

Civic Performance: Pageantry and Entertainments in Early Modern London.

Amrita Sen and J. Caitlin Finlayson, eds.

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The eleven essays in this volume offer new perspectives on civic performances in early modern London. The collection takes as its subject familiar forms of political pageantry, such as princely entries and coronation ceremonies, with particular attention given to the Lord Mayor's Show. Such ephemeral forms of display pose unique methodological and historiographical challenges. What little survives of these momentary occasions is usually fragmentary and all too often the political nature of these events leads scholars to focus exclusively on their propagandizing function. The essays in this volume confront these challenges head on. By drawing on a variety of different approaches that utilize sources ranging from archival records to festival books, the essays collectively offer a fuller picture of civic spectacles as events that speak to a wider set of political, economic, and social-cultural developments.

The volume is organized thematically into three larger parts. The first, "Civic to Global," examines pageants as spaces of encounter that reflected London's emergence as a center of international commerce. Tracey Hill examines the dramatic staging of merchant adventurism in the Lord Mayor's Shows in order to trace out how these pageants expressed tensions between the companies engaged in foreign and domestic trade. Amrita Sen interprets the presence in Thomas Heywood's *Porta Pietatis* of two animal others—the sheep and the rhinoceros—as iconographic reflections of shifting economic forces in an increasingly global London. Sarah Crover analyzes how Anne Boleyn's 1533 coronation pageant, as a gendered performance of royal power, served to promote closer relations with France. Nancy J. Kay examines the ephemeral triumphal arch erected for the entry of James I in 1604 by London's Dutch community to reveal how outsiders shaped state occasions. Kay's discussion of the arch's authorship is especially notable for the way it centers the frequently overlooked forms of expertise that sustained the production of pageant architecture.

Part 2, "Material Encounters," deals in various ways with the marshaling of labor and resources that were required to stage the Lord Mayor's Show. A deep archival dive by Ian W. Archer reveals the finances and inner workings of the corporate entities that were responsible for producing all aspects of the Show. Archer's attentiveness to issues of administration underscores that early modern pageants did not happen by magic but were, in fact, the result of concerted efforts by diverse actors. Similarly, through a close examination of livery company records, Jennifer Linhart Wood traces out the hiring of musicians and the mythologizing effect of music. Jill Ingram's analysis of ritualized forms of gift exchange reiterates the crucial role that pageants played as spaces for transacting different kinds of economic and social relations.

In the third and final part, “Methodologies for Re-viewing Performance,” the essays model different approaches for investigating civic spectacles. David M. Bergeron shifts the scale of analysis. Rather than looking at a specific occasion or type of event, Bergeron traces out over years the various roles played in civic displays by a single person. J. Caitlin Finlayson examines the translation and circulation of ephemeral architecture in print while Katherine Butler reconstructs soundscapes through texts to access something of the lived experience of festivals. Finally, Janelle Jenstad and Mark Kaethler present a digital geospatial tool that enables users to visualize London’s pageants within their dynamic urban contexts. Together these contributions push the study of early modern festivals to consider a fuller range of objects, actors, spaces, and practices.

Where the volume is perhaps less successful is in its organization. The themes that frame each section do not quite work as organizing devices, if only because as lines of inquiry they run through all of the volume’s contributions. In sum, for the way that they open new avenues for analyzing ephemeral modes of display, the essays are valuable not only for the specific insights they offer about London’s civic pageants but also as models for investigating festival cultures in other early modern contexts. More broadly, the essays together invite critical reflection on civic performances in the present. London continues to stage the Lord Mayor’s Show, and the celebrations given for Queen Elizabeth II’s Platinum Jubilee in 2022 made clear that pageantry remains a potent fixture in our contemporary cultural landscape.

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England Re-Oriented: How Central and South Asian Travelers Imagined the West, 1750–1857. Humberto Garcia.

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In *Orientalism*, Edward Said famously theorizes “a kind of Western projection onto and will to govern over the Orient” (*Orientalism* [1994], 95). In *England Re-Oriented*, Humberto Garcia continues the work of extending Said’s vision. He turns from Europeans in the East to Asians in the West. His focus is neither on leaders like Napoleon nor on overarching discursive patterns, but rather on individual writers—Joseph Emin, Sake Dean Mahomet, Shaykh I’tesamuddin, Abu Talib Khan, Yusuf Khan Kambalposh, and Lutfullah Khan—who write about their experiences abroad. With this archival shift, Garcia finds that Said’s categories of analysis are even more unstable than Said himself envisioned. In fact, Garcia argues that these authors see themselves within a contiguous Eurasian masculinity that challenges assumptions of English patriarchal, imperial dominance.