Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England ranges over private and public reading, and over a variety of religious, social and scientific communities to locate acts of reading in specific historical moments from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. It also charts the changes in reading habits that reflect broader social and political shifts during the period. A team of expert contributors cover topics including the processes of book production and distribution, audiences and markets, the material text, the relation of print to performance, and the politics of acts of reception. In addition, the volume emphasizes the independence of early modern readers and their role in making meaning in an age in which increased literacy equalled social enfranchisement and interpretation was power. Meaning was not simply an authorial act but the work of many hands and processes, from editing, printing and proofing, to reproducing, distributing and finally reading.

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# Contents

List of illustrations  
List of contributors  
Acknowledgements  

Introduction: discovering the Renaissance reader  
Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker  

## Part I The Material Text

1 Errata: print, politics and poetry in early modern England  
   Seth Lerer  
   41  

2 Abandoning the capital in eighteenth-century London  
   Richard Wendorf  
   72  

## Part II Reading as Politics

3 'Boasting of silence': women readers in a patriarchal state  
   Heidi Brayman Hackel  
   101  

4 Reading revelations: prophecy, hermeneutics and politics in early modern Britain  
   Kevin Sharpe  
   122  

## Part III Print, Politics and Performance

5 Performances and playbooks: the closing of the theatres and the politics of drama  
   David Scott Kastan  
   167  

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vi

Contents

6 Irrational, impractical and unprofitable: reading the news in seventeenth-century Britain 185
Joad Raymond

PART IV READING PHYSIOLOGIES

7 Reading bodies 215
Michael Schoenfeldt

8 Reading and experiment in the early Royal Society 244
Adrian Johns

PART V READING TEXTS IN TIME

9 Martial, Jonson and the assertion of plagiarism 275
Joseph Loewenstein

10 The constitution of opinion and the pacification of reading 295
Steven N. Zwicker

11 Cato’s retreat: *fabula, historia* and the question of constitutionalism in Mr Locke’s anonymous *Essay on Government* 317
Kirstie M. McClure

Index 351
Illustrations

1. First page of William Collins's *Persian Eclogues*, 1742, page 74
2. First page of William Collins's *Oriental Eclogues*, 1757, page 75
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