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#### Sommario/riassunto

The symbolic mode of thought and expression that produced the mixed art form of the emblem also informs and shapes much of the literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This study explores the relationship between the emblem proper and the literature of England and Germany during the period. The book proceeds from a definition of the emblem, based on a critical theory which has received little attention among English and Romance scholars, to a detailed analysis of the form and function of emblematic imagery in a variety of literary forms. The chapters following move into specific discussions of the structural affinities between emblems and poetry, drama, and fiction. The emblem-books are important as a cross-reference for the meaning of motifs in literature. They indicate what educated men knew about nature, history, and mythology and, furthermore, how they interpreted this knowledge. It is not only as a mode of thought but also as an art form that the emblem offers a valuable perspective on the purely verbal art of literature. Emblematic structure and imagery function as a formal, shaping principle in literature in all its genres and forms. Imaginatively conceived, carefully researched, and clearly presented, this book makes connections which will enrich the field of comparative studies.