THE STRUCTURE OF THE CHESTER CYCLE:
TEXT, THEME AND THEATRE

A DISSERTATION

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INTRODUCTION

On the last day of his term as mayor, in October, 1575, Sir John Savage was leaving the Common Hall when he was served a writ by the pursuivant from York accusing him of having caused the Whitsunday plays to be performed that year in contempt of the Archbishop of York's prohibition.¹ On the 10th of November of that same year, he wrote a letter from London to the town council to explain that he and Mr. Hankey, mayor in 1571, had been brought before the Privy Council because that body had been informed that they alone had commanded the plays to be performed; he asked that the council inform the Privy Council that the plays had been brought out with the common consent of the city's aldermen.²

On November 21, the mayor and aldermen of Chester responded in Sir John's behalf; presumably, the hearing was concluded without harm to Sir John, but the plays

¹George Ormerod, The History of the County Palatine and City of Chester, I (London, 1819), 198.

²Rupert H. Morris, Chester in the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns (Chester, 1895?), pp. 319-22.
were never performed again. The plays were one of the first of Chester's old and beloved customs to go; but the forces of reform and suppression soon made assaults on other civic festivities. Of the mayor in 1599, David Rogers says:

The mayor (Henry Hardware, esq.) was a godly zealous man, but got not the love of the commons for he put down some ancient orders, used among some companies, especially the shoemakers whom he much opposed, caused the giants not to go in the Midsummer Watch or Show; he caused the Bull Ring at the High Cross to be taken up; also the Dragon and the naked Boys in the same shew not to go, nor the Devil for the Butchers, but a boy to ride as other companies. 3

Some of these ancient customs were restored the next year and the Midsummer Watch, with the last few remnants of the cycle plays, became very elaborate and festive for a while but finally in 1677 ceased all together. 4

Though the plays and other customs had a fitful survival, the memory of them was not so easily eclipsed. Archdeacon Robert Rogers and his son, David Rogers, William Smith, William Webb, and the four Randle Holmeses are a few of the more significant sixteenth- and seventeenth-century antiquarians who copied, annotated and edited records about Chester and thus preserved those few precious accounts about the drama in and

3Ormerod, I, 201.

festivities of Chester. In 1935, Professor Salter reported that Chester was still able to boast that twenty-three of its medieval guilds were in existence; some of these, in fact, still have records from the sixteenth century in their possession. It is with a great deal of interest and pleasure, therefore, that the modern scholar turns to the collection of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century descriptions of Chester contained in George Ormerod's standard history of the city, or to Morris' history, in which excerpts from the mass of Chester documents are generously cited.

The bibliography on the plays themselves, however, is very slight. The first complete edition is that of Thomas Wright for the Shakespeare Society in 1843-47; the standard text is the Early English Text Society edition of Deimling and Matthews, which is to be replaced soon by the edition being prepared by Professors R. M. Lumiansky and A. D. Mills. I have not been able to find many in-depth studies of specific plays in the

5 The Trial and Flagellation With Other Studies in the Chester Plays, ed. W. W. Greg (Malone Society, Oxford, 1935), p. 1—hereafter, Trial. The Archivist of Chester Town Hall informed me that some of the records were still in guild hands; she added that she hoped these records would soon be deposited in the town Archives.

Chester cycle; the most important of those that I have located are R. M. Lumiansky's article on the Harrowing of Hell, Brother Linus Lucken's monograph on the Antechrist plays, Eleanor Prosser's cross-cyclic studies of five plays, Joseph Hemingway's cross-cyclic study of the Nativity plays, and Paul Strohm's recent dissertation on rhetorical and dramatic techniques in the cycle. In addition to these, P. M. Salter's Medieval Drama in Chester and his series of articles on the Banns are most important for the discussion of the development of the cycle and its production, and W. W. Greg's articles on editing medieval drama, his edition of the Antechrist play, and his and Salter's studies for the Malone Society are most significant for textual criticism. To be sure, there are general discussions of typological and

7Lumiansky, "Comedy and Theme in the Chester Harrowing of Hell," Tulane Studies in English, X (1960), 5-12; Lucken, Antichrist and the Prophets of Antichrist in the Chester Cycle (Washington, D. C., 1940); Prosser, Drama and Religion in the English Mystery Plays (Stanford, 1961); English Nativity Plays, ed. Samuel B. Hemingway, Yale Studies in English, 38 (New York, 1909); Strohm, "The Dramatic and Rhetorical Technique of the Chester Mystery Plays," Univ. of California unpubl. diss. (Berkeley, 1966).

theological themes and of cyclic structure in many histories, dissertations and critical analyses, but these discourses are usually overviews which draw on all the cycles and thus tend to agglomerate rather than make distinctions between plays or cycles.

The student or scholar who wishes to work with the Chester cycle is immediately faced with the bewildering textual problem. Unlike the other cycles for which there are only single complete manuscripts, the Chester cycle exists in five complete, or nearly complete, copies and several fragments. The MSS of the full cycles are all copies from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries:

- MS D, dated 1591 (Henry Huntington MS TM 2);
- MS W, dated 1592 (BM MS Add 10305);
- MS R, dated 1600 (BM MS Harley 2013);
- MS B, dated 1604 (OU MS Bodley 175); and
- MS H, dated 1607 (BM MS Harley 2124).

Two important texts of single plays are the Peniarth copy of the Antechrist pageant, dated ca. 1500, and a copy of the Trial and Flagellation, dated 1599, still in the hands of the Coopers' guild in Chester. Less important is the Manchester fragment of the Resurrection. A clear family relationship obtains between MSS DWIR, but

9Deimling, Ch. PI., vii-x; Greg, AnteX, pp. xv-xxii; Trial, pp. 2-3; "Banns," XV, 432. Both Greg and Salter have designated Deimling's MS h as MS R; I follow their example.
H represents a divergent tradition. Professor Deimling concluded that MS H represented the earliest tradition of the play, even though it was the last copied, and used it for his text for the EETS. Professor Matthews completed the edition following Deimling's original decision. Professor W. W. Greg, in his edition of the Antechrist play and his Sanders Lectures, essentially agreed with Deimling's view that the H text was superior if it were to be used alone; but he noted that the scribe of MS H took many editorial liberties with the text. Although some of these could be recognized, he argued, others could not; therefore, he decided that the safer course would be to use MS D, the best of the DWRB MSS, as copy text with recourse to H where HB agreed against D. Furthermore, he concluded that none of the MSS DWRB was directly derived from any

10. The divergence is clearest at those places where extensive revision has taken place; see the ends of the Balaam and Passion plays, for example.

11. Ch. Pl., pp. xiv-xxii. He did not work with D at all. Cf. p. vii n2. Collations of MS D are provided at the beginnings of vols. I and II for all the plays included in vol. I. Matthews provides a collation for the rest of the plays in the notes to volume II at the bottom of the page. I have found a number of inaccuracies in the Pollard collations for vol. I; they should be relied upon only with caution.


of the others and that there were, as a result, as many lost intermediaries as there are surviving texts. Professor F. M. Salter restudied the question after he had discovered the Coopers guild copy of the Trial. He fundamentally agreed with Greg, except that he would not posit so many intermediaries between the manuscripts DWRB and the original document, the "Regenell." On the basis of his examination of the Coopers play and the variant genealogy derived therefrom, Salter suggested that each play might have had a distinct family relationship and proposed that each should be tested individually. The conclusion is based on the assumption that either a scribe may have collected all or part of the play scripts from the individual guilds or that the "Regenell" itself was being emended at the time the prototypes of MSS DWRBH were copied. Neither Greg nor Salter attempted this task, and Greg seems to have felt that such a derivation was unlikely. Perhaps Professors Lumiansky and Mills will be able to shed some new light on the interrelations of the surviving MSS.

When I first started to write this dissertation, I decided to use the D MS throughout, since both Greg and Salter agreed that it should be used as a copy text.

\[14\] See the genealogical chart on p. lxxxiv in AnteX.

\[15\] Trial, pp. 31-2, 43-5.
for a critical edition. Before proceeding, however, I sought the advice of Professor Lumiansky, and he responded that he saw no reason not to use MS D, but that I could not ignore MS H. As I worked with the H and D versions of the Cappers play of Moses and Balaam, I began to see the wisdom of his and Greg's remarks about MS H. The H version of that play is almost flawless in its rhyme scheme and all but one of the textual cruces which appear in D have been resolved. Attempts, however, to determine what the original readings might have been are hampered by the fact that it is impossible always to tell which of the H readings were late emendations; furthermore, I did not feel confident in relying on Deimling's collation of the other MSS and could not obtain a copy of MS B in time to use in preparing my texts. Further examination of MSS H and D showed that for the subjects I wished to discuss in my dissertation, MS D was not sufficiently superior alone to justify its use over that of the standard text and that the variations in readings would not affect substantially a discussion of thematic and structural unity in the cycle. I made, therefore, the pragmatic decision to use MS H, but concluded that I should compare it throughout with MS D. The continual

16 The unsatisfactory rhyme is in the "b" lines of stanza 4, "looke-wee." H resolves most of the cruces in D, except for that at line H230. Each MS has a different reading; none is satisfactory.
contrast of the two has resulted in some rich finds of material. A great deal of this material appears in the latter half of Chapter III where I consider the production of the cycle; the variations in stage-directions, for example, help to confirm the kind of staging only suggested in one manuscript.

The most important result of my work with the D manuscript was that I discovered the Balaam play in its entirety as it had been revised and preserved in MSS DWRB. After comparing the D version with that of H, I came to the conclusion that D was dramatically superior to the other but that both fulfilled the needs of the cycle. The first chapter of this dissertation, therefore, is concerned with these two versions, what they can tell us about the writing of medieval plays and the sources of medieval plays, and how a large series of plays are fitted together. The Balaam play is unusual in that it exists in two different versions; it is also unique in so far as it is the only play on the subject in the extant English drama. This fact suggested that there might be value in pursuing the question of the development of medieval drama from liturgy to cycle play. In summary then, the first chapter discusses the events and materials that came together to create a Balaam play at Chester and then examines the transmutation of that play in the hands of a second playwright.
With the exception of the Balaam play, I treat each of the other major sections in the order that they appear in the cycle. In addition to this consecutive play of organization, I have attempted in each chapter to approach the cycle from a different point of view in the hope that the discussion of each succeeding section would help create a cumulation of detail that would impress on the reader the interpenetration of the themes of the cycle and the effect of pageant structure on staging. If the first chapter is devoted to the question of how the play is built, then the second is concerned with how the cycle is built. One of the evident frustrations in the scholarship on medieval drama is the inability to determine why certain subjects were chosen as suitable ones for the Old Testament section of the cycles, and what their relation to the cycle was. The more recent answer has been that topics were chosen because they prefigured events in Christ's life. However, two critical studies, one by V. A. Kolve and the other by Arnold Williams, have questioned the relative importance of typology in the Old Testament group. Of these two, it might be said that Kolve gives greater emphasis to intellectual considerations while Williams stresses production difficulties. Their objections to typology

as the controlling principle of selection or as a significant mode of representation form the background for my discussion of typology, the use of iconography in literary argument, and the meaning of "type" with regard to characterization. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of each of the five plays, and suggest a principle of organization that may very well have been the basis for the selection of the plays.

Chapter III postulates that the structure of the individual play as well as the larger unit, such as the Passion sequence, will have an effect on the method of production. The chapter is primarily concerned with the Nativity, Passion and Resurrection sequences; but where there is evidence of similarities in structure or overlapping of them, I reconsider the Old Testament sequence and anticipate the Antechrist and Judgment plays. In the first half of the chapter, I discuss methods of unifying the cycle as a whole and the large sequences in particular. Each of these sequences has its own dominant mode of organization; yet all intermesh as a result of their narrative continuity and the repetition of motifs. It seems to me that the desire for unity led the playwright into using devices, such as repetition and parallelism, which eventually affected the shape of the plays and that of the stage. Once the playwright
had learned to integrate several parts of the same narrative in one play, then he was writing for a stage much larger than a small pageant wagon. Both individual plays and the longer sequences call for multiple loci and a great deal of movement from place to place. In effect, the plays combining several narratives, which developed at Chester, necessitated a large stage. I speculate, therefore, about the performance of the plays at Chester, and I end the chapter with a discussion of the Rogers' description of the Chester stage in light of the kind of stage called for by the text of the plays.

The last chapter will deal with the final three plays of the cycle, the Prophets of Antechrist, Antechrist and Judgment. The Chester cycle is the only one which has such a fully developed eschatological conclusion. The group is imitative in form of earlier plays and is the culminating point of many themes. For example, the Prophets play imitates the processus contained in play V in the H manuscript: as the latter announced a beginning of a new age and a new dispensation, the former announces the last age and the final adjudication. Many themes are reiterated and brought to their resolution here; for example, the opposition of divine miracle to demonic magic, the contrast between heavenly King and worldly monarch, the opposition of the Old Covenant to the New Covenant are all re-evoked and concluded.
Perhaps more significant is the structure of the Antechrist play itself. In this fascinating play, we see the Antichrist claim to be Christ; he imitates, through fraudulent means, many of the acts that we have just seen Christ perform. In effect, he recapitulates the whole cycle, but in a parodic form. Antichrist is all illusion; Christ was reality. The compact recapitulation of divine history forces an end to worldly time; it effectively stops the matter of the play and of human history so that we can see the resolution Christ makes of the men who are of the world which fought violently against Him and His plan for Life.

I have tried in each chapter to come at the plays with a different set of premises so that we might find out as much as possible about the cycle's history, artistry and production. I think that the use of different approaches convinced me more than ever that the Chester playwrights had a great deal of control over their work and that the play they created is not an inconsiderable piece of drama.¹⁸

¹⁸I use the plural of "playwright" here, as is accurate; but, in general, I will use the singular throughout the dissertation except in those cases where we can identify foreign interference, e.g., the Tanner poet, or where we are talking about the work of two clearly identifiable poets. I agree with Salter, "Banns," XV, 445 and 445 n2, that at some time rather late in the cycle's history, someone did an extensive revision of the cycle; therefore, we are justified in speaking of one poet and the cycle's unity.
THE SOURCES AND REVISIONS
OF THE CAPPERS PLAY

The first part of my discussion of medieval dramatic techniques will be confined to the Cappers play of Moses and Balaam, a play unique to the Chester cycle and unique in so far as it exists in two versions. I shall first attempt to define the sources of and influences on the play in order to highlight the playwrights' contributions to cycle drama and to assess the use of their materials, and then turn to a discussion of the internal unity of each of the versions and their respective place in the cycle.

The Cappers play comes down to us is five manuscript copies, of which we shall consider only D and H. The major difference between the plays is that H is composed of a Moses play, a Balaam play and a Procession of Prophets; the D version has a Moses play, the H Balaam play and a continuation thereof. Reference in the discussion which follows to the H version is that edited by Hermann Deimling and to the D version that transcribed in the Appendix.

In order to find the influences on and sources of the Chester Balaam play, I shall first turn to the...
liturgical and vernacular drama of the Middle Ages. Since only the Chester play and the French collection of Old Testament plays, among the extant medieval drama, have any developed treatment of Balaam, it is possible to conclude that there is very little, if any, dramatic influence on the Chester Cappers play. On the other hand, since the H version contains a Prophets play and since Balaam usually appears in Prophets plays, we do have an opportunity to examine the innovations the Chester playwrights may have made in dealing with a prophetic prologue. I think that the Procession of Prophets is an interpolation in the H version (cf. Deimling, p. xxi) and that both playwrights H and D intended to or did eliminate the undramatic procession. I will, of course, examine the H version as it now stands and give some indication of how the prophets procession distorts that version internally. Nevertheless, it can be demonstrated that the Chester Balaam play versions make a significantly different and more dramatic presentation of prophetic material when they confine the prophecies to one character within the narrative of the play.

Once we have shown that there is no important dramatic influence on the Balaam play, we can examine other vernacular and Latin works which might have been
the source of the play. I have finally come to the conclusion that the Vulgate account of the Balaam story is a possible, if not the probable, direct source of the play, and that certain traditions, Jewish in origin, influenced the way that Balaam was represented on the stage. By calling the Vulgate the source, I assume that the source is 1) the work which contains all the narrative incidents in the play, 2) the work which has a similar overall structure and 3) the work which provides, given the exigencies of translating and poetizing, a pattern of phraseology. The Vulgate satisfies all these requirements better than do other works that I have looked at thus far. The establishment of the Vulgate as the source is not, however, the end product of my discussion; instead, I will use the Biblical account as the model by which we can elucidate the playwrights' themes and discover how the playwrights made a play.

The final section of this discussion will be concerned with the Moses scenes of the plays and the connection between those scenes and the Balaam scenes. By looking at the internal unity of the plays, I hope that I can describe some of the playwright's skill in creating a dramatic play for the medieval stage.

Balaam's role in medieval drama is, for the most part, slight, and usually confined to a statement of
his prophecy that "A star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel (RSV)." His earliest appearance is in the prophets scene at the end of the twelfth century Mystère d'Adam. The rubrics describe Balaam as an old man dressed in an ample garment and seated on an ass; but they do not tell us that he thrashes his ass. Instead, he merely comes forward and recites the Vulgate version of the Orietur stella, a five-line vernacular paraphrase and a five-line explication. He, like the other prophets, is then led off to hell by a devil.

The liturgical plays of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are not much more complex than this early vernacular one, but both the Laon and Rouen versions show some further dramatic development of the Balaam scene. At Laon, Balaam is described as sitting "on an ass, bowed, bearded, holding a palm branch and urging with


2 The Vulgate text is: oriatur stella ex Iacob et consurget virga de Israhel / et percutiat duces Moab vastabitque omnes filios Seth / et erit Idumea possessio eius (Num 24:17b-18a).

3 For the Laon Text, see Karl Young, The Drama of the Medieval Church, II (Oxford, 1933), 150; Rouen, see Young, II, 159.
his spurs." First, the *Apellatores* commands Balaam to say that the Lord will rise from the race of Jews, and Balaam says:

\[\text{Exibit de Iacob rutilans nova stella et confringet ducum agmina regionis Moab maxima potentia.}\]

We should note that this prophecy is not the one usually attributed to Balaam, the *Orietur stella*, but that it is similar in content. The angel appears before Balaam and his ass after the prophet has made his prophecy. The ass stops, Balaam prodns him and then angrily asks why he will not go forward. The ass responds that an angel with a drawn sword is standing before him and will not let him pass. The play breaks off inconclusively at this point and is immediately followed by the rubrics for the *Laon Ordo stelle*. Young notes that the presence of Simeon and Balaam at the end of the play and following Sibyl, the last prophet in the Augustinian sermon, probably indicates a mechanical and disordered adaption. Balaam's prophecy, usually glossed in part as a reference to the star of the Magi, seems, however, to be a fitting climax to a series of scenes which precede the Magi play.

4Young, II, 145. My translation.

5Young, II, 103ff.

Far more important is the disorientation of the scene itself. In the Biblical narrative, Balaam is stopped by the angel, warned not to curse the Israelites, and then makes his prophecy in the presence of Balaack. The ass scene appears to be tacked on to the prophetic utterance.

The Rouen version, although it does use the Exibit formula, shows greater reliance on the Vulgate narrative, or at least a knowledge of it. Instead of relying on the Vocatores, the usual speaker before each prophecy, the playwright introduces two messengers from King Balaack who ask Balaam to come to the king. Balaam pulls back on his reins and strikes the ass with his spurs, but the winged angel stops the ass with his drawn sword. The ass demands to know why Balaam injures him so terribly with his spurs. The Angel tells Balaam not to do Balaack’s bidding and Balaam then recites his prophecy. Even though the narrative is ultimately derived from Numbers, the play shows no similarity in phraseology to the Vulgate. The scene is, however, in logical order and does create a more dramatic situation by placing the

7Young, II, 152, 152n3-5, notes no dependence on the Vulgate for the narrative and says the speeches of the Apellatores and Balaam are derived from Epiphany sequences.

8Balaam uses the Exibit formula; the Orietur appears in the Rouen Ordo Stelle; cf. Young, II, 44.
ass scene and prophecy in the context of the Biblical narrative about Balaam and Balaack.

The Benediktbeuren Christmas Play includes another variant of the Balaam story. The prophet enters singing: *Vadam, uadam, ut maledicam populo huic*! This is the only reference to the Balaack request. Immediately afterward, the Angel appears to him to tell him to beware lest he say anything other than that which the Angel tells him to say. The rubric says that the ass is afraid and draws back, but it gives no indication that Balaam beats the ass. Balaam's prophecy is not a direct quotation from *Numbers* 24:17, but a responsory based on it: *Orietur stella ex Jacob, et consurget homo de Israel, et confringet omnes duces alienigenarum, et erit omnis terra possessio ejus.*

Balaam also appears in four continental vernacular plays; however, his role in all but one is as slight as in the *Adam* and the liturgical plays. The two earliest plays are the St. Gall Christmas play (14th century) and the Mastricht Passion play (14th century). Although

9Young, II, 175.

the subject matter of each play is different, Balaam's appearance in both is contained within a prophetic prologue. Briefly, the St. Gall Balaam, the second person in the Processus Prophetarum, introduces himself and tells of the power of his words and curses (lines 17-23); he says that the King of Moab called him to come to curse God's servants (lines 24-28), that greediness overcame him and led him into accepting the King's request; that his ass scolded him and that he repented his greediness (lines 29-33), and that this incident opened his eyes and forced him to speak other words (lines 34-46). He then repeats his prophecy, the Orietur, in a loose vernacular paraphrase. The Mastricht Passion play contains a short prophets scene of Balaam, Isaiah and Vergil between the fall of Adam and Eve and the Annunciation. In this scene, Ecclesia calls on Balaam to make his prophecy (lines 200-203) and Balaam responds with a very loose paraphrase of the Orietur (lines 204-17). There are no references to his ass or to the

it a Passion Play; cf. Die Prophetensprüche und -Zitate im religiösen Drama des deutschen Mittelalters (Leipzig and Dresden, 1913), p. 8. The play breaks off at line 1501 in the middle of the Gethsamene scene, thus the ending is unclear. At the end of his edition of Das St. Galler Spiel vom Leben Jesu (Germanistische Abhandlungen, 41 [Breslau, 1912], p. 236), Emil Wölter publishes a fragmentary prophets procession in which Balaam has a two-line speech. The scene does not seem to have anything to do with his appearances elsewhere.
Balaack situation; he is not, therefore, represented in any pejorative way. The prophets scene functions as the bridge between the Old Testament fall and the beginning of the process of Redemption.

Balaam's appearances in French drama are confined to a brief role in a procession and a more developed one in Le Vieux Testament. In the Mystère de l'incarnation, he is again one of the prophets in a prologue. He has a speech of 83 lines in the Mystère based on the last prophecy as it is contained in Num 24:16-19. He does not mention the Balaack story; instead, he explicates the prophecy in a short sermon. The speech is a good example of an allegorical reading of a text: three phases, he says, of Jewish history have passed; the fourth is nigh. By the fourth phase, God has made him understand fourthings: 1) a king having a bipartite nature shall rise from Jacob; 2) the king shall dare


12 The Balaam speech, as the author or the scribe of the Mystère tells us, is based on Nicholas of Lira and Paul of Burgundy's commentaries on Numbers 24. The playwright connects him with Balaam (Eliud) in Job. See p. 4.

the strength of the infernal prince; 3) the followers of the king will be so virtuous and strong that they will prefer cruel death and martyrdom to the anger of their King; and 4) the king shall come again to judge men. Balaam ends the prophecy with a benediction.

The most significant Balaam play in either the vernacular or Latin is in Le Vieux Testament, a 15th century group of Old Testament plays. The play, like H, follows rather closely the Vulgate account in Numbers 22-24, but does not, as D does, include the scene of Balaam's wicked counsel. Balaam declares himself a magician and invoker of demons (lines 26706-18), rejects the first embassy and succumbs to the second request (lines 26713-843), meets the angel (lines 26884-942), prepares his sacrifices (line 26973) and makes three prophecies (lines 26901-27010). The play ends with Balaack leading his armies against the Israelites (lines 27011-44). Because of the similarity between the Chester and French versions, Ungemach was lead to believe that the French play was a source for much of the

14 Le Mistère du Vieux Testament, III, ed. James de Rothschild, Société des anciens textes français (Paris, 1881), pp. 407-23 (lines 26651-27044). Grace Frank says there are innumerable references to this Mistère in the 15th and 16th centuries, but that the references are probably to part of, not the entire, cycle. The plays have no intrinsic unity and may be a collection from different authors; cf. The Medieval French Drama (Oxford, 1954), p. 194, 194n1.
English play. The prophecies, he thought, were based on the Vulgate, the D play's scene of Balaam's counsel on Flavius Josephus, and the major incidents of H and D on Le Vieux Testament. It should be apparent, however, that certain structural elements appear in the French play that do not appear in the English ones: the two emissaries, the building of the altars, and Balaam's self-declared avowancy of the black arts. Furthermore, the parallel passages that Ungemach cites are not truly parallel; instead, they show that both the French and the English playwrights used their imaginations to develop a dialogue which is absent in the Bible.

Heinrich Ungemach, Die Quellen der fünf ersten Chester Plays, Münchener Beiträge zur romanischen und englischen Philologie, I (Erlangen and Leipzig, 1890), p. 18 et passim. The discussion of Balaam is contained in pp. 155-98.

Most of Ungemach's assertions were immediately opposed by Hermann Deimling in his review of Ungemach in Archiv für Studium der neueren Sprachen und Litteraturen, Bd. 86 (Braunschweig, 1891), 428-31 and I use his objections here. Deimling says, p. 430, that he will consider the sources of the Chester Plays in his introduction to his EETS edition, but unfortunately that part of the introduction was not completed at the time of his death. Hans Utesch thought that the French mysteries had only a secondary influence and that the Chester Balaam is original in itself and probably drawn from Numbers 22-25, 30:1-8 with some reliance on Flavius Josephus (Jewish Antiquities) and Peter Comestor (Historia Scholastica); cf. Die Quellen der Chester-Plays (Kiel, 1909), p. 7, 11. Samuel B. Hemingway, in referring specifically to the Nativity play and to the Chester plays in general, doubts that the French influence was strong or that the Chester
Lastly, the structure of the French version is closer to the Vulgate than it is to H and thus it seems likely that the French and H playwrights drew on the Vulgate or some intermediary. I think it can be shown that both playwrights had recourse to the Vulgate for their paraphrases of the prophecies and that the D playwright had recourse to a Balaam tradition rather than direct access to Josephus.


Ungemach does not deny the use of the Vulgate as an important source for the Angel scene and the prophecies and for other segments throughout the play. Most of these parallels are cited in the Notes to the D version in the Appendix.
The Chester Balaam plays are not only unique among English vernacular cycles for their content, but also among all extant vernacular drama for their expanded narratives coupled with prophetic materials. In all but one of the prophet scenes we have examined, the dramatic action is limited or non-existent—that is, either there is a short scene of the Angel, ass and Balaam, or there is a monologue by Balaam. These prophet scenes are essentially undramatic because there is no attempt at characterization (the prophet is identified by costume or attributes peculiar to him and/or by his own assertion), there is no dialogue and there is no dramatic conflict. The Balaam scene is exceptional in so far as the ass episode is often represented (at Laon and Rouen and in the Benediktbeuren Christmas play and the French Vieux Testament) and in so far as there is some attempt at portraying Balaam as an unwilling prophet (Benediktbeuren and St. Gall plays, Vieux Testament and Chester H and D plays). In the other plays, Balaam's prophecy is the essential matter and Balaam is a morally neutral character or, at least, is not represented in any pejorative way. The main function of these prophets plays is to provide a prologue to the Nativity sequences which follow immediately in some plays or to indicate within a liturgical framework that a new dispensation,
as is shown in the Passion plays, is forthcoming. The *Vieux Testament* Balaam play, the only expanded narrative comparable to the Chester play, does not function as a prologue in the way that these other versions do; instead, it is a segment imbedded in an exhaustive treatment of *Old Testament* history. To be sure, these *Old Testament* plays to some extent prefigure the existence and meaning of the events in the life of Christ, and Balaam's prophecies of Christ are emphasized within the context of the scene; but the cycle as a whole, if it was ever considered a cycle, is divorced from any *New Testament* cycle and appears to be as intent on developing these stories for their historical interest as on relating them to the *New Testament*. The Chester playwrights made the intelligent choice of developing the Balaam play both for its narrative interest and for its prophetic content. It is an immediate prologue, more clearly so in H, to the Nativity sequence and a narrative with thematic links to the Moses play. None of these dramatic predecessors or contemporaries could have furnished the pattern for the Balaam play and none could have served as the sole source for the content or structure of the play. Both versions of the Chester play, whether they were written by one or two playwrights, are

significant individual responses to dramatic art and the needs of the cycle.

The Chester playwrights, even though their play is unique among extant texts, were not working in a vacuum; they had ample precedent for using a prophets section as a prologue. Their contribution to dramatic art was to imbed this kind of material into a dramatic narrative. The *Processus Prophetarum*, though quite variable in content, is perhaps the least changeable in form of all the plays presented in medieval drama; in fact, the content usually overwhelms the form. The *Processus* is often a prologue to the Nativity and/or Passion sequence and, in the English cycles, is the connective between the Old and New Testament plays.¹⁹ Basically undramatic and susceptible to little humorous treatment, these plays appeared almost unchanged from the Twelfth century *Mystère d'Adam* down to the great cycles and continental plays. It is clear that the prophets play in the H version is related to and imitated this long tradition; it is also evident that this scene was introduced, perhaps re-introduced, into the Cappers play after the latter had been expanded into a play about Balaam. The Chester Nativity sequence shows a clear dispersal of this

¹⁹ This is not true of Towneley as the MS now stands; Martin Stevens, however, believes the Prophets play has been misplaced; cf. his article, "The Missing Parts of the Towneley Cycle," soon to be published in *Speculum.*
prophetic material through plays VI-IX, places the material in a more dramatic context, and thus obviates the necessity for a formal Procession. The Chester solution is the most imaginative and dramatic one we have seen. The incomplete Towneley and the lengthy, undramatic N-Town processions appear as separate entities outside any narrative context and clearly are intended to be prologues to the Nativity and Life of Christ.  

The Towneley play prophets make and discuss their prophecies in some detail; the N-Town cycle retains the form of a Processus Prophetarum, but, as Bonnell has rightly pointed out, the play is a Jesse-tree play.  

The alternation of kings, the ancestors of Christ, and prophets, the foretellers of Christ, forms a genealogical and prophetic tree of Jesse designed to portray the prophecy of Isaiah Egredietur virga de radice Jesse. The dramatic mode of presentation is, however, the same as that of a Prophets play and both N-Town and Towneley are conceived in this simple manner. The York playwright went a step further than any of the other playwrights we have considered and recast the Procession as an


introduction to be spoken by a Prologue at the beginning of the Annunciation play. The York solution is certainly less cumbersome than a procession and its combination of prophetic and narrative material helps to make it more interesting. The Chester prophets scene, as we noted above, is traditional in both form and content: the prophets are frequently found in other processions and the Expositor, though unique to Chester in this playlet, is common enough elsewhere in the role of Explicator. If we eliminate the prophet scene, then we are left, in both H and D, with a dramatically conceived narrative with enough prophetic material to form a prologue to the major sequences of the cycle. The H version, minus the Procession, and the D version represent the Chester playwrights' solution to the cumbrous prophetic prologue.

In our discussion thus far we have been able to define some of the significant alterations the Chester playwrights made in the dramatic presentation of prophets, in general, and Balaam, in particular, and we have seen that the Chester Balaam plays show no direct derivation from the surviving liturgical and vernacular plays which were contemporary with or preceded them. Neither does

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English vernacular literature afford much material which may have acted as a source for the Balaam play. The great collections of legends and the histories often refer to the Orietur prophecy but do not tell the Balaam story. The Stanzaic Life of Christ, compiled at Chester from the Legenda Aurea and the Polychronicon, does contain a poetic version of the Balaam story and has been cited as the source of the Chester play. His source, he says, is John Chrysostom. The story is


24 A Stanzaic Life of Christ, ed. Frances A. Foster, EETS, 166 (London, 1926), pp. 54-58 (Lines 1593-1728). Miss Foster says the compiler added the Balaam story (p. xxvii) and suggests the play was influenced by the Life (xlii). Robert H. Wilson thinks that at most the Life provided minor episodes in the plays (pp. 413-4), but finds many contradictions between the Life and the plays and tradition (pp. 421-22). In effect, he thinks there is too little similarity to say that the Chester playwrights used the Life as a direct source for the Balaam play. See his article, "The Stanzaic Life of Christ and the Chester Plays," MP, 28 (1931), 413-32.

25 I have been unable to locate the narrative in Chrysostom.
inserted before the narrative about the Magi's meeting with Herod and relates not just the Balaam story, but also tells of his connection with the Magi. The Balaam section (lines 1593-1728) follows the narrative in Numbers 22-24 rather closely, but it does not contain paraphrases, except for the Orietur, of the prophecies. The story of the watch of the Magi, descendants of Balaam (lines 1729-64), follows the Biblical story. The passage does not contain any reference to the wicked counsel of Balaam. Although the playwrights could have used the Stanzaic Life for the outline of their plays, they would have had to turn to other sources in order to find all their material, that is, for the prophecies and the story of Balaam's betrayal. Balaam is described as a conjuror of devils (lines 1605-8) and as an avaricious and reluctant prophet (lines 1645-52); but, as we have seen and as we shall see later, these traits are not peculiar to the Stanzaic Life. Furthermore, the Life and the plays are in different stanza forms and, perhaps partially because one is a narrative and the other a play, there are no verbal echoes of the Life in the play. There is nothing, in fact, in the Life, with the possible exception of the mention of Mont Victoriall, which is unique to the Life and the Chester Magi plays. The headnote, following line 1592, to the Life passage clearly states that the Balaam story is
included in order to explain why the Magi came to worship the Christ; there is no connection made with Moses, a connection which is stated and is thematically implicit in the Balaam plays. We can conclude, therefore, that there is little evidence for the direct influence of the Stanzaic Life on the Chester Balaam plays.

In Latin literature, I have been able to find only two narrative accounts of the Balaam story: Flavius Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* and Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*. Josephus' account can be dismissed as the immediate source on the grounds that, though it contains the outline of the story in the H version, it does not contain the prophecies as they are formulated in DH. It may however have had some influence on the

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26 *The Latin Josephus: The Antiquities, Books I-V*, ed. Franz Blatt, *Acta Jutlandica*, XXX, I (Copenhagen, 1958). The account is in Bk IV, cap. 102-40 (pp. 274-80). Ungemach, *Die Quellen*, compares lines D341-72 and Jos., cap. 127-30 (Ung., pp. 188-9), lines D392-416 and Jos., cap. 131-34, 136-7, 139 (Ung., pp. 189-91), and lines D421-8 and Jos., cap 142, 147, 154. Ung. cites the Greek text, but it is more likely that the playwright, if he used Josephus at all, would have had the Latin translation. Blatt says, p. 12, that the Antiquities was translated into Latin at the end of the sixth century, that it was known all over Europe (pp. 12-13), that the 15 translations printed between ca. 1470 and 1524 were done before the Greek text was known (p. 117). R. R. Bolgar (*The Classical Heritage*, New York, 1964, p. 478) does list a few Greek MSS of the Antiquities in Italian libraries in the second half of the 15th century. It is, however, more probable that the Chester playwright knew the Latin version, if any at all. Peter Comestor, *Historia Scholastica*, Pat. Lat., 108, 1236-9.
section of the D playlet in which Balaam gives his advice. Peter Comestor is certainly closer to the H version, but the similarities inherent in the playlet and the Historia Scholastica are the result of both having ultimately derived from the Vulgate. Fully ninety per cent of Comestor's version of the story is a direct quotation or a rephrasing of the Vulgate. Comestor mentions Josephus but is clearly not indebted to him for the major portions of the account. He also emphasizes Balaam's avarice and his consultation of demons, both of which are emphasized in D, but he does not describe Balaam's bad counsel, nor does he give a complete version of the second prophecy on which the playwright could have based his paraphrase. I think it is clear that neither of these works could have served as the single or immediate source of either the H or D version of the play. The Vulgate, on the other hand, does provide all the narrative elements in the play except for the portrayal of Balaam's avarice and is the ultimate, and probably direct, source of the prophecies as they are stated in the plays. The playwrights were also aware of a traditional representation of Balaam as an avaricious and reluctant prophet and they brought this material to bear on their representation of the story; yet the primary debt of the play, especially of the H version, seems to be to the Vulgate.
The Balaam story is told almost in its entirety in Numbers 22-24 and comprises a complete narrative in itself.27 A later tradition of Balaam, arising from certain cruces and hints in this section, is reported in Numbers 31 and other Old and New Testament books, developed in Jewish commentaries and carried over into Christian commentaries. The H version draws almost exclusively on the account in Numbers 22-24 and the D version draws more broadly on the whole tradition.

The account in Numbers is quite simple and can be briefly told. After the Israelites had been led out of Egypt, they made their way to the Promised Land through various hostile countries. Where they could, they avoided these people or sought their permission to pass through unharmed; but where tribes proved hostile or reluctant to let them go through unmolested, the Israelites were forced into battle. In all these battles they had been successful; therefore, it was with great fear that Balaack, the Moabite king, looked out and saw them encamped on his borders. He consulted the elders of his tribe and it was decided that their only hope was to seek aid from Balaam, a divine, who had the power to bless or curse with words. An embassy bearing gifts

for divination was sent to Balaam, but he, upon consulting
God, told them that God would not permit him to return
with them. When this was reported back to the Moabites,
Balaack decided to send more important representatives
and greater gifts. Balaam again consulted God and this
time God told him that he could go but that he was not
to say anything other than what He would tell him to say.
In the morning Balaam mounted his ass and started off on
his journey. The text here (Num 22:22) says that God
was angry with Balaam and sent an angel with a drawn
sword to stand in his path. Three times the ass saw
the angel, tried to avoid him, and finally fell down
before him. Each time Balaam, enraged, struck his ass
and rebuked the ass for making sport of him. God then
opened the ass' mouth and through the lowly beast asked
Balaam why he so mistreated his faithful servant. The
angel made himself visible then to Balaam and the seer
prostrated himself in fear. He exclaimed that he had
just seen the angel and asked for pity. The angel
rebuked him for striking his ass and for being perverse

The crux is attributed to the retention by a Biblical
redactor of two differing versions of the story. The
Elohistic tradition is responsible for Num 23:19-21a
where God permits Balaam to go, and the Jehovahist tradition
for the seemingly unprovoked anger of God (Num 22:22).
See the Encyclopaedia Biblica, ed. Rev. T. K. Cheyne and
J. Sutherland Black, I (London, 1899, 461 and The
Interpreter's Bible, ed. George A. Buttrick et. al., II
(New York, 1953), 137-8, 251-2.
in his going to Balaack. He added that had the ass not stopped, then he, the angel, would have killed Balaam. The seer then again received permission to go and was warned not to say anything other than that which he would be told to say. Balaam finally came to Balaack's camp where they both offered sacrifices.

The next day Balaack took Balaam up on a mountain, showed him the Israelites and bade him curse them. Together they made sacrifices and then Balaam went off to another part of the mountain to consult God. There God tells him that He will put words in the seer's mouth upon his return to Balaack. Balaam then makes his first prophecies. The same procedure is repeated on two other mountains and, finally, Balaam raises his eyes to the heavens and in his fourth prophecy proclaims that

orietur Stella ex Iacob et Consurget virga de Israel / et percutiet duces Moab vastabitque omnes filios Seth / et erit Idumea possessio eius (Num 24:17b-18a).

After each of the prophecies Balaack exclaims that Balaam is not doing what he was brought to do and Balaam, at several points, tells him that he can only say what God will permit him to say. Finally discouraged, Balaack separates from Balaam and the latter returns to his homeland.

It should be apparent that there is an inconsistency in the Biblical story at the point where God becomes
angry at Balaam's going to Balaack. In the verse just prior to this, God had told Balaam that he could go. This crux in the text was at least partially responsible for the legends that later attached themselves to the Balaam story. At the moment, it is only necessary for us to look at the playwrights' responses to the crux. In both the H and D versions the matter is glossed over. Both playwrights condense the two ambassadorial missions into one and interpret freely God's responses to Balaam's requests for permission to go. God's first response is a quite clear denial of permission: noli ire cum eis neque maledicas populo quia benedictus est (Num 22:12). The playwrights make the statement an equivocal one:

Balaam, I commaund the,  
King Balaak his bydding that thou flee;  
that people that is blessed of me,  
curse thou not by no waye. (H137-40; D185-8)

Balaam is reluctant about the whole matter because he had hoped to gain riches from his service to Balaack. God responds:

Thoughghe the folke /Balanck D7 be my foe  
thou shalt haue leaue thydder to goe,  
but looke that thou doe right soe,  
as I haue thee taughte. (H145-8; D193-6)

This statement follows naturally from the preceding one, for Balaam was told before only to flee Balaack's bidding. In the Vulgate, God's second response is exactly opposite to his first one: si vocare te
venerunt homines isti surge et vade cum eis / ita
dumtaxat ut quod tibi praecpero facias (Num 22:20).

God's anger in Num 22:22 is therefore seemingly unjustified. The playwrights, drawing on the tradition arising from this crux, provide an explanation for God's rage. Balaam says that he will do as the Lord commands him (H149; D197), but as soon as he gets on his ass he tells the knight that he will curse the Israelites:

Now by the law I leve upon,
sith I haue leaue for to gone
they shalbe cursed every one,
and I ought wyn maye.

If Balaak hold that he has heighte,
Gods hest I set at light,
warried they shalbe this night,
or that I wend awaye. (H153-60; D201-8)

Then the angel appears and rebukes him. After this point the two versions differ in their representation of Balaam.

The depiction of Balaam as an avaricious, reluctant prophet and an invoker of demons is Jewish in origin and older, as well as being more extensive, than the Christian tradition. Undoubtedly the crude jointure of the Elohistic and Jehovist versions of the story encouraged the development of an explanation which would make the narrative comprehensible and less contradictory. 29

29 George B. Gray says that Balaam was long held to be a detestable character who became a victim of his avarice. The plot of the Moabite women and Balaam's death as a
One of the solutions to this crux, preserved by Josephus, was that God granted permission because he was indignant at Balaam's second request and because He wished to confound the seer later. Another, but related, explanation was that God, recognizing Balaam's avarice, permitted the prophet to go in order to accomplish His blessing of the Israelites.

The story of Balaam's wicked counsel (appended at the end of D) was also an early development, and Josephus transmits the whole legend in some detail. The origin result of his part in that treachery was added to the Biblical account several centuries later by the Priestly tradition; cf. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Numbers, The International Critical Commentary, IV (New York, 1920), p. 319. For a condensed account of the Jewish legends, see Louis Ginzberg, Legends of the Jews (New York, 1956), pp. 464-68, 472-3. A more extensive discussion of the Balaam-Balaack story and Balaam's wicked counsel can be found in the original Ginzberg Legends, III (Philadelphia, 1913-38), 552-73 et passim. Balaam first met Moses at the court of Pharaoh where Balaam led the delegation of magicians who opposed Moses and Aaron. Cf. II, 254-77.

30 Antiquities IV, cap. 106-7.

31 Origen, Homélies, p. 290.

of this legend is obscure but was obviously known to the
Jewish authors of the Old Testament and the Jewish-
Christian writers of the New. Perhaps the legend arose
out of the general obscurity of the events related in
Numbers 25 and the ambiguous statement in Balaam's last
prophecy that he will give Balaack counsel (Num 24:14b). 33
At any rate, there is an old tradition that because of
his avarice Balaam counselled Balaack to send the
Moabite women out of the Israelites in order to tempt
the young men into fornication and idolatry. 34 This
plan was so successful that God became angry and,
through Phineas and the other righteous Israelites, slew
24,000 of the Israelites for their perfidy. Later in
Numbers (31:8), we learn that Balaam was slain during
the invasion of the Midianite lands.

33 Origen, Homélies, pp. 391-2, following Philo, Vita
294, interprets Num 24:14b in this way. See also Hugo
of St. Victor, Sermon 80, in Sermones Centum, PL 177,
1154.

34 Balaam's cupidity and avarice are noted throughout
the Jewish and Christian sources. See, for example,
2 Peter 2:15-6, Jude 11; Origen, Homélies, pp. 290, 301;
St. Augustine, Questiones in Heptateuchum Libri VII,
Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, XXXIII (Turnholt,
1958), Bk Iv, lines 1136-40, 1142-76, 1235-41; St.
Gregory the Great, Pastoral Care, tr. Henry Davis,
Ancient Christian Fathers, 11 (Westminster, Md., 1950),
p. 205; Maurus, PL 108, 728, 730.
On the basis of these legends, Balaam became known in the Christian West as a soothsayer, a diviner, a practitioner of magic and a servant of demons. He was an example of the fool, the vanus populus, and, because he carried his words on his lips and not in his heart, he was a figuration of the Scribes and Pharisees who praised God and followed His commandments minutely but who attempted to trick Christ. Furthermore, Bonaventure tells us that Balaam is one of the twelve prior manifestations of the Antichrist, because he gave bad counsel and was an idolator, and that at the Last Judgment, he will arrive at the head of the delegation of iniquitous prophets.

In general, Balaam's reputation among the Fathers and theologians of the medieval church is despicable;

35 See, for example, Joshua 13:22, Philo, Vita Mosis I, cap. 264-5; Origen, Homélies, pp. 274, 289; Maurus, PL 108, 726, 729; Hugo of St. Victor, Sermon 72, PL 177, 1136; Peter the Cantor, Verbum Abbreviatum, cap. xxii, PL 205, 80.


37 Bonaventura, Collationes in Hexameron, Opera omnia, V (Quarrachl, 1891), p. 399a; Sermon XIII, Opera omnia, IX, 72a.
yet his prophecy, the Orietur, parallel to Isaiah's, was considered one of the more significant Old Testament prophecies of the coming of Christ. This depiction of Balaam as a wicked man who pronounced great blessings on Israel led to a double vision of the man depending on whether one wished to emphasize his example or his prophecy. Origen, for example, says of Balaam that he was culpable when he consulted God again out of greediness, when he made sacrifices to demons and when he gave wicked counsel; but that he was worthy of eulogy when he was filled with the words of God, when he prophesied the coming of Christ to the Jews and all nations, and when he blessed instead of cursed the Israelites.  
This bifurcation of character tends to permit the evoking of Balaam either as a wicked character in sermon literature and commentaries or to present him as a neutral figure if the emphasis is on his prophecy. We have noted above, for example, that in the Mystère d'Adam, perhaps the Laon Propheta Play, the Mastricht Passion play and the Mystère de l'incarnation, Balaam is presented as a morally neutral character—no reference is made to the Balaack situation. Furthermore, as Réau notes, only two scenes from the Balaam narrative appear in medieval art: the meeting with the angel,

38 Origen, Homélies, pp. 294-5.
which prefigures the appearance of Christ to Thomas, and the prophecy of the star, which prefigures the birth of Christ and which is most often connected with the star of the Magi. 39 When he appears as a prophet in the Jesse trees, he is not shown on his ass, but is merely identified by name or by his prophecy. 40 In most of these paintings, windows and carvings, then, Balaam's prophecy is emphasized and he is portrayed in a neutral fashion.

The Chester playwrights, therefore, could develop whichever of these characters they wished. Since the H playwright's emphasis was on the prophecies, he played down Balaam's wicked side. He does not eliminate mention of Balaam's avarice (cf. H141-44) or his perversity and duplicity (cf. H153-60), but he does allow us the possible interpretation that Balaam's encounters with God changed his mind. V. A. Kolve, on the basis of the H text, says that

39 Louis Réau, Iconographie de l'art chrétien, vol. II (Paris, 1957), pp. 216-18. Réau does not give any evidence for his interpretation of the angel scene. Mary D. Anderson says that not only was Balaam the prophet of the star, but that "his journey was the accepted antitype to that of the Magi." See her Drama and Imagery in English Medieval Churches (Cambridge, 1963), p. 23.

Balaam learns his lesson, and in Balaack's company he blesses Judea each time he is ordered to curse its people. What is more, his blessings prophesy the great joy soon to come to the Jews. Though Balaam is perverse in mind and easily tempted by money, he does finally obey God, and his reward is a prophetic knowledge of the Messiah. God has used him to comfort the Jews and to confound their enemies.41

Although the H text certainly permits such an interpretation of the play, an actor could alter the tone of the prophecies by emphasizing Balaam's discomfort whenever he tells Balaack that he cannot help prophesying the way that he does. The literary and artistic works cited immediately above do suggest that Balaam could be represented in a neutral way or, at least, in a way in which his wickedness was not brought forward. I have introduced this alternative tradition because I think that the text of the H version is sufficiently ambiguous after the meeting with the Angel to discourage us from making any hard and fast interpretation of Balaam's character. The use of Numbers 22-24 as a source and the emphasis on prophecy in the H version lend credence to the kind of reading Kolve gives the playlet; yet the tradition of a wicked Balaam and a performer's capacity to create that kind of character through intonations and stage business argue for a possible representation of an avaricious and reluctant prophet.

The D playwright leaves no room in the mind of the observer for doubt about Balaam’s character: the seer is an invoker of demons, an avaricious man and one who will do anything for money. If we look, for example, at the major D insertions early in the play, we can see that the D playwright has attempted to build up his characterization of Balaam more concretely and to motivate him sufficiently so that the final scene, the giving of his advice, is well prepared for. First, Balaack is more clearly defined as an opponent of God; he calls his gods to aid him (D133-6, 161-4) and he is called the foe of God by God Himself (D193). 42 We might expect that one idolator would call on another for aid, and, a few lines later, Balaam reveals himself as one:

ffrend, I have godes wonder fell.
both Ruffyn and Reynell
will worke right and I them tell;
ther ys noe wyle to seeke. (213-6)

The D playwright retains Balaam's answer to God in which he reveals his reluctance, out of desire for gain, to follow God's bidding (D189-92; H141-44) and his change of mind once he is on the road (D201-8; H153-60), but the playwright also has Miles tempt him once more with gold:

42 The corresponding H line is: Though the folke be my foe (H145).
Balaham, doe my lordes will,
and of gould thou shalt have thy fill;
spare thou nought that folke to spill,
and spurne ther godes speach (209-12)

Following this offer of reward, Balaam proclaims the
power of his gods (D213-6) and the Angel, the symbol
of God's wrath, appears before the ass to rebuke him.
Balaam is sorely afraid when he sees the angel, but,
I think, it is a guileful Balaam who says:

Lord, have pittye mee vpon,
for synned I have sore.
Lord, ys yt thy will that I forth /goe7 ?
(D251-53; H195-7)

And I think it is a reluctant and sorely taxed Balaam
who responds to Balaack's greeting thus:

Nought may I speake, as I have wyn,
but as god putteth mee within,
to forbye all the ende of my kyn.
therfore, syr, me ys woe. (D261-4; H205-8)

Balaam truly cannot do other than pronounce the blessings
on Israel as long as he is in God's power, but as soon
as the prophecies are finished and he is in full posses-
sion once more of his faculties, he can offer Balaack
some advice. In the D version, it is clear that Balaam
cannot resist the gold offered him and, though he
cannot curse them, he knows that he can provide a
"policye" which will temporarily alienate the Israelites
from God. The H playwright, on the other hand, does
not clearly develop the story of Balaam's cupidity or
tell us about the wicked advice given to Balaack. He
seems only to have used the traditional representation of Balaam as avaricious and reluctant in order to get over the crux in the Biblical passage.

There are a number of other modifications in the original story, most of which are made in order to make the play workable on the stage. The playwrights probably eliminated the second embassy because it unnecessarily delayed the story and because it created the complications, discussed above, which the playwrights wanted to avoid. They also eliminated the building of the altars and the making of sacrifices. And they had Balaam and Balaack move to different parts of the hill rather than to different mountains for each prophecy. These are deletions made primarily for stage convenience and to keep the narrative moving quickly.

On the other hand, the playwrights follow quite closely the intent, if not always the letter, of Balaam's prophecies and Balaack's responses to them. Compare Balaam's first prophecy in our text and in the Vulgate:

\[
\text{How may I curse them in this place,} \\
\text{the people that God blessed have?} \\
\text{in them is both might and grace,} \\
\text{and that is always seen.} \\
\text{but such death as they shall have,} \\
\text{I pray, God send me.} \\
\]

\(\text{H217-20, 231-32; D281-4, 295-6}\)

\text{quo modo maledicam cui non malexixit Deus} \\
\text{qua ratione detester quem Dominus non} \\
\text{detestatur (Num 23:8)}\]
moriatur anima mea morte iustorum
et fiant novissimi mea horum similia
(Num 23:10bc)

Note that in some places the playwrights translate almost word for word; yet, in others they obviously feel free to expand. They quite obviously felt freer in their handling of Balaack's responses:

What the Devilles! eyles the poplart?
thy speach is not worth a fart,
doted I wit well thou art,
for woodland thou hast wrought.

I bade thee curse them, every one,
and thou blest them, blood and bone...
(H233-38; D297-302)

quid est hoc quod agis
ut malediceris inimicia vocavi te
et tu econtrario benedictis eis
(Num 23:11bcd)

Furthermore, the playwrights could incorporate their Christian glosses into the passage while still retaining the original historical intent. The second prophecy, omitted in D, is a very close paraphrase of the Biblical text (see notes), but the last stanza of the prophecy shows interesting expansions:

To Iacobs blood and Israeli
God shall send joy and heale;
and as a Lyon in his weale,
Christ shall be haunsed hye,

And rise also in noble araye,
as a prynce to wyn great paye,
overcome his enemies, as I say,
and them bownedly bye. (H249-56)

ecce populus ut leaena consurget et quasi
leo erigetur
non accubabit donec devoret praedam et
occisorum sanguinem bibat (Num 23:24)
It is obvious that the playwright has added his Christian gloss to the passage, but note that he also allows enough of the original sense to come through so that we are aware that the Israelites will be blessed. The last prophecy, the most famous of Balaam's prophecies, is also modified. We need not deal with the translation here—it follows the same pattern as that cited above—but just compare the two Latin versions:

Orietur Stella ex Iacob, et exurget homo de Israeli, et confringet /consurget D/ omnes duces alieninarum /alienegenarum D/, et erit omnis terra professio /possessio D' eius. 

(H288; D320)

Orietur stella ex Iacob et consurget virga de Israel et percutiet duces Moab vastabitque omnes filios Seth et erit Idumea possessio eius (Num 24:17b-18a)

We should note that the Vulgate lists the variants "exurget" for "consurget" and "homo" for "virga." The DH version is a responsory and can be found in other Balaam plays, in Magi plays, in the Stanzalic Life and other places noted above, so we cannot assume that our playwrights fathered it. Instead they chose the form with less specific allusions because the passage made more important allusions of its own in terms of Christian, as opposed to Hebraic, history and because, in this passage, the playwrights need the ambiguity in order to retain both the historical and allegorical senses.
It should be apparent that the playwrights felt they had some freedom in manipulating their source; yet it is also clear that they never strayed far away from it except when they were faced by an irresolvable crux or when they wished to expand the meaning of a passage. To them, the intent, not the letter, was significant and they also were obviously quite anxious to convey that intent in a dramatic and clear way. The D playwright is almost as conservative as, although more colloquial than, the H playwright, but the sources and the tradition he drew on were just as valid as H's.

Thus far we have concerned ourselves only with the Balaam section and its source, traditions and narrative content, but no analysis of the play can be complete until we ask ourselves how the playwrights fused the Balaam and Moses scenes into one thematic unit. The principal events in the Moses section are narrated in chapters 20, 32 and 34-35 of Exodus and are imbedded in a mass of legal and religious instructions. After the Israelites had been led out of Egypt and while they were on their way to the Promised Land, God commanded Moses to come up on Mount Sinai to receive the laws that He would have the Israelites follow. The people, frightened by thunder, lightning and smoke, ask that Moses, not God, speak to them (Ex 20:18-19). Moses
replies that they should not be afraid, that God has come to prove them and that God puts fear in them so that they might not sin (Ex 20:20). While Moses is on the mountain, the people of Israel, concerned at his delay, erect a golden calf as their idol (Ex 32:1). Moses descends from the mountain and breaks the tablets of the law in outrage at the Israelites' perfidy. Finally, Moses asks God to forgive the sins of the Israelites and he receives the second table of laws (Ex 34:1-3). When he descends the mountain this time, his face is aglow and, according to the common medieval misinterpretation, he has horns on his head (Ex 34:29). He tells the people that these commandments of the Lord must be obeyed.

The H and D versions of the Moses section are similar in intent, but different in a number of particulars. The most immediate contrast is that the H playwright gives us only one scene and allows the Expositor to tell us that Moses received the law a second time; D, on the other hand, enacts both events. The first 24 lines of these two versions are approximately the

\[\text{43 The horns on Moses' head are common in literature and art. This peculiar attribute arises from reading cornutam ("shining") as if it were the adjective from cornu (cornutus, "horned"). See Réau, II, 1, 177.}\]
same: God tells Moses the commandments and instructs him to be obedient. The H and D texts diverge at this point. In H, the Principe Sinagoga stands before God and Moses and, as if representing the Israelites, expresses his fear and pleads with Moses to be an intermediary (H25-32); he later exclaims (H41-48) at Moses' shining face and horns when the latter descends from the mountain. Moses' speeches to the Israelites (H33-40, 49-64) are based on Ex 20:20 and Ex 35:1-6, or those passages following the first and second giving of the law respectively. It is only in the Expositor's speech (H73-84) that we are told that Moses received the laws a second time. The playwright has obviously condensed his story and freely manipulated the Biblical passages. The scene is very simple and appears primarily to serve only the didactic purpose of reciting the commandments.

The D playwright seems more conscious of chronology and may have worked a little more closely with the Vulgate text. He eliminates the Principe Sinagoga and adds a scene of the second giving of the law. In his first speech (D25-32), Moses reveals himself as a humble man before God and then, turning to the people, tells them not to be afraid. The commandments, he says, are to prove the Israelites' worthiness, for, now that they know what sin is, they can avoid it (HD33-40). At this point, the Doctor comes on stage and tells the
audience that these were the first laws given to man and that he who obeys them will have the greatest success (D41-4). Then he says that he cannot repeat the whole of this story, but that Moses had to receive the laws again because he had destroyed them in anger at the Israelites' idolatry (D53-56). The second scene shows us Moses before God again. God implies that neither His mind nor the laws have been changed and instructs Moses to write them again (D77-80). From the mountain Moses speaks again to the people and warns them not to disobey the laws (D81-96; H49-64). There is one significant addition to the Biblical narrative in the last two lines of his speech (D95-6; H63-4): the Israelites are to offer gifts "to him that shall save you from wo / and helpe you in your neede." Quite literally, God does this in the next scene; but the lines also point forward to that future time, reiterated in Balaam's prophecies, when Christ will save those who have obeyed His commandments.

There are two kinds of linkages in these plays that help to unite the Moses and Balaam sections of the plays. The first is a simple narrative continuity and the second is the thematic development which organizes the play internally and connects it with the rest of the cycle. The narrative unity in the H version is not as explicit
as that in D and depends almost entirely on the juxtaposition of the Moses and Balaam scenes; furthermore, the insertion of the Procession of Prophets throws the slight narrative connections out of order. There is no army represented in the Moses section of the play and our only clue to the Israelites' journey through the wilderness is in God's opening statement:

Moyses, my servaunte life and dere, 
and all the people that be here, 
ye wott in Egipte when ye were, 
out of thralldome I you broughte. (H1-4)

The Expositor tells us that this is a condensed version of the events recorded in the Old Testament (H65-72) and thus it is with some abruptness that Balaack appears on the scene. The king's opening speech (H89-112) relates the Balaam to the Moses section; he says he once ruled Israel, that Moses through prayer can defeat all his enemies, that he, Balaack, wants to be avenged on these people and that the Israelites are destroying his land.

The narrative unity in H is more implicit than explicit; in D it is made apparent through the character of the Doctor and by several references in Balaack's opening speech. The Doctor most often functions as a narrator rather than an Explicator. In his first speech, he performs part of the traditional role of Explicator when he implies Christ is to be the Second Law given to man (D41-2) and when, at the end of the play, he explains
the meaning of Balaam's last prophecy:

And by this prophecye leeve yee mee, 
three kinges as yee shall played see, 
honored at his natuiltye, 
Christe when hee was borne. (D445-8)

In the rest of his two speeches, the Doctor is a narrator who provides the links between sections of the play, who expands the narrative with events difficult to stage but meaningful to the story, and who helps to create the thematic unity of the play. His first speech (D41-64) provides a link between the first and second sections of the Moses play; it also allows for the passage of time and explains what happens between the two events. By placing the Doctor's speech between the two scenes of the giving of the Law, the D playwright is able to show us more forcefully the apostasy of the Israelites and thus he prepares us for their desertion of their God at the end of the play. The Doctor's last speech continues the narrative beyond the Balaam scene and thus encloses the Balaam play within the narrative of Moses and the Israelites. Furthermore, the passage comprising lines 125-64 in D, an interpolation, repeats statements made in the Moses play and fills in more clearly the events that occurred between the giving of the law and the arrival of the Israelites on Balaack's borders. For example, Balaack tells us that the Israelites came out of Egypt and that their
Egyptian pursuers were killed (D149-52); he says that he has heard that the Israelites want to take his land away from him (D137-40) and that their one God is strong (D153-6).

There are three related themes and events in these plays, all of which are developed clearly in D, but which are obscured in H, at least in part, by the insertion of the Procession of Prophets. The first pair of themes is that God is "pearles of postye" and that obedience to Him will bring rewards in this world and in the hereafter. Coupled with these ideas are the prophecies of the coming of Christ and his dispensation of justice at the Last Judgment. It is made apparent, particularly in the D version, that Christ's descent into the world is necessary because some men are recalcitrant and persistent in their evils and that others, although obedient, err from time to time and are imperfect by nature.

The omnipotence of God is made evident throughout the play. When Moses first descends from Mount Sinai, he tells the Israelites:

By this sight nowe yee may see,  
that hee is pearles of postee;  
therefore this token looke doe yee,  
therof that yee ne blynne (D37-40)

The whole Balaam confrontation with God shows that God is not to be gainsaid. Even though Balaam does not wish
to obey God, he is forced to be the instrument of God's blessings. It is apparent that he has no control over the situation, for he tells Balaack that he cannot say anything other than that which God puts in his mouth (H205-8, D261-4; H259-60; H279-80, D319-20). The final witness is Balaack himself. His long opening speech recounts how God has helped the Israelites in the past and he concludes, therefore, to oppose his gods to their God. Balaack's decision to resolve the conflict between peoples on a cosmic scale—his gods versus their God—adds a dimension not apparent in the H version. It is the kind of opposition of the infernal to the divine that is apparent in the plays (to name the major ones) of the *Fall of Lucifer*, the *Fall of Man*, the *Harrowing of Hell*, the *Antechrist* and the *Last Judgment*. And in this play, as in all the others, God is triumphant.

The second theme is that God gave laws to men so that they would recognize sin and avoid it. If a person were obedient to God, then he would have joy and bliss. The theme is apparent from the beginning of the play. After God has given the laws to Moses, the patriarch turns to the people and says that the people should be careful not to break them (DH39-40). The Doctor steps forward and expands the point:

"Lordings, this commandement was the firste law that ever god sent;"
Yet, while Moses is on the mountain, the people of Israel transgress the law (DH54), and the laws must be given again. It is emphasized that the laws are not to be changed (D77-80), and Moses once more warns the Israelites to obey them on pain of death (D81-4, H49-52; D89, H57). If the Israelites will follow the laws and give honor "to him that shall save (them) from woo," then He will help them in their need (D95-6, H63-4).

Both Balaack and Balaam, as we have seen before, are worshippers of other gods and other laws. Balaam makes this quite explicit at the point when he changes his mind:

Knight, by my lawe that I live one,  
now have I leave for to gonne,  
cursed they shalbe every eych one...  
(D201-3, H153-5)

Balaam's perversity against the will of God is later evidenced in the counsel he gives to Balaack, and for his transgression, he is killed (D437-40). The Israelites too turn once more from their God when they fall victim to the wiles of the Moabite women and commit fornication with them and practise idolatry. Balaam prophesies at the end of his speech of advice that his plot will work and will anger God:

Soe shall the theyre god displease,  
and torne themselves to great disease;
then may thow have thy hartes ease,
there law when they refuse. (D369-72)

The Doctor then relates what happens:

Soe by these women full of Illusion,
godes people were brought to great confusion,
and his displeasure. in conclusion,
his law they sett at naught. (D413-6)

God's anger was made evident through Phineas who, with the help of the other righteous Israelites, slew 24,000 of those who had turned from God (D429-32).

The theme of divine retribution and future reward is repeated throughout this pageant and the rest of the cycle. The open-ended or doubly significant terminology which usually occurs in the last lines of the speeches of Moses and Balaam is meant to apply both to the historical situation of the Israelites on the way to the Promised Land and to the allegorical meaning in which the Israelite is representative of the Christian. For example, Balaam prophesies that God shall protect the faithful and that they shall die the death of the blessed:

Theire god shall them keep and save,
and other reproffe shall they none wave;
but such death as they shall have,
I pray god send to mee. (D293-6, H229-32)

That Christ shall come to save the blessed:

To Jacobs blood and Israell
God shall send ioy and heale;
and as a lyon in his weale,
Christ shalbe haunsed hye,
And rise also in noble arise,
as a prince to win great paye,
overcome his enemyes, as I say,
and them bondly bye. (H249-56)

That He will grant them bliss:

I wott well that god made all this,
his folke to lyue in ioye and blys.
that cursys them cursed hee is;
whoe blesseth them to god is deare.
(D309-12, H269-72)

And that He will judge all men:

Now on thinge I will tell you all,
hereafter what shall befall:
a sterre of Iacobb springe shall,
a man of Israel,
That shall overcome and have in bond
all kinges and dukes of strange land,
and all this world have in his hand,
as lord to dight and deale.
(D321-8, H289-96)

The play operates successfully on two temporal planes,
the past and the future, in terms of what has and will happen,
and on a third, the present, in terms of day to day morality. Just as God rewarded the faithful Israelites with the Promised Land, so He will reward faithful Christians with the joys of heaven; and, just as He damned the wickedness of Balaam and of those Israelites who turned from Him, so He will damn those who disobey Him. The moral for the audience is that He will reward those who follow his laws both in this life and in the one to come.

The narrative and thematic unity I have outlined above is fairly evident in the D version of the play,
but it is obscured in H by the intrusion of the Procession of Prophets. The prophecies, quite obviously, disrupt the narrative unity of the play; however, if we conceive of them as amplifications of the Balaam prophecies, then we can allow them some justification as long as we, the audience, will permit the distortion in the familiar chronology and the inclusion of material foreign to the narrative immediately before us. To be sure the Old Testament prophets provide a thematic continuity with the major portion of the Balaam play, but the prophets section is not an integral part of the play. The purpose is purely didactic and thus the scene is a dead one in a play that usually bodies forth its didactic meaning in lively dramatic scenes.

The prophets scene in H has much more relevance to the plays that follow than it does to the Moses-Balaam play. The procession, as we have seen in our examination of early Balaam appearances, acts as a prologue to the events of Christ's life; in fact, the Expositor explains each one and, in a fairly succinct reprise, tells us that two refer to the Incarnation and the others to the Passion, the Resurrection, the Ascension and Pentecost (H413-32); he forgets that he has told us of the Harrowing of Hell in the Esayas section and the Judgment
in the David section. Furthermore, the prophets of Christ form a structural parallel with the prophets of Antichrist. I do not know whether we should emphasize the last point too much since the Balaam play was presented on the first day and the Antichrist plays at the end of the third day. Obviously, the parallelism would be more apparent and structurally stronger at a time when the cycle was simpler. In conclusion, I think we can see that the prophets were probably inserted in H so that they could function as a prologue; however, we also are forced to conclude that they are a disruptive element within the scene, and that they focus the emphasis on the prophetic element and thus obscure the themes, the power of God, the law, and the necessity of obedience to God, which are developed throughout the narrative sections of the play.

44 The Expositor, line 411, says that we have heard six prophets, but we have actually heard seven.
In the preceding chapter, we examined the playwright's materials and imagined how he might go about constructing a play. This chapter will concern itself with the playwright's selection of Old Testament subjects for inclusion in the cycle. Of necessity, we shall have to skip over quickly that dark period between our first vernacular play in England, the Mystère d'Adam, and the cycles themselves. There is nothing like the English cycle anywhere on the continent, so we are further forced to draw our conclusions from the small class of extant cycles and the few records remaining to us of other cycles. The usual procedure has been to collapse the cycles together and to try to figure out why certain Old Testament subjects were chosen and others, equally capable of dramatization, were omitted. On this basis, most critics have decided that the Old Testament plays prefigure events in the New Testament section. The playwright undoubtedly was aware of the figural meaning of the Old Testament characters presented in the cycle; but he does not anywhere let the typological interpretation overwhelm the drama of the play. Furthermore, I think that
it is impossible in most cases to make typological relationships apparent to the audience and, therefore, after a discussion of each of the plays, I will suggest that the subjects were selected because they describe the major interventions of God into history before the Incarnation. Although it is impossible to deny that the playwrights may have made their choices on the ground of figural meaning, my conclusion is that the Chester playwright very probably did not do so and that he wished to present to the audience the idea of the necessity of the Incarnation and to show the reasons that God did not abandon man.

It is not the purpose of this chapter to present a thorough discussion of the development of drama from Quem quaeritis to the cycle, but a succinct statement of scholarly thought on the relationship between liturgical and cyclic drama may prove necessary if we are to know something about what the state of the vernacular drama was before the additions were made that finally created the English cycle play. Professors Dustoor, Hardison and Kölve have suggested, quite effectively I think, that the cyclic drama did not grow directly out of the liturgical drama as older critics had often stated. All three agree that in one way or another

1O. B. Hardison, Jr., Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages (Baltimore, 1965), pp. 257, 281-3;
the vernacular drama very early separated from and/or grew up independently of the liturgical drama and that responsories or the liturgical year gave the immediate stimulus to the form of the plays. Dustoor showed that the play of Moses and the Table of the Law derives not from the Processus Prophetarum but from the lectiones and responsoria of the period of Septuagesima and Lent. Hardison believes that the Mystère d'Adam is drawn specifically from the responsory of Sexagesima as it is given in the Gregorian Liber responsalis and that this responsory provides the outline of the play. Kolve suggests that the whole structure of the cycles devolved from the liturgical year itself, that is, from the readings for the year which provide the overall shape, and from those for the seventy days preceding Easter which provide the content for the Old Testament plays.


Hardison, pp. 259-61. He believes that La seinte Resurrection, a play we are not concerned with at present, is drawn directly from a literary and non-liturgical source, the Gospel of Matthew. See pp. 281-3. Most of our plays are based on literary sources. The discussion here is directed toward shape, not content or source.

Kolve, pp. 43ff. Jerome Taylor narrows the scope of both shape and content to the texts of the Feast of Corpus Christi itself. See his article, "The Dramatic Structure of the Middle English Corpus Christi, or Cycle, Plays," in Literature and Society, ed. Bernice Slote (Lincoln, Neb., 1964), p. 179.
I wish only to emphasize here that the vernacular tradition was independent of the liturgical drama, that the liturgy probably influenced the shape of the cycle at least initially, and that the liturgy may have been responsible in some way for limiting the selection of Old Testament subjects.

If we can assume the liturgical influence on form and delimitation of subject matter as outlined above, then we are reasonably well prepared to ask why certain Old Testament subjects were chosen to the exclusion of other. Numerous books and articles have cited typology as the principle of selection for these plays. It will not be necessary to take up these opinions separately since they have been summarized and thoughtfully expanded by Professor Kolve. In Chapter Three of his book, Professor Kolve deduces that the overall form of the cycle was derived from the lessons of the liturgy; he further suggested that there was an impulse for the central story of Corpus Christi, to complete itself, to add a beginning and end to the middle. The center is the Advent of Christ. This event, Kolve says, is never celebrated without reference to the first and last comings; therefore, he concludes, the creation and

4 Chp. 4, "Corpus Christi Form: Principles of Selection," pp. 57-100.
the judgment of man are necessary adjuncts to the Advent.\textsuperscript{5}
The Fall of Man is necessary because it explained the necessity for the Advent:

The Fall became a kind of datum, a given fact, from which everything else follows: it made necessary the Incarnation, and thus created a direct relationship between Adam and Christ which in turn shaped the understanding of the Redemption and the manner of its working out.\textsuperscript{6}

The connection of the Creation and Fall to the redemptive process is obvious; but the rationale for the inclusion of other Old Testament subjects in the cycle is different. Kolve, following older critics, thinks that the next step was to choose those events and personages from the Old Testament who provided prefigurations of the events which occurred in the life of Christ and those which were meaningful in the redemptive history of mankind.\textsuperscript{7} However, Kolve adds, "figuration," that is, prefiguration and fulfillment, only explains why certain events were included and not why other equally valid events were excluded.\textsuperscript{8} Kolve's concept

\textsuperscript{5}pp. 58-9.

\textsuperscript{6}Kolve, p. 59.

\textsuperscript{7}pp. 62-85.

\textsuperscript{8}p. 86ff. Kolve follows Auerbach's definition of figura as described in his article of that title in Scenes from the Drama of European Literature (Meridian Books, New York, 1959), pp. 11-76. See also the discussion below.
of a secondary controlling principle for the selection of typological subjects is a valuable one. He asserts that if typological relationships are the guiding principle of selection, then some other structural principle must have been involved in order for the compilers of the cycles to have come up with essentially the same subjects. He concludes that although no cycle develops the theme explicitly, the underlying controlling principle is the concept of the Seven Ages of Man as first developed by St. Augustine. The plays which do not appear in the proto-cycle but which do appear in individual cycles are evidently idiosyncratic and not necessarily related to the controlling idea of the Seven Ages of Man.

Kolve classifies the Fall of Lucifer, the Creation and Fall of Man, Cain and Abel, Noah, Abraham and Isaac as first priority subjects, and Moses and the Exodus and/or Moses and the Law and the Prophets as second priority subjects. He cites the first group as first priority subjects in a proto-cycle on the basis of their inclusion in all the extant English cycles and the Cornish cycle and in those lost cycles of which we have records. The second group is made up of those plays which have a high incidence of appearance; they are present in all but one of the above cycles. See pp. 50-6.

Kolve, pp. 99, 88; but also throughout the concluding section of the chapter, pp. 86-100. E. Catherine Dunn suggests a similar argument for the Towneley plays; cf. her article, "The Medieval Cycle as History Play," Studies in the Renaissance, VII (1960), 76-89.
There are several assumptions that Kolve makes which should be kept clearly before us. First, he says that the similarity of subject matter in the cycles "probably has little to do with cycle interborrowings, or with literary accident, or much less with a paucity of material from which to choose." On the contrary, we cannot rule out borrowing. We have several examples of direct borrowing of one cycle from another, especially of Towneley from York, and we might suspect that there was greater intercyclic influence than has been acknowledged heretofore. For example, in the Chester cycle, the Christ and the Doctors scene shares a number of lines with the York play of that name and may have been borrowed from York. The Brome and Chester Isaac share a number of lines and are in some way related. All four cycles show the stretching of Christ on the cross; it is difficult to assume that all four arrived at this

11p. 56.

12Greg, Trial, pp. 101-11. He includes parallel texts of the pertinent York-Chester passages. Towneley also took the play from York and the N-Town play probably derived some of its lines from the York version.

representation independently. There may also be borrowing of a subtler kind; for example, the portrayal of Noah's wife as a shrew in the Chester play appears to be in contradiction to her representation elsewhere in that play and may have been influenced by her portrayal in one or more of the other cycles. The Chester Shepherds play is remarkably like the Towneley Prima Pastorum, and something like the opening scene of the Secunda Pastorum, in structure and content though not in poetic form or language. Most of the examples cited above are extra-Biblical and extra-exegetical; I think, therefore, that we must not be too hasty in assuming that there is little influence from interborrowing. If we can find similarity of treatment of subject matter among the cycles, then we may conclude that there is a possibility of borrowing or influence; furthermore, if this kind of similarity exists, then we might conclude that the similarity of subject matter itself may have been the result of borrowing.

14 Chester, XVI, lines 565-600; York XXXV, lines 76-148; Towneley, XXIII, lines 119-54; Ludus Coventriae 32, lines 726-53. The scene may have been common enough in Gothic art so that the latter may have suggested the motif to all the playwrights.

15 Salter does not think the characterization is inconsistent. See MDC, p. 30, and my discussion below. Of course, the tradition of Noah's wife is old and it is possible that the Chester playwright independently introduced it.
Secondly, Kolve assumes that a description of the cycles as they now exist reflects what a cycle must be if it is to be a complete cycle. He establishes a proto-cycle made up of Old Testament subjects of first and second priority, but he ignores intercyclic borrowing and assumes, I think, that the compiler of each cycle had the same principles of selection in mind when he organized the cycle. The proto-cycle is, however, an artificial concept and does not conform to the facts. The Fall of Lucifer, for example, is labelled a first priority subject; yet we know that at Chester it entered the cycle after the other Old Testament plays and that it, the Tanners play, was written by a playwright other than the rime couée redactor. The Tanner playwright did make the play conform to certain features of the Creation play; but in doing so, he need not have understood the principles of selection on which the Old Testament plays were based. Perhaps a better example is the Moses play. Kolve makes the Moses plays of the Exodus and/or the Giving of the Laws a second priority subject because they appear in all but one of the cycles. It is possible that these two should not be grouped together, for each play may have been introduced for different reasons. Kolve groups them because they show

16 Salter, "Banna," XV, 451-54; XVI, 16.
events in the Fourth Age and thus they are important because they are prefigurative and fall within the Seven Ages of Man concept. The art historian, Wilhelm Molsdorf, on the other hand, lists over fifty examples in which Moses or an event in which Moses is involved prefigure Christ or an event in Christ's life. All these presumably would fulfill the requirements of selection according to typology and in conjunction with the Seven Ages of Man. It might be better to ask if there is any reason for the inclusion of the Giving of the Law in the Chester cycle and assume either independent selection, intercyclic borrowing or influence, or selection according to some other principle.

Many recent critics have cited typology as the basis for selection or as the controlling principle on the selection of material from a mass of material limited by some other concept. I shall cite only a few significant examples. E. Catherine Dunn, in an article on the Towneley plays, discusses that cycle as a "history play," based generally on the Seven Ages of Man, in which the specific Old Testament characters are chosen.

p. 93.

Christliche Symbolik der mittelalterlichen Kunst (Graz, 1968; rptd. from Leipzig edn., 1926), pp. 283-4, the index, and the passages there cited.
because they are prefigurations of Christ. She also notes the emphasis on Old Testament covenants in these plays. Eleanor Prosser proposes that the doctrine of penitence unifies the cycles and, although she insists that the playlets must be separately treated as drama, indicates that she thinks the Old Testament episodes were selected on the basis of typological relationships and prophetic statement. Jerome Taylor deduces that the structure of the cycle plays is inherent in the texts of the Feast of Corpus Christi which "stressthe comprehensive commemoration of all God's wonders in the Eucharist." He says that episodes are bound into the cycles by one or all of the three following ways: they are

1) causally related in a sequential action which knits together a whole series of men's responses to God's saving initiatives (e.g., without Noah's faith, there would have been no mankind surviving the flood...);

2) exemplary of one or another kind of faith or obedience, or license and disobedience, with the repetitions of exempla suggesting a movement in the direction of what Elder Olson has called "the pattern play";


20 Drama and Religion in the English Mystery Plays (Stanford, 1961), pp. 23-4. In all fairness to Miss Prosser, one must admit that she does not give a typological interpretation in her excellent discussion of the Cain plays.

21 Taylor, p. 179.
3) figural in Erich Auerbach's sense, that is, with an early episode finding its complete significance in a later one which it foreshadows and adumbrates. 22

Finally, Professor Arnold Williams has recently suggested that typological significance may have been the original reason for the selection of the material, but that the plays which we now have no longer reflect as strongly that liturgical or sermon influence as they do present actions "more appropriate to drama." 23

We cannot ignore Professor Williams' suggestion and we must also ask, as he does, whether typological explications are relevant to the plays as they now stand. In the discussion which follows, I will expand Professor Williams' remarks and ask chiefly two questions: 1) should the typological interpretation of the Old Testament plays, particularly those of the Chester cycle, be given the emphasis that they have been given, and 2) is typology of first priority in the selection of these plays? I shall argue that typological significance is not of top priority in the Chester plays and that, although I cannot disprove the original intention of selecting plays on the basis of typology, the plays may have been selected for other reasons.

22 ibid., p. 183.

Before I begin discussion of a typological test case, the Noah play, I would like to define typology as I will use it, and to distinguish two other "types" which do not fall within the concept of figura. I shall use throughout the following discussion Auerbach's definition of figura, or typology:

figura is something real and historical which announces something else that is also real and historical. The relation between the two events is revealed by an accord or similarity.

Figural interpretation establishes a connection between two events or persons, the first of which signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second encompasses or fulfills the first. The two poles of the figure are separate in time, but both, being real events or figures, are within time, within the stream of historical life.24

For an Old Testament person or event to be a figura, it must satisfy three requirements: 1) it must prefigure a person or event in the New Testament; 2) the latter person or event must appear in the New Testament in order to fulfill the prefiguration; and 3) both events must be real and historical.

There is a tendency, I think, not to observe these criteria closely when attributing figural significance to some Old Testament events in the plays. I shall develop shortly the ways in which the Noah play does not conform to this definition, but for the moment it is

important that we distinguish one "type" which is often lumped together with prefigurative types. Professor John Gardner has called the Towneley Cain an "exegetical type of the disloyal Christian." Cain is an exegetical type, but he is not a figura. I do not think that the medieval audience would have been as specific as Professor Gardner has been; instead, they may have recognized Cain as an evil person, one who is unwilling to render unto God what is God's. The emphasis in the portrait, however, is not that Cain prefigures the Jews who killed Christ, for example, but that he is a member of that class of people who are not obedient. The "exegetical type" of Cain is a tropological figure; Cain is an immoral person, one whose actions are not to be followed. The representation of an evil Cain depends solely on character development and actions within the play. The character type can, therefore, be defined as an individual who represents a class but who is not specifically prefigurative of an individual in a later play. Of course, a character may assume both figural and tropological significance; for example, in the Chester Abraham

25 "Theme and Irony in the Wakefield Mactacio Abel," PMLA, LXXX (1965), 515.

26 Réau says that Cain symbolizes the Jews. See Icon., II, i, 93. The attribution of the artistic interpretation to that of drama is open to the same objections as those described below.
play, Abraham is represented as a type of the obedient Christian, he is a moral exemplar, and, in the expository speeches of the Doctor, he is denoted as a figura for God the Father. Cain, however, does not satisfy the basic requirements of a figura; he does not prefigure anyone and there is no person in the New Testament section who corresponds specifically to Cain.

I think we must also consider the antitype as a possible category within our definition of figura. The exegete might well juxtapose Eve and Mary in order to show that Mary is all that Eve was not and that Eve, therefore, was a negative figura fulfilled positively in Mary. The Towneley playwright expresses this notion most succinctly in the Annunciation play:

I wyll that my son manhede take,  
ffor reason wyll that ther be thre,  
A man, a madyn, and a tre:  
Man for man, tre for tre,  
Madyn for madyn; thus shall it be.  
(X, 30-34)

The poet obviously had the antithetical relationship in mind; but he makes the statement long after the Creation play and we must ask whether he is really concerned with a negative figura or a rationale for the Incarnation. I think it is more probably the latter. 27 It is difficult

27 Martin Stevens says that the Towneley Annunciation holds a position like that of the Creation in the first part of the cycle—it is a Second Creation. Of these lines and the design inherent in the repetition of the
enough to recognize a figura when the Old Testament event parallels one in the New Testament; it seems to me that it is even more difficult to recognize a figura that depends not on parallelism but antithesis. The characters of Eve, Noah's wife and other women in the cycles are more important as contrasts to Mary than as negative figura; they are stereotypes, not antitypes. In essence, I am arguing that the Eve-Mary relationship is not figurally specific enough. We shall see that both Eve and Noah's wife are characterized as shrewish, guileful and "licorris"; these traits, however, are données, not dramatically developed characteristics. The stereotype is an ancient and effective dramatic device whether it is adhered to or violated. One of the most often cited stereotypes of the cycle drama is that of the raging tyrant; Herod and tyrants like him were perfectly familiar to the medieval drama and the stereotype would have been in mind whenever such a figure came onstage. The Chester playwright varies the portrait for dramatic effect. The Herod of the first Magi play

creation, he says that "nowhere in the medieval English craft cycles is there a more successful justification for the Old Testament plays or a more dramatic enactment of the typological thesis." He also admits that the "underlying and invisible design" may have been too subtle for conscious perception by the audience. See his article, "The Dramatic Setting of the Wakefield Annunciation," PMLA, 81 (1966), 193-8.
(VIII) and the Slaughter of Innocents (X) is the typical tyrant. On the other hand, Herod the Justice (XVI) does not rage at all and his bemused questioning of Christ contrasts sharply with his ancestor's desperation and the irrationality of the Jews who accuse Christ. Herod the Judge has no irrational outburst, no desires for vengeance; the one person we would expect to condemn Christ finds nothing wrong with Him except that He might be a little mad. Octavian (VI) is even more interesting as a character because he enters as any stage tyrant would, yet he gradually becomes submissive to a child. The stereotype is invoked, then violated. The effect is a powerful affirmation of Christ's divinity; the tyrant becomes the suppliant. These two last mentioned tyrants, both variants of the stereotype, heighten our cognition of the events in which they are involved and force us to be in awe of the mystery before us. I think the character of Mary functions in the same way; she is the variant of the stereotypes established by Eve and Noah's wife. The contrast of Mary with these women heightens our awareness of her sanctity, her meekness and her worth. I think, therefore, that contrast is the more significant dramatic device and that the notion of antitype is foreign to the play. Eve and Noah's wife are representatives of a class, not negative figure of Mary.
In summary, I think we must define as *figura* only those historical characters and events which prefigure and which are fulfilled by other historical persons and events. The Cain-type and the stereotype can be developed by characterization alone or by assertion, and require no knowledge on the part of the audience external to the dialogue of the play itself; "figuration," if it is to be evident, requires that the playwright make the figural equation explicit or so stage the two events that the parallelism is explicit. Given the nature of medieval exegesis, one can always find examples on which to base an assertion of figural relationships, but unless one can find some evidence in staging or in the text, a figural interpretation remains an assertion external to the play and a result of contemplation, not representation. The orientation of figural and tropological interpretations are different: the former is chiefly aimed at the demonstration of the relevance and plan of history; the latter has as its main purpose moral didacticism. With this definition of typology in mind, we must now ask whether the figural relationship could have been made visually or intellectually apparent to the audience.

Professor Arnold Williams has suggested that figural interpretation has not produced satisfactory results for
plays other than the Abraham play. Figural interpretation has been argued, however, for all the Old Testament plays. A figural explanation of the Abraham play is fairly simple; but let us examine the weakest link in the chain of Old Testament plays, the Noah play. Professor Kolve sets forth the traditional exegetical explanations of Noah and the flood. The flood is a


29 Rosemary Woolf has demonstrated how typology might work in her definitive article, "The Effect of Typology in the English Medieval Plays of Abraham and Isaac," Speculum, XXXII (1957), 805-25.

30 pp. 67-9. See also John Gardner's article, which makes the same assertions, "Imagery and Allusion in the Wakefield Noah Play," Papers on Language and Literature, IV (1968), 7-8. Gardner emphasizes the disharmony in the relationship between Noah and his wife as reflective of a world into which sin has entered. Their battle is a microcosmic picture of the situation God will blot out. Howard Schless follows the same line of reasoning when he says, "The Wakefield Master, by a series of slight but brilliant changes made the Uxor episode parallel the theme of disorder, chastisement, and re-established harmony that is the very substance of the Biblical level of the play" (p. 233). See his article, "The Comic Element in the Wakefield Noah," in Studies in Medieval Literature in Honor of Professor Albert Croll Baugh, ed. MacEdward Leach (Philadelphia, 1961), pp. 229-43. Alan H. Nelson says that Noah is a figure of Christ because of his obedience to God (pp. 396-7), but that he is not perfect in all respects (p. 397). The battle between Noah and Gill results in reconciliation; the "farce" scene occurs within the Biblical framework of a play which reveals man's salvation, his reconciliation to God through obedience (pp. 399-401); cf. his article, "'Sacred' and 'Secular' Currents in The Towneley Play of Noah," Drama Survey, 3 (1964), 393-401. The fight scenes are less well integrated into the Chester play; but I do think it would be apparent to the audience
figura for both baptism and the Last Judgment, for just as Noah was saved by water so will many be saved by the waters of baptism and through baptism at the Judgment. For the full figura of the Last Judgment, Kolve also cites as evidence the words of Christ (Matt 24:35-51) in which He compares Noah to Himself and His coming again to destroy the world. The York play, Kolve says, makes this relationship obvious when Noah says that the next time the world will be wasted by fire. 31 Furthermore, Kolve thinks that the opening speech of God at the Last Judgment echoes the ideas and phrases in His speech at the beginning of the Noah play and, on the basis of the interpretation of Augustine and the Glossa Ordinaria, that Noah and the ark are significations of the Christ and the church respectively. The Glossa also equates the wood of the ark with the cross, for in both cases men were saved by wood. There is nothing unusual about these interpretations; however, they are not immediately apparent to the reader of the text:

that it reflects the nature of human existence and that Noah's wife will procreate disobedience from her union with Noah. All three critics see Noah as a figure for Christ and the opening prayer in the Towneley play may indicate that that was the playwright's intention. The Chester play, however, has no such device and I see no indication of a representation of Noah as prefigurative of Christ.

31 Cf. York, IX, lines 297-302.
They are the result of contemplation and the staple of sermons and commentaries.

Some of these equations can be represented in art; some cannot.\textsuperscript{32} The \textit{Biblia Pauperum}, for example, juxtaposes Noah's ark riding the flood and the destruction of Sodom by fire to a central panel showing the destruction of the world by fire.\textsuperscript{33} The juxtaposition makes the \textit{figure} evident. To support his contention that Noah signifies Christ, Kolve cites the plate in the \textit{Holkham Bible Picture Book}, in which Noah is shown at the rail of the ark with his arms outstretched "in the posture of Christ on the cross"; in his hands are the black raven and the white dive, \textit{figure} of the damned and saved thieves.\textsuperscript{34} There are two objections to the use of this icon as reflective of the drama: 1) Noah's posture in the \textit{Holkham Book} is not typical of the other examples I have seen and, 2) more important, the icon is not self-evident. The plate fills one whole page and is therefore isolated from the \textit{New Testament} subject that

\textsuperscript{32}Réau cites all of the symbols that Kolve mentions. See \textit{Icon}, II, i, 104-6.

\textsuperscript{33}Henrik Cornell, \textit{Biblia Pauperum} (Stockholm, 1925), plate 47.

\textsuperscript{34}The \textit{Holkham Bible Picture Book}, ed. W. O. Hassall (London, 1954), fo. 8. The iconographic interpretation is on page 74 of the commentary.
it might prefigure. The interpretation of the icon is derived from exegetical sources and imposed on the icon. Though the interpretation may have been intended by or known to the artist, I doubt the the unlearned person, assuming he ever had access to the book, would have immediately recognized the symbolism attached to the illumination by modern critics or, perhaps, by the medieval cleric. Furthermore, the equation of the ark with the church and the wood of the ark with the cross would be difficult to represent iconographically except through justaposition or by the use of descriptions or poems, usually in Latin, written as a legend in the Old Testament scene. A Latin tag, especially an abbreviated one, would hardly be of value to the layman. If these figural relationships are difficult to represent in art in any self-evident fashion, then they would be even more difficult to present in a play.

35 M. R. James, "Pictor in Carmine," Archaeologia, 94 (1951), 141-66. James prints only the table of contents which lists samples of Old Testament figure of events in Christ's life. In his description of the Pictor, pp. 141-8, James says it was compiled in the Thirteenth century in order to guide artists in the depiction of sacred events. The compiler was specifically offended by secular paintings, carvings, etc., in the area of the altar and suggested these series of justapositions of Old and New Testament events as more profitable for contemplation. Each Old Testament scene was to have a two-line Latin verse that would explain its relationship to the New Testament scene. I think the tag-explanations indicate that the figure would not always be apparent even to the learned. It is also apparent that the reform was directed toward the learned.
Iconography can be a valuable asset to the study of medieval drama, but its proper role is that of supportive evidence, not prescription. For example, the text of the Chester Abraham play suggests that Abraham is dressed in armor in the first scene and perhaps in robes in the last two scenes. Medieval iconography supports the distinction in costume. When he appears before Melchisedech he is depicted as a medieval warrior; when he is about to sacrifice Isaac, he wears an ample robe. In this case iconography supports dramatic convention; we cannot conclude, however, that because Abraham is dressed in armor in an icon that he will be dressed in a similar manner in a play. Likewise, the study of icons can lead the drama critic into erroneously concluding that the figural relationships apparent in art are also apparent in drama. This conclusion results, I think, from the fact that the icon brings together in a single object a relationship which we think might be relevant to another art form, the drama. On the contrary, the most basic distinction between an icon and a play is that the former is a spatial arrangement of forms which disregards chronology while the latter, of necessity, is linear and temporally chronological. A play develops within time, it imitates  

36 Réau, Icon, II, i, 126-7.
history; the icon is frozen as one moment in time for
the purpose of the contemplation of the play of history.
The painter can juxtapose Eve and Mary in the garden,
one picking the apple, the other a Eucharistic wafer,
and thus make emphatic the antithesis of the two. 37
The relationship is immediately and visually apparent.
This technique is impossible in a play; the closest
the playwright can come to such a representation is
through exposition or parallelism and suggestive
staging. We will consider these last two modes in our
discussion of the Noah play; however, we must remain
cognizant of the fact that figural relationships in
icons do not force us to assume figural relationships
in drama.

If we are to assert a figural interpretation for
the Noah play, then we should try to find some textual
evidence for it in the play. The only matter relevant
to the New Testament plays appears in God's last speech
in which he promises Noah that he will never destroy the

37 Ernst Gulden, Eva und Maria: eine Antithese als
Bildmotiv (Graz-Koln, 1966), plates 156-9 (pp. 302-3)
and frontispiece. These plates indicate the antithetical
relationship of Eve and Mary; representations of the
Salutation (plates 48-66; pp. 260-67) show the general
relationship of the Fall to the Incarnation. In these
plates the central scene is that of Mary and the angel,
while in the background, on the sides or on panels in
triptychs, the scene is that of the expulsion from the
garden.
world again with water. By implication, but not as a result of any explicit statement, the audience would recall that the earth would finally be destroyed by fire. The flood as a figura for baptism is irrelevant on the practical grounds that there is no water and on the more technical grounds that there is no fulfillment, a baptism play, of the prefigurative event. It is equally unlikely that the ark would be constructed in such a manner that it would resemble the Church. The iconography shows no such similarity; Noah obviously describes a ship (lines 89-96); and the townspeople of Chester, dwellers in what was then an important seaport, would hardly accept a ship that did not look like a ship. I do not understand how one could get across the equation of wood and cross without stating it and I cannot imagine how one would costume Noah or have him act so that it would be visually and intellectually apparent that he was a figura for Christ.

In sum, I think that only the slight link between the flood and the final destruction of the world is relevant and, as I hope to show later, I think that this is not the principal idea that the playwright is trying to emphasize.

38 The other cycles have Baptism plays; cf. York XXI, Towneley XIX and N-Town #19.
The figural interpretation of the Abraham play is as obvious as such a reading is obscure in the Noah play. However, rather than point to the Chester Abraham play as evidence of the selection of Old Testament plays on the basis of prefigurations of Christ, I think we should be suspicious of the inclusion of an explicit interpretation of these events by an Expositor. Why did the playwright decide to include an interpreter for this play, the one play most obviously parallel to events in Christ's life? Further, we might ask ourselves how often the Chester playwright bothers to step in and explain such parallels. In fact, there are only two explicit references to figural significance in the whole corpus of the Chester plays. The first occurs in the Abraham play; the other in the Temptation play (XII). At the end of the temptation scene, the Expositor enters and explains the temptation scene in figural terms:

Loe! lordinges, Gods righteousnes,  
as St. Gregorie makes mynde expresse,  
since our forefather overcomen was  
by three thinges to doe evill:  
Gluttony, vayne glorye there be twooe,  
Covetuousnes of highnes alsoe,  
by these three thinges, without moe,  
Christ hath overcome the Devill. (H161-8)

In lines 169-208, the Expositor particularizes and explains how Adam fell through succumbing to these three sins and that Christ withstood them:
Thus overcome Christe in this case the Devill, as played was in this place, with those three synnes that Adam was of wayle into woe wayued. (H201-4)

These three sins are either explicitly stated or implied in the Creation play, but they are not developed; nor are they explicated in such a way that they would look forward to the temptation scene. Although Adam makes a prophetic statement of what will come (the Incarnation, the Flood, the end of the world and the Judgment), he does not and cannot represent himself as a figura of Christ without violating the integrity of his characterization.

In fact, no character explains that he is a figura of Christ and no prophet explains his own prophecies. To be sure, some of the prophecies are transparent to anyone who has the least knowledge of Christian history; nevertheless, the prophecies are all explained by an Expositor. The Expositors in the Chester play, as I noted in the preceding chapter, are not always explicators; but they are the only interpreters for the audience in the plays. The characters do not, in fact, violate their integrity by knowing more than they could; they

39 The possible exception is the long dialogue in the second Magi play (IX), in which the Three Kings explain at some length the symbolism of their gifts. They are, however, prophets and seers, descendents of Balaam, and thus might be expected to display foreknowledge of the events of Christ's life.
do not understand themselves in terms of figura within the plan of Christian history and the prophets do not fully understand the significance of their statements. On the basis of the discussion thus far, I think we can conclude that there is little evidence that the Chester playwright intended to emphasize prefiguration in the Old Testament plays, and that when he did want to add a figural interpretation, he did so in explicit terms. We must still reserve the right of the learned members of the audience to impose figural interpretations on the Old Testament plays; but I do not think that such an understanding would have been apparent to the unlearned.

Although recent critics are more amenable to the discussion of the artistic and thematic unity of the cycle plays, not long ago one important critic asserted that such discussions were fruitless since the guilds independently controlled the fate of their scripts.  

Certainly the guilds' vicissitudes of fortune had some effect on the cycle itself, but I do not think it is very likely that the guilds at Chester controlled the content of their plays. We have, for example, documents relating to amalgamations and divisions of, and fiscal responsibility for, certain plays, but little evidence that the guilds wrote or altered the scripts. On the
other hand, we do have some evidence that the total script resided in the hands of the corporation and it would appear that at one point, perhaps prior to 1467, one man totally revised the cycle and put it into the rime couée stanza.\(^{41}\) There is evidence in Plays II-V of thematic unity and a progression toward the central matter of the cycle, the Incarnation and Redemption of mankind, which argues for single authorship or, more probably, a single reviser who put most of the Old Testament plays in the form that we now have them. The little external evidence we have supports such a notion. The first play in the cycle, the creation of the angels and the fall of Lucifer, is of different authorship and entered the cycle about 1467-88.\(^{42}\) Nevertheless, it is apparent that the author was well-acquainted with the Creation play (there are a number of events in the play which prepare us for

\(^{41}\) W. W. Greg says that the Chester play was contained in a single book; cf. "Bibliog.," pp. 23-6. Supporting evidence can be found in the Chester records where we find the Smiths paying fees for "charges of the Regenall," and "for reding the oraginall book" in 1554, '61 and '69 and where we find Randall Trever charged in 1567 with having failed to return "the originall booke of the Whydson Plaies." See Morris, pp. 315, 315n2. See also Salter, MDC, pp. 73, 75. Salter, in opposition to Professor Grace Frank's belief that no cycle was ever revised in toto, says that the fact that the bulk of the Chester play is in a single stanza form suggests "a very thorough revision in toto at some period." See "Banns," p. 445n2 and Miss Frank's original article, "Revisions in the English Mystery Plays," \textit{MP}, XV (1917-18), 565-72.

\(^{42}\) Salter, "Banns," XVI, 16.
parallel events in play II) and that he fitted play I into the thematic context of the Old Testament plays as well as made it a miniature statement of the relationship between God and man. I think, therefore, that we can study these first five plays as a unit.

For sheer spectacle, the first play is equalled only by the Judgment scene. The play opens with God alone before the void. We can be sure that he was of dignified appearance: we are told that his face projected beams like the sun (lines 95-6), that his great throne was onstage (line 67), and that he wore some kind of diadem (line 84). His opening speech, an alliterative and macaronic passage, clearly defines for the audience that God is without spatial or temporal limitations and that He is a triune God. I think that this speech has more than a didactic purpose. The necessity of presenting an anthropomorphic God creates theological complications bordering on heterodoxy. The playwright has to have God onstage and has to have Him offstage so that Lucifer can contravene His commandments. This opening statement asserts, therefore, the orthodox conception of God. We shall see later how the playwright further circumvents this dramatic requirement.

\textsuperscript{43} The D MS lacks the first play; all citations are from Deimling's edition.
When God creates the angels, the audience is treated to a solemn procession of the nine orders and Lucifer and Lightbourne, all undoubtedly dressed in the best finery the gild could provide. No greater visual expression of the loss of heavenly bliss could have been provided than that between Lucifer and Lightbourne in their glorious robes and in their blackness after their fall. The pageantry of the play would have a profound effect on the audience and could hardly have been forgotten as history, unrolling before their eyes, culminated in the final dispensation.

The first time that we see Lucifer he appears to be docile and obedient to God. He praises God and points to the nine orders of created angels, but his concluding line betrays that the seeds of pride are already within him:

nyne orders here be witterlye,
that you have made here full brighte;
In thie blisse full righte they be,
And I the principall lord here in thie sight.

(lines 37-40)

The line, which identifies Lucifer for the audience, is a statement of fact; yet God does not Himself set Lucifer next to His throne until later (cf. lines 65-8).

The omnipresent God recognizes the statement as one of burgeoning pride and He turns immediately to Lucifer to warn him to be humble in his attendance and not exalt himself "to excellency in no heighe"
exaltation (line 48)." To make His warning more effective, God creates hell in the void, "a dungeon of darkenes that never shall have endinge (line 51)."

I think that this passage is one that the playwright included in order to circumvent the unorthodox representation of an anthropomorphic God; the playwright clearly shows us that God knows what is to happen. The opening scene then ends with praise of God and an angelic song.

The next scene (lines 65-104) prepares us for the crisis of the play. God turns to Lucifer and sets him next to His throne, but warns him once again not to touch the throne and that He will destroy Lucifer's beauty if pride encourages him to advance beyond his degree. Lucifer pretends to be obedient, as does Lightbourne, but again demonstrates his pride when he concludes by saying, "and bearer of light thou hast made me (line 80)." God once more warns Lucifer and the angels not to contravene his covenant:

I haue forbyd that yow ne sholde,
but kepe yow well in this stature,
the same Covenant, I charge yow, hold,
In payne of heaven ever forfeyture.
(lines 85-8)

Admonishing each of the angels to keep his place, He sets Lucifer as governor over them while He looks over all that He has created.

As soon as Lucifer thinks God is out of sight, he begins to praise his own beauty and to aspire to the
supreme position of God Himself. His opening lines bring together the two bases of his pride which he betrayed in his first two speeches:

   Ah! ah! that I am wonderous bright,
   among yow all shyning full cleare!
   of all heaven I beare the light
   though God himself, and he were here.

   (Lines 105-8)

The progress of Lucifer's pride is the high point of the play; throughout the next ninety lines, he lingers near the throne, screwing up his courage before the horrified eyes of the angels to do the ultimate blasphemous act of usurping the throne of God. He falls victim to the same desire with which his agent will later tempt Eve—
to be as God:

   All in this trone if that I were,
   then sholde I be as wise as he.

   (lines 109-10)

The Virtues and Cherubim, aghast at his impudence, tell him that they will not follow his lead and warn him that his "pride will turne to great distresse " (line 120). Lucifer's presumption though has gone too far for him to turn back and he asserts his authority over the angels. His power as governor has totally corrupted him:

   Distresse! I commaunde yow for to cease
   and se the bewtye that I beare;
   all heaven shynes throughge my brightnes,
   for god himselfe shynes not so cleare.

   (lines 121-4)
Three more orders warn him of his imminent fall; but
Lightbourne encourages his master in his resolve. The
Thrones and Powers beg him to cast off his pride; but
Lucifer silences them with his impudence:

Behould, Seigniours, on every syde,
and unto me cast your eyne;
I charge yow, Angels, in this tyde,
behould and se what I doe meane.

Above great God I will me guyde,
and set my self here, as I wene:
I am pereless and prince of pryde,
for God him self shynes not so 'sheene'.

(lines 157-64)

Lucifer usurps the language of God and adjures the
angelic host, "behold my body, both handes and head!"
(line 167); he commands them to pay obeisance to him
and says, as God had said previously, that he is their
"Comfort, both Lord and head, / the myrth and might of
the maiesty" (lines 171-2). Lucifer has still not sat
down on the throne. Lightbourne, no slacker himself,
imitates his master and announces that he is second in
degree and that he and Lucifer shall have the reverence
of all heaven. It is still not too late for Lucifer to
stop; the Dominations, almost in terror, urge Lucifer
to return to his seat and ironically say to Lucifer,
"yow have begun a parlous playe" (line 185). But
Lucifer has finally decided on usurpation. The text
eloquenty and tersely reflects Lucifer's final impudence:

I redd yow all, doe me reverence,
that am repleat with heavenly grace.
though God come here, I will not hence,  
but sit right here before his face.  
\textit{Et sedet.}

As he plops himself down in God's seat, the tension 
created throughout this sequence is broken. Lucifer 
has finally done the unthinkable.

Lucifer's assumption of power is short-lived, 
however, for God immediately appears and casts the two 
usurpers into hell. God at first is enraged and tells 
Lucifer that he is doomed; but, then, God reveals his 
deep sorrow that this should have happened:

Lucifer, who set thee here, when I was goe?  
what haue I offended vnto thee?  
I made thee my frende, thou arte my foe!  
whie hast thou trespassed thus to me?  
Above all Angels there were no mo  
that sate so nighe the maiestye.  
(lines 201-6)

I think this statement is essential to our understanding 
of the whole cycle. We shall see that throughout the 
plays that follow God continually offers his friendship, 
but that with few exceptions it is spurned.

As soon as Lucifer, now \textit{Primus Demon}, and Light- 
bourne, \textit{Secundus Demon}, land in hell, they begin blaming 
each other for their fall from bliss. They bemoan 
their fallen state and know that it is to be without 
end. Lucifer, chained till dooms day (line 250), begins 
his plot against man and, turning to Ruffian (a third 
demon?), admonishes his agent to see to it that men never 
reach the heavenly bliss denied to the demons.
The scene shifts back to heaven where we see God lamenting the fall of part of his angelic host. The image of a God suffering so much for the lapse of his most wicked creatures prepares us for the compassion which He will show when He offers the supreme sacrifice of His Son for man's sinfulness. Thus after the fall of Lucifer, God begins the process of creation. The play ends with reference to the separation of the light from the darkness, an event repeated in the Creation play, but an act which has visual reality in this play. We have seen the separation of the black fiends from their former bright state; we have seen the division of the universe between those obedient to God and those who reject his commandments. As a set piece, this short introduction is brilliantly conceived, a well-wrought play; but it also establishes the dichotomy which will be apparent in the world and the one which will be reasserted at the Last Judgment.

The Drapers play of the Creation and Fall of Man is the only one of the Old Testament group that is essential to the cycle, for it alone makes evident the necessity for the Incarnation. I suspect that the Cain and Abel scene came into the cycle along with the Creation and Fall. The Cain play makes apparent the results of the Fall—man's sinful nature inherited from the
father of man—and, as our playwright makes explicit, the penance men will suffer for the original sin. Though we need not search for a reason to justify the inclusion of the Cain play in the *Old Testament* sequence, I think that the playwright developed the scene so that it would fit into the pattern of plays III-V.

The first 104 lines of the play are taken up with the acts of Creation and the molding of man out of dust. As soon as God quickens man, He warns him to be wise and not bring himself into strife (111-12). He takes Adam into paradise and, standing him before the tree, tells him not to eat of the fruit; if Adam eats of the fruit, he will lose the "comfort and solace" of the garden and will be subject to death. God puts Adam to sleep so that He can form Eve of his rib and when He awakens him, Adam exclaims that he has had a dream of events that will come in the future (137-40). Adam will later tell us what that dream was (441-72), but it is dramatically important here because it tells us that God has foreknowledge of Adam's fall and the events that will proceed from his sin. When Adam looks on Eve, he names her *virago* because she was taken from man. The playwright gives the Vulgate rendering of "woman" and thus uses it as a prophetic and ironic description of Eve (cf. lines 269-72). The idyllic scene thus ends with a hint of what is to come.
God presumably leaves Adam and Eve alone in the garden and the Demon appears to plot the destruction of mankind. The Demon's monologue (lines 161-76) suggests that this play was originally the first in the cycle. He quickly sketches out what has happened to him and explains his motivation for tempting Adam and Eve. He laments that he, the brightest angel in heaven, had lost eternal bliss out of pride. It is apparent that he is envious of men and hopes to make men follow his example and lose their place. His plan is to beguile Eve because she will do anything she is forbidden to do and, therefore, he reasons, she will immediately go to the forbidden tree:

That woman is forbyd to doe,  
for any thinge therto will shooe;  
therefore that tree shall shee come to  
and assaye which it is.  
(lines 185-88)

He puts on his adders-coat (line 206) and meets Eve at the tree.

The serpent's seduction of Eve is a mixture of subtlety and disguised truth: he tempts Eve with the same sin he committed and tells her, in a deceitful way, exactly what she will gain from her transgression. When he sees Eve, he asks her why God forbade Adam and Eve to eat the fruit of the trees in the garden. Eve responds immediately (and shows that she is aware of God's commandment) that they may eat of all trees save
one and that one, if touched, will bring death to them. The serpent disdainfully rejects such a notion and tells her that God forbade the fruit because He is their enemy and because He did not want them to become as He:

God is coynt and wyse of wytt,
And wottes well, when yow eate hit,
then your eyes shalbe vnknit,
like goddes yow shall be,
And knowe both good and evill also.
therefore he warned yow therfro...
(lines 225-30)

The con-artist sidles up to Eve and assures her that he can be trusted:

Take of his fruite and assaie:
It is good meate, I dare laye,
and, but thou fynde yt to thy paye,
say that I am false.
(lines 233-6)

Eat just one apple, he says, and they shall know both "wayle and woe." Eve succumbs to the serpent's beguilement and, taking an apple, says she will save one morsel for her husband (line 248). Turning to Adam, she offers this piece to him; he agrees to do her will and eats it, whereupon he immediately recognizes his nakedness and his sin. The dramatic tension inherent in the scene is like that in the preceding play where we saw Lucifer standing near the throne. The audience knows that Adam and Eve will fall and they are even more aware of what the serpent's promises of the knowledge of "good and evil"
and "wayle and woe" really mean; but foreknowledge of the final outcome of the action does not deprive it of its drama. The audience undoubtedly would have silently urged Eve to reject the serpent's offers.

There is a theological and dramatic problem in the scene. How does one motivate these creatures of God to commit the one act forbidden them? The playwright chooses the traditional path of asserting woman's lower nature; but, I think, he emphasizes this almost to the point of heterodoxy. He very nearly makes the sin an act resulting from nature, not from will. The serpent has told us that Eve will come to the tree because it was forbidden (lines 185-8); he further tells us that "women are full liccoris." After Eve eats the apple, she offers only a portion to Adam; it seems that he does not even know that it is the forbidden apple (cf. lines 263-6). The point is straightened out later in the play (lines 369-76), but, for the moment, it appears that Adam may not be responsible for his act. After eating the morsel, Adam, like the demons in hell in play I, immediately blames Eve for having led him astray (lines 257-64) and says that he prophesied that she would cause him to sin:

_Yea, soothe said I in prophesie,_
_when thou wast taken of my body,_
_mans woe thou woldest be witlie,_
_therefore thou wast so named._

(Lines 269-72)
It is fairly obvious that this play was written by a man for a masculine society. The apparent reason for the original sin, Eve's nature, would have been acceptable to the medieval audience; however, it does obscure the fact that both Adam and Eve chose to transgress God's commandment.

When God enters the garden and calls for Adam, Adam says he is naked and will not appear before God; God asks him how he could know he were naked unless he had eaten of the forbidden tree. Adam ignores that question and blames Eve for tempting him into sin. Eve blames the serpent. Starting with the lowest creature, God condemns the serpent to crawl on his breast and to be forever trodden down by women and all the created beasts. Eve shall bear children in pain and will be under the mastery of men; Adam will have to work a now unproductive earth for his food. Finally, they are condemned to death.

Adam laments his disobedience; yet still throws the blame on Eve and the serpent:

Now all my kinde by me is kent, to flee womans intisement; whoe trustes them in anye intent, truly he is decayved.

My licorous wife hath bene my foe, the devilles envye shent me also, they twayne together well may goe, the sister and the brother!

(lines 349-56)

God dresses them in the skins of dead beasts to symbolize
that they are subject to death (lines 365-6). It is only at this point that God makes it clear that it was Adam's will that led them into sin:

Adam now hast thou thy willing, 
for thou desiredst over all thinge 
of good and evill to have knowing, 
now wrought is all thy will. 
Thou woldest knowe both wayle and woe, 
now is yt fallen to thee see; 
therefore hence thou must goe 
and thy desire fulfill. 
(lines 369-76)

Adam and Eve are forbidden the garden lest they eat of the tree of life and live forever; therefore, Cherubim are placed at the four gates of paradise to forbid man entrance. These four angels, the playwright's expositors, re-iterate the consequences of man's fall:

Lord, that order, as is righte, 
is ready set here in thy sight, 
with flame of fyre ready to fight, 
against mankinde, thy foe. 
To whom grace cleane is gright, 
shall none of them lenge in my sight, 
till wisdome, right, mercy, and might 
by them and other moe. 
(lines 393-400)

These speeches at the end of the scene tell us that men can no longer make claims on God and that divine intervention will be necessary if their sin is to be redeemed.

I think the scene of the Fall, though it can hardly be undramatic, is not one of the playwright's best plays. The Cain and Abel scene, in contrast, is one of the
best wrought of the cycle. It could easily stand alone, but the prologue by Adam places it firmly in the context of the cycle. The scene shifts from the Angels protecting the gates of Eden to Adam, thirty years after the fall, praying to God, praising His creation, and thanking Him for not have forgotten his servant (lines 425-32). Adam has amended his life and seeks to comfort his family by telling them of the dream he had of the Incarnation and Redemption, the destruction of the world by water and fire and the Last Judgment. In rather succinct terms, Adam prophesies that the destruction will be visited on men because they will sin so horribly, and that the evil will be separated from the good in the last days. He adjures his children to work hard, as he has done, and to offer, willingly and humbly, gifts to God for His grace. Eve adds that she and her husband have come to their present straits as a result of their disobedience; she tells them of her punishment and warns them not to commit similar errors but to be always ready to serve God.

Cain appears to be an obedient son in his reply to his mother, but his discontent is evident in his concluding lines:

44My discussion follows that of Miss Prosser's, pp. 71-4.
of corne I have great plentye
sacrafice to god—sone yow shall see—
I will make to looke if he
will send me any more.
(lines 517-20)

Cain believes he can bargain with God or put God in his
debt; Abell, by contrast, is humbly ready to make willing
sacrifice and has no thought for any reward. Cain
insists that he, the eldest, should be the first to
make sacrifice; but instead of offering the "cornes
fayre and cleane / that groweth on ridges out of the
reane" (lines 477-8), as Adam had instructed him, Cain
decides to offer corn from which the kernels have fallen
off, that which was eaten by animals and that which is
earless. Before, he had bragged of having a plentiful
amount of corn; but when it comes to the actual sacrifice,
his imposes a number of qualifications on his gift:

Loe, god, here may thou see
such corne as grew to me;
part of it I bring to thee
anon, withouten let.

I hope thou wilt quite me this,
and sende me more of worldlie blisse,
els, forsooth, thou doest amisse,
and thou be in my debte.
(lines 545-52)

Cain is now fully revealed as being guilty of avarice
and of attempting to deceive God; he has ignored his
parents' advice, shown that he is oriented toward this
world, and attempted to bribe God. Abell does not
admonish his brother, his elder; but he emphasizes that
his gift is in thanks for that which God has given him. God accepts Abell's gift and the shepherd interprets this as a sign that God has favored him with His grace. Cain is immediately envious of his brother's favor. God, however, has not totally rejected Cain; He appears to tell him that a proper offering will gain him reward:

\[
\text{wottes thou not well that for thy deed,}
\text{if thou doe well, thou may have meede;}
\text{if thou doe fowle, fowle for to spede,}
\text{and sicker thereof to be?}
\]

(Lines 581-4)

Cain pretends to be chastened and, thinking to get out of God's sight, asks Abell to come into the next field with him. Abell meekly complies and Cain immediately accuses him of trying to set himself above his elders. Cain is now determined to kill his brother and thinks, as Lucifer did, that not even God can do anything to him:

\[
\text{Thoughe God stode here in this place}
\text{for to helpe the in this case,}
\text{thou shold dye before his face.}
\text{have this and get the right!}
\]

(lines 613-16)

It is apparent that Cain does not understand God's omniscience; like Lucifer and Adam and Eve, he thinks he can commit sin and hide it. God, however, calls Cain to task and curses him for his misdeed. Before the face of God, even Cain is appalled by his wickedness and he thinks not only that everyone will try to kill him, but, worse, that he is forever cut off from the grace
of God. God will not permit anyone to kill Cain without incurring great punishment; He insists that Cain, as well as his descendants, must live and suffer penances for the murder. Bewailing his fate, Cain returns to his parents to tell them what he has done; but he cannot be very truthful even after his wicked deed, so he tells his parents that he killed Abel when they got into a fight. Both Adam and Eve lament the death of their son; but it is Eve who draws the moral from the fratricide:

Well I wott and know, I wis,
verey vengeance that it is,
for to god did I so amisse,
that I shall never haue gladinge.
(lines 693-6)

Cain goes into exile, but before he leaves, he turns to the audience and tells them that his curse is on them too:

For so God hath toulde yt me,
that I shold never thryve ne thee.
now I goe, to all that I see
I graunt the same gifte.
(lines 701-4)

This last short scene shows the audience that the chain of original sin is unbroken. For their misdeed, Adam and Eve were condemned to live in a fallen world and were deprived of their son; the sins of the fathers will continue to be visited upon their sons until man is finally lifted up to the perfection of heaven. The first sin, furthermore, not only incurred worldly misfortune, but also set in action a chain of sin that will be projected down through the ages.
The Noah play is the simplest of the Old Testament plays and requires little comment except to state its theme and to discuss the episode involving Noah's wife. As I noted above, the characterization of Noah's wife as a shrew may have been borrowed from another cycle or added independently from well-known legends about her. The disruptions in the text suggest that this characterization may have been added to an older play based on the Genesis account; the characterization, although it would have to be made consistent in performance, is inconsistent as it now stands in the text.\textsuperscript{45} The first interpolation is apparent in lines 97-112, where Noah's wife refuses to enter the ark. The members of Noah's family, when we first see them, are all obedient to Noah's orders; there is no indication that his wife is any less cooperative than the rest:

\begin{verbatim}
And we shall bring tymber to,
for wee mon nothing els doe;
women be weake to vnderfoe
any great travayle. (lines 65-8)
\end{verbatim}

This speech undoubtedly recalls God's admonition to Eve that henceforth women should be obedient to man (2.317-20); but it may have suggested to a reviser the

\textsuperscript{45}Salter, MDC, p. 30, explains how he thinks the first appearance of Noah's wife as a shrew is consistent (lines 65-68), but he does not mention the later lines in which there appears to be a reversion to her former docility (lines 173-6).
possibility of bringing in the traditional representation of women as shrews. A dislocation in the action occurs in the scene that depicts the building of the ark (lines 81-112). Following line 80 (fo. 17r in MS D), for example, we find the stage directions: Tunc faciunt signa, quasi laborarent cum diversis Instrumentis H. Then Noe beginneth to buyld the arke D. Noah explains what they are doing as he and his family build the ark (H81-95). The H stage-direction (line 96), imitted in D, is: Tunc Noe Iterum cum tota familia faciunt signa laborandi cum diversis Instrumentis. Noah's next speech indicates that the ark is finished:

Wife, in this Castle vessell D we shall be keped; my childer and thou, I wold, in leaped. (lines 97-8)

Noah's wife resists entering the ark and Noah complains of woman's quarrelsome nature (H105-12). Then we have the D stage-direction, one that is obviously out of place if the action thus far is chronologically accurate: Then Noe with all his familye shall make a signe as though the wrought vpon the shippe with divers instruments and after that god shall speake to Noe as followeth (fo. 17v; corresponds to that of H80). It appears that the scene with Noah's wife is out of place; they should not be entering the ark at this point. The position of the D stage-direction probably indicates
that the scene of Noah's wife's refusal to enter the ark was inserted into an older play. Furthermore, the next time that we see the wife, she is again docile. The stage-direction (H160; fo. 18r) indicates that the family, except for Noah's wife, enter the ark and once there point out and describe the animals on board. Although she is apparently not on board, she is included in the dialogue; her speech is indistinguishable from the others:

And here are Beares, wolfes sett,
Apes, owles, marmoset,
weesells, squirrels, and firret;
here they eaten their meate.
(lines 173-6)

I think this speech indicates a return to the docile characterization that we first saw in the play; it is immediately followed, however, by the second scene of the wife's refusal to enter the ark. This scene is in its proper place, for it follows God's commandment to Noah to gather the animals together and to enter the ark with his family (lines 113-4). Noah's wife is so recalcitrant because she does not want to leave her gossips behind. When it becomes apparent that his pleas have no effect, Noah sends his sons out to forceably bring his wife in; she rewards him with a clout on the head. It is evident that the interpolator was not disturbed by any inconsistency that he may have created
by adding the shrewish wife to the play; moreover, his
dependence on the stereotype would have made the por­
trayal acceptable to the audience. It is only through
a comparison of the variant texts that we notice the
introduction of this new characterization into an
older play.

Nevertheless, I think the portrayal of Noah's wife
as a shrew adds another dimension to the play; it is
not gratuitously included for its comic effect. God
has determined, at the beginning of the play, to destroy
men but not mankind. He knows, however, that men are
inclined to sin and that his vengeance will merely
eliminate the mass of sinners in the world at that
moment. Noah's wife, because of disobedience to her
husband, shows that human nature does not change; she
is the symbol of the discord which will be carried over
from the old world to the new one which she and Noah
and their family will re-populate. Later in the play,
God points out that he knows full well that men will
continue to sin when He says, "for of youth man full yore
has byn enclyned to syne" (lines 319-20). Noah's wife,
a woman, is the proper symbolic carrier of that sin.
The characterization reaffirms the stereotype of women--
a stereotype that stands in such important dramatic
contrast to Mary later in the cycle.
The rest of the play is fairly straightforward. At the beginning of the play, God says that He regrets having created a race so persistently sinful. Although he intends to destroy men, He decides that He will reward Noah's faithfulness by saving the patriarch and his family in order that they may begin life on earth again. God tells us later in the play that His act of destruction was motivated by vengeance, but it is apparent at the opening of the play that He is willing to give men ample opportunity to avoid their demise. He already shows that He is not merely a God of vengeance, a point that is reiterated at the end of the play. First He tells Noah that he will give men 120 years to amend their ways (lines 5-8). Knowing that men will not become obedient; he orders Noah to build the ark and thus offers mankind another chance:

Manne that I made I will destroy,  
beast, worme, and fowle to flie;  
for on earthe they doe me nye,  
the folke that are theron.

hit harmes me so hartfullie,  
the malyce now that can multeply,  
that sore it greueth me Inwardlie  
that ever I made manne.
(lines 9-16)

He tells Noah He will save him because Noah has been righteous (lines 17-18, 37-40), whereupon Noah reasserts his obedience to God and thanks Him for the grace shown to him:
Thy bydding, lord, I shall fulfill, 
and never more the greeve ne grill, 
that suche grace hast sent me till 
among all mankinde.  
(lines 45-8)

The point is important because it shows that God has not entirely turned away from man; the chain of grace is unbroken.

After the flood is passed, Noah prepares to offer sacrifice in thanks to God (lines 285-8; 297-304; 305-12). 46 God finds Noah's sacrifice acceptable and promises him that, although men will continue to sin, He will not again destroy them with water:

warry Earth will I no more  
for mans synne that greves me sore;  
for of youth man full yore  
has byn enclyned to syne.  
(lines 317-20)

God's closing speech (lines 345-72) states the point of the play. Quite simply He makes a covenant with Noah;

He vows not to wreak vengeance on mankind:

a forwarde now with thie I make,  
and all thy seede for thy sake

46 The whole scene in the ark, H257-304, is omitted in MSS DBWR. It would appear that the omission is unintentional although it does eliminate the technical difficulty with the birds. The sleight of hand is explained in the stage-direction, H272. It is interesting to note that 48 lines are missing here and 24 in Play V where we would expect Balaam's second prophecy. MSS DWB also lack the 96 concluding lines of XVIII found in HR. All three omissions are multiples of 24 and may reflect scribal omission of whole sides of leaves prior to the copying of MS D.
of suche vengeance for to slake, 
for now I haue my will.  
(lines 345-8)

My Bowe betwene you and me 
in the firmament shall bee, 
by very token that you may see 
that such vengeance shall cease...  
(lines 353-6)

The idea is repeated throughout the concluding lines  
of the play; it signals, I think, a new relationship  
between God and man. God indicates that He will end 
the age of vengeance and begin one of mercy, an age  
which will be fully instituted through the Advent of Christ. The play also points toward the Judgment.  
When God will finally destroy the world with fire, He implies, He will deem men justly. Not all men will be 
saved, even though God's mercy is infinite, for when 
men had the opportunity to choose good, as Christ 
points out at Judgment, they chose evil:

Lo, you men that wicked haue bene,  
what Sathan sayeth you heare and seene;  
righteous Dome may you not fleene,  
for grace is putt away.  
when tyme of grace was enduringe,  
to seeke it you had no lykinge;  
therfore must I for any thinge  
doe righteousnes to day.  
(24.605-12)

Noah quite clearly has bought mankind another chance.  
God has instituted an age that will be dominated by 
mercy; by making the covenant, He has assured Noah that 
His grace will be transmitted to following generations.
To the modern audience, the story of God's commandment to Abraham to sacrifice his beloved son may seem like a crude and senseless testing of an obedient servant. The medieval playwright probably recognized the difficulties of dramatizing such a story; however, he would also have been used to the idea of God's saving the severest tests for men such as Abraham. One means of shifting attention away from what might seem to be God's unmotivated testing of Abraham is to present the play as if it were prefigurative of the sacrifice of God's own son. The playwright, thereby, translates into human terms God's anguish over the Passion. The shift to typology, however, does not solve all the dramatic problems before the playwright; a typological interpretation merely allows the contemplative onlooker to understand the promise inherent in the sacrifice. The dramatic difficulty, as Rosemary Woolf points out, is to represent Abraham as obedient but not callous:

the most modest realism—even ordinary sensibility—demanded that Abraham should hesitate, that he should at least have one moment of rebellion when he would feel that his child's life must be preserved, no matter what the cost. But, since Abraham prefigured the Father, he could not even momentarily show himself irresolute over offering his son as sacrifice. 47

She notes that we must further make a distinction between Abraham's anguished obedience and anguished

rebelliousness; Abraham, she says, never falters in his resolve to commit the act even though his paternity makes him hesitate before the contemplation of the act. Isaac also helps to save Abraham from becoming a callous and unconvincing figure by balancing his willingness to obey with his love and distress. In the Chester play, Isaac fearfully asks if he is to be the sacrifice and pleads that his father beat him instead for his misdeeds (lines 286-92); however, as soon as he understands that it is God's will, he too is immediately obedient and even tries to comfort Abraham:

Mary! father, God forbydd but you doe your offringe.
Father, at home your sonnes you shall finde that you must love by course of kinde.
be I once out of your mynde, your sorrow may sone cease.
But you must doe Gods bydding.
father, tell my mother for nothing.
(lines 315-22)

The insistent point made throughout this section of the play is that Abraham is obedient to God's will and that Isaac, once that he knows it is God's will, is obedient both to his father and the Heavenly Father. Abraham's hesitation and anguish do much to humanize the story and the figural interpretation provided by the Expositor helps to nullify the severity of the test; yet, I think the Chester playwright was still not

ibid., p. 819n.
satisfied and that he added the Melchisedech and covenant sections so that they might provide some kind of explanation for the test.

The Melchisedech scene is one of those in which figura and symbol coalesce. Abraham returns home after a victorious campaign against four kings in which he was able to rescue his brother and capture much booty. He immediately thanks God for his good fortune and promises to give one-tenth to Melchisedech, God's priest. Lot decides to do the same. Their messenger, Armiger, is sent ahead to give Melchisedech the news; the king-priest offers thanksgiving and decides to go out and welcome Abraham with bread and wine. The offering is made and Abraham and Lot give their tithe to Melchisedech. The scene, simple throughout, is thoroughly medievalized and Christianized. Abraham was undoubtedly dressed as a warrior and Melchisedech welcomed him in the robes of a priest. The identification of Melchisedech as a priest is explicit in the text (line 34) and it is apparent that he is meant to be represented as a Christian priest for he offers a "Calicem cum vino et panem super patinam." Furthermore, the audience would have

49 See also Psalm 110 and Hebrews 6:19-7:17.

50 Stage-direction, H72; the D direction (fo. 21v) translates H but omits specific reference to the patina. The representation of Abraham as a warrior and Melchisedech
recognized the medieval tradition of the priest's meeting the victorious warriors with the sacraments at the gates of the city. The typological significance would be transparently obvious; yet the playwright has the Expositor give a thorough explication of the scene.

The fact that the playwright feels the necessity of explaining this obvious example of "figuration" should make us wary of assuming that typology would be apparent in a play, for example, like Noah; but it should also make us look a little more closely at the scene before us so that we can find out what is represented there.

Throughout the scene, there is an emphasis on the grace shown to Abraham; furthermore, the playwright makes it clear that this grace is manifested by both worldly rewards and spiritual blessings. In his first speech, Abraham couples the notion of spiritual grace with worldly success:

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A! Thou high God, graunter of grace,  
that ending ne beginning hase,       
I thank thee, lord, that to me hase  
to daye geven victorye.        
(lines 17-20)
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Both Abraham and Lot emphasize that their booty has been given to them by God (lines 27-8 and 47-8) and that they will give one-tenth of it back to God. When

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as a priest is supported by the iconographical evidence. See Réau, Icon, II, 1, 126-7.
Armiger announces to the King Abraham's victory, he uses the word "grace" in its more worldly sense:

Here he will be this ilke nighte,
and riches with hym enough dight,
I hard him thank god almighty
of grace he had hym sent.
(lines 53-6)

But Melchisedech emphasizes the spiritual grace:

And /I will/ present hym with bread and wyne,
for grace of God is him withine...
To god, I wot, he is full deere,
for of all thinges his prayer
he hath, without danger,
and speciallie great grace.
(lines 61-2, 69-72)

When he meets Abraham, he adds:

Abraham, welcome must thou be,
Gods grace is fullie in the,
blessed euer must thou be
that Enemyes so can meke.
(lines 73-6)

Then, by giving Abraham the bread and wine, Melchisedech symbolically bestows on the warrior the grace of God's blessings. Strictly within the terms of the scene, therefore, the presenting of the bread and wine is a symbolic bestowal of future blessings on Abraham for his free offering of a tithe, and, for his recognition of God's part in his successful venture. The Expositor, in conclusion, interprets the meaning of that historical event in terms of a later event. The typological significance follows logically from the action represented but is not the reason for the inclusion of the scene.
The first scene and Melchisedech's blessing prepares us for the second short scene, the dialogue between God and Abraham, in which God makes specific the future blessings which will come to Abraham if he follows the commandments of his Lord. God promises Abraham that He will aid him because of his good deed and Abraham asks God to give him a legitimate heir. Although God knows that from Abraham's seed will come a Savior, he nevertheless makes a bargain: if Abraham will be obedient and circumcise his flesh as a sign of that agreement, then God will grant him a son and future blessings:

Wherfore, Abraham, servant free,
loke that thou be trewe to me,
and forward here I make with the
thy seede to multeplie.

So much more further shalt thou be,
Kinges of thie seed men shall see,
And one Child of great degree
all mankind shall forbye.
(lines 169-76)

The Expositor once more tells us the difference between the Old and New Laws and the significance of the promise. More important, however, is the fact that the playwright has prepared us for the test. He has shown us that God blessed Abraham with worldly riches and that Abraham was willing to give part of them in sacrifice for the gifts made to him. He has further told us that God intends to include Abraham in His divine plan of salvation: it is from Abraham, if he remains obedient
and thus proves men worthy, that a Savior will be provided. Abraham has been obedient and willing to serve God in times of plenty; he has been willing to cut into his flesh a sign of his servitude. Now it is time to test him in adversity; he must be tried to see if he will be willing to sacrifice the flesh of his flesh.

The sacrifice may have been so performed that the figural relationship would have been obvious; but I think, once again, that the playwright constructed the scene so that the typology would not overwhelm the play. The scene concentrates on Abraham's anguish and his obedience. Everyone knows that Abraham will not have to sacrifice Isaac, but that does not stop the audience from participating in the agony Abraham feels. The interminable preparations and hesitations build up the same kind of tension that was apparent in the scenes in which Lucifer stands near God's throne and in which Eve hesitates before taking the apple. The outcome is well-known; but one cannot avoid participation in the action before that resolution. Abraham obediently carries out God's orders and is finally relieved of his burden at the last possible moment. In thanksgiving, he prepares to offer the lamb:

Ah! lord of heaven and King of blisse,
thy bydding I shall doe, I wis.
Sacrifice here to me sent is
and all, Lord, through thy grace.
(lines 437-40)

God then reaffirms his covenant:

Abraham, by my selfe I sweare,
for thou hast bene obedeynt ever...
Thou shalt be blessed, thou art worthy,
thy seede I shall multeplye,
as starrs and sand so many het I
of thy bodie cominge.

.................................
And all nations, leave thou me,
blessed evermore shall be
through fruyt that shall come of thee,
and saved through thy seede.
(lines 445-6, 49-54, 57-60)

The Doctor explains the typological significance, but
a key passage in his concluding speech re-emphasizes one
of the central ideas of the play:

This deed you se done in this place,
In example of Ihesu done yt was,
that for to wyn mankinde grace
was sacrificised on the rode.
(lines 465-8)

Abraham was not able to buy men grace, but he proved
that men were still worthy of grace, and God made a
covenant with him that men would be saved by one of
Abraham's seed. 51

51 Miss Effie MacKinnon says of the York Isaac that
there is no indication the playwright intended Isaac
to be the forerunner of Christ; instead, he shows that
"Abraham as a dutiful servant of God is to be used to
propagate the line which should bring forth Jesus."
The sacrifice, she says, tests his fitness. See her
article, "Notes on the Dramatic Character of the York
Cycle," SP, XXVIII (1931), 443.
In play V, God makes the covenant of the Ten Commandments with Moses, the intercessor for the Israelites, so that men will know what sin is and avoid it. At the conclusion of the scene, Moses tells the Israelites to offer sacrifice to "him that shall save you from woe / and helpe you in your neede" (H63-4; D95-6). After the giving of the third great covenant, there follow the prophecies of the New Covenant. The Balaam story amplifies the themes we have seen in the other Old Testament plays. God forces Balaam to confer blessings on the Israelites; thus, He makes clear that His earlier promise of a Redeemer from Abraham's seed will be fulfilled and demonstrates that he does aid the Israelites while they are obedient to Him. In the H version, the playwright introduced the Processus Prophetarum in order to spell out the nature of the promised New Law; the D playwright continues the Balaam narrative and thus gives a further demonstration that God's plan cannot be altered by earthly events. The D version also shows the resistance of the Israelites, and therefore of men, to a rightful relationship with God and reasserts the necessity for divine intervention if any men are to be saved. The play combines the covenant motif, the theme of obedience to God and the prophecies of a New Covenant.
The Old Testament sequence in general forms a prophetic prologue to the cycle; the controlling principle of selection for plays III-V, however, is the idea of the covenant. Kolve has pointed out that the central matter of the cycle plays is the Advent of Christ and that this Advent is never spoken of without reference to the first and last advents of God, those at the Creation and at Judgment. Within the large framework of triple advents, the Chester playwright has chosen to show us in the Old Testament section three other entries of God into the world, each of which was concluded with the making of a covenant. I suggest that he chose these subjects in order to show God's concern for mankind, a concern that resulted in a New Covenant or Testament, Christ, which superseded the old ones. I do not mean that the Old Testament covenants are figura for the covenant established through Christ; instead, they are evidence of God's continuing concern for man and

Greg recognized long ago that the Old Testament sequence formed a prophetic prologue. I do not agree, however, that these plays are "not themselves dramas, but dramatic prologues"; cf. "Bibliog.," p. 14. For a more recent discussion of prophecy in this section, see Strohm, pp. 33-4 and the discussion which follows. He believes that typology, though not strongly evident to the audience, was the principle of selection and that the playwright supplemented figura with prophecy.

Kolve, p. 62.
establish a pattern of divine intervention into the affairs of men. Furthermore, all the covenants are prophetic and, therefore, are contributors to the general emphasis on prophecy in the whole Old Testament section.

The covenants are historical agreements with the three patriarchs, Noah, Abraham and Moses, but also bestow future blessings on the race from which the final covenant will come. God, however, places a condition on each of his agreements: man must be obedient to His word if he is to gain the promised salvation. Obedience implies not just that man follows the laws of God, but that he also willingly offers sacrifice to God as a sign of submissiveness. Noah offers sacrifice after the flood and God rewards him by promising never to take vengeance on man again. For Abraham's free offering of a tithe of his worldly possessions and for his willingness to sacrifice Isaac, God promises that the patriarch's seed will outnumber the stars and that one of his seed will save mankind. Moses, after receiving the law, tells the Israelites that they must honor God and make sacrifices to Him if they are to be saved. The historical agreements include not only the prophetic central covenant but also a mass of details relating to the
conduct of life and religious practices. For example, God tells Noah that he can now eat clean animals; formerly, he had allowed man only to eat "grasse and rootes" (2.333):

Thereas you have eaten before
grasse and rootes, sith you were bore,
of cleane beastes now, les and more,
I gave you leave to eate.
(3.329-333)

From Adam, Cain, Abell and Noah, God expected an offering of the first fruits of man's labor and animal sacrifices; Abraham, on the other hand, established the tithe of all goods coming to man from God (4.133-4). There are a number of other such details concerning the laws and practices of the Jews; the playwright, in fact, seems to have followed the scriptures very closely in setting down this mass of Old Testament lore.

The concentration on the Old Testament laws and practices is, I think, related to the Chester cycle's general emphasis on the Old Law and its opposition to the New. The theme is frequently iterated in the Old Testament section:

Adam: And my bloude that he will wyn,
That I so lost for my synne;

The Chester playwright's preoccupation with Jewish ritual and the commandments ancillary to the covenants have been noted but not commented upon; cf., for example, E. K. Chambers, *Eng. Lit. at the Close of the M. A.*, p. 27.
a new law then shall begin,  
and so men shall yt finde.  
(2.453-6)

**Expos**: Lordinges all, takes good intent what betokens this Comaundment:  
[i.e., circumcision]  
this was some tyme a sacrament  
in thould lawe truelye tane.  
As followeth now verament,  
so was this in the old Testament;  
but when Christ dyed, away yt went,  
and Baptisme then began.  
(4.193-200; cf. also 4.117-28)

**Expos**: Lordinges, this commandement was of the old Testamente.  
(H5.65)  
Lordinges this commandement was the firste lawe that ever god sent.  
(D5.41-2)

There are other explicit examples: with Noah, God emphasizes that a law of mercy will be substituted for the law of vengeance; the *Expositor* tells us that Melchisedech's offering signifies the "new Testament" and will replace the old law under which men honored God with the sacrifice of beasts. We ahve also seen that the whole Moses-Balaam play is about law. The *Expositor* tells us that the tablets were the first laws given to men; Balaam tries to oppose his law to God's law; the Israelites think to contravene with impunity God's laws. But God's law persists and Christ descends to earth as the New Law.

The opposition of the two laws and the sacrifice motif are carried over into the *New Testament* sections.
For example, in the Purification play, the last one of the Nativity series, Christ fulfills the requirements of the old law, circumcision and presentation to the temple, and then expounds the Ten Commandments to the Doctors of the Temple. The Nativity sequence ends, therefore, the reign of the old law and ceases at the point where Christ is ready to take up the exposition of the New Covenant. We shall see later that the Jews, not understanding the new dispensation, fight Christ hardest because they think He will set aside their law. Antichrist attempts to re-establish the Jews and their law and says that Christ had unjustly removed them from their rightful place. Before the Last Supper, Christ Himself tells his disciples that he is going to institute a new law and new sacraments:

\[\text{ffor now a new law I will beginn,}\]
\[\text{to help mankynd out of his synne,}\]
\[\text{so that he may heaven wynn,}\]
\[\text{the which for synne he lost.}\]

and here, in presence of you all,
\[\text{an other sacrifice beginne I shall,}\]
\[\text{to bring mankynd out of his thrall,}\]
\[\text{for helpe him nede I must.}\]
\[\text{(15.73-80)}\]

In four of the six plays in the Nativity series the sacrifice motif reappears.\(^{55}\) Octavian offers incense to the child, the shepherds and their apprentices.

\(^{55}\)See the next chapter for the discussion of the sacrifice motif.
(in MSS DWRB) give simple gifts, and the Magi bring splendid gifts of practical and symbolic value. In the Presentation play, Christ makes his sacrifices according to the Old Law. The New Testament sequence is concerned with Christ's sacrifice of himself for man and the establishment of new sacrificial forms for mankind. These forms include the sacraments, such as the communion supper, but also the acts which indicate man's compliance with God's New Law, such as the seven cardinal acts of mercy outlined in the Judgment play. The Antichrist, as noted above, reinstates the Old Law temporarily and the four kings offer sacrifices to him in the Temple according to the Old Law. I think that the ubiquity of the theme of the opposition of the Old and New Laws and the repetition of the sacrifice-motif testifies to the fact that these three Old Testament plays were selected because they dealt with the three great covenants made between God and man before the Incarnation.

The covenants moreover demonstrate God's concern for mankind and thus they fit into the pattern established by the Creation play of the necessity for divine intervention. Throughout the Old Testament section, the playwright reiterates mankind's perverse and rebellious nature; it becomes apparent, however, that most men will
remain sunk in sin and that the few genuinely good men cannot salvage mankind from its inherent and accumulated guilt. When Adam and Eve are thrown out of the garden, they are condemned to a life of work and pain in a fallen world where they can no longer claim grace by any right. In his dream, Adam foresees the eventual salvation of man; however, that salvation is contingent upon man's obedience to God and his willingness to make appropriate sacrifice. Cain rejects his opportunity for salvation by trying to bargain with God in order to gain more worldly goods. God offers him a chance for amendment and promises him his "meede" if he will be obedient and offer proper sacrifice. But Cain forfeits that reward by murdering his brother. At the opening of the Noah play, God laments his creation of the perverse human race, but still gives it 120 years to amend its faults while Noah prepares the ark which will safeguard the race. Both Noah and Abraham are examples of men obedient to God: through the former, God saves man from extinction and thus damnation; through the latter, he intends to save men's souls. God's patience and willingness to forgive, however, go unrewarded. The Israelites begin to worship a golden calf at the very time that God is concluding his covenant with Moses. Even so, He insists on bestowing
the Law on the perfidious Israelites. In the H and D versions of the Balaam scenes, God carries out his promises and forces the idolatrous prophet to bless the Israelites; the Balaam-continuator shows us once again the perversity of the Israelites and once more God's willingness to drag them into the Promised Land. The continued wickedness of mankind adumbrates that of Adam and Eve and thus reiterates the necessity for the Incarnation. The covenants demonstrate that God is willing to give men chance after chance to amend their lives. After the Incarnation, Crucifixion and Resurrection, however, men will be judged severely, as the Noah play implies, according to their deeds.

In summary, I think we can say that the Creation play was added as a prologue to the cycle in order to indicate the necessity of the Incarnation and Passion. The Creation play not only shows man's fall and prophesies through Adam's dream the redemption, but also establishes the pattern of covenants and sacrifices. When God leads Adam into the Garden, He makes an agreement with the first man: Adam is to have all the joys of paradise without travail as long as he does not eat of the forbidden tree. God's curses on Adam, Eve and the serpent establish the new terms of man's life. Adam knows, however, that man can still be redeemed if he
will be obedient to God's laws; therefore, he instructs Cain and Abel in farming and husbandry and in giving willingly a sacrifice in order to receive God's love. The establishment of new covenants are necessary because of man's persistence in sin; these covenants are made with those men who are obedient to God and are worthy of transmitting the promise of grace which will be fully extended to man through Christ's entry into the world. Prophecies appear throughout the Old Testament section; therefore, it is fitting that the sequence ends with the blessing of Israel and statements foreshadowing the redemptive process.

I cannot prove that typology was not the principle of selecting the Old Testament subject matter; if it was, then I think the covenants provided the Chester playwright with a secondary principle of control. However, to assert that the playwright went about choosing his subjects first on the general grounds of typology and then concentrated on the specific subject of Old Testament covenants is to unnecessarily complicate matters. The covenants as appropriate subjects are already limited to three; they provide their own principle of selection and have their own secondary control. To be sure, the playwright was probably aware of the typological significance of his subjects and perhaps
the obvious parallels between the Abraham story and events in Christ's life suggested the addition of the typological explication to the play. He did not carry through with this technique in the rest of the Old Testament section and uses it only once again in the Temptation play. If, however, the covenant was the playwright's central concern and the basis for his selecting the Old Testament subjects, then he made the content of his plays conform to the structure of his cycle and vice versa. Instead of choosing subjects of typological significance within the concept of the Seven Ages of Man, neither of which he could or did effectively bring to the audience's attention, I think the Chester playwright chose subject matter which he could explicitly relate to the rest of the cycle.
THE STRUCTURE OF THE
NATIVITY, PASSION AND RESURRECTION SEQUENCES
AND THE STAGING OF THE CYCLE

Although the Balaam play and the Old Testament sequence are a significant single play and a well-organized series respectively, neither show as well the sustained dramatic abilities of which the Chester playwright is capable as does the central matter of the cycle, plays VI-XXI. The plays of the Old Testament section, while they are thematically bound to the cycle and to one another, have a tendency to break down into separate units because there is a lack of narrative continuity. The Balaam play is much like the cycle as a whole: the D version is built on a thematic and narrative continuity and preserves a recognizable chronological time; the H version depends on the association of themes for its unity and introduces a prophet series not germane to the time scheme of the play. Both versions work within the context of the cycle and fulfill satisfactorily the task assigned to them; nevertheless, the D version, I think, is representative of a significant advance in dramatic art.

Just so, the central segment of the cycle is significantly different from the Old Testament section
and uses a different set of dramatic devices to achieve its purpose. This large sequence, including the Nativity, Passion and Resurrection plays, of course, has as its base a single narrative, the events of Christ's earthly existence, and therefore is more amenable to the development of a continuous dramatic story than are the disparate elements of the Old Testament sequence. Nevertheless, the playwright seems to have been aware that this larger section could also dissipate into discrete units if he did not reinforce the narrative continuity with thematic and structural patterns. The subject of this chapter is a discussion of the methods that the playwright used to build individual pageants and larger units, such as the Nativity sequence, and the mutual effect the structure of these units and the production of the plays had on each other.

The simplest kind of unity is achieved by direct reference to previous events or by the continuation in a second pageant of an action begun in former pageant. The most obvious example of the first of these devices is the recollection of Balaam and his prophecy by the magi. At the end of the Balaam play, the Expositor points out that Balaam's prophecy about the star will soon be fulfilled:

And by this prophecye, leewe yee mee, three kinges, as yee shall played see,
honored at his Natiuitye, 
Christe, when hee was borne. 
(lines 445-8D)

As soon as the Magi come onstage they pray that God will grant them a glimpse of the star which their ancestor had prophesied (8.5-12, 33-40 et passim). They also explain how the prophecy was passed down to them and thereby prepare the audience for the kings' immediate belief in the Advent. The best example of the simple continuation of an action occurs in plays XIII-XIV where we see several characters leave to report Christ's actions to Cayphas, and later see them reappear in Cayphas' company. For example, two Jews say they will report Christ's meeting with the blind man (13.297-300), and later one of the merchants in the temple does the same (14.257-60). In the scene immediately following (14.306-68), we see several of the Jews report Christ's activities, including the raising of Lazarus which two Jews had witnessed (13.430-7). It is detail such as this that helps to reinforce the narrative continuity of the play; it is a device, as we shall see later, which is used to great effect in much larger sequences.

One further device is the occasional recapitulation of past events or the recollection of prophecy either at the time the prophecy is fulfilled or when it is about to be fulfilled. Probable the most important example of the use of this device in the Passion-Resurrection
sequence is in the Harrowing of Hell. The Harrowing is a natural divider between these two sections, because it is one of the culminating points of the redemptive process, the prophesied freeing of men from the Devil's power, and because it occurs during a point in the action where a time lapse is required.\(^1\) The play is used to recapitulate the events which have led up to this moment and to indicate a shift in the cycle's direction. Naturally the play opens with Adam; he is joyful that his promised release is near and tells the audience how he and the others became captive in hell. Simeon re­appears and recalls for us the events of the Purification; the two prophets, Isaiah and David, have been onstage before in the H version of play V and their prophecies have been cited in the first Magi play. The two other characters, Seth and John the Baptist, are new to the cycle; yet they recall events which would certainly have been familiar to the audience and which testify to the authenticity of the harrowing. After the power of Hell is broken, Christ leads the patriarchs and prophets to Paradise, where they meet Enoch and Hely and the Saved Thief. The thief recalls his salvation on the cross.

\(^1\) Of course, the opening scene of the Resurrection (XVIII) with Pilate, Cayphas and Annas takes up some of the time, since it is intended to represent and cover the same time period that is in XVII.
and Hely says he has been in paradise while awaiting his struggle with the Antichrist (18.229-36).

The shift in the cycle's direction is anticipated by the prophets and patriarchs' recollection of prophecies made earlier in the cycle; the argument of the play is that it was prophesied that Christ should reclaim the souls of men from hell, someone is coming to reclaim them, therefore, that person is the Christ. It is an argument that Christ Himself uses throughout the Resurrection sequence. Up to this point, but particularly in the Nativity sequence, there has been a series of prophecies which were immediately or eventually fulfilled by Christ's actions; Christ, however, never claims that He is fulfilling prophecy. In the Resurrection sequence, Christ recalls the prophecies made about His death in order to comfort His despondent disciples and to prove that it is He Who has indeed risen.

Cleophas and Lucas explain to the unknown pilgrim that they have been informed of Christ's resurrection, but that they fear it is not true. Christ rebukes them and recalls the prophecies, some of which have already been fulfilled, to assure the two men of His resurrection (19.73-96). When Christ later appears to the entire group of disciples, He shows them His wounds and eats
to prove that He is there in the flesh; afterwards, however, He recalls for them the prophecies of His death and resurrection (19.201-16). There are, of course, other miraculous events in this section which help to confirm the actuality of Christ's resurrection.

To state that He is fulfilling the prophecies or promises made earlier in the cycle, as Christ does in the Resurrection section and the Judgment play, is to redirect the audience's attention to those earlier promises of the Old Testament and Nativity sequences. Those prophecies, by projecting the audience's attention ahead to coming events, also help to unify the cycle, because the audience knows that each prophecy will be fulfilled and therefore that the action taking place before them, the Nativity play, for example, contains the seed of the events prophesied. I only want to emphasize here that prophecy is a simple device for unifying sections of the cycle. For example, Adam tells his children about the Judgment (2.465-72), and God, when He makes his covenant with Noah, implies that He will destroy the world with fire the next time. Part of Balaam's last prophecy (H5.293-6) is about the Judgment; throughout the Passion sequence there is continued discussion of Christ's regnency; and in the Resurrection sequence, Christ refers to His Second
Coming. The Judgment is formally prophesied in the Prophets Play (XXII); it is the occasional reference that keeps the coming event in the audience's mind. When prophecy receives a great deal of emphasis, as it does in the Nativity sequence, then it ceases to be a mere unifying device and becomes a skeletal part of the structure.

Thus far we have discussed rather simple devices which, to be sure, can be combined into more forceful patterns. The repetition of subject matter in varied forms can also help create a more unified structure. In the preceding chapter, we saw that one of the playwright's major concerns was the performance of the sacrifice. It is apparent that this material is emphasized as a part of the Old-New Law theme and tells the audience exactly which practices were abrogated by Christ's descent into the world. Christ's sacrifice of Himself is the only kind of offering that is significant enough to buy men's souls; but it is freely done because some men had been faithful and obedient enough that God would intervene for them. The Old Testament sacrifices and the crucifixion of Christ are only the two extremes of the sacrifice motif; in effect, the motif runs through the cycle and reappears under various guises.

In four of the six plays of the Nativity sequence, there are scenes in which the characters honor Christ
with gifts or make offerings to God. Essentially the purpose of the gift-giving in all these plays, the *Nativity*, *Shepherds*, *Magi II*, and *Purification*, is the same: the characters honor God for the gifts given to them; they make a token repayment, as did Abell, Noah and Abraham, for the bounty lavished on them. Though the characters' purpose in making the gifts is to honor God, the use to which the playwright puts the various scenes is different. The offering of incense by Octavian is intended, I think, to indicate the power of the meek King over the greatest monarch of the world. Octavian has intelligence enough to know that it would be folly to proclaim himself a god, since he knows that he is not immune to mortality; nevertheless, he demonstrates in his opening speeches his consciousness of his immense power. He is arrogant; he intends to prove his might and "postie" by making everyone pay a tax of one penny. The tax is to be a demonstrable sign of obedience to Rome and is to be eternal:

and by that peny, as well spent,  
knowled to be obeydient  
to Rome by gifte of such a rent  
from that tyme after aye.  
(lines 269-72)

Octavian obviously knows the value of the obligatory "gift" common to the middle ages. Later Preco reiterates that this gift demonstrates Octavian's sovereignty:
a peny of each man haue will he
the value of tenne pence it shalbe
to knowledge that he hase soveraigntie
fullie of all mankind.
(lines 397-400)

In effect, Octavian wants his tithe; this tax, imposed from the top, is an imitation, but an inversion, of the gifts willingly made to God. God expects an offering: Octavian demands one. When Joseph hears that he must pay this tax, he immediately complains of his oppressed state. He earned his money, he says, by hard labor, not by demands for tribute from those in his power; he must always pay whatever he has to the king, but now perhaps, he adds, the Child will bring them out of their misery. The important point of the pageant is that the king who would demand gifts ends up by giving a gift to the Child. Sibyl shows him the sign of the Child and the emperor falls to his knees, offers incense to the vision, and tells the Senators to worship the Christ. Octavian strongly reiterates that he would not be worshipped as a god; instead, he would worship the One True God. Incense has a symbolic value, as the Magi will later tell us; but the importance of the gift in this scene is that it is offered by the greatest monarch of the world.

The shepherds' gifts are very simple ones, the giving of which demonstrates their joyousness at the sight of
the Redeemer. Unlike the Towneley shepherds' gifts, the Chester shepherds and apprentices' offerings seem to have no symbolic value: the three shepherds offer a bell, a flask and spoon, and a cup; Gartius, his wife's old hose; and the four apprentices, a bottle, a hood, a shepherd's pipe and a nut pick.\textsuperscript{2} Though they have no intrinsic value, these items are of use to the shepherds and thus the offering of them represents some deprivation to the men and boys. The willingness with which they give the gifts represents, I think, the transformation they have undergone since they were told of the Child. In the first part of the play, they felt lonely and longed for companionship; they did feast, but withheld their surplus from Trowle-Gartius and the apprentices. They were rather cheerless individuals; indeed, Gartius had accused them of not even singing while they feasted. Once they see the Child, however, they become joyous and liberal; when they leave the stable, they exchange the kiss of peace and demonstrate genuine comradeship. The giving of gifts by the shepherds undoubtedly originated in imitation of the offering of the Magi; the Chester playwright, however, so shapes his play that

\textsuperscript{2} Eugene B. Cantelupe and Richard Griffith, "The Gifts of the Shepherds in the Wakefield 'Secunda Pastorum,' An Iconographical Interpretation," Medieval Studies, XXVIII (1966), 328-35. The four apprentices appear only in MSS DBWR.
their simple offerings indicate that the smallest of sacrifices is also acceptable.

The Mercers play of the Oblation of the Magi (IX) is the most developed and significant of the examples of gift-giving because the play combines the sacrifice-motif with the general pattern inherent in the Nativity sequence of prophecy. At the opening of the play, the Magi are again on their journey to Bethlehem. They are surprised to find the Child in a stable instead of a palace, but are assured by the sight of the star that they have found the King they seek. Their gifts as they tell us, have both practical and symbolic value; for example, the First King's gift of gold will both help Mary in her poverty (49-52), and symbolize the Child's kingship (37-40). The practical value of the gifts can also be expressed in terms of temporal things as opposed to eternal truths; they represent Christ's bipartite nature:

Thus shall we honour hym all three
with thynges that falles for his degree,
touchinge manhoode and Deitye
thesis guiftes will well befall.
(lines 61-4)

In effect, the three Magi give a little homily on the symbolism of their gifts: gold is a proper gift because Christ will be King of Jews (37), and because gold is a fitting tribute to a king (65-72); it also signifies a king's power (89-92), love (97-100), and Godhead
(105-8). The incense, the Second King says, will take away the smell of the stable (53-6); it is also a sign that He is the head of the Church (73-80) and represents eternity (93-4), devout prayers (101-2), and devotion (109-10). The myrrh is to be used to anoint the Child (57-60) as it will later be used to save the body from decay and the man from sin (81-88); it further signifies bodily death (95-6), man's mortality (103-4), and the power to cleanse body and soul (111-12). These mighty kings give their gifts as tokens of their obedience and submission to the Divine King; they are performing an act of sacrifice:

And sith he hath in hym Godhead
me thinks best, as eate I bread,
Incense to geue hym through my red
in name of Sacrifice.
(lines 73-6)

It should be apparent that in their discussion of the appropriateness of their gifts, they also make prophecies of Christ's later actions and of his special nature. The play continues in the same vein: the Magi name the Old Testament prophets, recall and restate those prophecies in their salutations to the Child, and reiterate the symbolism of their gifts. Mary receives the gifts and promises them eternal reward for the willing offerings they have made to her son.

The gifts offered in the Purification play are, of course, of a different kind; they represent the old
sacrifices. In a very short scene mid-way through the play, Mary and Joseph explain why they must go to the temple. The playwright has thoroughly enmeshed the two different acts of purification and presentation, and thus has slightly obscured exactly what is going on; nevertheless, the reason for the action is quite clear:

Iosephe, my trewe owine fere, 
owe rede I, if your will were

3 There may have been a Presentation as well as a Purification or Doctor's play. The Early Banns announce the Mercers play (Magi II) thus:
The mercers worshipfull of degre
the presentation that haue yee
hit fallyth best for your see
by right reason & skyle
The series Presentation, Slaughter, Purification makes better chronological sense and eliminates the disparity in Christ's age in the Purification and Doctors' scenes. In addition, the series in the York cycle evidently was Purification (really a Presentation and Purification), the Flight into Egypt, the Massacre and the Doctors in the Temple (cf. Smith, York Plays, 433nl.). N-Town follows a similar pattern. It has an even more elaborate Presentation, for we see Mary lay her son on the altar, etc. We know that the Chester Magi play was divided; but the division seems an ill-advised one since it gave the Mercers a short play which could have been more easily performed in association with the Goldsmiths. Furthermore, the Chester playwright does not usually preach so openly; the homily, while significant, is over-long and appears to be padded to make the Mercers play long enough to be playable. The Purification is made up of two abruptly joined scenes; the first of which, the Simeon scene, only mentions Mary's needless purification and which concentrates on the reception of the Christ. It is possible that the Chester Magi play was divided and that the Mercers were given the second part to take up the place of a Presentation play; the latter was shifted to the present position of play XI. The Doctor's scene may have been added at this point; the Magi's story of Mount Victorial could have also been added at this
seith fourtie daies are gone intier,  
the temple that we goe to,  
and moyses lawe for to fulfill  
my sonne to offer semion tell;  
I wote well that it is godes will,  
that we now so doe.  
(lines 121-28)

Joseph says that Mary is clean and the purification is unnecessary; but he adds:

yet it is good to do as god bade  
and worcke after his lawe.  
(lines 131-2)

They will take, he adds, two doves and a turtle dove as their sacrifice in order "to fulfill godes lawe" (136). The implication is that Christ, the New Law, will conform to the regulations of the Old before He proceeds on His ministry. The Doctor's scene, although not originally a part of the play, strengthens this idea by having Christ expound the Old Law as the last "act" of the Nativity sequence. 4

time either as a development of play V or in conjunction with the revision of that play. Salter does not believe the reference is to a Presentation play and thinks plays VIII-X formed a single play. See his "Banns," XVI, 1-5.

4The Doctor's scene is in cross-rhyme; about half the lines are taken from the York-Towneley version of the Doctors play. The Coventry Weavers play is also in part dependent on the York text, though Greg believes that the Coventry and Chester derivations are separate. See Greg, Trial, pp. 101-20, and "Bibliog.," pp. 280-319.
The Purification play not only shows that Christ literally fulfills the obligations of the Old Law, but also that He fulfills the prophecies of the Old Testament. The central issue of the opening Simeon scene is that the priest does not believe a virgin can conceive a child. The miracle of the book reasserting the word "virgin" for Simeon's "good woman," Anna Vidua's implicit faith that to God nothing is impossible and the Angel's statement that Christ will be born of a virgin, all convince Simeon that Isaiah's prophecy is true; therefore, the priest needs only to hear from Joseph that Mary is as clean as the virgin wax the old man offers in order for Simeon to burst into praise and welcome. He and Anna conclude the scene with their prophecies of the events which are to come and of the redemption which this Child will buy. The Simeon scene affirms that Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah. The sacrifices of the Purification do provide a fitting contrast to the new kinds of gifts offered in the preceding plays; they also recall the older forms of showing obeisance to

5 It is interesting to note that the Vulgate's "virgin" in Isaiah 7:14 is taken from the LXX mistranslation of the Hebrew for "good woman." It seems unlikely that the playwright would have known this; but the legend may have preserved it as another of those "proofs" of Mary's virginity from the time when such a belief was not universally accepted. See the Interpreter's Bible, V, 218.
God, just before the cycle turns to the sacrifice of
the prophesied God Himself and the establishment of the
new sacraments.

As I noted in the preceding chapter, the universal
response of the Jews toward Christ is antagonistic because
they fear He will destroy their law. There is some
suggestion of this attitude in the Doctor's scene of the
Purification when the Third Doctor says:

> Let hym Christ wend furth on his wayes
for and he dwell, without dread,
the people will full sone hym praise,
well more then we for all our deede.
(lines 261-4)

The next play, the Temptation, makes this even more
emphatic by simple parallelism: first, we see Satan tempt
Christ with the things of the flesh and of this world;
second, we see two Pharisees try to tempt Christ into
contravening the Old Law. The First says:

> for to tempte him I haue tight,
to witt whether he will deme the right,
or ells unlawfully.
(lines 214-16)

The Second believes they have Christ in the perfect
dilemma:

> Hit is good redd, by my fay,
so we may catch him by some way,
for if he doe her Woman Taken in Adultery grace to-day,
he dothe against the law.
And if he bydd punishe her sore,
he doth against his owne lore,
that he hath preached here before:
to mercy man shall draw.

(12.217-24)

The Passion sequence continues in the same way: the Jews are shown at every step to be fearful of losing their power and their practices, such as bartering in the temple; but most of all they fear the loss of the Mosaic law.

The playwright emphasizes the Jewish fear of the loss of their law in order to provide them motivation for the plot against Christ; he also keeps reiterating the point because it is an essential part of the arguments of the play that a new order must be established if men are to be saved. At the beginning of play XV, the playwright makes quite clear that Christ will establish new sacraments. Jesus first tells his disciples that the Paschal feast is near at hand and that it must be prepared "according to the law" (15):

That feast needes kepe must wee
with very great Solemnitye;
the pascall lambe eaten must be,
as the law dothe command.

(lines 5-9)

Before Christ shares the Last Supper with his disciples, He explains precisely the significance of their gathering:

ffor know you now, the tyme is come
that signes and shadows be all done;
therefore make hast, that we may soone
all figurs cleane reiect.

ffor now a new law I will beginn,
to help mankynd out of his synne,
so that he may heaven wynn,
the which for synne he lost.
and here, in presence of you all,
an other sacrifice beginne I shall,
to bring mankynd out of his thrall,
for helpe him nede I must.

(15.69-80)

The meaning of the Crucifixion as sacrifice and sacrament is explained at some length by Christ as He ascends to heaven. He explains to an angel that His body bleeds and His clothing is red because He has thereby bought men from the devil; the blood, as we see later (24.421-8), will be saved until Doomsday:

These bloudy dropps that you may see,
all they freshe shall resarved be,
till I come in my maiesta
to Deme the last day.

This bloud shall witnes bear to me,
I dyed for man on the Rood tree,
and rose with in dayes three;
such loue I loued them aye.

(20.129-36)

At two other places in the Resurrection sequence, Christ asserts the power of this new sacrament; when He rises from the dead He says:

I am very bread of lyfe,
from heaven I light and am send.
who eateth this Bread, man or wyfe,
shall lyue with me, without ende.

(18.170-3)

Later, He makes a shorter speech of the same kind to the pilgrims at Emaus (19.117-24).

The sacrament of communion is the means of achieving salvation; but men also need other comforts. In play XXI, we see the disciples gathered together to await
the descent of the promised Holy Ghost. While the
disciples pray for the Comforter, Jesus bids God send
It to them; God, in a lengthy recapitulation of His
intervention for mankind, decides to send this gift to
sustain men until the time of Judgment:

My ghost to earth shall goe downe
with Seven giftes of renowne,
ther to haue by Deuotion,
confirme them to be sadd;

That they may be ever-ready bowne,
in heauen bliss to wear the Crown,
ever to raygne in possession,
ther to be mery and gladd.

(21.167-74)

In the Antechrist play, we shall see that the
Four Kings continue the old forms of sacrifice re-estab-
lished by the agent of the arch-fiend; in the Judgment,
we shall see Christ extend the greatest gift of all,
grace, to those people who performed the seven cardinal
acts of mercy. To summarize this section, I have tried
to show that the playwright can unify his material by
thematic repetition. In this case, the playwright
concentrated on Judaic sacrificial practices in the Old
Testament section, the giving of gifts as a modification
of sacrifice in the Nativity sequence, and then he
inverted the sacrifice motif in the Passion and Resur-
rection sequences so that it would conform to the theme
of the Old versus the New Law. In the early parts of
the cycle, he develops parallel actions, such as Abel's.
and Noah's sacrifices, and the presentation of gifts
by Octavian, the Shepherds and the Magi; in the later
parts, he uses Christ as spokesman to explicate the
inversion of the sacrifice motif which is advanced
implicitly in the main action.

The motif, the use of stereotypes, and the repeti­
tion of themes are some of the means the playwright
utilizes to organize the cycle and to create a coherence
greater than just a narrative one. He also maintains
tight control of his material in the smaller units, such
as the Nativity, Passion and Resurrection sequences,
and in the individual pageants. Each of the three
sequences has an orientation of its own, a basic organi­
zational principle which unifies its component parts.
In addition, there are two transitional plays, the
Purification and the Harrowing of Hell, which provide
a time lapse and a rest before the re-orientation of
the next sequence. The Nativity sequence is structured
on the prophecies made throughout that group of plays
and the affirmation of those prophecies; it has a
repetitive pattern. The Passion sequence is more

6 The Prophets of Antechrist does much the same thing
for the eschatological conclusion.

7 See Strohm, pp. 53-73, for the basic pattern of the
sequence and the effect that confirmation of Christ's
divinity has on the audience.
dependent on the simple New Testament narrative; the emphasis is on the events leading to the climax of the cycle, the Crucifixion. Nevertheless, there are continual references to the opposition of the Old to the New Law, and that of the Divine Other-worldly King to the earthly men of power. The Resurrection sequence is much like the Nativity series in that it affirms the divinity of Christ and the miraculous nature of His resurrection through the recollection of prophecy; it further emphasizes that Christ is still with his followers and has provided the means of protecting and comforting them. This series, like the Judgment play, is the most straight-forwardly didactic. The plays which precede the sequence are historical in content; the Resurrection sequence, however, is at once historical and contemporary. Christ, therefore, preaches to his disciples as well as to the audience. The exact nature of the Sacrifice, the sending of the Holy Ghost, the making of the Creed and the explanation of all these events is directed toward the audience so that they will understand what has been done for them and how they should act.

The carefully developed thematic strands and the repetition of motifs can be rather easily lost if the staging of the plays does not support them. But when one reads the text, one is struck by the fact that the
text calls for repeated use of some physical structures and that the stage necessary for the pageants as they now stand must have been larger than has been traditionally assume. Though we can possibly argue that the unity in the play would only be evident to the Chester playwright and the reader and lost in the performance, we may also argue, as I shall, that there was a stage at Chester which helped to sustain the thematic unity of the cycle. The rest of this chapter will be devoted to the description of that stage as it is revealed in the text of the play and in other records external to the text.

I should like to turn now to a discussion of the Nativity play and the implications that the structure of that play has on its production. The structure of the Nativity play is significant because it demonstrates that the playwright has learned to advance two separate narratives which relate two concurrent events causally related. Thus, the first Octavian scene tells us why Joseph and Mary had to go to Bethlehem; the second shows the birth of Christ. The latter two events are as nearly simultaneous as can happen on a stage. Again we have here not just narrative continuity, but thematic

8 The Octavian scenes of the Nativity may once have been separate and the play perhaps more like the Towneley Augustus Caesar. See D. S. Bland's note, "The Chester Nativity: One Play or two?" N&Q, 208 (1963), 134-5.
continuity and organic structure. This play is the first in the cycle which uses effective scene-splitting; its structure demands a stage with multiple loci. The play is divided into the following scenes:

**Nativity** (736 lines)

1) Annunciation (1-48)
2) Meeting with Elizabeth (49-120)
3) Doubt of Joseph; Joseph and Angel (121-76)
4) Octavian and Senators, taxing and Sybil (177-384)
5) Announcement of tax to Joseph; journey to Bethlehem (385-440)
6) Arrival; midwives (441-584)
7) Expositor's description of Roman Temple; Octavian and Sybil worship Christ (585-736)

There have to be at least two localized places according to the text and stage directions: a dais for Octavian (247) and the stable for Mary and Joseph (440). The rest of the scenes could take place in unlocalized areas. The play is certainly not static. Mary leaves locus (1) to meet Elizabeth (2); Joseph goes off to another "place" (3); the messenger leaves locus (4) to encounter Joseph (5); Joseph and Mary, with an ox and an ass, go to locus (6); then we shift our attention back to the Expositor, Octavian and Sybil in locus (4,7). Our attention shifts therefore from place to place as the characters move or as the action is taken up by different sets of characters in their loci.

The amount of movement in the play suggests an ample stage. Besides the principal loci, there must be a
"place" where the characters can move in order to simulate journeys and in order to distinguish locales other than the Emperor's palace and the stable. There must also be an off-stage area.

Even a fairly simple play, such as the Resurrection, can become complex in staging and lively in action. I have broken the play up into the following scenes; the scene breaks indicate a movement of characters from one place to another or the shift from one narrative part to another. 9

Resurrection (527 lines)

a) Pilate's Palace (1-129)
b) Tomb (130-241)
c) Pilate's Palace (242-308)
d) Tomb--to which Marys come (309-68)
e) Marys leave and Magdalene meets Peter and John (369-84) 10
f) Tomb--to which Peter and John run (385-420)
g) Tomb--to which Magdalene returns (421-55) 11
h) Magdalene goes to Mary Jacobi and Salome (456-71)
i) Two Marys apparently meet Christ at Tomb (472-87)
j) Two Marys go to Peter (488-503)
k) Peter meets Jesus on way to (at?) Tomb (504-27)

9 MSS DBW break off at line 432 and lack most of scene (g) and all of scenes (h)-(k).

10 There apparently is movement away from the tomb here. See the direction: Tunc descendunt / the Marys et paulisper circumambulant et tunc obvient Discipulis, Petro et Iohanni.

11 The Magdalene evidently goes and sits next to the tomb here; cf. lines 421, 431 and 435.
There are apparently at least two stable loci: the palace and the tomb. Various characters come to the tomb where Jesus remains sitting after he has come out of the tomb and appeared to the Magdalene (cf. d,f,g,i and perhaps k); the other scenes, (e), (h) and (j) are unlocalized. Once again multiple narratives move forward simultaneously; the brief encounter scenes would help move the action along rather quickly. A logical progression of events also takes place. After the Marys encounter the angels and are told Christ has risen (d), they run off to find the disciples. They are not yet quite certain that the body has not been stolen (lines 371-2); but Peter is convinced that Christ has risen when he sees the garments in the tomb (f). The Magdalene is the first to meet Christ (g); she tells the other Marys, who then meet Him (h, i); they, in turn, confirm Peter's belief that Christ has risen (j) and he finally meets Christ himself (k).

It is apparent, I think, that the structure of individual pageants demands more loci and a larger platea than a simple pageant wagon could afford. The problem is complicated, however, by the fact that the playwright was working with larger units than the single play; he created, in the Passion sequence, for example, a series of actions which overlap from one pageant to
another and which require a consistency of staging. 12

Plays XIV-XVI place the greatest demands on the stage. In play XIV, Jesus enters with all (?) his disciples on their way to Simon the Leper's house, where they all sit down (40). The room must be large enough to accommodate 17 people, the 12 disciples, Christ, Mary Magdalene, Simon, Lazarus and Martha. When they leave Simon's house, Christ points out a "Casteil" where the disciples will find an ass and foal (138f), and the disciples go into the city (152); Christ sees the city (208), rides toward it (224) and finally comes to the Temple (224). It is apparent that something was there which represented the city; it could merely have been the surrounding buildings or perhaps the Temple itself. At any rate, there must have been a temple for the scene with the merchants (225-64). Judas enters after that scene and explains that he is envious of the anointing of Christ's feet and of the money wasted thereby (265-304) 13; he momentarily withdraws (304) and our attention is shifted.

12 In their discussion of the staging of the Ludus Coventriæ, Professors Cameron and Kahrl argue that critics cannot assume a consistency of staging practices in that play (p. 123). The Chester play differs from that cycle in that it was totally revised, or nearly so, by one playwright whereas different sections, in particular, the Passion sequence, were separately revised for the N-Town cycle and designed for the kind of production most suitable to their content and structure. See their articles in Theatre Notebook, XX (1965-6), 61-9; XXI (1967), 122-38, 152-65.
to Cayphas and Annas and the Pharisees, who report Christ's actions. The scene concludes with the decision to move against Christ in order to protect the Judaic law and the power of the priesthood. It is possible, though I think it unlikely, that this scene occurs in an unlocalized place; at any rate, the pageant requires at least two loci, Simon's house and the Temple.

Play XV also requires at least two loci. Again the play opens with Christ and his disciples outside a city; then the disciples are sent to hire a room for the Last Supper. The domus (44) is already prepared for them and was evidently quite an elaborate set:

\[\text{loes! here a parlour all ready dight,} \\
\text{with paved floors and windows bright.} \]

(lines 53-4)

John and Peter prepare the table (60), go to get Jesus, and then return for the Last Supper. After the sacrament and the washing of the feet, they all leave to go into the garden. The garden scene would require a great deal of space because it includes the disciples, Jesus, Malchus, Primus Jew and possibly other soldiers (304); it also demands that Jesus walk away from the sleeping disciples to pray.

Play XVI is an amalgamation of two plays which Salter believes was carried out in 1575; the combination was

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13 Thus the scene at Simon's house provides motivation for Judas and is a necessary part of this play.
facilitated by the fact that the two plays call for similar loci.\footnote{Trial, p. 13; "Banns," XV, 444, 447 and XVI, 17.} Play XVIa (lines 1-384) requires a place for Annas and Cayphas and the buffeting\footnote{Salter suggests that the meaning of the direction, Tunc Iudei statuent Iesum in cathedra (line 72) is that the Jews place Christ in something representing a church, for, as he points out, DuCange lists "church" as the medieval definition of cathedra. See MDC, p. 66. I think this unlikely and would translate cathedra as "chair." The Early Banns say: flechers bowyers with great honors the Cowpers find the Tormentors that bobbyde god with gret horrors as he sat in his chere (Salter, "Banns," p. 159). See also line 16.70 of the text. Christ is often seated in pictures of the buffeting and the mock coronation. The latter is preceded by the direction, tunc flagella-bunt eum et postea induent cum purpura sedentem in Cathedra (320), where cathedra is obviously a chair. During the scourging, Christ is tied to a column (320), as is also traditional, and as Salter also notes.}; a raised platform for Pilate\footnote{See line 128 and the DBWR MSS insertion after H144, "Cum vp, lordings." They later return to Pilate's palace.}; a place for Herod (168-208); and a place for the scourging and mock coronation.\footnote{See n. 15 above. This place is probably the same as that of the opening scene.} Obviously, there need not have been four pageant houses for this action; on the other hand, one seems a little cramped. If the buffeting and scourging occur in one place, then the locus for Annas and Cayphas would serve very well. Furthermore, the Chester playwright insis...
that the Jews were responsible for Christ's death, and he calls the Torturers, Jews; to emphasize the point he may have wanted to use the High Priest's mansion. Pilate and Herod then could share a pageant, since the journey involved in going to Pilate, then to Herod and back to Pilate, would provide time for a change in actors. At line 384, the H version has the direction, "Tunc ibunt versus montem Calvariam," and the play continues; MS D omits the direction, adds a scene of Peter's denial, and begins XVIb with the Simon of Cyrene episode.¹⁸

The latter half of the play requires a space through which Christ and Simon can bear the cross (397-404); a hill large enough to accommodate three crosses and a minimum of seven characters, the four Jews, the two thieves and Christ (448 com. D, 705-20); and possibly a place for Pilate from which he can see the action (600-17), but certainly one to which Joseph and Nicodemus go to beg the body of Christ.¹⁹ The minimal requirements, ¹⁸ The amalgamation of this play is part of the subject of Salter's essay on the "Trial and Flagellation." See, Trial, pp. 1-73 and Greg's rejoinder to the dating of the event, p. 81nl.

¹⁹ See the stage direction at 836. Joseph greets Pilate thus in MS H: "Ben avoose, Sir Pilate in hye! as you sitt in your Sea" (837-8). The lines are omitted in D. There are a number of deletions, omissions and/or corrections throughout these last sections in MS D and apparently EWR.
therefore, appear to be a large hill and a place for Pilate.

Some of the features in these three plays also appear in other plays in the Passion sequence. For example, the Temptation requires that Christ be able to stand on the pinnacle of the Temple (112, 124); the Healing of the Blind Man possibly has a temple for the Pharisees in the scene in which they examine Cacus (13.116-229). Plays XVI, the Passion, and XVIII, the Resurrection, have scenes located at Pilate's palace; play XIII requires a sepuchre large enough for Lazarus to be in and XVIII has one large enough for Peter to go into (396). The most significant feature, however, is the hill: Satan takes Christ up on a hill to show Him the grandeur of the world; the Torturers lead Christ up on the hill of Calvary; Michael leads the saved into paradise.20

A close reading of the text, especially of the rubrics, reveals a great deal of both horizontal and vertical movement within specific play units and a consistency of locations through several plays. For

20 Satan mentions the hill in line 130; the D MS adds the direction, "Tunc Sathan adducet Ihesum super montem..." Calvary is described as a hill in lines 384, 403 and the stage-directions at 448 (om. D) and 860. Michael leads them into Paradise at 17.204. The stage-direction does not say that Paradise is a hill (although often represented that way), but it is certainly on a higher level than Hell.
example, the Fall of Lucifer requires a horizontal movement from Heaven to Hell; the Creation play, from Heaven down to Paradise, from Paradise down to earth; the Temptation has various high places and earth; the Harrowing of Hell, hell and paradise, a movement upward; the Pentecost pageant has a descent of two angels; the Ascension, a high place and a movement upward (Christ) and several other movements upward and downward (4 angels!); and the Judgment, a descent in clouds. In addition seven plays specifically mention a hill and three others may very well have had one: a hill for Eve and perhaps Paradise in play II; one for Abraham's sacrifice, Moses' receiving of the Law, Balaam's blessing of Israel; a hill, perhaps two (cf. 7.171, 217), for the shepherds; Mount Victor for the Magi; a mountain for Christ in the Temptation; Calvary; and possibly, the Mount of Olives in XV and a hill for Paradise in the Harrowing of Hell. This hill is significant because it is a recurrent feature in all segments of the cycle.

21 S. F. Crocker notes only six hills. See his article, "The Production of the Chester Plays," West Virginia University Bulletin, Philological Papers, I (Oct., 1936), 77. The seventh is in the stage-direction of the Creation play: "Tunc Adam fodiit terram et docebit fillios et Eva Colum habebit (H496; om. D). Iconography supports this representation of Eve sitting on a hill spinning and/or nursing her sons while Adam digs in the earth below. See, for example, Guldan, Eva und Maria, plates 3-4 and 51."
and because it is frequently a locus distinct from others in the pageant. For example, in the Shepherds' play, the Painters need a hill and a stable; in Magi I, the Goldsmiths need a hill and a palace for Herod. If paradise is a hill, then it is a separate locus from Heaven and Earth in play II and from Hell in the Harrowing. The Passion requires the hill plus a pageant for Pilate's palace. Furthermore, the hill is fairly large. As the first Paradise, it would have to accommodate Adam, Eve, God and the serpent, and after the expulsion, four angels; the Paradise of the Harrowing, however, would have been large enough to hold Adam, Enoch, Hely, the Saved Thief and possibly Michael, Seth, David, John the Baptist, Isaiah and Simeon. Certainly for the crucifixion it had to be large enough to support three crosses, four Jews and an undetermined number of by-standers or principals, such as Cayphas, Annas, Mary, John the Evangelist, and so forth. Presumably, this hill could have been a pageant wagon, except that a high wagon would have been difficult of access if there were no ramps or stairways. Possibly it was a permanent feature of the stage. A hill or mountain is mentioned in the sources or narratives on which all but one of these plays are based; the single exception is the Shepherds' play.

22 The Ironmonger's half of play XVI requires only these two loci.
There is no necessity for a hill in the Shepherds' play; its presence, therefore, suggests a permanent feature of the playing area. Of course, it is possible, though unlikely in the context of the dramatic realism elsewhere in the staging of the cycles, that the hill was the pageant wagon itself; the playwright may just have called it a hill because his players would be acting on an elevated platform.

Chester is notable for rather lengthy pageants with multiple incidents, and, furthermore, for the budding off of new plays from old ones or the division of old plays into several new ones. Professor Salter's admirable article on the Banns indicates that a great deal of this activity took place between circa 1475 and circa 1531. These expansions vastly complicate the staging of the play, as we have noted above. For example, the Last Supper, Judas' decision to betray Christ, the conspiracy and the trial and flagellation are spread over three lengthy plays with other incidents interspersed throughout the first two and multiple loci throughout all three. In a very effective series of scenes the final hours of Christ are portrayed as we get glimpses of the developing plot against Him. Although a great deal of this movement could have taken place in an unlocalized area, the large...

23"Banns," XVI, 16.
groups of people and the number of "identified" locations suggest more than one pageant wagon. The whole series of plays from the Temptation (XII) through Pentecost (XXI) is marked by constant movement from place to place.

The repeated use of certain structures in the cycle, such as hills, palaces, etc., suggests a more permanent acting area than an itinerant wagon. The Early and Late Banns and the Rogers' account of the method of performance, however, apparently describe a much simpler, mobile performance. Professor Salter dates the composition of the Early Banns as 1467; they were subsequently revised up to about 1531 and copied in their present form circa 1540. He believes the Late Banns were composed for the 1575 performance of the cycle. It would appear that in 1467, 1540 and 1575 the plays were mobile. In addition, Morris says that there is a record for 1574 that the citizens of Chester were upset because the plays were performed in only one place.

The paucity of our information about the drama at Chester has made the reconstruction of her medieval

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24"Banns," XVI, 16.

25p. 318. He quotes from MS Harl 2125. Salter, as far as I know, does not mention this fact, although he has consulted the MS. He demonstrated (MDC, pp. 34-6, et passim) that Morris is untrustworthy, so it would be advisable to reserve judgment on the point until the MS can be consulted.
stage a speculative occupation. In fact, there have even been questions about the Rogers account, our most contemporary witness, for some time: who wrote the account, David or Archdeacon Robert? when was it written? and is it accurate? No modern critic believes it in its entirety and Professor Salter, who has treated it in the greatest detail, thinks most of it is fallacious. All critics do accept the fact that the performance was ambulatory. But the stage described in the text certainly does not seem to conform to that described in the Rogers account in so far as the latter has been traditionally understood. I think a fresh examination of the problems related to the Rogers' account is necessary here; I will then compare the stage that is revealed by the text with that of Rogers'.

26 MDC, pp. 54ff. Professor Wickham accepts Salter's conclusions, but goes on to describe a more complex mobile stage than does Salter. See his Early English Stages, I (London, 1966), 173 where he states that Rogers was inaccurate and where he describes the pageant wagon.

27 There is one curious exception. On p. 26 of English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages (Oxford, 1947), E. K. Chambers says "He (Expositor, Proco, Doctor, Nuntius, or Messenger) calls himself Gobet on the Grene only at 4.137, and his demands for 'room' to be made, with the fact that both he and later the character Antechristus come in riding, suggest a stationary performance on a green or other open space, rather than one on moving pageants." But on p. 18, he twice says that at Chester the plays were processional and on p. 19 he cites the Rogers description of the pageant wagons.
account to see if we can resolve the inconsistencies, if any, between the two.

Scholars of the medieval drama have for some time alternately believed or disbelieved the Rogers account of the performance of the Chester plays. I cannot pretend to understand the entire document and will not assert without reservation a complete description of the Chester stage; nevertheless, I would like to examine the documents in light of Professor Salter's discussion of them. As Salter's lectures amply demonstrated, the discussion of the medieval drama had been dominated by those who thought it to be quaint, primitive and unsophisticated; on the other hand, he set out to show that the plays were indeed good drama and that the stage was ample to the demands of the plays. While one cannot but admire and endorse Salter's knowledge and enthusiasm, one can object that in certain details he may have gone astray. I shall confine most of my discussion to his third lecture, in which he discusses the production of the plays and the Rogers account.

The Rogers accounts are contained in MSS Harley 1944 and 1948, both of which are described as a collection of papers relating to Chester. These two are the earliest; there are evidently other copies. See Salter, "Banns," p. 433n1. The texts which follow are taken from Greg, Trial, pp. 146-7 and 165-6.
titled thus:

A breuariye or some Collections of the most anchant & famous Cittie of Chester, Collected by the Reuerend: m'r Robert Rogers, Batchlor in Diuinitye Archdeacon of Chester, and Prebunde in the Cathedrall Church of Chester, & parson of Gawsworth written by his sonne David Rogers, and reduced into these Chapters followeinge,...

The title of MS 1944 omits the reference to Archdeacon Rogers; on the following folio is an address to the reader subscribed "per David Rogers: 1609 Iuly." Of these documents, Salter has said:

Associated with the great name of Robert Rogers, the Breviarye has been granted the authority of an eye-witness account, although there is hardly an accurate statement about the Plays in it, and although the author was by no means in sympathy with his subject.29

I assume that Salter means by the last phrase that David Rogers was not sympathetic to his subject.

Since Robert died in 1595 or earlier, since MS 1944 contains the Late Banna, possibly revised by David for a projected revival in 1600, and since the MS contains references to the St. George's Day Races up to and including the year 1623, Salter assumes that the Breviarye should not be ascribed to Robert at all.30 Instead, he thinks that it is the work of David and,

29 MDC, p. 54.

30 MDC, pp. 54 and 123n1; "Banna," pp. 432-3 and 433n1.
therefore, that it was written one to two generations after the last performance of the plays. Finally, he questions whether David ever saw the plays and implies that if he did, he was very young and could only have hazy memories of their performance. Next, Salter looks at the description and circumstances of production and attempts to demonstrate that the description is inaccurate. He questions the reliability of David Rogers' account in the following passage, occurring just after the Banns in MS Harley 1944:

And thus much of the Banes or Breife of the whitson playes in Chester for if I shoulde heare resite the whole storye of the Whitson playes it would be too tediouse for to resite in this breauarye as alsoe they being nothinge proffitable to any vse, excepte it be to shewe the Ignorance of oureforefothers, and to make vs theire ofspringe vnexcusable before God that haue the true and synceare worde of the gospell, of our lord and sauiore Iesus Christe, if we apprehende not the same in oure life & practise to the eternall glorie of our god and the saluation & comforte of oure owne soles

Indeed, whoever wrote that statement was a hostile witness. But was it David? or was it the Archdeacon? or someone else? And why if this writer was so antagonistic toward the plays did he bother copying down ten folio pages about them?

31 MDC, pp. 56-7; see also Greg, Trial, p. 160.

32 Hardin Craig, ERD, p. 123, says Archdeacon Rogers would have seen the plays unless his "manifest prejudice against them caused him to abstain."
Let us begin with the Breviarye itself. It seems quite appropriate to assume that David Rogers did the compiling and that he wrote the two MSS. Greg adds that the Breviaryes are in the same hand, David's, but that the additions to MS 1944 are in a variety of hands, including David's. Greg does not believe these extra notations are a continuation of the Breviarye; therefore, the references to St. George's Day Races in 1623 produce no evidence for or against Robert's having written the Breviarye. In fact, Professor Salter implies by his argument that the date of the manuscript determines the date of the contents; he assumes, on the grounds that events are included after Robert's death, that the Archdeacon could not have written those parts describing events before his death. This is surely not the case. The operative words in the titles of the Breviarye are "Collections" and "reduced." Robert Rogers could have collected, that is, brought together and/or written down, some material from other records relating to Chester. His son David reduced them; that is, he put them down in writing and/or condensed them. As we

33Trial, p. 164.

34The MS that Lysons used for his Magna Britannia says the collections "being but in scattered notes [were] by his son reduced into these chapters following." See Salter, "Banns," p. 433. I have been unable to examine the Lysons edition. Salter says that he did not look at the original MS, which was then in private hands.
shall see, the MS Harl 1948 description of the pageant performance is more "reduced" than that of MS Harl 1944. If David was acting as editor, then the attack may be Robert's; David may have only decided what to include and what not to include.

Salter has suggested elsewhere that David may have added several lines at the end of the Late Banns when he revised them for a possible performance of the cycle in 1600. He does not insist that David wrote the lines, but points out that the theory has in its favor, "David's two signatures \( I.e., \) the initials at the end of the lines themselves and the subscription at the beginning of the MS, the obvious lateness and ignorance and bigotism of the verses themselves, and David's evident desire to improve upon the materials he copied." Evidently Salter does not find it peculiar that the person who objected with such violence to these plays should be revising a prologue for their performance. I cannot see a man damning and revising at the same time, so I think either David did not write the objection cited above or he did not write these revisions. The content of the revision in fact has none of the virulence

35 See his discussion on pp. 433-4 of his article on the Banns. He does not press the point of the 1600 production.

36 "Banns," XV, 433n3.
of the attack; the poet, whoever he was, merely states
that, when the plays were formerly produced by "Craftes
men & meane men," the production was a little crude
because it showed the face of God instead of having His
voice come out of a cloud. This Banns reviser
obviously thinks these old plays were quaint; but he
objects to the method of performance, not the content.
Furthermore, his objections are more in line with those
earlier in the Banns which form an apology for the
ignorance of the former age. The Prologue says that

Cited by A. C. Cawley, The Wakefield Pageants in the
Towneley Cycle (Manchester, 1958), p. 125. As Cawley
points out, there would be little left of the cycle if
all these deletions were carried out.

See lines 94-124 in Greg, Trial, pp. 150-1; lines
the monk who write these plays lived in a time lacking the finer "witt" and language of the audience and that they should not condemn him for his crudity. In effect, the poet seems to be offering an apology for the plays as a way of giving qualified approval to their performance in 1575 when the future of the plays was in doubt. It has been demonstrated that the cycles were defeated by the Reformation, and the person who attacked those at Chester sounds very much like one of the reformers who was opposed to the "popish" content of the plays; the poet who wrote these banns, however, seems not to object to the content very much. In addition, someone has introduced a prose commentary which explains what the verses mean. This device, I think, is an aid to the reader and not a part of the spoken Banns. The plays came under attack in their last years; but the council tried to keep them going. In 1571, Ormerod notes, the plays were prohibited:

This year Whitsun-plays were played, and an inhibition was sent from the archbishop to stay them, but it cam too late.

See Ormerod's collection of 16th and 17th century texts relating to Chester in his book, History of the County Palatine and City of Chester, I (London, 1819), 198. See also Morris, p. 318. Morris also prints the letters and resolutions relating to the arrest of Sir John Savage, who as mayor in 1575, was responsible, along with the town council, for the performance of the plays that year. See pp. 319-22. He was summoned before the Privy Council at London to answer the charges. See also Salter, "Banns," XV, 448.

MS R of the Chester plays (and D, a 19th century copy of R) does not contain these interlinear remarks.
commentary is obviously written by someone sympathetic to his task for he makes even clearer than does the Banns poet that the reader should not be too harsh on the monk who wrote the plays:

heare /the speaker7 confesseth, that the liued in the time of Ignorance wantinge knowledge to use the holy thinges of God arighte, yet this monke had a good entente to doe good, thoe blyndlye he did shew it.41

I think that this commentary was written either by the collector or the editor of the Breviarye. If the last few lines of the Banns refer to the 1575 performance or one before it, then the Archdeacon could have written the commentary. If indeed David revised the Banns for a performance in 1600, then he may have inserted the commentary. Whoever wrote the commentary did not compose the attack on the plays.

Let us sum up the case for David. First, if David was the hostile witness, then he had no reason to copy the section of the Breviarye dealing with the plays unless he did so out of faithfulness to his father's efforts and desires in originally collecting the papers. If he wrote the commentary on the Late Banns and if he added the last few lines to the Banna, then I think we can say he was not the attacker. He certainly would not have associated himself with any revival of the plays

41 Greg, Trial, p. 150.
if he felt so strongly against them. Lastly, David is responsible not just for MS 1944 but also for MS 1948. Greg believes that this MS is a later copy because David's handwriting in MS 1948 corresponds more closely to that of the later additions to the 1609 MS copy of the Breviarye. If this is the case, we should be much surprised to find that our hostile witness is suddenly friendly. He has severely reduced the amount of space allotted to the plays; but there is no outburst against them.

Of course the case for David can be easily reversed if we assume that Archdeacon Rogers wrote the Banns commentary when he was collecting his papers and thereby showed his sympathy for the plays. Though he may not have written the additional lines at the end of the Banns, he could have found them in a now lost copy of the Banns. We have no solid proof for a 1600 production and, therefore, the lines may not have been composed after the last performance in 1575. Furthermore, the condensation of the MS Harley 1948 may indicate that David did object to the plays and that he severely abridged the description of them while still sticking to his original intention of editing his father's papers. If these are the facts, then Dave may have been hostile

Trial, pp. 164-5.
to the plays and the Archdeacon in sympathy with them. Yet it is reasonable to suppose that David would have had less cause to be upset thirty-five years after the last performance of the plays than his father, who was directly involved with them.  

The Archdeacon apparently had no objections to drama itself, since in 1583, he conveyed money from the Chester Cathedral's Treasurer to the Earl of Essex's players, and later to another company, the Queen's players. Furthermore, in 1567 and 1573, the Cathedral bestowed upon the players "a barell of bere...to make them to drinke." On the other hand there seems to have been an increasing dislike for the unruliness of actors, plays and other amusements, for in 1596, the Chester Assembly ordered

43 Archbishop Rogers may have made the collection at any time up to the time of his death in 1595, but only after 1575 if he were responsible for collecting the Late Banns. According to Ormerod, II, 448, a memorial tablet existed at Eccleston Church for Elizabeth Rogers, wife of the Archdeacon, which says that he died 22 years before her own death on Dec. 11, 1617, that is, in 1595. Salter, MDC, p. 124nl, cites R. V. H. Burne to the effect that Robert died in 1587.

44 The items are cited in Salter, MDC, p. 25; Ormerod, I, 88, has Rogers becoming Archdeacon about 1581.

45 Salter, MDC, p. 121n25. If the plays were performed in 1573, then the Church seems not to have objected even though it was in 1571 that the attempt had been made by the Archbishop to prohibit the plays. See n. 39 above.
that "there shalbe neither play nor bearebeat within the City." The Assembly did reserve the right, and the Cathedral accounts show that the chapter did also, to listen to the Queen's Players, a more respectable company presumably. Reaction to the stage continued, however, until the Assembly in 1615 prohibited the licensing of players to perform any plays after six o'clock at night. Nevertheless, plays and other dramatic performances continued to be played from the time of the demise of the Whitsun Play throughout this period. Neither the Archdeacon nor his son, as far as we know, were offended by plays, though one of them evidently disliked the mystery cycle. If the attack was written by the Archdeacon, then it may have been a marginal comment made by him and incorporated into the text of the Breviarye by his son, or the Breviarye may have been in a greater state of completion than David would have us believe. There is the possibility, of course, that the attack comes from one of those "fewe writers" from whom the materials were evidently collected.

46 Salter, MD C, pp. 25-6.
47 Salter, MD C, pp. 26-7.
48 The theory that the attack comes from one of the writers from whom the Archdeacon got his materials is not without merit. At least one antiquarian of Chester
Since we do not know the state of the Archdeacon's materials when they came into David's hands and since we cannot therefore assess the latter's contribution to the collection, I do not think we can establish with any certainty who the person was who attacked the plays. It is clear, I think, that the writer of the 1575 Banns, the person who provided the commentary on them and the

is known to have been hostile to the plays. The Vale Royal of England, one of the documents published by Ormerod, was originally published in 1656 and contains three treatises. The two which interest us are a general description of Chester by William Smith, "Rouge Dragon Poursuivant," of the reign of Elizabeth, and the Itinerary of each of the Cheshire hundreds written by William Webb in 1621. Many of their details are the same, but compare the following accounts of the same event of 1571:

This year Whitsun-plays were played, and an inhibition was sent from the archbishop to stay them, but it came too late. (Webb)

This year the maior would needs have the playes (commonly called Chester playes) to go forward against the wills of the bishops of Canterbury, York, and Chester. (Smith)

See Ormerod, I, 198.

Of the 1575 performance, Smith writes:

This year Sir John Savage caused the Popish plays of Chester to be played the Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday after Midsummer day, in contempt of an inhibition and the primate's letters from York, and from the earl of Huntingdon.

See Ormerod, I, 198-99.

The rest of the entry sounds very much like an eyewitness account; it is accurate, because it says that Sir John and Mr. Hankey, who was mayor in 1571, were solely responsible for causing the plays to go and were so charged. A letter from Sir John, published in Morris, pp. 319-22, confirms that this was the charge; the Town Council, when requested, asserted that the plays were brought out with their full support and compliance.
poet who wrote the lines at the end of the Banns were not hostile to the plays. David could very possibly have been responsible for the latter two additions, and, therefore, may not have been the hostile witness. Moreover, we should ask ourselves exactly what effect hostility to the plays might have had on the description of their performance. Quite obviously it could have encouraged a certain lackadaisical attitude to any thorough description of the plays. It seems to me that Archdeacon Rogers could have jotted down a general outline of their production, and that his son copied it and made further deletions and additions in the copies he made. Or David, either from hostility or from a conviction that the production of the cycle was naive and awkward, may have garbled the account which he derived from oral or written sources. On the other hand, the Archdeacon's account may have made little sense to David; David may have copied what seemed comprehensible to himself and thus began the series of misunderstandings which persist to the present day. My point quite simply is that no antiquarian would intentionally perpetrate a fraudulent account of the plays, that the attack on the plays' content has little or no relevance to the description of the plays' performance, and that there is no proof that David wrote the attack and/or the account.
Although the two accounts are substantially the same, they do contain some differences; presumably it is the latter fact that has caused critics to assume that David and not his father wrote the account. Such an interpretation assumes that David was not copying from his father's notes, but was rewriting or adding to his own descriptions. But it is equally feasible that David was working from a longer version in his father's collection and that he excerpted from or paraphrased them. At any rate we have no grounds to assume that they are as inaccurate as Salter would have us believe. There is no doubt that they are unclear.

The accounts tell us that the plays were written by Randall Higden, a monk at St. Werburgh's Abbey, in the mayoralty of Sir John Arneway. This much of the account is probably wrong, the result of civic pride; since it was a tradition, neither of the Rogerses is responsible for it. The plays were divided into Twenty-four parts, each company having a responsibility for a part. Salter calls attention to the discrepancy between David's Twenty-four parts and the list of Twenty-five plays; yet it should be noted that in all

Salter presents a lucid and very probable description of how the two names of Arneway and Higden came to be associated with the plays. He dates the original cycle circa 1385. See MDC, pp. 36-42.
MSS, the plays are numbered I-XXIV with two pageants being numbered Sixteen in MSS DWRB. Furthermore, the original compiler of the Banns, or perhaps David, has written numbers, again 1-24, in the margin of the Late Banns to correspond to the plays; he has not numbered the plays consecutively in the daily breakdown of the plays performed on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Whitson week and, therefore, he may have overlooked the fact that the division into seven, nine and nine plays adds up to twenty-five. The error is one easily made. Likewise the discrepancy between four and six-wheeled wagons mentioned in MSS 1948 and 1944 is cited as an example of David's ignorance when it well may be only a scribal error; the important point is that the "cariages," "pageantes" or "scafolde" were on wheels. Salter also classifies the statement that "every Company brought forthe their pagiente which was the cariage or place which they played in" as inaccurate on the grounds

Salter's objections are mostly made in MDC, pp. 54-8, and will not be noted separately in the discussion which follows.

The D MS ends the first Passion play with the insertion of the scene of Peter's Denial at H384 and with the statement, "finis paginae decime sextae. This storye is finished in the leaves following." (fo. 98r). The next play (fo. 98v) is headed: "The Irenmongers play. Incipit pagina de crucifixione christi et de his qui fuerunt in eundo versus locum caluere et Incipit Calphas." It does not number the play; all other pageants in the MS are numbered, and the next play, the Harrowing, is counted as play seventeen.
that in 1531, the Vintners, Dyers and Goldsmiths and Masons agreed to share a carriage. But the statement may simply imply that each company, when ready to perform its plays, had a carriage to perform on. The account does not say that each company owned a carriage, only that each played in one. These few examples suggest that Salter is hostile to the Rogers account; his attack on these minor points and his unintentional misreading of the document, it seems to me, make his case sound more substantial than it is.

To be sure, not all of Salter's remarks are directed toward minor discrepancies in the account. For example, MS 1944 tells us of the riding of the Banns, but MS 1948 does not. The latter MS seems to follow the former rather closely at this point except for that deletion. The Harley 1944 MS precedes the note on the Banns and the places where the plays were performed by this sentence:

...the manner of wch playes was thus: They were devided into 24 pagiantes or partes, acordinge to the nuber of y^e Companyes of y^e Cittie, and euery Company brought forthe their pagiente wch was y^e cariage or place wch they played in...[Banns and playing areas, lines 15-287]...these pagiantes or cariage was a highe place made like ahouse wth ij rowmes beinge open on y^e tope the lower rowme they apparrrelled & dressed them selues, and in the higher roume they played...51

MS 1948 follows the same pattern except that it moves:

51 Greg, Trial, p. 146; the quote from MS 1948 is on p. 166.
quickly from the first to the second part of the
statement:

The manner of these playes weare, euery
Company had his pagiant or pte wch pagiantes,
weare a high scalofole wth 2. rowmes ahiger &
lower, vpon 4 wheeles In the lower they
apparelled them selues, And In the higher
rowme they played beinge all open on the tope
that all behoulders mighte heare & see them...

The order of and description in this account is too
similar to the first to be accidental; the one relies
on the other or some other original. We cannot con­
clude, therefore, that these are two different accounts
made up by David Rogers. If he is responsible for the
account in MS 1944, then I think he probably condensed
and paraphrased it for inclusion in MS 1948. It does
seem odd, however, that he would have added details in
MS 1948, such as the statements that the upper room was
open on top "that all beholders mighte heare & see"
and the last sentence. It is conceivable that David
was copying and condensing from a much longer account
contained in his father's papers. If this were the case,
then some of the fuzziness in the account could be
attributed to David's lack of understanding about a
performance that he may never have seen, and his conse­
quent editing out of details which seemed confusing to
him. Salter argues that the account is David's and
therefore untrustworthy; but it may be ultimately attrib­
utable to the Archdeacon and thus more worthy of our
attention.

The most significant charge levelled against the account is that the pageants are described as being "open on the tope," that is, as being "roofless." Salter says that the pageant wagons had to have a roof over them so that there would be some means of supporting the windlasses necessary for ascents, and also so that there would be a place in which to disappear. Wickham follows Salter's interpretation and remarks "we know that Rogers was mistaken in saying that the pageant carts were 'all open on the tope'"; he argues that a roof was necessary to hide the machinery used in the pageant. This tradition of the roofless pageant house is at least as old as Morris; it is based, I think, on a misreading of the account. MS 1944 says that the pageant was made like "ahowse" and had two rooms. Houses have roofs and rooms ceilings; the matter is clinched, however, by the additional phrase in MS 1948, "open on the tope that all beholders mighte heare & see...." The statement means that the upper roon was:

52 MDC, p. 68.

53 I, 173. But see also his discussion of street pageant theatres and machinery in I, 93ff.

54 See the illustration in Morris, p. 311. Surely the reconstruction is impossible.
opened, as opposed to the bottom room which was closed, so that the audience could see into the playing area. The upper room was roofed and open on from one to four sides. If the pageants stood in the middle of the street surrounded by the audience, then quite clearly they would have to be open on all four sides. There is no reason that this should be true, however; and as Salter points out there is a need for some kind of sounding board in open-air performances. The most obvious thing to do is to place the stage in front of a natural sounding board, such as the Abbey Gates, the Pentice, or the walls outside the city on the Roodee. The Balaam pageant, if it was played in this kind of stage, appears to require at least three open sides so that the prophet can speak in three directions; but other pageants, such as Pilate's palace, may have been closed on three sides. A natural site, a roof, and walls or backing in some pageants would provide structures enough to act as sounding boards; they would act much as the modern shell amphitheatre does.

55 MDC, pp. 68-9. He suggests that the roof provided a sounding board.

56 See the stage directions at lines H216, 240 and 264 and D280, 304 and 320. The lack of use of the fourth side may reflect the fact that the wagon was backed up against something.
The significant detail which must give us pause is the lower room where the actors apparelled themselves. Most critics have taken this statement literally, as Morris did, or passed over it without much comment, or assumed that it was wrong. Only Craig, as far as I know, squarely faced the problem; he says:

But the actors in these plays did not dress themselves at the theatre or change their clothes. They came already clothed and played through several performances in one part and, as far as we know, did not change costumes at all. What misled Rogers was that by his time theatres had tiring houses or tiring rooms, and actors made changes in costume and sometimes doubled in their parts.57

I certainly agree that there is little opportunity for doubling in the Chester plays since the play was evidently processional and doubling therefore would be confined to individual pageants. The guild records left us do not give much support to the idea of doubling either. In the Purification, for example, Simeon, Anna and the Angel could have played the three doctors in the second scene; the records for 1554 show, however, payments to the doctors, Joseph, the "letall God," Mary, Dame Anne, Simeon and the Angels.58 The Coopers accounts for

57 ERD, p. 124.

58 Salter, MDC, pp. 76-7; the Coopers accounts, cited below, will be found on pp. 73-5.
1572 and 1574 are not so neat. In 1572, the Coopers paid rather substantial wages to "hugh gyllam," "Thomas marler," "John stynson" and "rychard kalle," some of whom are clearly actors. Presumably these were the four actors who played Cayphaa, Annas, Pilate and Christ (or Herod?). There is no payment for the tormenters. In 1574, there is a record of payment to Pilate, Annas and the Tormentors, but to no others. The four Jews and Cayphaa and Annas and Pilate or Herod are all onstage together at one time or another; so it would seem that doubling was impossible. Of course, payment may have been made to the other performers and no record made of it, or, more probably, the record may be there in some disguised form. Some parts may have been filled by volunteers for no payment. At any rate, there would seem to be no doubling and, therefore, little need for a tiring house under the stage.

It is tempting to accept Craig's suggestion that Rogers confused the pageant wagon of the mystery cycles with the theatres of his own day. Or perhaps we should adopt Wickham's suggestion, that Rogers was confused and described this upper and lower room arrangement when the

59 There is the possibility that the Passion play (XVI) was amalgamated before 1575 and that the Coopers paid some characters one year and the Ironmongers the others, and vice versa.
tiring house was actually behind the stage area. We have seen, however, that the Rogers account may be right in other respects where critics have formerly believed it to be wrong; perhaps it is also right, or nearly so, in this case. In 1656, Sir William Dugdale mentioned the Coventry play and pageants in his Antiquities of Warwickshire. He makes a few inaccurate statements, that the Gray Friars acted the plays and that the MS called the Ludus Coventriae was the text of the play; but Craig has shown how these errors came about. The Dugdale description, an independent account, does appear to support the Rogers account in several particulars. The relevant passage is the following:

...which Pageants being acted with mighty state and reverence by the Friars of the House, had Theaters for the severall Scenes, very large and high, placed upon wheels, and drawn to all the eminent parts of the City...

It would appear that there was a high room; in fact, Wickham prints a picture of a wagon like the one Rogers describes from a painting of a triumph for the Archduchessa:

60 EFS, I, 173.

61 2nd. edn. (London, 1730), p. 183. The passage cited below is on this page also.

62 ERD, pp. 240-3.
Isabella in Brussels in 1615. One wonders why this wagon is so high; surely in a triumph there is little need for costume changes. It is apparent that this high room on wheels was feasible and in use; for the moment, we shall just have to concede that there is no apparent reason for the apparelling room under it. There is a record, however, of a play in Coventry in 1584, the Destruction of Jerusalem, which was performed on pageant wagons. It was a cooperative effort of the craft guilds; each guild apparently contributed toward the common costs or paid for their own part. In the Coventry Smiths' accounts, we have payments to the following actors:

it. pd to Reignolde Headley for playenge of Symon and Phynea v s., it. pd to Gabryel Foster for playenge of Justus Ananus Eliazer and the chorus vj a viij d... it. pd to Jhon Hoppers for playenge of Jesus and Zacharyas iiij s, it. pd to Henry Chamberleyne for playenge of Pristus, a pece of Ananus, and Zilla iiiij s iiij d...

There is also a payment to a prop man "for carryenge of our apparaill from pagent to pagente vjd." Obviously the actors doubled their roles and changed clothes several times. I have noted above that the Smiths at Chester apparently paid all their characters separately;

63 EES, I, plate XXI, fig. #28; the passage cited below is on p. 396.

64 Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays, 2nd ed., EETS ES 87 (London, 1957), 90-2, 102, 103 and 109—hereafter, TCCCP; the account cited below is on p. 91.
therefore, the Coventry records for 1584 do not apparently
describe the same kind of performance. The Coventry
records do lend weight to the Rogers account by showing
that doubling and costume changing was a part of the
production technique for plays like the cycles; however,
except for the Rogers account, there is no evidence at
Chester to support such a version of the production of
the plays.

Finally, the Rogers account tells us that the plays
were performed in pageants on wagons and that these
stages were moved from place to place within the city.
There are some interesting variations in the accounts
on where these pageants were performed. MS 1944 has two
versions:

And they first beganne at ye Abbay gates &
when the firste pagiente was played at ye
Abbaye gates then it was wheeled from thence
to the pentice at ye highe crosse before ye
mayor, and before yt was donne the seconde came,
and ye firste wente into the watergate streete
& from thence vnto ye Bridgestreete, and soe
all one after an other tell all ye pagiantes
weare played appoynted for ye firste daye, and
so likewise for the seconde & the thirde daye...

A few lines later, the commentator repeats these
directions:

And when they had done wth one cariage in one
place they wheeled the same from one streete
to an other, first from ye Abbaye gate to ye
pentise then to the watergate streete, then
to ye bridge streete throughe the lanes & so
to the estgate streete. And thus
they came from one streete to an other
keapeinge a direct order in every streete,
for before ye first cariage was gone ye seconde came, and so the thirde, and so orderly tell ye laste was done all in order without any stayeinge in any place, for worde beinge broughte how euery place was neere done they came and made no place to tarye tell ye last was played.

The description in MS 1948 is clearly dependent on the above; it does, however, combine those two versions and adds an important new point at the end:

They begane first at the Abay gates, and when the firste pagiante was played; it was wheeled to the highe Crosse before the mayor, and so to euery streete, and soe euery streete had a pagiant playinge before them at one time tell all the pagiantes for the daye appoynted weare played, and when one pagiant was neere ended worde was broughte from streete to streete that soe the mighte come in place thereof, excedinge orderlye and all the streetes haue their pagiantes afore them all at one time playenge together to se wch playes was greate resorte, and also scaffoldes and stayes made in the streetes in those places where they determined to playe their pagiantes.

There is no clear reason for the redundant description in MS 1944; but it is evident that MS 1948 has a condensed version of those two descriptions and thus the editing resembles that kind of deletion and amalgamation we noted.

65 Compare with the opening sentence of MS 1944; the rest of the passage is more closely related to the second description in MS 1944.

66 Morris, p. 304, reads "stages"; even if the MS reading is "stayes," it is clear that some structure is meant here. Note the awkward conjunction of "that soo"; it seems that a clause may have been unintentionally dropped here.
before. David Rogers is probably copying from another copy of the Breviarye or from a longer note in his father's collection. It is clear that the pageants were played at the Abbey Gates and at High Cross. Morris transcribes a case of dispute on 5 June 1568 concerning the right to a "mansion" in Bridge street for the Whitsun plays; therefore, the play was presented somewhere in that street.

67 They may also have been performed somewhere in Watergate street and possibly in Eastgate street. A natural assumption is that the play was performed at the Water gate, the Bridge gate and the East gate, where there might have been open spaces. 68 Near Bridge gate, there was a widening of the area at St. Mary's-super-montem; the Castle could be seen in the background. Outside West gate is an open area, bounded by the walls of the city on one side and the

67 Morris, p. 304n2. Salter, for some unknown reason, says that the plays were performed "at the gates of St. Werburgh's Abbey...at the High Cross, then at the Castle, and finally by the river on the extensive open space called the Roodee." See MDC, p. 12. His order of sites is not confirmed by any document that I know of. The Castle is not in Bridge street. For the possibility of the Roodee as a playing area, see the text below.

68 Northgate, Westgate, Bridge (running south), and Eastgate streets form a cross at High Cross. Northgate street expands into an open area, where the corn market was held, at about mid-point between High Cross and the north gate. The corn market was just outside the Abbey gates. See the very pleasant and orderly description of the city in Ormerod, I, 157-9.
curve of the River Dee on the other, called the Roodee. Here plays and triumphs were performed, foot and horse races run, and other civic festivities celebrated. The place in the Watergate street could, therefore, have been the Roodee. The minstrels' court began at East gate and we have at least one record of a dignitary being received there. I am still a little dubious about the plays having been performed at four or five stations. We have other records from Chester of a play being performed in two places on the same day; but only this account suggests so many locations. Furthermore, the larger the number of locations, the greater the complexity of timing the performances. For example, if the pageants were performed only at the Abbey Gates and the Pentice, then one could quickly follow the other; if, however,

69 In 1567, the history of Aeneas and Dido was performed on the Roodee "on which triumph there were made two forts, and shipping on the water, besides many horsemen well armed and appointed." See Ormerod, I, 198. Likewise, other triumphs were acted there in 1577 after a performance of the Shepherds play at High Cross. Other civic activities took place there also, such as the horse races (I, 202), the sheriffs' breakfast shoot (I, 298), and the homages to the Drapers performed by the Shoemakers, the Saddlers and newly married persons (I, 292, 296). The minstrels were received by the heirs of the Earl of Dutton at East gate (I, 162); in 1630, the Duchess of Tremoyle was entertained at East gate (I, 202). Prince Arthur saw the Assumption of Our Lady before the Abbey Gates in 1499 (I, 197). Salter says it was the Purification. See MDC, 49-50. King Robert of Sicily was performed in 1529 and King Ebrauk in 1588-9 at High Cross. See MDC, pp. 23-5.
they were played at four or five place, then the
difference in length would occasion long delays for a
guild which had a short play behind a guild which had
a long play. Apparently the Smiths in 1554 made a
number of such stops:

Item we gaue botord beere to the players 4d
for bred in northgate street 1jd
we drank in watergate street vjd at jo a leys xd
at Ric. Anderton founderer xijd at mr
dauison tauarne xiijd

There is one other possibility. The guilds may
have played only at Abbey Gates and High Cross. Mistress
Webster, the party who claimed a right to the "mansion,"

70 It does not seem that the Rogers account could refer
to a procession of all the guilds and wagons because by
1531, the Vintners, Dyers and Goldsmiths-Masons had
agreed to share a pageant wagon and, therefore, could
not have had a wagon in the procession at the same time
if they retained the positions in the procession that
they had in the cycle. While the two guilds who had
Herod plays (VIII and X) might be all right together,
the Dyers play of Antichrist would be out of place.
Furthermore, the positioning seems to have become rather
fixed, for the guilds retain nearly the same order in
the Midsummer procession as they do in the cycle. See
Morris, p. 330. A procession through the rest of the
city while the plays are going on at Abbey Gates and High
Cross does not seem likely because there would be only
one wagon at a time, the one which had just finished at
High Cross. I suppose it would be possible to have
a procession of those pageants which were to perform
on each day either before or after that day's perform­
ance. Processions often took place on important days
and were frequently followed by a mass and a breakfast
or large feast. In fact, the guilds formed a procession
on Corpus Christi day; on that day the clergy performed
a play, according to the Early Banns. See Trial, pp.
132 and 139; MDC, pp. 46-7.

71 Salter, MDC, p. 76.
could have had the structure in or at Bridge street where it ends at High Cross; the tavern mentioned in the expense account above could have been just off the square in front of the Pentice. This possibility does not conform to the intent of Rogers' description, so we must remain sceptical of it; but if David is extracting from a longer account, he may have garbled it sufficiently to give the impression that the plays were performed in places other than Abbey Gates and High Cross. Since the Chester plays were performed over a three day period, they could easily have been so played, even with delays at individual stations, as Rogers apparently states. We shall have to accept the Rogers statement on this point for the moment.

Except for some reservations about the number of stations and the need for a tiring house, I think that I have demonstrated that Rogers account may be a fairly accurate description of the performance of medieval drama at Chester. I also hope that I have demonstrated the possibility that the confusion arising from the Rogers account may be the result of editing or condensation by David rather than an intentional or unintentional misrepresentation of the facts. It should be apparent to anyone that the Rogers account is not an exhaustive treatment of the staging of the Chester plays. It must be admitted, for example, that it does not described the pageant wagon of the Drawers of Dee who had Noah's ship.
The stage directions for that play, however, call for a place similar to the one in the account:

\[\text{Et primo in aliquo suprema loco sive nubibus, si fieri poterit, loquatur Deus ad Noe extra Archam existentem cum tota familia sua.}\]

The Creation play clearly distinguishes between the place where God creates the world and the place where He creates Adam (2.80); the former, it seems likely, was a raised platform. The stage-directions in the Balaam play state that God is in a high place when Balaam first speaks to Him (H136, D184). Evidently, God is shown on his throne in The Sending of the Holy Ghost and in the Judgment. 73

In fact, all the plays in which God appears, such as the Fall of Lucifer and Abraham, or those in which there are ascents or descents, could use a high scaffold for God. Although one could ascend into the roof, as Salter and Wickham have suggested, one could also ascend into a heaven scaffold if one were present. There is a curious stage-direction in Christ's Ascension which suggests that

72 The D version is as follows: "the thirde pageante of Noyes fludd and firste in some high place or in the clowdes if it may bee god speakeythe vnto Noe standinge without the ark with all his familye." Note that the phrase, "si fieri poterit," applies in both accounts to the clouds, not to the high place. For a similar example, cf. 24.356, "descendet Iesus quasi in nube, si fieri poterit."

73 In the Sending of the Holy Ghost, MS D adds at H152: "Christe must speak in heauen." See also HD167 and 238.
there was a place to which Christ had to go in order to make his ascent: "Tunc abducet discipulos in Bethaniam, et cum pervenerit ad locum Ihesus, stans in loco vbi ascendit, dicat... (20.96). Christ leaves that place where He has met with his disciples and goes to another place to ascend. At this other place, He hangs in mid-air (104, 112) while the angels greet Him; then the angels, anywhere from one to four (cf. 152), descend to meet Him, ascend with Him, and descend to the earth again. It is quite possible that Rogers was describing this heaven scaffold. Other stages may have been high also: the hill or mountain, Pilate's palace, and the temple in the Temptation.

The guilds certainly would have built the kind of pageants necessary for their particular play; there is no need to assume that all pageants are alike. The hill that reappears is evidently higher than ground level, but obviously not a high place like the heaven scaffold. There are a few suggestions about it in the Shepherds' play:

Primus: Pastor
come, eate with us, God on heaven hy, and take no heed, though here be no housing!

Secundus Pastor
Hosuing enough have we here, while we have heaven ouer our heads. (7.147-50)

The phrase, "God on heaven hy" may just be an oath;
however, it could be the same kind of ironic pun as in the second line, "here be no housing." The latter definitely recalls Joseph's and Mary's difficulties in finding shelter; the Second Shepherd takes the statement literally, nevertheless, and tells us that they are sitting on a hill out of doors.\textsuperscript{74} I see no reason for the playwright to make this statement if it were not true. Surely the hill from which Balaam prophesies the star, the one on which the Magi see it and the one on which Christ is crucified are not closed in or roofed.

A most interesting piece of stage machinery were the images which were to fall before Christ, "\textit{si fieri poterit}," as He was borne into Egypt. Most of the pageants in the Nativity, Passion and Resurrection sequences require a room-like structure. For example, we need a stable in the Nativity sequence, various rooms, such as Simon the Leper's house (14.40 and MS D addition at 14.16), the room for the Last Supper (15.36, 44, 60), the Castle of Emaus

\textsuperscript{74} Further indications that the pageant may have been backed up to a wall or building in the city streets are the following references:

\begin{quote}
Hankin, sheperherd, shame thee I shall;
woth thou art worse then thou was.
ware lest thou wait here by the wall!
(7.266-8)

Boy, lest I break there thy bones,
kneele downe and aske me a boone.
Lest I destroy thee here on these stones.
(7.269-71)
\end{quote}
(19.112), a "Castrum in alio loco" where the disciples are met in the same play (19.168), a mansionem where the disciples meet Thomas (in the same play, 19.240), and various palaces for Annas and Cayphas, Herod and Pilate. Presumably these pageants would be square, open on one if not more sides, and elevated above street level but not as high as the heaven scaffold.

A pageant wagon would be very cumbersome to work on if, for example, Christ and his twelve disciples are on it and have to go from Bethany to Jerusalem. Professor Wickham has conjectured that a platform cart was drawn up in front of the pageant cart and used as the principal acting area. We should therefore recall the Rogers' description in MS 1948 where the final sentence says that the guildsmen "also scafolds and stayes made in the streetes in those places where they determined to playe their pagiantes." These scaffolds appear to be stationary structures, unlike those at Coventry, which apparently were driven from place to place. If the "stayes" are stages and the scaffolds some kind of playing area rather than places for spectators to sit, then the people of Chester were able to watch a play in which many of the

75EES, I, 173. The reader should consult the evidence produced in the chapters on Miracle Plays and Street Pageants, pp. 51-178.

76Craig, TCCCP, pp. 84, 91 et passim. The accounts mention both pageants and scaffolds, so they apparently were two different structures.
features remained the same, e.g., heaven, perhaps hell, the world (= hill?); but also one in which special effects or cumbersome props, such as the idols in the Massacre and the room for the Last Supper, were brought in. I suspect that this scaffold may have been lower than Professor Wickham conjectures and that it would have been made easy of access by the use of ramps from the ground. Even though the companies may have had such a platform, they did not restrict their acting to that area. For example, Abraham rides in and later offers Melchisedech a horse; Balaack the king rides onstage; Mary rides an ass to which is tied an ox; the Magi "circumambulant bis et tunc ad Equos"; Mary goes into Egypt on the ass; and Jesus rides into Jerusalem on an ass.\footnote{For Abraham, see lines 1, 88 and 96 in MS H; D says at H86-8 that "here Abraham offereth to Milchysedec an horse that is laden." The H stage-direction (88) for Balaack "ex altera parte montis dicet rex Balaack equitando" is probably inaccurate and should be something like D96, i.e., "veniet Rex Balaack equitando iuxta montem." See also H5.152. For Mary, see 6.440; for the Magi, 8.112, which MS D translates "Then goe downe to the beasts and ryde abowt." For Mary on the ass the second time, see 10.477 and for Christ's entry, 14.208. Balaam rides on the stage probably, but his ass is clearly a person. See H168 and D224.} I think it unlikely that the actors would be riding on the stage itself. As is evident, the area surrounding the stage can be used for entrances or as an unlocalized area through which characters journey.
Of course, some characters can make a journey by foot and need never leave the scaffold itself.

If some of these structures remain stationary, then the acting area itself helps to unify the cycle. For example, if Paradise and Calvary are recognizably the same hill, as they are in legend, then another layer of significance is added to the play. If Abel's, Noah's and Abraham's sacrifices are made on the same hill as that on which Christ sacrifices Himself, then the sacrifice-motif discussed earlier is made more concrete. If Balaam blesses Israel and prophesies the star from the same hill from which the Magi see the star later, then the narrative connections between these two plays are strengthened. Also, certain contrasts can be emphasized through staging. One of the major themes of the cycle, as we shall see in the next chapter, is that of divine versus worldly kingship. What better way to underline that notion than to have Octavian's palace on one side and a stable, the only dwelling place for poor people (7.465-72), on the other; or what better way to illustrate the transience and inefficacy of worldly power than to have Herod rage against Christ and proclaim himself highest of all while God looks on from his high scaffold? Many of these contrasts would become concrete only if parts of the stage remained stationary. The Vintners, for example, need the hill, and a palace
for Herod for the First Magi play; it would be unlikely that they would bring in a heaven scaffold merely to emphasize the irony just described. It is fruitless to go further; the few records we have are silent on such details.

In summary, I think that the text of the Chester plays, especially those segments dealing with the Nativity, Passion and Resurrection, shows a consistent and repeated use of certain motifs which suggest a similarity of staging and performance. In addition, the fairly long individual pageants frequently require at least two loci and many of these are used from play to play. These two features of the plays also suggest a larger playing area than that available on a pageant wagon, and they admit the possibility of a semi-stationary stage at each of the playing areas mentioned in the Rogers' account. This playing area was probably composed of a low platform, alongside which the pageant wagons were placed, and one or more stable scaffolds for such playing areas as the heaven scaffold or palaces. The company's pageant wagon probably was an elaborate prop essential to the play; it extended the stage area by giving the players interiors for the various rooms necessary in the play. Finally, I think that this kind of a stage is consistent with the Rogers account of the acting area in Chester. One of
Rogerses gave us the fullest account that we have of these plays; even though it is very short, in fact no more than a brief note, we should hesitate before discarding it.
EPILOGUE

The Chester cycle is the only extant cycle with a developed eschatological conclusion; the other cycles make an abrupt jump from the Assumption of the Virgin to Doomsday. The set of three Chester plays structurally parallel earlier parts of the cycle, repeat actions within the cycle and climax in a simple, profoundly moving Judgment, and they, therefore, give the cycle a more proportional balance than the other cycles have. Furthermore, the Prophets and Antichrist plays permit the audience to enter more fully into the meaning of the redemptive act because it is in the last plays that the didactic point of the cycle is most explicitly developed. It seems

1The Towneley plays lack 12 leaves between the Ascension and Doomsday plays; both the end of the Lord's Ascension and the beginning of the Judgment are defective. Martin Stevens believes that the missing plays may have been Mary plays. See his forthcoming article in Speculum, "The Missing Parts of the Towneley Cycle." There is evidence that Chester had an Assumption played by the "wurshipfull wyffys" of Chester. Salter believes it enter the cycle about 1488; it is mentioned in the early banns, but not in the late banns. See, "Banns," XV, 17, 140; Greg, Trial, pp. 137 and 171. Salter ("Banns," XVI, 6-7) cites Morris to the effect that the Assumption was also performed separately before various dignitaries in 1488, 1497 and 1515 and was in the cycle as late as 1540. The last three plays were already in the cycle before the Assumption was introduced; cf. "Banns," XVI, 17.

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to me that a Judgment alone might pass too swiftly over what the sacrifice of Christ means to Christians and what good people must do if they are to gain the bliss intended for them. The Chester plays are able to assert forcefully that men's deeds are inadequate to gain them heaven, that all men must be allowed the opportunity to believe in Christ before they are judged, and that no man is damned unless he chooses by his actions to be so judged. When Antichrist offers the four kings worldly wealth and "bliss" with him forever, he, in effect, is offering the audience the same. They are permitted a final chance to choose between Antichrist and Enoch and Hely. Christ's statement to the damned and saved souls is an address to the audience also; He tells the onlookers what the conditions of salvation are and that the Judgment will be a righteous and just one. Many of these statements are made implicitly in the cycle, but it is in the last plays that the exhortation to do good is made explicitly to the audience.

The Prophets play is a general prologue to the last days and a more specific introduction to the Antichrist play; the latter play recapitulates many of the scenes in Christ's life and also is the culminating point for many of the themes of the entire cycle. By repetition of events and themes, the Antichrist play provides a conclusion to the earthly life of man; it ends human history.
It is therefore a fitting predecessor to the Last Judgment, a play concerned with the beginning of eternal life. These two plays complement each other and are the final restatement of the theme of worldly goods versus heavenly bliss which is carried by the language and events throughout the rest of the cycle.

The Prophets play (XXII) is quite obviously patterned after the prophets sequence in play V of the H manuscript. At a time when there were fewer plays in the cycle, the parallel must have been more obvious to the audience; but it is still clear that the playwright intended a repetition of the pattern of prophecy and explication. Salter believes that the play may have been a part of the Antichrist play and later expanded into a complete play sometime before 1467; the necessity for a play of some length may help to account for the awkward concluding section on the fifteen signs of Doomsday.² It is clear

²Salter, "Banns," XVI, 5-6 and 17. Bro. Linus Lucken thinks that the fifteen signs may have been an interpolation or an afterthought because they do not mention Antichrist (p. 138). Furthermore, he could find no source in the Latin fathers for this combination of the Prophets and the fifteen signs (p. 105). The source of the signs he believed to be a sermon in Mirk's Festial, but Professor William Heist demonstrated that the fifteen signs are of the Voragine-type of the legend and possibly a direct translation from the Latin. See Lucken's Antichrist and the Prophets of Antichrist in the Chester Cycle (Washington, D. C., 1940), pp. 126ff. and Heist's The Fifteen Signs Before Doomsday (East Lansing, 1952), pp. 168-9.
that the section on the fifteen signs is disruptive and out of place. Professor Paul Strohm has suggested that the speech interrupts the chronology of the Last Things as well as the progression from the first two general statements about Doomsday to the last two specific prophecies of Antichrist.\(^3\) The more logical position for the fifteen signs would have been after the Antichrist play, or, at least, at the beginning of the prophets play, so that they would not interfere with the progression toward the Antichrist play. Barring this particular piece of inelegance, the Prophets play does prepare the audience for the events which follow.

Although the prophecies foreshadow specific events in the last two plays, they also give a broad general introduction to the Last Days. It is possible that the playwright, once he had chosen his prophet group, felt he had to give a fairly literal rendering of their prophecies; as a result, the prophecies are not always directed in toto to the final plays. On the other hand, the exposition indicates that he did try to narrow the scope of the prophecies. For example, the Expositor tells us that the two silver hills mentioned by Zacharias are Enoch and Hely (85-6) and that the "skewed horses" signify the Jews and Pagans who are to be converted by

\(^3\)Strohm, p. 150.
the two holy men (117-24). Both these references are clearly directed toward events in the Antichrist play. Bro. Lucken notes that the prophecy is a good translation of Zachariah 6:1-5, but that he has been unable to find any commentary which treats the passage as the Expositor does. In the Daniel prophecy, the playwright edits even more; he has Daniel mention the Four Beasts but has him concentrate on the Beast bearing the horn of Antichrist. These several examples are indications of authorial control; the playwright does not succeed, if he ever intended to, in making all the details of play XXII conform to the events of XXIII and XXIV.

The prophecy of Ezeckial (1-48) is confined to the subject of the raising of the dead at Doomsday. The important point is that they will rise in the flesh (15, 32) and that the light will be separated from the darkness for eternity:

They that shall be saued, shall be as bright as seven tymes the Sonne is light;
the Damned Thester shall be in sight,
ther Dome to vnderfoe.
(lines 41-4)

The lines reflect the actual conditions of the Judgment play when Jesus tells his angels to separate the good from the evil (24.493-500); moreover, they show that the cycle will come full circle with a separation of light and darkness like that which we saw in play I.

4Lucken, pp. 99-100 and 100n.
The other prophecies are less straightforward.
The prophecy of Zacharias foreshadows the appearance of
Enoch and Hely and the conversion of the Jews and Pagans;
it also includes much matter which does not appear on
stage. The four chariots, the Explicator says, represent
the four degrees of saints who will suffer: the martyrs,
confessors, converts, and virgins. Of these four, only
the converts, those represented by the "skewed horses,"
appear in the Antichrist play. The others, distinguished
by different colored robes, may have appeared in the
Judgment play, but we have no indication that they did.
Daniel's prophecy foreshadows the coming of Antichrist
before Doomsday. The Expositor tells us that Antichrist
will be a great lord whose reign will last only three
and one-half years. He also explains that three kings
will be destroyed by Antichrist and that seven will honor
him. Of course, we see only four kings who, at first,
honor him and then are slain. John the Evangelist's
prophecy is more pertinent to the Antichrist play: he
tells us that Enoch and Hely, clad in sackcloth (188;
cf. 23.390), will appear and end the 1260 day reign of
Antichrist. He warns that whoever opposes them will
die and that the holy men shall fight Antichrist, be
slain by him in Jerusalem and rise three and a half
days later. The Expositor says Enoch and Hely will turn
water into blood and perform many miracles—we see them
do neither. He further tells us that Antichrist will deceive God's people and that Enoch and Hely will reconvert them:

That when Antechrist comes in bye,  
godds people for to destroy,  
that he deceyveth falcely,  
they shall convert agayn.  
(lines 225-8)

In fact, we do not see Antichrist confuse God's people; we do see him persuade the four kings that he is the Messiah and it is after he is unmasked that they convert to the true faith.

Most of the prophecies, the exception is Zacharias', refer to the Antichrist legend rather than to the Chester Antichrist play. The playwright's emphasis seems to have been on enlightening the audience about what is to come, both with some specific references to the events of the succeeding play, and with general references to the end of the world. The double orientation prepares the audience for the Coming of Antichrist, but also instructs them in the signs (which they may see) that will precede the Last Days. The didactic scope, in effect, is larger than the dramatic or structural scope of the play. Nevertheless, when Antichrist appears onstage, the audience would know immediately that this was the

\[ ^5 \text{See W. Bossuet, The Antichrist Legend, London, 1896. The most important chapters for this study are IX, XI-XII and XIV.} \]
servant of the arch-fiend who would make one more attempt
to deny men the heavenly bliss offered them.

The Antichrist, like all good medieval villains, does not leave the audience in doubt about his true self: he pompously declares himself the Savior, Messiah and Christ (9-16), says that he is the one prophesied by Moses, David and Isaiah (17-20), and insists that there was another person, a magician, who formerly had proclaimed himself as Christ. This man, Antichrist says, was a liar and was justly killed:

But one hath ligged me here in land,
Iesu he height, I understand;
to further falsehood he can fonde,
and fared with fantasy.

His wickednes he would not wonde
till he was taken and putt in Band,
and slayn through vertue of my sand;
this is sooth, sickerly.
(lines 25-32)

Antichrist, like Christ, is a Jew, but unlike Christ, he comes to restore to the Jews their earthly power and their law. The Jews and Pagans, however, appear as reluctant to believe in Antichrist as they did in Christ and, therefore, they demand that he show them signs and miracles to prove his divinity (67-72). The first marvel the Antichrist performs is to turn a tree upside down and to

I have continued to cite the Deimling edition, but have frequently consulted Greg's parallel editions of the Peniarth and Devonshire MSS of this play. See The Play of Antichrist from the Chester Cycle, Oxford, 1935.
make it bear fruit from its roots. The marvel is quite patently the conjuror's trick; it has no purpose except to amaze and draw the attention of the crowd. Symbolically, it demonstrates that Antichrist's acts will be perversions of Christ's—mere illusions. The next two miracles, the raising of the dead (89-112) and his own death and resurrection (121-33, 165-8) finally convince the kings that he is the awaited Messiah and the kings thereafter make sacrifice to him in the temple. Finally, to confirm his new converts in their faith, he sends his "holye ghoste" out to enter into his followers. The Antichrist, however, is as knowledgeable about men as anyone else; hence, he seals his bargain by giving the kings lands and great wealth.

Though some of the Antichrist's acts are outwardly parallel to those of Christ, they really are inversions of His works. The Antichrist's posturings mimic the form but are not of the essence of Christ's wonders or of His nature. Enoch and Hely, God's servants and his disputants with the adversary, demonstrate for us the illusory quality

7 All these events are traditional parts of the Anti-Christ legend; cf. Lucken, pp. 13-14, and Bossuet, pp. 160-62, 168-70 and 175-81.

8 The sending of the Holy Ghost may be our playwright's addition, included in imitation of the Chester play XXI, The Sending of the Holy Ghost. It does not appear in other writings according to Lucken (pp. 54-6).
of all the Antichrist's miracles. First the two men of God defy the Antichrist:

Fye on thee, feature! fye on thee:
the Devills owne nurry!
through him thou preachest and hast posty
a whyle, through sufferance.
   (lines 353-6)

thou false feind, commen from hell!
with the we purpose for to mell
my fellow and I in feere.
   (lines 395-7)

Afterwards, they accuse him outrightly of fraud:

They were no Miracles, but marvayls thinges
that thou shewed to these kinges;
into falsehood thou them bringes
through the feindes craft.
   (lines 410-13)

Enoch and Hely are able to show the kings that the marvels are indeed illusions when they trick the Antichrist into giving proof of the miraculous nature of his raising of the dead by asking him to make the dead eat and drink. As the dead come forth, Enoch and Hely bless the bread, obviously sacramental wafers (579-80), and thus frighten

9St. Thomas Aquinas says that the devil may resort to marvels in order to lead men into sin, but that these marvels are illusory. A miracle, he argues, is something that occurs outside the created order of things to which every creature is subordinate; it involves a substantial change which only the Creator can perform. The devil can perform a miracle, in a less restricted sense, since he can cause changes which to the lower intellective faculties of men seem miraculous. See the Summa Theologica, Pt I Q114 A5. The terror of such a world view is that a man cannot distinguish a miracle from demonic legerdemain.
the devils who animate the dead bodies. The demonstration convinces the four kings that Antichrist is a fraud and they piously prepare themselves for martyrdom.

Enoch and Hely show the kings and the audience that the Antichrist only mimics the form of Christ's acts; moreover, before and during their debate with him, we see that Antichrist is incapable of understanding the essence of Christ's acts, and His nature. The Antichrist at the beginning of the play is pompous and arrogant; he announces himself in Latin, a device the playwright used in the Harrowing and Judgment where the Devil cites scripture before Christ and God. The Antichrist obviously uses it in imitation of God as a means of impressing the "lewed." This Messiah's omnipotence is, however, oriented toward the mundane: he would be worshipped in the Temple as a God (37-8); he would have all women love him (43-4); and he promises to give gifts and lands to his followers (49-53). Furthermore, he usurps God's position and boasts of his powers; he asserts that he created the sun and the moon, made day and night, and will bring his people to bliss. The bliss is quite obviously a worldly one, for he then proceeds to give out treasure. The

10 The confounding of the demons with the sacramental wafer is not found elsewhere; cf. Lucken, p. 63, and Utesch, p. 84. The playwright probably intended it to be a parallel of the scene in which Christ eats bread and drinks wine in order to prove to his disciples that he had risen in flesh and spirit; cf. 19.191-200 and 2.37-56.
language throughout this passage, like that of Herod's, is a mixture of words laden with possible spiritual meanings but oriented to this world:

For all that will leave me upon, worldly wealth shall them fall on, and to my bliss they shall come, and dwell with me for aye.

And the gifts that I beheld, you shall have, as is good right; hence or I go out of your sight, each one shall have his Dole.

(lines 223-40)

Then he proceeds to divide up the Western world. It is apparent that Antichrist knows the language of salvation (really of damnation), but he mistakes the means and the method. He is much like Satan at the Temptation who cannot comprehend the divinity of Christ and who thus treats Him as if He were only a man. Sinlessness is unknown to Satan; heaven is incomprehensible to Antichrist.

Immediately following Antichrist's claim to have created the world, Enoch enters and prays to the One True God for aid:

Almighty god in majesty, that made the heaven and earth to be, fire, water, stone and tree, and man through thy might;

The points of thy privy any earthly man to see is impossible, as thinkes me, for any worldly wighte.

(lines 253-60)

Undoubtedly this is a disclaimer of any thorough treatment
of God's essence in the theological discussion which follows, but it is also an assertion of God's ineffability. Antichrist believes he knows what God is and thinks he can imitate Him; his presumption lands him in one of Enoch's traps.

The entire encounter between Antichrist and Enoch and Hely becomes increasingly comic as we watch him collapse from pomposity into ineffectuality and confusion. When he is first challenged, Antichrist reacts with threats (357-64); next he accuses Enoch and Hely of being wizards (P371), false flatterers (375), heretics (379) and thieves (387-93). When he finds that the prophets still resist him, he tells them of all the miracles he has performed and warns them again to worship him (402-8). At the end of this speech he adds a feeble: "and lett vs no more stryve." Antichrist's argument here is to be contrasted with Christ's actions: the latter refused to perform miracles to prove his divinity.

The prophets again refuse to honor him and Antichrist, now completely confused about his next step, calls forth his Doctor to advise him. The interchange between them

11 Only the Peniarth MS has "wysarde" which Greg thinks is original. Cf. p. 18n371 of his edition. Antichrist calls the holy men thieves because of their dress. See lines 387-90. One wonders whether he is only asserting that they are furtive looking because of their dress or whether there might be some anti-clerical jibe intended.
provides an excellent indication of Antichrist's ineffectuality:

**Poet:** O! lord, maister, what shall I say then?
**Anti:** I beshrew both thy knenne:
    art thou now for to kenne?
In fayth, I shall thee greeve.
Of my godhead I made thee wyse,
and sett thee ever at mickle price;
now I would feele thy good advyse,
and heare what thou would saye.
(lines 423-9)

The Doctor is obviously non-plussed, but he finally encourages Antichrist to curse the prophets. This omniscient god then says:

The same I purposed—leeve thou me!—
all thinge I knew through my posty;
but yet thy witt I thought to see,
what was thyn intent.
(lines 442-45)

He curses Enoch and Hely, to no avail, and then visibly loses what little control he has left. He says he will save them, that he made day and night, all the growing things on earth, and the stars (459-64). When Hely denies this, Antichrist rattles on as if by mere assertion he could become the Creator (469-76). The prophets call him a liar, a fiend, a witch and a sorcerer (477-84), to which the Antichrist cries:

Out on you, Harlotts! whence came ye?
wher haue you any other god but me?
(lines 485-6)

It is at this point that Antichrist falls into his first trap and reveals that he only apes God. To Enoch's reply that he believes in "Christ, God in Trinity," a
concept which Antichrist does not understand (490-1), the fiend's agent demands:

**Anti:** Rybbauldes ruled out of raye, what is the Trinitie for to say?

**Hel:** Three Persons, as thou leeeve may, in one godhead in feere; father and Sonne, that is no nay, and the holy ghost, stirring aye, that is on god veray, bene all three named here.

(lines 493-500)

Antichrist is outraged by such nonsense and declares the prophets madmen:

Out on you, Theeves! what say yee? will you haue one god and three? how dare you so say? Madmen, madmen! therfore leeeve on me, that am one god, so is not he; then may you lyve in joy and lee, all this land I dare lay.

(lines 501-8)

Enoch continues his offensive and tells Antichrist that God has no beginning or end; on the other hand, he says, Antichrist had not only a beginning but was born a bastard (509-16). Thoroughly outraged, Antichrist immediately adopts the argument of the opposition and once more mimics the form of Christ's essence:

Wretches! Goles! you be blent; godds Sonne I am, from him sent; how dare you maintayne your intent sith he and I be one? Haue I not, sith I came him froe, made the dead to speak and goe? and to men I send my ghost also, that leaved me vpon.

(lines 517-24)

Hely again asserts that all Antichrist's acts were tricks
and done only through God's sufferance (525–8). Antichrist has now lost all control and, railing against his adversaries, falls into the second trap of allowing Enoch and Hely to offer bread to the risen dead. After the kings witness the flight of the fiends within the dead men, they convert to belief in Christ and along with the prophets are slain by Antichrist. The archangel Michael descends and slaughters the Antichrist and two delightful stage demons gleefully carry his body off to hell.

The Antichrist play is a brilliant piece of medieval drama; however, it is not just a set piece, for the playwright has used it as a capstone for the entire cycle. The play concludes the action which precedes it and anticipates the next play, the Judgment, an action which is truly other-worldly and terminal. Although a number of themes and patterns reach their culmination and receive their final statement in this play, I wish to concentrate on three: the contrast of the worldly ruler and the Divine King, the opposition of demonic magic to divine miracle and the recapitulation of divine history.

The worldly monarchs and persons in power, such as Annas and Cayphas, frequently dupe themselves into thinking that their temporal power is omnipotent and that they can successfully oppose their wills against that of God. Antichrist, the last and greatest of the tyrants, is most like Herod; yet many of the other monarchs and rulers
show the same characteristics as these two. Among the numerous extraordinary statements that Herod makes about himself, the following, I think, is most revelatory of his character:

I king of kinges, none so keene,
I soveraigne Syre, as well is seene,
I Tyrant, that may both take and teene
Castle, tower, and towne,
I weilde this world withouten wene,
I beat all those vnbxon beene,
I dryue the Devills all by deene
deepe in hell a-downe.
For I am king of all mankinde,
I byd, I beat, I loose, I bynde,
I maister the Moone; take this in mynde
that I am most of mighte.
I am the greatest aboue degree,
that is or was or euer shall be.
the Sonne it dare not shyne on me
if I byd hym goe downe;
No rayne to fall shall none be free,
nor no Lord haue that Liberty
that dare abide, and I bid flees,
but I shall cracke his Crowne...
(8.161-80)

Antichrist is different from Herod only in degree; instead of claiming power over nature, he asserts that he created all things:

I made the day and eke night,
And all thinge that is on earth growinge,
flowers fresh that fayre can springe;
also I made all other thinge,
the Starrs that be so bright.
(lines 460-4; cf. also
lines 221-4 and 471-2)

Both kings usurp the language of God and claim to be "pearles of postee," to have the power to "dight and deale" and to offer "ioye of bliss."
Since this is a play about cosmic history, it is quite natural that God, the originator and maintainer of the world, should assert his omnipotence. Those other characters whose pretensions to power are based on what they believe to be their own inherent worth, however, are shown to be impotent. Lucifer was the first to try to usurp the power and perogatives of God; he was overcome by his exalted notion of his worth. So, too, the monarchs and rulers of the world frequently fail to recognize the limitations placed on their power. Although Octavian later recognizes his limitations, he first enters upon the stage boasting of his power:

I, preeved prynce, most of power,
under heaven highest am I here,
fayerest foode to feight in feare,
noe freak my face may flee.

all this world, withouten weare,
King, prince, Baron, Bachler,
I may destroy in great danger
through vertue of my degree
(lines 185-92)

The Antichrist's claims are more extravagant; he first speaks, in Latin, of his power over all men and then claims that he is the prophesied Messiah who will adjudicate and reward men:

Messias, Christ, and most of might,
that in the law was you beheight,
all mankynd ioy to dight,
is comen, for I am he.
(lines 13-16)

See, for example, 1.1-20, 20.1-4 and 24.1-8.
Thes that leuen in me stidfastly,
I shall them saue from anye,
and such ioy, right as haue I,
with them I think to deale.
(lines 21-4)

All of these men offer bliss to men; however, it is apparent that the most they can offer is worldly wealth or power. Balaack, for example, offers Balaam great "wynnyng"; his gift, however, is not of spiritual or eternal reward but of gold, lands and power. Satan also tempts Eve with the promise of a new kind of bliss; she will be, he says, like God and will know both "good and evill," and "wayle and woe." His promise is accurate and she and Adam earn a fallen world. Satan later tries the same trick with Christ in the desert; there he offers the Savior the world:

Looke about thee now and see
of all these realmes the royalty,
for to kneele downe and honour me
thou shalte be lord of all.
(lines 133-6)

But Christ rebukes him and tells him that one should honor God and not the world. Antichrist, an agent of the fiend, promises his followers that he will bring them to bliss; it is a bliss, however, that is founded on wealth in this world and damnation in the next:

For all that will leeve me vpon,
wordly welth shall them fall on,
and to my blisse they shall come,
and dwell with me for aye.
(lines 233-6)
The Chester playwright does not just show us that Antichrist is the last of the great tyrants; he also provides examples of better kings with whom the Antichrist is to be contrasted. The Magi are, of course, the best examples of kings. Though we never see them in their capacity as rulers dealing with their subjects, we do see them as they humble themselves before the divine king. They are immediately convinced of his divinity and saving grace and offer gifts symbolic of his kingship, his death and his act of salvation. Octavian, though, is the most interesting monarch of all because he undergoes the transition from boasting tyrant to humble suppliant. When we first see him, he brags of his great power over all the world; yet we see him turn down the offer to be worshipped as a god. He knows, as Herod does not, that he is mortal and aged; through his power he has established the Pax Romana (6.245-8), but he knows his power will not last:

and godhead askes in all thinge
tyme that hath no begininge,
ne never shall have ending;
and none of these have I.

Wherefore, by verye provee shewinge,
though I be highest worldlie king,
of godhead have I no knowing

(6.337-43)

Octavian is predisposed toward a belief in a divinity; thus it is with calmness that he accepts the word of the Sibyl that there will be a greater king than he,
and it is with humility that he kneels and honors the Child whom he sees in his vision of the Holy Family.

Most of the persons in power attempt to thwart the divine play for salvation; all of them help bring about the redemptive process in one way or another, and thus contribute toward the eventual restitution of the God to man relationship which was lost at the Fall. The D version of the Balaam play gives the most succinct statement of the effectiveness of worldly power against the Divine plan. Although Balaam finds that he cannot curse the Israelites, he still wishes to receive the rewards Balaack promised him; consequently, he comes up with a plan to divorce the Israelites from their God. It is, he says, merely a stop-gap:

Yee shall not them distroye for aye, but for a tyme vexe them yee maye.

(D5.349-50)

Octavian establishes the Pax Romana, a universal peace during which it was prophesied Christ would be born, and determines to take a census, the immediate cause for Joseph and Mary's having to go to Bethlehem. Herod, for all of his pretensions to omnipotence, is unable to kill Christ and thus protect his worldly realm from dissolution; furthermore, his assertion, "this Realme is myne and shalbe aye" (8.354), is shown to be unfounded by his own death and that of his son. The latter event is not only a punishment for Herod's evil
deeds, but is also a symbolic representation that all earthly kings will die and be replaced by the Eternal King. Annas, Cayphas and Pilate either demand or acquiesce to the murder of Christ so that they can retain their power; they do not realize that they are helping to bring about the establishment of a new kingdom and a Judgment that will condemn them for their deeds. Last of all, Antichrist tries to reverse the whole redemptive process; but his only accomplishment is to provide the conditions for the final conversion of the Jews to the True Faith. In effect, he puts an end to human history and earthly sway; he has given the final demonstration of Christ's divinity and prepares the way for Judgment.

Many of the rulers and persons in power are apparently agents of the devil; Antichrist is specifically stated to be the Adversary's agent. One of the larger themes of the cycle is that of Satan's opposition to and presumption of the power of God. One might conclude that this were a contest of equals if it were not for the fact that Satan never has any real power when he plays adversary to God. No failure deters him, however, and we are forced to conclude that it is only Satan who believes he is engaged in equal battle. On the more mundane level, the devil's role, frequently made manifest through his worldly agents, is to tempt men away from God. The contest of the Devil with God is thus only a seeming
one: in all direct encounters, Satan loses, and in all indirect battles, those involving men, the outcome depends on the human's decision to choose good or evil. All Satan's works, from the putting on of the serpent's shape to the "miracles" he enacts through Antichrist, are illusions and his power resides only in God's sufferance. The sending of Antichrist is Satan's last attempt to "kepe mankind from bliss"; the Antichrist's legerdemain is the last hope of the demonic host and thus it is natural that Antichrist should mimic Christ and that the battle should be carried out by opposing magic to miracle, illusion to reality.

Though the contest is carried out by the agent of Satan and the representatives of God, it is one which involves the Messiah versus the Adversary, the untimate Anti-Christ. The events in Antichrist's career, as we noted above, mimic the acts of Christ; yet the manner of enactment is entirely different. Antichrist claims a miraculous birth, claims to have created all natural things, asserts his trinity, raises the dead, resurrects himself, sends out his "hoolye ghoost," and directs his "disciples" to spread the tydings of his advent. He is on the offensive. He asserts he is the Messiah; he says he fulfills the prophecies; he performs marvels when asked to prove his divinity. Christ claims divinity in the presence of his disciples, before those whom he has aided,
and before the Jews who He knows will not believe; He refuses, however, once the conspiracy against him has gotten underway, to claim earthly regnency or divinity except in equivocal terms. The most extended conversation on the subject of His kingship is with Pilate; in this dialogue, Christ asserts that his realm is not Jewish nor of this world:

My realme in this world, as say I, is not, but if it were, witterly, with Iewes were I not tane.

And if my realme in this world were, stryve with you I would now here, and lead with me such power, should pryve you of your pray.

But my might in this manere will I not proue, ne now appear as worldly kinge, my cause unclear were then, in good fay.

(16.270-80)

Christ does not claim to fulfill prophecy; the cycle is shaped, however, in such a way that it is apparent that He does so. Likewise, He refuses to perform miracles to prove his Godhead; the miracles He performs are in aid of

13 He claims divinity before his disciples (13.1-35) and throughout the Last Supper and Garden scenes (15.65-304), before the blind man (13.232-3, 240-55), before the Doctors in the temple, and his mother (11.233-40, 253-6, 321-24). He also asserts obliquely his godhead to Satan in the Temptation (12.121-4, 137-40). To the Jews who will not believe, He makes similar statements (13.277-88, 16.49-54), but He is equivocal before Pilate (16.147-8), will not prove his divinity by performing miracles before Annas and Cayphas (16.9-16) or Herod the Judge (16.177-80), and remains equivocal at his second appearance before Pilate (16.261-96).
men and in themselves demonstrate his divinity to those who are willing to believe. Annas and Cayphas, like the other Jews, refuse to acknowledge the miracles because they fear loss of their power; instead, they accuse Christ of witchcraft.\textsuperscript{14} It is ironic and doubly damming, therefore, that the kings are convinced by Antichrist's magic. When they ask for signs, he complies; it is only when these marvels are demonstrated to be fraudulent that they finally turn to the God Whose divinity had been amply proved. Finally, it is apparent that the acts of Antichrist are just illusions of the devil; with the defeat of Antichrist, Satan is defeated a last time and the contest over men's souls is ended.

The Antichrist play is structurally and thematically conclusive; it puts a period to the human history which has unfolded before the audience and sets the stage for the final act. By bringing together a number of the major themes which have run through the cycle and by recapitulating the prophecies and life of Christ, the playwright has, in effect, constructed a microcosm which succinctly restates both the events and ideas of the cycle. He has added a prophetic prologue to the Antichrist play and made the acts of Antichrist sufficiently parallel to those of Christ so that the passion section would be

recalled. The play also alludes to parts of the Nativity and Old Testament sequences: the Antichrist pretends to a miraculous birth; the kings make sacrifices according to the Old Law; they, like the Magi, offer gifts to the Messiah; the Antichrist is a tyrant like Herod. I do not wish to overstress these parallelisms; the play is not a repetition of events but a recombination and restatement of them. The over-all effect is that of general similarity, not a parallel pattern of one-to-one relationships. I think the play is conclusive because it calls to mind many of the events in the cycle. Furthermore, the imitation of Christ in such detail and for such perverted purposes leaves no other action available; its utter blasphemy exhausts history.

Throughout the cycle we have seen that men are not to be damned just because of Adam's sin but for each man's participation in that sin; the Incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ are only parts of the redemptive process which opens to man the possibility of salvation. In the Creation play, God emphasizes that Adam fell because his act of will contravened the commandment of God; in the Noah play, He says that man was always inclined to sin, that is, that man, given free will, always misused his opportunities. When Adam sinned, he lost for himself and his descendents man's claim on grace; men must wait, therefore, until "wisdome, right, mercy,
Grace was extended to man through Christ's entry in the world; He offered men mercy that was to be tempered with justice. Each person in the play is offered the opportunity to be obedient and thus obtain salvation through belief in Christ; many, however, chose to ignore the obligations of man to God and chose this world over the next. As a result, God initiates a number of covenants in order to re-emphasize His concern for man and to give men another chance for redemption. The Old Testament section established the fact that mankind was obstinate; the New Testament section showed that the Jews, in particular, and certain other men continued to be recalcitrant. One would have assumed that the life of Christ provided ample opportunity for men to mend their ways and to turn to God. They did not. Nevertheless, it is apparent that God was willing to offer the Jews and Pagans still another chance to convert to belief in Christ. The defeat of Antichrist is that last offer of mercy to mankind; it concludes God's intervention on the behalf of men. After Antichrist, no man can claim any excuse for not choosing good; the stage is set for the final dispensation wherein Christ will extend His mercy tempered with justice.

After the shocking brutality of the crucifixion and
the terror inherent in the Antichrist play, the Judgment play is astounding in its simplicity and majesty. Though God has every right to wreak vengeance on the persistently wicked human race, he keeps the covenants made with Noah, Abraham and Moses to forgo vengeance and to bring men of belief into paradise. The emphasis from the beginning of the play is on justice:

In my godhead are Persons three; may none in fay from other be, yet Souerayne might that is in me may Iustlye be moved.

(lines 5-8)

The four saved souls lament their past sins and hope that their contrition and purgation will gain them mercy; the six wicked souls, on the other hand, know that it is useless to ask for mercy, for they never repented of their sins, and because they have spent the time since their deaths in hell instead of in purgatory (173-4). The good souls make it evident that belief in Christ is necessary for salvation; but Christ reduces the grounds on which men are to be judged to whether men did or did not perform the seven cardinal acts of mercy. Mercy will be granted to those who have been merciful. The ease with which men can be saved heightens the horror of the way salvation was bought for mankind and increases the sense of sin in, and the awareness of, the baseness in man. This effect is intensified by the sight of the instruments of the passion arranged behind Christ (17-20) and by
Christ's attestation that man's sins have continued to rend his body:

Yet for all this great torment that I suffred here whyl I was lent, the more I spared in your intent, I am not as I feele; for my body is all to-rent with Othes false, alway fervent; Mo lymme on me but it is hent from head right to the heele.

(lines 413-20)

All that Christ had asked in return for his willing sacrifice was that men aid other men; they need only have given food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothing to the naked, harbor to the cold, comfort to those in prison and to those who were ill. The principal sin of the wicked was that they did none of these; instead, they used their power and position to oppress God's poor (637-44). In effect, the wicked have no grounds on which to claim mercy: for all that Christ did for them, they reciprocated nothing.

It is significant that the prominent people at the Judgment are those who were in power; these men are more culpable than others because, as God's earthly representatives, they were in a position to lead men astray or induce them to do good. They are responsible for

15 See lines 457-64, 477-84, 621-8. The playwright mentions only the six acts cited in Matthew 25:35-6.

16 See the statements of the redeemed Pope, 57-60, Emperor, 81-4, and king, 117-20; cf. also Kolve's discussion of the leaders of men as being more culpable (pp. 221-6).
their sins and those of men under them:

Papa Damnatus

Of all the Soules in Christianity
that damned were whyle I had degree
now geue Accoumpt behoueth: me
through my laches forlorne
(lines 197-200)

They recall for us the monarchs of the cycle who, in order to maintain their power, forced lesser men to commit sins against God and crimes against men. Annas and Cayphas, for example, try to protect their law and thus lead the Jews away from belief in the promised Messiah. Pilate, fearful of losing his place, allows Christ to be condemned and thus sanctions participation by the Jews in the scourging and crucifixion. Furthermore, it is apparent that their positions help to corrupt the lofty; their worldly sway causes them, like their predecessors, to forget that they owed their position to God and that they were to use it for His cause rather than to accumulate earthly treasure. The Papa Salvatus, for example, says:

Thou grantedst me lord through thy grace,
Peters power and his place;
yet was I blent, Alas! Alas!
I dyd not thyne assent.
(lines 57-60)

The damned Pope tells us how he was corrupted by his position:

Now Bootles is to aske mercy;
for lyvinge, highest in earth was I,
and Conning, chosen in Clergie,
but Coueteousnes did me care.
Alas Siluer and Simonye
made me Pope vnworthy.
(lines 181-6)

All the damned souls regret their worldly power and
possessions and confess that they misused their offices.

In fact, all of the damned and the saved have com-
mittted the seven deadly sins; yet some were saved "at the
last" by contrition and because they underwent heavy
penance in Purgatory. The importance of the emphasis on
final contrition and punishment is two-fold. The
references to purgatory indicate that, though Christ
bought man the means of redemption, He did not grant him
complete exculpation. The man who wills a sinful act is
responsible for the consequences; in this case, he must
accept punishment. Further, the reiteration of the need
for purgatorial cleansing indicates that man cannot come to
heaven on his own merits however good they may have been;
instead, he must be contrite and suffer penance in order
to gain Christ's grace. By making this point clear, the
playwright emphasizes the need for the redemptive process.
Secondly, the playwright has the Emperor (95-6) and the
King (133-4) tell us that they became contrite only at
the end, yet were saved. Actually all men must be
contrite at the very end since the condition of life is
sin regardless of men's individual acts. The emphasis
here, however, is on last minute contriteness after a
life spent wholeheartedly pursuing the world; the
conversion indicates that men should not despair of being saved. Christ's mercy is infinite enough to redeem the contrite sinner as it is to save the one who has led a fairly just life.

Christ's long speech at the middle of the play (357-436) explains the divine plan, asserts the righteousness of the Judgment, and tells all the people gathered before Him exactly what their sins have done. He says He will show all His "lovesome Deedes" done for man. First, He says, He created man and put him in paradise; but man immediately forfeited it. He weighed the situation and decided that the best way to save men was by His descent into the world, His Crucifixion by the Jews, and His Ascension to the Father to beg a boon for mankind.

He tells the souls to look on the blood He shed for them so that the good could be saved and the damned should know the great sorrow that is theirs because they ignored Christ's sacrifice. Even though men knew of His sacrifice, He says, they still continued to rend His body with their sins. He again displays His wounds; He bleeds again for mankind's salvation and demands:

How durst you euer doe amysse
when you vnbethoughte you of this?
that I bledd to bringe you to blis,
and suffered such woe?
(lines 429-32)17

17In the Ascension play, Christ says He will reserve His blood until the Judgment; cf. 20.129-52.
After seeing such sacrifice and the continuing torment, the saved souls can only plead for mercy. Christ then separates the good from the evil.

Although the judgment is completed, the devil appears to make his "demands" for the damned souls. The interchange between Christ and the demons does reiterate what Christ has just said, but it also makes the demons ludicrous because they come to claim a justice that has been already dispensed. Devils can never resist the chance to be pompous; these two cite scripture to prove that Christ promised that He would damn the wicked. All their speeches are didactic in content: they recapitulate the sins of the wicked and describe the torments of hell. The demons are decidedly presumptuous in making these speeches; Christ, however, reinforces what they say by agreeing with them and then adding that not even His mother and all the saints in heaven could save the damned souls now that "grace is putt away." He does not dispute with the devil; He tells everyone that the devil is right:

Lo, you men that wicked haue bene,  
what Sathan sayeth you heare and seene;  
righteous Dome may you not fleene,  
for grace is putt away.

when tyme of grace was enduringe,  
to seeke it you had no lykings;  
therefore must I for any thinge  
doe righteousnes to day.  
(lines 605-12)

The concluding speeches by the Four Evangelists are
merely reiterations of this last scene. They tell the
audience that they said in their gospels exactly what
Christ has said in the play; they are also witnesses to
the righteousness of the Judgment. If one pays heed to
the play and to their gospels and commits sin nevertheless,
they say, then one can make no "excusation" before the
High Tribunal:

And I, John, the Evangelist,
bear witnes of thinges that I wist,
to which they might full well haue trust,
and not haue done amisse.
And all that ever my lord sayde here,
I wroght it all in my manere;
therefore excuse you, withouten were,
I may not well, I wisse.
(lines 701-8)

The various sections of the cycle all make demands
on the Christian audiences' conscience, but each section
does it in a different way. The Old Testament section
tells us that the redemptive process was known and planned
from the very beginning and that occasionally God would
make agreements with men lest they become too despondent.
The Nativity sequence joyously celebrates the Advent of
the Savior and describes not only the miracles attendant
on his birth but also the changes made in the lives of
everyone from the lowest shepherd's apprentice to the
world's highest monarch. The Passion above all else
displays the brutality and the torment that the Redeemer
had to suffer because He healed the ill and forgave the
sinner. His only crimes are meekness and the desire to save men; His reward is the scourge, buffets and the cross. In the Resurrection sequence, He returns to earth to comfort those closest to Him and those who were fearful that the world would relapse into its old patterns of despair and worldliness. The last group of plays, however, show that God does not abandon the faithful if they are obedient and serve Him. He charges them only to feed, in His Name, the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to house the cold, to visit the sick and to go to those who are imprisoned. Most succinctly, He explains to the damned why they were righteously adjudged:

Nay, when ye saw the least of myne that on earth suffered pyne, with your Riches you would not them Ryne nay fulfill my desyre.
And sithe you would nothing enclyne for to helpe my poor hyne, to me your loue it was not fyne, therfore goe to the fyre. (lines 637–44)
THE CAPPERS PLAY OF MOSES AND BALAAM

The following text is neither a critical edition nor a diplomatic text, but a reading text of the Cappers play provided for the convenience of the reader. I have retained the spelling of the Devonshire manuscript, now Henry Huntington MS TM 2, but have silently expanded the few contractions made by the scribe and have punctuated throughout. For the ease of the reader, I have made a few emendations; these are enclosed in brackets and the MS reading is noted at the bottom of the page. The notes and commentary are chiefly concerned with those issues raised in my discussion; I have not provided a complete collation of MSS D and H. I was not able to examine the manuscript first hand; my transcription is from a film of the manuscript.
Deus and Moysen

1 Moyses, my servant leeffe and dere,
and all my people that bine here,
yee wotten in Egipte when yee weare,
out of thraldome I you brought.

5 I will you have noe god but mee;
noe false godes none make yee;
my name in vayne name not yee,
for that liketh mee nought.

9 I wyll you hould your holydaye;
and worshippe yt eke alwaye
father and mother all that yee maye;
and slea noe man noe where.

13 ffornication yee shall flee;

3-4 Exod. 20:2.

5-20 The Ten Commandments appear in Exod 20:2-17
and Deut. 5:6-21. Deuteronomy frequently
repeats parts of Exodus, but it appears that
the playwright followed the Exodus account.
noe meannes goodes steale yee;
nor in noe place lenge ne bee
    false wytnes for to beare.

17 Your neighbours wyefe desyre you nought,
servante nee goodes that hee hath bought,
oxen nor asse in deede nor thought,
nor nothinge that is his,

21 Nor wrongefullye to have his thinge
   agaynst his love and his likinge.
   In all these keepe my byddinge,
    that yee doe not amyse.

Moyses

25 Good lorde, that art ever soe good,
   I will fulfill with mylde moode
   thy commandementes; for I stood
   to here thee nowe full styll.

29 ffortye dayes now fasted have I
that I might bee the more worthye
   to lerne this tokenn trulye;

25-32 The stage direction and speech and character
of Princeps Sinagogae in H are deleted by D
and a speech of Moses added. The Princeps
speech is based on Exod 20:18-19 and Moses'
response (DH 33-40) on the next verse, 20.
noue wyll I worke thy will.

Tunc Moyses in monte dicat populo

33 Good folke, dread yee nought;
to prove you with, god hath this wrought.
take theese wordes in your thought;
nowe knowne yee what ys sinne.

37 By this sight nowe yee may see
that hee is pearles of postee;
therefore this token looke doe yee,
therof that yee ne blynne.

Doctor

41 Lordings, this commandement
was the firste lawe that ever god sent;

41 The Princeps' second speech (H41-48) is based on Exod 34:29 and the common medieval misunderstanding about the horns on Moses' head. This second speech occurs after the second giving of the laws, an event not represented in H. The speech of Moses (H49-64) is shifted in D to lines 81-96, the end of the Moses section. It is based on Exod 35:1-6.

42 was the firste lawe that ever god sent was of the Old Testamente H66. It is significant, in terms of the whole D version, that "law" is substituted here. Implicit is that this first law is to be succeeded by a second one, Christ. The rest of the passage (D43-4) also reflects the shift in theme.
43 x: poynctes there bine takes intent
    that moste effecte ys in.

45 But all that storye for to fonge
    to playe this moneth yt were to longe;
    therfore moste fruitefull ever amonge,
    Shortly wee shall myn.

49 After wee reden of this storye,
    that in this monte of Synaye
    god gave the lawe witterlye,
    wrytten with his hand

53 In stonye tables, as reede I,
    before men honored mawmentrye.
    Moyses brake them hastelye,
    for that hee would not wond.

57 But after played, as yee shall see,

49-55 (H73ff) The giving of the law is recorded in
    Exod 31:18 and the breaking of the tablets in
    32:19.

54 before J but when H77. The H reading is better
    because it more clearly expresses Moses' reason
    for breaking the tablets. The "mawmentrye"
    involved is the worship of the golden calf.
    See the second prophecy (H247-8) in which
    Balaam says there is no idolatry in Israel.

57 (H81) The second giving of the law is based on
    Exod 34:1-4. Note that the D playwright changes
    the line in order to emphasize that the second
    giving of the law will be performed.
other tables owt carved hee,
\[\text{which god bade written should bee}\]
the wordes hee sayde before;

The which tables shry\[n7\]ed were
after as god can Moyses leare,
and that shry\[n7\]e to him was deare,
therafter, ever more.

\textbf{Deus}

\textit{here god appereth agayne to Moyses}

Moyses, my servant, goe anon
and kerve owt of the rocke of stone
tables to wryte my byddinge vpon,
such as thou had before.

And in the morninge looke thou hye
into the monte of Synaye.
lett noe man wott but thow onlye,
of companye noe more.

\[\text{In7 supplied from H83.}\]

\text{shryved MS and shryve D63. Probably a scribal error in D. Deimling does not list the D variant in BWR. The H reading is the better one, and refers to the building of the ark and its honored place in Israelite worship.}

\text{An entirely new scene.}
Moyses

73 Lord, thy byddinge shalbe donne
and tables kervised owt full soonne;
but tell mee, I praye thee, this boone,
what wordes I shall wryte.

Deus

77 Thou shalt wryte the same lore
that in the tables was before;
hyt shalbe kepte for evermore,
for that is my delyte.

Tunc Moyses faciet signum quasi effoderet tabulas
de monte et super ipsas scribens dicat populo:

Moyses

81 Godes folke of Israel, herkens you all to my spell:
god bade ye should keepe well
this that I shall saye.
85 Syxe dayes bodely worke all,
the seaventh sabboath ye shall call,

81-96 (H49-64) Based on Exod 35:1-6. We should also note that in Exod 34:12-16, God especially warns Moses not to permit the Israelites to make covenants with the people they fight, and that they must guard against worship of foreign gods and fornication with foreign peoples.
that daye for ought that maye befall
hallowed shalbe aye.

Whoe doth not this, dye shall hee;
in howses for ever shall noe man see.
firste fruyctes to god offer yee,
for soe himselfe beede.

purpur and kyse both too,
to him that shall save you from woo
and helpe you in your neede.

Tunc descendet de monte et veniet Rex Balaack
equitando iuxta montem et dicat:  

Balaack

I, Balaack, kinge of Moab land,

for ever_ fire H58. The D line makes no sense;
the corresponding H line makes more sense and
follows the Vulgate (Exod 35:2-3)

The missing line can be restored from HB thus:
Gould and silver offers also,
purple, bisse, and other moe (H61-2)
D94 (H62) is obviously corrupt.

Balaack is portrayed as a raging tyrant; yet
the Biblical text (Num 22:3) says that he and
the Moabites were afraid after having seen the
destruction caused by the Israelites.
all Israell and I had in hand;
I am soe wrath I would not wond
to slea them everye wight.

ffor there god helpses them so stowtly
of other landes to have mastery,
that yt is boteles wytterly
agaynst them for to fight.

What natyon doth them anoy,
Moyses prayeth anon in hye;
then have the ever the victorye
and there enemyes the worse.

Therefore, how I will wroken bee,
I am bethought, as mote I thee:
Balaham shall come to mee
that people for to curse.

Noe knife nor sworde may not avayle
that ylke people to assayle;
that fonndes to fight hee shall fayle,
for sycker yt is noe boote.

All natyons they doe anoye,

The comparison implicit in the stanza is garbled.
See H109-12: All nations they doe any,
and my selfe they can destroie,
118 and my folke commen for to distroye,
and oxe that gnaweth buselye
    the grasse right to the roote.

121 Whosoever Balaham blesseth, I wys,
blessed that man sothlye is;
whosoever he cursys fareth amyse,
such name over all hath hee.

125 But yett I truste venged to bee
with dynte of sword or pollicye
on these false losells, leaves mee,
     leeve this withowten dowbte.

129 ffor to bee wroken is my desyre;

as Ox that gnawes biselie
the grass right to the roote.

BWR have a number of variants, for which see
Deimling's collation on p. 89. The D reading
"graweth" should obviously be "gnaweth." The
Vulgate has: ita delebit hic populus omnes qui
in nostris finibus commorantur / quo modo solet
bos herbas usque ad radices carpere (Num 22:4bc).
Ungemach, Die Quellen (hereafter, Ung.), p. 176,
also cites the parallel.

121-4 Balaam's power is described by Balaack in Num
22:6cd: novi enim quod benedictus sit cui bene-
dixeris / et maledictus in quem maledicta con-

125-64 This passage is very probably an interpolation.
See Deimling, p. xx. He notes that lines D121-4
and D165-8, which in H113-20 form a complete
stanza rhyming "he-be," are separated in D by the
Balaack speech. H is closer to Num 22:5-6.
my heart brennys as whott as fyre
for vervent anger and for Ire,
till this bee brought abowte.

Surgite dei patriæ et opitulamini nobis et in
necessitate nos defendite:

Therfore, my god and godes all,
o: mightye Mars, one thee I call,
with all the powers infernall,
ryse now and helpe at neede.

I am enformed by trewe reports
how the Mediators doeth resorte
to wynne my land to there comfort,
desended of Iacobs seede.

Now shewe your power, you godes mighty,
soe that these caytiffes I may destroye,
havinge of them full victorye,
and them brought to mischance.

Beate them downe in playne battell,
those false losells soe cruell,
that all the world may here tell,
wee take on them vengeance.

Supplied from MS B; Deimling, p. 89.
Owt of Egipte fled the bee,
and passed through the red sea;
the Egyptians that them pursued trewlye
were drowned in that same fludd.

The have on god mickell of might,
which them doeth ayde in wronge and right;
whosoever with them foundeth to fight,
hee wynneth little good.

They have slayne, this wott I well,
through helpe of god of Israel,
both Seon and Ogge, kinges so fell,
and playnly them distroye[d].

Therefore ryse vp ye godes, eiche one;

There is some justification, on the basis of the Vulgate, for adding this comment on the flight from Egypt (Num 22:5, 10). The playwright probably added it to make the connection with the Moses scene and to emphasize the strength and aid God gives to the Just.

Seon and Ogge were two kings defeated by the Israelites; cf. Num 21:21-35.

Emended to achieve rhyme with "pryde," line 164.

These lines are written in a hand different from the rest of the MS. Mr. Herbert Schulz, Curator of MSS at the Huntington Library, was kind enough to look at them for me. He also told me that Professor Lumiansky, who had looked at the lines a few weeks before my inquiry, concurred with his opinion.
162 ye be a hundrethe godes for one.
I would be wroken them vpon,
for all there pompe and pryde.

165 Therefore you fetche hym, batchelere,
that he may curse these peaple heare,
for sycker on them, in no manere,
may we not wroken be.

miles rex Balack loquitur

169 \textit{Syr}, on your errande will I goone,
that yt shalbe donne anone,
and he shall wreake you on your fanne,
the peopell of Israel.

Rex Balack

173 Yea, looke thou hett him gould, great \textit{wone},

169 A yt MS. The D MS and/or the film is obscured. The reading does not appear to be "Syr"; the H reading is undoubtedly correct.

173 one MS. The H reading "wone" (125) is probably the correct reading in which "wone"="dwelling." Balaack promises Balaam gold, a great house and lands. It is probable that Balaack's offer of wealth and lands arises from the tradition of reading Balaam's reply to the emissary as an ironic one: respondit Balaam / si dederit mihi Balac plenam domum suam argent / et auri / non potero immutare verbum Domini Dei mei / ut vel plus vel minus loquar (Num 22:18). See the discussion of Balaam's avarice above, pp. 39-40. Peter Comestor,
and landes for to live vpon,
to destroye them, as hee cann,
these freekerkes that bine soe fell.

Tunc miles Regis Balaack ibit ad Balaham et dicat

Balaham, my lorde greetees well thee,
and prayeth thee soone at him to bee,
to curse the people of Judee
that done him great anoye.

Balaham

Abyde awhyle there, batchelere,
for I may have noe power,
but yf that godes will were,
and that shall I wete in hye.

Hist. Schol., wherever possible emphasizes Balaam's greediness. To Num 22:15a in which we are told that Balaack sent back an embassy composed of more noble men, Comestor adds "muneraque majora, et ampliora promisit si malediceret populo" (PL 108, 1237), and says that greediness changed Balaam's mind (in his comment on Num 22:22a) and reiterates that Balaack gave him munificent gifts (c. 1238; cf. Num 22:40b). Peter added the word "munificence."

Only one mission is sent to Balaam in the play; the Biblical text (Num 22:7, 15) and the commentaries usually mention two. Lines 181-4 are based on Num 22:8: manete hic nocte et respondebo quicquid mihi dixerit. Ung., p. 179.
Tunc ibit Balaham ad consulendum dominum in oratione:

Sedens dicat deus

185 Balaham, I command thee,
kinge Balackes byddinge for to flee;
that people that blessed is of mee,
curse thou by noe waye.

Balaham

189 Lorde, I must doe thy byddinge,
though yt to mee be vnlikynge;
for therby mych wynninge,
I might have had todaye.

---

185 Heading: sedens dicat deus 7 Deus in supremo loco
H137. These two headings suggest that God is seated in a high place throughout the play.

185-8 Num 22:12: noli ire cum eis neque maledicas
populo quia benedictus est (Ung., p. 180), but note that the playwright drops the first part of the sentence.

189-92 In the Vulgate, vs. 13, Balaam tells the emissaries God forbids him to go. He makes no answer to the second emissary; instead, he just leaves with them. The playwright takes the opportunity in these lines to show Balaam's reluctance to give up his promised rewards.
Deus

193 Yett though Balack bee my foe,
   thou shalt have leave thyther to goe;
   but look that thou doe right soe,
   as I have thee taught.

Balaham

197 Lorde, yt shall be donne in hight.
   this asse shall beare me aright.
   goe we together anon, syr knight,
   for leave nowe have I caught.

Tunc Balaham et miles equitabunt simul et dicat

---

193 Yett though Balack  Though the folke H145. The D version concentrates on Balaack and his worship of false gods.

193-6 The second embassy is omitted in the play and the play picks up again with God's second answer to Balaam (Num 22:20): si vocare te venerunt homines isti surge et vade cum eis / ita dum-taxat ut quod tibi praecepero facias. Ung., p. 180.

197-208 The playwright provides us with a motivation for God's anger. In Num 22:20, God permits Balaam to go, but in 22:22, He is angry at Balaam's going. The playwright avoids the contradiction by revealing to us Balaam's duplicity, already prepared for in lines 189-92 and by showing us that Balaam is motivated by cupidity.
Balaham

201 Knight, by my lawe that I live one,
    nowe have I leave for to gonne,
cursed they shalbe every eych one,
    and I ought wynne maye.

205 hould the kinge that hee beheight,
godes hoste I sett at light;
warryed the shalbe this night
    or that I wynd awaye.

Miles

209 Balaham, doe my lordes will,
    and of gould thou shalt have thy fill;

201 Knight by my lawe that I live one. Now by the
    law I leve upon H153.

205 hould the kinge that hee beheight. If Balaak
    hold that he has heighte H157. The D line is
awkward and unnecessarily confusing.

206 hoste hast H158. B evidently follows H, WR
    follow D. Both readings are possible. In DWR,
the "the" (=they) of line 207 is a referent for
"hoste"; however, the HB reading is more probable
and would be translated thus: "If Balaak upholds
what he has promised, I will disregard God's
command. Cursed shall they be this night ere
I leave."

209-16 The speeches of Miles and Balaam are not in H.
The first is intended to entice Balaam so that
he will keep his resolve and the second makes
explicit Balaam's worship of other gods.
sparer thou nought that folke to spill,
    and spurne ther godes speach.

Balaham

ffrend, I have godes wonder fell.
both Ruffyn and Reynell
will worke right as I them tell;
    ther ys noe wyle to seeke.

Tunc Balaham ascendit super asinam et cum milite
equitabat et in obuiam venit angelus domini cum
gladio extricto et asina videt ipsum et non Balaham
ad terra prostrata iacebit et dicat:

Ruffyn and Reynell: Presumably the names of Ba-
laam's gods. The OED defines Ruffin as a name
of a fiend and cites only this passage (s.v.
Ruffin, sb. 1). Under definition 2, it further
defines the word as "a devil" and cites Ch. Pl.
I, 239. In the H MS of that playlet, the name
is "Ruffian," but DWRB have "Ruffin." The
colloquial quality of the names may be intended
as a sign that the devils are not very powerful
and helps increase the irony of the situation.
I could not locate any references in reference
works to Reynell, but see Antechrist (Ragnell,
23.651) and Mary Magdalene in the Digby Plays
(ragnell and roffyn, line 1200).

Stage-direction. The D version has Balaam mount
his ass at this point; yet in the stage-direction
following line 200 (shared with H at H152), we
are told that Balaam and Miles are already riding.
The repetition of the direction in D after the
unique lines 209-16 suggests that this whole
section was inserted into some version of H.
Balaham

217 Goe forth, Burnell! goe forth! goe!
what the diuell! my asse will not goe.
served shee mee never soe,
what sarrowe so ever yt is.

221 What the divell! now shee is fallen downe.
but thou ryse and make thee bowne,
and beare mee soone owt of this towne,
thow shalt abye, I wys.

Tunc percutiet Balaham asinam suam. Et hic oportet
aliquis transformiari in speciam asina et quando
Balaham percutit dicat asina:

225 Mayster, thow doeth ill secerly,
soe good an asse as mee to nye;
now hast thow beaten mee here thrye,
that bare the thus abowte.

217-40 Most of the conversation with the ass is created by the playwright. The scene is comic, as the reference to Burnell, if nothing else, should tell us.

221-4 (H165-8). Although the sense remains the same, the half-stanza is different in D and H.

225-8 Quid feci tibi cur percutis me ecce iam tertio (Num 22:28). Ung., p. 182.
Balaham

229 Burnell, whye begylest thow mee
when I have most neede to thee?

Asina

That sichte that before mee I see
maketh mee doun to lowte.

233 Am not I, mayster, thy owne asse,
to beare thee whethir thow wilt passe,
and many winter readye was?
to smyte me hyt is shame.

237 Thow wottest well, mayster, perdee,
that thow haddest never non like to mee;
ne never yette soe served I thee.
now am I not to blame.

Tunc videns Balaham angelum evaginatum gladium
habentum adoramus ipsis7 ipsum dicat Balaham:

229-30 quia commeruisti et injusisti mihi / utinam
haberem gladium ut te percuterem (Num 22:29),
Ung., p. 182.

233-40 dixit asina nonne animal tuum sum cui semper
sedere consueti usque in praesentem diem / dic
quid simile unquam fecerim tibi (Num 22:30).
Ung., p. 180. This interchange (lines 225-40),
if we allow for the necessities of verse transla-
tion and stanzaic development, is close to the
Biblical text.

240 St-dir: adoramus MS must be a scribal error.
Balaham

Balaham on his knees shall fall sodenly downe
and speaketh to the angell:

241 A, lorde, to thee I make a vowe,
I had noe sight of thee or nowe;
little wyste I that yt was thowe
that feared my asse soe.

Angelus

245 Why hast thow beaten thy asse, why?
nowe am I commen thee to nye,
that changed thy purpose soe falsly,
and nowe wouldest be my foe.

249 If this asse had not downe gonne,
I would have slayne thee here anon.

241-4 See note below on lines 251-3.

245 asse why_7 Ass thry H189. Both make sense; but see the speech of the Angel (Num 22:32) which H follows.

245-50 The Angel's speech is again close to the Vulgate: cui angelus cur inquit tertio verberas asinam tuam / ego veni ut adversarer tibi / guia perversa est via tua mihiue contraria / et nisi asina declinasset de via dans locum resistenti / te occidissem et illa viveret (Num 22:32-3). Ung.,
Balaham

251 Lord, have pitty e mee vpon,
   for synned I have sore.

253 Lorde, ys yt thy will that I forth \(\text{g}o\) ?

Angelus

Yea, but looke thow doe that folke no woe
   other waye then god bade thee doe,
   and sayde to thee before.

251-3 The Vulgate has: peccavi nesciens quod tu stares
   contra me / et nunc si d
dsplicet tibi ut vadam
   revertar (Num 22:34). Ung., p. 183. These two
   statements are divided so that the first appears
   in D241-4 and the last in D251-53. Note that
   the playwright has changed the last half of the
   verse in a significant way. The English, "Lorde,
   ys yt thy will that I forth \(\text{g}o\)?," could be just
   another of Balaam's guileful statements. He does
   not offer to return hom, but rather hopefully
   asks if he can continue his journey.

253 gonne MS. BWR follow Hj undoubtedly a scribal
   error in D. Most speeches in the play end on
   the last line off the half or full stanza. The
   scribe either lost his place and copied the
   "gonne" of 249 or assumed that "gonne" was to
   rhyme with "gonne-an-vpon" in an abbaab stanza.
   The "gonne" belongs with the second half of the
   stanza (D249-56) which rhymes "woe-doe."

254-6 The warning is repeated: ait angelus vade cum
   istis et cave ne aliud quam praecipero tibi
Tunc Balaham et miles equitabunt simul et in obuiam veniet rex Balaack et dicat rex:

Balack

257 Ah, wellcome, Balaham, my frende,
for all my anger thou shalt ende,
If that thy will bee to wende,
and wreake mee one my foe.

Balaham

261 Nought may I speake, as I have wyn,
but as god putteth mee within,
to forbye all the ende of my kyn.
therefore, syr, me ys woe.

Balack

265 Come forth, Balaham, come with mee,
for one this hill, soe mott I thee,

261 putteth mee within_7 puttes me in H206. The D line is clearer.

261-64 ecce adsum / numquid loqui potero aliquid nisi quod Deus posuerit in ore meo (Num 22:38). Ung., p. 185. Note that D263-4 add an ironic oath and reiterate Balaam's dilemma.

263 to forbye all the ende of my kyn_7 to forby all and my kyn H206. The D version makes clearer the eschatalogical intent of the line and sharpens the irony.
267 the folke of Israell shall thou see,
    and curse them, "I thee praye."

269 Gould and siluer and eke pearle,
    thou shalt have great plentee,
    to curse them, that yt sonne may bee,
    all that thou sayst to daye.

Tunc Balaack descendit de equo et Balaham /\To. 30\^7
de asina et ascendent in montem et dicat
Balaack rex:

Balaack

273 Lo, Balaham, now thow seest here
    godes people all in feare,
    cittye, castle, and ryvere;
    looke now, how likes thee?

277 Curse them now at my prayer,
    as thow wilt bee to mee full deare,

269 The "pearle-plente bee" rhyme is not true, but
    the half-stanza is less confused, particularly
    in the last two lines, than H273-16.

273-80 This stanza does not appear in H. It emphasizes
    that the Israelites are God's people and that
    they are strong and affluent. D277-80 repeat
    Balaack's temptation of Balaam by wealth and
    power and increase the contrast between Balaam's
    desire to curse the Israelites and his inability
    to do so.
and in my realme moste of powere,  
and greatest vnder mee.

Tunc Balaham versus austrem dicat

Balaham

How may I curse here in this place  
that people that god blessed hasse?  
in them is both might and grace,  
and that is ever well seene.

Wytnes may I none beare  
agaynst god that them can were;  
his people that noe man may dare,  
ne trowble with noe teene.

I saye this folke shall have there will,  
that noe natyon shall them gryll,  
the goodnes that they shall fulfyll  
nombred may not bee.

281–4  quo modo maledicam cui non maledixit Deus / qua ratione detester quem Dominus non detestatur (Num 23:8). Ung., p. 185. This is the one case in which Peter Comestor is closer to the text than is the Vulgate: quomodo maledicam populo, cui benedixit Dominus (Hist. Schol., c. 1238).

285–94 These lines are not in Num 23:9-10a; however, both passages, in different terms, do prophecy Israel's future greatness. Ung., pp. 185-6, cites them as parallel.
293. Theire god shall them keepe and save,
    and other reproffe shall they none wave;
    but such death as they shall have,
    I pray god send to mee.

    Balaack

297. What the dyuell ayles thee, thow populart!
    thy speach is not worth a farte!
    doted I hope that thow arte,

294. and other reproffe shall they none wave.7 no other repreve may I not have H230. The lines are awkward and obscure. The H half-stanza (229-32) would read: "Their God shall keep and save them; no other censure (repreve) may I make against them; but such death as they shall have, I pray God send to me." The number of variants in DWRB indicates that the line was also obscure to these scribes or their predecessors. WR, according to Deimling's collation, p. 95, would appear to have "have" instead of "wave" and B has "wane." R changes "reproffe" to "hurte." The reading of WR is the most lucid of the DWRB family, "and other censure (harm) shall they none have," and is close in sense to the H reading. If "wave" is equivalent to "waive" (OED v1, 6), then D might read: "Their God shall keep and save them, but they shall not escape (shun, avoid=waive) other censure (harm)." This could refer to the forthcoming disaster with the Moabite women. The H reading, that he cannot curse them against God's will, is, however, most consistent with the events in the play up to this point.


297-304 Balaack's reponse to the first prophecy is a good deal more colloquial in our play than in the Biblical text. I cite here the relevant
for madly thou hast wrought.

I bade thee curse them everycheone,
and thou blessest them blood and bone;
to this north syde thou shall gone,
for here thy deede is nought.

Tunc Balaack rex adducet Balaham ad borialem
partem montis et dicat alta voce:

passage from the Vulgate: dixitque Balac ad
Balaam / quid est hoc quod agis / ut malediceres
inimicis vocavi te / et tu econtrario benedicis
eis (Num 23:11).

The second prophecy, as noted above, is omitted
in D. The text can be found in Deimling, pp.
95-6, lines 241-56. The Biblical parallels are as
follows: non est Deus quasi homo ut mentiatur /
nec ut filius hominis ut mutetur / dixit ergo et
non faciet locutus est et non implebit (Num 23:
19). The meaning may be a little obscure.

Balaam implies that moving to another part of
the mountain and trying again will not change
God's words. Hugo of St. Victor, Sermon 77, PL
1142-45, says that when the devil cannot find
one means, he tries another (i.e., he goes to
another mountain). But, he adds, God does not
change his mind and forces Balaam to bless Israel.
This is a fairly common gloss on the passage.

Further parallels are evident: ad benedicendum
adductus sum benedictionem prohibere non valeo
(Num 23:20; H245); non est idolum in Iacob nec
videtur simulacrum in Israhel (Num 23:21a;
H246-8); ecce populus ut leaena consurget et
quasi leo erigetur / non accubabit donec devoret
praedam et occisorum sanguinem bibat (Num 23:24;
H251-6). The playwright toned down the last
part of this statement a great deal. nec male-
dicas ei nec benedicas (Num 23:25b; H257-8).
Balaham

305 A, lord, that here is fayre wonninge, halles, chambers of great likinge, valles, woodes, grasse growinge, fayre yordes and eke ryuere.

309 I wott well that god made all this, his folke to lyue in ioye and blys. that cursys them cursed hee is; whoe blesseth them to god is deare.

Balaack

313 Thow preachest, populard, as a pye; the dyuell of hell thee destroye! I bade thee curse my enimye, theryfore thow come mee to;

305-10 quam pulchra tabernacula tua Iacob et tentoria tua Israel / ut valles nemorosae / ut horti iuxta fluvios inrigui / ut tabernacula quae fixit Dominus / quasi cedri propter aquas (Num 24:5-6).

306 of supplied from H266.

311-12 that cursys them cursed hee is that warryeth them worried is H271. The sense is the same. Num 24:9bc: qui benedixerit tibi erit ipse bene-
dictus / qui maledixerit in maledictione reputa-

315-18 ad maledicendum inimicis meis vocavi te / quibus econtrario tertio benedixisti (Num 24:10bc). Ung., p. 187. This passage does not appear in Peter Comestor's account.
317 Now hast thou blessed them here thrice, for the meane mee to anoye.

Balaham

Syr kinge, I told thee ere soe thrice,
I might none other doe.

Tunc Balaham vertit se ad orientalem in plagam montis et respiciens cælum spiritu prophetico dicit: Orietur Stella ex Iacobb et exurget homo de Israel et consurget omnes duces alienigenarum, et erit omnis terræ possessio eius.

Balaham

321 Now on thinge I will tell you all, hereafter what shall bafall:

319 thrice th zwy H280. The numbers are confusing. In H, Balaam tells Balaack only twice (H205-8, 259-60); in D, only once (D261-4), since D eliminates the passage corresponding to H259-60. However, if one counts the statements in the first prophecy (D282-3, H217-8; D285-6, H221-3), then Balaam has told Balaack that he cannot curse the Israelites three and four times in D and H respectively. The more likely explanation is that D followed the Vulgate. In Num 24:10c, Balaack accuses Balaam of blessing the Israelites three times and Balaam responds that he had told Balaack before (cf. Num 22:38, 23:12, 23:26) that he could not say anything other than what God told him to.

320 A stanza (H281-88) does not appear in D.
323 a sterre of Iacob springe shall,
    a man of Israel,
325 That shall overcome and have in bond
    all kinges and dukes of strange land,
    and all this world have in his hand,
    as lord to dight and deale.

Balaack

329 Goe we: hence. yt is noe boote
    longer with this man to moote,

323 orientur stella ex Iacob et consurget virga de
    Israhel / et percutiet duces Moab vastabitque
    omnes filios Seth / et erit Idumea possessio eius/
    hereditas Seir cedet inimicis suis / Israhel vero
    fortiter aget / de Iacob erit qui dominetur et
    perdat reliquias civitatis (Num 17c-19). Peter
    Comestor (Hist Schol, c. 1239) follows the Vulgate.
    The Stanzacic Life is the same as D except for
    consurget D / confringet H Life. The remainder
    of the Vulgate prophecy (vsa. 20-24) continues in
    same manner and includes specific mention of
    Amalech, the Kenites, the descendents of Cain and
    the conquest of the Assyrians and the Hebrews by
    the Romans. The playwright, quite wisely, deletes
    these references and makes the statement a general
    one. We should note that he also deletes the
    eventual destruction of the Hebrews. The play
    identifies the just Hebrews with the Christians,
    i.e., the audience, who will benefit from the
    coming of Christ, and the last stanza (D325-8)
    clearly foreshadows the second coming and Judgment,
    a reading quite common to the Christian exegetes.

328 Between D328-29 appear the 17 spanzas of a
    Processus Prophetarum. H concludes the play with
    Balaack’s response (D329-36, H433-40) and a
    stanza spoken by the Expositor (DH441-48).
331 for god is both crop and roote
    and lorde of heaven and hell.

333 Now see I well noe man one lyue
    agaynst him is able to striyve;
    therfore here, as mote I thrive,
    I will noe longer dwell.

Balaham

here Balaham speaketh to Balaack "abyde a while":

337 O, Balaack, kinge, abyde a whyle.
    I have Imagined a merivelouse wyle,
    thy enimyse how thow shalt begyle,
    my counsell yf thow take.

341 Ther maye no pestylence them dismaye,
    neyther battell them affraye;

337-40 A half-stanza.

341-72. Ung., pp. 188-9, says that these lines are parallel
to Josephus, Ant., IV, cap. 127-30. I am not
competent to judge the Greek (see above, p. 33n26); the Latin
version does not show many parallels. To be sure, the content of
Balaam's speech is similar; however, neither the phraseology nor
sentence structure of D shows any clear dependence on the Latin
Josephus. If the playwright used Josephus, he must have borrowed from and altered
him freely. Ung., p. 191, also cites sections of
Josephus cap. 142, 147, 154, for D421-2, 434-4,
and 425-8 respectively. This material could have
been obtained from Numbers or other sources. The
general confused nature of the Doctor's last
343 plenteefull thee shalbee aye,
    of Gould, cattell and corne.

345 There god of them takes the care,
    from passions that hee makes them sure,
    them to preserve in greate pleasure,
    as hee before hath sworne.

349 Yee shall not them distroye for aye,
    but for a tyme vexe them yee maye.
    marke well now what I shall saye,
    and worke after my loore:

353 Send forth women of thy contrye,
    namely those that bewtyfull bee,
    and to thy enimyes lett them drawe nye,
    as stales to stand them before.

speech reflects the confusion in the Numbers account in Chapters 25 and 31, but there is no clear indication of dependence on the Vulgate. Josephus' account of the events in those chapters is a little clearer, but it is apparent that their general obscurity baffled even those who created the tradition which Josephus transmitted. I assume that the plot against Moses (D417-21) is intended to show the perversity of the Jews; however, the reasons for telling us that God commanded Moses to hang the offenders and that Moses did not do so is obscure. In Num 25:4-5, Moses appears to comply with this request. Phineas leads the attack against the perfidious Jews (Num 25:7-13) and Balaam and the kings are reported slain in Num 31:8.
When the yonge men that lustye bee
have perceyved there great bewtye,
they shall desyre there companye,
love shall them soe inflame.

Then when they see the have them sure
in there love, withowten cure,
the shall denye them theyre pleasure,
except the grante this same:

To loue theyre great solemnitye,
and worshipp the godes of thy contrye,
and all things commonlye,
with other people to vse.

Soe shall the theyre god displease,
and torne themselves to great disease;
then may thow have thy hartes ease,
there law when they refuse.

Balaack

Balaham, thy counsell I will fulfill;
hit shalbe done right as thow wyll.
come nere, my knight, that well can skyll
my message to performe.

The "b" lines do not rhyme: "performe-destroye."
Goe thou forth, thow valyant knight;  
looke thow ne stopp daye nay night;  
bringe those women to may sight,  
that shall my enimyes destroye.

Spare thou neyther ryche ne poore,  
wyddowe, mayde, ne ylke whoore;  
yf shee bee fresh of coloure,  
bringe her with thee, I saye.

Miles

My lord, I shall hye faste  
to doe your wyll, in goodlye haste;  
traste yee well, at the laste,  
your enimyes yee shall dismaye.

The doctor speaketh

Lordea and ladyes that here bine lente,  
this messenger that forth was sente,  
as yee have hard to that intente,  
these women for to bringe,

Soe crastelye hee hath wrought;  
the fearest women hee hath owt sought,  
and to godes people hee hath them brought,  
god knoweth, a perilouse thinge.
ffor when they ha\(\sqrt{e}\) of them a sight, manye of them agaynste right, gave them selfe with all theyre might, those women for to please;

And then soone to them they went, to have theyre lave was there intent, desyringe those women of theyr consent, and soe to live in pease.

But those women them denied; there love, the sayd, yt should be tryed, which they might not elles abyde for fere of great discyte.

Those blynde people sware many an othe, that neyther for leeffe nor for lothe, at any tyme they would have them wrothe, nor never agaynst them pleade.

Soe by these women full of Illusion, godes people were brought to great confusion, and his displeasure. in conclusion, his law they sett at naught.

God to Moyses, leeve yee now,

---

396-7 The MS has a hole in the page. The text is emended from B; cf. Deimling, p. 103 (lines 60-1).
418  bade him sett vp a gallowes tree,
     the princes of the tribes there hanged to bee
     for sinnes that they had wrought.

421  With that Moyses was sore greved,
     and generally hee them repryued;
     thercfere, the would him havemischiued,
     but god did him defend.

425  ffor the good people that tendered the lawe,
     when they that greate mischyefe sawe,
     wholye together the can them drawe,
     vpon those wretches to make and ende.

429  Anon, Phinees, a yonge man deuowte,
     captyayne hee was of that whole rowte;
     and of these wretches withowt dowbt,
     xxiiii thowsand the slewe.

433  And then god was well content
     with Phinees for his good intent,
     as the prophett wryteth verament,
     and here wee shall yt shewe:

Stetit Phinees et placavit et cessavit quassatio
et reputatum est ei ad institiam in generatione
sua &c:
Soone after, by godes commandement,
to the Madianytes the went,
and ther they slewe verament,
   Balaham with fyve gyants moe.

Lordings, mych more mattere
is in this storye then yee have hard here;
but the substans, withowten were,
   was played you beforen.

And by this prophecye, leeve yee mee,
three kinges, as yee shall played see,

-- A half-stanza.

yee have hard here_7 you see here H442. The D playwright appears to have changed this line
   to conform with the fact that the last part of
the play is in a narrative form.

this prophecye_7 these prophesies H445. The D
   reading would appear to be the more accurate
since it is only Balaam's last prophecy that
refers to the Magi's star. The change from
"prophecye" to "prophesies" is probably one in-
dication that the Procession is an interpolation
in H. The fact, on the other hand, that this
stanza is spoken in D and H over 100 lines after
Balaam makes the prophecy suggests that the
original play had neither the continuation nor
the Procession. If the interpolator of the
Prophets made the change from "prophecye" to
"prophesies," we may also have some evidence
for concluding that D made his expansion of
the play from the base text of the H Balaam
play rather than from the H text as it now stands
with the Prophets play in it.
honored at his nativitye,
     Christe, when hee was borne.

Now, worthye ayrs, both great and smale,
here have wee shewed this storye before,
and yf hit bee pleasinge to you all,
to morrowe nexte yee shall have more.

Prayenge you all, both east and west,
where that yee goe to speake the best,
the byrth of christe, feare and honest,
here shall yee see, and fare yee well.

finis.

honored

Note that the first half-stanza (449-52) is in cross-rhyme and that lines 453-6 are a half-stanza. F. M. Salter notes that the example of cross-rhyme may be the work of the reviser who wrote Play I and who made other revisions throughout the cycle. See "Banns," XV, 452. We should also note that line 452 indicates that this is the last play of the first day. The usual break, according to the lists and Banns, was after Play IX (cf. Greg, pp. 131, 161), but we know that in 1575, they started in the afternoon. If this stanza were added for that occasion, then it could not have been written by the author of Play I. See Salter, "Banns," p. 449n3.
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