

THE NEW MIDDLE AGES

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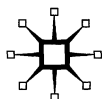
Memory, Images, and the English Corpus Christi Drama

by Theodore K. Lerud

MEMORY, IMAGES, AND
THE ENGLISH CORPUS
CHRISTI DRAMA

Theodore K. Lerud

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to Pam and “the boys”

Constat igitur artificiosa memoria ex locis et imaginibus.

Anonymous, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, first century BC

Doom of naturali weel disposid resoun weerneth not and reproueth not ymagis to be had and to be vsid as rememoratijf and mynding signes.

Reginald Pecock, Bishop of Chichester, fifteenth century

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Following page 76.

All plates are taken from manuscripts in the collections of the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford (all relevant shelfmark and folio information is given with the plate in the plate section following chap. 6); photos are courtesy of the Bodleian.

1. Woman owner kneels before enthroned Virgin and Child.
2. St. Peter is entrusted with the keys.
3. Moses receiving tablets.
4. The Annunciation; border with fountain and bird.
5. Adoration of the Magi.
6. The Crucifixion.
7. The Presentation in the Temple.
8. The Flagellation.
9. Christ crowned with thorns, tormentors.
10. The Annunciation.
11. The Nativity.
12. Adoration of the Magi.
13. Adoration of the Magi.
14. The Road to Calvary.
15. Christ bearing the Cross.
16. Harrowing of Hell.
17. Expulsion from Paradise, with viewers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

If memory serves, the germ for this book was suggested by a seminar paper by Seth Lerer on the “treatise of miraculis pleyinge,” in a seminar on medieval drama, deep in the backward and abyss of time, led by David Bevington at the University of Chicago. As I recall—although, unlike in the incident described by Simonides, there was no imminent danger of collapse of David’s home, where we were meeting—Seth was sitting immediately to my left, and David directly across from me. Seth’s topic then concerned more images than memory or backgrounds, and of course he is in no way responsible for what this idea has become. Thereafter, an NEH Seminar at the Newberry Library, led in the early 1990s by Eugene Vance, provided much encouragement and time to develop the idea. The participants in that seminar, as well as countless individuals who were patient enough to listen to various versions of this study at Kalamazoo, MLA, and other conferences, richly deserve my thanks. In particular, Jody Enders, Christina von Nolcken, Kathleen Ashley, and especially David Bevington come to mind as having read, heard, or in some other way provided encouragement for the project in various stages of its development. More recently, an NEH Summer Seminar on the various editions of John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* at Ohio State, led by John King in 2001, was helpful in allowing me to develop and test my thesis in terms of the continuation of the Corpus Christi drama into the Reformation. The members of that seminar were all helpful, in particular Christine Hutchins who read and commented on the early chapters. And I could not have completed the project without the joint support of Elmhurst College and sequent Deans Michael Bell and Alzada Tipton, who provided invaluable aid in scheduling research time and in acquiring essential image permissions; in addition, I am immensely grateful to Earl Swallow and the members of the Elmhurst College Faculty Development Committee, who were instrumental in the expensive and sometimes frustrating process of acquiring permissions to reproduce images. Similarly important was the support of Oxford’s Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, where Principal John Feneley allowed me to spend time, first in the summer of 2000 and

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In addition, I am indebted to the following publishers and editors for permission to use sections of my earlier publications: chapter 3, “Medieval Aristotelianism and the Poetics of the English Corpus Christi Drama,” appears courtesy of *Proceedings of the Medieval Association of the Midwest*, Volume 2, ed. Mel Storm (1993): 99–117; chapter 5 contains heavily revised sections of my essay “Quick Images: Memory and the English Corpus Christi Drama,” in *Moving Subjects: Processional Performance in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Ludus Series #5), ed. Kathleen Ashley and Wim Husken (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001), 213–37; and chapters 8 and 9 contain revised material from my article “Negotiating the Reformation in the Northwest: The Reinvention of the Chester Cycle,” in *REFORMATION* 8, ed. Andrew Hadfield (2003): 1–39. And finally I would be remiss not to acknowledge Pamela King’s *The York Mystery Cycle and the Worship of the City*, which, unfortunately for me, appeared just as I was completing final editing of my manuscript; though different in emphasis, with its focus on the relationship between cycle subjects and the liturgical year, it nonetheless constitutes a substantial advance in our understanding of the connections between cycle and city—one that I look forward to seeing incorporated in future discussions of the subject.

Of course none of these friends, colleagues, and fellow scholars is responsible for the errors of my application, or for the unaccountable lapses in memory that may have caused me to forget others.

TED LERUD
Oxford 2006