Moving Encounters:
Choreographing Stage and Spectators
in Urban Theatre and Pageantry

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Here I will take a closer look at a specific feature of medieval theatre and pageantry particularly prominent in outdoor, urban space: the *relative movement* of performers and spectators in immediate connection with performance.[1] In so doing I shall be exploring more closely a topic I touched on only briefly, and, it transpires, uncritically, in the paper I presented to the 2001 Groningen Colloquium of the Société Internationale pour l'Étude du Théâtre Médiéval (SITM), "The Morphology of the Parade," since published in *European Medieval Drama*.[2] Such movement, I assumed and said then, was both thematically and dramaturgically significant. I am now less confident this is the case, and in retrospect, and seen from a broader perspective, I am not altogether surprised: in its fully dramatic manifestations theatre of this kind was somewhat local in its incidence, rather short-lived, and dramaturgically pretty awkward.

Drama (presumably by definition) involves performance before spectators. Since very few people have actors in residence, and even fewer live in a theatre, drama also requires the relative movement of performers and spectators to bring the one within sight and sound of the other. But in many kinds of theatre, including modern, conventional theatre, while this relative movement *enables* the performance, it is not *part of* the performance: the spectators go to the theatre; the performers come to the palace; the players come to town and the spectators go to the market place to see their show. Not until everyone is sitting comfortably does the show begin. In an anthropologically "thick" analysis such movement would be an interesting part of the whole event: the travelling players parading into town, setting up their booth and distributing handbills, or conversely the audience-to-be travelling to the theatre, leaving their coats in the cloakroom, looking at the posters in the foyer, entering the auditorium, seeing who else is there and what they're wearing and whom they're with, waiting for the show to start. All this is exciting and special, arousing sensations and expectations which set the performance in a world apart, and therefore perhaps less viable as a site

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[2] "The Morphology of the Parade," *European Medieval Drama* 6 (2002), 1-30.

for the construction of ideologies than recently fashionable criticism liked to think. But in relation to drama as opposed to theatre, from the dramatic perspective rather than the anthropological, this movement (unless, say, it goes wrong, and the performance is disturbed by late arrivals) is not relevant for the appreciation of the performance itself.

But there were, and are, other forms of theatre, including pageantry, in which this enabling relative movement between performers and spectators occurs in immediate juxtaposition with, or even during, the performance, and is therefore also, potentially at least, an aspect of that performance. And if this potential were to be realized then the movement would in addition be *dramatically significant*, and would make the performance different from those under other auspices. In a recent study Peter Happé indeed claims of the York mystery plays that "The effect upon the exposition of the narrative of salvation in the York manner was enormous and, in dramatic terms, richly successful," this "York manner" including the element of movement, there being: "distinct aesthetic issues involved in making the most of limitations of a tight timetable, narrow streets, and the difficulty of manoeuvring pageant wagons around the city." Indeed, "These constraints became opportunities."[3]

Parade and Interception

In pursuing this topic in relation to the pageantry of public, urban space, I carry over from the Groningen paper a definitive distinction between two varieties of dramatic pageantry involving potentially significant, relative movement between performers and spectators: the *parade*, in which a *mobile performance* approaches and is observed by *stationary spectators*, and the *interception*, in which a *stationary performance* is approached and observed by *mobile spectators*. It will occasion no surprise that the parade form will be represented in what follows by the "processional" station-to-station Corpus Christi plays of provincial England, which I would insist are distinct in this respect from other medieval traditions in which dramatic performances followed, or preceded, a procession, from which, as performances, they were nonetheless distinct.[4] It may be equally predictable that interceptions will be represented by the exhibitions constructed in major cities athwart the path of incoming monarchs in "royal

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[3] Peter Happé, "Procession and the Cycle Drama in England and Europe: Some Dramatic Possibilities," *European Medieval Drama* 6 (2003 for 2002): 31-47, see 38 (henceforth Happé, "Procession and the Cycle Drama"); in what follows Happé explores dramatic characteristics of the York plays which largely stem from performance features other than the actual movement of the wagons.

[4] For some instances see N. Brooks, "Processional Drama and Dramatic Procession in Germany in the Late Middle Ages," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 32 (1933): 141-71 (henceforth Brooks, "Processional Drama and Dramatic Procession"), and Alan Knight, *Aspects of Genre in late Medieval French Drama* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983) (henceforth Knight, *Aspects of Genre*), ch. 6, "The processional context of medieval drama."

entries" or "Triumphs."[5] It will be convenient to speak of a "pageant" in both cases, but on the understanding that in the one case it is on a mobile wagon, and in the other on a stationary scaffold.[6]

But while the Corpus Christi cycles and the royal entries, as parades and interceptions, respectively, are modal contraries, in categorizations based on other criteria they share features distinguishing them from other forms.[7] They are both *dramatic*, or at least semi-dramatic, rather than non-dramatic or purely ceremonial; they both involve *interrupted* movement as the mobile party halts for this dramatic or semi-dramatic exhibition rather than merely riding by; above all, they are both *multiple forms*, involving a *sequence* of encounters between stages and spectators: in the mystery cycles a series of separate pageant wagons moves towards and then away from the spectators at a given station; in the royal entry the royal spectator (and his train) moves towards and then away from a series of stationary pageants on scaffolds along his route.

This means in turn that in exploring the significance of relative movement in these multiple forms there are two avenues of approach, focussing on, re-spectively, the whole sequence of encounters, and the individual encounters of which that sequence is comprised, and in each case (although this may not be realized fully in what follows) it may be useful to juxtapose them with simpler forms. The whole sequence can be usefully juxtaposed with other multiple en-counters in which the parade is a succession of less elaborate, non-dramatic items, or the interceptions involve less spectacular or non-dramatic displays, and in which the mobile group may pass by the stationary group without halting. The individual encounters can be usefully juxtaposed with simpler forms in which a single mobile performance is paraded past stationary spectators, or mo-bile spectators are intercepted by a single stationary performance.[8]

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[5] I also carry over from the "Morphology" article the insistence that while the encounter be-tween the monarch and the pageants may qualify as a performance watched by a secondary audience composed of the public at large, the primary audience is the royal party, in that it alone sees all the pageants.

[6] I am aware of, but will here omit, hybrid forms in which the mobile audience intercepted by pageant scaffolds is itself characterized by elements of pageantry, so qualifying as a parade; the classic instance is the London Lord Mayors' shows of the sixteenth and early seven-teenth century, and for some French royal entries with this element see Knight, *Aspects of Genre*, 123.

[7] For a discussion of less definitive similarities between the two forms, see Darryll Grantley, "'To swell a progress:' Retainers, Subordinates and the Ceremonialisation of Secular Power in Medieval, Scriptural and Hagiographical Drama," *European Medieval Drama* 1 (1997): 233-246.

[8] Parades of single items would include the traditional perambulations of morris-dancers, plough-trailers, hobby-horses and the like, single interceptions the way-laying of passing adults by children begging money with a May garland or a November "guy." Multiple but less spectacular parades would include processions involving guild representatives in livery and with banners (say in a Corpus Christi procession); multiple interceptions are virtually restricted to royal entries, so simple forms would be those of minor cities and towns where fewer resources could be committed, the interceptions restricted to welcoming officials, singing choirboys, girls throwing flowers, and the like.

The Sequencing of Multiple Forms

In the case of the multiple encounters – both parades and interceptions – the juxtaposition with simpler forms is particularly useful, since those simpler traditions have some very pronounced characteristics, deriving precisely from their multiplicity, and which provide a revealing perspective on our dramatic forms.

The key word here of course is *order*, since in multiple forms the relative movement of performers and spectators is compounded by the relative placing of items within either of these categories. The York pageants cannot go through a given station simultaneously, 48 abreast; an in-coming king cannot encounter a single ten-story scaffold with a *mystére mimé* at each level. In each case the multiple items have to be ordered into a sequence, and then it is a question of what factors can influence that ordering, and their relative significance. An obvious factor in these complex forms is the *content* of the pageants: the plays in a Corpus Christi cycle will approach a station in an order corresponding to their plots, constructing the Christian salvation narrative from Creation to Doomsday. Correspondingly, the scaffolds in a royal entry might follow a thematic sequence equating the royal entry with Christ's entry into Jerusalem or even his Advent.[9] But *context* can also be a factor when these performances are not merely multiple contrivances of an entire, undifferentiated community, but are identified, as they would have said, "severally," with specific social groupings within that community. This will be particularly relevant for the craft and trade guilds, for whom their relative status, as manifested by their order of precedence in public displays, was a matter of keen interest bordering on obsessive concern.

Sequencing Interceptions

By way of illustrative experiment we may glance first at the simpler and ultimately less significant case of interceptions. When a distinguished visitor approached and entered a community, the order in which he was ceremonially greeted by its officials and institutions was vitally enmeshed with the latter's relative power, status and honour, and a matter of intense scrutiny, dispute and conflict. As Charles VIII approached Paris in the summer of 1484 the Parlement sent out their own representatives to intercept him ahead of the party of local royal officials and were duly indicted and reprimanded for this breach of decorum, which amounted to what the official chronicle of the events stigmatized as perverting, "pervertissant," the order established by custom: "l'ordre qui de tout temps a acoustumé estre gardé aux entrées des roys."[10] In 1604 foreign

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[9] Gordon Kipling, *Enter the King: Theatre, Liturgy and Ritual in the Medieval Civic Triumph* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998) (henceforth Kipling, *Enter the King*).

[10] Cited and discussed in Donald Perret, "The Meaning of the Mystery: From *Tableaux* to Theatre in the French Royal Entry," in *Moving Subjects: Processional Performance in the*

ambassadors boycotted James I's entry into London because of disagreement over the order in which they should greet him along the route.[11] In late medieval and early modern English coronation entries part of the new ruler's customary route through London was lined by the city's guilds, who acclaimed him, precisely, as the Tudor historian Edward Hall put it, "in order:" "... beginning with the mean and base occupations, and so ascending to the worshipful crafts; highest and lastly stood the mayor, with the aldermen."[12]

What then, if such groups were also called upon to stage pageants on scaffolds along the route of a royal entry? How were these ordered? Did the guilds expect their respective scaffolds to follow the same, status-based order as their welcoming of the monarch, with the most prestigious group producing the last pageant? If the pageants intercepting the visitor were no more than the sum of their parts; if they were essentially independent items, then in theory at least this would be feasible: the order in which they were encountered could be coordinated with the status order of the participating groups. But when there is an overall system, when the sequence as a whole has meaning as well as its individual constituents, the situation becomes more complex. This factor is not restricted to the sophisticated advent or ascent to Jerusalem patterns Gordon Kipling detects in the London coronation entries of the Renaissance period: the series of allegorical concepts encountered by Charles VIII at various points on his passage into Rouen in 1485, for example, was sequenced so that their initial letters spelled out the name of the city: **R**epos pacifique, **O**rdre politique, **U**ncion des rois, **E**spoir en le croix, **N**ouvelle eaue celique.[13] When this occurs, there is a potential discrepancy between the status order of the groups and the sequence of their pageants, if say the most elaborate pageant, or the most significant pageant, or the in some way most appropriate pageant, rather than the most honourable *station*, is assigned to the most prestigious group.[14]

Middle Ages and the Renaissance, ed. Kathleen Ashley and Wim Hüsken (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001), 187-211, see 187-8 (henceforth Ashley, *Moving Subjects)*.

[11] Report of the Venetian ambassador, cited in David M. Bergeron, "Pageants, Politics and Patrons," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 6 (1993): 139-52, see 140.

[12] Hall, *Union of the two noble and illustre families of Lancastre and York* (1548), quoted in Lawrence Manley, "Of Sites and Rites," *in The Theatrical City: Culture, Theatre and Politics in London, 1576 – 1649*, ed. D. L. Smith, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), 35-54, at 46; see also R. M. Smuts, "Public ceremony and royal charisma: the English royal entry in London, 1485 – 1642," in *The First Modern Society: Essays in English History in Honour of Lawrence Stone*, ed. A. L. Beier, David Cannadine, and James M. Rosenheim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 65-93, see 69 (henceforth Smuts, "Public ceremony and royal charisma").

[13] Elie Konigson, *L'Espace Théatrale Médiévale* (Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1975), 201 (henceforth Konigson, *L'Espace Théatrale Médiévale*).

[14] Other factors can also be operative, say the location on the route of a church or other building with which the performing group is associated; for a Parisian example of this (the Clerks' Guild staging a pageant outside the law courts) see Lawrence M. Bryant, *The King and the City in the Parisian Royal Entry Ceremony: Politics, Ritual and Art in the Renaissance* (Geneva: Droz, 1986), 169 (henceforth Bryant, *The King and the City).*

Assigning royal entry scaffolds to individual guilds was not a regular feature of their organization, but in one instance where it is possible to check, the pageants produced by Coventry guilds for the entry of Elizabeth I in 1565, it does seem very likely that status order was indeed breached. The ranking order of the Coventry guilds for ceremonial occasions is revealed for example by the order of march laid down in 1445 for the Corpus Christi and midsummer processions, and as Charles Phythian Adams notes, it was apparently based on their relative contribution to civic office-holding.[15] As she entered and passed through the city, Elizabeth was intercepted by a series of pageants put on by specific guilds at named locations which indicate the following sequence: Tanners (at St John's Church), Drapers (at the Cross), Smiths (at Little Park Street), Weavers (at Much Park Street).[16] But had these been guild representatives *welcoming* the monarch, protocol (as reflected in the Corpus Christi marching order) would have demanded the sequence: Tanners (assuming they belong with the Barkers or Corvoisers), Smiths, Weavers, Drapers. With due reservations in the light of differences in context and date, the discrepancy between the two suggests that the guilds did not see the *order* of the pageants as embodying themselves or their status, and so the usual, intensely contested, conventions of order and precedence could be suspended.

Simple as this is, and whatever the truth for this particular instance, this experiment seems to provide us with a tool – a somewhat unusual, and potentially useful tool – for discerning an indigenous distinction between cultural activities, that is a distinction made by members of the culture concerned, as opposed to an analytical distinction imposed by the external, scholarly observer. (We can imagine how useful it would have been at an earlier stage in the study of medieval theatre to know exactly where medieval people placed the boundary between liturgy and drama.) Here we seem to have discerned the medieval boundary between ceremony and pageantry, or even theatre: if the guilds intercept an incoming monarch in a sequence which accords with local rules of precedence – however much there may be of exhibition by way of guild liveries and banners – *it is ceremony*; if the sequence of guilds does not follow the local rules of precedence – whatever the factors replacing them – *it is pageantry*. And so we move on, our curiosity aroused, to the vastly more significant field of processional movement, processional order, and "processional theatre:" to the sequencing of parades.

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[15] Hardin Craig, ed., *Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays*, Early English Text Society (hereafter EETS) es. 87 (1902; 2d ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1957; repr. 1967), xii (henceforth Craig, ed. *Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays*); Charles Phythian-Adams, "Ceremony and the Citizen: the Communal Year at Coventry 1450 – 1550," in *Crisis and Order in English Towns 1500 – 1700*, ed. P. Clark and Paul Slack (London: Routledge, 1972), 57-85, see 63.

[16] David M. Bergeron, "Medieval Drama and Tudor-Stuart Civic Pageantry," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 2 (1972): 279-93, see 281. It is evident that this order of listing is also the order of the pageants themselves, as St. John's Church was just inside one of the medieval gates (Spon gate), the subsequent stations strung out along a plausible route at increasing distances from it.

Sequencing Parades

The English station-to-station Corpus Christi plays, along with analogous but semi-dramatic Corpus Christi pageantry, belong to a very distinct category of medieval theatre in which drama and movement are intrinsically linked. And within this category they are further distinguished by the identification of their constituent elements with specific social groups (guilds) very conscious of their relative status, not least in connection with processional movement. When this latter factor is absent, therefore, the question of order can be dealt with in other ways. An instance is provided by the three-day mystery play produced by the town of Seurre, Burgundy, about and in honour of its patron saint, St. Martin, in the autumn of 1496. A few days earlier, by way of advertisement and announcement (doubtless analogous to the English crying of the banns), the entire cast of close to 200 paraded through the town on horseback. The connection between play and parade was thus merely inorganic, but the parade itself was intrinsically dramatic, in that the actors paraded in costume. It was at least quasi-processional in the sense that some thought was given to the ordering of participants, but in the absence of status-conscious groups (or, it seems, individuals) the ordering could be in terms of the second world of the characters rather than the first world of the players. Thus, in accordance with cosmological notions of order, the devils paraded first, the court of heaven in the place of honour at the rear, the whole in accordance with the image of the great chain of being.[17] The players also processed to the acting arena each morning of the three-day play, and from thence to the local church each evening, but in this case they were "mys en ordre" by the author of the play, "selon le registre," which might suggest (recalling that the full text of the York plays is called a "Register") that they marched, like a cast-list, in order of appearance.[18]

For in processions of course, in being highly visible and very public, order was of paramount importance, and indeed in the case of more complex processions marshals and heralds were on hand to see that the correct order of march was established and maintained.[19] But before going further it is necessary to insist that discussion will be confused if it is imprecise about what *kind* of procession is being invoked, and thus the nature of the connection between processional order and status: "precedence" does not always involve going in front. In terms of the relative status of participants, some processions had an ascending order, with the most prestigious coming last (except perhaps for a purely functional rearguard), some had a descending order, with the most prestigious par-

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[17] Knight, *Aspects of Genre*, 134-5.

[18] *Ibid.*, 135-36.

[19] For the example of Queen Mary's funeral in 1558, which had "haroldes rydyng to and fro to se them go in order" see *The Diary of Henry Machyn*, ed. J.G. Nichols (1848; repr. New York: Johnson Reprint, 1968), 182 (hereafter Machyn, *Diary*).

ticipants coming first (except perhaps for path-clearing ushers or whifflers),[20] while some had both.[21] Indeed it might be more accurate to say that in theory at least all processions had an apex, identified by the position of the object or person defining or motivating the procession – a monarch, [22] or a mayor,[23] a corpse[24] or Corpus Christi, a saint's relic, a bride, a lord of misrule[25] – with an ascending order ahead and a descending order following, since status is defined by or reflected in not so much order alone as *proximity to* this object or person. In practice there was however a zero option for both the ascending and descending orders: if the host is right at the rear, the Corpus Christi procession will comprise exclusively the ascending order of participants in front of it; if the mayor is right at the front, the mayoral procession will comprise exclusively the descending order of participants behind him. By my calculation, in discussing status in relation to processions, it can be legitimate to assign high status to the front, or the middle (the apex), or the rear, but never to more than one of these at the same time.[26]

It is a commonplace of discussion of the station-to-station Corpus Christi cycles that they are linked, historically or otherwise, to the Corpus Christi processions, and more generally some kind of significant connection with the procession as a distinct form of performance is implied in the near ubiquitous use of

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[20] As in English mayoral processions, where the civic dignitaries were followed by livery companies in descending order of status; see Smuts, "Public ceremony and royal charisma," 72.

[21] The three options are neatly set out and exemplified by Kathleen Ashley in her "Introduction: The Moving Subject of Processional Performance," to *Moving Subjects*, 7-34, see 17-18.

[22] For some specific instances of the "order of march" of royal processions entering Paris see Bryant, *The King and the City*, 227-32, tables 2-9 (tables 6 and 7 suggest some interesting discrepancies between English and French usage); for Queen Elizabeth leaving London on progress in 1561 see Machyn's, *Diary*, 263-4.

[23] Machyn's *Diary*, 47-8 (London Lord Mayor's parade in 1553).

[24] For Henry VIII's funeral procession and a discussion of the principles of protocol involved, see Jennifer Loach, "The Function of Ceremonial in the Reign of Henry VIII," *Past and Present* 142 (Feb. 1994): 43-68, see 57-58. Inevitably Machyn's *Diary* has detailed descriptions of the funeral corteges of Londoners of various degrees, e.g. a squire, 283, a knight, 244, a nobleman's wife, 242, and an earl, 83; see also Nichols' "Introduction" to Machyn's *Diary*, xxi-xxii, for further contemporary examples.

[25] For instances of the latter see Machyn, *Diary*, 13-14 (Court Lord of Misrule of winter revels of 1551-5), 137 (Lord and Lady of May, 1557). Machyn also reports (*Diary*, 33) a procession which has attracted some attention as including a pageant which may be an early analogue of the cure scene of the mummers' plays. But the cure here (of Jack of Lent) is subsidiary, as is on this occasion the Lord of Misrule: the apex in this case, "hanged with cloth of gold," is a mysterious "wyrth," so that the procession technically remains undefined.

[26] For completeness' sake it might be possible to posit a procession with a "negative" apex such as a criminal or a scapegoat and prestige accordingly measured in terms of distance from it rather than proximity to it, and high prestige consequently associated with both the front and the rear. This is unlikely to be relevant for the Corpus Christi plays (although it might be for the processions of the Passion plays within them).

the term, "processional staging" when speaking of, for example, the York Cycle. When guilds participated in the ordinary Corpus Christi processions, which usually seems to have meant their representatives carrying candles ahead of the Host, they were acutely and aggressively aware of the way the order in which they paraded reflected (or determined) the relative prestige and standing of the guilds within the community: civic records bear witness to bitter, decades-long disputes on precedence between adjacent guilds in the procession (sometimes resolved by splitting the procession into parallel columns).[27]

But here, too, guilds seem to have distinguished between this *ceremonial* kind of procession, and "mere" pageantry, in which exhibitions of some kind were paraded, including cycles of plays. There is a fascinating glimpse into this kind of thinking in the order of march for Corpus Christi decreed at Freiburg im Breisgau in 1516. The German vocabulary (as often) is close to being systematic, in that there is one list comprising merely a sequence of guild names, headed, "the order in which the guilds will follow after each other on Corpus Christi day or in other such *processions* [*processen*]," and another comprising a sequence of guild names and against them the subjects of their pageants (mainly scenes from salvation history, from Adam and Eve to Doomsday), headed, "the order of the *perambulation* [*vmbgang*] on Corpus Christi day." That procession and perambulation were seen as distinct types of cultural activity is indicated by the many discrepancies between the two lists with regard to the order of the participating guilds, many of whom feature in both (it will be noted that the perambulation list includes the apprentices of several crafts as well as the craft guild itself):

Processional order		*Sequence of pageants*	
"Der zunftkortzen ordnung wie die ... zu vnsers herren fronlichnams tag oder zu andern sollichen processen uff einander gan sollent":		"Die ordnung des vmbgangs vff vnsers herren fronlichnams tag ... Des örsten gat der schülmaister mit der procession vnd mit creutz vnd fannen vnd die schüller ...	
[1.] Metzger	(to 13)	[1.] **Moler**	[Adam, Eve,Cain, Abel]
[2.] Küffer	(to 12)	[2.] Küfferknecht	[Abraham & Isaac etc.]
[3.] Moller	(to 1/15)	[3.] **Brotbocken**	[Annunciation etc.]

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[27] For a continental example, see Peter Arnade, *Realms of Ritual: Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), 55-56; for England, Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991; repr. 1994), 263 (henceforth Rubin, *Corpus Christi*). Benjamin R. McRee reports the ultimate reconciliation of competing status claims in a Shrewsbury agreement of 1461, which saw two guilds marching not merely in parallel columns, but (presumably lest right should be more prestigious than left) swapping positions with each pair of marchers: "Unity or Division? The Social Meaning of Guild Ceremony in Urban Communities," in *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, ed. Barbara A. Hanawalt and Kathryn L. Reyerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 189-207, see 203, n. 2 (henceforth McRee, "Unity or Division?").

[4.] Schnider	(to 5)	[4.] Kilchher	[Shepherds etc.]
[5.] Schumacher	(to 7)	[5.] **Schnider**	[Three Kings]
[6.] Gerwer	(to 20)	[6.] Kilchher	[Simeon & Anna etc.]
[7.] Zimerlyt	(to 9)	[7.] **Schümacher**	[Flight into Egypt]
[8.] Brotbocken	(to 3)	[8.] Schniderknecht	[Entry; Last Supper]
[9.] Reblyt	(to 22)	[9.] **Zimerlytt**	[Mount of Olives]
[10.] Krömer	(to 17)	[10.] Schümacherknecht	[Arrest]
[11.] Schmid	(to 21)	[11.] Schmidtknecht	[Crown of Thorns]
[12.] Tucher	(-)	[12.] **Küffer**	[Trial]
[13.] Karrer	(-)	[13.] **Metzger**	[Crucifiction]
		[14.] Bernhart gartner	[Mary and John]
		[15.] Geltschmid vnd **moller**	[Brurial]
		[16.] Brüderschafft	[St Sebastian]
		[17.] **Krömer**	[St George]
		[18.] Burgersz sun	[St. Ursula & Appolonia]
		[19.] Paule horgansz	[unspecified *figur*]
		[20.] **Gerwer**	[Death]
		[21.] **Schmid**	[Saved Souls]
		[22.] **Reblyt**	[Damned Souls]

This palpable distinction between procession and pageant sequence may be underlined as much as compromised by the connection indicated in the quoted headings: the procession is not so much distinct from the perambulation as a distinct part of it, for of the "*umbgang*" the order says: "In front goes the schoolmaster with the *procession* and with a cross and banners" before going on with the list of pageants.[28]

The distinction in these terms between procession and pageant-sequence is equally emphatic in those English towns where the latter was replaced by, or developed into, a cycle of plays, each play on its own pageant-wagon, each play produced by a particular guild. The sequence of the plays of course followed the salvation narrative, and as often observed, practical considerations sometimes determined the assignment of plays to guilds: wealthy guilds (not necessarily the most prestigious) might be assigned plays requiring elaborate effects or many performers (like Doomsday or the Crucifixion); leather-trades might get Adam and Eve (on account of the white-leather body-suits), shipbuilders or mariners for obvious reasons Noah and the Ark, goldsmiths the Three Kings, etc. This in itself would inevitably mean that *the sequence in which the guilds' respective pageants passed through the streets differed from the order in which the guilds would go in procession at Corpus Christi or other times*. It is also worth recalling that the relationship between a given play and a particular guild was emphatically displayed in connection with the performance, not just a matter for the civic records: as will be noted later, guild members, sometimes even the

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[28] Brooks, "Processional Drama and Dramatic Procession," 149-50. For a recent study of the Freiburg Corpus Christi pageantry in its local context see Cora Dietl, "A Corpus Christi Play as Part of the Habsburg Monarchy's Politics," *European Medieval Theatre* 6 (2003 for 2002): 109-119.

entire membership, in livery, accompanied their pageant wagon through the streets of the city concerned.

Such discrepancy is not merely predictable but discernible at Norwich, where we have lost the texts of the plays (performed in Whitsun week) but have lists of which plays (in a cycle which covered the Biblical story from the Creation to Pentecost) were assigned to which guilds (usually groups of guilds), and these we can juxtapose with lists of the guilds' marching order in the Corpus Christi procession.[29] There is almost a touch of Christian "highest shall be lowest" ethos in the way the prestigious Mercers (in the regulations of 1533) came *last* (of the guilds) in the Corpus Christi procession (immediately ahead of the Mayor), yet in the play cycle as performed in the 1530s contributed to the *first* play (The Creation). But this is not a simple matter of a reversed order of precedence, for otherwise the sequences are arbitrarily different. For example the Smiths, who lead the procession, produce play 8, the Masons (place 2 in procession) produce play 4, the Carpenters (place 3 in procession), play 2, the Reeders (place 4 in procession), play 6, and from the opposite extreme the Grocers, who occupy place 23 in the procession, produce play 3.

Similarly at Coventry the order in which the guilds paraded with their plays (with regard to those few whose play can be ascertained) is different from the order of the Corpus Christi procession (noted above). Guild *plays* occurred in the sequence:

Shearmen and Tailors:	Nativity
Weavers:	Purification
Smiths:	Trial before Herod
Pinners:	Death of Christ
Cardmakers:	the Empty Tomb
Mercers:	Death and Assumption of Mary
Drapers:	Doomsday.[30]

In the Corpus Christi *procession* the order of these guilds would have been: Pinners, Smiths, Weavers, Cardmakers, Shearmen and Tailors, Drapers, Mercers.

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[29] Norman Davis, ed., *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, EETS. ss. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), xxviii-xxxi. It is proper to add that the situation at Norwich was extremely complex in these years, and further investigation from the current perspective would be extremely illuminating. Until 1527 the pageants were produced by (evidently undifferentiated) craftsmen within the Guild of St Luke, but a successful petition of that year (Davis, xxvii) requests that they be assigned to distinct (groups of) craft guilds, which must have produced precisely one of the crises of order this study discusses shortly. The way in which both guild and Corporation associate the pageants with what is specifically called a "procession" probably reflects notions obtaining before the change. There may be a connection with the revision of the order of march of the guilds in the Corpus Christi procession in 1533 (I give the revised order above, but the old order was no more in conformity with the order of the guild pageants).

[30] Craig, ed., *Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays*, xv.

Finally, for the guilds at York we also have an order of march, "how they shall goo in ordyr" (from 1501) for the Corpus Christi procession (which sometimes divides into parallel columns):

                        cobblers
                        porters
                        ropers and heirsters
                        glovers
                        butchers
        bakers   fullers
                        carpenters
        coverletweavers smiths
        fishmongers, fishers, mariners
        cordwainers   weavers
                        tailors
                        mercers.[31]

But in the surviving MS of the cycle those of these guilds which offer a play do so in the following order:

Play 4.	Fullers	(Garden of Eden)
Play 7.	Glovers	(Cain and Abel)
Play 8.	Fishers and Mariners	(The Flood)
Play 22.	Smiths	(The Temptation)
Play 27.	Bakers	(Last Supper)
Play 28.	Cordwainers	(Agony in the Garden)
Play 36.	Butchers	(Death of Christ)
Play 38.	Carpenters	(Resurrection)
Play 42.	Tailors	(Ascension)
Play 45.	Weavers	(Assumption)
Play 47.	Mercers	(Last Judgement)[32]

The considerable discrepancies are in this case all the more striking given the long-running dispute prompted by the dissatisfaction of the Cordwainers at their place in the Corpus Christi procession.[33] There is no way the York Cordwainers would have accepted marching through the streets of their city so far

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[31] *Records of Early English Drama (REED): York*, ed. Alexandra F. Johnston and Margaret Rogerson, 2 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 186. This list is cited with due reservations in the light of the complications and controversy about the relationships between the various guild and pageant lists in connection with the historical development of the cycle; the 1501 order is chosen as closer than those of the early fifteenth century to the date of the surviving play texts (the Register of 1463-77).

[32] As in *The York Plays*, ed. Richard Beadle, York Medieval Texts, 2nd ser. (London: Arnold, 1982) (henceforth Beadle, *York Plays*). The discrepancy has been remarked upon from a different perspective (and perhaps a little optimistically) as a symptom of "egalitarianism" by Mervyn James in his *Society, Politics and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), ch. 1, "Ritual, drama and social body in the late medieval English town," 36; the analogous situation at Chester is touched on on 36, n. 60.

[33] Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 263.

"down" the list in relation to (i.e. ahead of) the Weavers and Tailors if they sensed that the sequence of pageants in the York Cycle was in any formal sense a procession (i.e. with ascending status: if with descending status there is conversely no way the Weavers and Tailors would have accepted their positions so far behind the Cordwainers).

I would claim that all this involves more than a curiosity of medieval protocol or a detail of medieval staging. There is no doubt that the guilds saw their prestige as emphatically invested in their contribution to the Corpus Christi play, but this was evidently manifested in the splendour or success of the performance rather than the order of march. From this evidence I draw a rather disturbing conclusion: *in no significant sense* – that is in no sense that had any significance in late-medieval English urban culture – *were the station to station cycle plays "processional:"* the constituent pageants were experienced *in succession*, but not *as a procession*. The Corpus Christi procession was ceremony; the Corpus Christi play was pageantry, or even theatre: the two were not perceived as belonging to the same category of cultural production.

This in turn must have implications both for our appreciation of the cycle plays and for our understanding of their relationship to processions in general and the Corpus Christi processions in particular. In diachronic terms this perspective has implications for the debate – to the extent it is still current – on the developmental relationship between, say, the York Corpus Christi Play and the York Corpus Christi procession.[34] Since they are distinct types of cultural production there can have been no steady, gradual development from the one to the other, via, say, an intermediate form in which the guilds were accompanied by non- or less- dramatic pageants. Any scenario of this kind would require a moment of massive discontinuity in which the social order of the procession (as ceremony) was replaced by the theatrical order of the play-sequence (as pageantry). The Freiburg example does indicate that the guild procession and a narrative sequence of pageants could be combined, but provided the pageants constituted a single, separate unit attached to the procession.

Less complex but perhaps more germane to current discussions are the synchronic implications for the way we more generally discuss the Corpus Christi plays as "processional," that is in applying to them the vocabulary and/or the connotations of medieval procession. To put it bluntly: we should not do so. They were play-cycles: sequences of plays; not processions. And in general we should be cautious in (or rather stop) applying to the sequence of the plays or pageants, status conventions deriving from the ordering of processions: those conventions were inoperative in ordering sequences of pageants and plays.

For example, Alan Fletcher will probably need to reconsider some of his remarks on the pageants paraded by trade guilds and other associations in Dublin on Corpus Christi Day, as specified in the Corporation order from 1498. These are clearly semi-dramatic pageants which did not need to stop to be ap-

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[34] Cf. Martin Stevens, "The York Cycle: From Procession to Play," *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s. 6 (1972): 37-62.

preciated, and so could have been either separate from, or (as in Freiburg) part of, the Corpus Christi procession (to which Fletcher refers to in another connection), but in either case should be seen as a distinct phenomenon subject to different conventions. As cited by Fletcher, the 1498 order makes no reference to the vessel containing the Host or to clerical participation (or even to the Mayor – as opposed to the "mock" Mayor of the Bullring). The order is exact in its terminology, making no use of the word "procession," but headed "Corpus christi day a pagent," and opening: "the pagentes of corpus christi day." Most of the pageants are on Biblical subjects, presented as usual in their *narrative* order: Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah's Ark, Abraham and Isaac, and so on. In some cases, as Fletcher notes, "there is an appropriateness between a trade and the topic presented," but as in the play cycles this is tantamount to the suspension of the principles of processional order (based on status). In being assigned Adam and Eve for practical reasons the Dublin Glovers are doomed to whatever relative status in a real Corpus Christi procession would be associated with coming ahead of the Dublin Mariners, Shipcarpenters and Salmon-fishers, who for equally practical reasons get Noah's Ark, and who thus in turn are doomed to whatever relative status in a real Corpus Christi procession would be associated with coming ahead of the Dublin Skinners and Tanners, who for practical reasons (the camel he rides on to the promised land) get Moses. It is therefore doubtful if, simultaneously, the principles of processional order can be applied in assigning prestige to the association or the pageant which comes at the end of the sequence (not least, to invoke another principle, if significance has already been assigned to the association and pageant featuring in the *middle* of the sequence). These considerations jeopardise Fletcher's entire interpretation of this Corpus Christi "procession" as demonstrative of the shifting balance of status within the Dublin community.[35]

Similarly it is necessary to question some of the assertions about the York plays which are based on transferring principles appropriate rather (or only) to the York Corpus Christi procession (or other processions). Thus in a highly complex discussion rendered more complex by its diachronic perspectives, Martin Stevens links the production of some of the last plays in the cycle by some of the more significant guilds to precisely the status of those guilds, *as if the plays were a procession*:

> The end of the dramatic procession was certainly dominated by some of the more powerful trade and craft guilds in York to help give a climactic close to the play and, not so incidentally, to bring recognition and honour to their guilds. In a very general sense the dramatic procession reflects the hierarchical parade order associated with the solemn Corpus Christi

[35] Alan J. Fletcher, "Playing and Staying Together: Projecting the Corporate Image in Sixtenth-Century Dublin," in *Civic Ritual and Drama*, ed. A.F. Johnston and W. Hüsken (hereafter Johnston and Hüsken), LUDUS 2 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997), 15-37, see 22-23 (text of the 1498 order), 23-24 (interpretation of sequence), 25 (the Corpus Christi procession proper).

procession, and that fact, too, provides the proper atmosphere for bringing the play to a close.[36]

To this, within its own terms, it can be objected that the correspondence to the Corpus Christi procession is indeed in a "very general" sense, and anyway the correspondence to the Corpus Christi procession does not mean automatically that bringing up the rear corresponded to high status. Taken as a whole (and not just its guild sequence) the Corpus Christi procession was defined by the vessel containing the host, and status was therefore reflected in proximity to this apex, before or after, with the places of lowest status those at the beginning and the rear of the procession. A lot will therefore depend on the composition of the "procession." That the Weavers, Cordwainers, Tailors and Merchants (or rather those bearing candles on their behalf) come towards the end of the sequence of crafts in the Corpus Christi procession-proper probably does reflect well on their status in relation to other crafts, assuming (as seems likely) that they are marching ahead of the Eucharistic apex of the procession. But that their plays come at the end of the cycle proves nothing of the kind. To start with, as we have seen, the York Cordwainers, having been in violent dispute for decades over their place in the procession, uncharacteristically acquiesced in producing (and accompanying) the 28th play of the 47. If Stevens is thinking of some period when the pageants were supposedly part of the Corpus Christi procession, then everything would depend on whether the plays came ahead of the apex (which would mean last is best) or behind the apex (which means first is best), but as the Freiburg evidence suggests, even when the pageants are part of the procession, processional order does not apply to them.

We are left with the notion of a separate play-sequence in some way *analogous to* a Corpus Christi procession, but then we are obliged to ask, analogous to the guild-candles segment of the procession (with status increasing towards the rear) or analogous to the Corpus Christi procession as a whole (with a status apex somewhere in the middle, corresponding say to the pageants on the Passion or the Last Supper)? We might also query just how much status there was for the York Mercers in producing the last play in the cycle, which effectively meant being obliged to assemble with their pageant at 4:30 a.m. and then wait for almost 13 hours before moving into the first station at about 5:25 p.m., starting a series of performances which sometimes couldn't be completed because of the onset of darkness.[37] But of course none of the above objections is necessary,

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[36] Martin Stevens, *Four Middle English Mystery Cycles* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 34 (henceforth Stevens, *Four Middle English Mystery Cycles*).

[37] The 5:25 p.m. setting off for the Mercers is based on Margaret Dorrell's timetable in "Two Studies of the York Corpus Christi Play," *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s. 5 (1971):63-111, at 107 (henceforth Dorrell, "Two Studies of the York Corpus Christi Play"); for the 4:30 a.m. assembly for all plays see the 1415 Proclamation in *REED: York*, 25, and for finishing after dark Richard Beadle, "The York Cycle," (henceforth Beadle, "The York Cycle") in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, ed. Richard Beadle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 85-108, see. 88 (henceforth *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*) and Dorrell: 84.

since Stevens' assertions are based on the illegitimate procedure of assigning to the play-sequence a processional (or even quasi-processional) status, which is not in accordance with contemporary attitudes.

The Corpus Christi pageants, then, did not constitute a procession in the technical sense which had significance for the Middle Ages. They nonetheless pass by in sequence, and we may speculate briefly on the significance of the sequential nature of the performance. As Meg Twycross has remarked:

> one of the main features of the Corpus Christi play was this processional quality, a sense of marvel following upon marvel. We should remember that the whole event was a performance, not just the individual pageants enclosed in it.[38]

This will of course have been more evident if the sequence comprised "mere" pageants, which did not need to stop at given stations for the performance of a play. With plays, the sense of succession will be suspended during the performance of any one of them, and for any ensuing pause. While the arithmetic is daunting, it is evident that when a shorter play was followed by a longer one, an interval would develop which increased at each station. In Margaret Dorrell's systematic timetable for the York Plays, a delay of one minute at the second station between plays 4 (Eden) and 5 (Fall) has extended to 11 minutes by the last station. More disturbing of continuity (where one would have thought it was needed) is the initial 8 minutes (at the second station) between play 8 (the Building of the Ark) and play 9 (the Flood), which has grown to a massive one hour and 28 minutes by the last station. This is by far the longest of the delays, but other substantial intervals include the (at the last station) 44 minutes between this latter play 9 (Flood) and 10 (Abraham and Isaac), 44 minutes between plays 17 (Magi) and 18 (Purification), and 55 minutes between plays 25 (Lazarus) and 26 (Entry into Jerusalem). At other times, of course (which is why the cycle did not take a week), shorter plays back up behind a longer one, ready to move into the station as the preceding play is vacating it, and adding to the sense of continuity.[39]

Chester seems to have deployed a system of runners to keep the pageants moving at a steady rate, which may have ensured a more uniform rhythm of play and delay. David Mills, however, who knows more than most about the Chester plays and the Chester records (having edited both) and who has seen modern productions, emphasises that we tend to overlook the "*discontinuity* of performance" (my emphasis) involved in "watching one carriage removed and the next manhandled into place by the putters and secured for performance."[40]

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[38] Meg Twycross, "The Theatricality of Medieval English Plays," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, 37-84, see 47.

[39] Dorrell, "Two Studies of the York Corpus Christi Play:" 102-7.

[40] David Mills, *Recycling the Cycle: The City of Chester and its Whitsun Plays* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 119-20 (discontinuity) and 121 (the runners).

The Movement of Individual items

Such considerations – the limited sense of continuity associated with the sequence of plays, and the technically-speaking non-processional status of the sequence – only render potentially more significant, as differentiating this type of theatre from other types of theatre, the movement of the *individual* pageant in relation to the audience at a given station, with which for illustrative purposes we can again juxtapose the reverse form, the movement of the audience (the royal party) in relation to the individual stationary pageant in a royal entry.

Phases of Contact

Performance in both cases is enabled by performers and spectators gradually coming closer together, and as they do so (whichever of them is mobile), a series of communicative thresholds are crossed. The *visual* threshold is crossed when they come within sight of each other, initially so broader effects and colours can be discerned, then details, leading ultimately to the crossing of the *textual* threshold which is achieved when the audience can read any texts (typically explications of symbolism) displayed. Somewhere in between, an *aural* threshold is crossed when the audience can hear any noises (music, shouting, bells, shooting of firearms) made by the performers, and this too will shade into a discursive aspect with the crossing of the *verbal* threshold which is achieved when the audience can both hear and understand the speech of the performers. At this close range we may for completeness sake include an *olfactory* threshold crossed with discernment of the perfumes emitted by both stationary and mobile pageants,[41] while the *gustatory* threshold crossed on tasting the food and drink offered to incoming royalty (say at the inevitable fountain flowing with wine),[42] may be encompassed within the crossing of the *physical* threshold with which the approach culminates, manifested in say the kissing of hands or the presentation of gifts (or the keys of the city). The equivalent in the Corpus Christi plays might be the harassment of the audience by devils and tyrants. Afterwards the sequence will be reversed as performers and audience separate and the one moves away from the other.

There is considerable dramatic potential in this relative movement, and the core aim of this study was originally to explore to what degree the devisers of medieval drama and pageantry exploited it. The results thus far are disappointing, although the list just enumerated may provide a valid tool for appreciating this aspect of performances to the extent it will be present under any circum-

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[41] For an instance of scent (specifically incense) deployed in a royal entry (of Richard II into London in 1392) see Kipling, *Enter the King*, 17. In 1546 the Norwich Grocers' Guild purchased "perfumes for the Gryffyn" which sat atop their pageant wagon (Davis, ed., *Non-Cycle Plays*, xxxiv). This (the motivation is obscure) was for an Expulsion from Paradise play: the devils in the Doomsday plays were presumably associated with burning sulphur or the like.

[42] Bryant, *The King and the City*, 141-3.

stances, whether or not it was deliberately and systematically made use of by the devisers of the performances.

Interceptions (Royal Entries)

With regard to interceptions, the pageants deployed on stationary scaffolds (or conduits and crosses) to intercept incoming royalty were certainly multi-media productions, capable of impinging on both sight and hearing, both at a distance and close to, and with touch, smell and taste viable supplementary options. On occasion it is possible to discern, on the part of producers, an awareness of the significance of this narrowing distance between audience and stage. In Bruges, in connection with the entry of Charles V in 1515, a castle was designed to be blown up by gunpowder at a moment when the royal party could see it, while still at a safe distance; but ignition of the fuse was mistimed (we might say confusing the visual and physical thresholds), and the explosion rained burning debris on the audience as they rode by.[43] Similarly a rather ambiguous record concerning Henry VIII's reception in York in 1541 suggests that one pageant was supplied with "as much melody as may be devised" to sound as he approached.[44] Fortunately a contemporary account of Elizabeth's entry into Norwich in 1578 is quite explicit in distinguishing visual, aural and verbal thresholds. The second pageant intercepted her at the entrance to the Market, the musicians on (in) it evidently alert and waiting:

> At the first sight of the Prince, and till hir Maiesties comming to the Pageaunte, the Musitians, which were close in the Chambers of the saide Pageant, vsed their loude Musicke, and then ceased: wherewith her highnesse stayed, to whome the personage representing the Cittie of Norwich, did speake in these wordes ....[45]

Sometimes the approach phase of the event is acknowledged implicitly or retrospectively within the performance. For example, timing coordinated with the king's approach would certainly have made more effective one of the pageants staged for Henry VI of England and France entering Paris in 1431, in which an actor dressed as a deer is chased by dogs, and on seeing the king runs to him, kneels and begs for protection.[46] During Katharine of Aragon's London entry in 1501 the gates of the castle of Policy swing open miraculously at her approach, prompting the castellan to search the skies for a possible explanation, his eye

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[43] Wim Hüsken, "Politics and Drama: the City of Bruges as Organizer of Dramatic Festivals," in *The Stage as Mirror: Civic Theatre in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. Alan E. Knight (Cambridge: Brewer, 1997), 165-87, see 168-69.

[44] *REED:York*, p. 272.

[45] *REED: Norwich 1540 – 1642*, ed. David Galloway (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 256, emphasis added. The same technique was used under household auspices as Queen Elizabeth on progress in the summer of 1591 approached the stately home of Lord Montecute: .".. vpon sight of her Maiestie, loud musicke sounded, which at her enteraunce on the bridge suddenly ceased. Then was a spech deliuered..." *REED: Sussex,* ed. Cameron Louis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 188.

[46] Bryant, *The King and the City*, p. 175.

finally lighting on Katharine (presumably as she draws up to him and halts) as "the bright star of Spain, Hesperus."[47] Commenting on this instance, Gordon Kipling notes that in London Lord Mayors' Shows of 1611 and 1616 directed by Antony Munday, at the approach of the mayoral party noble predecessors are inspired to emerge from their tombs (to offer the customary praise and advice).[48] Also qualified for inclusion here may be instances when the performance registers belatedly the presence of the royal audience (with the implication this is a recent change; they had not been there a moment previously). Queen Elizabeth's coronation entry was not the first or only time when in a pageant of the Judgement of Paris, about to award the prize to Venus, Paris notices the presence of the royal beauty and awards it to her. The same device was used to compliment Anne Boleyn in 1533,[49] and there was a variant on the formula in Paris in 1491 for the entry of Anne of Brittany, bride of Charles VIII. In one pageant a figure representing Charles calls for all the most beautiful women in the realm to present themselves with a view to selection as the royal spouse, only to realize, on seeing Anne before the pageant, that the project is unnecessary.[50]

At the moment of closest contact between royal audience and scaffold a lot will depend of course on whether the mobile audience stop or ride on by. It may be assumed that the growing ambition and complexity of the late medieval and Renaissance royal entries suggest a shift from tableaux designed to be seen literally in passing to more theatrical exhibitions designed to be appreciated during a halt,[51] but the change need not have been steady or irreversible.

There may even be instances of an odd hybrid in which a fairly elaborate or indeed dramatic pageant was geared to cater for an audience which rode by (albeit slowly) rather than actually stopping to watch. Early Parisian royal entries seem sometimes to have deployed a stage some sixty yards long, set up not athwart the royal line of march, but along it. The earliest hints of such an arrangement occur in connection with the entry of Queen Isabella in 1389. Froissart describes her moving along the customary route through the rue St. Denis, and approaching one of the traditional sites for scaffolds, the hospital of the Trinité, where:

> ... on the street, there was a scaffold, and on the scaffold a castle, and the length of [*au long de*] the scaffold was arranged the "Pas Saladin", and all the personages, the Christians on the one hand [*part*] and the Sarasins on the other. ... And a bit above them was impersonated the King of France and the Twelve Peers of France ....

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[47] Gordon Kipling, "Triumphal Drama: Form in English Civic Pageantry," *Renaissance Drama*, n.s. 8 (1977): 37-56, see 43.

[48] Kipling, *ibid.*, 43, n. 17.

[49] Gordon Kipling, "'He that saw it would not believe it:' Anne Boleyn's Royal Entry into London," in *Civic Ritual and Drama*, ed. Johnston and Hüsken, 39-79, see 39.

[50] Bryant, *The King and the City*, 155.

[51] For the evolutionary view see Perret, "The Meaning of the Mystery," particularly 197 and 201.

When the Queen's litter arrives at the scaffold, King Richard (Lionheart) from the Christian party goes to the King of France to obtain permission to attack the Saracens, and duly does so, initiating a battle which lasted "une bonne espace" and was watched "moult voulentiers." Froissart does not specify (as he does for the preceding scaffold) that the Queen *stopped* to watch, and it is pretty clear that she observed the *next* scaffold "as she passed," so it is just possible to imagine the battle raging on this long stage as the audience moved past and along it.[52] The situation is perhaps a little clearer for the entry of Henry V (of England) in 1420. At a point more towards the end of his route (which had taken him along the rue St. Denis to the Isle de la Cité), was a long stage, described as follows by a contemporary observer:

> In the Rue de la calandre in front of the Palais there was a most touching mystery, a living representation of the Passion of Our Lord, just as it is depicted around the choir of Notre Dame. The staging was about a hundred paces long, reaching from the Rue de la Calandre to the walls of the Palais.[53]

The analogy with the frieze strongly suggests moving along and viewing pictures in a narrative series, and indeed the original formulation gives a stronger impression of an audience viewing them *as they pass*: the plural scaffolds (*eschaffaulx*) "lasted" (*duroient*) a hundred paces, "coming" (*venant*) from the rue de la Calendre "as far as" (*jusques aux*) the walls of the palace.[54] In the most plausible instance a "mystery" of the Nativity from the Annunciaton to the flight into Egypt was staged for the entry of Henry VI in 1431 on the rue St. Denis at the Trinity Hospital station mentioned earlier. Our local observer tells us: "the staging reached from a little beyond St. Sauveur to the end of the rue Darnetal, where there is a fountain called the Queen's Fountain."[55] This time the local references indicate clearly that the stage was long, about 200 feet, and was positioned *along* the rue St Denis, up which the royal party was moving.[56] It is very likely they will therefore have literally followed the action and moved on from one scene to another, pacing alongside the Archangel Gabriel from heaven to Nazareth and the holy family from Nazareth to Bethlehem, and from Bethlehem along the road to Egypt.

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[52] *Oeuvres de Froissart*, ed. K. de Lettenhove (1867-77; reprint Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1967), vol. 14, 9 (my translation).

[53] *A Parisian Journal, 1405 – 1449*, tr. J. Shirley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 154 (henceforth *Parisian Journal*, tr. Shirley). Shirley's street map of medieval Paris, fig. 4, is useful in recreating the topographical detail of these Parisian entries.

[54] Konigson, *L'Espace Théatrale Médiévale*, 201-2.

[55] *Parisian Journal*, tr. Shirley, 270.

[56] Bryant, *The King and the City*, 151 and note 37. I am assuming the 200 feet estimate is not affected by Bryant's apparently confusing the Ponceau and Queen's Fountains: the rue Darnetal was and is where it was. Bryant is in error in saying this mystery had the same topic as the one put on for Henry V in 1420. Bryant notes that a performance with the same topic had greeted Henry V at this station back in 1420, so the longways stage might also have been used on that occasion

I know of no instance where the performance deliberately anticipates, incorporates or responds to the detachment of audience and stage as the royal cavalcade moves on. This may, however, be the place to report my puzzlement at those triumphal arches (reported in connection with Parisian entries) apparently with decorations or inscriptions on the side facing *away* from the approaching audience:[57] are the royal party meant to observe them over their shoulders as they ride away, or are they for the sake of the watching populace, or added with a view to later publication?

This is a rather meagre harvest, and may not augur well for the significance of built-in movement in the form where the stage approaches the audience, as represented by some of the English mystery cycles.

Parades (Mystery Plays)

We can at least be certain that the approach of a particular pageant *to* a given station, and its departure *from* that station, will have constituted a mobile spectacle qualifying as a parade (if not a procession) in its own right. In addition to the wheeled pageant itself as an imposing visual exhibition, it would comprise the men employed to pull and manhandle the wagon, those actors, singers and musicians who were not on the wagon, any animal (live or articulated) to be used as a mount in the action, any stage-hands needed to produce effects, plus – as innumerable guild records testify – some or as often *all* of the members of the guild responsible for the pageant, who are to accompany it throughout its route, presumably in livery, and in some cases specified as carrying swords.[58] If these guild members did not have the task of clearing a path through the crowds then whifflers or ushers would be needed to achieve this, and it is hard not to suspect that the guild's banners were also part of the cortege. This would indeed make an impressive visual spectacle, aurally enhanced if the pageant approached or departed to the accompaniment of music or singing. It is not certain whether the concluding stage direction of the final play at York, The Last Judgement (47), which has God. ... *cum melodia angelorum transiens a loco ad locum* (l. 380SD) refers to movement within the pageant from earth to heaven, or to movement with the pageant from station to station, but payments to minstrels at Chester suggest (in not specifying a particular task) that they were to accompany the wagons through the streets.[59] And these impressions based on the records are amply confirmed by modern, original-staging productions: "the sheer spectacle of even moderately dressed converted farm wagons accompanied in procession

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[57] Bryant, *The King and the City*, 165, 196.

[58] Beadle, ed., *The York Plays*, 37; Dorrell, "Two Studies of the York Corpus Christi Play," 78-80.

[59] Richard Rastall, "Music in the Cycle," in *The Chester Mystery Cycle: Essays and Documents*, ed. R.M. Lumiansky and David Mills (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 111-164, see 131, 133-134, and 136-7.

by costumed and masked actors, some with musicians, approaching an expectant audience is unparalleled in English theatre."[60]

But of course the most vital question is whether the business or the effect of the arrival and departure on a mobile stage is somehow reflected or exploited in the action or dramaturgy of the play itself. It is potentially the definitive feature of station-to-station performance. For as long as the wagon is *stationary* we are effectively in the familiar realm of scaffold-and-place theatre.[61] The only difference here (apart from the multiplicity of stages already dealt with), is that immediately prior to and after the performance that scaffold, and the actors on it or with it, are visibly and emphatically mobile, presenting both a challenge and an opportunity to medieval playwrights and actors. It is of course legitimate to speculate in an intelligent and informed way on how a given play would work and what effect it would have under these circumstances, and to check these speculations by experimenting with original-staging productions, but it would undoubtedly be an added satisfaction if this very special context could be seen to have left any distinguishing mark on or in the plays concerned, as represented by their surviving texts.

In a potentially paradigmatic study of this kind, Alan E. Knight notes that "Dramatic spectacles of the late Middle Ages were mounted on either fixed or mobile stages," each with numerous variations, and that this perspective has significant implications for our appreciation of them:

> ... the type of stage used for a dramatic presentation had a determining influence on both the play's conception and its performance. The requirements of the stage, moreover, had a direct bearing on which aspects of a story's meaning could be conveyed to the spectators and which aspects of contemporary society would be mirrored in the spectacle.

By way of exemplification he offers a comparative analysis of two French dramatizations of the Susanna legend: one "presented on a fixed stage (probably indoors) as part of an enormous mystery play," the other "mounted on a wagon in the setting of a great civic procession."[62] But the latter is one of Lille plays, of which Alan Knight tends to use the term "processional" in a rather broad sense: they were indeed performed "in the setting of," or "at" (page 205) the Lille procession, but not *in* it. As Knight's ensuing contextualization indicates, the Lille Susanna play will have been performed twice: once (in mime) as the Lille

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[60] John Marshall, "Modern Productions of Medieval English Plays," in *Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, 290-311, see 303. It may also be relevant to speculate that with much of the space at the stations taken up by the wagon itself and scaffolds for paying spectators, many citizens may have experienced the plays more as mobile pageants, in the streets between stations.

[61] Thus J. W. Robinson, *Studies in Fifteenth-Century Stagecraft* (Kalamazoo: EDAM, 1991), 29, can claim that "Both the Wakefield Master and the York Realist write explicitly for the Place-and-Scaffold method of presentation and show themselves thoroughly at home with its possibilities," even though (at least) one of them had also to contend with a "scaffold" that moved between performances.

[62] Alan E. Knight, "The Stage as Context: Two Late Medieval French Susanna Plays," in *The Stage as Mirror*, 201-216.

procession went past the location where it was stationed, later (with the dialogue), after the completion of the procession, in the main square. It was indeed performed on a wagon or other form of mobile stage, but in the terms established at the beginning of this essay the mobility was enabling, not dramatically significant. It enabled the local people who produced the play (like the dozen or so other groups doing the same) to get their stage from their neighbourhood into the city centre and then to move it from the one venue to the other, but there is no indication that the stage had been or would be mobile immediately before or after a given performance. It is evident from a textual reference (in another play) that for the later, full performance, a given stage had at least been stationary long enough for the audience to have closed in on all sides of it. Consequently when Alan Knight identifies features which (in comparison to the play on a "fixed" stage) are likely to derive from the Lille staging arrangements, they are linked not to the stage's *mobility*, but to its *size* (pages 208 and 216). This size is in turn of course conditioned by the required mobility, but the latter remains of only secondary importance to the nature of the performance. Similar qualifications apply to the significance of the the striking dramatic procession which occurs in the course of (in the plot of) the Lille Susanna play (page 208). This procession-in-the-content may well have been inspired by the procession-of-the-context, the Lille procession, but that (in relation to the full performance) had occurred hours earlier, and the play wasn't in it.

For English tradition, predictably, I will take the York plays as the most suitable example, not least as this aspect of their dramaturgy was perceptively examined by Alexandra Johnston in her 1985 study, "The York Corpus Christi Play: A Dramatic Structure based on Performance Practice." Johnston examined the beginnings and endings of the plays in the York Cycle, and discerned the frequent occurrence of a couple of dramaturgical characteristics which were eminently compatible with or even prompted by, the performance context. Many plays begin with "a significant opening statement by one or another character," be it a declaration by a figure of authority, or a tyrant's hanague, and many end with some "carefully engineered business making the last few lines of the episode a formal departure," an explicit leave-taking, sometimes addressed directly to, or at least encompassing, the audience.[63]

However, from the present perspective it is not feasible to take these insights as the point of departure for further exploration. Richard Beadle sees these features as "a *conceptual extension* of the actual repeated comings and goings of the pageants at the stations,"[64] rather than dramaturgically embedded in the performance context, and to the extent Alexandra Johnston is arguing for the latter, these characteristics are actually appealed to as contributory *evidence*

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[63] Alexandra Johnston, "The York Corpus Christi Play: A Dramatic Structure based on Performance Practice," in *The Theatre in the Middle Ages*, ed. H. Braet *et al* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1985), 362-73, see particularly 366-69 (endings), and 369-71 (beginnings).

[64] Beadle, "The York Cycle," 99 (my emphasis).

for the station to station mode of performance, in the context of a substantial debate (with Alan Nelson and Martin Stevens) on whether all the York plays were indeed performed at all the stations. There would consequently be a danger of circular argument in appreciating these dramaturgical features here in terms of a mode of performance they were previously invoked to demonstrate.[65] The circle might be broken if, say, these features were lost in those plays which are taken over from York in the Towneley Cycle, not generally reckoned to have ben performed station to station, but this is emphatically not the case. Three of the York plays concerned (11, Moses and Pharaoh; 37, Harrowing of Hell; 47, Last Judgement) open with the authoritative declaration or harangue (from Pharaoh, Jesus and God, respectively), and in the two cases where this can be checked, the derivative Towneley play (8, Pharaoh; 25, Harrowing of Hell) retains this dramaturgy even when (in the case of play 25), there are substantial differences in the actual text: The beginning of Towneley play 30, Judgement, is lost. Strikingly, while York's play on the Resurrection (38) opens with Pilate merely speaking first in a discussion with Anna and Caiphas, the derivative Towneley play (26, Resurrection) assigns him a substantial opening harangue in what should be the "station to station" manner. Meanwhile three of the York plays (20, Christ and the Doctors; 37, Harrowing of Hell; 47, Last Judgement) conclude with leave-takings which are retained (in two cases despite extensive textual differences) in the derivative Towneley plays (18, 25, 26).

Indeed we might ask more generally if these two dramaturgical features are equally characteristic of other station-to-station cycles, while *not* equally characteristic of cycles generally reckoned to be performed under other (i.e. stationary, scaffold and place) auspices. It would require a more thorough assessment, on the basis of more clearly thought out definitions, than I have been able to achieve thus far, but a glance at the (definitely station to station) Chester cycle and the (probably scaffold and place) Towneley Cycle suggests that while a significant pattern may be discernible for the concluding heralded exit, this does not seem to be the case for the opening declamation.[66]

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[65] The embeddedness in the discussion is particularly strong in Johnston's suggestion that the opening declaration is less likely to occur in plays which are backed up at a station behind a longer one and ready to start at once. It is not easy to query the logic of a scholar with unparalleled knowledge of the York records and experience of modern productions, but surely the waiting pageants would be backed up just *outside* the (by all accounts crowded) performance station, and still need to be pulled into place for performance (the circumstance which, it is suggested, may trigger the opening declaration).

[66] On a very preliminary assessment, and with unstable definitions, less than a half of the Chester plays open with a declamation compared to York's three quarters, while three fifths end with formal leave-takings, within striking distance of York's four fifths. Between one half and three quarters of the Towneley plays open with a declaration or harangue, while between one half and two thirds end with leave-takings. Here and following, references are to *The Chester Mystery Cycle*, ed. R.M. Lumiansky and David Mills, 2 vols. EETS. ss. 9, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974 and 1986), and *The Towneley* Plays, ed. Martin Stevens and A.C. Cawley, 2 vols., EETS. ss. 13 and 14 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). I have hesitated to take these comparisons further, given the current uncertainty

On further reflection the latter is unlikely to be specific to plays performed on mobile stages, but rather characteristic of plays (including these) produced under auspices in which a prerequisite for a successful performance is the trans-formation of a crowd (be it at a banquet or in a street) into an audience. Ironi-cally the fuss and bother of getting the stage into place is itself an effective means of doing this, rendering the opening declaration if anything less neces-sary. That said, it is tempting to hear the opening words of Pharaoh's harangue at the start of Moses and Pharaoh (Play 11) as spoken from the "bridge" of a mobile pageant which although it will presumably settle down as a palace, cur-rently still needs steering like a ship: "O pees, I bidde that no man passe. / But kepe the cours that I comande" (ll. 1-2); but tempting only: the lines are repro-duced in the derivative Towneley play.

It would be a more dramaturgically convincing reflection of station to sta-tion production for the beginning of a play to encompass (with or without the attention-claiming declaration) the entry of characters who (as signalled by the dialogue) are explicitly travelling. By which I mean not travelling *on* the stage, but travelling *to* the stage, that is, entering the station along the street and ad-vancing to a destination represented by the pageant, which has presumably moved into place first. The York plays do not give us stage directions distin-guishing between entrances onto the pageant and exits into the station, so it is largely a matter of interpreting the dialogue, but at York this seems quite likely to be the case with Mary and Joseph on their way to the Bethlehem stable (Play 14, Nativity), two shepherds who "walke thus" (l. 3) "ouere thees felles" (l. 35; Play 15, Shepherds), the Holy Family on their way to Egypt (Play 18, Flight into Egypt), Mary and Joseph on their way home from Jerusalem (Play 20, Doctors), the Devil on his way into the wilderness, pushing through the crowd ("Make rome, belyve, and lat me gang!," l. 1; Play 22, Temptation), the Woman Taken in Adultery (Play 24) being led to judgement, Christ on the Road to Calvary (Play 34) and of course the disciples on the Road to Emmaus (Play 40). These eight plays make up about 17% of York's 48-play cycle, which may be impressive in contrast to Towneley where the feature is less frequent, and/or less emphatic,[67] but here too it is necessary to be sceptical: when Joseph and Mary in York's Play of the Doctors (20) realize they have left Jesus in Jerusalem, they reverse direction and go back ("Agaynewarde," l. 39) to the city, duly finding him among the Doctors (presumably on the pageant wagon). One of these

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about the staging of the Towneley Cycle: Peter Meredith, "The Towneley Cycle," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, 134-162, notes (see 135), that in the absence of external information our notions on its staging must rely exclusively on the text, in whose stage directions (see 142) "there is nothing ... that gives a hint as to the type of staging involved." The danger of circular argument thus looms again.

[67] Clearest in Play 21, the Buffeting, discernible in the two Shepherds' Plays (12 and 13) and the Scourging (22); a lot depends on how close to the beginning of the play the entrance should be to link it to the movement of the play as a whole, for example the spectacular en-try of Cain with his plough and oxen 25 lines into The Murder of Abel (Play 2).

movements must therefore be against the station to station direction of the play as a whole.

To the extent it indeed is a reflection of performance conditions, this travelling entry at the beginning matches the dramatically motivated concluding departures invoked by Alexandra Johnston. Of course *any* form of theatre which cannot close a curtain on performers on stage needs to get them off by motivating the departure of the characters from the scene which the stage represents. Elizabethan stage-plays developed a "Come let us go and ..." stage-clearing formula to meet this exigency.[68] The formal leave-taking of the York Plays may be its late-medieval analogue or antecedent, verbally reinforced as it is by formulaic variations on "we will wende": "wende we hense" (9. 321), "we will wende" (19.281; 28.305), "wende we nowe" (21.106; 23. 229), "will I wende" (22.210; 24.204), "wende youre way" (32.389), "wightely wende we" (43.403), etc. Such phrases may reinforce the notion that some of these concluding leave-takings involve characters "wending" out of the station (in the direction of the next station) rather than withdrawing into the recesses of the pageant, which (as with the analogous entries) would be a significant dramaturgical correlation with the station-to-station movement of the play as a whole.

Again however it has to be acknowledged that such "wending" exits are not exclusive to station-to-station plays, and at best only a little more charcateristic of them.[69] Indeed, dramaturgical logic would suggest that motivated exits would actually be more necessary in stationary scaffold-and-place performances (especially if deploying a limited number of scaffolds), which need to clear the stage at the end of one play or scene ready for its occupation by others in the next: in station to station performances (which from this perspective actually means multiple-pageant productions) this is less essential, since each play has its own stage. There is a striking instance of this in the play of Christ with the Doctors, mentioned earlier. At York (play 20), when Joseph and Mary have found Christ among the Doctors, the holy family in due course take their leave (ll. 287-8), the Doctors evidently remaining on their Temple pageant, which will shortly move off to make room for the following Baptism pageant. But at the end of the corresponding play of the (probably stationary) N-Town cycle, Christ and the Doctors (21), following Christ's leave-taking (278, "my leve I take"), in

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[68] For this formula in the context of Elizabethan stage conventions see my "Towards the *Zielform*: The Oral Decomposition of Marlowe's 'Bad' Texts," Pre-Publications of the English Department of Odense University, ed. Erik Hansen (Odense: English Department, SDU-Odense, 2003), 29. For comparative purposes it may be worth noting that the "Come ..." formula is deployed at the end of 13 of the 21 scenes in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (about 60%), and the figure is almost exactly the same (15 out of 24, making about 60%) for *Romeo and Juliet*; the convention is so strong that at V.i.85, Romeo, going off alone, cannot help addressing the formula to his bottle of poison.

[69] Again it is very hard to determine when the phenomenon is present, but by my calculation 28 of the 47 York plays end this way (about 60%), as against 14 of the 32 Towneley plays (about 45%).

a rather desperate stage-clearing effort the Doctors insist on going with him (282): "Of yow to haue more informacyon."[70]

It would evidently be wiser to opt for the more modest thesis that this feature and the analogous travelling entry, manifestly shared with stationary, scaffold-and-place staging, would nonetheless have a special resonance under performance auspices in which the performers are literally seen to be "wending" through the streets of the city towards and away from a station immediately before and after a given performance. Perhaps the most striking instance of this appropriateness (and it is hard to think it is not deliberate) is the ending of York's "Abraham and Isaac" play (10), where the movement of the performers out of the station is motivated as the characters' departure for home from the mountain of the sacrifice (evidently represented by the pageant). "The gaynest gates now wil we wende" says the actor playing Abraham (373), immediately before continuing his way along a route that takes him through Micklegate, Ousegate, Spurriergate, Stonegate and Petergate.[71]

Journey as Theme

We have in effect now moved on to my final topic, the relationship between the first world movement of the performers in the streets (the movement *of* the play) and the second world movement of the characters across the dramatic landscape (the movement *in* the play). Emphasising a correlation between the two, and the significance of that correlation, would be very much in accord with the general tendency of criticism to suggest an overall correlation (be it doctrinally correct or politically subversive) between the world of the plays and the world within which they are being performed, with say Yorkshire (in this case Wakefield) shepherds complaining about weather, women and working conditions before moving on to Bethlehem, ranting Pharisees looking and sounding rather like bishops, and Christ welcomed to "his" city by citizens of York as much as of Jerusalem. And of course there is a good deal of movement within the plays, in addition to that which may bring characters into the station at the beginning or take them out of it at the end. When the movement is vertical, say in the fall of the angels (York Play 1) or the Ascension of Christ (Play 42), it is certainly contained within the pageant, but substantial dramatic journeying across a landscape or through a (typically Jerusalem) townscape may well be linked (in the mind of the authors, or in the perception of the audience, and it would be good to know which) with the movement of the performance:

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[70] *The N-Town Play: Cotton MS Vespasian D.8*, ed. Stephen Spector, 2 vols., EETS. ss. 11 and 12 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). Alan J. Fletcher has observed that, "Since the 1970s, opinion has generally turned against theories of processional staging for any parts of N-Town," "The N-Town Plays," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, 163-188, see 178.

[71] The plural form makes this instance measurably more suggestive than the exit line of the Second King in the Towneley play of the Magi (14): "This is the gate, I vnderstand, / That wyll me lede vnto my land" (632-33).

Abraham and Isaac on their way to the mountain (Play 10); the shepherds (Play 15) and the Magi (Play 16) on their way to the stable; Christ's Entry into Jerusalem (Play 25), his movement as a prisoner between Annas and Caiphas, Herod and Pilate (Plays 29-33) and then on the Road to Calvary (Play 34), and finally his joining the disciples on their way to Emmaus (Play 40).

It would be easier to accept the significance of this feature if we could be certain it was less characteristic of mystery cycles associated with stationary performances, but several of the above plot-journeys also feature in the Towneley cycle, which can also boast spectacular movements such as Cain with his plough and oxen in the Murder of Abel (Play 2).[72] In maintaining the link between their first and second worlds station to station performances face the additional problem that this possible sense of identity between the dramatic travelling of characters and the utilitarian movement of actors is massively countered by the significant and unignorable contradiction in the movement of the central item of the performance, the pageant wagon itself. With the obvious exception of Noah's ark (at least when it is supposed to be afloat), the moving pageant represents a stationary object: heaven and/or hell, a garden or a mountain, a castle or a stable, Bethlehem or Jerusalem. It is all very well, as above, noting the appropriateness of Abraham's leaving the station to "wend" home from the mountain through the "gates" of the city, but in a moment or two, the mountain will wend off after him.

The problem the mystery cycles faced from this discrepancy between the first-world movement of the performance and the second-world movement of the plot can be seen in perspective by the contrast with performances where the two movements coincide, and there is a one-for-one correspondence between real and dramatic locations, like the still popular ritual of the stations of the cross. In Florence, in 1390 at the Feast of the Epiphany, a group of citizens staged the journey of the Magi through the streets, travelling first (in the first world) to the Baptistery of San Giovanni, where (in the second world) they met and conversed with Herod, then on to the Church of San Marco, standing in for the Bethlehem stable, where they found and adored the Christ Child.[73] At the equivalent moment at York, the magi can and do come into a station as if travelling from home in search of Christ, and they can leave the station as if departing for home having found him, but in between they will visit a stable which came on in front of them and which goes off after them. In a simpler (one-stop) English instance (analogous to a play touched on above) the Guild of the Purification in late medieval Beverley processed through the town with a figure representing the Virgin Mary, child in arms, at the head of the column, and on arrival at the church, advancing to the high altar, "she" handed it to another

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[72] Happé, "Procession and the Cycle Drama," 43-47 notes the effective use of processions in stationary productions.

[73] Richard C. Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Academic Press, 1980), 254.

figure representing Simeon (who had, nonetheless, also walked in the procession).[74]

Equivalence between player-movement and character-movement is most threatened in sequences of plays with overlapping casts, most notably in the Passion sequence. For any one play dramatic and theatrical movements fit as, say, Christ is paraded into the station by his guards at the beginning and dragged out again at the end, provided both movements are in the direction of movement of the plays as a whole. But in that case, having seen Christ disappear in the direction of the next station at the end of a given play, the audience will then see him enter from the direction of the preceding station at the start of the next. Alert to this discrepancy, Peter Happé speculates that Christ may have gone off the way he came in, ready to come in again from the same direction, but this then breaches the equivalence between first world and second world movements, and of course the Christ who enters for the next play is represented by another actor, while the previous one and his captors are left to thread their way back (or rather forwards) through the audience to catch up with their pageant before the next station. Happé's valid perception that we are here confronted with "double space" matching the "double time" of the plays' notorious anachronisms, effectively pins down the discrepancy.[75]

Against this background we may approach with some scepticism the York play for which the significance of mobile staging has been most forcefully invoked, the entry into Jerusalem (25).[76] As in the instances just discussed, to the extent the movement of the actors through York corresponds to the movement of the characters through Jerusalem, the equation between York and Jerusalem (sometimes clearly sought by the text) will be sustained, but it is decisively undermined by the movement of the pageant, which to the extent that it represents Jerusalem, in moving through York rather emphasizes the distinction between York and Jerusalem. But the movements of the actors and/as characters are also problematic from this perspective.

The *thematic* invitation to equivalence is very strong. Christ's triumphal parade into Jerusalem is acted out within a performance mode which is itself a parade, so that the pageantry in the performance contributes to the pageantry of the performance, but while the movement of Christ and the disciples towards the Jerusalem-pageant corresponds to or continues the movement of the performers towards and into the station, it is a very brief moment. It is soon interrupted by the business of fetching the ass, which in passing produces movement against or across the flow of the pageant route. Since performances under stationary

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[74] McRee, "Unity or Division?" 193.
[75] Happé, "Procession and the Cycle Drama," 43. Ultimately of course the question here is not so much the problem of verisimilitude: medieval audiences probably had no more difficulty with these awkwardnesses than did Jacobean audiences with Shakespeare's Desdemona entering "in her bed." The present topic is how (or whether) the mystery cycles responded to the very special auspices of station-to-station production.
[76] Stevens, *Four Middle English Mystery Cycles*, 50-61; Happé, "Procession and the Cycle Drama," 41-42; Johnston, "The York Corpus Christi Play," 371-72.

auspices also make effective use of processions, if there is something special about processions in mobile performances it can only be because they are more impressive, or because there is a significant relationship, presumably a correspondance, between the two movements (of the performance and of the procession in the performance). But in what follows, the movement of Christ's group is an altogether utilitarian and unspectacular business, especially after the ass is sent back to its owner at an early stage. And as he advances Christ is intercepted by three supplicants in turn: a blind man and a cripple whom he cures, and a sinner (up a sycamore tree) who is absolved. Within the world of the play these are "real" events, but dramaturgically they merely emphasize the paradox that this play, rather than reflecting the contextual movement of the performers, is really, as we might have expected, more convincingly analogous to the modal opposite of the parade, the interceptions of the royal entry (which indeed, to complete the circle, sought to equate the welcoming of the king to his capital with the welcoming of Christ to Jerusalem). Furthermore, whatever movement Christ and his party do make towards Jerusalem is more than matched by the counter-movement of the leading citizens, who as in the first stage of a historical royal entry, go out with a good deal of pomp and music to meet him, in what is repeatedly (ll. 260; 311) referred to as a "processioune."[77] Their greetings end the play, and insofar as the action imitates contemporary ceremony, we are still outside the city; the royal parade is still to come, and the exit of the performers at the end of the play may represent its beginning. Otherwise, ironically, in a play which is paraded (in one direction) before an audience, it is the surrogates of the audience who do (in the opposite direction) the parading.[78]

This is an appropriate concluding observation to a study whose results have uniformly run counter to expectations. Performance of the York plays, taken as a whole, was not processional: the sequence was in practice subject to many interruptions and in principle did not qualify as a procession as understood by contemporaries. In the performance of individual York plays at a given station, while their coming and going were doubtless spectacular, and while there is every reason to expect that the mobile auspices will have made the experience of performance different from seeing analogous material in a stationary, scaffold-and-place, context, there is little to indicate that dramatists made any systematic

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[77] Stevens, in *Four Middle English Mystery Cycles*, duly notes (60) that this procession of the Jerusalem aldermen "advances in the opposite direction of the play proper" (through York), but will go on to claim (page 61) nonetheless that this play is "a microcosm ... of the Corpus Christi procession and cycle proper."

[78] This is of course merely a glimpse; more convincing conclusions would require a more detailed and comprehensive comparative analysis of the way journeys' and processions' beginnings, endings, and featuring within plays are handled in, say, the York and Towneley plays, perhaps building on the analytical strategies in Hans-Jürgen Diller's *The Middle English Mystery Play: A Study in Dramatic Speech and Form*, tr. Frances Wessels (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), ch. 6, "The Representation of Time and Space in the Cycles." The processional features in Towneley's Buffeting and Scourging (plays 21 and 22, the latter derivative from York) look extremely interesting in this respect.

use of the potential inherent in the relative movement of stage and audience immediately before and after performance (of which we do, occasionally, find instances in the royal welcomes). Indeed on closer examination and consideration the dramaturgical discrepancies between the movement *in* the play and the movement *of* the play are as significant as their thematic compatibilities. Moving encounters, it would seem, are not a particularly fertile habitat for dramatic performances. Mystery's end may not have been due exclusively to urban economic decline and Protestant intervention: it was perhaps just as much drama itself, in pursuit of fulfilment, moving on to new pastures more natural to it.

MEDIUM AEVUM QUOTIDIANUM

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HERAUSGEGEBEN
VON GERHARD JARITZ

Titelgraphik: Stephan J. Tramèr

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