H-Net Reviews
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Lorna Hutson. *The Oxford Handbook of English Law and Literature, 1500-1700.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. 720 pp. $150.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-19-966088-9.

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Published on H-Albion (March, 2018)

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It is something of a trope of law and literature scholarship to suggest a dominant image or metaphor for the interplay between the two fields. In the case of *The Oxford Handbook of English Law and Literature, 1500-1700*, that image is found on the front cover and in an essay on the very subject of the crossover between early modern law and literature by the late legal historian Christopher Brooks. It is a reproduction of folio sheets from a manuscript (Huntington MS 46323 [not 4623]) owned by the Claverley family, in which poems by Sir Henry Wotton, Francis Davison, and John Donne are framed by "copious notes on English laws" "running vertically along the margins," and, on the folios shown, "pertaining to unlawful games" (p. 202). In this image, literature and law share the same textual space, which is something, but read crosswise from each other, which is another. Can they ever be brought into meaningful alignment, that is, into alignment so that they mean something to each other? In her expert introduction, the *Handbook*'s editor, Lorna Hutson, briefly surveys the history of the law and literature as a disciplinary dyad from the 1970s onward, and (the *Handbook*'s title notwithstanding) makes the case that history should be thought of as a requisite ligature that can bind the other two better than a mere "and" (an "extremely permissive conjunction," p. 1) ever could.

In addition to Hutson's introduction, *The Oxford Handbook of Law and Literature, 1500-1700* contains thirty-eight chapters by individual contributors. A review such as this one can hardly do equal justice to all of them. In what follows, I will sort out the majority of them into a few useful groupings (which differ slightly from the eight thematic groupings into which Hutson places them), and then give (just slightly) more attention to the half-dozen or so chapters that especially piqued my interest. Your results will no doubt vary.

A number of chapters are written by established scholars in the field of law and literature. Their chapters here are distillations, extensions, or representative samplings of their signal contributions to the field. These include: Kathy Eden on classical rhetoric, Quentin Skinner on *The Merchant of Venice* and judicial rhetoric, the prolific and provocative Peter Goodrich on emblem books and common law, Paul Raffield on the "mimic rites" of the Inns of Court, Barbara J. Shapiro on evidentiary standards, Jason P. Rosenblatt and Elliott Visconsi separately on John Selden, Frances E. Dolan on domestic crime and "Witch Wives," Henry S. Turner on ideas of corporate (and other kinds of) persons, Andrew Zurcher on Edmund Spenser and instrumentality, Mary Nyquist on slavery throughout Shakespeare, Hutson and

Christopher Warren separately on *Henry V* and laws of war. The pair of essays that work best together falls in this group: Nigel Smith focuses on the vigorous legal theorizing of mid-seventeenth-century religious radicals, especially the Levelers, and Paul D. Halliday shows that their ideas about legal "birthrights" and "the due course of law" have their roots in Genesis and are, in turn, the basis of contemporary notions of universal human rights. Again, these chapters do not necessarily summarize previous work, but can be seen as recognizable samples of larger (sometimes much larger) bodies of scholarship. Fittingly, then, in what is in some ways the collection's most reflective chapter on the law and literature movement, Luke Wilson, who has written extensively on contract theory and early modern drama, steps back to offer something of a structuralist account of contract law and the genre of comedy, whereby "contract stands in relation to law, as it does in relation to genre [i.e., to comedy], as both instance and essence" (p. 401).

About a half-dozen chapters are written by distinguished legal scholars and make only occasional gestures toward imaginative literature: James Sharpe on local law enforcement, Norma Landau on justices of the peace, Alan Cromartie on conscience and equity; Tim Stretton on contracts, marriage, and ecclesiastical courts (the stuff of Renaissance drama); David Ibbetson on the law of libel; Alastair Bellany on the torture of John Felton, the assassin of Charles I's favorite, George Villiers; and Robert A. Houston on Scottish law. Since so much of early modern law is opaque to nonspecialists, these chapters will no doubt be especially valuable to readers on the literature side of the law and literature divide. To these can be added Ethan H. Shagan's valuable account of "the problem of ecclesiastical polity" or "the capacity of public law to regulate private lives, from sexuality to conscience" (p. 338). He shows how difficult it was, by the end of the seventeenth century, for "the Church of England" to "retain meaningful boundaries and identity in the anomalous and untenable condition where the Church remained a branch of the state which owed services to all subjects, despite the fact that many subjects were no longer members of the Church of England as well" (p. 345). And shifting terms from church to empire, Daniel J. Hulsebosch discusses in an analogous way "the problem of imperial subjecthood: what package of legal rights and liberties did royal subjects enjoy across the royal domains and colonies outside England?" (p. 749).

A handful of chapters focus on the humanistic elements of early modern legal training, the socioliterary environment of the Inns of Court, and the culture of legal professionals: Margaret McGlynn on readings on statutes at the Inns, Ian Williams on common law scholarship, Jessica Winston on 1590s legal satires, Martin Butler on masques and other festivities (Raffield's chapter mentioned above also fits here). Carolyn Sale argues convincingly that Isabella Whitney's poetic "Wyll" (1573) asserts legal "conceptions of occupation and use" against an emerging and still dominant emphasis on "absolute possession" (p. 436). A cluster of chapters focus on censorship and the laws that shaped an emergent English press: Joad Raymond on John Milton's *Areopagitica* (1644) and Martin Dzelzainis on the regulation of the Restoration-era press. In addition to the Shakespeare-focused chapters already mentioned, a number of chapters focus on legal aspects of early modern drama: Joshua Phillips argues that "the very constitution of cenobitic religious orders was always at odds with legal practices and discourses designed around individuating property relations" (p. 303), so that the monks and nuns populating early modern history plays in particular "represent the threat posed to monarchical sovereignty by communal practices and formations" (p. 304). James McBain examines law training and early Tudor drama, and Bernadette Meyler, clemency in Philip Massinger's *The Bondman* (1623). Shakespeare, as expected, dominates a significant subset of this group: Virginia Lee Strain on *2 Henry IV* and the rhetoric of legal re-

form, Edward Holberton on John Dryden and the "connections between imperial expansion and domestic disorder" (p. 746).

This volume is commendable for both its breadth of topics and depth of learning (and for the bibliographies!). It should serve both as a valuable reminder of where the law and literature movement came from and as an early indication of where it is heading.