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Interpreting the Emblematic *Tondi* of Friedrich Brentel in the Context of Rosicrucian Hermeticism

(Diss.: Applied Emblematics in Hungary (16th–18th Centuries))

The Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest holds a series of thirty-two miniature gouache *tondi*, dated after 1630 and ascribed to Friedrich Brentel, showing emblematic *picturae*. The emblems seemingly belong to one series; however, all of the miniatures were carefully cut out in a circular shape at a later phase. According to the current consensus, the miniatures formerly belonged to a luxuriously executed emblem book or *Album amicorum*, thus any inscriptions mottoes or signatures are absent. While first thought to be original inventions of the painter, during the past decades several attempts were made to trace the emblematic sources of the series, yet without a complete solution. After an extensive comparative analysis, I have identified every *picturae* of the two series in contemporary emblematic publications. Two of the earlier emblematic sources include the emblematic fables of Aegidius Sadeler (1608) and an emblematic series of battling animals made by Hendrik Hondius (1610). Four of the *picturae* is found in the moralizing political emblems of Jacob Bruck-Angermundt (*Emblemata moralia et bellica*, 1615), while ten is found in Daniel Meissner's monumental series of emblematic *vedute* (*Thesaurus Philo-politicus*, 1625-1627). Used as a prototype of fifteen emblems, the most extensively used source of the Budapest collection was the moral emblematics of Daniel Cramer (*Octoginta emblemata moralia nova*, 1630).

My research focuses on the content of the emblems and the possible function of the series. The moral content of each emblem in the selection of the Budapest series could be analysed through its original source. I intend to interpret selected emblems of the series and, through these case studies, challenge the question whether the series holds a coherent thread? The function of such a series could be revealed through contextual analysis. Thus, I trace the tradition of illuminated manuscript copies of emblem books during the early seventeenth-century. Most of these collections could be associated with the workshops of Matthäus

Merian the Elder and Lucas Jennis in Frankfurt. Merian and Jennis were the publishers and illustrators of several alchemic, hermetic, Rosicrucian and Proto-Pietistic emblem books; including those utilized in the Budapest collection. Yet, the most important analogous series is that entitled *Gloria crocodilus*, held in the British Museum. The manuscript, containing copies of emblems mostly taken from Zinzgref's *Emblemata ethico-politica*, was already associated with the Budapest collection. The London collection is still ascribed to Jacob Hoefnagel; on grounds of the former and most possibly false attribution of the Budapest series to the same artist. However, a detailed examination of the Budapest collection could shed new light on the *Gloria crocodilus* as well.