Parisian Confraternity Drama of the Fourteenth Century: The 'Miracles de Nostre Dame par personnages'

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PARISIAN CONFRATERNITY DRAMA OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY
THE 'MIRACLES DE NOSTRE DAME PAR PERSONNAGES'

Parisian Confraternity Drama of the Fourteenth Century is the first volume of studies devoted solely to the Miracles de Nostre Dame par personnages. These anonymous plays, found in a single luxury manuscript, comprise the only major corpus of dramatic works in French that have survived from the fourteenth century. They derive from a rich diversity of sources: narrative miracle accounts, saints' lives, epic chansons de geste, vernacular romances, and history. Each play is preceded by a richly detailed miniature, some with more than one, and each includes at least one rondel to be sung by the cortege accompanying the Virgin. They constitute both a collective demonstration of the fervent late-medieval devotion to the Virgin, and a substantial archive of contemporary insights into the issues of power, authority, and influence that struggled for dominance in fourteenth-century Paris. As this extraordinary collection has, in its entirety, attracted little critical attention to date, this volume will be of significant interest to scholars wishing to explore the plays in their literary context, as well as those interested in medieval drama, the Marian tradition, and the role of confraternities in fourteenth-century French culture.


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THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL
CENTRE FOR MEDIEVAL STUDIES
PARISIAN CONFRATERNITY DRAMA
OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

The Miracles de Nostre Dame par personnages

Edited by

Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox

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Most of the essays here assembled are revised contributions to the first international colloquium devoted entirely to the forty plays in the Miracles de Notre Dame par personnages contained in the Cangé Manuscript (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 819–820). That event, organized at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, by the co-editors of this volume, was inspired in part by the several pioneering studies that the late Graham A. Runnalls devoted to the manuscript, text, and socio-cultural context of this important collection from fourteenth-century Paris. Graham was unable to attend the colloquium, but the papers presented on that occasion, as well as those subsequently added to the collection, frequently evoke or reflect on his work. One of his seminal articles, ‘Medieval Trade Guilds and the Miracles de Notre Dame par personnages’, which originally appeared in Medium Aevum, 39 (1970), 257–87, is reprinted here, and it is to his memory that we dedicate this renewed exploration of the rich and unique dramatic collection he so admirably brought to prominence at the outset of his productive career. We are glad to report that shortly before his death we were able to inform him of the completion and imminent publication of the volume. In his reply, he said that ‘it was a source of great joy and pleasure to me that the volume is now to be published. I would therefore be grateful if you would give my thanks to all those who contributed to the volume and took part in the conference, most of whom are known to me personally or academically.’

We gratefully acknowledge permission from Medium Aevum to reprint the article by Graham Runnalls. We are grateful too to Adrian P. Tudor and Alan Hindley, of the Editorial Board of the series ‘Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe’ published by Brepols, both of whom generously afforded essential guidance on numerous occasions as the volume was being readied for publication. Special thanks are also due to Deborah A. Oosterhouse, whose vigilant work...