

*The Emblem in Early Modern Europe: Contributions to the Theory of the Emblem.*  
Peter M. Daly.  
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The status of the emblem and the emblem book, with its relationship to questions about the nature of image and language, the mimetic and semiotic, and the text-image interaction, has never been more central to the disciplinary trends in Renaissance studies as it is today. The rich historiographic tradition in emblematics, along with the sheer erudition (both linguistic and otherwise) required to approach early modern emblems, makes the need greater than ever for an overview on the state of the field that can serve as an entrée for new scholars. While John Manning's *The Emblem* (2002) provided such an introduction for the more general public, Peter M. Daly's *The Emblem in Early Modern Europe* serves just this scholarly purpose.

*The Emblem in Early Modern Europe's* chapters each treat individual, yet interconnected, facets of the field. Chapter 1, "Recent Emblem Theory," treats new work as well as going back as far as that of Praz, thus providing an excellent historiographic frame for the reader, especially when it comes to the often-overlooked

German-language sources. The depth of Daly's bibliographic notes in this chapter and in the volume's select bibliography are themselves of great interest to both a specialist emblem-studies readership and those just approaching the field.

The chapters on the truth and importance of emblems are similarly illuminating, with Daly's use of deceptively simple questions serving as a mode of entry into sophisticated discourses about emblems and reader judgments. In the fourth chapter, "Emblems as Transmitters of Knowledge and Tradition," Daly admits, and in many ways justifies, his own historicist position in reading emblems in context. The readings of Wither and Rollenhagen span this and later chapters, and include a fascinating detour into emblems and memory arts. For specialist readers, especially those interested in Anglo-Continental interactions in print, this is both a treat and a rarity in the existing literature. Ashgate has done readers a service in providing an excellent array of printed images as inset plates, a model that — given the nature of copyrights on early modern images — other presses should more often emulate.

The only flaw in the volume is one that Daly, who refers to himself as a "Luddite" in several places throughout the text, openly acknowledges. Given the rising importance of the digital humanities to early modern studies, and emblem studies in particular, Daly fails to credit these new tools and databases with their full potential. Daly sees these projects in the light of the unsophisticated use of Wikipedia or Google by a hapless undergraduate, but the systematic complexity and elegance of the ICONCLASS-based Arkyves.org (via Brill) actually solves many of the cataloging and archival problems he raises. Projects at the Universities of Glasgow and Illinois have provided just the volume of, and access to, facsimiles that Daly proposes students need to more carefully examine in order to write about emblems in historical, literary, and artistic context.

In staging the rise of online sources as parallel to the decline of the physical, printed bibliography, it seems that Daly creates a false dichotomy. More well-informed archival work with primary sources, whether in situ or from digitized editions, occurs because of these new, widely available resources. As a book historian, I cannot agree more with Daly about the necessity of well-edited scholarly bibliographies, including his own many contributions to the field. As one of the first generations of emblem scholars to be digital natives, however, I must emphasize that these bibliographies coexist quite well with the burgeoning digital universe of sources and references. Daly's *The Emblem in Early Modern Europe* itself is greatly supplemented by browsing full digital editions of Alciati, Quarles, and the Jesuit emblematisers he mentions.

*The Emblem in Early Modern Europe*, in sum, provides a lively and broad reintroduction to the central questions raised by emblems and emblem books, and is both an essential read for specialists in emblematics as well as early modernists interested in period constructions of truth and image. Daly, as an eminent and long-serving scholar in the field, threads the needle between the specialist and generalist audience well, providing a genuinely enjoyable, as well as deeply scholarly, reading experience.

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