

Book Reviews

PRE-1800

JAYNE ELISABETH ARCHER, ELIZABETH GOLDRING, AND SARAH KNIGHT, eds. *The Intellectual and Cultural World of the Early Modern Inns of Court*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011. Pp. 336. \$89.95 (cloth).
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This volume developed from a conference organized by the volume's three editors that aimed to encourage interdisciplinary work by connecting scholars who often operate in very separate academic spheres. The volume opens with an overview of the inns in the century from 1450 to 1550 provided by Sir John Baker, the only extended consideration of the teaching of the law in the volume, and is then divided into three sections: the first on education, religion, politics, and the law; the second on art, architecture, and gardens; and the third on literature and drama.

In the first section, Hugh Adlington's and Emma Rhatigan's essays address the sermon culture of the inns in complementary ways—Adlington examines the resident preachers and the few surviving texts of known visiting preachers between 1570 and 1640, and concludes that all of the inns lived on the godly end of the spectrum and that any simplistic assumption that godly sermons were necessarily plain and unadorned does a disservice to the learned men who served the inns. Rhatigan reinforces this point with an examination of the subtlety, sophistication, and warmth of the most famous of those men, John Donne, who she argues drew on his own dissolute past in “a complex and highly effective rhetorical strategy to bridge the gulf between the secular and the spiritual which he confronted at Lincoln's Inn” (103). Damian Powell's paper plays off Pocock's “common law mind” to consider the ways in which the corporate life of the inns shaped the life and attitudes of one of its best-recorded sons, James Whitelock, the only bencher of the Middle Temple in this period with a Bachelor of Civil Law degree. Powell suggests not only that the temple provided a path for advancement for Whitelock that he then used to advance his son Bulstrode but also that he reflected the tension between the insular assurance of the common law and the cosmopolitan learning of the civil law. Finally, Wilfrid Prest's examination of the tradition of readers' dinners demonstrates that the feast was not a single event but a series of social gatherings that drew on

the resources of a wide variety of friends, neighbors, family members, clients, and patrons, and that built community within and beyond the inns as well as providing an opportunity for display.

The second section draws us into the early modern halls of the inns and their remarkable physical survival through the following centuries. Mark Girouard considers their relationship to the collegiate and livery halls of the same period and suggests that the architecture of the inns may also have influenced the domestic architecture of men who had passed through the institutions at an impressionable age. Tarnya Cooper examines the surviving portraits of the legal members of the inns, arguing that portraits were generally not commissioned by or for the inns but for display in the country houses of successful lawyers, generally making their way to the inns through later gifts and bequests. She points out that portraits of judges were generally formulaic, designed to emphasize their learning, rectitude, and the power of their office, and concludes with a consideration of the rather more original portrait of Donne, suggesting that the inns' visual culture was generally conservative but open to the cosmopolitanism of the capital and to the "rich literary and dramatic culture [that] fostered new ideas about self-presentation" (174). Paula Henderson's paper on the inns' gardens concludes that while the inns paid a good deal of attention to their outdoor space, their gardens were fairly conservative, designed to promote quiet thought and contemplation rather than to mimic the elaborate designs and conceits of the aristocratic gardens beside them. Similarly, Geoffrey Tyack's discussion of the rebuilding of the inns after the Great Fire, and various lesser fires, demonstrates how the lawyers worked hard to preserve their open spaces against the encroachments of property developers while building and rebuilding in a restrained classical style that owed something to both contemporary collegial and aristocratic design but more to the "sober calculation" of the professional needs of the inns (210).

In the third section of the book, Jessica Winston considers the community of writers of lyric poetry in the late sixteenth century and the ways in which those men sought to create a "homogenous and like-minded group" through their writing (224). Lorna Hutson examines the use of forensic rhetoric in Shakespeare and Gascoigne's productions at the inns, while Bradin Cormack and Richard McCoy both examine the thematic relationships between *The Comedy of Errors* and the Gray's Inn revels in which it was first performed, questioning how the revels can help us understand the nature of authority and jurisdiction within the inns and the ways in which those concerns are reflected in the texts themselves. The collection closes with a paper by Alan Nelson pointing out that professional companies put on plays in the inns, particularly the Inner Temple, far more consistently than we knew.

This collection of essays is both stimulating and frustrating. The inns of this volume are dynamic and multifaceted: self-conscious educational institutions with an effective monopoly over the upper reaches of the law and easy familiarity with the culture, wealth, and power of Court and city. A young man entering an inn in the late sixteenth century might have participated in revels, attended learning exercises, listened to godly sermons, looked out over Robert Dudley's garden, succeeded in his studies to the point that he asked his neighbors, friends, and relatives for gifts for his reader's feast, and had his bookish portrait painted to hang in his country house—but how typical would that be? These papers are a series of rich snapshots, but despite the aim of the conference, there is little attempt to integrate those images or reconcile the very different places the inns might be and the very different trainings they might provide for the self-consciously ambitious and self-consciously dutiful men who inhabited them.

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