



The Art of English Poesy, Critical Edition

George Puttenham

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George Puttenham's *Art of English Poesy* is a foundational work of English Renaissance criticism and literary theory. Rich in detail about the nature, purpose, and functions of poetry as well as the poet's character and goals, it is also a valuable historical document, offering generous insight into Elizabethan court culture, implicitly on display in the attitudes and values of the writer. His illustrative anecdotes enable us to watch European courtiers negotiating their social and political relationships with one another as well as with rulers and social inferiors.

This new critical edition of *The Art of English Poesy* contains the first modernized and fully annotated edition of Puttenham's 1589 text; a substantial introductory essay by Frank Whigham and Wayne A. Rebhorn; a comprehensive bibliography; several glossaries and appendixes; and an index. The editors' masterly essay introduces Puttenham to modern readers and situates *The Art of English Poesy* in the context of the rhetorical theory, poetics, and courtly conduct of its time. The introduction also includes a concise biography of Puttenham based on a variety of new and unfamiliar data: he married an older and much richer woman whom he badly mistreated; indulged habitually in a life of sexual predation; was repeatedly sued, arrested, and imprisoned; survived several supposed attempts on his life; and died, nearly indigent, in 1591. For scholars and students of the English Renaissance, the Cornell edition of *The Art of English Poesy* should prove the definitive edition of Puttenham's major work.

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