The recent International Medieval Congress at Leeds (12–15 July 1999) focused this year on 'Saints'. There were accordingly a number of papers and sessions devoted to the saints in early drama. This review is principally of the sessions on 'The Theatre of Saints', although other papers and discussions will be mentioned as they are important in light of the current debate on when and whether we can be sure that a 'saint play' was in fact a dramatic performance. Professor Clopper has argued above that there is very little evidence of 'ludus', or even 'miracula', being a play in the sense of scripted drama. In a paper on 'The Problem of the Clerkenwell Plays' (Session 809) he showed how seemingly cumulative evidence of a cycle could in fact be confused and confusing in its dating and descriptions, and argued that the chroniclers were probably referring to an extraordinary event, possibly on a much smaller scale than the 'cycle' assumed by earlier scholars.

An awareness of Professor Clopper's caveats ran through the discussions of many of the papers, although this is nothing new. It is in the nature of early drama discussions that for every person who raises a hypothesis, two others will raise caveats. This constant questioning of the evidence is vital in light of the very sparse information which that evidence conveys. It was therefore something of a relief for the audience of Jane Cowling's paper on 'A Fifteenth-Century Saint's Play at Winchester: Some Problems of Interpretation' (Session 609) that the play record of St Agnes at Winchester in 1409 indicates at least a script, a playing-cloth, and a partial cast list. Here, at least, was a text (or had been a text) and therefore (surely?) there had been a play. Whether it was actually performed is another question, and one which the evidence does not answer.

Sue Wilson's paper on 'Miracles, Drama, and St John of Beverley' (Session 1109) reminded us that a clearly dramatic performance (with words and actions, and evidently in the vernacular) was happening in Beverley in the late eleventh century. Her paper pointed out some of the parallels between the miracle which occurred and the performance of the resurrection play, and the way in which the author 'dramatizes' his material for the reader.

In the first session on 'The Theatre of Saints' (Session 1209), James Stokes, in 'Saints Plays from Lincolnshire: What the Records Tell Us', gave us some new information from Donnington and Spalding of plays of Nebuchadnezzar and the Three Children and of St Michael and the Dragon. Parish plays, he argued, were not invariably or inevitably rough and rustic.
Citing the *Croxton Play of the Sacrament* and wall paintings in Friskney, he argued that the plays had less to do with local saints and more to do with central doctrines and personal spiritual transformation. The discussion of this paper again raised issues of what type of performance is being recorded.

Sam Riches, approaching the topic from the point of view of an art historian in 'Ritual in Civic Saint Cults: The “Riding of St George” in Late Medieval England' discussed the survival of St George ridings into the Reformation and the importance of the guilds of St George in fostering these celebrations, noting especially the higher social level of the members of these guilds. A cautionary note was sounded in the question period, as some of the evidence is from Mary's reign, and may represent revival rather than continuity. Syd-

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plays were a common feature was not, of course, resolved. What was clear from the discussions was that an interplay of speculation and caution, of imaginative response to, and rigorous questioning of, the evidence, is vital to the forwarding of our understanding of the remaining fragments of the 'Theatre of Saints'.

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