



Suicide in the Middle Ages: Volume 2: The Curse on Self-Murder

Alexander Murray

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A group of men dig a tunnel under the threshold of a house. Then they go and fetch a heavy, sagging object from inside the house, pull it out through the tunnel, and put it on a cow-hide to be dragged off and thrown into the offal-pit. Why should the corpse of a suicide – for that is what it is– have earned this unusual treatment? In *The Curse on Self-Murder*, the second volume of his three-part *Suicide in the Middle Ages*, Alexander Murray

explores the origin of the condemnation of suicide, in a quest which leads along the most unexpected byways of medieval theology, law, mythology, and folklore –and, indeed, in some instances beyond them. At an epoch when there might be plenty of ostensible reasons for not wanting to live, the ways used to block the suicidal

escape route give a unique perspective on medieval religion.

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