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“Love is a fire that burns unseen”

The Reception of Greek Erotic Representations in Alciato’s *Emblemata* and Camões

Taking as a central issue the mythical representation of Eros, this paper deals with the reception of Antique poetic models in Alciato’s emblem book, proposing an intertextual dialogue with the major Portuguese Poet of the 16th century, Luís Vaz de Camões (c. 1524-1580). When the Milanese jurist printed the first version of his *Emblemata* in 1531 giving birth to a new literary genre closely connected to visual arts, Alciato clearly announced his indebtedness to ancient authors, explaining that he intended to provide inspiration for writers and artists. The comparative reading focused on erotic representations within Alciato’s *Emblemata* highlights the visual motifs taken from the *Greek Anthology*. Considering that Alciato’s book attained tremendous editorial success by the end of the 16th century, with a significant impact on the arts and literature, this approach analyses iconic representations of Eros in contemporary Portuguese literature. The work of Luís de Camões, celebrated as the master of “mute poetry” and able to paint images by using words, is therefore selected as an example in order to discuss the relevance of that subsequent connection to Alciato in light of Neoplatonic theories of Love. This paper aims thus to demonstrate how antique representations of Love survived in Renaissance culture by fostering an ingenious adaptation to meet the aesthetic norms of that period, especially committed to logo-iconic language.