

BOXES AND BOOKS IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

In early modern England, boxes furnished minds as readily as they furnished rooms, shaping ideas about the challenges of interpretation, and negotiations of the book as text and material object. Engaging with recent work on material culture and the history of the book, Lucy Razzall weaves together close readings of texts and objects, from wills, plays, sermons and religious polemic to chests, book-bindings, reliquaries, and coffins. She demonstrates how the material and imaginative possibilities of the box were dynamically connected in post-Reformation England, structuring modes of thought. These early modern responses to materiality offer ways in which the discipline of book history might reframe its analysis of the material text. In tracing the early modern significance of the box as matter and metaphor, this book reveals the origins of some of the enduring habits of thought with which we still respond to people, texts, and things.

LUCY RAZZALL has held research and teaching positions at the University of Cambridge, Queen Mary University of London, and University College London. She has published essays on material texts and material culture in the early modern period, on subjects including relics, emblems, and print culture.

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Materiality, Metaphor, Containment

LUCY RAZZALL



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A Note on Texts

Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from the works of William Shakespeare are taken from *The Complete Works*, ed. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from the works of Desiderius Erasmus are taken from the *Collected Works*, 89 vols (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974–2019). All references to individual volumes from this edition are abbreviated to *CWE*.

In all direct quotations from early modern English sources, I have modernised the use of *i/j* and *u/v*, and expanded contractions wherever possible.