Document généré le 12 oct. 2024 05:52

Renaissance and Reformation
Renaissance et Réforme

Brayman, Heidi, Jesse M. Lander, and Zachary Lesser, eds. The Book in History, The Book as History: New Intersections of the Material Text. Essays in Honor of David Scott Kastan

Goran Stanivukovic

Volume 40, numéro 3, été 2017

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1086142ar
DOI : https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v40i3.28746

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Éditeur(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (imprimé)
2293-7374 (numérique)

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Citer ce compte rendu

Stanivukovic, G. (2017). Compte rendu de [Brayman, Heidi, Jesse M. Lander, and Zachary Lesser, eds. The Book in History, The Book as History: New Intersections of the Material Text. Essays in Honor of David Scott Kastan]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, *40*(3), 287–289. https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v40i3.28746

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Book Reviews / Comptes Rendus

Brayman, Heidi, Jesse M. Lander, and Zachary Lesser, eds.
The Book in History, The Book as History: New Intersections of the Material Text. Essays in Honor of David Scott Kastan.
New Haven: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University / Yale University Press, 2016. Pp. 417 + ill. ISBN 978-0-300-22316-3 (paperback) US$25.

This book is a Festschrift for David Scott Kastan, edited by a group of his students. As occasional volumes inevitably are, this one is eclectic in terms of themes covered and methodologies employed in individual chapters. As the editors note in the introduction, the essays reflect "a second wave of early modern literary studies in book history and materiality of the text" (9), a wave that provides an "alternative" (13) to the New Historicist critical mode. The plural form, "waves," might be more accurate, given the variety of topics and approaches found here. Since this is a book about books as material objects, one has to applaud the press for producing an elegant object, almost an artifact of modern printing.

Divided into four thematic parts, the book addresses the materiality of printed text, and of the printed book, as a matter of literary and cultural formalism examined on both macro and micro scales: from whole books, to sheets of pamphlet literature, to ink and punctuation. In the first section, "Past Impositions," András Kiséry and Allison Deutermann advance the growing interest in early modern literary studies of what they call new formalism, focusing on how "literary artifices [and] the patterns that organize social and cultural existence" (37) correlate and respond to "history and historical reality" (37). Described in this way, the new formalism of print presumably includes other kinds of formalism that are the fabric of such a textual one, like prosody, rhetoric, and style, which cannot be separated from the materiality of print. Mario DiGangi's analysis of how historicism influences the study of queer affect in early modern scholarship—by focusing on the figure of the merchant and "mercantile emotions" (73) against the background of a penumbra of texts in which desire figures as the affect associated with the merchant—reconstructs a rich socio-textual context for the reading of affective friendship in *The Merchant of Venice*, another hot topic in early modern studies. This part ends with an essay

by Alan B. Farmer on published playbooks and the question of ephemerality. The critical vocabulary and methodology come out of quantitative methodology, now a scholarly vogue often intended to offer a corrective alternative to early forms of historicism, challenging especially the discursive estimations and certainties of New Historicism. This deftly argued and statistically documented essay provides a clear record of stationers investing in editions of printed play texts for many years after those plays' original publication, thus serving readers' demand and, presumably, their tastes.

The section that follows, "Textual Incarnations," opens with Benedict S. Robinson's richly-documented analysis of an affective reverence for the Qur'an, manifested in '[t]the gesture of kissing the book" (133). He tackles this kind of intimacy with faith in print in clear and probing ways. Taking up Kastan's argument about how the materiality of the book shapes literary meaning at the stages of production and reception, Thomas Festa picks up on Coleridge's resonant statement that the rhetorical vividness in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* is like a dream. Festa elucidates the relationship between the print layout of the 1590 edition of Spenser's romance epic and its poetic fabric, specifically in relation to "incarnation and idolatry" (153). Extending his research into early modern Anglo-Ottoman relations, Daniel Vitkus, in his essay on early English discovery narratives, examines the idea that the discovery narratives and the kinds of printed material, like maps and engravings, "function to point the way for empire, conquest, and profitable commerce" (195). This part ends with Bianca F.-C. Calabresi's engaging discussion of Milton's idolatry, or fetishism—as seen in *Eikon Basilike*'s influence on *Eikonoklastes*—and her focus on the overlaying of print rubrics in red with the metaphorical significance of blood.

The third section of the book is devoted to examining marginalia, glossing, and selfhood. Sarah A. Kelen takes us back to Spenser, to *The Shepheardes Calender,* examining the dual function of glossing in relation to how marginalia construct a perception of the reader's identity as both "the erudite scholar" and "the schoolboy who needs E. K.'s explication" (243). Chloe Wheatley discusses Milton's polemical, antiprelatical treatise, *The Reason of Church-Government,* and explains Milton's habit for citation in this tract as an instrument for inciting readers "to belief and ultimately to action" (258). Claire McEarchen explores the intersection of religion and Shakespeare in the complexly textualized label

of "Puritan," resorting to William Perkins's idea of conscience as a context for offering brief reflections on *Richard III* and *Richard II*.

The book ends with three essays on Shakespeare. William H. Sherman offers an incisive discussion of the role of punctuation, especially serial colons, in modern editions of Shakespeare's poems and plays, as processes of cultural systematization of an "often ambiguous play" (320) from an earlier culture. Zoltán Márkus provides a refreshing and lucid analysis of nationalistic British and German constructions of Shakespeare as competing and conflicting historical appropriations for political purposes, driven by WWII. Finally, it is apt that a volume in honour of one of the past editors of the Arden Shakespeare ends with an essay about the first collected edition of Shakespeare's works: the 1623 Folio. Adam G. Hooks explores how, in this splendid and one of the most important books printed in early modern England, the idea of history is "consolidate[d]" (342) in the history plays included in the folio and in subsequent editions of the collected works.

In his engaging essay—more than an afterword to this collection of eclectic and timely essays—Peter Stallybrass addresses the "entanglements of present and past" (386). The entire collection is driven by a scholarly desire to disentangle a literary text that is also a material, printed text belonging to the history that produced it and to the interpretative openness of the present moment in which the old text is read, and speculated about, anew.

GORAN STANIVUKOVIC
Saint Mary's University, Halifax

Brunel, Jean, éd.
Sainte-Marthe, Scévole de, *Œuvres complètes*. IV. *Pædotrophiæ Libri III. Publications des années 1580–1587. Poemata 1587. Publications des années 1588–1592.*
Textes littéraires français, 634. Genève : Librairie Droz, 2015. 846 p. ISBN 978-2-600-01872-2 (broché) 89 CHF.
et
Brunel, Jean, éd.
Sainte-Marthe, Scévole de, *Œuvres complètes*. V. *Derniers recueils poétiques 1596–1629.*