

architectural and spatial comparisons between the two venues, given its sound history and informed speculations.

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The Bible on the Shakespearean Stage: Cultures of Interpretation in Reformation England. Thomas Fulton and Kristen Poole, eds.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. xvi + 304 pp. \$99.99.

Beginning with the universally acknowledged truth that the Bible turns up everywhere in Renaissance culture, and that Shakespeare's allusions to biblical stories have been abundantly cataloged by scholars, this superbly lively collection of essays adds to that list of allusions and goes further to show the ways in which Shakespeare could count on his audiences to have been well acquainted with the practices and methods of biblical interpretation. Reformation readers and audiences alike made it their business not simply to read the biblical text but to ponder carefully how the text offered itself to be read. This habit of mind is what the editors of this collection call "popular hermeneutics" (1–2)—that is to say, a method that had long been the purview of an intellectual elite that was now rapidly becoming a set of skills available to London's general populace. Fascination with biblical hermeneutics grew rapidly, especially among the Protestants who learned to read the Bible in new printed editions, in Reformation sermons, in scenic representations, and in plays. Literacy rates markedly increased. "The Protestant Reformation was, at its heart, a debate over the nature of language and the nature of reading," the editors tell us (2). Interpreting the Bible in this culturally expansive context necessarily and intentionally touched on social, political, and religious issues.

For example, as Bruce Gordon shows, the Geneva Bible of 1560 and others that followed offered to Elizabethan Protestants a series of heavily glossed texts with learned insights from Continental scholars like Theodore Beza, Francis Junius, and Immanuel Tremellius. Behind them, in turn, was the scholarship of Erasmus, Martin Luther, Huldrych Zwingli, William Tyndale, Philip Melancthon, and John Calvin, among others. Adrian Streete argues that the author or authors of *Titus Andronicus* were attuned to "the biblical rhetoric of lament," especially in the book of Lamentations, as a way of studying how the extreme emotions of utter loss could be conveyed to those who are still living. Especially in the opening of act 3, how could playwrights convey a scene of almost unbearable pain that could somehow be seen, spoken, and endured? In both the play and its biblical precursors, the audience or the reader is asked to consider a bottomless sorrow that "cannot attain, or else does not elicit, a response" (122). Hannibal Hamlin interprets the acts of Pericles as "Shakespeare's Biblical Romance" (140), in which voyaging by sea is perceived to be a test of providence. Is human life guided by fortune, dumb luck, or divine purpose? The playwright

turned of course to John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* and to Laurence Twine's *Pattern of Painful Adventures*, but he also had in mind the ethical and religious complexities of the book of Job and the story of Jonah and the whale. Both Pericles and Jonah are "seafaring victims of storm and shipwreck" (144). "Biblical allusions and echoes add a distinctly Christian resonance to the romance," writes Hamlin, enabling us to appreciate *Pericles* as "a romance of conversion" (140, 227). The journeys of Pericles bear a striking geographic resemblance to those of the Apostle Paul.

Metatheatrically, Shakespeare's plays often dramatize onstage the essential idea embodied in this essay collection about critical interpretation. We often see clerics interpreting a biblical text. Thomas Fulton shows this to be true in *Sir Thomas More*, *Richard II*, *Henry V*, and other history plays. The archbishop of Canterbury in *Henry V* plays out his self-serving role as interpreter of history by identifying the Salic land with a learned footnote to the book of Numbers, specifying that "When a man dies, let the inheritance / Descend unto the daughter" (1.2.98–100). Such churchmen are "the managers of statecraft, purveyors of dynastic and state interests," and are also "defenders of their own immensely endowed self-interests against those of other court factions" (205). Romans 13 is for Fulton "the most dominant biblical passage in Shakespeare," even though Shakespeare's use of that text, with its insistence that the prince "is the minister of God to thee for good," is "somewhat cautious" and even tinged with irony (206–07).

Richard Strier, in his essay on "classical and biblical allusions in *The Winter's Tale*," carefully analyzes biblical anticipations of the final statue scene in that play: allusions to the resurrections conducted by Elizah and Elisha narrated in 1 Kings 17:1–6 and to the condemnation of idolatry in Habbakuk suggest that Shakespeare had in mind his spectacular Pygmalion-like finale as he was writing earlier scenes of the play. Tom Bishop turns to the account of King Richard II in Pomfret Castle to show us how Richard's "studying how I may compare / This prison where live unto the world" (5.5.1–2) derives much of its intensity from the "synoptic gospels" and their depiction of the life and Passion of Christ (108). Bishop insists that Bible reading in the period "was only one, and by no means necessarily the most influential, of the ways of encountering the power, authority, and vividness of Scripture" (103).

Other valuable demonstrations of critical interpretation of scripture are offered by Kristen Poole, Jan Zysk, Aaron T. Pratt, Shaina Trapedo, and Jesse M. Lander. Julia Reinhard Lupton's afterword provides an elegant synthesis of the book by exploring its depiction of Shakespeare's biblical virtues: learning, belonging, respect, performance, and wisdom (222). The collection is admirably clear, sensible, and well focused on its central thesis. This is a splendid book.

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David Bevington's many reviews have added greatly to "Renaissance Quarterly" over the years. With news of his passing, we present with great appreciation this, his final review for our journal.