

given the often highly gendered domestic division of labor in fetching and using water, some analysis of the differential social impact of household water supply would have been welcome, particularly in the later period, when Tomory estimates that the poorest 30 percent of houses remained unconnected. Social and cultural urban historians will want to explore the consequences of Tomory's argument about the (unequal) proliferation of piped water in the eighteenth century, given the implications it has for histories of domestic labor, ideas of cleanliness, and sociability in and around the early modern urban household.

In 2017, the UK government introduced a market for water supplied to nonresidential customers in England in the latest of its generational shake-ups of the water industry. These reforms break up wholesalers' regional monopolies, allowing Northumbrian Water to supply brewers in Bristol, and Bristol Water to supply in nurseries in Newcastle. Tomory's timely and stimulating new history of the London water industry provides an in-depth examination of one of the first markets for piped water. It will be of interest to historians of business, technology and the early modern city, as well as anyone seeking historical background on the Brave Old World into which we are now moving.

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JESSICA WINSTON. *Lawyers at Play: Literature and Politics at the Early Modern Inns of Court, 1558–1581*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. 270. \$95.00 (cloth).  
 doi: 10.1017/jbr.2017.207

Jessica Winston's *Lawyers at Play: Literature and Politics at the Early Modern Inns of Court, 1558–1581* is an intriguing book that explores the world of the Inns as a distinct literary space, revealing that from the start of Elizabeth I's reign to 1642 there were "over one hundred major and minor writers" who were members of these legal societies (2). Nowadays we rather superficially tend to think of "play" as an activity only indulged in by children. The modern adult world has lost its sense of what this involves, but Winston's title captures the ludic culture enjoyed by our early modern forbears. Not only does she chart the dramatic output and performance culture of the Inns of Court, but she also explores the figurative meaning of "play": the liberty provided by the Inns of Court to be creative, to push the boundaries and explore the convergence of both the imaginative and real worlds. She focuses on the literary output as an extracurricular activity (recreation), an escape from the day-to-day realities of the law, fostered by the setting and institutional culture of the Inns themselves and driven by those mysterious intellectual forces that characterized the Renaissance. The importance of the cultural environment comes through in the geographical epithets used. The Inns formed "literary territories" that "had a topography and temperature of their own" (42) and within which lawyers fostered a distinct social and literary domain. Then, as now, the Inns' intellectual and communal independence provided a licensed opportunity for commentary on and satire of contemporary politics and politicians as much as judges, lawyers, and the legal system, demonstrating a capacity for self-mockery combined with well-observed critique.

Winston's concern is not simply with the artistic environment: it is the legal profession that she regards as crucial in balancing the equation. Indeed, her central claim is that the networks of writers associated with the Inns of Court manifested their literary oeuvres at key moments of change in the legal profession as it responded to perceived challenges in the administration of justice and a crisis in recruitment to the profession itself. In pursuit of this, Winston maintains

there is a clear agenda to their writing, but it is not one merely founded on critique of the law for its shortcomings and idiosyncrasies. If Elizabethan polity was framed by the law, it was underpinned by service in the law, portrayed idealistically in numerous works as a civic duty. Emphasizing the relationship between the writers and the different genres used, Winston also argues the various literary forms provided a “code of communication” (11) or a form of “textual traffic among friends” (89): they offered a link with past and present traditions and a meant not only of expressing themselves and their own experiences, but, more broadly, of conveying (often through parody and imitation) both their understanding of and alternative views on the nation and its legal and political institutions.

Some perspective, however, is necessary. Winston’s constituency of literary “writers” dovetailed with membership of the Inns, yet only a small percentage of these (perhaps no more than 5 percent) were producing “literary” works. The percentage can be notionally increased (she argues) if one were to include those acting and attending the revels and other plays and those within the ambit of the royal court, but essentially it is a small, if active cohort. More importantly, who were the eponymous “lawyers”? The title implies the literary men were “lawyers,” yet how many were members of the legal profession? In the appendix “Literary Men of Court, 1558–72” Winston lists thirty-eight men, together with their publications, but she provides no corresponding biographical pedigree from which to gauge the extent of their involvement in legal affairs. Many are simply names; she offers no amplification of the role of Thomas Churchyard, Edward Hake, and William Fulwood, for example, despite all having entries in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Winston claims the writers “shared social and professional aspirations” (77–78), but although Yelverton and Hatton went on to hold high office in the law, many prominent or prolific writers were not qualified “men of law” and (as she admits) had no pretensions towards a legal career. Barnaby Googe, for example, is remembered as a poet and translator and was only a member of an Inn of Chancery, while Jasper Heywood, also “a well respected poet and translator,” was only “briefly” a member of Grays Inn (47). The extent to which “lawyers” (individually or as a group) contributed to or actively engaged with, let alone drove, this literary phenomenon is left vague. Moreover, her argument that there is a direct link between the Inns’ literary activity and a supposed crisis in the legal profession is not entirely convincing as she does not provide appropriate evidence of the latter. The statistics on litigation trends (figures 2.1 and 2.2), for example, are not entirely helpful to her case as they do not take into account litigation in the provincial courts, nor the courts of Chancery or Requests.

The scope of the book, too, is somewhat confusing. The title firmly identifies the chronology as 1558–1581, yet the opening sentence of the introduction sets the scene “[i]n the late 1580s” (1). The “fluctuating intensity of the literary culture” associated with the Inns (45) is considered both “important” and “striking” and accordingly Winston identifies different networks of writers within four distinct periods from the late 1550s to the 1640s. A broader conceptual outlook to the volume is suggested by statements that it “considers the interconnections of literature, law and politics in the period spanning from 1558 to 1642” (2, 4). What follows, though, is located almost exclusively within the initial twenty-three years and Winston does not again refer to the wider time span, even in the conclusion.

If not wholly true to its title, it is nevertheless a very well-researched and illuminating volume with apt illustrations. The detailed analysis and contextualization Winston provides for the first half of Elizabeth I’s reign is impressive and offers a stimulating insight into the cultural milieu of the Inns of Court during a particularly formative period in their long history.

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