



**Daly, Peter M., and G. Richard Dimler. The Jesuit Emblem in the European Context**

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Volume 41, Number 3, Summer 2018

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1085699ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v41i3.31581>

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Publisher(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (print)

2293-7374 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Mongeau, G. (2018). Review of [Daly, Peter M., and G. Richard Dimler. The Jesuit Emblem in the European Context]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 41(3), 211–212. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v41i3.31581>

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**Daly, Peter M., and G. Richard Dimler.**

*The Jesuit Emblem in the European Context.*

Early Modern Catholicism and the Visual Arts Series 14. Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2016. Pp. xi, 467. ISBN 978-0-91610-188-6 (hardback) \$70.00.

Peter M. Daly, professor emeritus at McGill University, and G. Richard Dimler, emeritus at Fordham University, are both well known in the world of Jesuit emblem studies. Their extensive publications in this area, especially the encyclopedic five-volume Jesuit series in the *Corpus Librorum Emblematum*, have made them pioneers in the field. This volume provides an introductory survey to the topic. The book is divided into two parts: the first 180 or so pages introduce topics of significance to Jesuit emblem studies; the second part, roughly 285 pages, is composed of seven appendices and a selective bibliography.

We can begin with the second part. The seven appendices are organized by assistancy and province as these existed before the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773. An assistancy is a grouping of provinces who report to the superior general of the Society of Jesus through one of his regional assistants, while a province is a grouping of Jesuit works and residences under the authority of a major superior known as a provincial. Each appendix lists the major institutions of the Society of Jesus by province within the assistancy, and lists the publications linked with that institution. Books of emblems (with their DBS classification) and significant theoretical works by Jesuits are listed. For example, under the listing for the college at Vienne (French assistancy, province of Lyons), one can find the works of Claude-François Ménéstrier, one of the more important Jesuit theorists of the emblem, along with a basic description of their contents. This approach makes it easy to access the voluminous bibliography of

primary sources and provides basic information for understanding the sources themselves.

The first part of the book consists of six chapters and a conclusion. After providing some broader context for understanding the role of the emblem in the Renaissance and baroque periods in Europe, along with an introduction to the educational mission of the Society of Jesus, the authors present a survey of Jesuit theorists of symbology; each theorist's views are summarized, but no attempt is made to discuss convergences and differences among them or to propose an analysis that would relate the views of these theorists to key elements of Jesuit spirituality or educational theory. This is unfortunate, given the vast knowledge of the authors in this field.

The next two chapters survey the major Jesuit emblematic books of the period and the use of emblems in the material culture, including "ephemeral" decorations for theatre productions and college celebrations, as well as more permanent architectural decoration. Chapter 6 reviews the various purposes served by Jesuit emblems and emblematic books, whether the service of God, the ruler, humanity, or the Society of Jesus. This again takes the form of a survey rather than an analysis. The treatment is thematically suggestive, but readers are left to draw their own conclusions. The authors' conclusions take the form of a summative classification of the materials surveyed in the book.

The book is best described as a handbook for beginners in Jesuit emblem studies, or as a thorough compendium for experienced scholars in the field. It represents the first comprehensive overview of the material and theoretical contributions of the Society of Jesus to the development of the emblem in Europe prior to 1773, and as such will find a welcome place on the reference shelves of scholars and scholarly institutions with an interest in emblem studies.

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