

LAURE Research Process Essay
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During late October 2016, I sat at a cubicle desk on the second floor of King Library, idly searching for inspiration for a history paper. I began browsing books about the history of the printing press and noticed a mid-sized volume with a yellow cover: *The Gallery of Memory* by Lina Bolzoni. I picked it up, read the first few pages and, intrigued, checked it out of the library. This book would soon become the foundation of my 2017 University Summer Scholars (USS) project.

A few weeks later I mentioned Lina Bolzoni's book to my history professor, Dr. de Boer. He was familiar with Bolzoni's research, which focuses on mnemonics, memory devices, and image/text relationships during the Italian Renaissance. I expressed my interest in applying for the Undergraduate Summer Scholars program, and he offered to serve as my faculty advisor.

Over winter break, I began reading sources on the art of memory by Frances Yates, Mary Carruthers, and Lina Bolzoni. I attended a Research Methods Workshop through Miami's Humanities Center during J-term and also met with Dr. de Boer on the Oxford campus to discuss my USS application, since I wasn't sure how to transform my interests into a project idea. During this time Dr. de Boer introduced me to the field of emblem studies. Emblems, I learned, are a symbolic combination of image and text that usually communicate a moral, didactic, or humorous message. The first printed emblem book, Andrea Alciato's *Emblemata*, was published in Augsburg, Germany in 1531. Renaissance scholars have speculated on the relationship between the art of memory and the text/image combination of the emblem, but no known connection exists. I decided that I wanted to explore this connection for my USS project. By the end of January, I had prepared an annotated bibliography of sources on the art of memory, a research proposal, an initial bibliography of emblem studies, and my USS application.

Towards late April, I began rereading my bibliography, searched secondary sources online, and ordered an English translation of Alciato's *Emblemata* through OhioLink.

Starting my research in late May was difficult but exciting, since I knew nearly nothing about emblems. Every day, I read and annotated books on emblem theory by scholars including Peter Daly, Denis Drysdall, and Judi Loach. I also studied primary sources, including Baldassare Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* and Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince*. I wrote weekly research reports, which I discussed with Dr. de Boer. King Library, the Wertz Art & Architecture Library, OhioLink, and Interlibrary Loan were essential to my research progress. The librarians at King were also helpful resources, especially Nathaniel Floyd, who helped me identify and download Evernote, a note taking software that I used (and still use) extensively.

I also discovered that King Library's Special Collections owns a copy of Andrea Alciato's *Emblemata*. This edition, published in 1593, contains the same images as those that I had been studying in Jonathan Moffitt's translated edition. Dr. de Boer and I examined the book together, and he helped me read the text's Latin commentary. I visited the Special Collections several times throughout the summer to study the images, since I could notice small details here that weren't visible in the online or printed editions. My project was beginning to feel tangible.

Outside of Miami's library resources, I combed through Glasgow University's Online Library of emblem studies, "Alciato at Glasgow." This site includes digitized facsimile editions of Alciato's *Emblemata*, which helped me to trace the formal changes to the emblem's image and text. In early July, I also visited the Newberry Library in Chicago, where I obtained a reader's card and studied several other editions of Alciato's *Emblemata*, as well as Conrad Peutinger's collection of Roman inscriptions, *Inscriptiones Romae*, published in 1520.

The most difficult portion of my project was during July when I began writing my final research paper. At this point I was so immersed in my project that I didn't know how to begin; I *knew* that I knew about emblems, but I didn't know how to communicate this through writing. I learned that the best antidote was to keep writing, regardless of whether I was satisfied with my results. After several weeks of lackluster writing and helpful discussions with Dr. de Boer, I realized that I needed to adjust my writing style to better support my historical argument. As a French and English major, I hadn't been accustomed to writing a history paper in a narrative form. By mid-July, my writing became more organized and my research was beginning to coalesce.

Although I was initially interested in the relationship between emblems and the art of memory, in my final paper I instead focused on the historical conditions in Milan during the early sixteenth century that influenced the emblem's emergence. I explained that, although scholars often think of the term *emblem* as an abstract and symbolic device, the origins of the word can be traced to very concrete political conditions in Milan, Italy between 1512 and 1515. Now I realize that, to me, humanities research means discovering what I was never looking for.

This past February, I used the travel stipend of my summer scholars funding to attend a conference at the Warburg Institute in London, England, where I had the opportunity to informally discuss my research with other Renaissance scholars from the Warburg, Oxford University, and Cambridge University. Additionally, my general audience article, "Andrea Alciato and the Politics of the Printed Image," was recently published in Miami University's online history journal, *Journeys into the Past*.

Although I'm proud of what I've accomplished, I also recognize that there are areas where I could have gone further. I read and annotated several sources in French, but understanding German would have helped me read more on emblem theory; fluency in Italian would have helped me read more primary sources on Milanese history and Alciato's personal life. Most of all, I wish I had known enough Latin to read the emblems in their original language. However, I am currently enrolled in an introductory Latin class this semester, so I to improve my language ability. In fact, I'm taking this Latin class in French at l'Université Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3, since I'm studying abroad in Paris this semester. I also plan on visiting the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF) to study French editions of Alciato's emblems later this month.

This project began with a serendipitous experience at King Library over a year ago. Although I never would have expected that one single book would transform into such an extensive and fascinating research project, I'm glad it did.