

BRITISH LAW AND LITERATURE IN THE  
LONG EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The law underwent significant changes in eighteenth-century Britain as jurists and legislators adapted doctrines to fit the needs of an increasingly commercial, industrial, and imperial society. This volume reveals how legal developments of the period shaped and were shaped by imaginative writing. Reading canonical and lesser-known texts from the Restoration to the Romantic era, the chapters explore literary engagements with libel law, plague law, marriage law, naturalization law, the poor laws, the law of slavery and abolition, and the practice of common-law decision-making. The volume also considers the language and form of legal treatises and judicial decisions, as well as recent appropriations of the period's literature and legal norms by the Christian right. Through these varied case studies, the volume deepens our knowledge of law and literature's mutual entanglements in the long eighteenth century while shedding light on legal and ethical questions that remain of concern to this day.

MELISSA J. GANZ is Associate Professor of English at Marquette University. She is the author of *Public Vows: Fictions of Marriage in the English Enlightenment* (2019), winner of the Walker Cowen Memorial Prize. Her essays on legal and ethical dimensions of British fiction have appeared in journals including *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, *Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation*, *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, *Review of English Studies*, and *ELH*, as well as in several edited collections. She holds a JD from the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School and a PhD in English literature from Yale University.

# BRITISH LAW AND LITERATURE IN THE LONG EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

EDITED BY

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CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment

978-1-009-22413-0 — British Law and Literature in the Long Eighteenth Century

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Frontmatter

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UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05-06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,  
a department of the University of Cambridge.

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Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781009224130](http://www.cambridge.org/9781009224130)

DOI: 10.1017/9781009224185

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When citing this work, please include a reference to the DOI 10.1017/9781009224185

First published 2025

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*A Cataloging-in-Publication data record for this book is available from the Library of Congress*

ISBN 978-1-009-22413-0 Hardback

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## *Acknowledgments*

It is a pleasure to thank the many people who helped make this volume possible. First and foremost, I want to thank Bethany Thomas, George Paul Laver, and the entire team at Cambridge University Press for their support of and assistance with this project. I am also grateful to Franklin Matthews Jebaraj for overseeing the volume's production and to Fiona Little for meticulous copyediting. My sincere thanks go, as well, to the anonymous readers for their thoughtful feedback on the proposal and swift reading of the manuscript.

This volume emerged from and reflects the insights of a vibrant community of scholars working at the intersection of eighteenth-century studies and law and literature. I am grateful to all the contributors for their inspiring work in the field and their collaboration on this volume. Special thanks go to Simon Stern and Kathryn D. Temple for their comments on the Introduction and their long-standing friendship and support. I am grateful, as well, to Katherine Gilbert, Christine Holbo, Tal Kastner, Adam Kozaczka, Adam Schoene, Lisa Siraganian, and Jolene Zigarovich for ongoing discussions and collaborations around law and literature. In addition, I thank Sarah Ailwood, Michael Demson, James Engell, Kelly Fleming, Rachel Gevlin, Stephanie Hershinow, Regina Hewitt, Nancy E. Johnson, Susan S. Lanser, Jayne Lewis, Elizabeth Neiman, Sal Nicolazzo, Eric Oberle, Sarah Raff, Miriam Wallace, and Sharif Youssef for enriching conversations over the years.

A 2021–22 Laurance S. Rockefeller Visiting Faculty Fellowship at Princeton University's Center for Human Values supported work on the initial stage of this project and stimulated my thinking about legal and moral judgment. I am indebted to Melissa Lane, Kim Lane Scheppele, and Hendrik Hartog for welcoming me to Princeton and the UCHV community, and to all the fellows, especially Elizabeth Cohen, Luara Ferracioli, Alexandre Lefebvre, and Gavin Sullivan, for an exhilarating year.

I am grateful, as well, to my colleagues at Marquette University for supporting my work. I want to thank the Committee on Research, in particular, for awarding me a Way Klingler Fellowship and a Summer Faculty Fellowship. Over the past few years, I benefited from the encouragement of my chairs, Gerry Canavan and Leah Flack, and the good cheer of many colleagues in the English Department, including especially Amelia Zurcher and Jason Farr. I also benefited from Max Gray's unfailingly prompt assistance with my book requests and library queries. I am very grateful, too, for the friendship of Deirdre Dempsey and Corinne Bloch-Mullins. Special thanks go to Albert J. Rivero and Sarah Wadsworth for their advice and interest in this volume.

Last but not least, I thank my parents, Eli and Jerilyn Ganz, and my sister, Caryn Ganz, for their love and support.