

Emblems and the Natural World, 1500–1700 (Münster, 17–18 Dec 2015)

Münster, Dec 17–18, 2015

Deadline: Jan 31, 2015

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Since its invention by Alciato (*Emblematum liber*, 1531), the emblem is inextricably connected to Natural History. Alciato and his followers massively drew their themes and inspiration from the natural world, as is evidenced by Henkel and Schöne's *Emblemata. Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst* (1967). For their information about the natural world, the early modern emblematicists were greatly indebted to ancient, medieval and early modern textual and/or pictorial traditions. These traditions include ancient natural history (Aristotle, Pliny a.o.), the Bible and its commentators and illustrators, the medieval encyclopaedists (Albertus Magnus, Thomas de Cantimpré a.o.), the *Physiologus* and its offspring, the medieval bestiaries, and the 15th- and 16th-century emblematic antecedents (book illustrations, proto-emblematics). Since the 1550s the natural world regularly became the emblems' main topic, as can be seen in emblem books solely consecrated to Natural History: Barthélemy Aneau's *Decades de la description des animaux* (1549), Guillaume Guérout's *Blason des oyseaux* (1550) and Joachim Camerarius's *Symbolorum et Emblematum Centuriae Quattuor* (1590-1604). Animals are also the main topic of the so-called emblematic fable books in the tradition of Gilles Corrozet, Marcus Gheeraerts, Aegidius Sadeler, Audin, and the *Labyrinthe de Versailles* – and their application in paintings, drawings (Joris Hoefnagel), and decorative arts (embroideries, roof- and wall-painting). Emblems on animals are regularly quoted by early modern naturalists like Gessner and Aldrovandi, and integrated into their encyclopedic volumes on natural history. The emblem's protean connections with the natural world had – rightly or wrongly – led modern historians of science to coin the term “emblematic worldview”. The conference *Emblems and the Natural World* aims to address these multiple connections between emblematics and Natural History in the broader perspective of their underlying ideologies – scientific, artistic, literary, political and/or religious, and from the point of view of various disciplines: Neo-Latin, German, French, English Studies, philology of various languages, art history, book history, history of religion and of philosophy, and the history of science.

Please submit a one-page abstract (300 words) and a short curriculum vitae (max. two pages) to both editors before January 31, 2015:

- Karl Enenkel, Medieval and Early Modern Latin Philology, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, Münster: kenen_01@uni-muenster.de
and
- Paul Smith, Department of French, Leiden University: p.j.smith@hum.leidenuniv.nl

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