

Institution: University of Bristol
Unit of Assessment: 29 – English Language and Literature
Title of case study: The Revival or Re-invention of Early European Performing Arts as an Instrument of Civic Regeneration and Cultural Tourism.
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

This case study relates the impact of work on civic entertainments as important contributors to community cohesion and identity, to understandings of local heritage, and as generators of cultural tourism. Based on the research and outreach activities of Professor Pamela King, internationally acknowledged specialist on European civic processions and shows, medieval and modern, it outlines how she is engaged with civic communities in an advisory and informing capacity to bust myths and raise the level of public debate about the nature and potential of “medieval” festivals, as various agencies seek new or enhanced ways to generate income for the city and its institutions.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)
--

Research into the largely lost drama of medieval England has depended on literary studies of the surviving texts, cultural-historical studies of surviving records of productions, and modern academic reconstructions of the extant plays. From the mid-1980s Pamela King has developed a different methodology for understanding lost medieval dramatic traditions, which involves attending civic confraternal festivals which survive in continuous and evolving production since the Middle Ages, chiefly in southern Europe. From this research strand evolved a further area of research into why surviving –and invented – medieval civic festivals succeed, what cultural moments they answer, and how they can contribute to community cohesion and cultural tourism. In addition to a series of single-authored publications listed below, this research has given rise to two projects.

1. The 2MP: Medieval Plays in Modern Performance archival project has compiled a collection Level catalogue, and three item-level, catalogues, of the archives of the earliest twentieth-century productions. Funded by the Worldwide Universities Network (£15k), this project involved a partnership with, and was based and supported in, the University of Bristol Theatre Collection, but corresponded with specialists in the Universities of Cape Town, Sydney, Toronto, Alberta, Leeds, Southampton, and Lancaster. Its aim was to guarantee access to the original archival materials and to relevant expertise, both on the conservation and interpretation of ephemeral records, and on the twentieth-century production history of medieval plays throughout the Anglophone world. It thus provides a resource both for scholars, making possible a new sub-field of research, and for civic and community groups and authorities who seek to revive or invent civic festivals.

2. An Exploratory Workshop on Re-inventions of Early-European Performing Arts and the Creative City, Civic Regeneration and Cultural Tourism (REPACC), funded by the European Social Fund (€14k), was held at the Central European University in Budapest in September 2012. King was Principal Investigator, with co-PIs from Copenhagen, Western Australia, and Rotterdam. The workshop brought together twenty-two delegates (seven academics working in theatre and civic history, two sociologists of the city, two publishers, three festival organisers, four performer/practitioners, three musicologists, and a theatre archivist) from 11 countries including Europe east and west, and Australia. The workshop formulated a range of new research questions which are being taken forward in various follow-up project plans. Questions include the following: Why do these festivals happen? What is their role in their owning communities, and for what reasons do participants invest/engage in medieval festivals? How do heritage performance festivals relate to, and engage with, audience perceptions of local history and identity? How do references to the medieval past contribute to the recuperation and construction of cultural memory, and act as agents of social cohesion? How do medieval festivals engage disparate civic identities? What is it that medieval festivals have in common in the European tradition, or do continuous vs fractured vs

Impact case study (REF3b)

conflicted traditions have distinct taxonomies? What are the parameters for selection within the typology of medieval festivals? How do institutional contingencies affect the construction of medieval festivals? How much are medieval festivals contributing measurably to the economic wellbeing of cities and their regions? What do medieval arts festivals offer in the 21st century and how are they enjoyed, and why have so many been instigated since the millennium?

The workshop also set up new networks to track examples of best practice and case-studies across Europe, and to begin mapping a pan-European approach to this highly local, fragmented field of practice. In particular, bringing social science experts together with humanities scholars and practitioners identified ways of measuring, quantifying and maximising the social impact of re-inventions of historical performing arts in contemporary urban settings.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- [1] Pamela M. King, 'The Renaissance of medieval theatre and the growth of university drama in England', *Medieval English Theatre*, 27, 2007, pp. 105-130. ISSN 0143-3784. Can be supplied upon request. This article, in the foremost specialist journal on the medieval stage, developed a paper delivered at the triennial conference of the *Société Internationale pour l'étude du Théâtre Médiéval*, held in Lille in August 2006, and also published in the proceedings of that conference. The paper addresses how, in the revival of medieval plays as part of the Festival of Britain, the universities, community drama specialists, and the professional stage colluded to generate events which reflected a moment of national nostalgia and contributed to the birth of the "heritage industry".
- [2] Pamela M. King, 'Civic Space and Gender Roles in Lerwick's Up Helly Aa', in Máire Fedelma Cross (Ed.), *Lodges, Chapters and Orders*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 244-59. ISBN 9780230272576. Can be supplied on request. This article is developed out of a paper delivered by invitation at the conference held at the University of Sheffield in July 2002 on the theme of Gender and Fraternal Orders and contributes to the debate on how evolved and invented civic fraternal orders have come to embrace women in what were formally all-male organisations.
- [3] Pamela M. King, 'Confraternities and Civic Ceremonial: the Siena Palio', in Margaret Rogerson (Ed.), *The York Mystery Plays*, (pp. 181-204), The Boydell Press, 2011. ISBN9781903153352. Can be supplied upon request. The volume in which this essay appears is devoted to performance in and of the city of York through time, with a particular focus on the centrality of the city's medieval mystery play cycle. The paper seeks to demonstrate how one of Europe's foremost confraternal civic performance events, Siena's *Palio*, shares many deep organisational structures and cultural understandings with the York plays, and offers intelligence about how the lost civic dramas of medieval England can be understood and how such performances can speak to modern communities.
- [4] Pamela M. King with University of Bristol Theatre Collection, *2MP: Medieval Plays in Modern Performance*, <http://www.bris.ac.uk/drama/2mp>. This website is the outcome of a collaborative project, 2010-11, to locate and capture archives of modern productions of medieval plays in the twentieth century. The website links to item-level catalogues of 3 individual collections, as well as providing a collection-level catalogue of other resources.
- [5] Pamela M. King, 'Re-inventions: Medieval Plays at the Old Vic in the Inter-war Years', in preparation. This paper, based on a paper given at the 2011 International Medieval Congress in Leeds, discusses how heretofore archival material held in the Theatre Collection of Bristol University reveals how the revival and reinvention of medieval drama found a new currency at the end of World War I and throughout the interwar years, and formed part of the agenda set by Lilian Baylis at the "Old Vic" in London, bringing the English Christian cultural heritage to the "working man and woman".

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Pamela King is a noted international specialist on the English medieval theatre, with known interest and expertise in present day confraternal revivals and reinventions of the medieval performance arts in civic contexts. She is President elect of the international Medieval and Renaissance Drama Society, and past President of the *Société Internationale pour l'étude du Théâtre Médiéval*, the two

Impact case study (REF3b)

leading international associations for the study of the early theatre. Her 2006 book, *The York Mystery Cycle and the Worship of the City* was a double prize-winner. She is also the co-owner of the Medieval Players' archive, the archives of the only touring company in the UK to have pursued an artistic policy based on the practices of the medieval stage, and now lodged in the Bristol Theatre Collection, and of the Norah Lambourne archive of set and costume designs for the Festival of Britain production of the York Plays.

As a consequence of her research profile and specialism, she has been invited to contribute in non-academic contexts where her expertise has demonstrably raised the level of public debate and thereby enhanced the aesthetic quality and actual and potential success of civic festive events, as well as the public understanding of the medieval entertainment industry:

- Having regularly given public platform lectures in Coventry as part of the development of Coventry Mystery Plays company, a collaboration between the Alan Higgs Charity, Coventry City Council, and Coventry University, she has been appointed Visiting Professor at Coventry University in the School of Art and Design with the specific brief to collaborate in developing the Coventry Mysteries further as a civic project [a]. Although she is also the editor of the original Coventry Mystery Plays (*The Coventry Plays*, Medieval Institute Publications, Kalamazoo, 2000, co-edited with Clifford Davidson), the present project that appropriates their name does not aim to reconstruct the medieval festival, but has been re-inventing a summer festival of street theatre empowering multi-cultural neighbourhoods in a project directed at fostering civic identity and social cohesion. These connections, and further envisaged work, guarantee a range of social and cultural benefits with economic spin-out [b].
- She has been an invited speaker at the York Guilds conference at which practitioners of the revived York Mystery Plays meet with academics to discuss the transmission of the city's medieval dramatic heritage to modern indigenous and tourist audiences in 2007 and 2011, informing the artistic policies of those "guilds" as they develop subsequent productions within their modern "tradition" of the York Festival and Mystery Plays [c].
- As a direct product of the 2011 involvement under 1, she was invited to become academic consultant, with special advisory roles relating to the production of a text, and to the inducting of performers into appropriate performance styles etc., to the Gloucester Mystery Plays, 2012-13 [c]. This is an entirely new and very ambitious event that will be repeated every three years, organised with the support of and in aid of Gloucester and Worcester Cathedral Charities, Gloucestershire County and City Council, and involving amongst others, Gloucestershire Honorable Gentleman, Gloucester Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, Round Table, Gloucester Lions, the Sealed Knot, the Warwick Warriors, Gloucester Rugby Club, and Mr Rick Wakeman. The festival patron is actor Jeremy Irons. The "mystery plays", which have no known medieval originals, will be performed at Gloucester Cathedral, city streets, and RFC stadium, at Worcester Cathedral, and Warwick Castle, and will involve performances of a full cycle performed by cast drawn from the 87 non-professional theatre groups in Gloucestershire, a full cycle performed by Gloucestershire secondary schools and youth drama groups, Cathedral performances on dates in line with the church calendar, and wagon performances in Warwick and Gloucester at which the combined Choirs of Gloucester Cathedral and the National Youth Orchestra will perform [d].
- As a direct product of her involvement with the individual festivals listed above, she was able to bring the producers of the York and Gloucester festivals together with practitioners and academics working in the field from across the world at her European Science Foundation (ESF)-funded workshop in Budapest (9 to 11 September 2011), entitled "Reinventions of Early-European Performing Arts and the Creative City, Civic Regeneration and Cultural Tourism" [f, g, h]. The participant list for the workshop [g] indicates the truly international reach of the work on reinventing Early-European performing arts [j]. Since their return, they have perceived the wider implications of their local knowledge and have set up a consultancy of which King is a member, aimed at sharing knowledge in order to assist other cities to establish medieval festivals, maximising the quality and ambition of their productions, while reducing their financial risks, maximising profit for chosen charities,

Impact case study (REF3b)

including different sectors of their communities, and attracting new tourists. At the time of writing, the service is engaged in initial discussions with two potential client cities.

- She has been involved in discussions about the entertainment industry in the Middle Ages on local and national radio, most notably acting as organiser of expert participants to a BBC Radio 3 Sunday Feature on Myths and Mystery Cycles, 12 September 2010, 22.00-22.45, presented by John Sessions, and she is regularly consulted by the BBC in relation to similar topics [i].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- [a] Invitation to take Visiting Professorship at Coventry University from Professor Madeleine Atkins (Vice-Chancellor). Corroborates Visiting Professorship and support for Coventry Mysteries Project.
- [b] Executive Director, Alan Higgs Charity. Can corroborate King's role in developing the Coventry Mysteries further as a civic project.
- [c] Executive Director, York Festival of Mystery Plays. Can corroborate impact on York Festival of Mystery Plays.
- [d] Appointment letter for position of Honorary Academic Consultant to the Gloucester Mystery Plays Festival from the festival director, Philip McCormick. Corroborates appointment to consultant position and outlines role in script and performance preparation.
- [e] Director, Gloucester Mystery Plays Festival. Can provide further corroboration of King's contribution to the Gloucester Mystery Plays Festival.
- [f] Invitation to Participate in ESF-funded workshop in Budapest from Senior Administrator, ESF Exploratory Workshops. Corroborates King's involvement as convenor of the workshop.
- [g] List of Participants for ESF-funded workshop. Corroborates international reach and claim that King was able to bring the producers of the York and Gloucester festivals together with practitioners and academics working in the field from across the world.
- [h] Programme for ESF-funded workshop. Corroborates programme for workshop.
- [i] Producer, BBC. Can corroborate King's media involvement which has raised public awareness of reinventions of Early-European Performing Arts.
- [j] Director of the Centre of Excellence for the History of the Emotions, University of Western Australia. Can corroborate international reach of reinventions of Early-European Performing Arts.