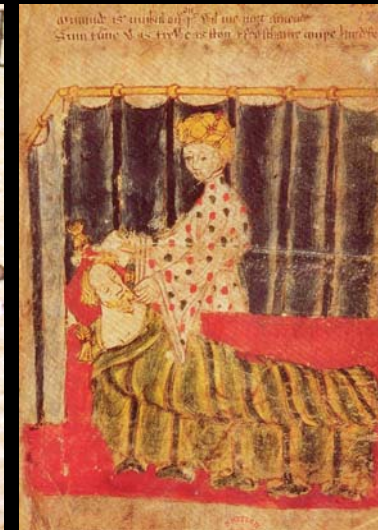
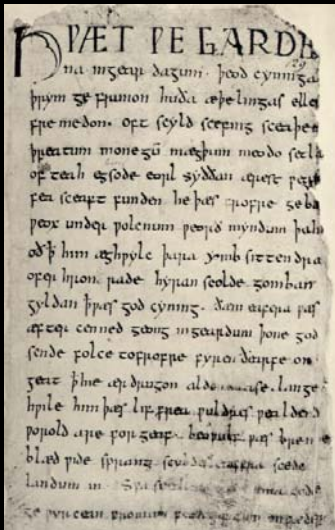


The Medieval Period, Day Seventeen

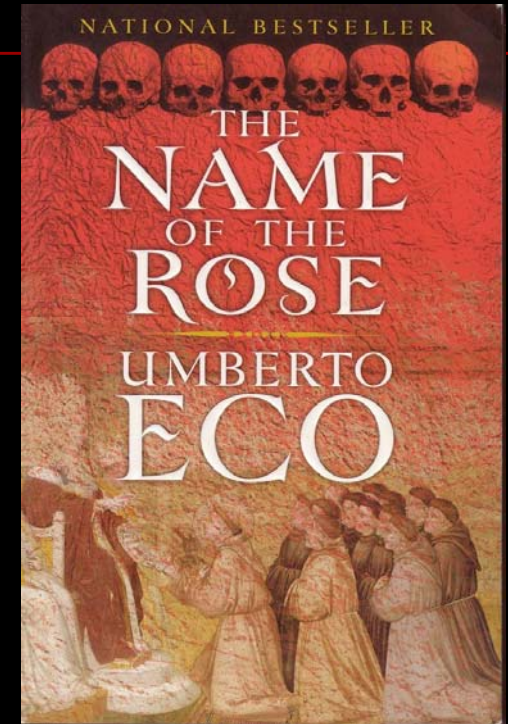
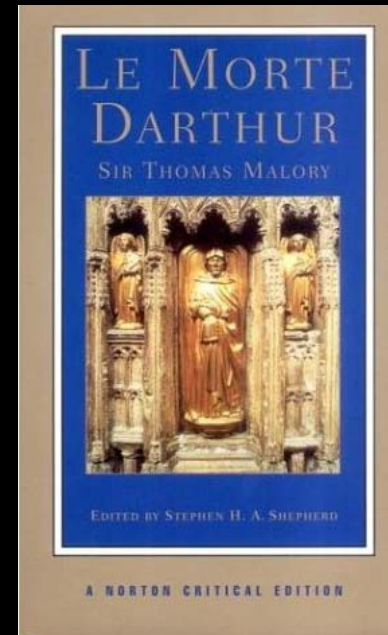
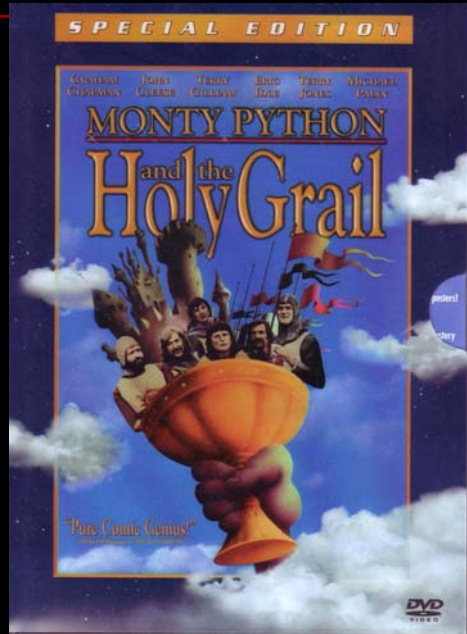
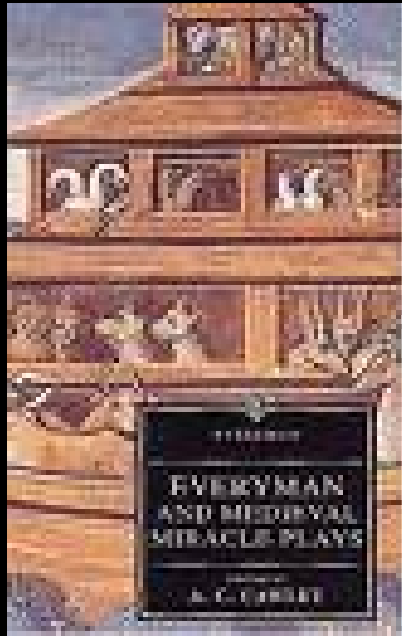
Medieval Drama

Our Medieval Period Past:



- *Beowulf, The Life of St. Margaret*
 - *Mannynge's Chronicle, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, The Canterbury Tales*
- You've seen Old English and Middle English
You've seen prose and verse
(metrical, syllabic, alliterative, rhyming, stanzaic, non-stanzaic)

Our Medieval Period Future:



- Medieval Drama! *Monty Python's Holy Grail*
- Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*, *In the Name of the Rose*

New forms! Different forms of Middle English drama, Middle English prose, and the modern film and novel!

Introduction to Medieval Drama

- What's Medieval about Medieval Drama?
 - Earliest record of any of these plays' performance is c. 1376
 - Last record c. 1569 (in Shakespeare's time!)
 - Most manuscripts date to the late fifteenth or sixteenth century

Why All the Drama?

liturgical dramas, biblical plays, corpus christi plays, miracle plays, mystery plays or mysteries

- Magic Mass: early religious ritual of enactment
‘hocus pocus’ from ‘hoc est enim corpus meum’ [‘this is my body’]
- Corpus Christi [body of Christ] festival growth
first official record c. 1311
- The Meanings of “Mystery”
medieval civic structure, guilds and the regulation of crafts and labor

Medieval Meditation on Christ's Wounds



York *Crucifixion*

The Triumph of Isabella, Brussels, 1615

- The text comes from the collection of plays in a manuscript known as the “York Register” of the Corpus Christi play, dated ca. 1463-77.
- These plays would probably have been performed on a pageant wagon, in a procession through the streets of York with other pageants of the cycle.



Play and Work

- Working on the play
 - Guild structures were crucial to the regulation of labor; the guilds' presentations of the play cycle had a civic as well as religious function
 - The plays were allocated to emphasize the guilds' specialized skills and special guild tax supported the plays
- Working in the play
 - “to this work us must take heed, / So that our working be not wrong” (25-6)
 - “Since ilka thing is right arrayed, / The wislier now work may we” (37-8)
 - “This work is well, I will warrant” (104)
 - “Oh! This work is all unmeet: / This boring must all be amend” (127-8)
 - “Say, sir, how likes you now / This work we have wrought?” (249-50)
 - “What they work wot they noght” (261)
 - “This travail here we tine” (300)

York *Crucifixion*

- Why do you think the *Crucifixion* was dramatized by the guild of “Pinner[s] [makers of wooden pegs] and Painters”?
- Why do you think the anonymous author is known as the “York realist”?
- What is the difference between the speech of Christ and the speech of the soldiers?
- What is the poetic form of the drama?
 - 12-line stanza, rhyming abababababcdcd
 - The syllable count is not exactly regular but there is a definite meter: a and b lines have four stresses and the c and d lines have three

How does this form compare with other texts we’ve read?

Signs and the Divine

- Can god have a body?
- Can a body be a sign?
- ‘Polysemous’ theatre
 - ‘One god in three (or more?) persons’
multiple Gods, Christs and Marys

How is modern drama different?

What is the appeal of Medieval Drama today?



23-25 The York *Crucifixion*, wagon production at the Minster Gates station, York, 1993, raising the cross, placing the cross in the mortice, Christ crucified. Players from Bretton Hall College, Wakefield, directed by Philip Butterworth.



York *Crucifixion* 2002, presented by The Company of Butchers

The present Guild is able to claim continuous membership since its medieval roots.

Through its Court the Guild controlled the meat trade in matters of hygiene, meat restricted days and fast periods, and over 'foreign' (i.e. non-Guild) butchers.

Standards of workmanship were protected through the apprenticeship system. Seven years was generally agreed as the minimum period of training and servitude before the apprentice became a 'freeman to ply his trade'.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries membership of the Guild fell from thirty or forty in 1812 to possibly only one in 1940. All other York Guilds save the Merchant Adventurers and Merchant Taylors had ceased to exist. In 1940, the last remaining member was persuaded to swear in new members, enabling the Guild to continue to the present day.

The present Company is largely an organisation for Master Butchers in and around the City and further afield, with members in associated trades. It is one of the very few surviving craft guilds in the country.

[Historical information taken from The York Butchers' Guild, by B.A. Corsair and W.L. Fitzell.]

Modern Productions

Actor playing Judas accidentally hangs himself

By J.A. Getzlaff

May 8, 2000 | Irony doesn't always make you laugh. On April 22, the day before Easter, a 23-year-old Italian man died during a reenactment of "Via Crucis," or "Way of the Cross," a traditional Easter play.

According to the Associated Press, Renato Di Paolo was playing the part of Judas Iscariot, the apostle who betrayed Jesus Christ and then killed himself in remorse. The play, which took place in the tiny village of Camerata Nuova, 45 miles from Rome, required Di Paolo to be tied to a tree by a noose. According to a Reuters report, the young actor had played the part safely the previous evening, but this time when he jumped off a rock about a foot off the ground, the noose tightened around his neck and asphyxiated him.

Incredibly, no one noticed. The play continued until an actor saw that Di Paolo was lying rather stiffly and realized he was unconscious. The young man was promptly rushed to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead. The entire event was captured on video by an amateur cameraman, who recorded the stunned screams of the actors and audience, which included Di Paolo's parents.

The video was given to Italy's RAI TV and was broadcast the next day, on Easter Sunday.

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Next Class: *Everyman*!

Don't forget to pick up your mid-term on the way out today—email me and set up office hour appointments to discuss any questions.

For next class:

- Read the play *Everyman* (so popular the publisher's series is named after it!)
- Start work on your first essay
- Post and make comments on the website