

## The Death Arts in Renaissance England

The first-ever critical anthology of the death arts in Renaissance England, this book draws together over seventy extracts and twenty illustrations to establish and analyse how people grappled with mortality in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As well as providing a comprehensive resource of annotated and modernized excerpts, this engaging study includes commentary on authors and overall texts, discussions of how each excerpt is constitutive and expressive of the death arts, and suggestions for further reading. The extended Introduction considers death's intersections with print, gender, sex, and race, surveying the period's far-reaching preoccupation with, and anticipatory reflection upon, the cessation of life. For researchers, instructors, and students interested in medieval and early modern history and literature, the Reformation, memory studies, book history, and print culture, this indispensable resource provides at once an entry point into the field of early modern death studies and a springboard for further research.

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THE  
DEATH ARTS IN  
RENAISSANCE ENGLAND  
A Critical Anthology



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No creature under heaven may comfort me but thou, Lord God, the heavenly leech of man's soul which striketh and healeth, which bringeth a man nigh unto death and after restoreth him to life again that he may thereby learn to know his own weakness and imbecility and the more fully to trust in thee.

Katherine Parr, *Prayers Stirring the Mind unto Heavenly Meditations* (London: 1545; STC 4818), C6<sup>r-v</sup>

This death is a gate and entrance unto eternal life; there, at the last, are we delivered from all wretchednesses, miseries, carefulness, disquietness, from all errors and juggling casts of the devil, neither shall we any more be defiled with the most stinking filthiness of sin, neither shall we be seduced and led away into heresies or errors, nor yet be thrown headlong into desperation.

Thomas Becon, *The Solace of the Soul* (London: 1548; STC 1774), B5<sup>r-v</sup>

The world is a sea, death is a hook, Christ is that fish in whose mouth was found a piece the price of our redemption; the tribute is paid and we are delivered.

Peter Barker, *A Judicious and Painful Exposition upon the Ten Commandments* (London: 1624; STC 1425), O3<sup>r</sup>

Towards winter I grew to eat very little, much less than I did before, so that I was exceeding lean, and, at last, nothing but skin and bones. A neighbouring gentlewoman, a very discreet person that had a great desire to see me came in at the back-door of the house unawares and found me in the kitchen, who, after she had seen me, said to Mrs. Wilson, 'She cannot live; she hath death in her face'. I would say still that every bit I did eat hastened my ruin, and that I had it with a dreadful curse; and what I ate increased the fire within me, which would at last burn me up, and I would now willingly live out of hell as long as I could.

Hannah Allen, *A Narrative of God's Gracious Dealings* (London: 1683; Wing A1025), G6<sup>v</sup>–G7<sup>r</sup>

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## A NOTE ON ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviated references are used:

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Appleford,<br><i>Learning</i>     | Amy Appleford, <i>Learning to Die in London, 1380–1540</i> (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015).  |
| Ariès, <i>Attitudes</i>           | Philippe Ariès, <i>Western Attitudes Toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present</i> , trans. Patricia M. Ranum (Baltimore, MD and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974). |
| Aristotle <i>CW</i>               | <i>The Complete Works of Aristotle</i> , Jonathan Barnes (ed.), 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).  |
| Augustine <i>CG</i>               | Augustine, <i>City of God, Volume IV: Books 12–15</i> , trans. Philip Levine, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966).                                   |
| Beaty, <i>Craft</i>               | Nancy Lee Beaty, <i>The Craft of Dying: A Study in the Literary Tradition of the Ars Moriendi in England</i> (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1970).                   |
| Becker, <i>Death</i>              | Lucinda M. Becker, <i>Death and the Early Modern Englishwoman</i> (Aldershot, UK; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003).   |
| Calabritto and<br>Daly, <i>ED</i> | Monica Calabritto and Peter Daly (eds.), <i>Emblems of Death in the Early Modern Period</i> (Geneva: Droz, 2014).   |
| Chaucer <i>WO</i>                 | <i>The Riverside Chaucer</i> , Larry D. Benson (ed.), 3rd ed. (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1986).   |
| Cicero <i>TD</i>                  | Cicero, <i>Tusculan Disputations</i> , trans. J. E. King, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927).   |

- Cressy, *Birth* David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
- Donne *PO* *John Donne's Poetry: A Norton Critical Edition*, Donald R. Dickson (ed.) (New York: Norton, 2007).
- DPE* Morris Palmer Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: A Collection of the Proverbs Found in English Literature and the Dictionaries of the Period* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1950).
- Duffy, *Altars* Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1992).
- Engel, *Mortality* William E. Engel, *Mapping Mortality* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995).
- Gittings, *Burial* Clare Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London: Croom Helm, 1984).
- Horace *EP* Horace, *Satires, Epistles, The Art of Poetry*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926).
- Horace *OD* Horace, *Odes and Epodes*, trans. Niall Rudd (ed.), Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).
- Houlbrooke, *Family* Ralph Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion, and the Family in England, 1480–1750* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
- Langland *PP* William Langland, *Piers Plowman: A Critical Edition of the B-Text*, A. V. C. Schmidt (ed.), 2nd ed. (London: J. M. Dent, 2000).
- Llewellyn, *Art* Nigel Llewellyn, *The Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual, c.1500–c.1800* (London: Reaktion, 1997).
- MA* William Engel, Rory Loughnane, and Grant Williams (eds.), *The Memory Arts in Renaissance England: A Critical Anthology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).
- Marshall, *Beliefs* Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

- Neill, *Issues* Michael Neill, *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).
- OED *Oxford English Dictionary*, [www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com)
- Ovid *MO* Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Frank Justus Miller, Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976).
- Phillippy, *Women* Patricia Phillippy, *Women, Death and Literature in Post-Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- PL Jacques-Paul Migne, *Patrologia Latina* (Paris: Garnier, 1844–1865).
- Plato *CD* *Collected Dialogues of Plato Including the Letters*, Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (eds.) (New York: Pantheon, 1961).
- Pliny *NH* Pliny, *Natural History*, trans. H. Rackham et al., Loeb Classical Library, 10 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938–1962).
- Seneca *EP* Seneca, *Epistles*, trans. Richard M. Gummere, Loeb Classical Library, 3 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917–1925).
- Spenser *FQ* Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, A. C. Hamilton et al. (eds.), 2nd ed. (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education, 2007).
- STC A. W. Pollard, G. R. Redgrave, P. R. Rider, K. F. Panzer, W. A. Jackson, and F. S. Ferguson (eds.), *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475–1640*, 3 vols. (London and Oxford: Bibliographical Society, 1986–1991).
- Vinter, *Acts* Maggie Vinter, *Last Acts: The Art of Dying on the Early Modern Stage* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019).
- Virgil *EGA* Virgil, *Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid: Books 1–6 and Aeneid: Books 7–12*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, G. P. Goold (rev. ed.), Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916–1918).

- Wear, *Medicine* Andrew Wear, *Knowledge and Practice in Early Modern English Medicine, 1550–1680* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- Wing D. G. Wing (ed.), *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and British America, and of English Books Printed in Other Countries 1641–1700*, 4 vols. (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1994).



## A NOTE ON TEXTS

All references to Shakespeare are taken from play and poem editions in *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Modern Critical Edition*, gen. ed. Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, and Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Unless otherwise noted, general references to the Bible are taken from the King James Version; however, when an entry includes biblical citations in the original margin notes, we reproduce them exactly as given by the author.

Abbreviations for the books of the Bible conform to *The SBL Handbook of Style*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014).