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0521842514 - Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, and Literacy

Heidi Brayman Hackel

Frontmatter

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MODERN ENGLAND

Reading Material in Early Modern England rediscovers the practices and representations of a wide range of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English readers. Heidi Brayman Hackel argues for a history of reading centered on the traces left by merchants and maidens, gentlewomen and servants, adolescents and matrons – precisely those readers whose entry into the print marketplace provoked debate and changed the definition of literacy. By telling their stories and insisting upon their variety, Brayman Hackel displaces both the singular “ideal” reader of literary theory and the elite male reader of literary history. This interdisciplinary study draws upon portraiture, prefaces, marginalia, commonplace books, inventories, diaries, letters, and literature (Spenser, Shakespeare, Sidney, Greene, Dekker, Lyly, Jonson, and others). A contribution to literary studies, the history of the book, cultural history, and feminist criticism, this accessible book will also appeal to readers interested in our continuing engagement with print and the evolution of reading material.

HEIDI BRAYMAN HACKEL is Assistant Professor of English at Oregon State University and author of several essays on early modern readers, literacy, and libraries.

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For Steve, “hand in hand”

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Acknowledgments

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[More information](#)*A note on the texts*

Original spellings and typography can provide important evidence for historicist literary practice, and they begin to make visible the obstacles to reading early modern texts. Quotations in this book therefore appear in original spellings, and the distinctions between u/v and i/j have been retained, as has “ff” for “F”. Modern italics for whole words represent the emphases created by different typefaces in a single text; italicized single characters (like *upon* or *pamphlets*) indicate my expansions of standard manuscript and print abbreviations. Square brackets ([]) enclose any other material added by me; angled brackets (< >) frame material deleted in the original.