

instability' again, speculating that the revisions the play seems to have undergone around 1611-12 were intended to alter its 'overall verbal texture and tone' (155) in a tragicomic direction. This argument is speculative; Munro acknowledges that we don't know the extent of the play's revision, and she offers no specific examples of the changes made. However, she is on surer ground with *Bussy D'Ambois*, where she is actually able to compare two versions and demonstrate that while the original version of *Bussy* is a straightforward, moralistic tragedy, the revised version incorporates tragicomic material in the form of 'ironic twist[s]' (162). She suggests that these changes actually make the play's tone darker, creating an ending that 'resists any consolation that tragedy might bring, and any sense that society can be rebuilt in its aftermath' (162). This analysis certainly shows *Bussy* being pushed in a more experimental direction.

Munro's study is a splendid demonstration that awareness of a play's company auspices can be an important correlative to playwright-centred studies. This short review cannot do justice to the wonderful level of detail that she is able to offer by focusing on one company, and she proves that 'company biographies' are of enormous importance. However, as the chapter on comedy demonstrates, this level of focus on one company occasionally risks missing the wider picture. As more studies of this kind are written, syntheses that *compare* the repertoires of different companies, giving equal attention to each, will become important. Such works will clarify what is distinctive and what is not, thereby illustrating further the different expectations that an early modern theatergoer had when choosing between different theatre companies.

DAVID NICOL

Chester N. Scoville. *Saints and the Audience in Middle English Biblical Drama*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004. Pp viii, 140.

In this learned, readable, and convincing study, Chester N. Scoville examines the rhetorical theory used to characterize four distinct saints—Thomas, Mary Magdalene, Joseph, and Paul—in medieval English drama. His alert readings are firmly grounded in an enviable grasp of Classical and Christian rhetoric from Aristotle to Aquinas, which he employs to show that the audience fre-

quently is invited to a complex response to these portrayals of saints, one that involves not only sympathy, but also judgment and interpretation. The saints are human, but they are also exemplars of the divine; having lived in the time of Christ, they are 'bridge[s] between the audience and the Church of the Apostles' (54). Through this fluid audience/character relationship, bonds of compassion, faith, and community are formed.

The book has six chapters: an introduction and conclusion along with separate chapters (Two through Five) for each of the saints. Each successive chapter builds upon the previous one, so that the book moves elegantly toward ever-greater rhetorical complexity. In each chapter, Scoville begins by establishing the scriptural and popular context for each saint and sets forth pertinent Classical and Christian rhetorical theory before beginning his detailed analysis of the saint in question. Throughout, he unveils the rhetorical sophistication of these dramatic portrayals of Thomas, Mary Magdalene, Joseph, and Paul.

Scoville begins with an analysis of four portrayals of Saint Thomas: one each in the Towneley and N-Town cycles, and two separate episodes in the York. The first three of these focus upon Thomas's doubt and the final one upon his faith. In medieval drama, Thomas's doubt is specific. He does not doubt the Resurrection *per se*; rather, he doubts the Resurrection of the body. These episodes are thus devoted not to a general exploration of Christian skepticism, but more specifically to the 'problems of Christ's death and resurrection, and to the problem of how Christians should live' (11). Faith is not blind; it is experiential. All four versions give logic its due before demonstrating the 'limits of rhetorical *logos* in the face of mystery' (84). In the Towneley episode, when Christ appears and tells Thomas to put his hand in his side, 'the audience's faith in the Resurrection is located *in* the figure of Thomas' (18), for proof is 'located in the eloquent body of Christ' (19). Scoville concludes his discussion of the Thomas plays with the unique York episode of Mary's appearance to Thomas. This play emphasizes the Augustinian assertion that '[t]he sight of the Church helps us believe that Christ is Risen' (28), and clarifies the rhetorical premise of the others. Augustine's distinction between apostolic and post-apostolic experience explains how these plays move the audience to faith, for they place the audience in the continuum of Christian history. The audience cannot see and touch Christ as Thomas does, but they can see and touch the Church and the community around them. Just as Thomas's faith is based upon the corporeal experience of the risen Christ, so the audience's faith must be based upon the corporeal presence of the Church

and the community around them as they watch the plays. The rhetorical patterning of the Thomas episodes moves from dialogue to lyric to panegyric as Thomas moves from a character in a dramatic situation to a mirror for the audience to the voice of the Church as a whole.

Chapter Three, on the Digby *Mary Magdalene*, takes up the issues of ethos and authority. Whereas the Magdalene's ethos is persistently questioned in the cycle plays, the Digby version goes out of its way to create for her a positive ethos and to intimate that this aspect of her nature was there from the start, even before she converted. She succumbs to temptation not out of lechery or greed, but because she has been spiritually debilitated by her grief over the death of her father. This play seems aware of the arguments of Augustine and Gregory the Great that the life of the speaker is important to the speaker's ethos. Because Mary Magdalene's preaching career is central to the play, her ethos must also be established as morally unblemished. In a particularly astute reading, Scoville notices that Mary says the good angel has 'tempted' her to goodness (38). He places this use of the word in the context of Ciceronian and Augustinian theory. Augustine 'saw a similarity between the structure of persuasion and the structure of a human being' (38); hence, Augustine's schematic of sin parallels Cicero's schematic of rhetoric. Rhetoric has three objectives, to teach, to delight, and to persuade; just so, according to Augustine, there are three steps to sin: suggestion, pleasure, and content. In this scheme, the difference between reason and sin lies 'in the direction of one's obedience' (39). The Digby *Mary Magdalene* portrays the Magdalene's preaching career in terms of 'this conflict between worldly and holy allegiances' (31), a conflict that the Magdalene herself experiences.

Scoville also draws upon Cicero and Augustine to establish the context for the Magdalene's use of the high style. He explains that decorum is essential to her ethos, hence her use of the high style, which is in keeping with hagiographic writing of the time. He also explains that the high style has implications for both the audience and the speaker: 'the audience ... is capable, culpable, and possibly unwilling; the speaker is grave, authoritative and superior' (31). In the final scenes of the play, after thirty years in her hermitage, she is depicted as 'both saint and lay person' (51). As a saint, she acts in relation to God, receiving the Host directly from him during her seclusion; as a layperson, she responds to a holy priest, receiving the Host from him on her deathbed. The play widens the community of faith to include the audience when the priest addresses them directly, inviting them to sing a well-known hymn and join in the final procession of the play. This emphasizes to them

physically, in the here and now, that they are part of the history they have just witnessed.

In Chapter Four Scoville turns to Saint Joseph, whose cult emerged at the same time as medieval Biblical Drama. Scoville focuses on the depictions of Joseph as found in several episodes of the York cycle: 'Joseph's Trouble about Mary'; 'The Nativity'; 'The Flight into Egypt'; 'Christ and the Doctors'; and 'The Purification'. Joseph plays many roles in the York cycle, but his most significant one aligns him with the audience: he is cast into the role of 'the first Christian' (69) in 'The Nativity'. Since he is not present for either the conception or the birth of Jesus and thus lacks 'the direct bodily experience of the divine,' he, like the audience, must 'follow faith based on signs and authorities' (69). 'Joseph's Trouble about Mary' depicts Joseph as 'torn between domestic and legalistic interests' (59). The audience is placed by implication in a number of different roles: 'potentially hostile jurors ... spying onlookers ... [and] fellow Christians' (59). Audience and character approach each other 'as the spheres of legality and domesticity become reconciled and, ultimately, sanctified' (59). The play pulls the audience in two directions; it alienates them, but also draws them in. Joseph's confusion over Mary reminds the audience again that they cannot understand these conundrums through logic; such understanding requires faith. The audience is cast into 'the role of faithful Christians in need of reassurance and Joseph plays the role of one whose conversion provided that reassurance' (65). This role is carried through the other episodes involving Joseph in the York Cycle, the main difference being that in these other plays he is not aware of the audience. In 'The Purification', where Joseph is depicted as venerable rather than feeble in his old age, Joseph is the link between the action on stage and the rites and rituals familiar to the audience. In 'The Flight into Egypt', Joseph and Mary's laments invite the audience to feel pathos, but 'Christ and the Doctors' implicitly disengages them from their identification with the Holy Family in preparation for the focus on Christ's ministry which is to follow. These rhetorical patterns skillfully maneuver the audience into a position in which they internalize sacred history through emotional responses to the plights of the characters on stage at the same time that they also see themselves as part of a continuum. They are post-apostolic Christians, whose faith depends upon different proof than that of the original Christians. Joseph 'bridges the gap between the audience and its sacred past and allows the audience room to reflect upon its relation to that past' (80).

If Thomas is the first Christian skeptic, Mary Magdalene the first Christian Preacher, and Joseph the first Christian, then Paul is the first Christian rhetorician. Scoville's book concludes, appropriately, with a discussion of the Digby *Saint Paul*. The play is 'a complex study in miniature of many of the issues of rhetoric, pity, and community that have underlai[n] all the texts discussed so far' (81). Rhetoric is necessary, but ultimately what moves is not the speaker, but the spirit moving in the speaker. The spirit also moves the audience: 'the entire play shows an uneasy tension between traditional Catholic religion and Radicalism' (83). Pointing out that the 'original performing lifetime of the play' (82) was the decades leading up to and following the Act of Supremacy in 1534, Scoville is of the opinion that this is not a Reformist play, but agrees with Heather Hill-Vasquez that under certain performance conditions it could appeal to a more radical or more traditional audience depending upon emphasis. The unease regarding logos that appeared in the Thomas plays recurs here. The first half of the play moves the audience through spectacle and pathos. The second half of the play shifts into a deeper rhetorical register with visual spectacle giving way to verbal virtuosity. The fact that Paul's escape from prison is described rather than staged is evidence of this and is important to the thematic movement of the play. Just as Joseph took on many roles and implicitly placed the audience in different roles in relation to him, so with Paul 'the audience becomes a crucial part of the play, and the play becomes a crucial part of the audience's own newworld' (85). At the end of the play Paul preaches in the *platea*, identifying the audience with Saul's original audience. This sermon is the center of the play, a fine example of extended rhetoric. His authority and ethos here derive from his humility, rather than from the empty and borrowed authority of his cloaks in the first half of the play.

Scoville shows how these saintly figures were meant to engage their audiences. They were not cold, distant icons, but rather flawed, yet virtuous human beings, whose struggles 'invited' audiences to feel compassion for them, 'and for each other by extension' (108). I find his readings utterly convincing. My only quibble with the book is that I would have appreciated some brief justification as to why he chose the particular plays he did, especially with respect to the cycles.

KATHARINE GOODLAND