

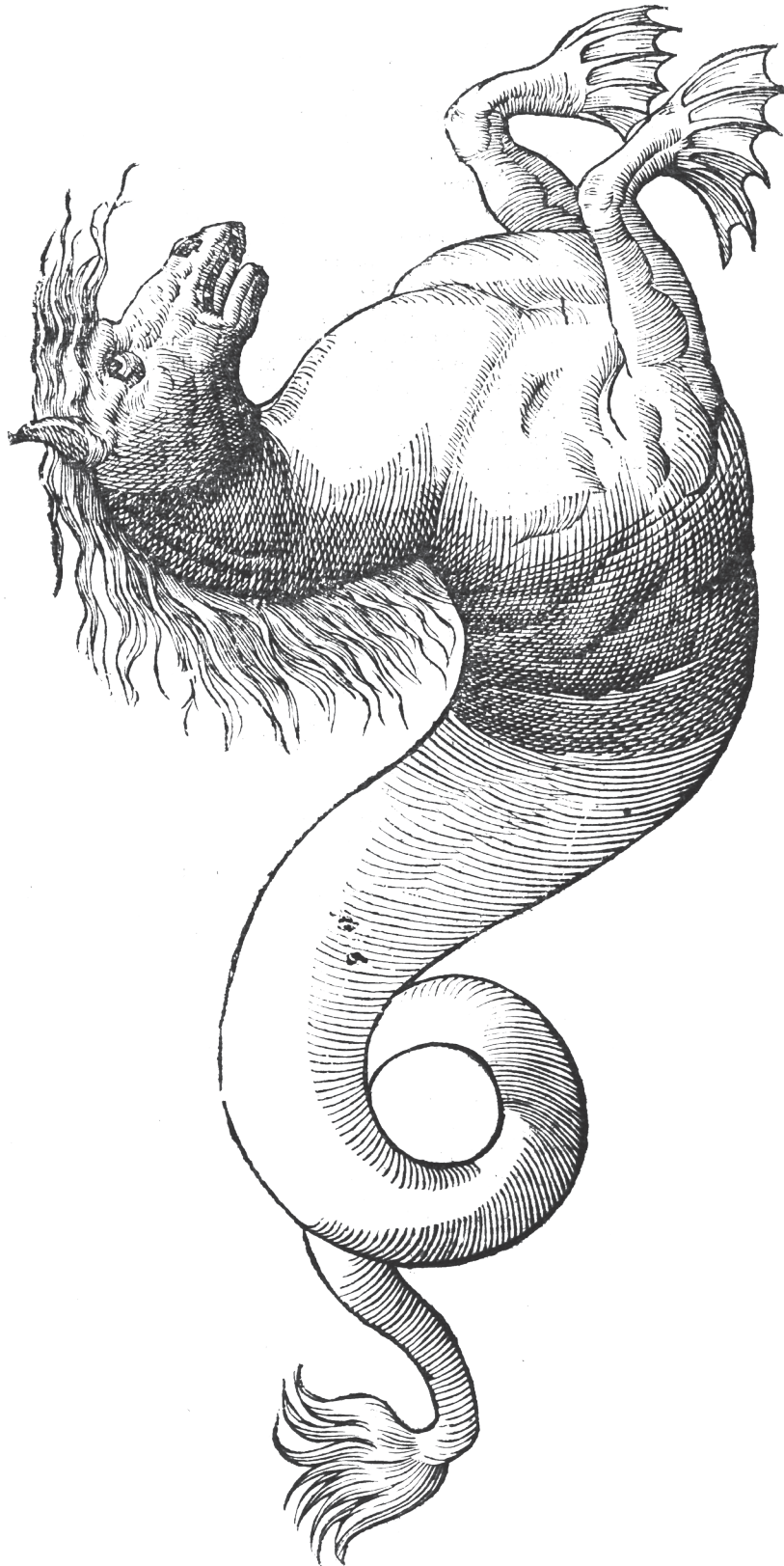


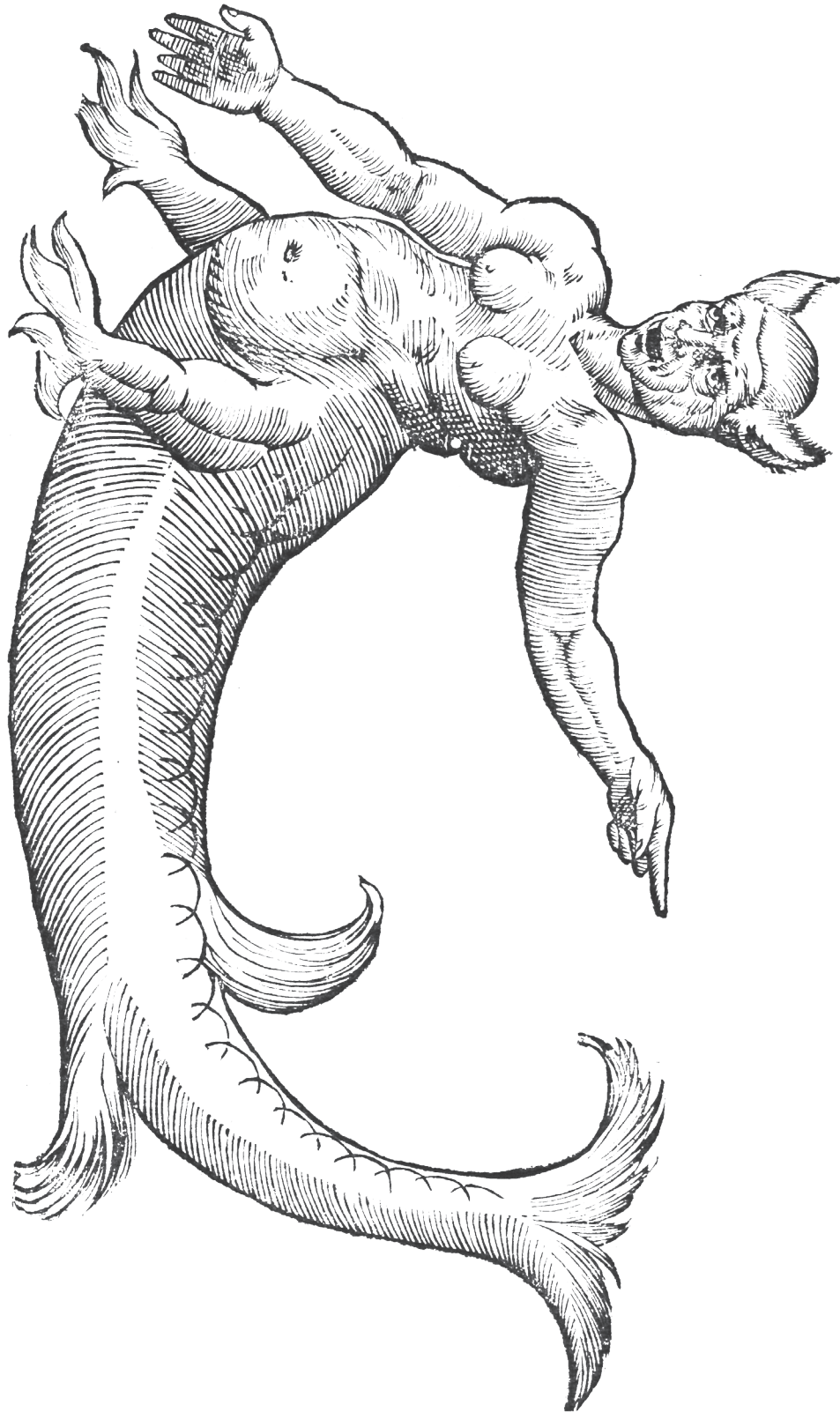
“A compleat body of chirurgical operations, containing the whole practice of surgery : with observations and remarks on each case : amongst which are inserted, the several ways of delivering women in natural and unnatural labors : the whole illustrated with copper plates, explaining the several bandages, sutures, and divers useful instruments” by M. de La Vauguion, MD (1716) <https://beckercat.wustl.edu/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=91937>

Images from “Monstrorum Historia” (1642)

“Monstrorum Historia” is a visually stunning book on the history of monsters. It is part of a larger work, an enormous 13-volume encyclopedia on natural history. The author, Ulisse Aldrovandi, wrote parts of the encyclopedia using the raw material in his museum and the botanical garden in Bologna in Italy. He collected not only specimens of plants, animals, fossils and minerals, but also reports and drawings of sightings of dragons and the “fabulous races” of Greek mythology such as centaurs, cyclops, satyrs and mermen.

The current boundary between art, science, myth and reality is not present in Aldrovandi’s encyclopedia or in his museum collections. According to Konrad Gesner, another encyclopedist of that period, the goal of encyclopedias of the 16th and 17th centuries was to acquaint the reader with the unusual.





Printers' Marks

One of the most distinctive features of books printed during the early modern period is printers' marks. These symbols, which ranged from simple to elaborate, frequently appeared on the title pages of books. While the first title pages were quite minimalist and usually only included the work's title, printers soon realized it was the perfect place for displaying trademarks. Their original function was to help protect a printer's output from piracy, but as they became increasingly eye-catching, they also started to serve as a marketing tool. A distinctive printer's mark displayed on a piece with fine craftsmanship branded that printer's name with a reputation for quality.

The following printers' marks appear in Becker Library's rare book collections. As is typical of Renaissance printers' marks, they incorporate biblical and classical imagery. Some are famous in the history of print, and some were used by printers who were more obscure, but all reflect the beauty of their tradition.

VIRTUTI

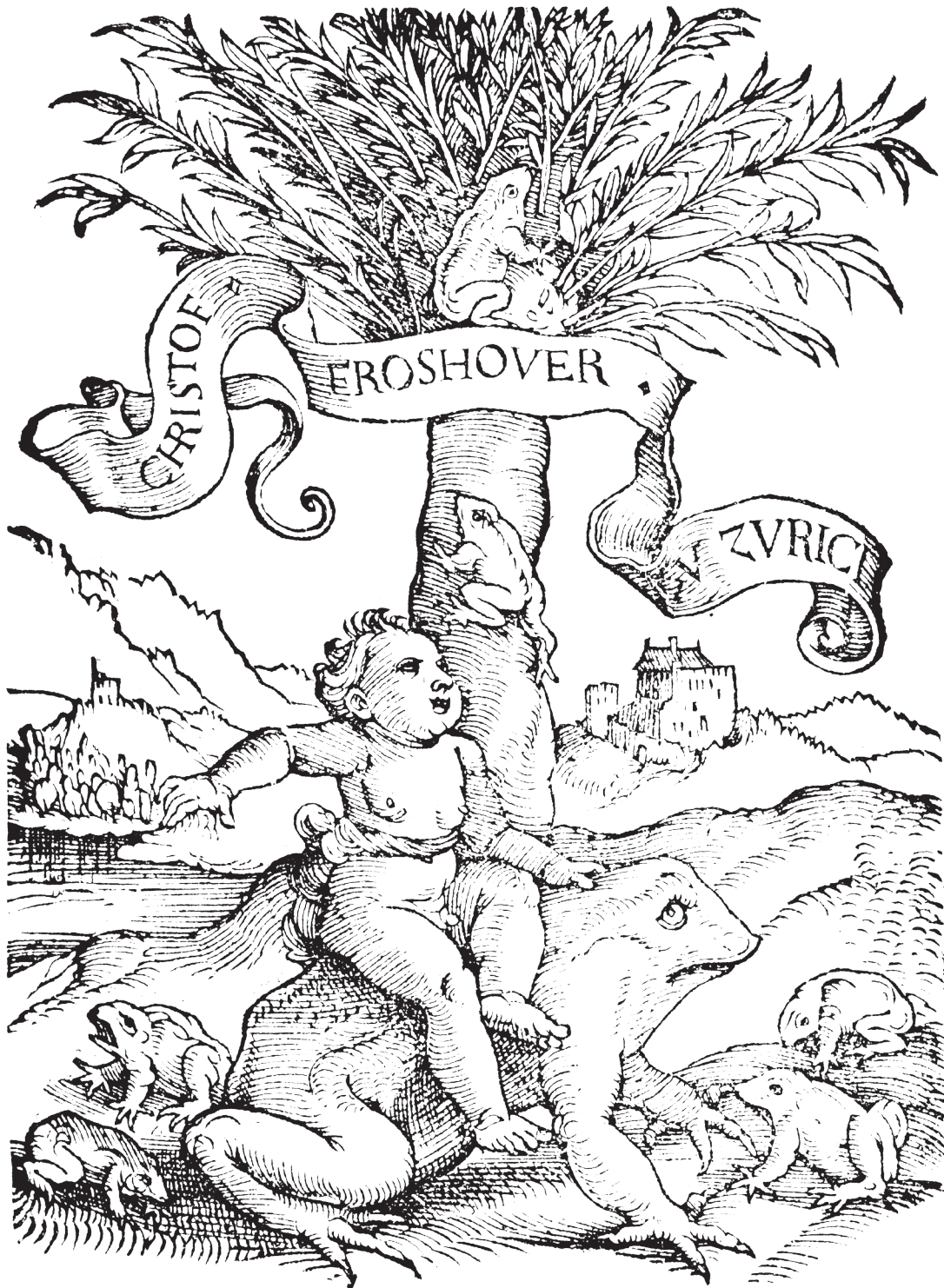


EST VIA.

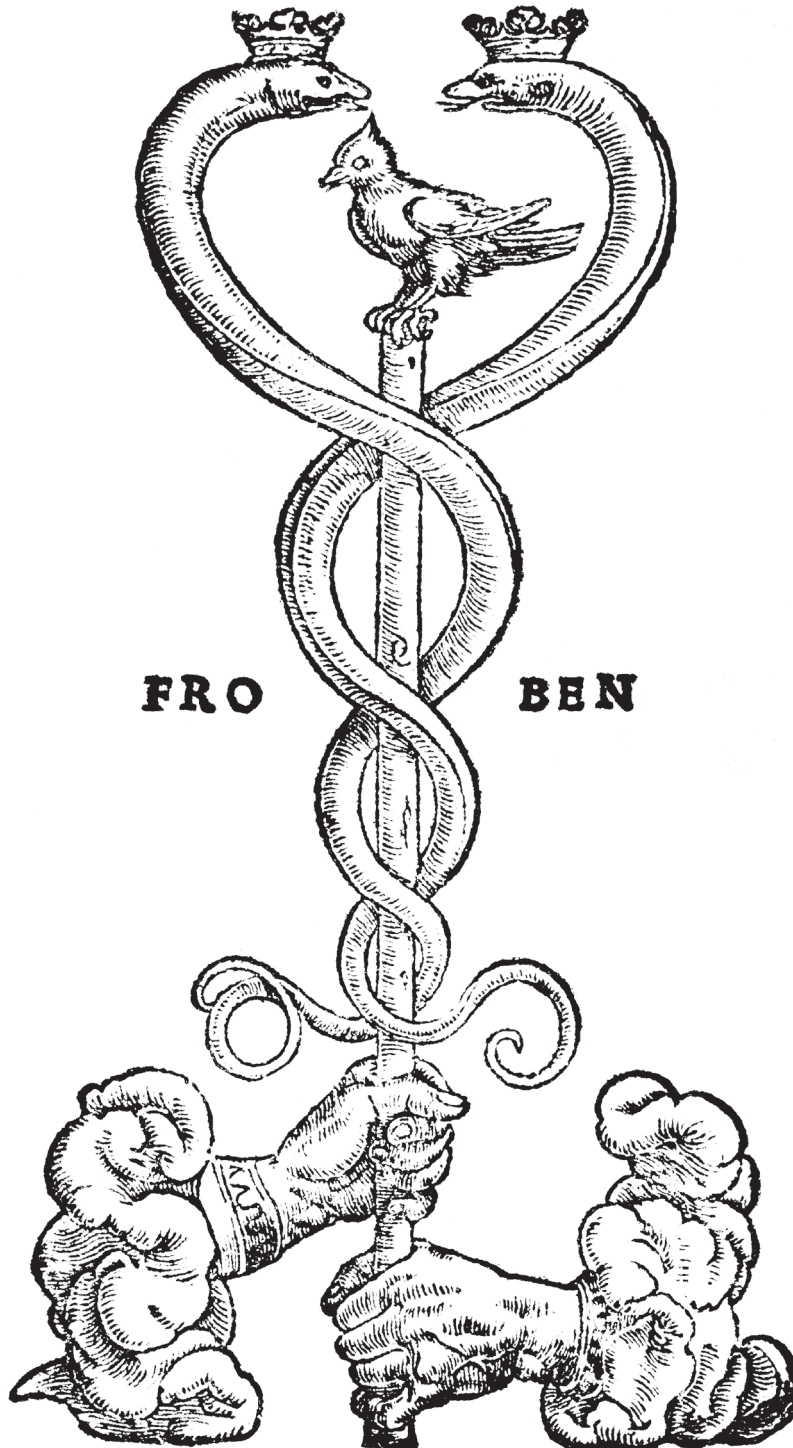
Johannes Oporinus' mark refers to the Greek Arion, who was miraculously rescued by a dolphin. The two figures are surrounded by the words "In Via Virtuti Nulla Est Via" ("No Way is Impassable to Virtue"), as spoken to Aeneas by the Sibyl in Ovid's "Metamorphoses."



Andreas Wechel's mark includes mythological symbols such as Pegasus, Hermes' caduceus, and the cornucopia, as well as his monogram surmounted by the "Sign of Four," a mystical symbol derived from the first two Greek letters in the name Christos: X and P.



This version of Christoph Froschauer's mark is a reference to the family's name. "Frosch" means "frog" in German, and the mark is a whimsical image of a child cavorting with a group of frogs. The banderole across the tree bears the founder's name and the firm's location.



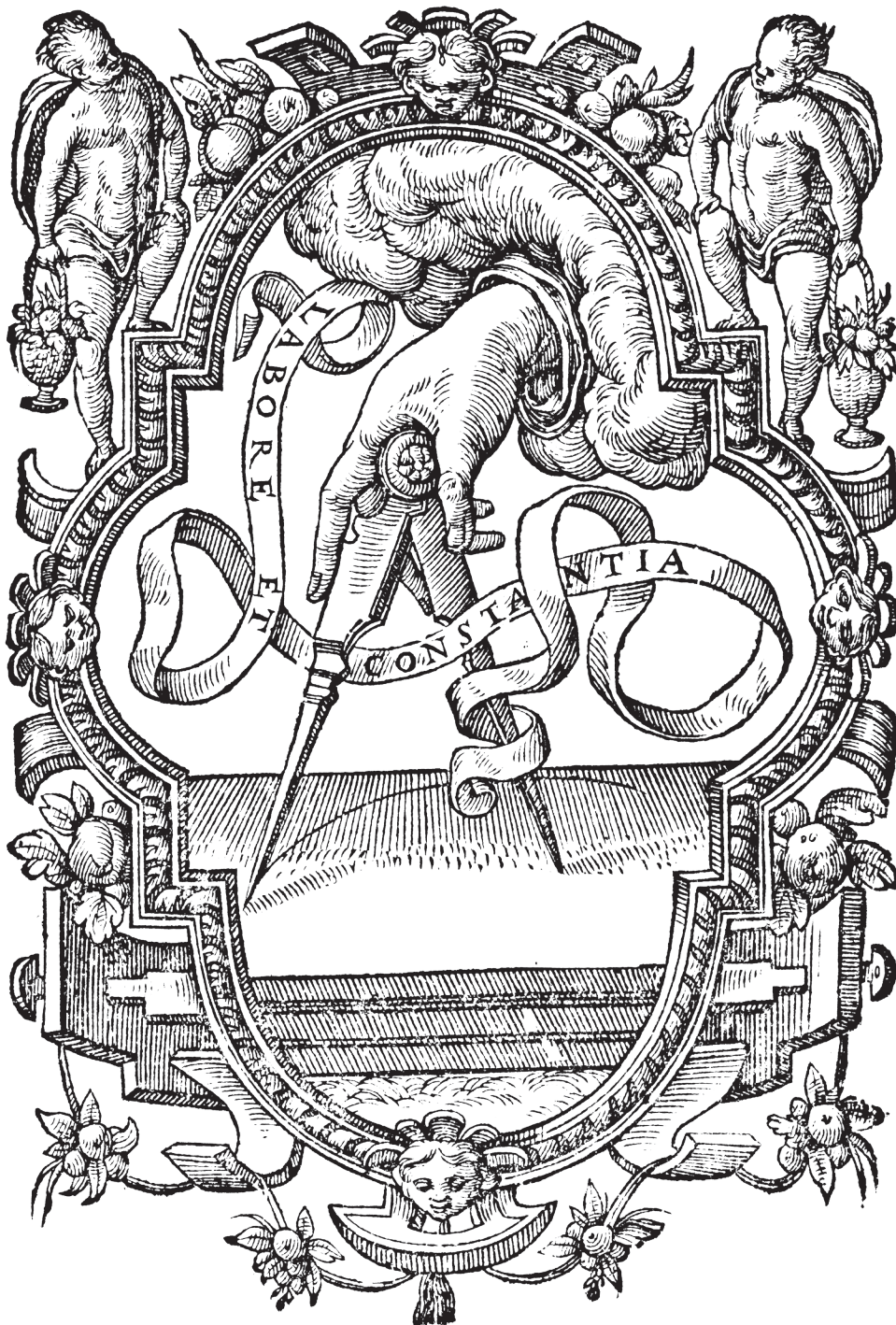
Johann Froben's mark is a variation on the Greek god Hermes' caduceus staff: two hands reach through the clouds to grasp a staff with a dove atop and two crowned snakes surrounding it. Trading the staff's traditional wings for a dove may be a reference to Matthew 10:16, "So be as shrewd as snakes and harmless as doves."



The mark of the Giunti press depicts a fleur-de-lis, which is the crest of the family's native city of Florence. This mark was used by all branches of the publishing firm—which included Venice, Rome, Lyon and Spain—regardless of where a specific press was located.



Gilles Gourbin's mark depicts Pandora, the first woman the Greek gods created. She was given a jar filled with all the world's evils and told never to open it, but she disobeyed. The Latin motto "Spes sola remansit intus" means, "Only hope has remained behind."



Christoph Plantin's mark depicts a hand holding a compass and the motto "Labore et Constantia" ("By Labor and Constancy"). The image depicts the motto's words: the center point of the compass represents constancy and the circle drawn by the compass represents labor.



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