Pageantry and power: A cultural history of the early modern Lord Mayor's Show, 1585-1639

Author: Tracey Hill

The London Lord Mayors' Shows were high-profile and lavish entertainments that were at the centre of the cultural life of the City of London in the early modern period. The Show was staged annually to celebrate the inauguration of the new Lord Mayor. The London mayoralty was not simply an entity of civic power, but always had its ritual and ceremonial dimensions. Pageantry was a feature of the day's entertainment. This book focuses on the social, cultural and economic contexts, in which the Shows were designed, presented and experienced, and explores the Shows in textual, historical, bibliographical, and archival and other contexts. It highlights the often-overlooked roles of the artificer and those other craftsmen who contributed so valuably to the day's entertainment. The Show was the concern of the Great Twelve livery companies from the ranks of one of which the Lord Mayor was elected. The book discusses, inter alia, the actors' roles, the props, music and costumes used during the Show and looks at how important emblems and imagery were to these productions. Pageant writers and artificers took advantage of the space available to them just as dramatists did on the professional stage. From 1585 onwards the Lord Mayor's Show was with increasing frequency transmitted from event to text in the form of short pamphlets produced in print runs ranging from 200 to 800 copies. The book also demonstrates the ways in which the Shows engaged with the changing socio-economic scene of London and with court and city politics.

eISBN: 9781526125101

Online Publication Date: 26 May 2017

BUY BOOK IN PRINT

RIGHTS AND PERMISSIONS
Pageantry and Power: A Cultural History of the Early Modern Lord Mayor’s Show, 1585-1639 by TRACEY HILL. Bookmark. by Meghan C Andrews. The Prison-Industrial Complex and Organized Labor: Union Complicity in the Corrections Industry. Bookmark. Download. Too often critics of early modern drama dismiss these shows as uncomplicated, unsophisticated, and unappealing in comparison to professional theater and masques. Tracey Hill’s engaging new book, Pageantry and Power, scorns this misperception in a startling image: “The mayoral Show cannot fairly be likened to a ‘municipal’ entity like a [End Page 300] public toilet” (15). The intolerance for scholarly elitism that motivates this book echoes less colorfully worded exasperation voiced unsuccessfully by previous pageant scholars. The people who created, witnessed and participated in civic pageantry—from the Lord Mayor himself, to the writers and artificers, to those who fired the cannons on the waterside—are therefore at the heart of this book. Pageantry
and Power: A Cultural History of the Early Modern Lord Mayor's Show, 1585-1639 is published by Manchester University Press. The citation reads: “This beautifully written and cogently argued book addresses the early modern Lord Mayor's Show and its spectacular display of power and authority in the city of London. The Lord Mayor's Show originates in King John's Charter of 1215, and takes place every year, for the same reasons for which it was initiated 796 years ago. As such it is the oldest surviving demonstration of the democratic principle anywhere in the world. Whilst Richard the Lionheart was away crusading, his brother John wooed the City to back him in his power struggle against Richard's Chancellor, Longchamps.