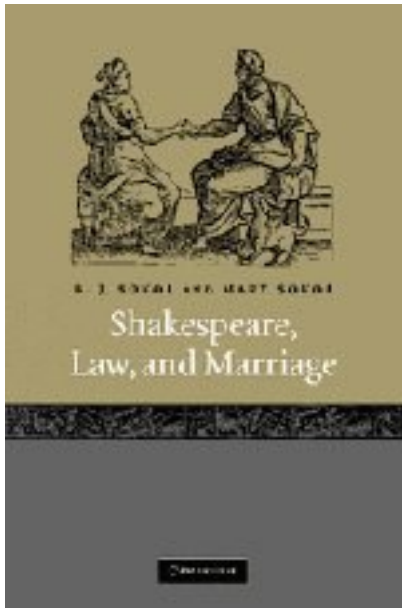


# Shakespeare, Law, and Marriage



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This interdisciplinary study combines legal, historical and literary approaches to the practice and theory of marriage in Shakespeare's time. It uses the history of English law and the history of the contexts of law to study a wide range of Shakespeare's plays and poems. The authors approach the legal history of marriage as part of cultural history. The household was viewed as the basic unit of Elizabethan society, but many aspects of marriage were controversial, and the law relating to marriage was uncertain and confusing, leading to bitter disagreements over the proper modes for marriage choice and conduct. The authors point out numerous instances within Shakespeare's plays of the conflict over status, gender relations, property, religious belief and individual autonomy versus community control. By achieving a better understanding of these issues, the book illuminates both Shakespeare's work and his age.

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