

## *Acknowledgments*

THIS book began with a light-hearted remark: late in 2003, over coffee with Tiffany Stern, I suggested for some amusement that we write a book on literary methodology; she, to my surprise, suggested that I write a book about the practice of bibliography as it pertains to early printed books and manuscripts. On our way back to the Bodleian, she urged me to think about it more seriously. A few days later, I saw Andrew McNeillie, who at that time was still at Blackwell. I mentioned the conversation to him; at an astonishing speed, he agreed, a proposal was written, readers' reports came in, and a contract was issued. Alas, I must confess, progress since then has been rather slower than anticipated. To Tiffany and Andrew, unintended godparents of this book, who were there at its inception, I owe my heartfelt thanks.

I dislike extended litanies of obligation, but there are some debts that need to be acknowledged, both professional and personal. If I was to mention every library, record office, and archive I have visited, the list would be very long, so I hope it is sufficient to say to those who have helped me in ways both minor, and more extensively that my debt is deeply felt. Similarly, I have had conversations, not all of which can be remembered, that made me reflect on an idea or issue that was on my mind at the time: for every suggestion that was made to me, or anything I had to explain, I owe those who were interested my gratitude.

There are some libraries, and their staff, to whom I owe a more particular debt. The Alexander Turnbull Library was the first nursery of my studies, and it has been a pleasure to engage with its collections, and to benefit from the gift as it was first intended and conceived. Similarly, at Duke Humfrey's, the staff have unfailingly catered to my requests for almost 20 years, and have quietly taught me more than they realized. Similarly, the staff of the relevant collections at Cambridge University Library, Trinity College, Cambridge, the National Library of Scotland, the Houghton Library at Harvard, the Beinecke Library at Yale, the Newberry Library and the University of Chicago, the Folger Shakespeare Library and Library of Congress, the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas, and the Huntington Library have helped with my understanding of these matters in ways that are largely beyond recall, although the debts are no less real. To my employer, De Montfort University, I am grateful for the patience and support that have been shown. To Emma Bennett, and the production staff at Blackwell, I hope this book has justified the wait: they have been enormously tolerant.

A number of colleagues and friends have been kind beyond duty or friendship, and have provided me with both support and advice: to David McKittrick, Laurie Maguire, John Pitcher, Tiffany Stern, Andrew McNeillie, Paul Eggert, Steven May, Peter Lindenbaum, Marta Werner, Randall McLeod, Stephen Orgel, and Gary Day, I am indebted for the support and kindness they have shown. On a more personal level, I would like to thank Marcus Quiren, Karl Davies, Tim Myatt, Jeff and Jessica Staniland, Tim Brown and Gael Webster, Felicity Gifford, Tim O'Brien, Olika Kortiyeva, Neil Sewell-Rutter and Emilia Markot: at one stage or another of this journey, they have all made things possible.

To Peter Shillingsburg, the debt is both more serious and specific: to him I owe the wisdom of his company, his engagement with everything that I have done in recent years, his sometimes acerbic but always astute comments on what I have written, his patience with my foibles, his discussions of textual scholarship and bibliographical history beyond the call of professional kindness, his generosity and companionship, and his profound sense of decency. I could not have asked for a better colleague, or friend, in my first four years at De Montfort.

Bright lights cast deep shadows. It was on my return from London to New Zealand in 1979 that I found myself, aged 17, at Victoria University sitting alongside Mary McCallum in the second row on the left-hand side of Easterfield 006. In the course of the next hour, my life changed, although it took longer perhaps to realize the full significance of what that class had meant. Over the next few years, I was privileged to be taught by Don McKenzie on several occasions and, in 1983, he not only supervised my 'dissertation' on the late plays of Jonson; Alexandra Lutyens, Jan Moore, and I were the last students to take his literary scholarship class before he left for Oxford. A few years later, he was my supervisor in Oxford, and I last saw him in the Bodleian a day or two before I went out to New Zealand in 1999, three weeks before his death. This book would have been immensely better for his oversight and advice: I hope it does some justice to the debt I owe him.

Julia Briggs had been at Oxford with Don, and when I moved to De Montfort we shared an office together for several years: at idle hours, our conversation would often turn to the debt we both felt towards his inspiration and kindness. Julia had a knack of reminding me of my better instincts: whatever Don had left brick, she made marble.

The debt to my parents ought not to require any further explanation: I have been graced by their support, generosity, and love.

Oxford  
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