him as an ‘abstracted symbol of saintly kingship’ (p. 168), employing the iconic chronorope in an attempt to address the problem and allowing him to function as a ‘useful’ saintly model to both kings and the monks at Westminster. The reading of Lydgate’s much-studied Edmund and Fremund is sophisticated and novel. Rather than primarily being a text functioning in the ‘Mirror for Princes’ genre for Henry VI, Camp shows how Lydgate’s poem casts the poet in the guise of shrine-keeper, with the poem itself functioning as a metaphorical shrine through which the young king (and crucially, we might argue, the wider Lancastrian community) might enjoy the saintly help of Edmund. The illustrations that accompany BL Harley MS 2278, however, are firmly located in a monastic chronotope, highlighting the role that the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds, Henry’s hosts in the winter of 1433–4, played in mediating the saint’s power.

Camp has succeeded in writing a (for the most part) elegant and readable monograph. While the lack of a concluding chapter is regrettable, the discussions of various saints’ lives relate and reference one another to produce a coherent and scholarly argument. To some extent her central point that hagiographers wrote and rewrote saints’ lives to meet the contemporary political, spiritual, and cultural needs of monastic communities is not novel (indeed, the impressive footnotes attest to the amount of scholarly work already done in this area), but her readings are sophisticated and add to our growing understanding of Middle English hagiography. At times one suspects that the historical context could be more nuanced, but this should not detract from a valuable addition to the literature.

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HILARY POWELL


Nicole R. Rice and Margaret Aziza Pappano’s The Civic Cycles: Artisan Drama and Identity in Premodern England conducts sustained, well-researched, and frequently very convincing readings of the nuanced expressions of artisan civic identity at work in the late medieval cycle drama. Historicist in its approach, the study responds to, and builds on, work by critics such as Robert W. Barrett, Jr. (Against All England, 2009), Christina Marie Fitzgerald (The Drama of Masculinity and Medieval English Guild Culture, 2007), and Ruth Nissé (Defining Acts, 2005). The introduction makes the true and telling statement that, in cities like York and Chester, ‘artisan life and dramatic expression existed in a complex, dialogic relationship to each other’ (p. 3) and concludes by signalling the work’s intent to
focus on artisan expressions of identity. It proposes that these were much more nuanced than earlier traditional dyadic models of civic relations would suggest – those, for example, that simply pit ‘artisans’ against a ‘growing merchant class’.

The opening chapter makes a compelling argument in this regard, examining the role of light in the ‘Fall from Heaven’ plays. Rice and Pappano contend that the York Tanners’ *Fall of the Angels* pageant, with its emphasis on light and competing brightness, reflects some of the historical guild disturbances and attempts at one-upmanship surrounding the hierarchical arrangements of the city’s Corpus Christi procession. The authors suggest that the devils’ wrangling over brightness, for example, may reflect aspects of the Tanners’ long-running dispute over trade rights with the Cordwainers as well as their well-documented bickering over hierarchy in the procession. Conversely, they suggest that the Chester Tanners’ *The Fall of Lucifer* play may have functioned as a bit of ‘self-promotion’ by the guild and the city’s governing elite. This argument posits that when the Chester cycle was transferred from Corpus Christi to Whitsunday/Pentecost around 1541, this brand new play was added as a means of ‘capitalizing on the new ceremonial occasion’ by the mayor and the guild (p. 64). The arguments are well supported by a wealth of historical evidence throughout, both general and incidental. In fact, the impressive range and scope of historical detail in the entirety of the work is to its credit.

The second chapter discusses the York Goldsmiths’ play of *Herod and the Magi* which was co-produced with the Masons from 1432–3. Rice and Pappano suggest that the play places the three magi in the symbolic position of *scrutatores* or ‘searchers’, who reject Herod’s proposal of a fraudulent, self-serving ‘inspection’ of the infant king. Instead, they suggest, these royal ‘searchers’ find true kingly perfection in the new-born Christ, in contrast with Herod’s conniving.

The third chapter discusses the ‘Judas plays’ in the York cycle, arguing that they present Judas as a disloyal and illegal ‘trader on his own behalf’ (p. 118) who betrays his master’s trust and tutelage. The suggestion that Judas’ selling of Christ for silver could be read as an oblique warning to disloyal apprentices, journeymen, and illegal traders is perhaps an imaginative stretch – albeit a compelling and well-supported one. This leads to a consideration of the Glovers’ *Cain and Abel*, in which Cain, it is argued, represents a disloyal servant to God: he refuses to do the work assigned by his master. This dynamic disappears in the sixteenth-century version of the play: the revision has Cain transformed into a ‘master’ in his own right, providing a poor example of craft professionalism to his (now rightfully) rebellious servant, Brewbarret.

Chapter 4 carries on to look at the socio-economic position of the so-called *femme sole* reflected in the drama, considering depictions of various female ‘workers’, including Mrs Noah and her daughters, as well as the Alewife in the Chester *Harrowing of Hell* who will evolve into the popular ‘Cuppes and Cannes’
figure in Chester’s post-Reformation Midsummer Show. Each of these characters, it is argued, reflect the city establishments’ anxieties over unregulated female work, as such labour was seen to encroach on traditional rights and privileges of the cities’ guild-dominated (and male) monopolies.

Despite the valuable work of the Records of Early English Drama project and similar historically based resources, the threadbare survival of play texts from England means that our overall understanding of the civic biblical drama is necessarily incomplete; no doubt it is skewed by such dynamic survivals as the York and (largely post-Reformation) Chester cycles. And it is unfortunate, if unavoidable, that this study is almost exclusively focused on the biblical civic drama from York and Chester. It does eschew the artificial generic category ‘Corpus Christi cycle’ that has prejudiced so much earlier scholarship, but there is too little acknowledgement of the civic, trade company-produced Corpus Christi plays evidenced in other northern cities: Durham, for example, enjoyed a proven tradition of guild-produced plays associated with its Corpus Christi festival. Whilst there is passing acknowledgement of the wider heritage in the introduction, the suggestion that York and Chester were ‘exceptional’ in having ‘developed civic performance and scripted biblical drama for the occasion of Corpus Christi’ (p. 4) is an unfortunate oversight.

Overall, however, Rice and Pappano’s *The Civic Cycles* is a remarkable study which makes an important contribution to the body of historicist criticism of early English civic drama. Both its approach and argument are very effective, and it is certain to become required reading for scholars of early English drama.

Durham MARK CHAMBERS


Stephen Knight’s central argument is simple in its complexity: the structure of the Robin Hood tradition is uniquely diversified, functioning as a wide-ranging cultural ‘root system’. Knight borrows from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guarterri (*A Thousand Plateaus*, 1980) to call this a rhizomatic tendency: Robin Hood materials ‘draw without apparent cultural hierarchy on a scattered range of unranked sources and so are remarkably open to new materials and ideas’ (p. 1).

Knight has argued throughout his career that individual Robin Hood texts are disconnected cultural snapshots, and the rhizomatic tendency furthers this view.

Knight structures the book as a rhizome, presenting independent clusters of Robin Hood moments, unifying the clusters via the body of the book and roughly