

blurred lines of confessional orientation and new, seemingly Protestant forms of expression in *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* by Sir David Lyndsay. Walker shows that the message of reform in Lyndsay's play—its critique of clerical abuse—comes from a Catholic orientation, connected to a program promoted by Archbishop Hamilton and others “eager to advance essentially Erasmian reforms” (59). Later translators of this play use the Geneva Bible to replace Lyndsay's Vulgate, seemingly converting a once Catholic self-criticism into a Protestant critique.

Several of the plays discussed exist in a blurred area between Catholic form and possible Protestant repurposing, or as a Catholic form that simply passes under the wire of Protestant sensibilities, as Philip Butterworth suggests in his study of biblical allusions in the Towneley Isaac and Jacob plays (109). While recently dated in a Marian context before 1558, they may have been written or revised later, as they seem to draw from the 1560 Geneva Bible. Similarly, Roberta Mullini argues that the B-text of the Norwich cycle presents “features that manifest the anonymous playwright's desire to adapt an old tradition to the new Reformist episteme so as to turn a Catholic text into a Protestant (if not Puritan) one” (126). The cycle plays do not survive long after the Elizabethan religious settlement, with mysteries ending in Chester in 1575, a year before the opening of James Burbage's Theatre; in Norwich they ended some ten years earlier.

Such confessional blurring is not evident in the N-Town plays, which Charlotte Steenbrugge places in the midst of controversies about preaching to the laity, suggesting that the text had an orthodox rather than Lollard affiliation. David Bevington illustrates how the fifteenth-century Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* merges theater and liturgy in a way that “while characteristic of other medieval religious plays, is here given a sharpness of focus that may owe its sense of urgency to then-current debate over the Real Presence of Christ in the Mass” (237). A few essays on the York cycles are placed near the end of this volume, including those by Clifford Davidson and Margaret Rogerson. The volume is well made, but its high price will limit circulation.

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Jewish and Christian Voices in English Reformation Biblical Drama: Enacting Family and Monarchy. Chanita Goodblatt.

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In *Milton's Languages: The Impact of Multilingualism on Style*, John K. Hale speaks exclusively of Milton's use of Latin and relegates his Hebrew studies to an insignificant breakfast choice (1997). Therefore, it is refreshing to read Chanita Goodblatt's deeply sourced study of the impact of biblical references on three categories of Reformation

drama: plays covering the book of Esther, those dramatizing the rivalry of Jacob and Esau, and, finally, treatments of the romance of David and Bathsheba. When explicating the story of Jacob and Esau, Goodblatt credits Luther's use of Rashi's "performative" characterization of Esau's desperate grubbing. She cites Reuchlin's gloss of Rabbi David Kimchi. Later in this analysis, Goodblatt refers to Calvin's gloss of Ibn Ezra's characterization of Jacob as one who hesitated to heed his mother, preferring a "secret mystery" (85), a deception later argued by Ibn Ezra to have caused a greater good. Goodblatt's multilingual journey is dazzling if, at times, biblically confusing. For example, Goodblatt lists the Geneva Bible as a source for "*Godly Queene Hester* composed in 1529 and published in 1561" (9). However, the Geneva Bible was published in 1561 and was not widely available in England until 1576.

Puzzling as well is Goodblatt's use of the Bomberg Biblia Rabbinica (1525) as the source for her Hebrew citations. She characterizes this text as a Judeo-Christian effort, when it is "a traditional rabbinic bible," as Frank Manuel notes (*The Broken Staff: Judaism through Christian Eyes* [1992], 84). The 1524–25 edition was revised by Elias Levitas in 1538 to reflect Masoretic vowel pointing. Yet the publication by Bomberg, a Christian printer, is undoubtedly ecumenical. All early rabbinic bibles are essentially similar, with the Bomberg using the earlier Soncino Rabbinic Bible (1488) as a text and the Buxtorf Biblia Sacra (1617) using the text of the Bomberg Biblia Rabbinica. Also, tying an English text to a specific Hebrew Bible has been difficult, as persistent criticism of Harris Francis Fletcher's 1929 connection of Milton to the Buxtorf Biblia Sacra has shown (George Conklin [1949], Kitty Cohen [1970], et al.).

Clearly, however, familial, monarchical, and Carnavalesque contexts, central to Goodblatt's analysis, are initially part of Hebrew biblical stories. Goodblatt, however, synthesizes original Hebrew and later Christian texts. To do so, she uses hermeneutic recognition of parallelism in the pleas of Esther, connecting "my soul" with "my life," and the subsequent elucidation of root words—"nafshi-soul" to explicate Isaac's blessings. Moving from exegesis to synthesis, Goodblatt analyzes the German *Comedy of Queen Esther and Haughty Haman* (1620) and its anti-Semitic themes, depicting Jewish congregants as "murmuring . . . figures that could be perceived as Catholic monks" (37), as a connection between Jewish separatism and Roman Catholicism (36). Thematic to this inclusive text is the petitioning woman. Goodblatt categorizes Rebecca's difficult pregnancy as "annunciation type scenes," recognized by Robert Alter (75). Rebecca's Christian annunciation "places [her] before the audience" (81). Annunciation, as Alter has noted, is one of the prominent biblical typologies, along with "the encounter of the future betrothed at the well; the epiphany in the field; the initial trial; danger in the desert and the discovery of a well" (*The Art of Biblical Narrative* [2011], 90). The beauty of Goodblatt's analysis is that she reenacts these typologies through biblical drama.

These interwoven voices sound in the story of Bathsheba, as Goodblatt recognizes both the inherent love story and the fact that, in *The Love of King David and Fair*

Bathsabe, With the Tragedie of Absalom (1594), love and victimization intermingle, as the title suggests. David's epithelium to his bride, "Now comes my lover tripping like a Roe" (cited 196), depicts both a lovely and a threatening pastoral, with Bathsheba regarded as a stolen sheep. Here again, the dramas depicted by Goodblatt enact the subtleties of the Hebrew text, a portrayal of a good and bad king. As Meir Steinberg notes in *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (1984), the biblical story describes David "staying in Jerusalem" even though his troops "go forth to battle" (2 Samuel 11:1).

In this fluid and engaging text, the play's the thing to catch our consciences. Accordingly, Goodblatt quotes the modern director of *The Love of King David*, who recalls "fantastic fights" (175). Appearing everywhere, from puppet shows to modern student performances, "Jewish and Christian voices" resound throughout the text.

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The Biblical Covenant in Shakespeare. Mary Jo Kietzman.
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The notion of covenant was a crucial theological and political one in early modern England, one that gained traction as a result of the Reformation in England and eventually wended its way into early modern literature. Mary Jo Kietzman's new work charting William Shakespeare's use and understanding of covenant in his works is an intriguing survey of the religious and political implications of covenant. Kietzman's task is to track and demonstrate Shakespeare's interest in covenant as a "theopolitical idea," one that stresses the necessity of societal and political bonds in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. She argues that reading covenant in Shakespeare vis-à-vis social and political bonds will lead to the unpacking of "new forms of relation between 'Lords'—God, King, husband—and their subjects" in early seventeenth-century England (21). To achieve her objective, she examines the meaning of covenant in the Old Testament and traces how Shakespeare applies the biblical imports of covenant on the theater stage through biblical allusions, primarily through Old Testament narrative accounts.

Kietzman first considers the account of Abraham's near sacrifice of Isaac, the Akedah, teasing out the striking parallels in Shakespeare's works—namely, *Titus Andronicus*, *Richard II*, and *King John*. The influence of Calvin's interpretation of the Akedah upon Shakespeare, she avers, is visible in the idea of covenant being a struggle with God. As Abraham struggled with the promise of covenant and the imminent sacrifice of his own son, so Shakespeare portrayed the early modern covenant as a wrestling with "ethical dilemmas so as to create new corporate bodies" (66). The narrative of