

The Best Collector: Ribadeneira's Hagiography of Ignatius Loyola as a "struggle against dispersion."

The *Vida del Padre Ignacio* published around the times of Loyola's canonization was Father Ribadeneira's longest work-in-progress, started sixteen years after the death of the Jesuit founder. During 37 years, Ribadeneira translates his first version of the work from latin to castillan, and constantly works on an updated edition. While there are other early Jesuits who are working on the same project, Ribadeneira's hagiography progressively becomes the most respected reference as well as the manual of imitation of the saint *par excellence*. In order to become the most successful hagiographer of the founding saint of the Society of Jesus, Ribadeneira needs to reform some of the outdated techniques of hagiographies, a popular genre of the Middle Ages coming back in fashion in Spanish daily life as a consequence of the cultural isolation under Felipe III. In most editions of the *Vida*, Ribadeneira will emphasize Loyola's everyday life gestures more than the miracles he performs as a way to promote Spain's early-17th-century culture as a model for Roman Counter-reformation as a whole. His obsession is to propose a comprehensive work that prevents the readers from dispersion (the physical opposite of collection). While dispersion can lead Christians to the Protestant Reformation, collection enables the Jesuit hagiographer to redirect believers toward the center, i.e. Roman Catholicism. In the light of critical observations from Michel de Certeau (*The Practice of Everyday Life*) and Walter Benjamin (*The Arcades Project*) this presentation will seek to show these physical tensions in the text, as well as to underline the centrifuge qualities of the act of collecting when it is applied to the writing of a saint's life.