



Poets and the Visual Arts in Renaissance England

Norman K., Jr. Farmer

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In the twentieth century, the pioneering work of such art historians as Erwin Panofsky and Edgar Wind heightened our awareness of the relationship between Renaissance literature and the visual arts. By focusing on that relationship in the work of such poets as Sir Philip Sidney, John Donne, Richard Crashaw, Edmund Waller, and Robert Herrick, Norman K. Farmer, Jr., convincingly shows that they and other writers of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in England wrote with a lively and creative sense of the visual—a sense richly informed by the theory and practice of Renaissance art.

Farmer begins by describing the powerful visual matrix that underlies the narrative structure of Sidney's *New Arcadia*. He compares the role of the visual in the poetry of Donne and Ben Jonson, and demonstrates how works by both Thomas Carew and Lord Herbert exhibit poetic invention according to familiar Renaissance pictorial themes. Herrick's *Hesperides* is shown to be the major seventeenth-century poetic application of the Horatian idea *ut pictura poesis*.

A special feature of this gracefully written and enlightening volume is Farmer's discussion of Lady Drury's oratory at Hawstead Hall. Published here for the first time are photographs of this uniquely decorated oratory, in which themes from a variety of English and Continental emblem books were painted on the walls of a room apparently designed for private meditation.

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