Civic Pageantry in Early Modern London: Contexts and New Research Methodologies

Natália Pikli

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Finlayson, J. Caitlin and Amrita Sen, eds. *Civic Performance. Pageantry and Entertainments in Early Modern London.* Abingdon-New York: Routledge, 2020. xiv + 254 pages. ISBN 978-1-138-22839-9. Hb. £96.

The Routledge Series of Performance and Early Modern Drama publishes cutting-edge research in emerging and interdisciplinary fields. *Civic Performance: Pageantry and Entertainments in Early Modern London* offers a collection of studies that may prove interesting to a wide variety of readers, showcasing different aspects of Lord Mayor's Shows and royal pageants; from textual analysis, iconography, and spatial studies to material and financial concerns. The reader is offered a colorful and informative introduction to the cultural history of early modern London, then an emerging metropolis with a population of more than 200,000. Although there seem to be focal points for investigation, and some pageants and royal entertainments are analyzed by different scholars, these studies do not prove repetitive but illuminative of new aspects such as spatial, financial, and sensory concerns. The essays follow in the footsteps of seminal studies in the field, most conspicuously David M. Bergeron's ground-breaking *English Civic Pageantry 1558–1642* (1971) and Tracey Hill's *Pageantry and Power: A Cultural History of the Early Modern Lord Mayor's Show, 1585–1639* (2010); however, they launch new directions. If someone would like to understand how the economic system of livery companies and transnational trade companies like the Muscovy, the Levant, and the East India Company, affected the political and cultural landscape of early modern London, this volume is a wonderful place to start.

The editorial intent of J. Caitlin Finlayson and Amrita Sen was to foster new approaches to well-known instances of early modern spectacle and pageantry. In the first two sections, "Civic to Global" and "Material Encounters," essays present early modern London as a vibrant performative space for civic and national identity, standing at the crossroads of local and global, royal and civic, commercial, literary, and political concerns. The final group of studies in "Methodologies for re-viewing performance" re-visits traditional scholarly practices and offers fresh takes on distinguished events like James I's royal entry. Jennifer Linhart Wood's and Katherine Butler's essays in the volume focus on the soundscape of the spectacle, which offers a long-expected turn to such sensory analyses proposed already by Bruce R. Smith's *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-factor* in 1999. The last essay by Janelle Jenstad and Mark Kaethler also opens new vistas for research by introducing their digital project, *The Map of Early Modern London*, which informs us of the geospatial cultural matrix of early modern events and texts. This last section pays the most articulated attention to the phenomenon that pervades all discussions of such performative events: the conflict between "fluid performance and fixed book" (7). The textual and iconographical records of civic and royal pageantry by contemporary authors, artists, and eyewitnesses can only provide a partial, and necessarily biased, account of the events, therefore scholars need to proceed with caution and read these with a critical eye to truthfully reconstruct early modern concerns about spectacles.

Tracey Hill's study discusses "The Merchant as Adventurer in Civic Pageantry," focusing on Lord Mayors who were elected from the newly emerging transnational trade companies, and on the role they, and specifically the East India Company, played in presenting the image of the merchant in the mayoral shows. As she points out, one would expect idealization and glorification of their enterprises; however, reality proved to be more complex. Although the heroic nature of the overseas expeditions was often emphasized, the

political, financial concerns, and the self-representation of the traditional livery companies remained central. She argues that Anthony Munday, Thomas Dekker, and Thomas Heywood's printed accounts of the Lord Mayor's Shows prove that timeless *topoi*, grounded in antiquity and moralization (Jason and the Argonauts, sheep and shepherds, London as a ship), were employed for a more general and allegorical image of the merchant trade, largely overshadowing contemporary issues, which might have been considered too controversial for representation. Amrita Sen's study narrows down the discussion of the relationship between trade companies and spectacles, as initiated by Tracey Hill. Sen discusses Thomas Heywood's *Porta Pietatis* (1638), celebrating Maurice Abbot, the new Lord Mayor, and a prominent member of the East India Company. The appearance of Indians and a rhinoceros in the show indicated an interest for the exotic in the imagination and mercantile life of Londoners. As the city entered global commerce, local and global concerns mingled, demonstrated by Heywood's juxtaposition of a shepherd and sheep with domestic wares, and an Indian riding a rhinoceros. Morality was strongly attached to homely products, the sheep becoming the emblem of Patience and Profit. The rarity of the rhinoceros, on the other hand, also signified the English merchants' recent access to exotic places. Sen traces the cultural dissemination of the image of the rhinoceros and similar exotic animals in early modern Europe, from the traveler Thomas Coryate's verbal account and Edward Topsell's English bestiary (1607) to Albrecht Dürer's depiction, and the famous live rhinoceros, originally given by Sultan Muzafar II to the Portuguese governor Alfonso d'Albuquerque in 1515, then gifted to King Manuel I, and finally to Pope Leo X. Sen provides a similarly informative cultural historical account of the Indian, or "blackamoor," in early modern England. Consequently, she throws Heywood's pamphlet and the corresponding mayoral show into relief with the immediate cultural context, and concludes that these were the exception rather than the rule, as they presented an idealized urban cosmopolitan space, where concerns of the ancient livery and the

new trade companies (that of the Drapers and the new East India Company) could be reconciled.

Sarah Crover's account of Anne Boleyn's coronation pageants in 1533 highlights the different consequences of organizing such spectacles on the Thames and in the streets of London, negotiating between royal and civic traditions and formulae. She explains how the difficulty of presenting an unusual royal spouse was overcome successfully and could become a triumphant presentation of an educated queen, the new faith, and a reconciliation between city and court, while also strengthening England's international status by foregrounding Anne's ties to France. Relying on previous seminal research by Agnes Juhasz-Ormsby, a Hungarian-born scholar, the editor of manuscript and printed accounts of the royal pageant, Crover points out the association between the coronation pageant and the ancient beating-the-bounds ritual, the water show acting as a "Thamesian church service" (58) with Anne at the center. She calls attention to the new and innovative elements in the land pageant, and discusses the controversial cultural history of allusions to Venus, Cleopatra, and St Anne, explaining how they relate to the image-making agenda of the coronation pageant.

Nancy J. Kay's study is a highly informative account of the interrelatedness of English and Dutch merchants and political interests as they are expressed in the "English Arch" erected by English wool and cloth merchants living in Antwerp for Philip II's entry in 1549, and the "Dutch Arch" for James I's royal entry into London in 1604. The instructive analysis of iconographical, political, and literary concerns is coupled with a historical overview of Anglo-Dutch relations in the period, and the study comments on more general issues of national identity and the instability of authorship in festival books as well.

I would advise Ian W. Archer's overview of the Lord Mayor's Shows between 1550 and 1700 to be used as a set text to everyone interested in the general processional form, routes, and story of the shows, as well as in the basic structure of livery companies and guilds

of early modern London. Besides providing a clear historical account, it addresses the different and often controversial duties of Lord Mayors as political leaders partly independent from the ruling power, and discusses how the relationship between City and Crown was negotiated in symbolic terms during their inauguration on Lord Mayor's Day (Feast of Saints Simon and Jude, 29 October) and in the Shows, even if there is "no evidence that Elizabeth I, James I, or Charles I ever attended a Lord Mayor's Show" (104). The greatest merits of his analysis, besides the informative details, are that it calls attention to the highly multimedial nature of the spectacles and the records, and it addresses controversial and potentially subversive ("vulgar") aspects of the civic pageants, which were originally supposed to represent harmony and order.

Jennifer Linhart Wood investigates the instrumental sounds of Lord Mayor's Shows and other pageants, focusing on the emblematic nature of Arion, Apollo, and their instruments. The "loudness" of early modern London is an emerging but ephemeral field of study; however, Wood's informative account avoids potential pitfalls. She persuasively reconstructs the musical landscape of the Shows and other royal entertainments between 1561 and the early seventeenth century, based on written records and the cultural historical background of music, mythological musicians (Arion, Apollo, Orpheus), and different forms of instruments (the Irish harp, the classical harp versus the contemporary lute).

Jill Ingram's focus on financial concerns of Lord Mayor's Shows highlights the traffic between commercial enterprises and the dramatic-theatrical innovations of contemporary playwrights. Anthony Munday's texts for the Lord Mayor's Shows in 1605 and 1611, and for the 1610 civic entry of Prince Henry, *London's Love,* form the basis of the discussion, complemented by the reading of Ben Jonson's royal entertainment for James I and Anne at Highgate, 1604. Ingram emphasizes the financial encounters between agents and organizers of the spectacles, as well as within the shows themselves. Ingram argues that giving or receiving

material goods, money, gifts, and so on, highlight obligations between political and financial actors. The essay also discusses the significance of the frequent resurrection motif in the pageants, which are supposed to create an air of ritual wonder and awe with respect to new rulers and mayors. However, the links to the resurrection motif in hobby-horse dances and other folkloric events are elaborated insufficiently, and some modifications in accordance with the more recent research in the field would have been welcome.

David M. Bergeron offers a new perspective by foregrounding the Duke of Lennox, a famous "city reveller" of James I's court. He comments on his patronizing a company of actors and the playwright George Chapman, and discusses how Lennox "had an intense and ongoing interest in London's political and economic world" (161), partly through his inclusion in the Merchant Taylors' Company, together with Prince Henry, in 1607. Lennox thus became a London citizen himself and later participated in royal masques, witnessing the Lord Mayor's Show in 1612. In the organization of royal welcomes, like Christian IV of Denmark's in 1605, he even cooperated with the London livery companies. As Bergeron richly illustrates, Lennox remained an active agent in pageants and masques until his sudden death in 1624, thus connecting civic and royal entertainment in his person as well.

J. Caitlin Finlayson's essay returns to Stephen Harrison's *The Arches of Triumph* (1604) and James I's royal entry but investigates it from a multisensory perspective, focusing on the visual and musical effects created by the triumphal arches, which were erected at significant sites of London for the pageant, each signaling a "station" in the procession where performances, related to the elaborate imagery of the specific arch, welcomed the new king. Contrasting written accounts by Ben Jonson, Thomas Dekker, Stephen Harrison, and the eyewitness Gilbert Dugdale, Finlayson comments not only on the different medial, authorial, and the publisher's intent of these printed books but successfully reconstructs the event and the arches themselves in the reader's imagination. Finlayson argues that the more expensive,

"officially sanctioned" (183), and lavishly illustrated folio volume of Harrison represented the artist's point of view, while Dekker and Jonson were "poets" of the entry, and Dugdale simply wanted to capitalize on the event. Finlayson claims that the artist Harrison's report encouraged an active reading and hearing of the iconography of the arches, becoming, in Harrison words, "perpetuall monuments" (196) to James I's entry.

Katherine Butler's account of the musical landscape of James I's royal entry relies on the same sources as Finlayson's study; however, it illuminates different facets of the same event, and comments on different authors' varying emphases on sounds and music, Dekker being the most attentive to such aspects. She addresses the relationship between the expected silence and the noise of the crowds, and how they were controlled. The essay follows the musical route of James I's procession in the city, thus creating a bridge to the last paper in the volume, on the geospatial significance of early modern pageantry. Janelle Jenstad and Mark Kathler introduce their project *Map of Early Modern London (MoEML)*, which shows "how spaces accrue meaning over time through the memory of past performances" (219). They delineate which earlier important sources paved the way to this digital project, from the early publications of the Percy Society to modern editorial work by Fredson Bowers, Gary Taylor, John Lavagnino, David Bergeron, and J. Caitlain Finlayson. Their scholarly endeavor is incorporated in this new comprehensive digital project, which presents the Shows all in one place with complementary printed and manuscript sources, helped by the database *Early English Books Online.* Consequently, *MoEML* is a rich geospatial, historical, and literary storehouse of information, ready to be mined for patterns and for interdisciplinary research, by both computational metadata and scholarly analysis. Jenstad and Kaethler emphasize that the Shows are not a "work" but an "event," and scholars must "break the book" (231) via such digital projects as, for instance, this "dynamic peripatetic edition" (232). Fortunately, the research helped by such websites, is not only open-ended, but is also facilitated by the

provision of everything in an open access form. Opportunities are thus endless for a future generation of scholars on early modern performance and the cultural history of London.

Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest