An Historical Survey and Annotated Bibliography of Studies in Periodical Articles on the English Mystery Cycles

Mary Charles Kielpinski
Loyola University Chicago

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AN HISTORICAL SURVEY AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY
OF STUDIES IN PERIODICAL ARTICLES
ON THE ENGLISH MYSTERY CYCLES

by

Sister Mary Charles, C.R.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

February
1962
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the course of the Middle Ages, drama made its appearance in England in the form of religious plays. Perhaps the most important of these plays were the Mystery Cycles, which were representations of the story of mankind from the Creation to the Last Judgment. These Cycles are important because they reflect the spirit and ideals of the times during which they were produced and because they laid the groundwork upon which the great drama of the Elizabethan era was built. Since more is known about the Mysteries than about the other types of religious drama of the Middle Ages, they have gained a new importance because of the light they shed upon the medieval religious plays which are being revived with increasing frequency both in England and America.

During the last century and a half, scholars have become increasingly aware of the importance of the Mystery Cycles not only because of their role in the schema of the development of English drama, but also because of their own intrinsic merit. This renewed interest in the Mystery Cycles has led to the publication of numerous studies concerning various aspects of the plays. By consulting periodical articles on the Cycles,
the student of this phase of English drama can take advantage of the
great wealth of material already available and can become acquainted
with the problems which confront the scholar in this field. An annotated
bibliography, giving the essence of each article, can save time for the
reader by directing him to those articles dealing with the particular
aspect of the Cycles in which he is interested.

John E. Wells has made a contribution in this direction in his A
Manual of Writings in Middle English, 1050-1400, in which he records
the generally accepted views of scholars on the works published during
the Middle Ages and some of the problems encountered in the study of
these works. With its nine supplements, this Manual covers the field
up to 1945. Since the book, however, considers not only drama but all
types of writing, the bibliography is, of necessity, selective. There
is, moreover, no indication of the contents and nature of each bibliographi-
cal item listed; the author merely presents a brief summary of some of
the more prominent problems in each field. Following the pattern set
by Wells's Manual, Millet Henshaw deals very briefly with only the most
significant articles concerning the Cycles in "A Survey of Studies in
Medieval Drama, 1933-1950," published in Progress of Medieval and Renais-
sance Studies for August, 1951.

The most recent help in this area, an exhaustive list of the works
pertinent to the entire field of medieval drama, is the Bibliography
of Medieval Drama by the Reverend Carl J. Stratman, C.S.V., published
in 1954. It is the section in this book on "Medieval English Drama" that has given rise to the present work, which is an attempt to indicate, in a general way, the nature of the material to be found on the subject of the English Mystery Cycles.

Since reviews of books on the subject are readily available, the present work is limited to a discussion of the periodical articles and the several essays appearing in festschriften concerning the five major cycles in England: Towneley, York, Chester, Ludus Coventriae, and Coventry.

The annotated bibliography is intended to present brief summaries of the contents of particular articles. Arranged alphabetically, it cannot provide an adequate overview of a field as vast as that of the Mystery Cycles. The section of annotations of individual articles is therefore preceded by a chapter summarizing, more or less chronologically, the problems and trends in the scholarship on the Cycles. In this chapter are presented the varying views on such questions as the dating of the Cycles, their relation to each other, and their sources. Besides indicating the change in the trends of thought on specific problems concerning the Cycles, the summary also considers the change in attitude toward the Cycles and the change in approach in the treatment of the problems concerning the plays. A special chapter is devoted to the roles played by internal and external evidence in the study of the Cycles.

In both the summary and the bibliography, the Mystery Cycles in
general are given first consideration. In the section on the individual Cycles, Towneley is treated first since it has been most popular with contributors to periodicals; York, because of its close relationship to Towneley, is considered next. Ludus Coventriae is placed between Chester, from which some scholars claim it received its Old Testament plays, and Coventry, with which it is often confused. In every section of the bibliography, the entries are listed alphabetically according to author, but each author's works are presented chronologically under his name since this makes for a more sequential overview of the author's ideas. Such an arrangement has seemed most conducive to increasing the value of the bibliography and of the summary accompanying it.
CHAPTER II

SUMMARY OF THE TRENDS AND PROBLEMS
DISCUSSED IN PERIODICAL ARTICLES
ON THE ENGLISH MYSTERY CYCLES

I. THE CYCLES IN GENERAL

The religious drama of the Middle Ages in general and the Mystery Cycles in particular began to be considered by contributors to periodicals during the early part of the nineteenth century. The first articles on the topic tended to be very general discussions of the main facts or general views concerning the Mystery plays, and many were merely minor parts of historical surveys of English drama. Although such general articles have continued to be written up to the present day, discussions of a more particular nature began to appear during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. These discussions do not easily arrange themselves into trends since once a new phase of the subject was introduced, articles concerning it appeared sporadically from then on, rather than in related groups within a short period of time.

Before the close of the nineteenth century, the problem of the poetic merit of the Cycles and of their influence upon later drama had already
been introduced. The former topic received only slight attention at that time and was considered again only after a lapse of fifty years, but the subject of the Cycles' influence has been discussed in at least one article during every decade since its inception although no particular patterns or trends of thought on the topic can be discerned.

During the first decade of the twentieth century most of the other topics which were to appear in discussions of the Cycles were introduced. Among those which received more than passing attention were their sources, their staging, and their reflection of medieval life. Except for cursory mention in general discussions, the last two subjects ceased to be considered in separate articles after two or three decades. The problem of sources, however, which tended to be much more particularized and presented many facets for discussion, gained the attention of scholars and has remained the most popular of the subjects concerning the Cycles in general.

During the third decade of the twentieth century, two additional topics, music in the Cycles and the dramatic value of these plays, were introduced. The latter topic evoked considerable comment within a short time after its introduction and has received renewed attention during the last decade.

With the foundations laid for an understanding of the Cycles and other religious drama of the Middle Ages, the present emphasis is being placed on the creation of interest in the performance of individual plays revived for the entertainment of modern audiences. Although many of the revived plays are derived from non-cyclic sources, they owe much of their
increasing success and popularity to the wealth of information and scholarship now available on the Cycles.

The earliest articles on medieval religious drama certainly did not foreshadow any revival of the plays in revised form. The attitude of the early writers toward this drama was, at its mildest, one of apology; at its worst, one of shock at the supposed blasphemies found in the plays. From reading these articles, one gets the impression that the Mysteries were family skeletons in the closet of English dramatic history. Since someone had mentioned their existence, they would have to be included in any article purporting to discuss the history of English drama. Excuses were therefore made to account for their great popularity during the Middle Ages. It was explained that the people of the time could not be expected to demand anything else since they were unlettered, unpolished, and superstitious masses who were gullible enough to be deceived by such entertainment. Even the English verse used in the Cycles seemed to add to the degradation of the Biblical subject-matter in the eyes of the anonymous writer of an explanation of a Mystery found in the earliest periodical article on the subject: "A mystery was in fact neither more nor less than a few chapters of the Bible, stripped of all their simplicity, and of all their poetry, and converted into English verse."1

The mixture of comic antics and horse-play with serious, even solemn, subject-matter was soundly censured by early nineteenth-century writers.

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1 "Mysteries, Moralities, and Other Early Drama," RE R, I (1820), 334.
In his remarks occasioned by the Surtees Society's publication in 1836 of the Towneley Mysteries, Lancelot Sharpe laments the presence of "the most revolting blasphemy in connection with the most sacred mysteries."\(^2\) As late as 1869, an anonymous writer attempted to prove that the Mysteries were completely licentious shows by pointing out the bawdy and indecent sections and by reading into inoffensive passages similar sentiments.\(^3\)

Alongside this negative attitude toward the Mysteries and slightly stronger than the excuses of the early apologists were the attempts to justify both the existence of the Mysteries and the treatment of their subject-matter. Writers began to draw attention to the fact that nineteenth-century standards could not be used in judging the religious drama of a period so radically different from the age of the commentators. In 1875 Lady Verney expressed the opinion that since it was the proofs of the faith which were depicted in the Mysteries, the uneducated public were probably none the worse nor the less reverent for seeing represented before them the scenes of the Savior's life even though the spectacle might be marred for modern audiences by buffooneries which were not considered the least irreverent at that time.\(^4\)

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\(^2\) Lancelot Sharpe, "Remarks on the Towneley Mysteries," \textit{Ar.}, XXVII (1837), 251.

\(^3\) "Mystery or Passion Plays," \textit{EM}, CVI (December 1869), 690.

\(^4\) Lady F. P. Verney, "Mysteries, Moralities, and the Drama, \textit{CR.}, XXV (March 1875), 597.
At the turn of the century, Hamilton Mabie considered it not only a grave injustice to many generations, but also a betrayal of the lack of a sound historic sense to read into the fifteenth-century grossness and indecency of expression the moral significance they would have had in the nineteenth century. He explained the grossness, not as a matter of character but of expression. Although the medieval English people were morally sound, they were coarse in habit and in speech after the manner of the time.  

The arguments for judging the Mysteries according to the standards of their own day led to the idea that perhaps the modern drama and its supporters could learn from the Mysteries and their audiences. As critics began to look more favorably upon the intermingling of solemn and comic elements in drama, they began to sense also the need on the part of the modern theatre-goer of a moral influence similar to that exercised by the Cycles.  

It was not until the second quarter of the present century, however, that writers noted that modern man in the Western World was beginning to reconsider the medieval idea of religious drama. At that time the increasing interest in the Passion Play at Oberammergau, the King of Kings, and Ben Hur was taken as an indication that the modern age was returning to the spirit of the religious drama as a means of bringing God

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5 Hamilton Wright Mabie, "The Forerunners of Shakespeare," Qu., LXIV (January 6, 1900), 38.

6 Verney, p. 602.
to the common people. The presentation of an increasing number of Passion plays and the current appeal of Old Testament stories as subjects for moving pictures are considered further evidence that religious drama is regaining popular favor. It has even been suggested that some of the old Mysteries might give television viewers a welcome relief, especially at Christmastime, even if their simplicity would keep them from gaining a prominent place on rating scales.

To account for the popularity and effectiveness of the Mysteries in their own day, writers also stressed the fact that the Bible, before the days of the printing press, was inaccessible to the general public. Furthermore, the mass of people would have been unable to read the Bible even if they had possessed a copy, not only because of the widespread illiteracy of the times, but also because an English translation was lacking. This inaccessibility of the Biblical teachings was thought by some of the nineteenth-century writers to be an adequate excuse for the existence of the Mysteries since it was considered better that the mass of people could have access to the treasures of Holy Scripture, even though it was through the poor and feeble exhibition of them contained in the Mysteries, than that they should remain ignorant of them altogether. Later writers stressed


the idea that plays were naturally much more effective in instructing the common people than any amount of book-knowledge could have been. In fact, the Mysteries were considered a sufficient answer to those who claimed that the common people of the Middle Ages were kept in ignorance of the Bible.\textsuperscript{10}

About the time that the Mystery Cycles were emerging from under the censure accorded them by early writers, scholars began to capitalize on one of the excuses offered as an apology for including the Cycles in the history of English drama; namely, that it was only through the study of the drama of the Middle Ages that the peculiarly national traits of English drama could be understood.\textsuperscript{11} Writers early recognized the fact that without the religious drama of the Middle Ages, there could have been no Elizabethan drama. It was in the preparation of an atmosphere conducive to an appreciation of drama among the people themselves that medieval drama earned its place as an indispensable forerunner of England's great Elizabethan age. Since the Mysteries were essentially plays written by the people, performed by them, and criticized by them, they were credited with fostering the growth of dramatic talent over the entire land and with developing in the people a taste for drama that prepared the groundwork without which the Elizabethan playwrights would have been utterly lost. The Cycles therefore furnished the actors and supplied the critics without

\textsuperscript{10}T. J. McG., "Medieval Drama," \textit{Tr.}, XXVI (July 1932), 23.

\textsuperscript{11}Thomas Wright, "On the History of the Drama in the Middle Ages," \textit{BMI.}, XXXVIII (1855), 298.
which there could have been no national drama.\textsuperscript{12}

It was considerably later, after the Mystery plays had been subjected to closer analysis, that the influence of the plays upon specific areas in later drama was noted. In 1920, Ernest Kirtlan observed that, besides keeping the dramatic instinct alive through the centuries, the Mysteries contributed to the development of characterization in Elizabethan drama. In the crowds of actors and in the common people uttering their thoughts, he perceived the germ of the first, second, third, and fourth citizen in Shakespeare’s plays, of the minor characters, and even of some of the principal ones.\textsuperscript{13}

Fifty years after it was first suggested that the Mysteries were important to the national drama of England because they prepared an atmosphere suitable for its reception, the idea was reasserted in order to contradict the theory that English secular drama is directly attributable to foreign influences. It was argued that the growth of any drama cannot be measured entirely in terms of influences, that Shakespeare and other Elizabethans must have seen some Mysteries and perhaps unconsciously absorbed their first lessons in stagecraft, and that the Elizabethans, already prepared by the limited scope of the religious plays, eagerly welcomed

\textsuperscript{12}Edmund Alfred Wesley, "The English Miracle Play," \textit{PLPS.} \textbf{LIII} (1899), 151.

\textsuperscript{13}Ernest J. B. Kirtlan, "The Mystery and Miracle Plays," \textit{LQR.} \textbf{CXXXIV} (July 1920), 117-119.
more drama as an extension of this experience. 1

Despite the fact that the Mysteries reached their climax in the tragic scenes of Calvary, Charles Mills Gayley, at the beginning of this century, considered them in essence a preparation for comedy rather than for tragedy since they fulfilled the definition of comedy as a play in which the individual achieves his ends, not by revolt, but by adjustment to circumstances and convention. Because the Mysteries did not exist for the purpose of portraying immoderate self assertion and the vengeance that rides after, but the beauty of holiness and the comfort of contrition, Mr. Gayley considered them a positive contribution to the maintenance of the social organism of which the individual is an integral part. In such a setting, even the drama of the cross is seen as a triumph. 15

In the plays of Chester and Coventry, those of the second and third period of the York development, and the work of the Wakefield Master, the same author identified the introduction of those features which are essential to comedy: humor of the incidental, of the essential or real, and of the satirical. 16

Several decades later the development of this movement of the Mysteries


16 Ibid., 123.
in the direction of comedy rather than of tragedy was again brought to the fore. A study of the comic elements from their original use as comic relief to the final shifting of emphasis from the serious to the comic constituents of the Wakefield plays revealed that the Mysteries contained the germs of most of the types of comedy and comic characters later a part of English drama. 17

Because of their role in the development of English comedy, the Cycles were credited with a still more noteworthy achievement. Since it is in its comedy rather than in its tragedy that a people's temper is reflected, this orientation of the drama in the direction of the comic and realistic meant that the Cycles were establishing a definite tradition which was to identify English drama closely with English life and dissociate it from the continental and cosmopolitan atmosphere shared by the religious drama of all nations. Moreover, it was the comic element which was responsible for giving drama its independence from religion and morality. 18

The influence of the Mysteries on particular authors in England is considered in periodical articles only in regard to Milton and Chaucer. Strange as it may seem, it was Milton who was first discussed as having been influenced by the plays, rather than Chaucer who was a contemporary of the medieval dramatists. The earlier article on Milton suggested that


18 Ibid., 206.
the poet decided on the theme and medium of *Paradise Lost* because of his acquaintance with the Mysteries.\(^{19}\) Twenty-five years later, an attempt was made to show that Milton must have had at least indirect access to the Mysteries because parallels which would be somewhat unlikely to occur independently to Milton and to the authors of the plays, were found in Milton's two epics and in the York, Chester, and Ludus Coventriae Cycles.\(^{20}\)

References to the Mysteries in Chaucer were brought to light only during the sixth decade of the present century. In both articles on this subject, it is the Miller's tale which supplies examples of dramatic influence on Chaucer. The Miller is represented as speaking in Pilate's voice,\(^{21}\) and the entire tale is explained as a parody on the current Mystery pageants: the Miller is seen as a ranting Herod or Pilate; Absolon is presented as a clerk who had once played the part of Herod in a Mystery play; and the story is told at the expense of the carpenter, a member of the guild which usually produced the Noah play.\(^{22}\)

The influence of the Mysteries upon the pictorial art of the period, demonstrated in the stained windows and missal paintings, was especially

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\(^{19}\)Herbert Harris, "Was *Paradise Lost* Suggested by the Mystery Plays?" *MLN*, X (November 1895), 223.


\(^{21}\)Roscoe E. Parker, "'Pilates Voys,'" *Spec.*, XXV (April 1950), 237.

\(^{22}\)Kelsie B. Harder, "Chaucer's Use of the Mystery Plays in the Miller's Tale," *MLQ*, XVII (September 1956), 193-194.
evident in the representations of doomsday which very vividly presented the famous hell mouth of the Mysteries. Edmund Wesley viewed this correspondence between the Mysteries and pictorial art as an inevitable result of the artists' mingling with the throngs of spectators at the performances of the Cycles. In drawing attention to the portrayal of specific details and their relation to the Mysteries, John Bonnell traced the human-headed serpent of Christian art to the York and Chester plays which depicted walking and speaking serpents. In a later article he suggested that the Mysteries influenced the German and Flemish artists who pictured Cain's weapon as the jawbone of an ass. Since there seemed to be no Continental foundation for such an idea, he assigned it to the only possible source, English tradition, specifically in the Cursor Mundi and the Lyff of Adam and Ewe. It seemed unlikely to him that Continental artists, who, like most members of their profession at that time, were unlearned, would have read these works, but both the Towneley and Hegge Cycles explicitly mention the jawbone, and Mr. Bonnell considered it entirely possible that the artists had at least some indirect contact with the idea as presented in these plays and reflected this contact in their paintings.

23 Wesley, pp. 150-151.


The intriguing subject of sources and origins followed closely upon that of the influence of the Cycles and soon surpassed it in popularity as a topic for discussion. In the first decade of the twentieth century the problem established itself as an interesting one, and every decade since then has produced a number of articles on the subject. The earliest writers concerned themselves primarily with the occasions which gave rise to the Cycles and to the models upon which they were fashioned. Before long, however, interest became more particularized as scholars began to seek the sources and inspiration of specific incidents, groups of plays, and interpolations although more general discussions also continued to be written.

Some of the early writers who had shown contempt for the Mysteries because of their seeming irreverence, suggested that the objectionable features could be traced to the fact that the religious drama was inspired by pagan rituals and festivities. 26 This idea was soon modified by the suggestion that the horse-play found in the Mysteries as they became more secularized could be attributed to the influence of the folk plays which were common during the Middle Ages. 27 To the folk play, too, have been attributed the ideas which influenced the characterization of the devil and of certain of the less admirable historical characters depicted in

26 "Mysteries or Passion Plays," pp. 671-672.

the Cycles. The most recent article on the subject rejected completely
the idea that the plays were a combination of pagan and Christian ritualistic
symbols and considered them Christian to the core.

The processional character of the plays and their association with
the feast of Corpus Christi suggest some bond between the plays and the
processions held on that day, but Hardin Craig did not consider such a
connection as absolutely necessary to account for the processional presen-
tation of the plays. A year later, Merle Pierson, after enumerating the
six commonly accepted hypothetical stages of development in the relation
between the craft plays and the processions, listed records of Corpus
Christi processions and plays in thirty-one towns. In only one, York,
did she discover a possible example of the important fourth stage, spoken
drama in the procession. Since church records from the time of the
flourishing of the Cycles, which would probably supply valuable information
on the subject, are unavailable, Lawrence Blair studied records of the late
fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries in an attempt to encourage an at-
titude of reserve toward belief in the stage-by-stage detachment of the


525.


30 Hardin Craig, "The Corpus Christi Procession and the Corpus Christi

Play," JEGP, XIII (October 1914), 602.

31 Merle Pierson, "The Relation of the Corpus Christi Procession to the

Corpus Christi Plays," TWA, XVIII (1915), 164.
pageants from the Corpus Christi processions. These records indicate that each church had either a procession or a play; both were not presented by the same group. Mr. Blair admits that such evidence is necessarily inconclusive since it represents a late period of the Cycles, but he suggests that it may be an indication of what took place earlier.  

The study of sources, however, is primarily concerned with discovering the prototypes of literary works. In this field, as in others, scholars differ in their opinions which can be grouped into three main classes. Early writers merely predicated Latin or foreign originals, making no attempt to prove their assertions. The next view to gain attention was that all the major Cycles drew their material from a common vernacular archetype. Contradicting this theory was the belief that each Cycle was composed of plays already existing in the locality and organised into a whole for the occasion of the Corpus Christi festivities. Most of the explanations in the discussions of this problem tended to be merely variations or adaptations of these three theories.

The liturgy's importance as a source of the Cycles was practically uncontested. Its influence was noted especially in the basic modes of dramatizing the material of sacred history as seen in the "Processus Prophetarum," the details of content and order in the Christmas group.

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32 Lawrence Blair, "Note on the Relation of the Corpus Christi Procession to the Corpus Christi Play in England," MLN, LV (February 1940), 95.
and the details of text and of treatment in the Resurrection group.  

Although the scenes intimately connected with the Resurrection and Nativity were easily traceable to the liturgical tropes, there remained the problem of accounting for the other plays which rounded out the cycle from the Creation to the Last Judgment. It had long been taken for granted that the Old Testament plays grew out of the "Processus Prophetarum" which introduced the Christmas group. Hardin Craig, however, preferred to treat these plays as preliminary scenes to the drama of the Passion and Resurrection rather than as an introduction to the Christmas story. He argued that the Old Testament plays bring out the full significance of the Passion and Resurrection and can be traced to the lessons and responsories of the period from Septuagesima to Lent, the preparation for Easter. To strengthen this theory, Miss Jenney demonstrated that the main characters of the Old Testament plays were those Biblical figures mentioned in the ritual between Septuagesima and Passion Sunday. As her most important argument she presented the parable and homily for Septuagesima in which the period from Creation to Judgment is symbolized by five hours, each dominated by one of the Biblical characters around whom the Old Testament group of the Cycles is built.  

33 Mary Hatch Marshall, "The Dramatic Tradition Established by the Liturgical Plays," PMIA, LVI (December 1941), 965, 987, 991.  
34 Hardin Craig, "The Origin of the Old Testament Plays," MP, X (April 1913), 473, 484.  
for a particular play, "Moses and the Table of the Law," in which the treatment of the subject points directly to the liturgical and homiletic material of the Lenten season.36

The source of the Passion plays was also frequently discussed. Although Continental Mysteries could be traced directly to the lyrical "Planctus Mariae," it was shown that in the English Cycles, these lamentations were extrinsic to the main portion of the plays and could be deleted without damaging the unity of action.37 Hardin Craig attributed the theory that the Passion plays grew out of the "Planctus Mariae" to the failure to comprehend the very first principle governing the invention of the religious drama in the ninth century, namely, that its origin was dramatic: it had action, impersonation and dialogue. His explanation of the origin of the Passion plays was based on the principle of dramatic extension. It seemed proper to add to the plays of the Resurrection the events that went before it; for this reason, the Passion group was added to the Cycles.38

Closely linked to the liturgy as sources of the cyclic plays were

36 P. E. Dustoor, "The Origin of the Play of 'Moses and the Table of the Law,'" MIR, XIX (October 1924), 462.

37 George Coffin Taylor, "The English 'Planctus Mariae,'" MP, IV (April 1907), 636.

Biblical and apocryphal writings. Studies of these sources have become popular within the last forty years and still present a vast field for exploration. One of the first articles on the subject, a discussion of angelic singing in English drama, attempted to demonstrate that the tradition of angels singing did not arise from the Gospel accounts of the visits of angels to earth but from the natural confusion during the Middle Ages between angelic singing and the singing of the elders mentioned in the Apocalypse.\(^{39}\) The use of the Eve-concept to set forth the fundamental truth of woman's high place in God's plan was traced to the Vulgate.\(^{40}\) Although the same is true of the basic story of Abraham and Isaac, the variations in Isaac's age and his replacing Abraham as the hero of the story have been attributed to legendary, apocryphal, and traditional sources.\(^{41}\) Both ranting tyrants of the Cycles, Herod and Pilate, are a combination of such material. The portrayal of Herod as a more violent character than he is in the Gospels has been justified by the accounts of him found in the Apocrypha.\(^{42}\) Pilate, too, is shown to be, not the


Pilate who found no fault with Jesus, but the unpopular, tyrannical and ruthless official of history, legend, and homily.\textsuperscript{43} Perhaps the study of other Biblical characters would yield similar interesting information.

The relation of the Cycles to English lyrical literature has been treated sporadically during the present century. Although the "Planctus Mariae" were early discounted as possible direct sources of the Passion plays, George Coffin Taylor demonstrated that the Cycles do have themes in common with the vernacular religious lyrics of the day. His study revealed that besides this thematic relationship, lyrics were often added either entirely or in part to the plays or else were closely paralleled in the plays.\textsuperscript{44} In an article treating the lyrics which can be isolated from the plays, Miss Pearson expounded the same theory, claiming that the isolable lyrics were not the work of the playwrights but poems incorporated from other existing works.\textsuperscript{45}

References to the poetical merit of the Cycles themselves had already been made in some of the early discussions of the plays. For the most part, these were general statements, such as there are "some germs of poetry and delicacies of expression."\textsuperscript{46} In 1883 an entire article was devoted

\textsuperscript{43}Parker, Spec., XXV, p. 243.

\textsuperscript{44}George Coffin Taylor, "The Relation of the English Corpus Christi Plays to the Middle English Religious Lyrics," MP, V (July 1907), 13.

\textsuperscript{45}In Emily Pearson, "Isolable Lyrics of the Mystery Plays," ELH, III (September 1936), 251.

\textsuperscript{46}"The Drama in the Middle Ages," NM, II (March 1853), 224.
to the discussion of poetry in the English Mysteries. The author attributed the inspiration of the poetry as well as of the subject-matter to the dramatists' strong faith which enabled them to combine simplicity with vividness of language and to blend human weakness and naturalness with things divine. The quaint simplicity and unevenness, noticeable in the Towneley plays, were presented as examples of the beauty of the old writing. 47 Two years later another writer again attributed the literary merit of the Mysteries to the ideas which inspired them but stressed the fact that it was in the elaboration of those episodes which appealed to the emotions that the poetic power of the playwright was most evident. 48 After a lapse of more than forty years there was a reappearance of the general acknowledgment of "touches of poetry" in the Towneley Prophets', Shepherds', Scourging, and Crucifixion plays. 49 At the same time another scholar was warning prospective students of English medieval drama of disappointment if they sought literary beauty in the Cycles. 50

The expressly lyrical portions of the Mysteries were considered as

48 Davida Coit, "The Poetic Element in the Medieval Drama," AM, LVI (September 1885), 407.
49 Carroll, p. 88.
unique contributions to English religious poetry, and their apparent defects in smoothness and melody were attributed simply to the change which the English language has undergone. In defense of this theory that the Cycles possess poetic merit, Miss Pearson suggested that it would be futile to seek the characteristics of modern or even of Elizabethan lyrics in medieval poetry. She described the medieval lyric as didactic, narrative, and long, yet possessing the unity of emotional attitude required in such a poem. It was these qualities that she sought as she studied the lyric passages of the Cycles.

The more practical question of how the Cycles were presented has kept the interest of scholars over the years in discussions centered upon the type of stage, the machinery, and the acting employed in presenting the plays. In considering the stage on which the plays were presented, most writers use the words pageants and scaffolds interchangeably, but D. J. Medley distinguished between them by using scaffolds to denote smaller structures which accompanied the great pageant wagons and were presumably used to represent places other than that of the main action. Whatever the situation may have been, all writers agree that the great care expended on maintaining these wagons precludes the idea that they were loosely constructed vehicles; they must have been well-built and sturdy enough to withstand the rough wear

51 Goit, p. 415.
52 Pearson, p. 229.
53 D. J. Medley, "The Setting of the Miracle Plays," TGAS, V (1906), 64.
to which they were subjected and to warrant the expense lavished upon them. Whether these pageants were fixed or movable remains a controversial issue, but most writers are willing to concede that though it seems probable that movable wagons were more popular in England than on the Continent, both kinds were probably found in England. Those who argue for the stationary wagons describe them as a series of fixed stages.

In discussing the appearance of the wagons, Mr. Medley again presents a view counter to the more or less accepted one that the stages consisted of several platforms arranged one above the other to represent the different worlds. He argues that this idea was the result of confusion between the stages themselves and the structures erected for the spectators.51.

Not much is known about the machinery used in producing the effects desired, but an early issue of The Theatre contains an interesting picture of the mechanisms employed to create the impression of hell and its tortures.55 Other devices, such as trap doors, ladders, and openings in the roof of the stage, are inferred from stage directions in the plays.

Besides the fact that the standards of acting were set by a board and strictly enforced, there is little else known about the actual performance of the Cycles. J. Swart distinguished two styles of acting: a formal style for parts derived from the liturgical drama, and a naturalistic one for the comic parts.56 In his article, D. J. Medley compared the presentation

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51 Ibid., 60.
56 Swart, p. 135.
of the Mysteries to children's play with its curious mixture of symbolism and realism. The simple means for localization of various scenes, the use of ladders in plain view of the audience, and the acceptance by the spectators of two or three actors as a crowd demonstrate the few demands for reality made by the audience and their ready acceptance of simple representations of ideas.\footnote{Medley, p. 64.}

That music helped to create the impression of realism was demonstrated in discussions of the use of cyclic music which were undertaken during the third decade of the twentieth century. The initial article, considering the role of angelic singing in the Mysteries, attempted to demonstrate that most of the songs were adaptations of the Gregorian chants and served definite dramatic functions in the plays, such as the localization of heaven, the indication of the passing of angelic messengers, and the solemnization of religious ceremonies. No instances of songs being allotted to the enemies of religion were discovered.\footnote{Moore, p. 92.}

That the medieval playwrights knew music is considered evident from the speech of the shepherds in the two Towneley Shepherds' plays.\footnote{Carroll, p. 88.} Fletcher Collins, however, who made a study of the types of music in the Cycles, pointed out that this talk about the polyphonic singing of the angels by the shepherds merely demonstrates the particular playwright's knowledge
of such music; it does not reflect the popular understanding of the subject. He considered the common playwright and audience more conversant with folk music in its various forms.60

Some confusion was caused by the ambiguous use of terms. Mr. Collins claimed that music in the Cycles was not incidental but dramatically integrated in the plays.61 R. W. Ingram called the music of the Cycles incidental, but then proceeded to explain his use of the term to mean that the music was necessary to the proper development of the action.62

Although discussions of various phases of the Cycles provide interesting information, it is not sufficient to study these works in a vacuum. Any literature must be properly placed against the background of its own times and, conversely, any literature reflects the times during which it was produced. Both facets of this principle were taken up during the early part of the century by those interested in understanding medieval drama.

Early writers began by examining the Cycles as reflections of medieval life, recognizing them as storehouses of local dialects and customs. Later, the thought was introduced that perhaps the modern reader should look for an explanation of the seeming coarseness and indecency of the plays in the undeveloped, uneducated state of society during the Middle Ages. The

60 Fletcher Collins, Jr., "Music in the Craft Cycles," PMLA, XLVIII (September 1932), 616.

61 Ibid., 621.

broad and healthy philosophy of the times made possible the presentation of religious subjects without constrained gravity. 63

Since the plays were written for a popular audience, they were studied as a faithful transcription of the life of the class which composed the bulk of that audience or, what is equally instructive, as embodying the ideas of that class concerning the ways of those greater than themselves. 64 K. M. Carroll used the Towneley Cycle to illustrate the wealth of allusion to contemporary custom and ideas contained in the plays. In them he indicated references to the plight of the poorer classes and their complaints against their overlords, their social history and thought, their religious controversies, and their mental and moral state. 65 Scholars recognized the fact that, through a study of the plays, one could realize how closely medieval life was bound up with the Church, and the student of literature could learn, to a certain extent, to see life through the eyes of the Middle Ages. 66

As a result of the Renaissance and Reformation, society underwent many changes which were considered by most authors as the chief reason for the discontinuance of the Mysteries. Lady Verney explained that with

64 Medley, p. 64.
65 Carroll, pp. 81-89.
66 Schutt, p. 11.
the decay of the simple religious spirit, which alone could render such representations decent, the disorders attending the performances of the plays became such that the Cycles were prohibited. 67 Edmund Wesley offered several more tangible reasons for the discontinuance of the plays. Though the dissolution of the monasteries was popularly supposed to have brought about the termination of the Cycles, he suggested that the suppression of the trade guilds by Henry VIII was the real cause while, at the same time, Puritan influences strongly militated against the plays. 68 The loss of most of the manuscripts was attributed by R. W. Chambers to their destruction at the hands of Protestant prelates. 69

In studying the texts and the municipal records regarding the regulation and production of the York Mary plays, Miss Mill traced the beginning of the end of the Cycles. In 1548 the plays of the Dying, Assumption, and Coronation of the Virgin were ordered left out. During the reign of Mary Tudor there was a brief resurgence of the forbidden group, but in 1561 the plays were deleted and the final interdict was issued against them. The shortened Cycle was destined to outlive the Mary plays by only a few years. 70 Reflecting the temper of their times, the Cycles ceased to exist

67 Verney, p. 601.
68 Wesley, p. 149.
when the conditions which had nourished them were no longer present.

That the recognition of the close relationship between the times in which they were presented and the popularity of the plays is a prerequisite for appreciating the dramatic quality of the Mysteries was emphasized by George R. Coffman in his plea for studying the Cycles as dramatic art. He insisted that since the plays were meant to be presented, and were presented, receiving popular acclaim, they must have fulfilled the dramatic standards of the day. To evaluate these plays dramatically, therefore, he urged that the scholar approach them from the point of view of the interested medieval spectator. 71

This plea opened a new field of discussion. Mr. Coffman contended that if the plays had been lacking in dramatic appeal, they would not have maintained their popularity for such a long period of time, nor would they have achieved their purpose of religious instruction among the poorer classes. In his opinion, dramatic effectiveness can be discerned only through the study of the Cycle as a unit, not of the individual plays, because it was the entire Cycle which was intended as a compendium of religious instruction for the common people. 72

In the following year, Robert Withington took up the discussion of the plays as drama but disagreed with the idea that the plays were important because of what they were; he insisted that their importance lay in what


72 Ibid., 411-424.
later developed from them. He also found dramatic effectiveness in the non-historic characters rather than in the unified Cycles.73

In her study of the dramatic structure of the York plays, Miss MacKinnon carried out Mr. Coffman's suggestion by considering the Cycle as a unit. Her division of the Cycle into preparation, central action, and conclusion suggested a plan to be followed in similar studies of the other Cycles.74 Following the same idea, Waldo McNeir attempted to demonstrate that both thematic and structural unity can be found in the Cycles by viewing the Passion plays as the core, the tragic climax of the unit.75 Viewing the problem of the dramatic value of the Cycles from another point of view, Miss Dunn considered the plays examples of conscious artistry since they include the general pattern of conflicting forces, verbal beauty, and complexity required by Aristotle in a drama.76

This present-day interest in the dramatic value of the Cycles is certainly far-removed from the attitude of the early nineteenth-century scholars who preferred to pass over quickly the mention of the Mysteries. Since the revival of the plays for presentation on the modern stage, scholars are not the only ones interested in knowing more about this type of drama.

73 Robert Withington, "The Corpus Christi Play as Drama," SP, XXVII (October 1930), 576-578.
75 Waldo F. McNeir, "The Corpus Christi Passion Plays as Dramatic Art," SP, XLIII (July 1951), 602-603.
76 Catherine Dunn, "The Miracle Play As an Art Form," CAQ, XIX (Easter 1956), 56.
Medieval drama is returning once again to the attention of the people as mention is being made of it not only in scholarly journals but also in magazines of a more popular nature. What will be its effect on modern drama remains to be seen.

II. THE INDIVIDUAL CYCLES

TOWNELEY

The Towneley Cycle is unquestionably the most popular one with contributors to periodicals, for more than one-fourth of the articles on the Cycles are devoted exclusively to the Towneley group. It was the first Cycle about which a complete article was written, and its popularity as a topic for discussion has steadily increased as scholars vie with one another in making their contributions to a better understanding of the plays which present so many interesting phases for study. Unlike the discussions of the Cycles in general, the articles on the Towneley plays group themselves naturally into trends concerned with the various unsolved problems in connection with the Cycle. The questions of the place of presentation, relation of Towneley to the York Cycle, analogues to the Mak story, the authorship of the "Secunda Pastorum," and the date of the Wakefield Master each evoked a spirited exchange of ideas even though decisive answers to most of these problems will probably never be achieved.

During the last decade of the nineteenth century, the question of the place of presentation of the Towneley plays was introduced. The consideration of this problem was to reach its climax in the 1920's and then be dropped
because of the lack of new evidence. During the same decade, sources for
the allusions in the "First Shepherds' Play" were sought, and the play
began its career as the second most popular one for discussion.

The first decade of the twentieth century saw a number of topics in-
troduced. Among these were the dating of the Shepherds' plays, which would
be taken up later as part of the problem of dating the work of the Wakefield
Master; the study of revisions within the Cycle, which continued through
the next decade; and the relation of the Cycle to the liturgical drama,
which was treated only sporadically.

In the following decade three popular subjects were introduced: the
study of sources other than the liturgical drama, the Wakefield group of
plays, and the "Second Shepherds' Play," whose long list of articles began
with discussions of analogues to the Mak incident. Textual studies began
in the twenties and have continued to the present day. The problem of the
relationship of the Towneley Cycle to the York plays was introduced into
periodicals only at the very end of the twenties although the work which
provoked this discussion, Miss Iyle's book on the original identity of the
two Cycles, had been published ten years before. During the next decade
this relationship was studied in particular plays rather than in the Cycles
in their entirety. The most recent articles on the Towneley Cycle continue
the types of studies introduced earlier but, as in the relationship to
York, solutions to problems are being sought in the study of individual
plays rather than of the cyclic unit.

The very earliest discussion of a particular problem in the study of
the Towneley plays was begun by Walter Skeat in 1893 when he suggested that Widkirk, a tradition in the Towneley family as the locality of the plays, was the archaic pronunciation of Woodkirk, a place near Wakefield. This statement brought about the first of Matthew Peacock's numerous contributions on the subject. After refuting Widkirk as the locale on the grounds that there is no trace of such a former pronunciation, he championed Wakefield because of its appearance in the manuscript, the mention of local place-names in the plays, and the conditions in Wakefield favoring the existence of a Cycle. After three similar articles by the same writer, Mr. Skeat defended his choice of Widkirk on the basis of a manuscript annotation to the effect that the Towneley plays were connected with "Wydkirk." Seventeen years later, Mr. Peacock added to his previous arguments portions of sixteenth-century records of the proceedings of the Wakefield Burgess Court commanding every craft to being forth its Corpus Christi pageant. Russell Potter opposed this inference, stating that the records merely prove that there were plays in Wakefield, but not that these were the Towneley plays.

80 Matthew Peacock, "The Wakefield Mysteries," TLS, (March 5, 1925), 156.
defense of his theory, Mr. Peacock answered that he did not consider the records alone as sufficient proof, but that the records confirmed previous evidence in favor of Wakefield. After two more articles, which repeated the same arguments endorsing Wakefield, the subject was dropped except for Louis Wann's conclusion, after an examination of the manuscript, that though Wakefield cannot be discounted as the original home of the Cycle, the locality must remain an open question because of lack of conclusive evidence.

Another topic about which only suppositions can be made is that of the revisions which contributed to the development of the Cycle until it reached its final form. F. W. Moorman predicated three layers of workmanship: the primitive Cycle, the borrowings from York, and the work of the Wakefield Master. Although Frank W. Cady agreed that two editors improved the primitive Cycle, he interchanged Mr. Moorman's last two groups because the York borrowings do not contain the couplets common to the other two groups. In a later article he traced the evidence of four editors in the Towneley Passion plays: the Wakefield Master, a couplet editor, the York borrower, and a quatrain editor, the last two of which he considered identical.

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83 Louis Wann, "A New Examination of the Manuscript of the Towneley Plays," PMIA, XLIII (March 1928), 150.
85 Frank W. Cady, "The Couplets and Quatrains in the Towneley Mystery Plays," JEPS, X (October 1911), 573, 583.
Miss Frank, on the other hand, rejected the idea of revisions of the entire Cycle at any one time since the text of all the plays did not remain in the custody of one man. She maintained that it was individual plays that were revised and borrowed at various times and that this continual rewriting and borrowing of old plays from other Cycles was sufficient to account for the origin of certain resemblances, both in structure and in phrase, that are otherwise not readily explainable.87 Except in articles concerning the work of the Wakefield Master, the question of mass revisions was not discussed at any length in later articles.

The study of sources for the Towneley plays resembled similar studies for the Cycles in general. The liturgical drama was the primary source accepted by most writers on the basis of the similar framework found in the Nativity and Resurrection plays in the various Cycles.

In addition to the liturgical drama and to the liturgy itself, Middle English poetry was also considered as a source of some of the Towneley plays. The Northern Passion, composed about the first half of the fourteenth century, was suggested by Miss Foster as a source of the Towneley Passion plays on the basis of general similarity of outline and verbal parallels. In accounting for these resemblances, she concluded that the playwright naturally preferred to use the English metrical paraphrases of the Scriptural stories rather than to translate the Latin of the liturgy.88 Miss Miller agreed,

87 Grace Frank, "Revisions in the English Mystery Play," MP, XV (December 1917), 565.
explaining that verbal parallels were fewer wherever the playwright attempted to avoid the commonplace by employing more originality.\textsuperscript{89} For similar reasons a Middle English metrical version of the Ten Commandments, "Speculum Christiani," was suggested as the source of a passage of the Towneley "Play of the Doctors."\textsuperscript{90}

About the same time that sources of the plays were being sought, attention was drawn to the "Second Shepherds' Play," which was to become the topic of at least one-fourth of the articles on the Towneley Cycle. The contrast between its realistic and comic atmosphere and the solemn Bethlehem scene upon which it was built appealed to scholars who saw in the play opportunities for study and discussion. Many of the articles concerned Mak and his escapade, and it was the discovery of analogues to this incident which opened the long series of discussions dealing with the play.

Analogues of the sheep-stealing incident involving Mak were brought to light throughout the thirty-year period from 1916-1945. Their appearances at various places and with only accidental details changed led to the classification of the story as folklore. The one major change made by the playwright, Mak's punishment rather than his escape, was shown to have been a necessary revision since evil could not go unpunished in a religious play.\textsuperscript{91}

\textsuperscript{89} Frances H. Miller, "The Northern Passion and the Mysteries," MLN, XXXIV (February 1919), 88-92.

\textsuperscript{90} Carleton Brown, "The Towneley 'Play of the Doctors' and the 'Speculum Christiani,'" MLN, XXXI (April 1916), 223.

\textsuperscript{91} M. T. Parrott, "Mak and Archie Armstrong: What Professor Kolbing Left Unsolved," MLN, LIX (May 1944), 303.
That the incident belonged to the realm of folklore was substantiated by the large assortment of analogues from various localities and periods. Albert S. Cook recounted three appearances of the story: in the play, in what purported to be an authentic history of the last half of the eighteenth century, and in an early nineteenth-century ballad. Since he left the veracity of the history account unsettled, he could not definitely discount the possibility that the ballad might have been merely a recounting of this narrative.92 Two years later, Albert C. Baugh declared that the incident definitely belonged to the province of folklore in the light of a fifteenth-century novella by Giovanni Sabadino.93 In 1932 J. B. Whiting uncovered a late Latin story in the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius, a work not unknown to the Middle Ages. Though the story differed in details, it corresponded in essentials to the incident in the play.94 American analogues were added to the growing list two years later. One, found in the *Congressional Record* of the Seventy-Second Congress, was told by a southern Senator, and a similar story, reported to have occurred in North Carolina, was re-told by Will Rogers. The discoverer of these two stories also found a story strikingly similar in details in *Cuentos Asturianos*, a Spanish


93 Albert C. Baugh, "Parallels to the Mak Story," *MP*, XV (April 1918), 734.

Later the South contributed another version localized near Augusta, Georgia.

Although M. T. Parrott did not add any new analogues to the Mak incident, he was the first to attempt to answer the question whether the play or the nineteenth-century ballad, "Archie Armstrang's Aith," was closer to the folklore tradition. Since the play had to be tempered by the Nativity theme it was meant to portray, he concluded that the ballad more closely resembled the original than did the play. After studying thirteen analogues from six different countries, Robert C. Cosbey agreed with Parrott that the source of all of them was folklore and that the playwright was the adaptor who had to make his play conform to the requirements of a burlesque parody of the Nativity scene.

The possibility of identifying the author of the "Secunda Pastorum" was introduced by Oscar Cargill's suggestion of Gilbert Pilkington whose signature was inscribed in a manuscript containing the Northern Passion as well as a romance, the Turnemant of Totenham, which was similar in technique to the "Secunda Pastorum." After predicating Gilbert Pilkington as the author of all three works—the Northern Passion and the Turnemant on the basis of their inclusion in the same manuscript, and the "Secunda Pastorum"

95 H. M. Smyser and Thomas B. Stroup, "Analogues to the Mak Story," JAF, XLII (October-December 1934), 378-381.
96 Thomas B. Stroup, "Another Southern Analogue to the Mak Story," SFQ, III (March 1939), 5.
97 Parrott, p. 303.
because of its general similarity to the Turnemant in the handling of 
comic situation and the realistic treatment of native character—he traced 
the manuscript from the Pilkingtons to the Towneleys through the agency of 
a Charles Pilkington, the guardian of Sir John Towneley, founder of the 
family library. 99 Miss Foster attacked the theory, first of all, on the 
grounds that the manuscript in which the name is found is an unreliable 
one, and no other manuscript attributes the Northern Passion to Gilbert 
Pilkington. She proceeded to show that the great discrepancy in the dates 
of the Northern Passion and the play preclude any possibility of their 
having been written by the same man, and that mere inclusion of two works 
in a manuscript of miscellanies is insufficient to predicate one author 
for both. 100 Although Miss Foster's article had already dealt the death 
blow to the Gilbert Pilkington theory, Mendal G. Frampton presented sup-
plementary arguments against Pilkington's authorship of the Turnemant of 
Totenham when he explained that the London location of the action of the 
Turnemant would have been unfamiliar to the Lancashire author of the Northern 
Passion. In addition, he argued that there was no connection between the 
Pilkington of the manuscript and the one who was the guardian of John 
Towneley. 101 Thus, within a very short time the tempting proposition of

99 Oscar Cargill, "The Authorship of the 'Secunda Pastorum,'" PMIA, XII (December 1926), 829.

100 Frances A. Foster, "Was Gilbert Pilkington Author of the 'Secunda Pastorum'?" PMIA, XLIII (March 1928), 127, 131.

101 Mendal G. Frampton, "Gilbert Pilkington Once More," PMIA, XLII (September 1932), 626-635.
attributing the most interesting of the Cycle plays to a particular author was abandoned because of the complete lack of any basis for such an attribution.

Textual studies, which made their appearance about thirty-five years ago, were of two kinds: those involving emendations in already existing editions and those concerned with interpretations of passages in the text. The first type of study, inspired by the increased accessibility of the Towneley manuscript after its acquisition by the Huntington Library, considered especially the Old Testament and the Wakefield groups. Half of the textual interpretation studies concerned the elucidation of passages in the "Secunda Pastorum" as scholars attempted to make the play more understandable by explaining the dialectical expressions and phrases commonly used in the Middle Ages.

While textual investigations were establishing themselves among the studies concerning the plays, the attention of scholars was being turned to the possible relationship between the Towneley Cycle and that of York. Most scholars agree that the Towneley plays are closely related to those of the York Cycle, but the exact extent of the relationship has not been satisfactorily defined. Before the appearance of the idea of a common parent Cycle, Frank W. Cady predicated a common liturgical source for the Nativity and Resurrection groups of both Cycles whose resemblances in general structure, arrangement and phraseology he considered remnants of translations from the Latin. 102

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After Miss Lyle's presentation of her "original identity" theory in 1919, discussions centered upon its possibility and that of the more widely accepted theory of borrowings from York. Grace Frank contended that the theory that York and Towneley were originally one as Cycles cannot be proved; therefore, she preferred to posit the identity of individual plays rather than of the entire Cycles. After briefly restating her theory that the York and Towneley Cycles were originally one, Miss Lyle answered the difficulties regarding the uneven quality of the plays in both Cycles by maintaining that revision, which in the Cycles was always erratic, was taking place continually even during the parent-cycle stage, and the plays which seem more advanced in York are merely revisions of plays which Towneley kept in the simpler form.

In the midst of the discussion of ideas of original identity and borrowings from York, Mr. Cady restated his theory that Towneley, York, and Coventry represent three entirely distinct growths from the same liturgical source. John Harrington Smith, on the other hand, supported Miss Lyle's theory by proposing a practically en bloc borrowing from York at some time at least one revision removed from Burton's list, therefore, about


105 Frank W. Cady, "Towneley, York, and True-Coventry," SP, XXVI (July 1929), 386.
Some scholars preferred to make their contributions to the problem of the relation of Towneley to York in the form of studies of particular plays. In the first of these studies, Miss Rogers viewed the reduction of speakers' parts in the "Pharao" play from seven in York to four in Towneley as a matter of economy on the part of the Towneley playwright. Her study, however, advanced neither the parent-cycle theory nor that of direct borrowings from York since she did not consider the evidence in the play sufficient to determine whether the modifications had been made upon a parent-cycle play or upon one borrowed from York. 107

Without explicitly suggesting the existence of a parent Cycle, other writers demonstrated that some of the Towneley plays were at least derived from early versions of extant York plays. Chester G. Curtiss, who attempted to demonstrate that the Towneley "Harrowing of Hell" was based on an early version of the York play, used the raciness of humor and improved characterization in Towneley to disprove the supposition that it is the early York text in toto. 108 A study of the same play by Mandal Frampton attempted to account for the metrical differences between Towneley and the original

106 John Harrington Smith, "The Date of Some Wakefield Borrowings from York," PMLA, LIII (June 1938), 600.

107 Genevieve Rogers, "Reduction of the Speakers' Parts in the Towneley 'Pharao,'" PQ, IX (April 1930), 217.

York version, which was very regular, by attributing the irregularities to a trimeter-writing editor who did the Towneley revisions. The same writer extended his studies of the relationship between Towneley and York to several other plays in the Cycle. He suggested that the "Conspiracio et Capcio" was indebted almost entirely to York except for the opening Last Supper scene. In the "Processus Talentorum," considered a late edition to the Cycle because Towneley already had a casting of lots scene, Mr. Frampton discovered a stanzaic and metrical organization found elsewhere only in York. He also found the injection of Pilate into the scene to be peculiar to York, having been featured in the Millers' play of Burton's 11:20 list, but discarded in 11:22.

The Brewbarret interpolation in the York Cain play presented a unique situation. It was the only case in which the suggestion was made that there was a possibility of York's having borrowed from Towneley. After stating the existence of this possibility, Miss Trusler rejected it because her studies led her to conclude that since the York interpolation does not exhibit structural unity, it was probably the work of a splicer rather than of an author, and it was not influenced by the Towneley play in which the corresponding episode is structurally complete. If there was any influence,

109 Mendal G. Frampton, "The Towneley 'Harrowing of Hell,'" PMLA, LVI (March 1941), 119.
110 Mendal G. Frampton, "Towneley XX: The Conspiracio (et Capcio)," PMLA, LVIII (December 1943), 934.
111 Mendal G. Frampton, "The Processus Talentorum (Towneley XXIV)," PMLA, LIX (September 1944), 654.
she would suggest that it was that of York upon Towneley. Mr. Frampton more definitely assigned the original idea to York, the borrowing to an early Wakefield editor, and the complete revision into the Pikeharnes of the extant Towneley play to the Wakefield Master.

Although many of the discussions of other individual plays present interesting information, no controversial issues are raised except in those articles considering the Towneley-York relationship. Even the discussions of the "First Shepherds' Play," second in the number of articles devoted to it, are isolated studies bearing little relation to each other. Noah's wife, though, has received attention similar to that shown Mak. The tradition of her stubbornness has been traced to the early part of the eleventh century in England and even earlier on the Continent, where it appeared in works of the Rhenish school of art. Miss Mill agrees that the legend of the stubbornness of Noah's wife was not the dramatist's invention since it was found in early Mohammedan as well as European tradition.

The date of the writing of the Wakefield Master's portion of the Towneley plays was the subject most under discussion during the second half of

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112 Margaret Trusler, "The York 'Sacrificium Cayme and Abell,'" PMLA, XLIX (September 1934), 959.

113 Mendal G. Frampton, "The Brewbarret Interpolation in the York Play the 'Sacrificium Cayme and Abell,'" PMLA, LIII (September 1937), 900.

114 Katherine Garvin, "A Note on Noah's Wife," MLN, XLIX (February 1934), 88-90.

115 Anna Jean Mill, "Noah's Wife Again," PMLA, LXI (September 1941), 613-626.
the nineteen-thirties. Already in 1905 an attempt had been made to date the composition of the two shepherds' plays by a study of their music.

Since the shepherds in the first play sang only a round, and those in the second a three-part descant, Miss Traver concluded that the author had progressed in his musical knowledge during the time between the writing of the first and the second plays. She dated the first play early in the second half of the fourteenth century, and the second toward the close of the century.\textsuperscript{116} Both are rather early dates when compared with later estimates.

Mendal Frampton tended to set the date of the Master somewhat later, that is, within the second quarter of the fifteenth century. He based his arguments on costume allusions in the plays attributed to the Wakefield Master, on an historical investigation of conditions favorable to the maintenance of a Cycle in Wakefield, and on bibliographical evidence regarding the borrowings from York.\textsuperscript{117} From his conclusion that the character of Pikeharnes in the Towneley Cain play was a development of Brewbarret, interpolated into the corresponding York play during the second decade of the fifteenth century, he sought to confirm the theory that the Wakefield Master could not have written before the second quarter of the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{118}

Although John Harrington Smith's evidence from Mak's costume seemed to suggest

\textsuperscript{116}Hope Traver, "The Relation of Musical Terms in the Woodkirk Shepherds' Plays to the Date of Their Composition," \textit{MLN}, XX (January 1905), 1-5.

\textsuperscript{117}Mendal G. Frampton, "The Date of the Flourishing of the Wakefield Master," \textit{PMIA}, L (September 1935), 631-660.

\textsuperscript{118}Frampton, \textit{PMIA}, LII, p. 900.
that the Master wrote at the end of the fourteenth or the beginning of the fifteenth century,\textsuperscript{119} his later article, by accepting the theory of a practically en bloc borrowing from York about 1400, agreed with Mr. Frampton's dating of the Master.\textsuperscript{120} As a final argument for a late flourishing of the Master, Mr. Frampton insisted that the "Processus Talentorum," discarded by the York Millers in 1422, could not possibly have been adopted by Towneley before 1425, and some time must have elapsed before the Master revised it.\textsuperscript{121}

Very few, if any, of the problems concerning the Towneley Cycle have been solved. Perhaps that is the reason why the Cycle remains of interest to scholars, who seem to be turning now to the analysis and discussion of the dramatic value of individual plays in the hope of discovering some new clue to aid in the solution of these problems.

\textbf{YORK}

In general, the York plays pose fewer problems than do those of Towneley. Their place of origin is agreed upon, the dates of many of the plays can be at least approximately estimated by studying Burton's lists, and no one has attempted to attribute any play to a particular dramatist. The chief

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\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{119}John Harrington Smith, "Another Allusion to Costume in the Work of the Wakefield Master," \textit{PMIA}, LII (September 1937), 901.
\item \textsuperscript{120}Smith, \textit{PMIA}, LIII, p. 600.
\item \textsuperscript{121}Frampton, \textit{PMIA}, LIX, p. 654.
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importance of the Cycle seems to be in its influence upon the other Cycles, especially Towneley.

The very earliest paper devoted entirely to the York plays was a rhyme-index published just before the turn of the century. During the first three decades of the twentieth century, periodical articles discussed the Middle English metrical sources of the plays. At the end of this period, writers turned their attention to the relationship between York and Towneley. Most of the articles on the topic, however, were inspired by a desire to solve the Towneley problems rather than by interest in the York Cycle itself. Recent studies have been rather erratic, with no articles directly relating to York during the last few years.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, scholars were interested in the metrical sources used in the composition of the York plays. The influence of the Middle English Northern Passion was considered especially evident in the arrangement of the sequence of events in the Passion plays. Together with the Gospel of Nicodemus, the Northern Passion was studied as the foundation of whole plays. Since both Towneley and York contain similar material probably borrowed from the Gospel of Nicodemus, the dating of these borrowings after 1400 was used as a means of discrediting the parent-cycle theory, which posited the separation of the Cycles about 1390.

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122 Foster, MLN, XXVI, p. 171.
123 Miller, p. 92.
Although it was the parent-cycle theory which was responsible for much of the attention which the York plays received, the earliest parallels drawn were those between the York and Coventry "Play of the Doctors." The first explanation given for the parallels was that Coventry had adapted the play from York with very few alterations.125 Further study, which showed that similar parallels could be drawn between Towneley and Chester, led Alexander Hohlfeld to pose the question which has never been satisfactorily answered: "Were the other plays taken directly from York or partly from each other?"126 About a decade later, John C. French predicated a common original for all four plays.127

This common original, in the case of York and Towneley, was considered by Frank Cady to be a common liturgical source, which would account for the resemblance in general structure and arrangement as well as parallel phraseology.128 In a later article, the same author added Coventry to the list of parallels, considering all three Cycles as entirely distinct growths from the same liturgical source.129 This idea contradicts both the parent-cycle theory of Miss Lyle and the theory of Towneley borrowings from York.

125 Charles Davidson, "The Play of the Weavers of Coventry," MLN, VII (March 1892), 185.
127 John C. French, "A Note on the Miracle Plays," MLN, XIX (January 1904), 32.
128 Cady, PHLA, XXIV, p. 423.
129 Cady, SP, XXIV, p. 386.
As far as particular plays are concerned, there is no York play to rival the Towneley "Secunda Pastorum." Not individual plays, but groups, such as the Old Testament, Passion, Easter, and Mary plays, were discussed. The Old Testament plays were considered important primarily because of their relation to the corresponding Towneley plays as were the Passion plays, which were treated chiefly in discussions of such topics as assignment of lines to characters, expense accounts of the performing crafts, and revision of the plays. There is no relation between the two articles on the Mary plays. In one the words of the four songs in Play XVI were traced to the Legenda Aurea rather than directly to the liturgy or the Vulgate. The other article presented a summary of the last years of the Mary plays after the Reformation. Only one play, "The Dream of Pilate's Wife," was discussed from the viewpoint of human interest. In the preparation made for the retiring of Pilate and his wife, Eva Freeman pointed out that the guild of the Tapiteres and Couchers seized an opportunity to advertise its wares. None of these studies, however, developed into a series of articles in which several authors discussed their findings.

Despite the fact that the York Cycle was often considered the source of the other Cycles, its popularity with scholars has been overshadowed by these other Cycles, especially by Towneley, which is probably most indebted

131 Mill, MLA, LXV, pp. 866-876.
132 Eva Freeman, "A Note on Play XXX of the York Cycle," MLN, XLV (June 1930), 392-394.
to it. Towneley's greatness as a Cycle is often attributed to its borrowings from York, but York is indebted to Towneley for much of the attention it has received in periodical articles.

CHESTER

The Chester plays have the distinction of being most often suggested for revival. During the first decade of the century several articles were written precisely with the intention of gaining an appreciative public who would support an attempt to have the plays re-enacted.

Before the end of the nineteenth century, discussions had begun on particular problems concerning the Chester Cycle. Interest in the relation of the Chester play of Abraham to that of Brome on the same subject was aroused in 1890 and has lasted until the present. Among the early twentieth-century articles were discussions of theories concerning the author of the Cycle, followed by articles on the dating of the plays. Consideration of possible sources, which appeared only in the third decade of the twentieth century, did not gain much attention. At the end of the next decade came mention of the play of Antichrist, the only play besides that of Abraham which was considered individually. During the last twenty years, no new topics have been considered, and articles on previously introduced subjects have been limited in number.

The most discussed topic in regard to the Chester plays is the subject of authorship. In an early discussion of the Mysteries in general, Ralph
Higden, the Chronicler, was named as the author of the Cycle. Most discussions which consider the possibility that Higden might have been the author agree on designating him a monk although they differ in spelling his name. Lady Verney called him Randall Higgenet, a monk of Chester, who composed certain Mysteries in Latin and later translated them into English. To this information she added that at a later date these Whitsun plays were altered and made into a Cycle by a certain Sir Henry Fraunces, also a monk. Arthur Francis Leach, who called the idea of a monkish origin for the Chester plays guesswork, traced the allusions which might have contributed to this idea. In the Harleian Ms. 2124, the plays were assigned to Don Randle Higgenet of Chester Abbey; in the Harleian Ms. 1944, they were called the work of one Randall, a monk of the Abbey of St. Warburgh in Chester and mention was also made that the first mayor, Sir John Arneway, caused them to be played. Mr. Leach concluded that since plays were often attributed to any monk known, there was nothing unusual in the Cycle's being ascribed to Randolph Higden, author of the Polychronicon, the great medieval encyclopedia of English history. After dating Higden's birth about the middle of the thirteenth century and noting that an early sixteenth-century compiler did not mention the plays in his list of Higden's works, Joseph Bridge assembled all the available documentary evidence on the topic. The

133 "Mysteries, Moralities," p. 333.
134 Verney, p. 599.
Banns of 1475 and 1570 and the Proclamation of 1520 mention Arneway as the deviser, but the Proclamation considers Francis, a monk, as the writer, while the Later Banns name a Dom Randall. Two versions of a manuscript account of the plays by Archdeacon Rogers, c. 1575, agree on Randall as the writer, but disagree on the dating of Arneway's mayoralty. To these findings, Mr. Bridge added the evidence in the Harleian manuscripts. Without committing himself to any decision in the matter, he concluded his article with the remark that, despite this evidence, the leading authorities are not inclined to accept the Higden theory.\textsuperscript{136} In a later article, Mr. Bridge acknowledged that it is quite possible that Henry Francis and Ralph Higden may have translated and revised some of the plays and rendered literary help in reducing the Cycle to unity, but that is all that can be said with certainty.\textsuperscript{137} As late as 1951, Arthur Brown still considered Higden's authorship worthy of a close study before being set aside despite the confusion concerning the dates of Arneway's mayoralty.\textsuperscript{138}

Closely connected with the question of authorship was the problem of dating the Cycle. If the plays were produced during the first year of the mayoralty of John Arneway, the Cycle existed as early as 1327. If this


\textsuperscript{137} Joseph C. Bridge, "Three Chester Whitsun Plays," \textit{JCM}, XIV (1908), iv.

date is accurate, the Chester plays present the earliest indication of the vernacular in the Cycles. Albert S. Cook presented as confirmation of such an early dating a "Sermon Against Miracle-Plays," presumably by a fourteenth-century Wycliffite. Upon investigation, Mr. Cook found that the Chester Cycle is the only one containing both the Antichrist and the Doomsday plays mentioned in the sermon. Assuming that the preacher had this Cycle in mind, he assigned the plays to 1350 at the very latest. Other scholars, however, objected to pushing back the date of the Cycles as far as possible even in an attempt to ensure complete continuity with the liturgical drama. Mr. Swart contended that available data proves only that the Cycles existed all through the fifteenth century and possibly as early as the last quarter of the fourteenth. He does not agree therefore that the Chester Cycle can be dated earlier than 1375.

Although the Chester plays are related in material and form to the other Cycles, only in two cases has any particular study been made of this relationship. The possibility that Chester supplied the Old Testament plays for Ludus Coventriae was considered in detail in articles discussing the latter Cycle. The only single play, however, which received considerable, if intermittent, attention was the play of Abraham's Sacrifice, found in every Cycle and also in non-cyclic versions. In attempts to discover whether the Chester or the Brome play on this subject was the earlier version,

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140 Swart, p. 132.
scholars have arrived at different conclusions depending upon the principles underlying their studies. Although the two plays are substantially the same in general features, the great difference in stanza form precludes any mere transfusion of the play from one manuscript to another. Alexander Hohlfeld considered the extant Brome manuscript as a corrupt form of an older version, adopted by Chester with the adjustments necessary to make the stanza form correspond to that of the rest of the Cycle.\footnote{Alexander Hohlfeld, "Two Old English Mystery Plays on the Subject of Abraham's Sacrifice," \textit{MLN}, V (April 1890), 237.}

Because the Chester play is simpler, has a definite didactic intention, and seems closer to the liturgical drama, Carrie Harper arrived at the conclusion that it was an earlier play though it was not necessarily the source of the Brome play. She considered a common source for both plays more probable.\footnote{Carrie A. Harper, "A Comparison Between the Brome and Chester Plays of 'Abraham and Isaac,'" \textit{Radcliffe College Monographs}, XV (1910), 73.}

From a study of the meter of the two plays Margaret Dancy Fort concluded that the Chester play, whose meter is uniform, is the earlier version while the Brome play with its irregular meter represents the work of a reviser who neglected metrical form for dramatic effect.\footnote{Margaret Dancy Fort, "The Meters of the Brome and Chester Abraham and Isaac Play," \textit{FMLA}, XLI (December 1926), 839.}

The latest article on the subject has returned to Hohlfeld's theory that both the Chester and Brome plays are based on an earlier version of Brome. J. Burke Severs reached this conclusion through a careful study of the verbal agreements between the plays and the confusions of order, the
wrongly-assigned speeches, and the clumsy transitions in Chester. 144

Interest in the play of "Antichrist," the only other play discussed at any length, centered upon the manuscript rather than the text. F. M. Salter dated the manuscript some time after 1467, when the Early Banns were published, and before 1488, when an addition to the Cycle altered the number of "Antichrist." 145

Although the discussion of French influence did not gain much prominence in English and American periodicals, foreign scholars and authors of complete works on the Cycles did consider the subject at some length. Albert C. Baugh summarized this scholarship on French influence, distinguishing three periods: the first, keynoted by an unwillingness to deny the possibility of French influence, yet a hesitation to accept it as proved; the next, dominated by assurance of its existence; and the third, characterized by a tendency to deny the existence of such an influence. Mr. Baugh himself was of the opinion that probably somewhere in the development of the Cycle the influence of the French dramatic tradition had been felt. 146

These discussions of the authorship and dating of the Cycle, its relation to other Cycles, and the possibility of French influence make up the bulk of the articles concerning the Chester plays. The main reason for

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144 J. Burke Severs, "The Relationship Between the Brome and Chester Plays of 'Abraham and Isaac,'" MP, XLII (February 1945), 150.


the numerous general discussions of the Cycle was the interest in reviving and modernizing the plays, particularly the Nativity group. In this respect, the Chester Cycle exemplifies the modern trend to acquaint the public with the religious drama of the Middle Ages.

LUDUS COVENTRIAE

The Ludus Coventriæ was the last Cycle to be taken into consideration by scholars. Not until 1906 did even a general discussion of the Cycle appear. In the following decade particular problems such as the place of presentation, sources of the plays, and the manner of their presentation were introduced and continued to be discussed during the next two decades. Following the comparatively recent trend of considering the dramatic value of the Cycles, studies of the Ludus Coventriæ during the last two decades have centered upon the existence of unity in the Cycle.

The Ludus Coventriæ shares with the Towneley plays the fact that it has problems peculiarly its own. In fact, the very name of the Cycle, Ludus Coventriæ, is misleading, and most authorities agree that it is a misnomer, causing confusion between this Cycle and that of Coventry. The cause of this confusion has been traced to a note in the hand of a seventeenth-century librarian who incorrectly titled the manuscript, Ludus Coventriæ Sive Ludus Corporis Christi.147 To avoid being misunderstood, many writers

147 Madeleine Hope Dodds, "The Northern Stage," AR³, 3rd ser. XI (1914), 38.
call the plays the Hegge Cycle after an early owner of the manuscript.

In attempting to solve the problem of the place of presentation of the Ludus Coventriae, scholars have little definite evidence to aid them. One of the earliest writers on the subject quoted passages from the Banns as indications that the plays were written for strolling players. In answer, Madeleine Dodds presented several difficulties which would result from this hypothesis. All the available evidence indicates that the strollers performed single plays which lasted no more than two or three hours and that the companies were small, containing as a rule half a dozen players. The Ludus Coventriae, on the other hand, was so long that it would have taken nearly a week to act; furthermore, individual scenes often required a great many characters, and extra persons were sometimes introduced quite unnecessarily. Although she admitted that the Cycle splits up into separate plays, Miss Dodds still considered it to have been arranged deliberately, if clumsily, as a Cycle.

In 1913 Hardin Craig suggested that these plays were probably identical with the lost Lincoln plays. It seemed plausible to him that the Hegge Cycle, which was unique in the possession of a group of plays dealing with the nativity and childhood of Mary, fulfilled the description of the Lincoln Corpus Christi plays later transferred to St. Anne's day. In addition, the requirement in Lincoln that each alderman supply a gown for a king would

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148 Leach, p. 233.

149 Madeleine Hope Dodds, "The Problem of the Ludus Coventriae," MIR, IX (February 1914), 80.
agree with the inclusion of thirteen kings in the Hegge Prophets' play. To these arguments he added information which suggested that both Lincoln and Hegge had a combination of processional and fixed plays. Even the play of the Assumption and Coronation, which he considered a late addition to the Cycle, presented no difficulties in the matter of dialect or content to deter him from predicating Lincoln as the location of the plays.  

Although the suggestion of Lincoln as the home of the Cycle appealed to other scholars, Mr. Craig's final argument was rejected by W. W. Greg who maintained that although the Assumption was in a different hand from that of the rest of the Cycle, it was not a late addition, since it was corrected and rubricated by the scribe who wrote the bulk of the manuscript which is available today. In a later article defending Lincoln as the home of the Ludus Coventriae, Mr. Craig added evidence from the Lincoln Corporation Minute Book of the early fifteenth century which pointed to an identification of the Corpus Christi play with the plays noted on St. Anne's Day, and of the sixteenth century which listed stage properties which could have been used in presenting the plays in the Hegge Cycle. He also attributed the remarkable homiletic and apocryphal interest of the Hegge Cycle to the fact that Lincoln was a great ecclesiastical center in which there was a close and intimate connection between the cathedral clergy and

150Hardin Craig, "The Coventry Cycle of Plays," A, No. 4477 (August 16, 1913), 166.

151W. W. Greg, "The Coventry Cycle of Plays," A, No. 4481 (September 13, 1913), 262.
the people of the town.152

The year after Mr. Craig published his theory, Miss Dodds, without making any reference to the Lincoln hypothesis, suggested Durham as the home of the Cycle. She based her assumption on the fact that, although there is no trace of the text of the Durham plays, the manuscript of the Ludus Coventriae contains the signature of its owner, "Robt. Hegge, Dunelmensis." Since Robert Hegge was supposedly interested in antiquities and came from a family which displayed this same interest, Miss Dodds concluded that he would have been just the person to have found and preserved the Mystery plays of Durham, his native town. She saw little conflict in the fact that the great body of the plays was composed in the East Midland dialect since she conjectured that the manuscript was compiled in the East Midlands but was brought to Durham where additions were made. To support the possibility of such a transfer, Miss Dodds noted that the monastery of Durham had a cell near Stanford and held estates in Lincolnshire, both in the East Midland area.153

In another article during the same year, Miss Dodds claimed that Bury St. Edmunds might have been the East Midland place of compilation of the Cycle since she considered it possible that one of the clerks who wished to compile a Cycle for some particular occasion could have composed one from

152Hardin Craig, "Note on the Home of the Ludus Coventriae," University of Minnesota Studies in Language and Literature, I (1911), 73, 80, 81.

153Dodds, ArA, XI, p. 38.
the collection of manuscripts of craft guild plays and dumbshows deposited in the religious house for safe-keeping. She conjectured that the manuscript drifted from Bury St. Edmunds to Durham in the sixteenth century.154

A later writer seemed to ignore Miss Dodds's proposition as he contributed to the list of stage properties available in Lincoln and suitable for the Hegge plays. In the Treasurer's Inventory of 1536 in the Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, there is an item listing "a rede coope called the Rutte of Jesse." Herbert Hartman related this garment to the unique Hegge Prophets' play which is a fusion of the art representation of the Radix Jesse and the conventional English "Prophetae."155 This piece of evidence was the last one contributed to the discussion of the problem of the home of the Ludus Coventriae, which will probably remain unsettled unless scholars can find substantial evidence to uphold their claims.

Another problem which seems incapable of solution is the question of whether the Ludus Coventriae consisted of processional pageants or whether the plays were performed on a fixed stage. Arguments are available to support both possibilities. After stating the commonly accepted opinion that the Ludus Coventriae was presented on one fixed stage, Elbert Thompson considered it a fair inference that the extant Cycle at least was derived from one whose plays were acted in groups by a few companies on their respective vehicles. He based his statement on the ease with which the Cycle can be

154 Dodds, MLR, IX, p. 90.
155 Herbert Hartman, "The Home of the Ludus Coventriae," MLN, XLI (December 1926), 530.
grouped into plays and upon the introductions to the several groupings, each suggesting that pageants were being shifted. In answer to the arguments which suggested that the plays were stationary, he contended that both the Coventry and Chester Cycles presupposed a stage display as varied and imposing as that prescribed in the stage directions of the Ludus Coventriae, and that even at craft plays the audiences were sometimes seated. 156

Hardin Craig favored the theory that there was a combination of processional and fixed plays in the Cycle. 157 In a later article, however, he qualified this statement by claiming that the Hegge plays were once evidently processional plays connected with the Corpus Christi procession, but in the form preserved, were obviously acted on a stationary stage since the records of the Lincoln Cordwainers reveal that the pageants in the St. Anne's Day Sights were dumbshows. Since there would certainly not have been two sets of pageant wagons in use at the same time, he concluded that the Cycle plays were evidently performed on a fixed stage. 158

The origin and development of the Cycle posed other problems since the Hegge Cycle shows signs of having been composed of plays from several cyclic sources. Elbert Thompson noted discrepancies, such as repetitions of scenes, which suggested that some sort of amalgamation had taken place. Since the Cycle is metrically irregular throughout, he rejected metrical tests as

157 Craig, A, No. 4477, p. 166.
158 Hardin Craig, "The Lincoln Cordwainers' Pageant," PMIA, XXXII (December 1917), 610-615.
possible aids in solving this problem. 159

Miss Dodds presented the theory that the Cycle was composed of five groups amalgamated into a rather clumsy whole. Starting her study with the Prologue, the main body of which she ascribed to a Cycle belonging to N-town, she attributed its expansion to an attempt to include a number of plays interpolated about the year 1468 when someone took the old Cycle of plays and amalgamated with it several other Cycles which he had before him. From a study of these interpolations, Miss Dodds observed that all the plays were selected to fulfill the twofold object of the compiler, namely, to convey instruction and to honor the Virgin. On the basis of such an amalgamation, Miss Dodds mentioned the necessity of identifying not merely N-town but also the five other places from which she conjectured that the interpolations had been adopted. She named the Lincoln Cycle as the source of the girlhood of Mary series but made no attempt to suggest possible sources for the other interpolations. 160

Howard Patch, on the other hand, distinguished only two groups in the Cycle. As the home of the first group, consisting of the Prologue and those plays that agree with it in subject-matter and verse structure, he suggested Northampton, Norwich, or Newcastle, while he thought the additions might have originated in Bury St. Edmunds or Lincoln. 161

159 Thompson, p. 19.
160 Miss Dodds, MHR, IX, pp. 86-89.
161 Howard Rollin Patch, "The Ludus Coventriae and the Digby 'Massacre,'" PMIA, XXXV (July 1920), 324-327.
Miss Block rejected the theory of a simple expansion of the proclamation or prologue to correspond with the interpolation of several plays. Her explanation suggested that the interpolations were made in a compilation already containing similar plays. In this way, she accounted for the existence of duplicate plays and series of plays in the Cycle.\textsuperscript{162}

In contradiction to the emphasis on the haphazard organization in the \textit{Ludus Coventriac}, two recent articles have attempted to show that the Cycle did have essential unity. Miriam Benkovitz demonstrated that the "Prologue of Demon," which introduced the first play of the Passion group, forced the heterogeneous group of plays into a fairly well-ordered union by making evident the basic theme of the Cycle, the antagonism between the redemptive forces of good and the destructive forces of evil.\textsuperscript{163}

Also stressing the importance of theological doctrine as the key to unity was an article explaining that unity was achieved in the Cycle through the Patristic abuse-of-power theory of the Redemption, which supposes that Satan lost his power over mankind when he abused it by bringing about the death of Christ, who was not subject to the law of death. The author pointed out the special care taken by the dramatist to intensify this conflict between Christ and Satan even in those plays in which it does not usually have an important role. He considered Miss Benkovitz's theory of the "Prologue

\textsuperscript{162}K. S. Block, "Some Notes on the Problems of the \textit{Ludus Coventriac}," \textit{MLR}, X (January 1925), 56-57.

\textsuperscript{163}Miriam J. Benkovitz, "Some Notes on the 'Prologue of Demon' of \textit{Ludus Coventriac}," \textit{MLN}, LX (February 1945), 79, 85.
of Demon" as an important phase of this unification.

Another problem was created by the supposition that the original Cycle contained no Old Testament plays but that these plays in Ludus Coventriæ were modelled after the ones in the Chester Cycle and inserted later by an editor who used the Prophets' play to connect the themes of the Old and New Testaments. Thomas Blake Clark, who suggested this theory, based his arguments on the fact that neither Richard James, who in 1629 acquired the original manuscript from Robert Hegge, nor William Dugdale who referred to the manuscript in the Antiquities of Warwickshire, Illustrated, mentioned the existence of Old Testament plays in the Cycle. In his claims he overlooked the fact that most authorities consider James and Dugdale unreliable.

In answer to Mr. Clark's supposition, Albert Baugh agreed that it was not altogether impossible that the cycle originally had no Old Testament plays, but he pointed to a lack of proof to support this idea. He noted, on the other hand, that detailed studies and descriptions of the manuscript and the language of the Ludus Coventriæ Old Testament plays have shown that these plays existed from the beginning of the Cycle, and that the similarity between the Chester and Ludus Coventriæ plays could be extended to the

164 Timothy Fry, O.S.B., "The Unity of the Ludus Coventriæ," SP, LXVIII (July 1951), 528, 529, 568, 569.

Although the *Ludus Coventriae* gained considerable attention from scholars, it seems significant to note that particular plays were studied almost exclusively only when they showed promise of contributing to the solution of one of the major problems of the Cycle. Perhaps this peculiarity is due to the fact that the Cycle itself became the object of discussions at a much later date than did the other Cycles. The appearance in 1953 of an article on the function of Play Fourteen seemed to constitute an initial step in the study of individual plays, but no other contributions have as yet been made.

**COVENTRY**

Since there are only two extant plays of the Coventry Cycle, very few periodical articles have been devoted to it. The Weavers' play received attention during the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of this one, but it took thirty years before the second play received any attention. Recognition was given to the play of the Weavers primarily because of its similarity to corresponding plays in the other Cycles. The play, entitled "The Presentation in the Temple and the Disputation with the Doctors," has its heart in the disputation section of which sixteen stanzas directly parallel the second scene of the York play, considered by Charles Davidson as the older of the two. Mr. Davidson also suggested that the

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Albert C. Baugh, "A Recent Theory of the *Ludus Coventriae*," *PQ*, XII (October 1933), 403-406.
Coventry guild probably adopted the York play with few alterations but that Robert Croo in the sixteenth century changed the wording and occasionally a sentence to suit his own ideas of polished diction. 167

Having had his interest aroused by Mr. Davidson's notes on the subject, Alexander Hohlfeld studied the corresponding Ludus Coventriae play and concluded that the Coventry play was completely independent of it. He suggested that further studies be made to see if the same sixteen stanzas paralleled the corresponding plays in Towneley and Chester, since such parallelism would raise the question of whether all four versions were taken from an older version of the York play or if they were partly taken from each other. 168

No one followed Mr. Hohlfeld's suggestion, but during the next decade John French made a study of a newly edited text of the play. He found that the Weavers' play paralleled not only the sixteen stanzas of the second scene of the York play, but that it paralleled the entire play. He attributed Mr. Davidson's "new introduction" to the change in a few lines by the Doctors. 169

It was almost thirty years later before the other Coventry play was discussed in its own right. Then, it was considered important only because of the character of Herod who "rages in the pageant and on the street also." Thomas Stevens suggested that Herod descended to the street by means of a

167 David, pp. 184-185.
spiral stair. In a general article on Herod, Roscoe Parker pointed out that the "outheroding Herod" deplored by Hamlet can be traced in England only to the Coventry play.

No other material for discussion has been considered in relation to the Coventry plays which have not even been mentioned in general discussions for the past two and a half decades.


CHAPTER III

THE ROLES OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EVIDENCE
IN STUDIES OF THE MYSTERY CYCLES

Whether based on internal or external evidence, the studies of the Mystery Cycles have made substantial contributions to the store of knowledge concerning these plays. Though both types of evidence have been used whenever possible, the dearth of complete and accurate records from the era during which the Cycles were produced has been a hindrance to a conclusive solution of some problems and has resulted in a heavy reliance upon internal evidence as proof of many theories. Many very plausible conclusions, therefore, will probably remain in the realm of conjecture unless documentary evidence will be discovered to confirm those theories which have already been widely accepted.

Problems such as the relationship of the Cycles, their sources, and even the type of acting in the plays, are dependent for solution almost entirely on internal evidence. In considering the relationship between the Cycles, scholars have spent much time studying the actual texts of the plays. These studies have led to various conclusions. Some scholars, notably Frank Cady, consider each Cycle as an independent growth from the same liturgical source as its fellows which resemble it in structure and in phrase.\(^1\) Others,

\(^1\) Cady, SP, XXVI, 386.
observing the same resemblance, predicate for the Cycles the very close relationship of actual identity some time in the vernacular stage of development, or the borrowing of individual plays from another Cycle.² The latter theory, as applied to York and Towneley, has been supported by recourse to Burton's Lists of 1415 and 1420 as proof that individual Towneley plays were borrowed from early York productions.³

Similarly, the evidence for non-dramatic sources of the plays is practically all internal. From resemblances in phrase and technique between the plays and non-dramatic poetry of the period, as well as apocryphal writings, legends, and even pictorial art, conclusions have been drawn as to the sources of the material in the plays. The Northern Passion and the Gospel of Nicodemus have been accepted as sources for both the York and Towneley Cycles which borrowed heavily from vernacular metrical paraphrases of Scripture rather than from the Latin texts of the liturgy.⁴ In similar studies the Apocrypha and the writings of the early Fathers have been considered the impetus for the portrayal of Herod and Pilate as ranting, raving tyrants.⁵ The characterization of Noah's wife and the details surrounding

²Lyle, PMIA, XLIV, 319; Frank, PMIA, XLIV, 318.
³Frampton, PMIA, LIII, 86; Smith, PMIA, LIII, 600.
⁵Parker, Spec., VIII, 67; XXV, 243.
Cain's crime both have been traced to common legends.⁶ Even pictorial art has been credited with contributing a very important idea, that of the use of the Tree of Jesse as the basis of the unique Hegge Prophets' play.⁷

Although account books of the guilds record fines for poor acting, it is to the plays themselves that scholars have had to turn for indications of the type of acting done in the Cycles. J. W. Robinson studied the stage directions of the plays and found that although much of the acting was formal rather than naturalistic, there were many places in the plays where more realistic acting was not only allowed but even recommended.⁸

Two of the Cycles, Towneley and Ludus Coventriae, present the specific problem of their place of presentation; both have been assigned locations by a combination of internal and external evidence. After exhausting the internal arguments for Wakefield as the home of the Towneley plays, Matthew Peacock turned to the Wakefield Burgess Court Records of the sixteenth century to prove that plays had been enacted in Wakefield, the town mentioned in the manuscript.⁹ Even though the records, since they are of a late date, do not conclusively establish Wakefield as the home of the Cycle, many

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⁶ Garvin, MLN, XLIX, 89; Oliver F. Emerson, "Legends of Cain," PMLA, XXI (December 1906), 831-862.

⁷ John Kester Bonnell, "Source in Art of the So-Called Prophets' Play in the Hegge Collection," PMLA, XXIX (July 1914), 327.


scholars have accepted the available evidence and refer to the Towneley plays as the Wakefield Cycle.

The location of the home of the Ludus Coventriae presents a more complicated problem than does that of Towneley. Most scholars, however, tend to accept Hardin Craig's suggestion of Lincoln, established on the basis of the evidence that the Childhood of Mary plays were most appropriate for presentation on St. Anne's Day, the time when the Lincoln plays were performed. To this and similar arguments, Mr. Craig added entries from the Lincoln Corporation Minute Book listing stage properties and expenditures which could have been connected with the production of the plays of the Hegge Cycle. Entries from the Cathedral's "Treasurer's Inventory" regarding costumes appropriate for the plays also strengthened his argument.

Only in one Cycle, that of York which presents the fewest problems of its own, are there any definite documentary sources of information. In municipal records and guild accounts, Miss Anna Jean Mill has discovered some references to the last years of the Cycle. From them she traces the downfall of the Cycle as it was foreshadowed in the discontinuance of the Mary plays and as it was exemplified in the gradual decrease in expenditures for the plays noted in the Bakers' Accounts after the Reformation. In another article, based on the Chamberlains' Rolls and Accounts in the York

10 Craig, U. of Minn. Studies, I, 80.
11 Hartman, MLN, XLI, 530.
City Archives, she presents the decrees governing the stations at which the York pageants were presented and gives a list of the various stations during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. With this information she confirms the idea that the fifteenth century was the time of the Cycles' greatest vigor.  

Although much has been learned from studying the plays themselves and although the meager documentary sources available have corroborated the material gleaned from internal evidence, many problems remain unsolved. The real problem is the lack of definite information from the days when the Cycles were being formed and from the time of their greatest flourishing. If such evidence should some day be found, many of the problems only tentatively solved will probably be ended to the satisfaction of all.

CHAPTER IV

THE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. THE CYCLES IN GENERAL


In her study of the characterization of Eve in the Mystery Cycles, the author finds that all the Cycles follow the Vulgate account rather closely in the main details. She considers the Eve-concept the means which the Cycles used to set forth the fundamental truth of woman's high place in God's plan.


In his comparison of Greek and medieval English drama, the author considers first their similar origin in connection with religious festivals. He attributes the difference in their development to the restrictions inherent in the organic unity of theme and in the didactic purpose of the Cycles as contrasted with the opportunities in Greek drama for a separate genre of comedy which knew no restrictions.

Blair, Lawrence. "Note on the Relation of the Corpus Christi Procession to the Corpus Christi Play in England," Modern Language Notes, LIV (February 1940), 83-95.

Since churchwarden accounts from thirty-six churches of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries show that each church sponsored either a pageant or a procession at Corpus Christi time, but not both, the author suggests that the two spectacles were always separate affairs. He admits, however, that since these are late records, the evidence is inconclusive and does not necessarily invalidate the theory of gradual detachment of the pageants from the processions with which they are thought to have been originally connected.

To substantiate his theory that the portrayal of a human-headed serpent in Christian art is attributable, not to myth or tradition, but to a convention in the medieval Mystery plays, the author quotes passages from the York and Chester Cycles in which the serpent is represented as a walking and speaking creature.

Since there is no foundation in Scripture for the tradition that Cain killed Abel with the jawbone of an ass, the author is of the opinion that its appearance in German and Flemish art can be traced to such works as the Cursor Mundi and The Lyff of Adam and Eve. As the means by which the unlearned artists of the time became acquainted with this exclusively English tradition, he suggests at least indirect contact with the Towneley and Hegge plays, which had absorbed the idea from early legends.

Boughner, Daniel C. "Retribution in English Medieval Drama," Notes and Queries, CXCIII (December 1953), 506-508.

As an illustration that medieval English drama was already groping its way towards the concept of retribution in tragedy, the author cites Ludus Coventriae 18 and 20, in which Herod, the cruel tyrant, faces a horrible death in punishment for his evil ways. It is Herod's tyrannical character which prompts the author to consider him the forerunner of the Senecan villains of Elizabethan drama.

Brown, Carleton. "Sermons and Miracle Plays; Merton College MS 248," Modern Language Notes, XLIX (June 1934), 394-396.

The inclusion in a midfourteenth-century sermon of a speech by the devil, which seems to be taken from a play of the Fall, suggests to the author that the tradition of vernacular plays existed in England at a date earlier than that of the extant Cycles. For this reason he warns against attempting to determine too closely the textual relationship of the Cycles which are preserved.


Although the author does not condone the practice followed by some playwrights of mixing the ridiculous with the religious in the Mystery plays, he sees in the comic elements the beginnings of English comedy. In answer to those who claim that the secular drama of England is directly attributable to foreign influence, he points out that the growth of drama cannot be measured in terms of influences alone, but that it presupposes the right conditions for acceptance, including an audience
nurtured in the knowledge of dramatic illusion.


After rejecting Miss Lyle's arguments that the Cycles were once identical in the vernacular stage, the author presents his theory that the individual Cycles are entirely independent growths from the same liturgical source. He argues that structural likenesses between the Cycles can be explained by their independent descent from a common source, and similarity of phrase by their common dependence on the Vulgate.


In an effort to illustrate the beauty of the poetry found in the English Mysteries, the author uses extracts from the Towneley Cycle. According to the author it was the vivid faith of the dramatists which enabled them to express themselves poetically at the same time that they were effectively presenting a system of theology in popular language and instilling into the minds of the audience a spirit of solid and practical devotion.


Since the medieval dramatist had not yet learned to imitate the life of the period he was treating, his plays were set against a background of his own times. The author used the Towneley Cycle to illustrate the wealth of allusion to contemporary customs and ideas contained in the drama of medieval England.


This general discussion of the English Mystery Cycles was intended as a contribution to the revival of interest in the plays at the turn of the century. The author considers the Punch and Judy show as a modern relic of medieval ecclesiastical drama.


Although the article is primarily a discussion of lost poetry, the author suggests that the Mystery plays may have been lost when they fell into the hands of Protestant prelates.

Included in the list of English dramatic works written before 1875 and revived between 1919 and 1925 are the Coventry, Towneley, and York Nativity plays.

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Besides the Nativity plays of the major Cycles, this new list, which supplements and corrects the author's previous one, includes the "Deluge" and the "Massacre of the Innocents" from Chester.


The Mystery plays, considered as predecessors of the Oberammergau Passion Play and as rich storehouses of local dialects and customs of the times, are discussed in broad outline as the source of both entertainment and instruction for medieval audiences.


In advocating the study of the Cycles as dramatic art, the author objects to the attitude which regards the Mystery Cycles as completely lacking in dramatic power since such a view ignores the popularity of the Cycles in their own day. He insists that an understanding of the spectators of these plays, a familiarity with medieval dramatic conventions, and an intimate knowledge of the preserved texts will reveal that the proportion of scenes which were dramatically appealing to the medieval audience compares favorably with that of the average drama of other periods.


Although the musical instinct of the medieval dramatist is strong in the interludes of song found in some of the plays, the author attempts to demonstrate that the playwright best displayed his power as a poet in the elaboration of biblical episodes dealing with subjects and emotions, such as love of children, home life, and suffering, with which the common people could identify themselves. She attributes any apparent defects in smoothness and melody in the plays to the change which the language has undergone.

Through an analysis of the Franciscan spirit of joy and of the twofold purpose of instruction and entertainment of the Mystery Cycles, and by reference to the manuscripts of the plays, the author attempts to demonstrate that the Friars Minor not only influenced the plays but actually were responsible for, and acted in, those of Coventry.


Although the Old Testament plays are usually treated as developments from the Christmas "Processus Prophetarum," the author sees them as natural outgrowths of the Passion and Resurrection plays since they bring out the full significance of these two groups of plays. He finds ample evidence for such a development in the liturgical lessons and responsories prescribed for the season of Septuagesima and Lent.


The term Corpus Christi plays is limited by the author to include only those dramatic works which were cosmic in theme, originated in the north, were performed by the craft guilds, and were completely established during the fourteenth century. Although he does not consider connection with the Corpus Christi procession necessary to account for the processional idea of the plays, he is certain that the Cycles originated, not in a dumbshow, but by a union of existent plays into cyclic form.


Since a dramatic origin in the form of liturgical tropes is available, the author attempts to demonstrate that there is no need to seek a source for the Passion plays in the lyrical "Planctus Mariae." He explains the development of the group of Passion plays according to the principle of dramatic extension whereby a simple Resurrection trope developed into a group of plays recording not only the Resurrection but also what preceded it, namely, the Passion.

Crawford, Mary. "English Interjections in the Fifteenth Century," University of Nebraska Studies, XIII (October 1913), 361-405.

Besides listing the common fifteenth-century interjections found in the literature of the period, the author gives either the meaning or the modern equivalent of each word and notes at least one work in which the word is found. Arranged under twenty-one headings, the ejaculations run the full gamut of human emotions. Many of the especially vigorous and hearty exclamations were contributed by the York and Towneley plays.

In his brief history of the Mysteries, the author observes that what we would consider irreverent and crude in these religious plays was well-received not only by the common people but also by the royalty who attended the performances. He is of the opinion that when the Mysteries faded into the moralities, drama lost in spontaneity what it gained in art.

"The Drama in the Middle Ages," National Magazine, II (March 1853), 221-224.

Although the author of this general discussion of medieval drama acknowledges that the plays contain some germs of poetry, he condemns the anachronisms found in them and considers the plays suitable only for superstitious spectators such as he envisions the people of the Middle Ages to have been.


Convinced that medieval drama is an art form, the author advocates its study as such. The pattern of conflicting forces and of verbal beauty and complexity which developed within the Cycles themselves are viewed by the author as signs of conscious artistry which remained unimpaired by the didactic intentions of the playwrights.

Dustoor, P. E. "The Origin of the Play of 'Moses and the Table of the Law,'" Modern Language Review, XIX (October 1924), 459-463.

Following Hardin Craig's theory that the Old Testament plays did not develop from the "Prophetae" but from the liturgy of Lent, the author suggests that the play of "Moses and the Table of the Law" is directly traceable to the liturgical and homiletic material of the Lenten season despite the fact that in the Chester Cycle Balaam appears both in this play and in the "Processus Prophetarum."


Accompanying a very brief description of a pageant wagon are two illustrations of plays being enacted and one of the area behind the scenes, equipped with ingenious devices used to create the terrifying effect of the torments of hell.


In tracing and comparing English legends concerning Cain as they are
found in the Chester, Towneley and York plays, the author notes that only the Towneley Cycle makes use of all the current legends, including the kind of offerings made, God's reception of the sacrifices, the weapon used in the murder of Abel, the exposure of Cain's crime, and the curse pronounced upon him.

Fischer, E. "Some Mystery Plays are Refreshing," Ave Maria, LXXXVI (December 21, 1957), 15.

After a brief summary of the manner of presentation of the Mystery Cycles, the author suggests that television might profitably produce the Christmas plays as a refreshing change of fare for the viewers.


Since all the plays of a Cycle did not remain in the custody of one man but each guild controlled its own play, the author opposes the idea that entire Cycles were periodically subjected to revision. She accounts for the origin of certain resemblances between the Cycles by the fact that both old plays and borrowed ones were revised at various times and under diverse circumstances.


It seems possible to the author that some day, even in industrial America, the theatre will turn again to the production of the Mystery plays, which, by mingling devotion and sublimity with fun and realism, will carry the message of the Word to all the Western World as the medieval drama did from the tenth to the sixteenth centuries.


To support his thesis that the Mystery plays were a preparation for comedy rather than for tragedy, the author relates the theme of the Mysteries to the idea of comedy which represents the individual achieving his ends, not by revolt, but by adjustment to circumstances. In the second section of the article, he maintains that since Arthur Leach considered only two towns in his study, his ascription of the plays to secular, not regular, clergy, is invalid.


On the basis of striking parallels between Milton's epic and York, Chester and Ludus Coventriae, the author suggests that if the poet did not have direct contact with the Cycles, he had at least indirect access to
them or to similar plays. Such influence, according to the author, would make Milton more directly a part of the English current of tradition and less a product of foreign and classical influences than he is usually considered.


From a careful scrutiny of the texts, the author has compiled a listing of all the non-Biblical names of persons, animals, and places mentioned in the Mystery plays. Each noun included is followed by a brief explanation or identification if necessary and by mention of the play in which it is found.


In attempting to demonstrate that Chaucer intended the Miller's tale as a parody on the current mystery pageants, the author points out a resemblance between the Miller and the ranting Pilate and Herod. Besides noting further that Absolon was represented as a clerk who had played Herod in a Mystery play performance, the author suggests that the story was told at the expense of a carpenter in order to ridicule the Noah play which the carpenter guild usually produced.

Harris, Herbert. "Was Paradise Lost Suggested by the Mystery Plays?" Modern Language Notes, I (November 1895), 223.

Milton's sudden change from an intended epic on King Arthur to a Biblical subject and to dramatic form, is attributed to his acquaintance with the Mystery plays. The author rejects the idea that Caedmon's poem suggested Paradise Lost since this source would not account for Milton's decision to employ the dramatic form.


In this survey of studies in medieval drama, only a very brief section is devoted to English plays. For this reason, only major works and articles are treated in the discussion which considers briefly the main currents of thought on the subject.

Ingram, R. W. "The Use of Music in English Miracle Plays," Anglia, LXXXV (1957), 55-76.

The period of change to the vernacular and to livelier representation is considered by the author as the time when properly incidental music
was introduced into the Mystery plays. From his study of music in the Cycles, the author concludes that Ludus Coventriae was the most advanced in possessing incidental music well-integrated with the action. It is to the combination of liturgical, popular, and folk songs in the plays that the author traces the true beginnings of the musical tradition in English drama.


By citing the parable of the husbandman, used as the Gospel for Septuagesima Sunday, and its corresponding homily, which interprets the day of the parable as a symbol of the entire period from Creation to the Last Judgment, the author seeks to confirm Hardin Craig's theory that the Old Testament plays came from the liturgy. In the homily, each epoch in the history of mankind is dominated by an outstanding personage who is also a principal character in the Old Testament group of the Mystery Cycles.


From a study of the various plays presented in the Cycles, the author concludes that each pageant wagon had to be constructed specifically for the scene represented on it. He also suggests that the wagons must have been sturdy vehicles since they underwent rough wear and were the objects of great care and expense on the part of the guilds.


After pointing out that the York and Wakefield plays differ primarily in motive—the York plays being theological, the Wakefield being human—the author credits the Mysteries with keeping the dramatic instinct alive in England and with supplying the germ for some of Shakespeare's minor and unnamed characters as well as for some of his principal ones.


From a detailed study of the Beverley and Lincoln plays, the author predicates as writers of the Mystery Cycles, not monks, but laymen, or possibly friars or secular clergy. He insists that Wakefield, not Wickirk, was the home of the Towneley plays, and that the attribution of the Chester plays to Higden is due to the custom of attributing plays to any monk who was known.

The presence of grossness and indecency of expression in the Mysteries is considered as an indication of an undeveloped, not a corrupt, society. Reading into such expressions the moral significance they would have in modern days is considered by the author as a grave injustice to the people of the Middle Ages and as evidence of the lack of sound historic sense.


Not the theory of evolution, but the De Vries' Mutation theory, which states that sudden and unaccountable changes lift the individual entirely out of its class, is made to account for the rise of medieval drama since the author is of the opinion that the change from the non-dramatic to the dramatic was accomplished, not imperceptibly, but by the addition of a definite unit, the speaking of the parts of a trope by two priests rather than by two halves of a choir. In the same way he views the morality play, not as an outgrowth of the Mysteries, but as the result of the combination of allegory and drama.


The influence of liturgical drama upon the course of medieval religious plays is seen chiefly in the establishment of basic modes of dramatizing the materials of sacred history. Details of content, order, treatment, and text are all traced to the practices observed in liturgical drama.


After presenting a brief history of drama, the author points out the differences in presentation, length of Cycles, and producers in the French and English drama of the medieval period. It is the author's belief that one can seek in vain for a master-craftsman among the writers of the Cycles.


A glance at the titles of the plays included in the Mystery Cycles is considered sufficient to refute the statement that the common people of the Middle Ages were kept in ignorance of the Bible. The plays are viewed as a solution of the Church's problem of ministering to the devotional and instructional needs of the people.

Using the Passion plays as a cross-section of each of the four major Cycles, the author attempts to demonstrate that the handling of action, conflict, and character produced a variety of effects in the parts of the Cycle without impairing the thematic and structural unity of the whole. The Passion group of plays, although tragic in character, is seen as an integral part of the action of the whole Cycle, which corresponds to the medieval ideas of comedy.


In discussing the stage setting of the Cycles, the author compares the presentations of the Mysteries to children's imitations accomplished with a curious mixture of symbolism and realism. To support his statement he cites several examples indicating the ease with which the medieval audience was satisfied especially in the matter of stage setting. Signs were sometimes used to announce the locality of a certain scene in a play; a square hole filled with water depicted a lake or sea in Palestine; and two or three actors were considered sufficient to create the illusion of a crowd.


The tradition of angelic singing is traced to the Middle Ages when the Mystery plays popularized the idea by assigning to the angels' songs definite dramatic functions, such as localization of heaven, indication of the passing of angelic messengers, and solemnization of religious ceremonies. That the songs of the angels were invariably in Latin is indicated in stage directions and in the jesting comments of the characters who were unfamiliar with the language.

"Mysteries, Moralities, and Other Early Drama," Retrospective Review, I (1820), 332-357.

A patronizing attitude toward the Cycles is adopted by the author of this cursory introduction to early English drama as he suggests that the circumstances of the times were responsible for what he considers a ludicrous presentation of the Holy Scriptures.

"Mystery or Passion Plays," Blackwood's Magazine, CVI (December 1869), 671-693.

Since the author considers the pagan festivities as the sole source of religious drama, the short section of this article dealing with the English Cycles describes them as licentious, bawdy performances.

Chaucer's introduction of the Miller speaking in "Pilates voys" is considered effective because of its current reference to the popular Mystery plays in which Pilate is portrayed as boastful and tyrannical in accordance with his historical and legendary reputation as a corrupt politician and unjust judge.


The representation of Herod as a boaster and a braggart is traced back to the Apocrypha and the writings of the Church Fathers because of early continental Latin plays which presented Herod with most of the qualities characterising him in the English Mysteries which elaborated further upon the analogy between Herod and unpopular officials.


The author divides the lyrics in the Cycles into three groups: the isolable lyrics proper, including laments and monologues which seem to have little connection with the subject of the play; the lyrics with dramatic significance, such as the verses addressed to Mary and her Child; and late additions to the plays, which resemble Elizabethan songs. She suggests that the lyrics were borrowed from the liturgy, Apocrypha, homilies, and even from non-religious poems.


Although the author agrees with scholars who trace the development back to the altar of the Church, she considers it worthwhile to reflect on the irony of the growth of an institution, conceived to counteract pagan influences and to teach the Gospels, into the drama of today in which survives little trace of the dignity, beauty, and power of the sacred drama from which it sprang.


After observing that the relationship of the Corpus Christi processions to the Corpus Christi plays is often explained by means of six hypothetical steps ranging from the mere marching of the craft guilds in the processions to the separation of the plays from the processions, the author reveals that, of thirty-one towns studied, only one presents any evidence of the possible existence of the most important fourth step, spoken drama in the procession.

From a study of the stage directions in the cyclic plays, the author concludes that, in general, the acting was formal rather than naturalistic. He assumes that the more liturgical connections a play had, the more strictly formal was its acting, but that the players were always guided by the two elementary necessities: clarity of gesture and openness in speaking.


Before presenting a bibliography suitable for beginners in the field of medieval drama, the author suggests that the study be undertaken, not for the purpose of discovering great literary masterpieces, but as a study of the origins of English drama, as a means of seeing life through the eyes of the Middle Ages, and as a preparation for the study of Elizabethan drama.


In commenting on the Mystery plays, the author argues against the too early dating of the Cycles. Although the plays contain realism, he does not think they constitute a naturalistic form of drama despite the naturalistic style of acting employed in the comic sections of the plays. He concludes by defending the thoroughly Christian origin of the plays against the theory that the plays were a combination of pagan and Christian ritualistic symbols.


To prove that the lyrical "Planctus Mariae" was not the source of the English Passion plays, the author gives a brief description of each English non-dramatic planctus, lists its motives, and shows its relation to other similar lamentations and to the Mystery plays. He concludes that though the "Planctus Mariae" contributed in a general way to the development of the English Passion plays, he sees no indication that any particular lyrical version affected a specific dramatic work.

-----. "The Relation of the English Corpus Christi Plays to the Middle English Religious Lyric," Modern Philology, V (July 1907), 1-38.

A study of the lyrical material in York and Towneley led the author to conclude that the Cycles borrowed from lyrical poetry in four ways: by echoing a specific lyric, by creating a close parallel with a lyric in thought and phrase, by inserting an entire lyric, and by using a
lyric as the starting point of a play.


This anonymous summary of Jusserand's article in the Revue des Deux Mondes merely refers to the Mysteries as having been often alluded to by Chaucer.


The comic aspects, especially the rowdy fighting scenes, of the Mystery Cycles are attributed to the popular pagan and folk celebrations which became associated with the plays as they underwent extensive secularization. The incongruous mixture of horse-play with the story of the Redemption, so shocking to modern taste, is thus seen as the natural expression of the various phases of medieval life.


In defending the Mystery Cycles against accusations of irreverence in the association of buffoonery with incidents from our Savior's life, the author explains that such presentations were in perfect accord with what was acceptable at the time. It was only after the decay of the simple religious spirit which animated both the playwright and the spectators that the Cycles lost that moral influence which the author feels is one of the greatest needs in contemporary fare.


On the basis of meter, rhythm, euphony, syntax, vocabulary, subject-matter, and lyrical as well as dramatic aspects, the author distinguishes three distinct styles in the Mystery Cycles: the liturgical, originating after 1320; the rhetorical, after 1370; and the colloquial, during the last decade of the fourteenth century. The second article is merely an expansion of the first with no additional information presented except for a two-paragraph discussion on the general theories of Middle English versification.

Wells, Minnie E. "The Age of Isaac at the Time of the Sacrifice," Modern Language Notes, LIV (December 1939), 579-582.

The aim of the dramatist is considered by the author as the factor which determined whether Isaac was presented as a child or as a young man since both traditions were current during the Middle Ages. The Chester
and Towneley playwrights created dramatic pathos by enlarging upon the pleas of the young child to his father, while the York and Ludus Coventriae writers wished to make Isaac, not Abraham, the hero of the play by representing the son as a person capable of expressing mature sentiments.


From his study of the influence of the Mystery Cycles, the author concludes that, besides making the common people familiar with the incidents of the Scripture narratives and their meaning, the Mystery Cycles influenced all phases of medieval culture, particularly pictorial art which drew heavily upon the plays for ideas. As the most important contribution of the Cycles, however, the author singles out the furnishing of the climate and impetus needed for the creation of a national drama.


The author disagrees with George Coffman's view that the dramatic value of the Mysteries can be accurately assessed only by excluding the aspect of the Cycles' relation to Elizabethan drama. After admitting that proper evaluation of the plays must consider the reaction of the medieval public, not of a contemporary audience, to the performances, he presents again his view that the plays have dramatic value only because they were the forerunners of a greater drama.


In his genealogical study of the vice character in drama, the author suggests that the representation of the devil and the less admirable historical characters in the Mystery plays was influenced by the fools and swordsmen in folk plays.


After reasserting his own idea that the folk-play fool influenced the development of the figure of the devil, and after recognizing Roscoe Parker's findings concerning apocryphal descriptions of Herod, the author emphasises the necessity of crediting both the dramatists and the actors with some originality in their creation and representation of the characters not definitely outlined in Scripture.

In the definite movement of the Mystery Cycles toward the comic rather than the tragic, the author traces the development of a national drama. The comic interpolations and the comic treatment of the villain, especially in the Wakefield Cycle, are distinctly English in character, and the author finds in them the germs of almost all the types of comedy which appeared in succeeding generations.


The modifications of character and action made in Abraham's story by the medieval dramatists are explained in terms of the contemporary interpretation of his sacrifice as a type of the Crucifixion. Although this typological interpretation allowed great latitude in the portrayal of Isaac, it created a difficulty in regard to the representation of Abraham. The author is of the opinion that it was the dramatists' skill alone that enabled them to portray Abraham simultaneously as a distressed human father and as a type of the Heavenly Father sacrificing his son.


In certain of the Mysteries, particularly the plays about Moses, the author finds evidence that tricks of magic mentioned in the plays actually had to be performed to satisfy the audience which was accustomed to such entertainment. The guild account books recording the employment of minstrels, degenerated by that time into variety entertainers, adds strength to his argument that juggling and conjury on the English stage date back to the religious drama.


In his study of animals on the English stage, the author finds no indication in the Mystery Cycles that animals were used for any other reason except incidental appearances in the plays. He sees no evidence for anything approaching a variety-show performance until the moralities.

----- "Variety-Show Clownery on the Pre-Restoration Stage," Anglia, LII (1928), 51-68.

Among the comic elements of the Mystery plays, the author considers such external features of amusement as the roaring of the devils and their by-play with the spectators as part of the tradition of vaudeville comedy still observable today in modified form at the circus.

Although he does not consider medieval drama important in itself, the author considers a general study of its development necessary to the understanding of the peculiarly national traits of English drama.

II. INDIVIDUAL CYCLES

TOWNELEY


The author sees no direct connection between the Mak story and the eighteenth and nineteenth-century analogues noted by Kolbing and Cook. On the basis of parallels found in Sabadino's Le Porretane, a fifteenth-century collection of Italian stories, he favors Cook's suggestion that the incident belongs to the realm of folklore.


Through a study of the verb tenses used in the play, the references to Christianity in the "First Shepherds' Play" are seen, not as anachronisms suggestive of accidental error, but as syntony, or the multiplicity of tenses running together. The continuous subjunctive present, used in these references, operates outside time and co-exists structurally with the stage-present, expressed by the present indicative.


The quatraine portion of the Towneley plays is dated about the middle of the fifteenth century because of a passage in the "Play of the Doctors" which appears to be based directly upon the "Speculum Christiani," a metrical version of the Ten Commandments, probably composed during the last decade of the fourteenth century.


Through a comparison of the Nativity and Resurrection groups in Towneley, York, and Coventry, the author supports E. M. Chambers' theory that the liturgical phase was the first in cyclic development. He attributes the common fundamental framework and similar phraseology in the Nativity groups to translation from a common liturgical source rather than to
borrowing from a vernacular one. He then extends the probability of such a development to the Resurrection series where the similarity is less evident.


Although the author agrees with the theory that three stages are distinguishable in the Towneley development, he disagrees with the chronological order predicated for the stages. He considers the York borrowings as the last of the additions to the Towneley Cycle since this group contains no couplets as do the plays of the primitive Cycle and of the Wakefield group, but it does contain quatrains, which, though characteristic of this group, are found also in the other two.


From a study of the plays usually attributed to the Wakefield Master, the author attempts to identify the chief characteristics of the playwright's style. Among these he includes humor, the peculiar metrical form of the nine-line stanza, and especially the superior dramatic power exhibited in character delineation, in the free use of Biblical sources, in local references, in the vivid presentation of contemporary life, and in interest-sustaining situations.


A study of the Towneley passion group indicates that the text of the final, or trade-guild, period in cyclic development underwent four editions: Wakefield, couplet, York borrowings, and quatrain. The last two are considered identical by the author because the quatrain editions consist of York scenes substituted for others already in Towneley.


After stating that the author of the "Secunda Pastorum" must have been an ecclesiastic connected with Wakefield in 1355 and indirectly with the Towneley family, Cargill suggests Gilbert Pilkington whose signature is affixed to the Northern Passion, found in the same manuscript as the Turnament of Totenham which resembles the play in its treatment of contemporary customs. He suggests further that the manuscript of the play was left by John Pilkington in 1476 to his brother, the guardian of the founder of the Towneley library.

Carpenter, Nan Cooke. "Music in the 'Secunda Pastorum,'" Speculum, XXVI
The shepherd's description of the angels' song as "Thrice brefes to a long" is considered by the author as a reference to typical English descent rather than to a complicated musical figure. The author also suggests that music has an important role in the "Secunda Pastorum" since it is used to mark off the play into symmetrical divisions, to point up the bad character of Mak, to soften the transition from the farcical to the manger scene, and to convince the shepherds to go to Bethlehem.


The purpose of this modernized version of the "Second Shepherds' Play" is to encourage readers to turn to the original version. Besides consulting all existing editions of the play, the present editor has done extensive research in an effort to clarify obscure passages.

Cawley, A. C. "Iak Garcio of the 'Prima Pastorum,'" Modern Language Notes, LXVIII (March 1953), 169-172.

Iak Garcio and Tertius Pastor in the "First Shepherds' Play" are considered identical because there is no good reason in the play for the introduction of a new character and Iak says nothing inappropriate to the character of the Third Shepherd whose place he takes in the regular sequence of speakers. A copyist's error is held responsible for the confusion.


To support his view that the "First Shepherds' Play" is best studied as an impressive dramatic poem which brings out the spiritual significance of Christmas in terms of the everyday lives of humble people, the author presents a detailed summary of the commonplaces of medieval life found in the play.

Cawley, A. C. "The 'Grotesque' Feast in the 'Prima Pastorum,'" Speculum, XXX (April 1955), 213-217.

The meal in the "First Shepherds' Play" is presented as an incongruous mixture of aristocratic and plebeian dishes. Both content and metrical form of the play suggest to the author that the playwright was familiar with the contemporary Boke of Nurture by John Russell.

Examples of various European customs of treating difficult labor are used by the author to show that the tossing scene is a superb delineation of poetic justice meted out to one who staged a pseudo-nativity. Realism is strengthened by having the treatment administered by shepherds who often assisted in obstetric cases.


The author used a photostat of the manuscript to decipher the almost illegible rubrics following line 132 of the play. To complete the phrase "Angeli cantant: simon," the author suggests "iustus et timoratus." His identification of the phrase with the beginning of the first antiphon of Lauds on the Purification is made more plausible since the next lines of the play paraphrase another portion of the antiphon.


From an examination of the cyclic structure of the Towneley plays as well as from a study of the Latin remains of non-biblical liturgical borrowings, prayer forms, and sacramental influences in the Cycle, the author concludes that the medieval dramatist made use of all parts of the liturgy which presented an orderly narrative sequence. The playwright thus drew from the sacramental rites, the canonical hours, and other liturgical ceremonies.


The echoing by one speaker in a close translation of the Latin what another has just said in a free translation is considered by the author as the second step in the evolution from Latin liturgy to vernacular drama. As an example of the earlier stage of development, he cites the Treves "Visitatio Sepulchri," which alternates vernacular paraphrase with Latin text. In the "Peregrini" the Latin statements are retranslated without removing the earlier paraphrase.


In a supposedly authentic late eighteenth-century account, History of the County of Cumberland, the author finds a sketch of Thomas Armstrong who rid himself of searching parties with the same device used by Mak. The question of whether the nineteenth-century ballad, "Archie Armstrong's Aith," merely recounts this event or whether both stories and the Mak episode belong to the realm of folklore is left unsettled by the author.
After analyzing the incidents in thirteen analogues to the Mak story, the author dismissed the views of independent origin for each of the group and of derivation of later versions from the play. He concludes that the source of all versions was folklore and that the adaptations peculiar to the Wakefield play were necessary to conform the story to its function as a burlesque parallel to the Nativity.

An examination of the Towneley and the extant York versions of the "Harrowing of Hell" leads the author to assume that both are based on an early York text superior to the present one. From several passages in Towneley, the author concludes that this early version was closely related to the Gospel of Nicodemus since the possibility that Towneley drew directly from the Gospel seems unlikely.

After a study of the manuscripts of the Old Testament plays in York and Towneley, the author suggests some variations in the readings of Smith's edition of the York plays and of the Early English Text Society's Towneley plays. Most of the corrections are made for metrical reasons.

A possible source for the quarrel in the "First Shepherds' Play" is suggested to the author by Iak Garcia's mention of the "foles of Gotham." In his Merry Tales of the Mad-men of Gotham (1630), Hazlitt includes a fifteenth-century story differing only incidentally from the quarrel scene in the play. The author assumes therefore that the tale had already taken definite form as early as the last half of the fifteenth century.
On the basis of general similarity of outline and identity of rimes and wording, the Northern Passion, a Middle English poem, is suggested as the direct source of the four Towneley plays which deal with the crucifixion and the events immediately preceding and following it. The influence of the poem upon the sequence of events in the York plays is also noted.

-----. "Was Gilbert Pilkington Author of the 'Secunda Pastorum'?" Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, XLIII (March 1928), 121-136.

Oscar Cargill's view that Gilbert Pilkington was the author of the Northern Passion and the "Secunda Pastorum" is refuted primarily on the basis of insufficient evidence that Pilkington wrote the first work. Miss Foster argues further that the two works were written at widely separated dates and in extremely different styles; moreover, she contends that the attribution of the Turnament of Totenham to the author of the Northern Passion merely on the basis of its appearance in the same manuscript is purely gratuitous.

Frampton, Mendal G. "Gilbert Pilkington Once More," Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, XLVII (September 1932), 522-635.

To supplement Miss Foster's arguments refuting Oscar Cargill's theory of identical authorship for the Northern Passion, the Turnament of Totenham, and the "Secunda Pastorum," the author suggests that the first two could not have been written by the same man since Totenham, near London, would not have been familiar to the Lancashire author of the Passion. A further argument against Pilkington's authorship of the burlesque poem and play is found in the Northern Passion's marginal notes which suggest that the author was a devout man, not an entertainer.


From a detailed investigation of the costume passages in the work of the Wakefield Master, the author concludes that the dramatist flourished in the second quarter of the fifteenth century. Information from poll-tax records showing the town capable at that time of sponsoring a Cycle is considered additional evidence for such a dating.


As a result of his collation of the printed text with the manuscript, the author suggests spelling corrections to be made in the printed text.
and objects to variations in the text of scribal notes as well as to the printing of the plays in irregular stanza form when the scribe employed identical form.

-----. "The Date of the 'Wakefield Master': Bibliographical Evidence," Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, LIII (March 1938), 86-117.

In a bibliographical comparison of the York and Towneley plays, the author continues his arguments for dating the Wakefield Master later than is generally done. He holds that the playwright did not begin his work until after the period of greatest York influence which, according to information in Burton's Lists and the York Memorandum Book, was from 1415 to 1422.

-----. "The Towneley 'Harrowing of Hell,'" Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, LXI (March 1941), 105-119.

In an attempt to account for the Towneley variations from the original York play, the author suggests that the trimeter lines were added by the same editor who contributed the septenar quatrains as he borrowed from the York plays.

-----. "Towneley XX: the Conspiracio (et Capcio)," Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, LVIII (December 1943), 920-937.

Towneley XX, the most composite play in the cycle, is considered the work of three major poets: the first depicted the Last Supper scene according to the first three Gospels; the second, the same scene according to John; and the third, the Agony and Capture portion. In discussing the play, the author attempts to demonstrate the metrical and textual influence of the Northern Passion and an early York play on the Towneley production.

-----. "The 'Processus Talentorum' (Towneley XXIV)," Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, LIX (September 1944), 646-654.

In Towneley XXIV the author distinguishes three stages of development: the basic story, the rime couee stanzas, and the Wakefield Master's additions. The conjecture that Towneley adopted the discarded York Millers' Play about 1425 is presented as an additional argument that the Wakefield Master flourished during the reign of Henry VI.


In place of Miss Lyte's parent-cycle theory as an explanation for the
resemblances between York and Towneley, the author posits the original identity of individual plays. She suggests that Towneley borrowed a larger number of plays from York than was formerly assumed, and that similarities and dissimilarities can be traced to such borrowings, to the use of the same Latin and vernacular sources, and to the subsequent revision that the individual plays received in each Cycle.


An illustration in the Caedmonian Ms. Junius XI is presented as an indication that the tradition of the stubbornness of Noah's wife was known in England even before the Conquest. Although the illustrator's style shows Rhenish influence, the author predicates English sources for his subject-matter, thereby contradicting Miss Carey's statement that Chaucer has the earliest mention in English of the legend which is found in the Mystery plays.


As a continuation of his study of medieval drama as a forerunner of English comedy, the author presents a discussion of the work of the Wakefield Master. Although stanza form and diction are usually considered the most marked traits of the Master's work, the author considers the treatment of individual characters as members of society a more important characteristic since it is such characterization that is suitable to the development of comedy.

Gerould, Gordon Hall. "Moll of the 'Prima Pastorum,'" Modern Language Notes, XII (December 1904), 225-230.

The story of day-dreaming Moll, mentioned by the Third Shepherd, is traced back to Continental folklore of the early part of the sixth century. Some versions feature a man instead of a woman, and some tell of the breaking of eggs rather than of a pitcher of milk.


Of the English Cycles only Towneley presents God revealing His divine purpose in the trial of Abraham. Since the monologue in which this is done is the only stanza in the play written in couplets, the author considers it an interpolation suggested by the play's repeated mention of Adam and of the Redemption theme. As a source he suggests Le Mistere du Vieil Testament.

The Towneley "Processus Crucis" presents the Crucifixion as a burlesque on a "just in tornamente" by elaborately working out the general figure of the cross as a charger. The author justifies this figure by referring to writings of the early Fathers of the Church who picture the cross with a sedile projecting from the middle of the vertical beam. Since the source of the Towneley idea cannot be traced to contemporary literature, the author suggests that such crosses were probably common in medieval churches.

Kökeritz, Helge. "Some Marginal Notes to the Towneley 'Resurrection,'" Modern Language Notes, LIX (December 1946), 529-532.

To demonstrate what is necessary to correct the misinterpretations and inconsistencies found in Adams' Chief Pre-Shakespearean Drama, the author offers a list of revised notes for the Towneley "Resurrection." As an aid to students in understanding the play, the notes stress the exact meaning of details of expression no longer in common use.


After briefly restating her theory that the York and Towneley Cycles are derived from an early Cycle in the vernacular, the author discusses the three main difficulties raised by other scholars. She recognizes the four distinct meters in the identical plays as evidence of revision during the parent-cycle stage but adds that such revision was not systematic. In the case of the partition in York of plays united in Towneley, she suggests that York amplified the simpler forms retained by Towneley. Finally, she concedes that the date of separation of the two Cycles cannot be definitely determined.


The author rejects the reading "tall wyghtys" in line 139 of the "Second Shepherds' Play" and suggests "two Alwyghtys," or two uncanny creatures. Reference is being made to the previously mentioned shrews, which are considered a portent of danger to flocks. Daw therefore intends to lead his sheep away.


Although the idea of the obstinacy of Noah's wife contradicts orthodox Christian handling which compares her meekness to that of Mary, it is prevalent in the literature, folklore, and art of a wide range of people. The author has found variations of the theme in the English Mystery.
Cycles; in Mohammedan, Russian, and German legends; in manuscript illustrations, as in Junius XI; and in Queen Mary's Psalter.


In attempting to account for the relatively few verbal similarities in the York and Towneley parallels to the Northern Passion, the author suggests that the playwrights, aiming for originality, tried to avoid borrowing verbatim wherever possible. The author also notes that the alliterative septenar stanzas of the York plays formed a technical obstacle to verbal correspondence since they could not easily reproduce the wording of the Northern Passion couplets.


To support his theory that it was northern England, the home of the Wakefield plays, that prepared the way for the great Elizabethan age, the author cites passages from the "Secunda Pastorum," in which are employed both essential and accidental features of Elizabethan comedy. He includes examples of intrigue, individualization of characters, disregard for unity of place, and satirization of individuals rather than of classes.

Oxley, James S. "'Sam,'" Times Literary Supplement, (July 5, 1934), 476.

On the basis of modern Wakefield dialect, the author interprets the word Sam in stanza thirty-six of the Towneley Noah play as the imperative of the verb to take hold of since one of the brothers is obviously asking for assistance in getting a large bundle into the Ark.


By reference to the folk tradition which usually provides for the escape of the thief unpunished, the author attempts a solution to Professor Kolbing's problem of whether the "Secunda Pastorum" or the early nineteenth-century ballad, "Archie Armstrang's Aith," corresponds more closely to their common source in folklore. Since Archie Armstrang escapes and Mak does not, the ballad ending is considered that of the original tale. The play ending, on the other hand, is attributed to the necessity of adapting the story to the Nativity theme around which the play was built.

Peacock, Matthew H. "Towneley, Widkirk, or Wakefield Plays?" Yorkshire Archaeological Journal, XV (1900), 94-104.
Because he can find no evidence that Woodkirk was formerly pronounced Widkirk, a name associated with the Towneley plays in an auctioneer's catalogue, the author rejects Walter Skeat's view that the plays were performed at Woodkirk. He considers Wakefield the home of the Cycle since it is mentioned in the manuscript and since the text contains references to place-names associated with Wakefield.


The association of the Towneley plays with Widkirk is considered unreasonable by the author since there is no reliable authority for the name of the place nor for its identification with Woodkirk near Wakefield; furthermore, the author can find no evidence that religious plays were performed in Woodkirk. He is certain that Wakefield, a city large enough to maintain a Cycle, was the home of these Mysteries, for local place-names are mentioned in the plays and local trade guilds in the original manuscript.


Even though evidence might be forthcoming to support Walter Skeat's assertion that Widkirk is the old name for Woodkirk, the author holds untenable the theory that this obscure village four miles from the city was the scene of the Wakefield Mysteries. Documentary evidence, local circumstances, and the analogy supplied by the other great Mystery Cycles point to Wakefield, a thriving town, as the place of performance.


As a continuation of his previous articles, the author contributes further proofs that the Towneley plays were presented at Wakefield. Sixteenth-century records of the Wakefield Burgess Court contain not only the command to bring forth the original of the Corpus Christi play but also the financial accounts of the play. A separate command ordered each craft to present its pageant.

-----. "The Wakefield Mysteries," *[London]* *Times Literary Supplement*, (March 5, 1925), 156.

After mentioning his previous arguments for Wakefield as the home of the Towneley plays, the author presents new proofs based on extracts of sixteenth-century Wakefield Burgess Court Records commanding the crafts to put on their pageants.

This article is almost identical with the one published in the April 1925 issue of *Beiblatt zur Anglia*.
Extracts from the Wakefield Burgess Court Records of the sixteenth century are presented to confirm the author's previous arguments that the Towneley plays were performed in Wakefield by the city's trade guilds. Mention in the Dodsworth Manuscripts of a school in Wakefield as early as 1275 leads the author to suggest that some of the students might have acted in the plays. He leaves unanswered the question of how the Towneley family acquired the manuscript of the plays.

In answer to Russell Potter's letter which questions the validity of the Burgess Court Records as proof that the Towneley Cycle was performed at Wakefield, the author re-emphasizes the idea that it is only when considered with the other indications previously set forth that the extracts from the records of the Wakefield Burgess Courts prove that the Towneley plays were enacted at Wakefield.

As supplement to his letter of March 5, 1925, the author presents additional references from the Wakefield Burgess Rolls of 1556 to support his contention that the Towneley plays were acted in Wakefield. These extracts record orders to crafts and actors as well as expenses incurred in producing the plays.

In refuting Matthew Peacock's theory that the Towneley plays were written and performed at Wakefield, the author claims that the quotations from the Burgess Court Records merely prove that plays were performed at Wakefield but they do not prove that these plays were the Towneley plays.

The elimination in the Towneley "Pharao" of dramatically unnecessary speakers found in the corresponding York play leads the author to conclude that the Towneley playwright revised the York play although she does not think that the evidence precludes the possibility of his having worked from an earlier play common to both York and Towneley.

On the basis of the rhyme scheme which calls for a closed c, and the presence of an unambiguous instance of the word in a similar context, the author concludes that the word foyn in line 286 of Towneley XXIII means few rather than enemies even though the construction of the line does not forbid a substantive to correspond to friendys in the same line.


The author's remarks, occasioned by the Surtees Society's publication of the Towneley Mysteries, include comments on the great contrasts between the religious and secular elements found in the plays and mention of the various forms of meter in the Cycle.


The author does not consider the name Widkirk just an obvious misspelling of Woodkirk on the part of the Towneley family. Since wid is an older spelling of wood, he considers Widkirk the correct name of the place with which the Towneley plays were connected.


Mak's sleeves, to which he himself alludes, are of a variety restricted during the Middle Ages to the households of great men, and, as such, are seen by the author as a contribution to the social satire prevalent in the entire scene. The costume also helps in dating the work of the Wakefield Master in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century.


The author is willing to accept Mendal Frampton's 1425-1450 dating of
the work of the Wakefield playwright, but he does not agree to a similar-
ly late date for the Cycle nor to borrowings from York after 1415 despite
Frampton's bibliographical evidence. He prefers Miss Lyle's theory of
an en bloc borrowing from York and dates this borrowing about 1400.

of American Folklore, XLVII (October-December 1934), 378-381.

To the Mak analogues, H. M. Smyser adds a southern Senator's version
as reported in the Congressional Record of the Seventy-Second Congress
and a similar tale retold in a Spanish magazine. Thomas Stroup con-
tributes the Senator's story as repeated by Will Rogers and another
southern analogue from North Carolinian folklore. In all these stories,
it is a pig, not a sheep, that is stolen.

(Autumn 1951), 86-117; (June 1952), 246-265.

The author considers the Mystery Cycles ritualistic rather than art
drama since he sees the spectators as a congregation rather than an
audience and the plays as an outgrowth of both Christian and pagan ritual
and tradition. As evidence that this ritualistic approach existed
even at the relatively advanced level of literary composition attained
by the Wakefield Master, the author cites the example of the shepherds' finding of a "hornyd" child in the cradle. The author relates this
horned child to the horned god of the pagans.

Spencer, Hazelton. "The Lost Lines of 'Secunda Pastorum,'" Modern Language
Notes, LVIII (January 1943), 49-50.

The apparent lacuna following line 263 may merely represent an irregular
stanza. If two lines are missing, the author prefers to assign them
a place in the speech of Primus Pastor at the beginning of the stanza,
that is, before line 262, rather than at the end since an order to Mak,
which seems to be the missing passage, would come more appropriately from
Primus Pastor than from Daw, who is speaking at the end of the stanza.

Stevens, Martin. "The Accuracy of the Towneley Scribe," Huntington Library

In establishing the accuracy of the Towneley manuscript, the author
takes into consideration that the scribe worked from separate manuscripts
done in different hands and that the Cycle includes various strata of workmanship. Since his study convinces him that the manuscript is an
accurate transcription of the original plays, he suggests that it be used
to facilitate linguistic and textual studies and to furnish information
concerning the origin, dialect, date, and development of the Cycle.

The origin and development of the Towneley "Talents" play is studied by the author in the light of Middle English dialects. The results of the study indicate that the play is a pure Northeast Midland text, not an edited version of the lost York Millers' play, and that the Wakefield Master, although not the author, did edit the play which was either composed at Wakefield or taken from a Cycle in Lincolnshire or Norfolk.

Stroup, Thomas B. "Another Southern Analogue to the Mak Story," Southern Folklore Quarterly, III (March 1939), 5-6.

In another southern analogue to the Mak story, the talk of hard times conforms to the conversation at the opening of the play, but the setting is localized near Augusta, Georgia. The story is told in the first person by a Negro, and a pig is used instead of a sheep.


The author suggests the emendation of water in line 352 of the Second Shepherds' Play to water, roll or toss about, since it restores the sense of the passage concerned with the shepherds' awakening. He objects to Manly's changing tharnes to tharnes simply for the sake of rime since similar examples of imperfect rime are found elsewhere in the play, and tharnes, meaning bellies, fits the context in which Mak is lamenting his numerous children.


Unity, achieved through the shepherds' participation in two contrasted situations, is considered by the author to be apparent at four levels: the literal, in which the shepherds react to a rollicking comedy and a quiet adoration scene; the allegorical, in which Mak and his wife, representing vice, are contrasted with Christ and Mary as virtue; the moral, in which the scene at Mak's cottage is contrasted with that of Bethlehem; and the anagogic, in which the shepherds foreshadow the terrors of hell to Mak and then glimpse a heavenly sight.

Traver, Hope. "The Relation of Musical Terms in the Woodkirk Shepherds Plays to the Dates of Their Composition," Modern Language Notes, XX (January 1905), 1-5.

From the fact that the shepherds in the "Prima Pastorum" sang only a round while those in the "Secunda Pastorum" sang a three-part descant,
the author concludes that sufficient time must have elapsed between the composition of the two plays for considerable progress in the author's knowledge of music. Since the second half of the fourteenth century was a period of transition and intense interest in music, she dates the first play early in the period and the second towards its close.

Trusler, Margaret. "Some Textual Notes Based on Examination of the Towneley Manuscript," Philological Quarterly, XIV (October 1935), 301-306.

An examination of all passages in the manuscript of the Wakefield plays involving irregular or obscure rhyme-words and a line-for-line comparison between the manuscript and the Early English Text Society edition of the plays present a number of textual problems to the author. She attempts to solve the difficulties by considering them in the light of commonly used expressions and pronunciations in the Midland dialect of the time.


A detailed study of the Wakefield Master's rime forms indicates that his language was the Midland dialect of the first quarter of the fifteenth century. The distinctive elements noted in his rimes include the use of colloquial and provincial words for realistic effect, artificial rime, and the use of doublets and alternative pronunciations in rime words. From her study, the author concludes that the Master was most probably a learned secular priest on intimate terms with the peasantry, and primarily a reviser more interested in dramatic effect than in poetic merit.

Vriend, J. "That Alle Myghtys May in the Towneley 'Secunda Pastorum,'" English Studies, VIII (December 1926), 185-186.

On the basis of parallel passages in other Middle English writings, the author considers the word may in line 623 of the "Secunda Pastorum," "That alle myghtys may," as a verb meaning "to be able." He therefore renders the passage, "Who is capable of mighty deeds."


A systematic examination of the Towneley manuscript indicates that all the plays except the last were written by the same scribe, but that the originals were derived from widely separated sources and localities. Because of the hard usage evidently accorded the manuscript, the author suggests that some parts were originally actors' copies. Although the
names of the successive owners suggest that the manuscript was connected with Lancashire, and the Towneley family itself was founded in that county, the author feels that the examination of the manuscript can contribute nothing to the solution of the problem of the original home of the Cycle.


After recognizing the dramatic problems encountered in an attempt to represent the second chapter of Luke while using contemporary English shepherds, the author presents the parallels in the two contrasted incidents in the "Second Shepherds' Play." He considers the birth of a child the unifying theme and song a powerful unifying device. In its sad, unstable beginning and its happy ending as well as in its contrast of burlesque and serious elements, the play is considered a foreshadowing of the Elizabethan drama.

Whiting, B. J. "An Analogue to the Mak Story," Speculum, VII (October 1932), 552.

In a late Latin story in Macrobius' Saturnalia, a work not unknown in the Middle Ages, the author has found an amusing dialogue concerning surnames which results in the telling of a story similar in essentials to the Mak incident. Besides noting that the story and the play differ in details, the author credits Mak's remarks with a pastoral gentility not found in the words of the Roman shepherds.


The author defends William Strunk's emendation of water in line 352 of the "Secunda Pastorum" to water on the basis that the manuscript spelling was probably the error of a scribe who wrote the word phonetically, thereby omitting the silent l.

------. "Thre Brefes to a Long," Modern Language Notes, LVIII (February 1943), 115-116.

That the playwright was well-acquainted with music is indicated in the shepherds' use of technical terms in describing the angels' song. As a result of his investigations, the author has found that the rhythm of the angels' song, spoken of by the shepherds as "Thre brefes to a long," was interpreted by Beethoven as fate knocking at the door, and is now the Morse code symbol for V.

The author attempts to demonstrate that the dramatist created ironic interaction in the minds of the spectators and the actors in the Towneley Shepherds' Plays through a balance of such ideas of hope and despair as were represented by the birth of Christ and the existence of evil. The shepherds, worldly and foolish, have the vision of the Savior which was denied the prophets who desired it; the spectators shudder at the realization that though Christ has been a reality for centuries, evil is still real and present in the world.

**YORK**


From a detailed bibliographical and textual study of the only existing separate manuscript of the York play on the incredulity of Thomas, the author concludes that this Sykes manuscript was a prompt-copy of the Scriveners' play. Although the play is commonly considered to be of northern origin, the author's study of the dialect of the manuscript has led him to give little credence to this view. In the transcription of the manuscript which follows the body of the article, the author has included notations of the variant readings found in the British Museum manuscript of the same play.


By using Burton's list, the author attempts to prove that Miss Lyle's original identity theory in regard to York and Towneley is untenable. The list includes descriptions of plays containing material from the metrical Gospel of Nicodemus although Miss Lyle contends that the Gospel did not influence these plays until some time subsequent to the publication of the list. Other plays, common to York and Towneley, show definite borrowings from the Gospel manuscript of 1400. Because of this evidence, the author feels that Miss Lyle's 1390 dating of the separation of York and Towneley into individual cycles loses its plausibility.


In his emendations of the York plays the author considers especially those errors probably due to a southern scribe's substitution of his own dialectical forms for those of the north or to a scribe's alteration of the text to suit his own taste. He bases his corrections either on a comparison with corresponding Towneley plays or on a comparison of the
faulty rime series with another series containing similar rimes.


As a contribution toward a scientific study of the period in which the plays were written, the author has listed all the rimes in the York plays and the frequency of their recurrence.


As early a date as 1350 is suggested by the author for the York Cycle since the Gospel of Nicodemus, considered one of its immediate sources, was probably available in an English version during the first half of the fourteenth century although its manuscripts date from the early part of the fifteenth. Parallels noted between the play and the poem indicate that the playwright most likely worked from memory as he expanded the condensed narrative of the Gospel.


As a supplement to a previous article in Modern Language Review for October, 1926, the author extends his work of emending the Old Testament plays to the York and Chester Cycles. Most of his corrections are of a metrical nature, correcting faulty rhyme or rhythm patterns.


In determining the relation between Brewbarret of the York play "Sacrificium Cayme and Abell" and Pikeharnes of the corresponding Towneley play, the author first attempts to establish the York Brewbarret interpolation as a product of the second decade of the fifteenth century because of metrical details. He then concludes that the character of Brewbarret, although accepted into the already existing Towneley play at an early date, did not become an integral part of the action until the Wakefield Master recast him as Pikeharnes.

-----, "The York Play of 'Christ Led Up to Calvary,'" Philological Quarterly, XX (July 1941), 198-204.

On the basis of comparison with the corresponding Towneley play which reflects the York version registered in Burton's list, the author concludes that York XXXIV exhibits extensive rewriting after the publication
of the list. Although the evidence is not sufficient to assign the rewriting of the play to the York realist, the author is of the opinion that it can at least be attributed to the great upsurge of playwriting during the Realist's time.


Although the author does not claim that the York playwright knew the fourteenth-century French narrative poem in which St. Martial of Limoges is present at the Last Supper and is used by Christ as an example of humility, she does state that the same curious combination of the strife at the Last Supper and an earlier dispute at Capharnaum occurs in both the poem and York XXVI. This similarity in subject-matter leads her to identify Marcelle of the play with St. Martial.

Freeman, Eva. "A Note on Play XXX of the York Cycle," Modern Language Notes, XLV (June 1930), 392-394.

That the early trade guilds took advantage of every opportunity to advertise their wares is considered evident in the Tapisteres and Couchers' "Dream of Pilate's Wife." The action of the play is halted momentarily while the attention of the audience is drawn to the couch and its furnishings as Pilate is ceremoniously prepared for his rest and to the beautiful coverings on Percula's bed as the servants display them to the audience before covering their mistress.


The words of the three musical passages of York XLVI are traced by the author to the Legenda Aurea even though the first two passages are adaptations of the "Song of Solomon." A liturgical source for the passages is considered unlikely since their wording corresponds to that in the Legenda Aurea and since there is no evidence that these passages, as they appear in the play, were ever used liturgically.


After comparing the structure of a Mystery Cycle to that of a chronicle play in its dealings with historical personages, its presentation of a sequence of events based on fact, its clearly didactic element, and its epic plot, the author urges that the Cycle as a whole, not the individual pageants, should be considered the dramatic unit for study. Using the sacrifice of Isaac as an example, the author attempts to demonstrate that the pageants are merely acting units in the development of the unifying theme which is God's plan for the salvation for mankind.

The Bakers' account books from 1543-1580 are presented as evidence that the guild continued to produce at least the Last Supper pageant even after the Mary plays were expunged from the Cycle. The sparse expenditures recorded in the accounts indicate that, although the plays were shorn of their glory, the bakers continued to do their duty adequately if unostentatiously.


From the texts of the plays and from municipal records, the author compiles information regarding the regulation and production of the Mary plays which were the first of the Cycle to be affected by Reformation decrees. The records indicate that all the Mary plays of the York Cycle were dropped after 1548 except for a brief period during Mary Tudor's reign.


In the York Chamberlains' Rolls and Account Books for the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the author has found details concerning the number and location of stations, the renting of scaffold seats, and the allocation of free places during the performances of the Cycle plays. A study of these records indicates that the sensational drop in financial receipts during the sixteenth century can be attributed primarily to the increase in the number of free places allotted to dignitaries. Following the main body of the article is a list of the stations at various dates.


Although the irregular sixth and seventh stanzas in York XXXIX were obviously constructed to coincide with the length of Magdalene's speech, the author is of the opinion that such correspondence at the cost of metrical pattern is not valid since it is not maintained throughout the play.


Only one paragraph near the end of the article is devoted to the fourfold role of maiden, mother, wife, and advocate assigned to the Blessed Virgin in the York plays. The rest of the article attempts to indicate
the one-sided view of Protestant writers regarding questions of ecclesiastical history and furnishes a brief survey of England's early devotion to the Mother of God.


The presence in thirteen York plays of not merely alliterative passages, but of alliterative verse, is considered evidence of the great skill of the dramatist since the type of alliterative verse used in the plays follows an intricate pattern. The author considers the close adherence of the York plays to the Biblical stories as an additional test of the skill of the playwright using this type of verse.


Since the York interpolation is not a structural unit, the author rejects Miss Carey's theory that the York episode between Cain and Brewbarret was modeled upon the highly developed Towneley scene between Cain and Pikesharnes. The fact that Burton's list makes no mention of Brewbarret in its description of the York play is not considered by the author as sufficient evidence that, in this case, York borrowed from Towneley.


Lines 97-108 in the York Crucifixion play are assigned by the author on the basis of their appropriateness to the work being done by the speakers. Since lines 97-106 seem to be a conversation between the leader and the man on Christ's right, the author assigns them to Primus Miles, who is directing the Crucifixion, and Secundus Miles, who is nailing the right hand; lines 107-108 are considered more fitting as a comment made by Tertius Miles, who is nailing the left hand.

CHESTER


After a brief summary of the scholarship of French influence on the Chester Cycle, the author examines the grounds for believing in this influence. Although parallel passages, French phrases and lines, references to France, and plays found only in Chester and in the French do
not, of themselves, prove French influence, he sees in the general management of certain scenes and episodes and in the structure of individual plays strong reasons for assuming such influence at some time during the Cycle's development.


The major part of the author's discussion of the Chester Cycle is devoted to the possibility of Ralph Higden's authorship of the plays. Although he presents all the available documentary evidence, including proclamations and banams, which seems to suggest that Higden composed the plays, the author does not commit himself to a decision in the matter. The rest of the article is merely a general description of the Chester Cycle.


The discrepancy between the dates of Arneway's mayoralty and Higden's life, which has caused scholars to doubt Higden's authorship of the Chester Cycle, is shown to stem from an erroneous listing in a nineteenth-century work on Chester in the Middle Ages. Since manuscripts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries support the tradition which links the origin of the Chester Cycle to Arneway and Higden, the author counsels that this tradition should not be hastily abandoned.


The Chester "Abraham and Isaac," prefaced as it is with episodes dealing with the offering of Melchisedech and the institution of circumcision, is interpreted typologically as a means of instructing catechumens on the rites of baptism and the Eucharist, and the significance of the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross.


The author merely notes the fact that the Wales National Library possesses in the Peniarth manuscript of the play of Antichrist (c.1500) the oldest known manuscript of a portion of the Chester Cycle.


In a Wycliffite sermon of the fourteenth century, published by Halliwell, mention is made of an Antichrist and a Doomsday play, presumably in the
same Cycle. Since the Chester Cycle is the only one which contains both these plays, the author concludes that it was the one meant by the preacher and, consequently, it must have been well established by 1350.

Crocker, S. F. "The Production of the Chester Plays," Papers by Various Members of the Philological Society of West Virginia University, I (1936), 62-86.

By direct reference to the plays and to contemporary documents, the author attempts to explain how and under what circumstances the Chester plays were produced. Descriptions of costumes, makeup, and stage properties are obtained from a close study of the text and stage directions of the individual plays. In conclusion, the author makes a survey of the use of music both in furnishing the atmosphere and in furthering the action of individual plays.


In an attempt to interest his contemporaries in producing something similar to the Mystery Cycles at their great festivals, the author stresses the enthusiastic approval the Chester plays received from their medieval audiences. The able portrayal by the dramatist of the basic emotions of man is considered sufficient to outweigh the author's rough and unpolished meter, which could be easily adjusted to make the plays presentable to a modern audience.


The emendations which the author suggests in Delamling's edition of the first five Chester plays are gleaned from the editions or notes of other scholars who have worked with these plays. To clarify the meaning of obscure passages, the author suggests changes in punctuation as well as the rewording of phrases which are no longer in common use.


A consideration of rime and meter leads the author to conclude that the Chester "Abraham and Isaac" is an earlier play than that of Brome on the same subject. She considers the metrical irregularity of the latter a result of the playwright's concentration on obtaining the desired dramatic effect rather than on reproducing the uniform meter of the Chester play.

Gollance, H. "The Chester Mystery Plays," Journal of the Architectural,
Archaeological, and Historic Society for the County and the City of Chester, and North Wales, n.s. XIV (1908), 18-28.

In an attempt to create an interest in reviving the Chester plays, the author presents an historical summary of the Cycle from the time of its composition about the first quarter of the fourteenth century to the Reformation. Although the author considers Ralph Higden responsible for the Cycle, he attributes to him the translation of the plays from another language, possibly French, rather than the original composition of them in the English language.


After a careful examination based on the principles that the earlier play possesses a more simple rendering of the Bible narrative, a didactic intention rather than an elaboration of didactic material, and subject-matter traceable to early Church drama, the author concludes that we cannot definitely say that the Brome play of Abraham’s sacrifice was derived from the corresponding Chester play. She considers it evident, however, that the Chester play was not taken from the Brome which is a more highly developed play.


Despite the close resemblance in general features and verbal expression in the Brome and Chester plays on Abraham’s sacrifice, the stanza patterns are so different that the author feels they preclude any explanation of relationship based on simple transference from one manuscript to another. He considers the extant Brome play a corrupt form of an older version used also by the Chester playwright who revised it to fit into the stanza pattern of the Chester Cycle.

Jones, E. D. "The Date of the Peniarth 'Antichrist' Manuscript,” The National Library of Wales Journal, I (Summer 1940), 145.

The author notes that F. M. Salter dates the Peniarth manuscript of "Antichrist" between 1467, the date of the Early Banns, and 1488, the year the sequence number of the play was changed.


In the first article of this series, the author traces the history of the last hundred years of the Chester Cycle by means of an exacting study of the relationship of the Late Banns to the early ones. The last two articles are devoted to the text of the Banns.
Severs, J. Burke. "The Relationship Between the Brome and Chester Play of 'Abraham and Isaac,'" Modern Philology, XIII (February 1915), 137-151.

The author agrees with Alexander Hohlfeld's theory that both the Brome and the Chester plays of "Abraham and Isaac" are derived from some earlier Brome version. The corruptions of the Chester text, consisting of confused order of lines, wrongly-assigned speeches, and clumsy transitions, are ascribed by the author, not to scribal errors, but to the work of an author-compiler attempting to reconstruct the original Brome version.

"Three Chester Whitsun Plays," Journal of Chester and North Wales Archaeological Society, XIV (1908), i-lxv.

The article prints the texts of three Nativity plays as they were performed in 1906 by the English Drama Society of Chester.


An examination of the plays considered by Miss Foster as influenced by the Middle English Stansaic Life of Christ leads the author to conclude that the dramatist merely added passages from the Life to already existing plays, since these passages can be removed without affecting the coherence of the plays. For this reason, the author does not consider the Life as the fundamental source of the play.

LUDUS COVENTRIAE


After establishing the fact that the Ludus Coventriae was not the group of Corpus Christi plays performed at Coventry, the author refutes Thomas Clark's theory that the Cycle acquired its Old Testament plays from Chester in the seventeenth century. He refers to manuscript studies which prove that the hand, except for a few insertions in the New Testament, belongs to the fifteenth century. The existence of parallels in Chester and Ludus Coventriae is dismissed as proof of borrowing since such similarities are true of all the Cycles.


The author attempts to demonstrate that the heterogeneous compilation of plays making up the Hesse Cycle is unified through the "Prologue of
Demon." Written by the compiler of the Cycle, this introduction to the passion group exerts its unifying force by focusing the attention of the audience on the eternal conflict between good and evil.


Because the separate groups of plays found in the Hegge manuscript contain alternate versions of some plays, the author is of the opinion that the entire Cycle, as found in the manuscript, was never acted at one time. She also claims that the Cycle is of ecclesiastical, rather than of civic, origin.


The seventh play of the Hegge collection is considered an attempt to dramatize the iconographic "Tree of Jesse" described in the Byzantine Guide to Painting. The author objects to Halliwell's titling the play "The Prophets," and suggests, rather, "The Tree of Jesse" because the phrase is used in the prologue of the Cycle and at the end of the play; furthermore, the characters in the play are not prophets concerned with the Coming of Christ, but men represented on the pictorial tree of Jesse.


In the assignment of a prologue to the Summoner, the author recognizes a reliable means of keeping the money-begging chore within the framework of the Cycle. The insertion of this prologue just before "The Trial of Joseph and Mary," a scene interesting enough to encourage large contributions, is considered further evidence of the dramatist's ingenuity.


Since no mention of Old Testament plays is made in early descriptions of the Ludus Coventriæ manuscript, the author advances the theory that the Cycle did not originally contain this group of plays. Because of similarities in the present Ludus Coventriæ and Chester Old Testament groups, he suggests that the former Cycle merely adapted the Chester plays in the seventeenth century.


Lincoln is suggested as the home of the Ludus Coventriæ because the
Cycle possesses a group of plays concerning Mary's childhood which would be appropriate for presentation on St. Anne's Day, the time when the Lincoln plays were enacted. As further evidence for the association of the Cycle with Lincoln, the author cites the prophet play which has thirteen kings, enough to account for the order that each Lincoln alderman furnish a gown for a king.

-----. "News for Bibliophiles [Coventry Plays]," The Nation, XCVII (October 2, 1913), 308-309.

In a restatement of his theory that Lincoln is the home of the Ludus Coventriæ, the author indicates that the development of these plays agrees with that of the lost Saint Anne plays, and neither dialect, style, nor content excludes the possibility of Lincoln as the place of performance.

-----. "Note on the Home of the Ludus Coventriæ," University of Minnesota Studies in Language and Literature, I (1911), 72-83.

To his previous arguments supporting Lincoln as the home of the Ludus Coventriæ, the author adds several others including entries in the Lincoln Corporation Minute Book concerning stage properties appropriate for the Hegge Cycle plays. In the intimate connection between the cathedral clergy and the townspeople of Lincoln, he finds an explanation for the homiletic aspect of the Cycle.


From a study of the Cordwainers' account books, the author concludes that this guild presented a dumb-show in a procession on Saint Anne's Day. Since there is no mention in Lincoln records about the location of stations and since there would probably not have been two sets of pageant wagons in one city, he suggests that the Hegge Cycle was once processional but was later presented on a stationary stage after the Saint Anne's Day procession.


After dismissing the hypothesis that the Hegge Cycle was performed by strolling players since it was too long and required too many actors, the author presents the theory that the Cycle consists of the plays mentioned in the Prologue as belonging to N-town with interpolations of groups of plays from other Cycles. She suggests the abbey at Bury St. Edmunds as the place where the compilation was undertaken for some yet undiscovered occasion.
In a general discussion of the northern stage, the author suggests Durham as the home of the Hegge plays mainly because Robert Hegge, a native of Durham and an early owner of the manuscript, was interested in the antiquities of his town and would have been the person to preserve its plays. She solves the problem of the presence of an East Midland dialect in a northern Cycle by suggesting that the manuscript was compiled elsewhere but brought to Durham where the plays were performed.


As the unifying force of the Ludus Coventriae Cycle, the author suggests the theory of the abuse of power by Satan who presumptuously attempted to extend his power over mankind to include Christ. Although all the plays of the Cycle do not directly relate to this theory, the author considers them part of its scheme because of the references made to the Redemption throughout the Cycle.

Greg, W. W. "The Coventry Cycle of Plays," The Athenaeum, No. 4481 (September 13, 1913), 262.

Hardin Craig's suggestion that the Assumption play was a late addition to the Hegge Cycle is rejected by the author who contends that the play is not in a later hand than the rest of the manuscript but only in a different one. The author's study of the manuscript indicates that the play was incorporated into the original fifteenth-century manuscript where it was corrected and rubricated by the same scribe who wrote the bulk of the Cycle.


John Bonnell's explanation of the seventh Hegge play as a portrayal of the "Root of Jesse" is used by the author as the basis of another argument favoring Lincoln as the home of the Cycle. In the Treasurer's Inventory of 1536 in the cathedral church of Lincoln, the author has found a description of "a Rede coope called the Rutte of Jesse," apparently worn in the play.


The author rejects of foreign birth as the interpretation of out born in Pilate's mention of Christ. He considers out a variant spelling of aught meaning at all. Consequently, he would interpret the line: "If
Jeaua verence perchance bom in the land of Galilee."


After suggesting that the Hegge Cycle was formed from two groups of plays distinct from each other in meter and method of performance with one of these groups used as a basis for the Cycle, the author presents the Digby "Massacre" as an example of a play that might possibly have been displaced in such a compilation since it can be easily substituted for plays XVIII and XIX in the Cycle.


Thomas Clark's theory that the Ludus Coventriae Old Testament plays were composed in the seventeenth century as adaptations of Chester is rejected by the author on the basis of Miss Block's manuscript studies which indicate that the entire manuscript dates from the fifteenth century. As a further argument the author attempts to show that the language of the plays is not of the seventeenth century but of an earlier period.


Because of striking similarities between the Hegge plays and Grimald's "Christus Redivivus" the author posits the dependence of the sixteenth-century work on the medieval plays. To the objection that Grimald could have had no knowledge of the Cycle, the author replies that Grimald may have come in contact with the manuscript as it found its way from Bury St. Edmunds, supposedly its original home, to Oxford, where Robert Hegge gained possession of it.


Since the whole of the Hegge Cycle seems too long to have been presented at one time, the author suggests that it was probably divided into two parts presented in alternate years. Although the extant manuscript indicates that the Cycle was presented on a fixed stage, the author believes that it originally was given on pageant wagons and may have been presented in that way for some time.
COVENTRY

Berkeley, Frances Campbell. "Were the Coventry Pageants Stationary or Processional?" Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, XXIV (1909), xxix.

In this summary of a paper read at a meeting of the Modern Language Association in 1908, the author suggests that, though pageants arranged for special occasions were stationary, the Mystery Cycle pageants were processional primarily because of their connection with the Corpus Christi festival.


The author's study of the Weavers' play indicates that the scene of the disputation in the temple is parallel to the second scene in the corresponding York play.

French, John C. "A Note on the Miracle Plays," Modern Language Notes, XIX (January 1904), 31-32.

The author attempts to demonstrate that the Weavers' play parallels the entire York play of the Doctors, not only the second scene. He then lists all the versions of the play, cyclic and non-cyclic, which can probably be traced to a common original.

Fretton, William George. "Notes on the Guild of Corpus Christi or St. Nicholas Coventry," The Reliquary, XXI (October 1880), 68-71.

Included in this brief history and description of the St. Nicholas Guild are entries from its accounts noting expenditures for the Corpus Christi plays.

Harris, May Dormer. "The 'World' in the Doomsday Mystery Play," Notes and Queries, CXIX (October 3, 1925), 243.

Since the author is of the opinion that the Coventry "Doomsday" required three worlds, one to set on fire at each performance, she disagrees with Sharp that wordy in an account book entry means a mechanism for producing the noise of an earthquake. In her opinion the word should be worldly to account for the properties necessary for the play.


Since the scenes preceding the Weavers' play are similar to those in
York, Towneley, and Chester, the author is of the opinion that an examination of the plays will prove that the Coventry play has parallels in all the other cycles except Ludus Coventriae. He poses the question whether all these plays were directly taken from an old form of York or partly from each other.

Munro, J. "'Tyrly Tirlow' and the Coventry Play of the Nativity," Notes and Queries, 11th series, I (February 12, 1910), 125-126.

The Christmas carol which the shepherds sing in the Coventry Nativity play is identified by the author as "Tyrly Tirlow," a carol quoted in Cambridge History of English Literature.


In an effort to explain how Herod could have carried out the directions, "Herod rages in the pageant and the street also," without interrupting his tirade, the author suggests that there may have been a spiral stair which led around the end of the pageant wagon to the street.
Approval Sheet

The thesis submitted by Sister Mary Charles, C.R. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of English.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

December 11, 1961

[Signature of Adviser]