
Renaissance and Reformation Renaissance et Réforme



Argent, Alan. The Richard Baxter Treatises: A Catalogue and Guide

Sheena Jary

Volume 42, Number 4, Fall 2019

Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1469–1533): Faith, Antiquity, and the Witch Hunt

Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1469–1533) : Foi, Antiquité et chasse aux sorcières

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1068589ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1068589ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (print)

2293-7374 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Jary, S. (2019). Review of [Argent, Alan. The Richard Baxter Treatises: A Catalogue and Guide]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 42(4), 197–198. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1068589ar>

© All Rights Reserved Canadian Society for Renaissance Studies / Société canadienne d'études de la Renaissance; Pacific Northwest Renaissance Society; Toronto Renaissance and Reformation Colloquium; Victoria University Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, 2020

This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

Érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

Argent, Alan.

The Richard Baxter Treatises: A Catalogue and Guide.

Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2018. Pp. xii, 280. ISBN 978-1-78327-292-1 (hardcover) US\$225.

Alan Argent took it upon himself to compile the third catalogue of the Richard Baxter treatises and the final product is an incredibly comprehensive guide that attempts to address the shortcomings of the two earlier catalogues (1856–63 and 1959). The catalogue is prefaced by N. H. Keeble, who provides some basic biographical details on Baxter; Keeble also explains that Baxter was a prolific writer who “moved between print and manuscript with no sense of either impropriety or generic difference” (vi). In prefacing his catalogue, Argent explains that the collection of folios, quartos, and “countless” small treatises made it very difficult to establish a system of order by which to group the twenty-one volumes of treatises, many of which were bound to other treatises without any explanation.

In addition to the notes, which trace the provenance of the Baxter treatises, Argent adds clarity to his catalogue with the editorial conventions section, as well as a bibliography, index of persons, and index of published works. The critical introduction, while only eight pages, not only informs readers on a variety of historical issues and people, but highlights the incredible breadth of knowledge that Argent presents to readers. On several occasions, Argent points out the value of the catalogue to book historians; of particular interest is Argent’s postulation that Thomas’s 1959 catalogue may have relied entirely upon Black’s earlier catalogue. In fact, Argent believes that Thomas may not even have worked with the Baxter manuscripts themselves. Argent points out that, if this is the case, the Thomas catalogue appropriates the errors of Black’s earlier catalogue, as well as additional errors of its own, hence the need for a more comprehensive version.

The introduction discusses an array of topics from the treatises’ provenance—including their physical appearance, i.e., watermarks and the colour, size, and quality of paper—to the presence of unidentified handwritten annotations and the difficulty of determining authorship for some of the writing included with the treatises. The introduction also touches upon Baxter’s vast network and his familiarity with theological and philosophical texts, ranging from highly placed Church of England officials to political

figures and nonconformist leaders. Writers like Augustine and Origen, Calvin and Bucer, Hobbes and Spinoza, and other reformed theologians from France, Germany, and Italy are also recorded influences in Baxter's writing. Argent notes that Baxter's network "transcended national boundaries and prejudices" (8), because he was concerned for "both the saving of souls and the saving of bodies" (7).

Argent's detailed annotations comment on whether the treatises were included in the Thomas or Black catalogues and whether they are cross-referenced with other treatises in Argent's catalogue. The annotations also provide brief summaries of the contents of each treatise, a physical description of the treatise, and the full titles—many of which were revised by Baxter at a later date. Argent's catalogue is a wealth of information framed by a critical introduction that expounds Baxter's passions, inspirations, and character. What Argent does so well is organize a complex system of thought in a way that represents Baxter's voice without overcoming it—or being overcome by it—so that contemporary readers can engage productively with the carefully ordered treatises.

SHEENA JARY

McMaster University

Bass, Marisa Anne.

Insect Artifice: Nature and Art in the Dutch Revolt.

Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019. Pp. xi, 297 + 192 colour ill. ISBN 978-0-6911-7715-1 (hardcover) US\$65.

It is quite uncommon, in the work of a scholar, to find a book that can be read not only with academic interest but also with genuine passion. Such is the case, however, with Marisa Anne Bass's latest book, *Insect Artifice: Nature and Art in the Dutch Revolt*. Bass's book is a compelling study of the cultural, political, and artistic landscape of the late sixteenth-century Low Countries and Europe. Bass uses as a case study the life and work of Joris Hoefstigel, a Dutch intellectual, merchant, erudite, and polymath. Born in Antwerp in 1542, Hoefstigel was forced to leave the Low Countries in 1576 by the harshness of the Spanish repression against the Dutch revolt. He then travelled across Europe, taking jobs as a painter and drawer, settling eventually at the Habsburg court.