

The Memory Arts in Renaissance England

This is the first critical anthology of writings about memory in Renaissance England. Drawing together excerpts from more than seventy writers, poets, physicians, philosophers and preachers, and with over twenty illustrations, the anthology offers the reader a guided exploration of the arts of memory. The introduction outlines the context for the tradition of the memory arts from classical times to the Renaissance and is followed by extracts from writers on the art of memory in general, then by thematically arranged sections on rhetoric and poetry, education and science, history and philosophy, religion, and literature, featuring texts from canonical, non-canonical and little-known sources. Each excerpt is supported with notes about the author and about the text's relationship to the memory arts, and includes suggestions for further reading. The book will appeal to students of the memory arts, Renaissance literature, the history of ideas, book history and art history.

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THE
MEMORY ARTS IN
RENAISSANCE ENGLAND
A Critical Anthology



Edited by
WILLIAM E. ENGEL, RORY LOUGHNANE,
and GRANT WILLIAMS



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The arts of memory were found by Simonides in Thassaly: for what time he was boden to a banquet at a nobleman's house called Scopas. It chanced that he was sent for to speak with two young men at the gate and straight way the banqueting house fell and destroyed all the guests. Then he, because he remembered in what order and place every man sat, delivered every man his friend to be buried. By that fact, both he perceived the order of the art of memory and what commodity came to the remembrance of man by such places and images as be contained in that feat.

Polydore Vergil, *De inventoribus rerum*, II.6, trans.
 Thomas Langley (1546), xlviir^v

Memory is the ledger-book of the brain; the Janus that hath an eye behind; the storehouse of the mind.

Sampson Price, *London's Remembrancer* (1626), B4^{r-v}

Memory. The eye's true register. The peasant's book. Time's wealthy treasurer. Warder of the brain. The soul's stomach. Treasure-house of the mind. Mother of the Muses. Mother of experience. The soul's exchequer.

Joshua Poole, *The English Parnassus* (1677), Ee8^v

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A NOTE ON ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviated references are used:

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