

Do heads excite a desire to chop them off; a desire to decapitate and take a human life, as anthropologists have suggested? The contributors to this book are fascinated by 'disembodied heads', which are pursued in their many medieval and early modern disguises and representations, including the metaphorical. They challenge the question why in medieval and early modern cultures the head was usually considered the most important part of the body, a primacy only contested by the heart for religious reasons. Carefully mapping beliefs, mythologies and traditions concerning the head, the result is an attempt to establish a 'cultural anatomy' of the head, which is relevant for cultural historians, art historians and students of the philosophy, art and sciences of the premodern period.

Contributors include *Barbara Baert, Esther Cohen, Mateusz Kapustka, Arjan R. de Koomen, Robert Mills, Marina Montesano, Scott B. Montgomery, Catrien Santing, Jetze Touber, and Bert Watteuw.*

This series of publications brings together new material on well-considered themes within the wide area of Early Modern Studies. Contributions may come from any of the disciplines within the humanities: history, art history, literary history, book history, church history, social history, history of the humanities, of the theatre, of cultural life and institutions. Each volume addresses a single theme and articles are selected for the freshness of their approach and for the extent to which they elucidate aspects of the theme of the volume. The themes are carefully selected on the basis of a number of criteria, the most important of which are that they should address issues about which there is a lively debate within the international community of scholars and that they should be of interest to a variety of disciplines.

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