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# Prints by Gabriel Huquier after Oppenord's Decorated *Ripa*

Jean-François Bédard

Scholars have long remarked on the liberties taken by the printmaker, publisher and art dealer Gabriel Huquier (1695–1772) in reproducing drawings by Antoine Watteau.<sup>1</sup> Prior to embarking on these etchings, Huquier invariably ‘finished’ Watteau’s arabesque designs, which were little more than rapid sketches. Without compunction, he ‘enhanced’ his prints after Watteau by incorporating elements commissioned from other artists and even altered the plates of the *Figures de Différents Caractères* he had acquired from François Chéreau I’s widow.<sup>2</sup> Huquier’s casual approach to the originals shows his lack of concern for reproductive accuracy. His desire to supply the decorative print market with a constant flow of fresh products outweighed fidelity to his models.

To be sure, Huquier’s architectural and ornamental prints were meant for a clientele altogether different from painting connoisseurs – primarily artists, artisans and their pupils, as well as art lovers who wished to decorate their homes.<sup>3</sup> These groups relied on images as sources of inspiration, teaching material, or ornamental objects and rarely considered them collectible items in their own right.

They sought novelty over exact duplication or printmaking virtuosity. Indifferent to the original inventors’ identity, they embraced the variety afforded by images that might combine the work of several artists. They had no objection to Huquier’s rearranging elements taken from other draughtsmen, who probably practised the same sort of *bricolage* themselves. Far from betraying the artists he was reproducing, Huquier’s modifications imitated their mode of invention.<sup>4</sup>

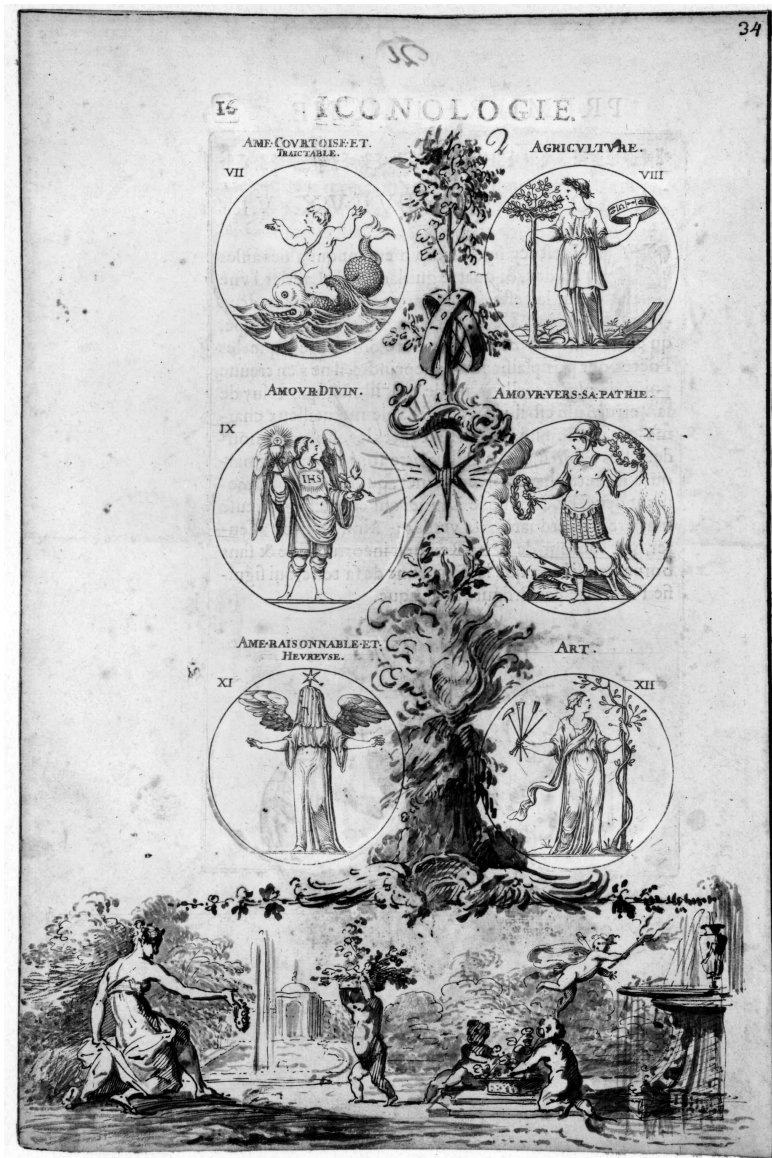
Huquier’s reproduction of a copy of Cesare Ripa’s *Iconologia* decorated by the architect Gilles-Marie Oppenord (1672–1742) demonstrates how the printmaker mirrored Oppenord’s creative process of appropriation and transformation.<sup>5</sup> Around 1713 Oppenord drew vignettes, head- and tailpieces, borders and other ornamental motifs in the margins of a copy of Jean Baudoin’s French translation of the *Iconologia*, illustrated by Jacques De Bié and published in Paris in 1636.<sup>6</sup> A subsequent owner of this copy rearranged the material, but a reconstruction of its original appearance shows that the architect’s decorations were a graphic commentary on the printed text and

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1. See for instance M. Eidelberg, ‘Gabriel Huquier – Friend or Foe of Watteau?’, *The Print Collector’s Newsletter*, xv, 1984, pp. 157–64 and M. Eidelberg, ‘Huquier in the guise of Watteau’, *On Paper*, I, 1996, pp. 28–32, with references to previous literature. On Huquier, see Y. Bruand, ‘Un grand collectionneur, marchand et graveur du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle: Gabriel Huquier (1695–1772)’, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, xxvii, 1950, pp. 99–114; Y. Bruand, ‘Huquier (Gabriel), le père’, in *Inventaire du fonds français: graveurs du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1930–present, xi, pp. 447–538; M. Préaud, P. Casselle, M. Grivel and C. Le Bitouzé, *Dictionnaire des éditeurs d’estampes à Paris sous l’Ancien Régime*, Paris, 1987, *ad. nom.*
2. M. Roland Michel, ‘Watteau et les *Figures de différents caractères*’, in *Antoine Watteau (1684–1721), le peintre, son temps et sa légende: actes du colloque international de Paris (Octobre 1984)*, edited by F. Moureau and M. Morgan Grasselli, Paris and Geneva, 1987, pp. 117–27.
3. On the market for eighteenth-century French ornament prints,

see C. Le Bitouzé, ‘Le commerce de l’estampe à Paris dans la première moitié du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle’, thesis, École Nationale des Chartes, 1986, particularly pp. 217, 238 and 354.

4. Katie Scott referred to Huquier’s ‘co-authorship’ of François Boucher’s prints in terms of collaborative *bricolage*. K. Scott, ‘Reproduction and Reputation: “François Boucher” and the Formation of Artistic Identities’, in *Rethinking Boucher*, edited by M. Hyde and M. Ledbury, Los Angeles, 2006, pp. 91–132. She also used the term *bricolage* to characterize the design process of grotesque ornament in general. K. Scott, *The Rococo Interior: Decoration and Social Spaces in Early Eighteenth-Century Paris*, New Haven and London, 1995, pp. 132–33.
5. Peter Fuhring has illustrated selected prints by Huquier after Oppenord’s *Ripa* in P. Fuhring, *Design into Art: Drawings for Architecture and Ornament, the Lodewijk Houthakker Collection*, London, 1989, pp. 82–110; see also Appendix I. Valery Shevchenko, ‘Risunki Zhiliari Mari Oppenord v graviurakh G. Huquier [The Drawings of Gilles-Marie Oppenord in the Prints by G. Huquier]’, *Hermilage Museum Reports*, lvi, 1995, pp. 16–24, does not discuss Ripa’s prints.
6. C. Ripa, translated by J. Baudoin with illustrations by J. De Bié, *Iconologie, Ou, Explication Nouvelle De Plusieurs Images, Emblemes, Et Autres Figres Hieroglyphiques des Vertus, des Vices, des Arts, des Sciences, des Causes naturelles, des Humeurs différentes, & des Passions humaines*, 1<sup>st</sup> edn, Paris, 1636.



28. Gilles-Marie Oppenord, Decorated Page from Cesare Ripa's *Iconologie*, c. 1713, pen and brown and black ink, with grey wash, on a printed page, 326 x 217 mm (Montreal, Canadian Centre for Architecture).

engraved illustrations. Oppenord sketched elegant vignettes and delineated graceful grotesques to illustrate the Ripa-Baudoin descriptions. He also elaborated on De Bié's original plates, which depict Ripa's emblems as personifications disposed in groups of six roundels. Around

these roundels, he devised fantastical grotesques that included elements selected at random from De Bié's engraved figures. In the book's second plate, for example, Oppenord inserted an elongated trophy between De Bié's vertical rows of roundels (fig. 28).<sup>7</sup> For this design, he bor-

7. Montreal, Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture. Inv. CCA DR1991:007, fol. 16. The album was reproduced in its totality in P. Fuhring, 1989, op. cit, pp. 82–110, with an essay by E. Dee ("The Oppenord Sketch-

book") on pp. 79–81. For a reconstruction of the original aspect of Oppenord's Ripa and a more detailed discussion, see J.-F. Bédard, *Decorative Games: Ornament, Rhetoric, and Noble Culture in the Work of Gilles-Marie Oppenord (1672–1742)*, Newark, DE, 2011.

rowed from the engraver, from top to bottom, a tree and zodiacal rings copied from the emblem 'Agriculture'; a dolphin from the emblem 'Âme courtoise et tractable' (Courteous and kind soul); a star from the emblem 'Âme raisonnable et heureuse' (Reasonable and happy soul); and a laurel wreath and flames from the emblem 'Amour vers sa patrie' (Love for one's country). Oppenord's striking composition resulted from the combination of elements brought together solely by the alphabetical order De Bié adopted to organize his figures. Disregarding the didactic nature of the publication, Oppenord generated his decorations from a playful, haphazard reworking of another illustrator's compositions.

Oppenord's decorated copy of *Ripa*, with the drawings trimmed from the margins and pasted into an album of sixty folios, is now at the Canadian Centre for Architecture

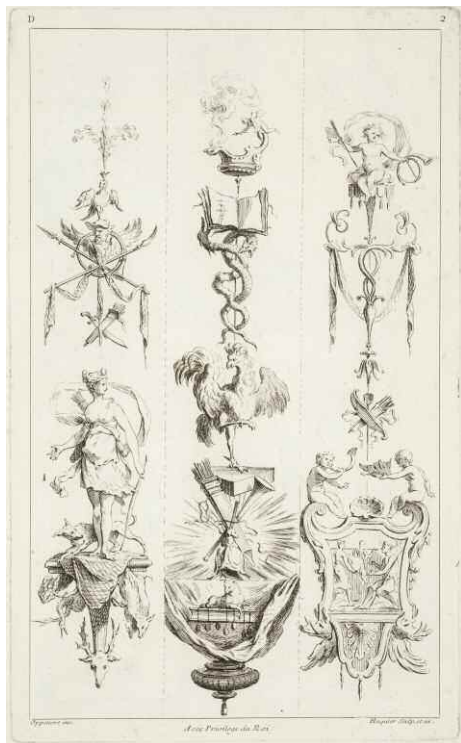
in Montreal.<sup>8</sup> The Montreal album was probably the creation of Huquier, who is thought to have arranged the contents in their current form. Not only are the reorganized drawings numbered from one to 247 in a different hand than Oppenord's – corresponding exactly to the number given in the description of the volume in the 1772 sale of Huquier's collection – but also the reorganization, which groups the drawings according to format, anticipates the layout of Huquier's plates.<sup>9</sup>

Huquier did not appropriate Oppenord's *Ripa* in its entirety or follow the sequence of drawings as they must have appeared in Oppenord's original. Instead he produced three series of etchings – the *Moyen* and *Grand Oppenord* and his own *Iconologies* – featuring elements randomly chosen from it.<sup>10</sup> Huquier etched the largest number of plates derived from Oppenord's *Ripa* for his

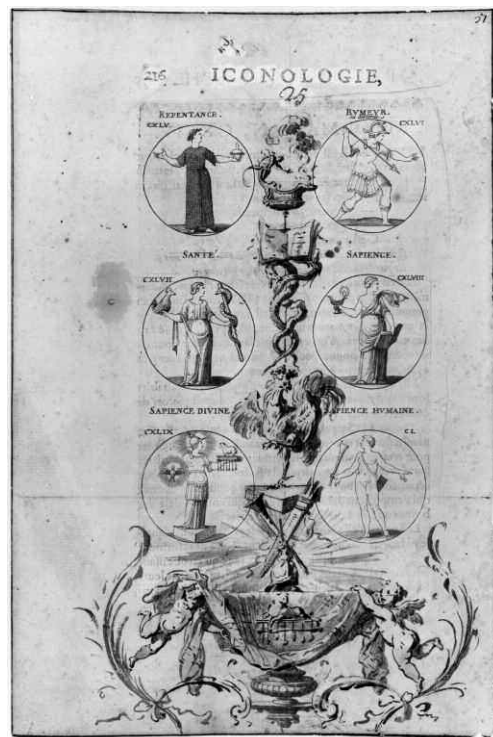
8. Montreal, Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture. Inv. CCA DR1991:007:001r to 060v.
9. '619 Iconologie de Jacques de Bié, enrichie de 247 desseins d'ornemens & sujets de figures sur les marges & les revers des estampes & du discours, par Oppenord, vol. in-fol.' F.-C. Joullain the younger, *Catalogue De Tableaux à l'huile, à gouasse & au pastel ...*

*De feu M. Huquier, Graveur, Paris, 1772, p. 115, no. 619. F. Lugt, Répertoire des catalogues de ventes publiques, intéressant l'art ou la curiosité, The Hague, 1938–87, no. 2075 is a reference to this sale. The current album is missing drawings 134 to 140 (between fols. 42v and 43r).*

10. See Appendix I.

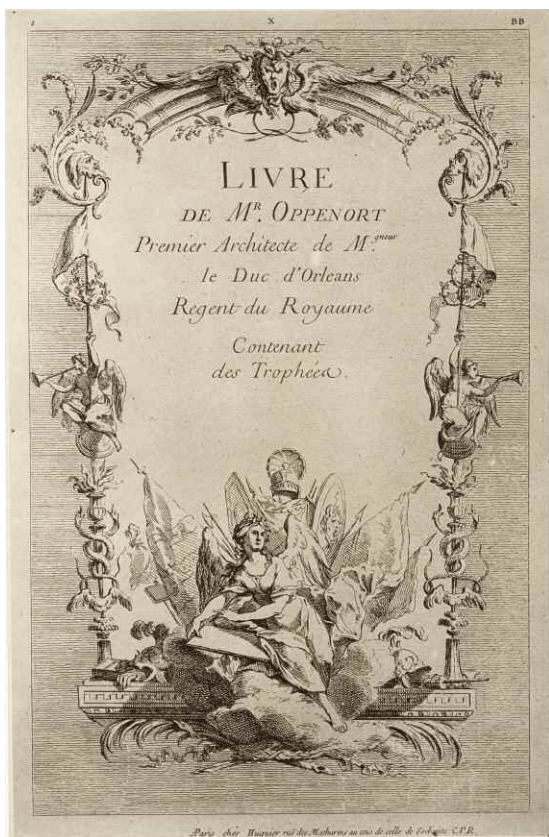


29. Gabriel Huquier after Oppenord, Plate D 2 from *Moyen Oppenord*, 1737–38, etching, 317 x 195 mm (Montreal, Canadian Centre for Architecture).



30. Gilles-Marie Oppenord, Decorated Page from Cesare Ripa's *Iconologie*, c. 1713, pen and brown ink and wash, on a printed page, 326 x 219 mm (Montreal, Canadian Centre for Architecture).





31. Gabriel Huquier after Oppenord, Title-page of the *Grand Oppenord*, 1749–51, etching, 370 x 239 mm (Montreal, Canadian Centre for Architecture).

own series known as the *Moyen Oppenord* of 1737–38, whose full title reads *Premier[- XI<sup>e</sup>] Livre de Differents morceaux A L'Usage de tous ceux qui s'appliquent aux beaux Arts Inventé par*

*G. M. Oppenort Architecte du Roy Et Gravé par Huquier*. Later, in 1749–51, he included other designs from *Ripa* in the series *Œuvres de Gille Marie Oppenord Ecuier Directeur General des Batiments et Jardins de son Altesse Royale Monseigneur Le Duc D'Orleans Regent du Royaume*, known as the *Grand Oppenord*. He turned to the *Ripa* album one last time for his own *Iconologies* of 1767–69.

In the *Moyen* and *Grand Oppenords*, Huquier chose the architect's designs as frontispieces<sup>11</sup> and for sequences of decorative motifs such as pilasters, cartouches and fountains.<sup>12</sup> By grouping Oppenord's designs according to theme and format Huquier optimized the use of space in the layout of his plates and made them easier for readers to refer to. Thus horizontal panels and cartouches were grouped together, and vertical pilasters and fountains formed separate sequences in the *Moyen* and *Grand Oppenord* publications.<sup>13</sup> Huquier relied on the same pragmatic approach in other suites he published, such as the first reissue of Watteau's *Figures de Différents Caractères*.<sup>14</sup>

As with Watteau's drawings, Huquier did not hesitate to alter Oppenord's original designs. He simply cropped the architect's sketches that proved too wide for a given layout. Thus, when he etched plate D 2 of the *Moyen Oppenord* (fig. 29), he eliminated the pair of putti in the drawing on fol. 21r of the Montreal album (fig. 30). Huquier also devised new compositions by rearranging elements from different drawings in the book, as occurs with the title-pages. For fig. 31, the title-page of the *Grand Oppenord*,<sup>15</sup> for example, he combined a trophy from fol. 13v (fig. 32) with the left border of fol. 4v (fig. 33).<sup>16</sup> Huquier also added elements to Oppenord's inventions, thereby disrupting the architect's compositional strategy that had relied on De Bié's alphabetical ordering of the engraved emblems. Finally, as he had done in his second reworked edition of Watteau's *Figures*, he added backgrounds to Oppenord's originals. To plate HH 3 of the *Grand Oppenord* (fig. 34), based for the most part on fol. 10r (fig. 35),

11. *Moyen Oppenord*, plates C 1 and D 1; *Grand Oppenord*, plates BB 1 and HH 1. The *Moyen Oppenord* is composed of 78 plates grouped in eleven books. Nine of these books, identified by the letters A, B, C, D, E, F, G, K, L contain six plates each (each plate numbered, e.g. A 1 to A 6, and so on for each book); the two remaining books (H and I) comprise twelve plates. An additional suite of twelve plates on fountains is usually bound at the end of the *Moyen Oppenord*. The *Grand Oppenord* comprises 120 plates. Eighteen books, identified by the letters AA, BB, CC, DD, EE, FF, GG, HH, II, KK, LL, MM, OO, PP, QQ, RR, SS, TT, are composed of six plates each (each plate is marked individually AA 1 to AA 6, and so on for each book); the remaining book, marked NN, comprises eight plates. Four individual plates complete the set: a title-page (plate I), a 'preface' (plate II), a portrait of Oppenord (plate III), and an elevation of a design for the choir of Meaux cathedral (plate CXX).

12. In the *Moyen Oppenord*, panels for plates C 2 to 6, pilasters for

plates D 2 to 6, and cartouches for plates E 2 to 6. In the *Grand Oppenord*, fountains for plates HH 2 and 3.

13. Horizontal panels and cartouches constitute suites C and E in the *Moyen Oppenord*; vertical pilasters and fountains the *Moyen Oppenord*'s suite D as well as the *Grand Oppenord*'s suite HH.

14. Marianne Roland Michel has noted that on this occasion Huquier modified Jean de Jullienne's carefully considered sequence. Instead, he grouped Watteau's sketches thematically, bringing together military figures, women's heads, etc. Roland Michel surmises that, by adopting this new arrangement, the print publisher hoped for a more profitable return on the *Figures*, which he could now sell as short thematic suites. Roland Michel, 1987, op. cit. p. 125.

15. Plate BB 1.

16. Similarly, for a trophy on plate D 3 of the *Moyen Oppenord*, Huquier combined elements from fols. 17r and 12r.

as noted by Peter Fuhring,<sup>17</sup> Huquier added a statue of a nude female seen from the front, taken from the left margin of the middle register of *fol. 54r* (fig. 36) and a landscape background from a source that has not been identified. Huquier also enriched other sequences of the *Grand Oppenord* with landscapes, most likely borrowed from Jacques de Lajoüe.<sup>18</sup>

Huquier returned to the decorated *Ripa* one last time at the end of his printmaking career. In his own set of *Iconologies*, he pushed creative license to the point of plagiarism.<sup>19</sup> He simply plundered designs from Oppenord's *Ripa* without the inscription *Oppenord inv.* he had scrupulously added to his previous plates after the architect. For a composition symbolizing 'Artifice' (fig. 37),<sup>20</sup> Huquier duplicated a composition from *fol. 15r* (fig. 38). He plagiarized the architect again for plates D 12, the emblem 'Bellonne', and S 8, 'L'Art militaire'. Perhaps Huquier was reluctant to divulge his debt to an architect whose reputation had by then been besmirched by critics of the Rococo. These mid-century promoters of a return to Antiquity in the visual arts had identified Oppenord as one of the principal instigators of the despised *goût moderne* (modern taste). Undoubtedly issued to compete with Jean-Charles Delafosse's celebrated *Nouvelle Iconologie Historique* of 1768, Huquier's *Iconologies* adopted Delafosse's severe style, popular in the second half of the century.<sup>21</sup> Huquier's *Iconologies* discloses a shrewd businessman wanting to make the most of his stockpile of Oppenord drawings despite a decline in the designer's standing.

In their creative work Oppenord and Huquier were both *bricoleurs* who had no qualms about rearranging others' compositions. However, they pursued different objectives in their interpretative projects. In his decorated copy of *Ripa*, Oppenord let both the Ripa-Baudouin text and De Bié's images stimulate his inventiveness. He illustrated passages from *Ripa* with decorative compositions that were thematically related to the text. With De Bié's plates he played even more complex games, using the engraved attributes as building blocks for grotesque compositions that gave new currency to Ripa's emblematic system.

On the other hand, Huquier's eye for profit guided his



32. Gilles-Marie Oppenord, Decorated Page from Cesare Ripa's *Iconologie*, c. 1713, pen and brown ink, on a printed page, 325 x 214 mm (Montreal, Canadian Centre for Architecture).



33. Gilles-Marie Oppenord, Decorated Page from Cesare Ripa's *Iconologie*, c. 1713, pen and brown ink, on a printed page, 318 x 208 mm (Montreal, Canadian Centre for Architecture).

17. P. Fuhring, 1989, op. cit, p. 86.

18. Roland Michel, 1984, op. cit, pp. 158–61.

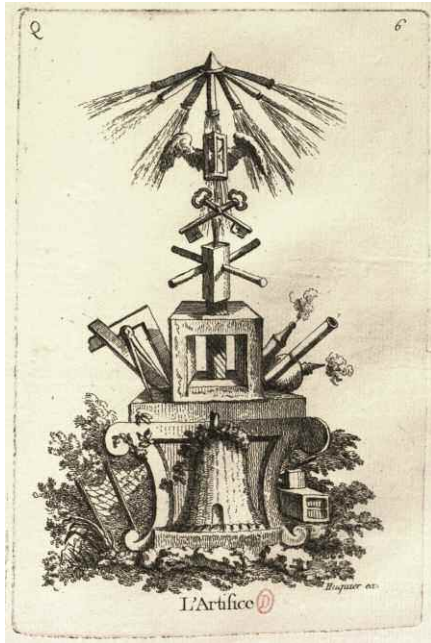
19. G. Huquier, *Iconologies où sont représentés les vertus, les vices, les sciences, les arts et les divinités de la Fable en deux cent seize estampes*, Paris, 1767–69; *Inventaire du fonds français: graveurs du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1930–present, ad. nom., nos. 62–277. A complete copy is at the Bibliothèque de l'Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art in Paris (pressmark 8° Rés. 54).

20. *Iconologies*, plate Q 6; Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, pressmark 8° Rés. 54.

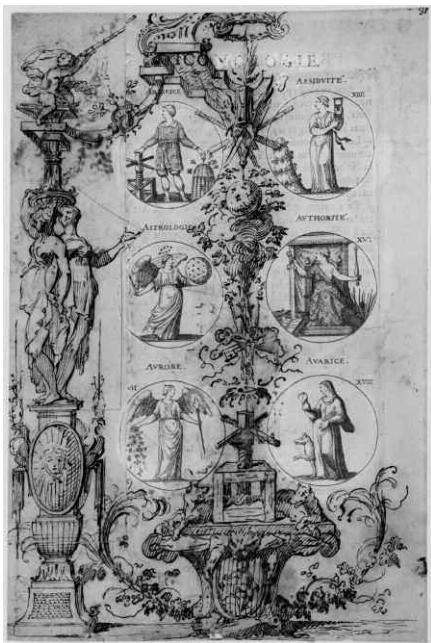
21. J.-C. Delafosse, *Nouvelle Iconologie Historique, ou, Attributs hieroglyphiques qui ont pour objets, les quatre elements, les quatre saisons, les quatre parties du monde et les différentes complexions de l'homme*, Paris, 1768.







37. Gabriel Huquier, 'L'Artifice' from the *Iconologies*, 1767–69, etching, plate 167 x 114 mm, sheet 236 x 175 mm (Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art).



38. Gilles-Marie Oppenord, Decorated Page from Cesare Ripa's *Iconologie*, c. 1713, pen and brown ink, grey wash, on a printed page, 318 x 212 mm (Montreal, Canadian Centre for Architecture).

## Appendix

Drawings from Oppenord's Decorated *Ripa* Etched by Huquier

Pages from Oppenord's <i>Ripa</i>	Plates in the <i>Moyen</i> <i>Oppenord</i>	Plates in the <i>Grand</i> <i>Oppenord</i>	Plates in Huquier's <i>Iconologies</i>
CCA DR1991:0007:0	(1737–38)	(1749–51)	(1767–69)
02v	G 2		
04v	D 5	BB 1	
09r			D 12
10r		HH 3*	
12r	D 3		
13v		BB 1	
15r			Q 6
17r	D 3		
18v	C 6		
19v	C 2		
20v	D 5, D 6		
21r	D 2		
22v	C 3		
23r		HH 2	
23v	E 5		
24v	E 2*		
25v	D 3		
28v	C 5		
29r	E 6*		
29v	C 1	HH 1	
31r	D 1		
31v	C 2, D 6		S 8
32v	D 5		
33r	D 6		
34r	C 2		
36r	D 2		
39r	D 4		
39v	C 4		
40r	D 4		
40v	D 4		
41r	C 1, C 5		
41v	D 2		
42r	C 5		
43r	E 6*		
44v	C 4		
46r	E 6*		
46v	E 2*		
47v	C 3		
50r		HH 1	
50v	C 6		
51r	E 5		
51v	E 3*		
52r	E 2*		
54r		HH 3	
54v	C 3		
58v	E 4		

\* Identified by P. Fuhling in *Design into Art*, pp. 82–110.