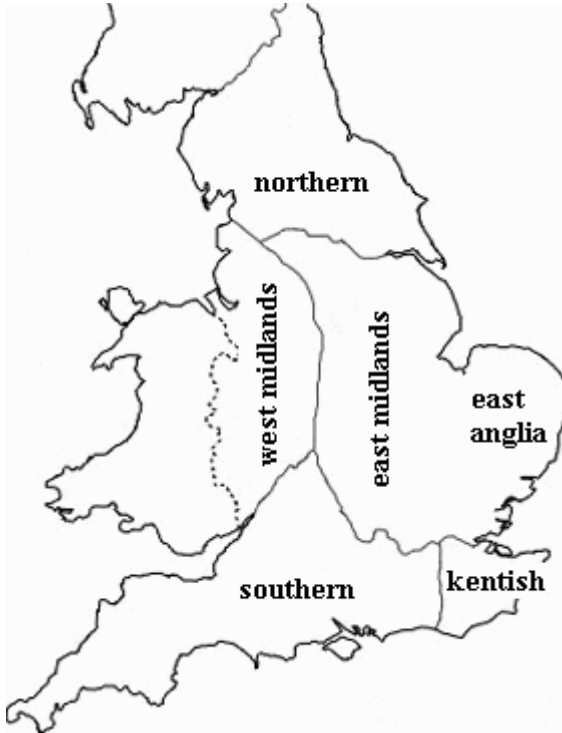


## Medieval English Drama – Additional Notes

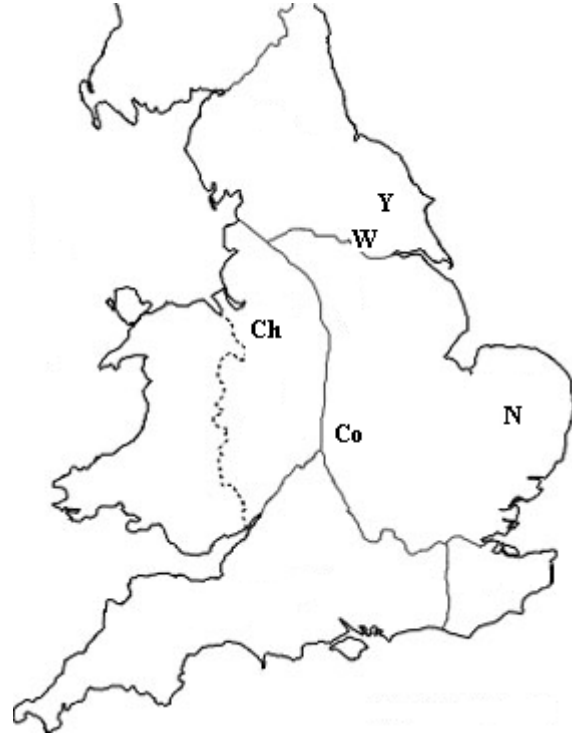
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## 1 Dialect areas and venues of the biblical cycles



The dialect areas of Middle English (1100-1500)



Venues of the biblical cycles

Ch = Chester; Co = Coventry; N = N-Town;  
W = Wakefield; Y = York

## 2 *The Killing of Abel* (Wakefield) – the dramaturgy

### Characters:

Garcio, Cain, Abel, Deus

### Stage properties:

- scaffold with two storeys: **apon this hill** (172), **ouer the wall** (299), **come downe** (442)
- plough with eight animals (25ff) (\*), **plogh** (58) (\*), **I shall hang the apon this plo** (462)
- fire and smoke (182, 276) (\*)
- **cheke-bon** (326)

### Dramatic structure:

two-people dialogues with one fixed speaker (Cain),  
bounded by monologues in audience address (AA):

**Garcio AA**, Cain-Garcio, Cain-Abel, **Cain AA**, Cain-Deus, Cain-Garcio, **Cain AA** (\*\*)  
1-24            25-58            59-332            333-343            344-375            376-464            465-476

### Acting:

- audience address (1-24, 333-343, 446-451, 465-476)
  - to signal beginning (**all hayll, peasse** 1-3) and end (**fayre well** 465),
  - to introduce characters (1-24),
  - to involve the audience (**full well ye all hym ken** 16; **the same blissyng** 447)
    - with an imputation of Cain-ness;
- posture, gesture and speech:
  - Abel            – gentle, meek, composed
  - Cain            – quarrelsome, scurrilous, frantic, stingy, cheat, liar
  - Garcio          – insolent to Cain and audience

### Anacronisms and local rooting –

- the story is set in the present of the spectators (15ff, 369),
- the biblical Cain being also the Cain that is among/in them.

\*

Either real or imaginary (mimed action).

\*\*

- (1-24)    Garcio introduces himself and his master – **audience address**
- (25-58)    Cain enters with a plough drawn by eight animals
  - and quarrels with Garcio (Pikeharnes = Rubarobe, Sgraffigna)
- (59-332)    Cain and Abel
  - greetings and scurrilities
  - offerings
  - Cain cheats on the choice of the sheaves
  - the killing of Abel
- (333-343)    Cain threatens the audience – **audience address**
  - and then is caught by fear and trembling
- (344-375)    God curses Cain
  - Cain asks to be buried in “Goudeboure” [the location of a stone quarry in Wakefield] (369)
- (376-464)    Cain and Garcio proclaim “the king’s peace” [pardon] (\*\*\*)
- (465-476)    Cain exits – **audience address**

\*\*\*

Il bando dell'indulto (Caino, in nero, proclama; **il servo, in rosso**, gli rifà il verso)

418 Ma tu fa il bravo ragazzo  
419 E grida 'udite, udite, tutti!'  
420 **Al tuo ragazzo uova e prosciutti!**  
421 Vi ordino in nome del re  
422 **Che con me e Caino fanno tre**  
423 Che nessuno muova loro accusa o colpa,  
424 **Sì, a casa del mio padrone c'è poca polpa.**  
425 Né a lui né al suo servitore,  
426 **È uscito di senno il mio signore.**  
427 Perché sono persone oneste e rette.  
428 **Che di carne mangiano sì e no due fette.**  
429 Il re così scrive e dispone  
430 **Potessi saziarmi con mezzo cappone!**  
431 Il re vuole che restino salvi e in salute  
432 **E io a farmi grandi bevute**  
433 E che vadano a loro piacimento;  
434 **Con il mio stomaco sazio e contento.**  
435 Che nessuno contro di loro faccia appello  
436 **Questo è quello che ha ucciso il fratello.**  
437 Che ognuno abbia per loro amore e riverenza  
438 **Sì, tela mal filata ha cattiva conseguenza.**  
439 Così non avrai brache a ricompensa!

### 3 *The Killing of Abel* (Wakefield) – a linguistic profile

(a mixture of Northern and North Midland forms)

#### Phonology

<a> instead of <o> :

amang *among* (393), hame *home* (424), lang *long* (77: but also ‘long’ 87, 115, 135, 138, 207, 286, 413, 439), stanys *stones* (49), world *world* (152, 468), wars, warst *worse, worst* (35, 111, 226, 252, 290, 334, 336)

<aw> instead of <ow> :

awne *own* (433), blaw *blow* (7, 277), saw *sow* (124), craw *crow* (313)

#### Morphology

*Second-person pronouns :*

thou, thee = *singular: subject and oblique case*

ye, you (5, 10) = *plural: subject and oblique case (also as a polite form of address, 43)*

*Present tense, second singular in –s :*

askis (347), bese (298), dos (362), fyndys (95), gettys (296), has (118), heris (40), sais (169), standys (62), wenys (151, 315)

*Imperative plural in –s :*

drawes (26)

*Present participle in –and :*

strykeand (393), walkand (108)

#### Syntax

*Modals that are also lexical verbs with object or that clause :*

can *know* (340)

will (229, 358, 373, 431)

wold *would* (69, 109, 253, 291)

*Auxiliary be with mutative verbs (= verbs involving a change of place or state) :*

ye were fallen (27)

*Impersonal verbs :*

me list *I like* (61: but also “I list” 161; “shall he like” 258)

#### Lexicon

gar *make, cause* (45)

mon *shall, must* (18, 267, 377, 379, 406)

rede, reyde *advise, advice* (135, 247, 259, 272, 340)

traw, trow *think* (117, 278)

wene *think* (151, 315)

weynd *go* (80, 134, 167, 303, 446, 455, 466)

wote *know* (5, 376, 377)

#### 4 *Noah* (Wakefield) – the dramaturgy

##### Characters:

Deus, Noah, Wife, 3 sons, 3 daughters-in-law

##### Stage properties:

- scaffold with two storeys
- distaff and spindle: **rok** (490), **spyndill** (528)
- staff: **staf** (552)
- ark: **ship** (172ff), **mast** (380), **sayll** (391), **helme** (393) – prefabricated
- plumb-line: **lyne** (667)
- raven and doves: **ravyn** (692), **dowfys** (700)

##### Dramatic structure:

Four serious actions alternating with two comic ones (with audience address, AA):

Noah-Deus, **Noah-Wife AA**, Noah and ark, **Noah-Wife AA**, steering the ark, end of Flood (\*)

1-262            263-351            352-416            417-607            608-754            755-806

##### Acting:

audience address (263-273, 300-312, 560-572, 573-583)

to involve women and men in the audience in taking gender sides;

spoken action (365-416)

describing and miming the building of the prefabricated ark;

posture, gesture and speech:

Noah            – solemn patriarch and henpecked husband scuffling with his wife

Wife            – peevisish, complaining, disparaging, retaliating

A large-scale model ship (352ff); a verbal staging of the Flood (495ff) (\*\*); a foreshortening of time (350 days, 661).

##### Comic realism and the familiarization of the sacred –

In the theological design of the cycles Noah and the Ark are a pre-figuration of Christ and the Church: only those who are within the Church as ‘ark of salvation’ will be saved at the final judgment (*extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*).

Biblical characters are given the traits of contemporary (even local) humanity in order to make them recognizable as bearers of a shared human plight in sacred history.

Noah is the awe-inspiring patriarch in dialogue with god, and the ordinary husband scuffling with a rebellious wife he is unsuccessful in chastising: the common human family in the dangerous waters of salvation history.

\*

(1-262) Noah, Deus, and the order to build the ark

(263-351) Noah and Wife squabble – **audience address**

(352-416) Noah builds the ark (mimed) – **spoken action**

(417-607) Noah, Sons and Daughters-in-law get on board

Wife refuses and withdraws to spin (475-533)

the Flood begins (495-507) – **verbal staging** (\*\*)

Wife jumps on board, Noah and Wife squabble (534-607) – **audience address**

(608-754) Steering the ark – the ideal human family collaborating and exchanging advice

Wife at the rudder, Noah at the plumb-line (625ff)

raven and doves (683ff)

(755-806) The Flood abates and the ark comes to rest on firm land  
Noah and his family disembark and look at the deserted world around them

\*\*

‘Verbal staging’ is characteristic of all drama: actions that cannot be represented on stage are presented verbally and left to the imagination of the spectators (cp. the Prologue to Shakespeare’s *Henry V*: “Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them / Printing their proud hoofs in the receiving earth”; and notice the cinematic close-up).

Shakespeare’s *Tempest* opens with a sea storm staged by the cries and gestures of the characters moving frantically across the bare stage, which the spectators are to take as the deck of a ship.

## 5 *The Second Shepherds' Play* (Wakefield) – the dramaturgy

### Characters:

3 shepherds, Mak and Gyll, angel, Mary with child on her knee (1078)

### Stage properties:

- scaffold with three locations: moor, Mak's house, Nativity stable (doubling with house?)
- cloak with big sleeves (273-4, 290-1, 571) (\*)
- stolen sheep (421, 471, 845-851) – real or imaginary
- cradle (482, 624, 776, 866)
- blanket: **canvas** (906)
- singing: 3-part song (shepherds, twice), lullaby (Mak), solo song (angel) (\*\*)

### Dramatic structure:

A serious main plot and a comic subplot: (\*\*\*)

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| 1-273    | the shepherds' complaints and song  |
| 274-919  | Mak's theft and Gyll's trick  |
| 920-1088 | the angel's song and annunciation, and the shepherds' visit to the manger |

The comic subplot is a parody of the Nativity (sheep in the cradle), and of 'the good shepherd', i.e. Christ come to retrieve man's soul stolen by the devil.

### Anacronisms and local rooting –

the story is set in the present of the spectators ("I thoght that we layd vs / Full nere Yngland", 510-11; and "Horbery", 657, was a town near Wakefield); the first shepherd complains about the social conditions of the Wakefield countryside (the lord's officials harassing the peasants); and Gyll earns from her spinning (430-2), that is she does piece-work for the cloth manufacture. The meaning conveyed to the audience is that of present misery relieved by the birth of Jesus – the elation being expressed by singing ("Of myrth is oure sang! / Euerlastyng glad", 964-5).

\*

They were known as 'bagpipe sleeves': the shepherds suspect that Mak's may conceal stolen things.

\*\*

- 265-273: the shepherds sing a three-part song, secular in content and probably in the style of English discant, with the tenor as the lowest voice, and syllabic (one syllable = one note).
- 919-20, 946-958: the angel's *Gloria*, solo song in very short notes, or melismatic style (one syllable = several notes). The first shepherd declares he can imitate it.
- 638-643, 686-689: Mak's lullaby, harsh and out of tune.
- 1087-1088: the shepherds leave singing a three-part song (*Gloria?* a carol?).

\*\*\*

- (1-273) The shepherds' complaints – **audience address**  
first shepherd (Coll): weather, harassment by lord's retainers (1-78)  
second shepherd (Gyb): weather, wife (79-156)  
third shepherd (Daw): weather, little food and low wages from first shepherd (170-263)  
three-part song as consolation (264-273)
- (274-919) Mak, dressed as a lord's retainer but recognised by the shepherds as a thief  
they sleep (274-386)  
Mak steals a sheep and goes to conceal it at home (387-425)  
Mak and Gyll: the sheep in the cradle (426-499)

Mak returns to the shepherds and they awaken (500-581)

Mak goes back home (582-646)

the shepherds miss the sheep and go to Mak's house (647-919)

(920-1088) The angel's song and annunciation

the shepherds discuss and imitate the song (946-958)

they visit the manger (959-1086)

they leave singing (1087-1088)

## 6 *The Crucifixion* (York) – the dramaturgy

### Characters:

4 soldiers, Jesus

### Stage properties:

- scaffold with two adjacent locations:
  - for the nailing of Jesus,
  - and for the raising of the cross (**yoone hille on high** 172, **yoone hill** 178)
- cross (39)
- hammer and nails (30)
- cord (113)
- mortise (161)
- wedges (235)
- garment: **kirtill** (289), **mantel** (298)

### Dramatic structure:

four-people dialogues with two monologues by Jesus at the beginning of the nailing and at the end of the raising of the cross (Jesus does not respond when addressed: 45, 65, 73, 249): (\*)

1-152	the nailing
153-248	the raising of the cross
249-300	Jesus' address and prayer, the soldiers' drawing of lots

### Acting:

audience address (33-34, 253-258)

spoken action (SA = saying what is being acted, with an effect of close-up and slow motion)  
emotional involvement the spectators by making them **feel** Jesus' pain (256)

posture, gesture and speech:

four soldiers grouping around a motionless Jesus (at the four sides of the cross, during both the nailing and the raising: *miles* 1 head; *miles* 2 right; *miles* 3 left; *miles* 4 feet) and professionally coordinating their work; *miles* 1 stands out as the one who bosses the others around and shirks work.

### Comico-pathetic realism and local rooting –

Rather than four soldiers (or 'knights' 1, 61, 97) – or four sadistic torturers – we see four craftsmen at work: they have a **forward** (10, 93, 'agreement', 'contract') to fulfil, and **worshippe** (14, 199, 'honour', 'reputation') to gain. The job must be well done and carried out on time (by noon, 15); and their own or other craftsmen's errors must be remedied (the holes on the cross have been bored too wide apart; the mortise is wider than the cross).

The audience's view of the scaffold is that of four craftsmen busying themselves around an inert Jesus, who for some of the time is barely visible, lying on the cross on which he is being nailed: here the spectators 'see' what the actors 'say' (stretching the limbs with a rope, hammering in the nails) – and the spoken action (saying what is being acted – words doubling action) has an effect of close-up and slow motion, effectively conveying the suffering of Jesus.

The comedy arises from the soldiers' professional narrow-mindedness and complacency, and from the incidents occurring during team work (the wrong size of the cross, *miles* 1's bossing and shirkiness, the back-breaking raising of the cross).

Soldiers 1 and 4 are comically differentiated: number 4 (standing at the foot of Jesus) is easily discouraged by difficulties; number 1 (standing at the head of Jesus) always has a solution for every problem, and is the self-appointed foreman ordering the others around, and shifting his stint on them.

\*

- (1-152) the nailing
  - the soldiers have reached Calvary and prepare for their job
  - the cross is flat on the scaffold (39)
  - Jesus prays to God (49-60), then lies down on the cross (75)
  - the soldiers use a rope to stretch Jesus' left hand (107-122) and feet (123-148) to the bores
- (153-248) the raising of the cross
  - the soldiers lift the cross at the second attempt and carry it uphill (162-218)
  - the soldiers raise the cross and drop it into the mortise (219-228)
  - the cross is unsteady and they fix it with wedges (229-248)
- (249-300) Jesus' address and prayer, the soldiers' drawing of lots
  - the soldiers are satisfied with their work
  - Jesus addresses the audience (253-258: from Lamentations 1:12) – audience address
  - and prays to God (259-264: from Luke 23:33)
  - the soldiers draw lots for Jesus' garment, and leave (288-300)

## 7 *The Crucifixion* (York) – a linguistic profile (Northern dialect)

### Phonology

<a> instead of <o> :

behalde *behold* (24, 75), lange *long* (29, 192), strange *strong* (32), halde *hold* (140), tase *toes* (179), wrang *wrong* (182)

<aw> instead of <ow> :

knawe *know* (6), saules *souls* (58)

### Morphology

*Second-person pronouns :*

thou, thee = *singular: subject and oblique case*

ye, you = *plural: subject and oblique case (also as a polite form of address, 249-252)*

*Present tense, second singular in –s :*

comaundis (115), carpis (165)

*Present tense, plural in –s :*

has (5, 34), gaynes (149), likis (249), sais (251), walkis (253), dois (260)

*Imperative plural in –s :*

commes (32), walkes (48), gose (78), takes (254), byholdes (255), forgiffis (260)

*Present participle in –and :*

doand (267)

### Syntax

*Impersonal verbs :*

hym awe *he ought* (8), vs muste *we must* (25), methynke *it seems to me* (171, 229)

*The verb gan/gune (can/con) as auxiliary of the past tense :*

gune...say *did say = said* (269)

*The verb late followed by an infinitive with an understood subject :*

late here *let us hear* (11), late dyng *let us strike* (17), late kille *let us kill* (32), late see *let us see* (84, 125, 186, 197), late bere *let us bear* (178)

*Auxiliary be with mutative verbs (= verbs involving a change of place or state) :*

we are comen (7)

### Lexicon

hope *think* (67, 98, 109, 169, 202, 206)

ilke *each* (8, 37, 148, 233)

mon *must* (283)

rede *advise* (24, 282, 293)

tille *to* (146, 181)

wende *go* (287)

wene *think* (163)

wootte *know* (3, 130, 157, 261, 295)

## 8 *The Passion Play I & II (N-Town) – the dramaturgy*

### *The Passion Play*

Divided into two parts, *The Passion Play* was an independent play that the scribe-compiler of the N-Town manuscript substituted for the corresponding pageants of the cycle: *Passion Play I* stages Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, the high priests' decision to prosecute him for subverting Mosaic law, the Last Supper (with the institution of the Eucharist), Judas' betrayal and Jesus' arrest; *Passion Play II* stages the trials before the high priests, Herod and, twice, Pilate, the road to Calvary, the crucifixion and the Harrowing of Hell (but the extent of the second part is unclear, since the scribe-compiler blends the episodes after the trials with the pageants of the cycle).

### Continuous action

In spite of the manuscript numbered division into separate pageants (or plays), the action is continuous, apart from the staging of the two parts in two successive years (see Play 29, line 6).

### Fixed staging

The detailed stage directions (SD) envisage a fixed staging with a number of scaffolds delimiting a circular playing area (called "the place" in the SDs) to be used for the movements of the characters between scaffolds and as location of the action ("the place" is also called *platea* in the Latin SDs of the cycle).

### Ambient scenic space

The "place" also envelops the spectators, who are thus in the middle of the action – the multi-locational set functioning as a scale model of Jerusalem with the public as extras: the N-Town *Passion* attempts to bring the present into the past.

### Activation and deactivation of locations

In the ambient space of the "place" or *platea* the spectators have a 360-degree view of the set, and so their attention has to be focused on the locations to which the action switches in succession. This is done with the use of curtains, which activate scaffolds by opening (see Play 27, SD after 76), and implicitly deactivate them by closing; and with the use of exotic and colourful costumes, which make the actors conspicuous when they move through the *platea* among the spectators (see Play 26, SD after line 164; Play 28, SD after line 80).

### Simultaneity

Besides continuity of action, the multiple locations also enable simultaneous actions (see Play 26, SDs after lines 208, 244, 280; Play 27 SDs after lines 76, 348; Play 28, SD after 148).

### City drama

*The Passion Play* stages its understanding of the Passion as a city drama: the urban scene (private houses, public buildings, streets); the civil actors (spiritual and temporal powers, citizens); the personal (Judas', Herod's, Pilate's wife's) and the politico-religious motivations (the high priests'); and the judicial pleading and political pressuring and responsibility shirking, with the religious power conditioning the civil one and turning Jesus' popularity against him – the people having the last say in the trial. The fragile humanity of Jesus is crushed and humiliated by the cruel working of the urban machinery.

And behind it all, the metaphysical struggle between God's son and the devil.

*Passion Play I* (pageants 26, 27, 28)

[ Pageant 26 ]

(1-164) Prologue – **audience address**

Satan announces his plot against Jesus (25-60)

and exhorts the audience to practise the capital sins (61-124)

John the Baptist prophesies the coming of Jesus (125-128)

and exhorts the audience to penance

and to follow the middle path of “hope and dread” (129-164)

(165-342) The high priests and the civil judges decide to prosecute Jesus

for subversion of the Mosaic law

Annas sends his messenger to Caiphias and the judges (199-280)

[ **three** moments of **simultaneity**: SDs after 208, 244, 280 ]

priests and judges meet in the council house (central scaffold) (289-342)

(343-485) Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem

[ interpolation of the episode of ‘the fetching of the ass’ (343-385) ] (\*)

Peter and John announce the arrival of Jesus (386-441) – **audience address**

the citizens meet Jesus, who restores sight to two blind men (442-485)

[ Pageant 27 ]

(1-348) The Last Supper and the conspiracy

Jesus prophesies the destruction of Jerusalem (1-16)

preparations for the Last Supper (17-76)

[ **simultaneity** of Council and Supper: SD after 76, **curtain** ]

the Council of priests and judges (77-140)

[ interpolation of Mary Magdalene: exorcism and ointment (141-268) ] (\*\*)

Judas’ betrayal (269-348) – **audience address**

(349-571) The Last Supper

the institution of the Eucharist (349-539: **curtain**, SD before 349)

Judas leaves and meets the devil (466-477: Luke 22:3)

Jesus foretells his arrest, death and resurrection, and Peter’s betrayal (540-571)

[ Pageant 28 ]

(1-192) The arrest

prayer on Mount Olivet and angel’s descent with chalice (1-80)

a group of armed, Judas, the kiss, and the arrest (81-148)

Mary Magdalene brings the news to Mary [ **simultaneity**: SD after 148 ] (149-192)

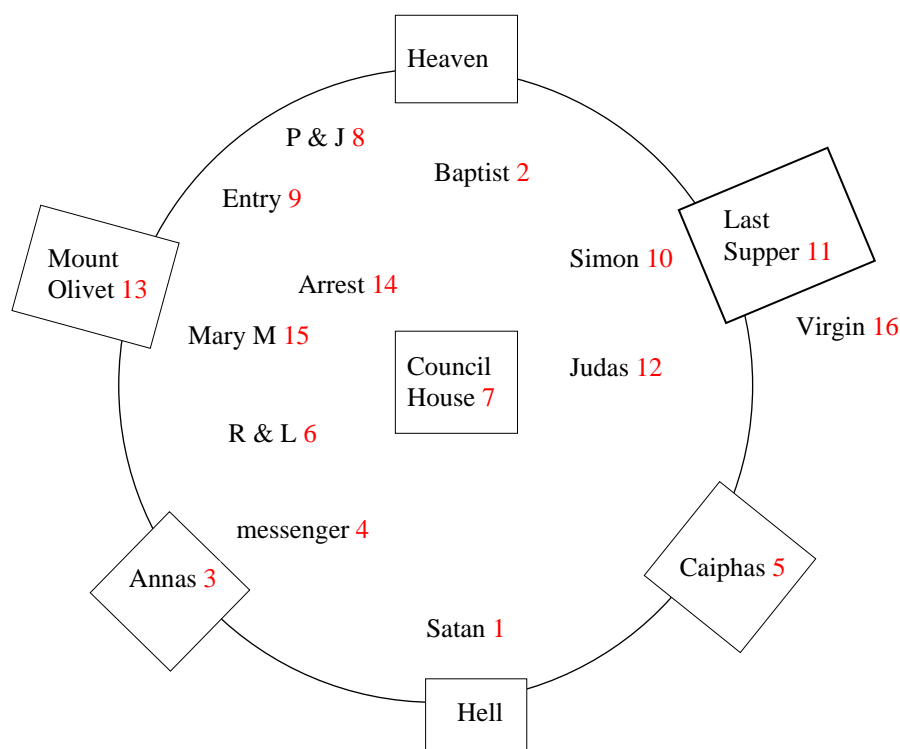
\*

The interpolation is dramaturgically inept. Jesus is made to enter the *platea* before the announcement of Peter and John, and then has to be disposed of in some way to enable the two apostles to make the announcement: this spoils the climax of his entry.

\*\*

The interpolation does not disrupt the dramaturgy, and the exorcism may be spectacular: the 7 devils exorcised out of Mary may jump out of a trapdoor and run screaming through the *platea* to disappear into the Hell scaffold.

A possible staging of *Passion Play I* (scaffolds and locations in the *platea*) :



**numbers show order of first appearance**

Arrest = the arrest of Jesus

Baptist = John the Baptist

Entry = Jesus' entry into Jerusalem

Mary M = Mary Magdalene

messenger sent by Annas to Caiphas and Rewfyn and Lyon

P & J = Peter and John the Evangelist

R & L = Rewfyn and Lyon

Simon = Simon the Leper

Virgin and closing tableau may use scaffold of Last Supper

### Movements :

- in his exotic costume **messenger** moves from **Annas** to **Caiphas** probably clockwise through the *platea* to let Caiphas finish his speech, then meets **R & L** in the *platea* and returns to **Annas** (Play 26, SDs after lines 208, 244, 256, 272);
- **Annas**, **Caiphas** and **R & L** simultaneously converge on **Council House** from three different directions (Play 26, SDs after lines 280, 283); and then they leave in divergent directions (Play 27, SD after line 348);
- **Judas** passes repeatedly from **Last Supper** to **Council House** (Play 27, SDs after lines 268, 336, 465);
- while the armed men of **Arrest** drag Jesus leftwards out of the *platea*, **Mary M** runs rightwards catching the audience's eyes and focusing them on **Virgin** for the closing tableau (Play 28, SD after line 148).

### Groupings :

- **Annas** hosts 5 characters (Play 26, SD after line 164), **Caiphas** 3 (Play 26, SD after line 208), and they sum up in **Council House**, with the addition of **R & L** (Play 26, SD after line 288);
- **Entry** comprises Jesus and his 12 apostles, 4 citizens and a choir of children (Play 26, SDs after lines 449 and 454);

- **Last Supper** has Jesus and his 12 apostles, plus Mary Magdalene and her 7 devils, if the interpolation is staged (Play 27, SD after line 76, and lines 141ss, 174-178);
- the groups of **Last Supper** and **Council House** have a few moments of simultaneity (Play 27, SD after line 76).
- **Arrest** confronts Jesus and 11 disciples with some 10 armed persons led by Judas (Play 28, SD after line 80).

Movements and groupings fully spatialize the action in the *platea* and on the scaffolds, while simultaneity ensures smooth transitions and continuous flow: a cinematic script.

The *Passion Play* uses movement to build the ambient space which enfolds characters and actors, and makes action prevail over characterization (as against the dramaturgy of the processional cycles, where the narrowness of the scenic space and the discreteness of the episodic structure are compensated for by the development of character).

*Passion Play II* (pageants 29, 30, 31)

[ Pageant 29 ]

- (1-20) Herod, Pilate, and Annas and Caiphas go through the *platea* to their scaffolds  
the “expositor” introduces the second part to the audience – **audience address**
- (21-89) Herod introduces himself as a persecutor of Christians  
but he is eager to meet Jesus, a worker of wonders – **audience address**
- (90-224) Jesus before Annas and Caiphas  
a messenger runs about the “place” and  
announces the arrest of Jesus (90-121) – **audience address**  
the interrogation, with beating and mocking (122-192)  
Caiphas’ anger when Jesus calls himself God’s son (167-176: Mark 14:63)  
the beating: Jesus is blindfolded for the “game” of  
“whele and pylle” (179-192: Luke 22:64) – **audience address** (\*)  
two women recognise Peter: Peter’s denial, the cock’s crowing twice,  
Jesus’ silent look at Peter (193-224)

[ Pageant 30 ]

- (1-152) Jesus before Pilate (1)  
Caiphas sends a messenger to Pilate (1-24)  
Judas gives back the money and hangs himself (25-32: Matthew 27:3-5)  
[ **simultaneity** ? SD after 32 ]  
Jesus is brought to the judgment-hall (33-152)  
Jesus is accused before Pilate (41-56)  
Pilate adduces lack of jurisdiction over Jesus and sends him to Herod (121-152)
- (153-261) Jesus before Herod (**curtain**, SD after 152) (\*\*)  
Herod asks for a miracle, Jesus’ silence, whipping (153-244)  
Herod sends Jesus back to Pilate (245-261)

[ Pageant 31 ]

- (1-212) Jesus before Pilate (2)  
[ **simultaneity** of Jesus brought round the “place” with Satan and Wife: SD before 1 ]  
Satan tries to stop his plot against Jesus (1-57) – **audience address**  
he realises that his power over men will be over if Jesus goes to Hell (38-45)  
the dream of Pilate’s wife (58-77: Matthew 27:19; **curtain**, SD after 57)  
Pilate and Jesus (78-210)  
Pilate and Jesus talk in private (114-140)  
Pilate washes his hands (141-158)  
Barabbas, Jesus and two thieves at the bar (167-210) (\*\*\*)  
Pilate sits in judgment with Annas and Caiphas  
the doctors (with the people) give the verdict  
Pilate inflicts the punishment  
the scourging, the mocking, the cross (SDs after 210 and 212)

\*

The game of “whele and pylle” (= ‘circle and pluck’, imperative plural) is the modern “hot cockles”, in which a blindfolded person has to guess who has hit him/her.

\*\*

Here the curtain has the effect of a cinematic cut: first we see the Jews bringing Jesus to Herod, and then we see them all kneeling or standing on Herod’s scaffold.

\*\*\*

The action recalls a medieval trial by jury: the judge asks the jury to render a verdict and then pronounces the sentence.

## 9 *The Passion Play I & II (N-Town) – a linguistic profile* (East Anglian dialect)

### Spelling

*Characteristic East Anglian forms:*

xal, xuld = *shall, should*

qw- = *wh-* (qwher *where*, qwhat *what*, qwyl *while*)

### Morphology

*Personal pronoun, second person :*

thou, thee = *singular: subject and oblique case*

ye, you = *plural: subject and oblique case (also as a polite form of address, Play 31:74-77)*

*Personal pronouns, third person plural :*

they = *they*

hem = *them*

here = *their*

*Present tense, second singular in –st :*

mayst (Play 26:156), spekyt (Play 27:202), seyst (Play 27:265), askyst (Play 27:266)

*Present tense, third singular in –th :*

sendyth (Play 26:34), pretendyth (Play 26:41)

*Imperative plural in –th :*

takyth (Play 26:18), heryth (Play 26:177)

*Present participle in –yng :*

kepyng (Play 26:136), coming (Play 26:415)

### Syntax

*Auxiliary be with mutative verbs (= verbs involving a change of place or state) :*

the day is come (Play 30:33)

*The verb gan as auxiliary of the past tense :*

gan...defye *did reject = rejected* (Play 31:20)

### Lexicon

*Latinized words :*

conjuncyon, presumpcyon, declaracyon (Play 26:158-163)