Letter from the Editor

This is the last issue of the REED Newsletter. Beginning in 1998, the newsletter will be transformed into Early Theatre: A Journal associated with the Records of Early English Drama (ISSN 1206-9078). Contents will be listed by the MLA under the acronym ET/REED. We hope that our subscribers, many of whom have been with us for twenty-two years, will continue to support us in this new format, and will enjoy the new range of articles and notes it will provide. The new journal will appear annually, in the fall.

Early Theatre welcomes research in medieval or early modern drama and theatre history, rooted in the records and documents of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. We likewise encourage articles or notes on related materials either in Europe, or in other parts
of the world where English or European travellers, traders, and colonizers observed performances by other peoples. Although we continue to be primarily interested in the performance history of any art, entertainment, or festive occasion of the period, we also invite submissions of interpretive or literary articles relating to the performances themselves.

The editorial board of the journal is actively involved in the selection and editing process. We expect to publish articles by members of the board in the first few issues, as well as articles and notes by other scholars, and welcome readers' responses, either by regular mail or by email, in exploring options for the new journal's future. The members of the editorial board include:

Lawrence Clopper, Indiana University
JoAnna Dutka, Past Editor, Erindale College, University of Toronto
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We are now considering articles and notes for publication in 1998 and 1999. Submissions, written in English, may range from 250–7000 words. Copies of the house style are available by email from the editor, and will be posted on the internet in January. Papers must be double-spaced, including endnotes; further instruction about submitting electronic copy will be sent if the article is accepted. For returns, include a self-addressed envelope and sufficient postage. Address correspondence and submissions to Helen Ostovich, Editor, Early Theatre, Department of English, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8S 4L9. For further information by email, write to:

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Helen Ostovich, Editor

ANNE BRANNEN

Intricate Subtleties: Entertainment at Bishop Morton's Installation Feast

Of the many obscure aspects of medieval feasts, probably the custom about which we have the least hard evidence is the subtlety. At some point in an important feast, a spectacle would be brought forth, consisting of some sort of model—of a lion, a castle, or saint, for instance—often accompanied by a verse. But the medieval menus of commemorative feasts, in which we find most descriptions of subtleties, are not often forthcoming about the details. Is the subtlety brought out before a course? During? After? Of what
is it constructed? Wood? Paper? Marzipan? What happens to these constructions later?
Are they displayed in the hall? Thrown away? Eaten (in the case of the marzipan)? And
the verses — are they written out and displayed on the subtlety, so that guests can read them?
Are they read aloud? If the latter, by whom? We understand that subtleties were a form
of edifying entertainment reserved for feasts. Beyond that, much of what we believe is
speculation. The menus do not usually help us.'

One exception to this general rule, at least in part, is the herald’s menu for the 1479
installation as bishop of Ely of John Morton, the future archbishop of Canterbury. In
that menu, we are given a wealth of details. As is true for most medieval menus, we are
told the dishes served at each of the three courses, and we are told the identities of some
of the more important guests. But it is unusual for a menu to make it clear, as this one
does, that the subtleties were presented both before and after each course. Moreover,
because the poems accompanying each subtlety are preceded in the account by the word
’rehersall’, we know that the poems were read aloud, thus constituting a form of dramatic
presentation one step away from the tableaux vivants often arranged for royal entries; at
the installation feast, humans spoke the lines, but they spoke them while accompanying
models of ‘characters’, rather than portraying the characters themselves, creating, in effect,
’subtleties vivants’. And from the evidence of the poems themselves, also preserved for
us in the herald’s account, we can see that the elaborate feast in its entirety celebrated the
trustworthiness of the new bishop, a former rebel, while simultaneously manifesting a
general consciousness both of his former less trustworthy state, and of the fairly recent
date of his pardon.

In 1479, Morton was back in favor with the York king Edward IV, a position he
had reached after some severe political setbacks. Lancastrian, and loyal to Henry VI,
under whom he had been Keeper of the Privy Seal, he had been excluded from the
general pardon of 6 March, 1461, escaping from the Tower of London to join with
Queen Margaret in exile in France. He was not pardoned until 1471, when he and
many other Lancastrians were received back into royal favor. By 1472, Edward had
made him Master of the Rolls; his appointment to the see of Ely, following five years
later, indicates a ‘rapid rise in the royal service’.

Despite, or because of, this rapid rise, his rebellious past had clearly not been entirely
forgotten at the time of the installation. The celebratory feast may have been elaborate
and costly — containing such dishes as roe deer, roasted ‘regardaunt’; roasted pheasant;
floirished peacock; semeca fritters; carp, a delicacy in England; sturgeon, a royal fish —
but the symbolism underlying the entire feast — as manifested in the food, the subtleties,
the poems, the guest list — was that of a well-knit society, well-governed and impervious
to, though aware of the possibilities of, rebellion.

At such a banquet, with both prominent churchmen and nobles present, it was not
unusual for both meat and fish dishes to be presented, though it was not a fast-day.
Since all the guests would be eating at the same time, they had to be provided with
both fish and meat dishes in both courses, customarily done by providing separate fish
and meat menus, fish and meat dishes being partitioned equally. This procedure was
not followed at Morton’s feast, however, at which the first course was composed almost
entirely of meat dishes, the ‘Graunt luce’ being the only fish offered; the second course
was composed more or less equally of mixed fish and meat dishes; while the third course was composed almost entirely of fish dishes, the meat-eaters being accommodated only with fowl: curlew, plover, cranes, and larks. Such a progression provides a symbolic movement from secular to pastoral concerns, appropriate for Morton's first church appointment.12

Markedly elaborate as well, and indeed highly unusual, was the set-up of the subtleties; though they might be presented at the end or the beginning of each course,13 normally we find only one subtlety per course. At Bishop Morton's installation, however, two subtleties were presented at each course, for a total of six in all, one before and one after each course.

The first course, for instance, was preceded by a subtlety representing a white lion, an emblem from Edward iv's coat of arms:

\[
\text{`le premere course put lestates}
\]

\[
\text{Un sotelte de lyon blanke rehearsal}
\]

\[
\text{Thinke and thanke prelate of grete prise,}
\]

\[
\text{That it hath pleasid the habundant grace.}
\]

\[
\text{Of king Edward in al his actes wise}
\]

\[
\text{The to promote hyder to his please.}
\]

\[
\text{This lytil yle whyle thou hast tyme and space.}
\]

\[
\text{For to repayre do ay thy besy cure}^{14}
\]

\[
\text{For thy rewarde of heuen thou shalt besure}
\]

Thus, the entire company acted as witness to the new bishop's instructions to remember the king, instructions meant to remind him and the company of the secular power and 'habundant grace' behind the installation and the feast, the king whose decision to promote Morton 'hyder to his please' epitomized his trust in the former rebel.

The first subtlety, then, was focused on secular concerns, as was the first course. The subtlety which followed the course, however, shifted the focus to religious concerns; from then on, the subtleties at the Morton feast were of a religious nature. This second subtlety represented the birth of Saint John, the bishop's name-sake (and the saint upon whose feast day – 29 August – the installation was performed), accompanied by a recitation of a poem petitioning Saint John to pray that the bishop, who had gained his position 'thorough [the saint's] meditacion', be preserved in virtuous life. The subtleties for the first course therefore reflect each other, representing the secular and sacred help received by the bishop.

The second course was introduced by a subtlety of 'le Ile de Ely'; it is not clear here whether the entire district of the Isle of Ely is represented here – that is, Ely itself and the surrounding parishes (now northeast Cambridgeshire), or whether only the city itself – Ely proper – is represented. At any rate, the text of the accompanying poem refers both to the earth of the Isle, and to its 'Lodesterre', which I take to mean the lantern of the church, the eight-sided, light-admitting tower on top of the nave crossing, with which
Bishop Morton is neatly conflated in the poem itself. In that poem, the bishop has become the 'lodestar of Ely', a spiritual counterpart of the Ely cathedral lantern:

Lodesterre of ely, loo suche is godys myght
Hym therfore to serue thou art bonden of right.

Here, the bishop and the Ely lantern alike provide guiding lights, for those traveling through the darkness of sin or the darkness of the fens at night."

Though this second course was followed by one subtlety as usual — a representation of God as a shepherd — in this single case there was a poem of two stanzas, rather than one. The first stanza is written in the voice of God — 'spoken', therefore, by the subtlety itself — commanding the bishop, as the earthly shepherd of the Ely fold, ever 'from rauenors to be ther true defendour'. This stanza is followed by one written in the voice of the bishop himself — whether or not the actual voice speaking the lines is that of the bishop we cannot know from what we are given in the account — promising not only to rule and guide his church according to God, but specifically 'to expel al rebel'. That the bishop specifically promises, whether in his own voice or that of the subtlety, to guard against rebellion, whether against the state or the church, seems quite pointed, and consciously directed at the bishop's past.¹⁶

The third course was introduced by a subtlety representing saints Peter, Paul, and Andrew, and an address in the voice of St. Andrew, admonishing the bishop to remember that all earthly things are vain, and stating that the three saints make him the protector 'of this our chirche'.¹⁷

The course was followed by the last subtlety, quite a solid one, apparently, representing 'le Eglesure letonne', that is, the church modeled in brass, or more probably, in a material made to look like brass.¹⁸ The last spoken stanza welcomes the guests — a welcome after the feast is over, in effect — 'ffrom ye highest vnto ye lowest degree', and admonishes them all to love God, not 'me', which, given the conflation of the bishop and the physical church, means both; Morton and the cathedral stand in the same position.

The guest list itself — that is, the list of some of the important guests — naturally includes both religious and secular leaders. Of the secular guests present, though, the guest list shows the same careful planning exhibited by the other reported aspects of the feast. Sir Thomas Howard was there, a member of the king's household who had family holdings in East Anglia;¹⁹ Sir John Donne and Sir Robert Chamberlain, also Yorkists, were there; but Sir William Brandon, who had been Henry vi's banner bearer, and John Fortescu, also Lancastrian, and pardoned with Morton, were there as well. The feast was planned with detailed precision, the magnanimity and watchfulness of the king manifested in the food, the entertainment, the lords on the dais. One was to understand that the king could forgive true repentance, and reward excellence. One was not to assume that he was foolish.

Bishop Morton's installation feast provides us with an especially coherent and intricate group of subtleties, but surely not a unique one. The possibilities for impressive instruction will not have been lost on the makers of other commemorative feasts. Should
other such descriptions of subtleties exist, they would provide a fruitful area for further study.

Appendix
'Bishop Morton's Installation Feast'

Cambridge University Library SSS.41.7
Short-Title Catalogue #782 ('Arnold's Chronicle', printed in Antwerp by A. van Berghen, 1503?)

C le premere course pur lestates

C Un sotelte de lyon blanke rehearsal
    Thinke and thanke prelate of grete prise
    That it hath pleasid the habmdant grace.
    Of king Edward in al his actes wise
    The to promote hyder to his please.
    This lytil yle whyle thou hast tyme and space.
    For to repayre do ay thy besy cure
    For thy rewarde of heuen thou shalt besure

C Pur potage.

Frumenty and venyson
Syngnet rosted
Graunt luce in sarris
Roo rosted regardaunt.
Feusaunt roosted
Venison in paste
Grete custarde
Leche porpul

C Un sotelte de natiuite saint Iohn rehersall
    Blissyd Iohn baptist for thy name so preciouse.
    Gracia dei be thy true interpretacion
    Pray euer to god yat in thy lyue vertuouse
    Iohn nowe of this see thorough thy meditacion.
    Preserued be which be this stallacion
    Thus is entred into his chirche
    Ther longe to endure many goode dedis to worche

C The seconde course.

C Un sotelte le lle de ely rehersall.

6
O mortal man call to remembrance
This text de terra tu plamasti me
What than auayleth al worldly plesaunce.
Sythe to the erthe thou shalt reuerte
De lime terre, how god hath ordeyned the.
Lodesterre of ely, loo suche is godys myght
Hym therfore to serue thou art bonden of right

gely to potage
Storke roosted
Pecoke florished
Carpe in soppis
Rabett roosted
Breme fresshewater.
Freature semeca.
Orenge in paste
Tatre borboyne
Leche damaske

C Un sotelte de dieu schepard.
Ego sum pastor bonus rehersall
john ofte resuolue in thy remembrancene.
That of my grace haue made the here protector
And of this folde I geue the governance
From rauenors to be ther true defensor
Them to preserue euer tyme & ower
Lerne of me & do thy besy deuor
From my folke al rauen to disseuor

C Respocio episcopi

Fayn I wolde blissed lorde yf it like ye
This cure of thy diuine puruiaunce
And special most grace hast giue me
To gyde & rewle after thy plesaunce
& to expel al rebel with thy manitence
From ye chirche good lord & geue me that grace.
And so me to rewle wyth the to haue a place

C The thirde course

C Un sotelte le sentis petre paule, & Andrewe rehersall
Remembre iohn this yat shineth bright
With gret abundaunce al is but vaynglorie
Lerne for to die and welcome in yon we knight
Welcome my preist & bishop verily
The holy peter blissed poule & I
Of this our chirche make ye protector
And of this yle ye vertuose gouernor

C  Crewe of amondes to potage
Boetour roosted
Perche in gelye curlew
Plouer roosted
Un caste de gely florishyd
Crenes dendose
Larkes roosted
Fresshe storigion
Quynces in paste
Tarte poleyn
ffritour bounce
Leche Reiall

C  Un sotelte de le Eglesure letonne rehersall
Now hertely ye bee Welcome into this hal
ffrom ye highest vnto ye lowest degree.
Requiring & specialy praing you al
Yeld to god ye louing & not to me
And ferthermore of your benignite
Domino deo nostro gracias agamus
And prayse his name with te deum laudamus

Syttyng at the hygh dees.
My lord of Ely in the myddes
On the right hande
The abbot of berye
The abbot of ramesey
The prior of Ely
The mayster of the rollis
The priour of braunwell
The priour of angelsheye
C  On the other hande
Syr Thomas howard.
Syr Iohn donne
Syr Iohn wyngelfeld
Syr harry wentworthe
Iohn sapcote
Syr Edward woodhous
Syr Robert Chamberleyne
Syr John Cheyne
Syr William Branden
Syr Robert Fynes
John Fortescue.
The abbot of Thorney and my Lady Brandon and other estates in the chambre.

Notes


2 The earliest known version of the menu is in the untitled incunabulum (#782 in the Short-Title Catalogue originally compiled by A.W. Pollard and G.R. Redgrave) written by Richard Arnold, beginning, on A2, 'In this booke is conteyney the names of ye baylifs custos mairs and sherefs of london', printed in Antwerp by A. van Berghen, in 1503(?). A transcription of the menu, taken from the 1503 edition of the incunabulum, can be found in James Bentham's *History and Antiquities of the Conventual and Cathedral Church of Ely, from 673 to 1771, etc.* (Cambridge, 1771), Appendix 35*–36*. It contains some scribal errors. Excerpts of the menu, taken from Bentham's account, and containing further errors, can be found in *Life in the Middle Ages*, by George Gordon Coulton, volume iii, pp. 150–151. Reference to the poem within the menu can be found in Supplement to the Index of Middle English Verse, edited by Rossell Hope Robbins and John L. Cutler (Lexington, 1965), 3563.5.

3 R. W. Ingram cites payments for subtleties, and for painting subtleties, from the Cappers' Records of 1525 (*Coventry reed* (Toronto, 1981), 123); in this case, payments for players appear along with the subtleties, providing one of the few other cases wherein we find subtleties to be associated with what we might normally think of as dramatic activity — though the exact connection in this case of the players and the subtleties is unclear.


5 A.B. Emden, *Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge to 1500* (Cambridge, 1963), 1319.


7 It had, for instance, three courses, which in England, where two courses were enough to mark an important feast, would signify a 'very grand occasion' (Anne C. Wilson, *Food and Drink in Britain: From the Stone Age to Recent Times*, Harmonds Worth, 1984, 42).
Three courses were not as unusual in France, where four courses would mark an important feast (Jean-Louis Flandrin, 'Structure des menus Français et Anglais aux XIVe et XVe siècles', *Du Manuscrit a la Table*, Carole Lambert (ed), Montreal, 1992, 176).

8 Wilson, *Food and Drink in Britain*, 37.


10 The guests would not necessarily be tasting everything offered, however, as Hiatt and Butler, working with guest lists and food payments, point out (*Curye on Inglysch*, 5).

11 Wilson, *Food and Drink in Britain*, 31.

12 Hiatt and Butler, *Curye on Inglysch*, state that the medieval feast, according to the *Liber Cure Cocarum*, naturally proceeds from substantial foods to more delicate foods (p 5).

Other customs concerning the choice of dishes for a course are known: Flandrin notes that in English menus, salt fish appears in the first course in all menus known to him, and that roast venison appears never in an English first course, but often in a second (p 185); Wilson, *Edward iv*, notes that 'it was rare for the meat of any type of animal to appear more than once in a course, or indeed in a meal' (p 120). All of these customs are features of the Morton feast. What is unusual here is specifically the changing number of meat and fish dishes in each course.

13 There is disagreement about this. Wilson, *Edward iv*, 336-7, assumes presentation after a course, but surviving medieval menus seem to imply, from the order of the entries, presentation before the course.

14 It is not clear how much 'repayre' Bishop Morton actually performed in the See of Ely, as the register of his official acts is missing (Emden, *Biographical Register*, 1320); he did, however, cause some important works of navigation and drainage of the fens to be done, and the 'great artificial cut between Peterborough and Wisbech … is still called Morton's Leam' (W.D. Sweeting, *The Cathedral Church of Ely: A History and Description of the Building with a Short Account of the Former Monastery and of the See*, London, 1901, 1921, 121–2).

15 The Ely cathedral lantern is its most prominent and famous feature, and has been so since the 14th century. Its construction was started under Alan de Walsingham in 1322, when the central tower fell, and was finished by 1342, when de Walsingham was prior (Sweeting, *The Cathedral Church of Ely*, 21–4). As one approaches Ely over the fens, the cathedral lantern is the first visible feature of the 'isle'. It serves not only to let light into the cathedral, but, at night when the cathedral is lit from within, to let light out, making it a good candidate for the 'fire of Ely', and, to the night traveller, a 'lodestar'.

16 Morton would later again be guilty of rebellion, when he would join – or perhaps engineer – Buckingham's 1483 rebellion against Richard III. Present at the Ely installation feast was another pardoned rebel, Sir William Bandon, who would also later join Buckingham's rebellion (Ross, *Edward iv*, 184). After his arrest in 1483, Morton escaped to Flanders, returning once again from exile at the accession of Henry VII (Emden, *Biographical Register*, 1319). Six years later, he would be appointed Archbishop of Canterbury (Giles St. Aubyn, *The Year of Three Kings: 1483* (New York, 1983), 117).

17 The cathedral was, and is, dedicated to the Trinity; the connection of either the bishop or the see of Ely to the three saints represented in the subtlety is unclear.

18 This is admittedly a vexed reading. Bentham, *History and Antiquities*, reads the incunable as 'le eglesure lettone', but does not explain it; Coulton reads Bentham as 'the
Eagle on the Tun', which he takes to be a 'punning rebus on Morton's name' (p 151). Quite likely the incunabulum itself contains misreadings of the copy manuscript; if so, this phrase probably represents one of them.

19 Ross, Edward IV, 344.
20 remembrance: for remembrance (?)
21 Respicio: for Responcio

CHRIS NIGHMAN

Another Look at the English Staging of an Epiphany Play at the Council of Constance

The Council of Constance (1414–1418), arguably the most important general council between the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 and the Council of Trent of the mid-sixteenth century, met to resolve three crises confronting the Church: the papal schism that had divided Latin Christendom since 1378, the heresies founded by Wyclif and Hus, and widespread clerical abuses. While it responded to all three of these problems, the council's greatest achievement was surely its election of Martin V in November 1417 after it had deposed two of the schismatic popes, John XXIII and Benedict XIV, and persuaded the third, Gregory XIV, to abdicate.

In a previous issue of this newsletter Andre de Mandach drew attention to the report of an Epiphany play that was twice staged at this council by the leaders of the English delegation; he concluded with the hope that 'further research may reveal the nature of these performances; they give a glimpse of courtly entertainment, perhaps dramatic, that combines secular and sacred in an intriguing fashion'. The present article examines the political context of these performances and suggests that they were probably staged for propaganda purposes in support of the policies of the English delegation.

According to Ulrich von Richental, the Constance burgher whose journal provides an important eyewitness account of this council, the English bishops hosted two banquets that included the enactment of scenes associated with the feast of the Epiphany: the Nativity with the Visitation of the Magi, and Herod's Slaughter of the Innocents. The first of these banquets was held on Sunday, 24 January 1417, for the prominent citizens of Constance; on the following Sunday, 31 January, the English hosted a more sumptuous banquet with a more splendid performance for a large group of German nobles and prelates and for the Emperor Sigismund, who had just returned to Constance on 27 January after an absence of about eighteen months.

There are two points to be made before examining the context of these performances: first, there is no other known evidence for dramatic activity at this council; second, Richental's comments on the skill of the players and the quality of the costumes and properties suggest that considerable expense and prior planning went into the staging of these performances. These observations beg the question of why the leaders of the English nation at Constance went to so much trouble to sponsor this particular perfor-
mance for their German guests. An explanation may be offered by considering the relations between the German emperor and the English delegation at this council in early 1417.

The long journey from which Sigismund had just returned in January 1417 yielded three significant results. In Spain, he had engineered the Treaty of Narbonne, whereby most of the remaining supporters of the last schismatic pope, Benedict xxiii, promised to withdraw their obedience from him and join the council in deposing him. Sigismund had then visited the king of France, but their already poor relations only worsened as a result. Finally, the emperor went to England where he concluded a military alliance, known as the Treaty of Canterbury, with Henry v on 15 August 1416.5

On 24 September, five weeks after that treaty was signed, two English bishops – John Catterick of Coventry-Lichfield and John Wakering of Norwich – arrived at Constance; according to Richental, they were accompanied by an unnamed doctor.6 Two weeks later, on 7 October, Bishop Richard Clifford of London appeared at the council.7 These are the last known arrivals of English delegates until Philip Morgan and several other royal emissaries appeared at Constance on 2 February 1417, after the banquets and performances described by Richental. Although the king's commission to Catterick, Wakering and Clifford had been issued on 20 July 1416,8 it is very likely that Clifford, at least, was present when Sigismund and Henry reached their agreement three weeks later, and then departed for Constance.9 It is also worth noting that Clifford is the only English prelate besides Robert Hallum, the widely-acknowledged leader of the English delegation, who was specifically mentioned by Richental as a host of the banquets and entertainments of January 1417; it is curious that Richental did not mention John Catterick who was the president of the English natio for that month and thus played a special role in welcoming Sigismund to the council. It seems probable, then, that it was Clifford who brought to Constance the costumes and properties, and perhaps even the actors, of the Epiphany play, along with the gold and silver plate on which the banquets were served.

It is also likely that the unnamed doctor who arrived at Constance with Catterick and Wakering was a certain Oxford theologian named Richard Fleming,10 who would soon distinguish himself at the council as a preacher. It has long been known that Fleming's eulogy for Bishop Hallum of Salisbury, who died at Constance in early September 1417, served to announce a shift in the English policy regarding a dispute known as the 'priority conflict' that had brought the council to a stalemate during the summer of 1417. In this controversy, Sigismund, the Germans and the English were united in insisting that the council enact sweeping ecclesiastical reforms before electing a new pope; the French, Italian and Spanish nations and most of the cardinals argued instead that first the unity of the church must be restored with a papal election and only then should reform proceed under the aegis of the new pope. In his funeral sermon for Hallum, Fleming proposed the compromise by which limited reforms were approved by the council and then a new pope was elected.11

A survey of Fleming's other known sermons from this council makes it clear that he was surely the most important English preacher at Constance in 1417, and thus a major spokesman for the English nation. In addition to his eulogy for Hallum and three other sermons noted in Heinrich Finke's register of Constance sermons,12 Fleming delivered
at least two more conciliar sermons in that year. This makes him by far the most active English preacher at Constance in 1417; but the case for his role as spokesman is based more on the content than the mere frequency of his preaching. Fleming's eulogy for Hallum, which helped resolve the priority conflict, has already been mentioned; it will be shown that it was also Fleming who, in his debut sermon at Constance, first announced the English position in the coming priority conflict. It is probably no coincidence that this important sermon was preached on the feast of the Epiphany, 1417, a few weeks prior to the English staging of an Epiphany play.

Fleming's sermon, known by the scriptural pericope that forms its *thema*, 'Surge illuminare Jerusalem' (Isa 60:1), is a very learned and rhetorically powerful expression of reform ideals that often repeats the prophet's exhortation in urging the Church, 'Jerusalem', to 'arise' from the depths into which it has sunk and 'shine forth' from the darkness enveloping it. The sermon is remarkable and probably unique in that it was intentionally designed as a commentary on the conciliar decretal 'Haec sancta' of 6 April 1415 in which the council had declared its supreme authority in the church and defined its three goals: the healing of the papal schism, the extirpation of heresy, and the 'reformatio ecclesiae in capite et in membris' (reformation of the church in both its head and its members). As Thomas Morrissey points out, not only does Fleming make specific reference to this decree, but its three goals also correspond 'to the tripartite theme of Fleming's address'. What Morrissey did not notice is that Fleming takes a particular political stand in this sermon. At the end of the sermon's *membrum primum*, which deals with the papal schism, Fleming makes the following important statement:

It is clear that the unrestrained extension of such fringes [of papal authority] and the vicious abuse of ecclesiastical power have been virtually the entire cause of the schism. And unless this synod of Constance (may it be constant in this work) will provide for appropriate remedies against it, an identical defect shall necessarily occur again because of a similar deficiency.

And in the sermon's third part, devoted to the issue of clerical reform, he makes a related assertion:

Therefore, this most holy synod has been gathered especially so that the church may be purged in head and in members from these evils by the antidote of inviolable and effective reformation....

Fleming's point is clearly this: it would be foolish to elect a new pope until after the abuses that caused the schism in the first place have been eliminated through reform; in other words, reform should take priority over the election of a new pope.

This is the first known public statement by any person at Constance of what would later be the Anglo-German position in the priority struggle. Sigismund himself and members of the German delegation apparently refrained from taking a public stand on this issue until several months later. It is virtually certain, though, that the emperor's
ambiguity was a deliberate strategy intended to assure the success of the proceedings against Benedict; he no doubt intended all along to promote major reforms before an election would take place. Sigismund's attitude in January 1417 is revealed in John Forester's letter to Henry v, written at Constance on 2 February 1417:

My lords of Salisbury [Hallum] and Chester [Catterick] with the consent of all your other ambassadors are fully disposed to forward reform in the Church, in head and in members. They will not have any regard to any benefice which they hold, for they do not want this goal to be thwarted; and of this I do not doubt that these my two lords will always under all circumstances hold by the good advice and deliberation of your brother, the king of the Romans [Sigismund].

Significantly, Forester does not mention Benedict or the issue of unity. Not only does this letter attest to Sigismund's commitment to reform, but it also suggests that he and Henry had already reached an agreement on this issue, presumably during the previous summer. In the very next passage Forester relates how at High Mass on Sunday, 31 January Sigismund wore the robes of the Garter and the king's royal collar, which Henry had bestowed upon the emperor during the latter's visit to England the previous year. Forester goes on to report that later that day Sigismund joined the duke of Bavaria and the burgrave of Nürnberg in dining with Richard Clifford; this is surely a reference to the second banquet at which the Epiphany play described by Richental was performed.

Considering all of these circumstances, it seems very likely that there was an intentional connection between Fleming's sermon, with its reformist message anticipating the coming conflict over priorities, and the two performances of an Epiphany play shortly after that sermon was delivered, especially the second one viewed by Sigismund and the ecclesiastical and temporal lords of the Empire. If this supposition is correct, then the purpose of the English bishops in staging the play would have been to apprise their audiences of the message Fleming had conveyed in 'Surge' or, for those who had been present when he preached it, to reiterate his main points, especially those regarding reform and the papal election that were to be the basis of the Anglo-German alliance in the coming months.

Fleming's sermon is naturally replete with references to the account of the Nativity in Matthew 2:1–16, the subject of the Feast of the Epiphany in the Latin church. Indeed, the scenes Richental mentions in his account of the English banquets were those used by Fleming to illustrate several key points in his very politicized sermon. For example, Fleming claims that the rule of the three schismatic popes has been 'truly Herodian': just as Herod deceitfully asked the Magi to lead him to the Holy Family so that he might adore Jesus, these popes never really intended in their hearts to abdicate for the common good as they had promised to do. Fleming then notes that even worse than Herod's cruel massacre of the infants of Bethlehem has been the damnation of countless innocent souls to hell because of the schism. In contrast to the popes of the schism, the pope to be elected by the council should be 'pure, meek, and content with little' like the infant Jesus.
discussing heresy, Fleming likens heretics to the magi when they forsook the star (faith) and turned to human assistance (flawed reason) in searching for the newborn Saviour.24 Finally, at the end of the section on reform Fleming explains that, once the church has been completely purged of abuses, its priests shall offer to God the 'gold of excellent lifestyle', the 'frankincense of devout administration', and the 'myrrh of severe correction' in guiding their flocks.25 The three gifts also figure prominently in the section on the schism where Fleming notes that the new pope should refuse the gold of simony; be humble in receiving the frankincense of praise; and be receptive to the myrrh of reproach.26

If there was indeed an intentional linkage between Fleming's Epiphany sermon and the Epiphany play twice performed shortly afterwards, the audiences might have been expected to draw that connection without any prompting. But it seems more likely that some form of oral message would have been conveyed with the portrayal of the scenes. The fact that Richental mentions only 'images and gestures' suggests that the performances themselves were pantomimes; although he makes no reference to narration, it is possible that some kind of commentary was provided only to the politically powerful audience at the second banquet, which he probably did not attend. If so, Fleming himself may have delivered a running gloss, as the scenes were being enacted, for the benefit of the emperor and other German magnates, serving as the 'doctor expositor' who appears in the surviving texts of some medieval religious plays.

Unless further evidence comes to light, the nature of the relationship between Fleming's Epiphany sermon and the play described by Richental will remain only a matter for speculation; but the circumstantial evidence that there was such a connection is quite strong. Very likely, these apparently unique and costly performances were staged for a reason that goes well beyond that of pious entertainment and edification. It is no overstatement to claim that virtually every public sacred act at this council had a political side to it; the example of Sigismund's attendance at High Mass on 31 January wearing the regalia given to him by Henry v is a relevant case in point. As Andre de Mandach astutely pointed out, it is the combination of secular and sacred that makes Richental's report of this play so intriguing; indeed, that same dual nature suggests why these performances were staged by the leaders of the English nation at Constance: because this Epiphany play probably served as the vehicle for political propaganda.

Notes

1 I would like to thank Professors Alexandra Johnston of the University of Toronto and Christopher Crowder of Queen's University (retired) for their invaluable guidance in my research on this topic.

2 André de Mandach, 'English "dramatic" performances at the Council of Constance, 1417', reed Newsletter 7.2 (1982), 26–8; the article includes editions and translations of this record. These passages had been previously edited and discussed by Eckehard Simon in 'The home town of the Schwabische Weihnachtspiel (ca. 1420) and its original setting', Euphorion 73 (1979), 318–19.

3 Cf. E.K. Chambers, The Medieval Stage 2 (Oxford, 1903), 101–2, n. 2; and Karl Young.
Manuscripts of Richental's journal disagree over the date of the second banquet; Simon ('Weihnachtspiel', 319) pointed out this discrepancy, noting that one copy he consulted reads 'Uff den fridag vor der liechtmel...' (29 January), while another has 'Am Sontag vor der liechtmel...' (31 January). De Mandach used the most recent edition by Otto Feger which has the later date, but some scholars have relied upon older editions with the earlier date; see, for instance, the translation of Richental's journal by Louise Loomis in *The Council of Constance: The Unification of the Church* (New York, 1961), 148. The later date is surely the correct one; see below, note 22.

This is according to another Constance diarist, Giacomo Cerretano; see Heinrich Finke (ed), *Acta concilii Constan tiensis* 2 (Münster, 1923), 347. Hermann von der Hardt, citing Cerretano, misdated Clifford's entry into Constance as occurring three days, rather than two weeks, after the arrival of Catterick and Wakering; see *Concilium* 4, 909.

Clifford's will was made at Dover on 20 August 1416, five days after the treaty was signed; see E.F Jacob (ed), *The register of Henry Chichele, archbishop of Canterbury, 1414–1443* 2 (Oxford, 1938), 225. Considering their arrival a fortnight ahead of Clifford, it seems likely that Catterick and Wakering left England before the treaty was signed. Catterick's will was made at 'Dertforth' (Dartford, Kent) 'in via versus Constan ciam ad consilium generale' (p 179) on 6 August, exactly two weeks before Clifford made his will. Wakering's will (pp 311–14) is dated 1425; the testament he presumably made before leaving for Constance was thus superceded and apparently does not survive.

See Thomas Morrissey, *Quidam magister Riccardus and Richard Fleming, bishop of Lincoln: a note*, *Antonianum* 67 (1992), 529–33; (Fleming did not become bishop of Lincoln until 1420). Morrissey refutes a suggestion that Fleming was present at Constance in 1415, pointing out that he was still in England after that date and probably came to Constance with one of these episcopal entourages in the early Autumn of 1416. Although he was surely correct on his main point, Morrissey followed Hermann von der Hardt in giving the incorrect date for Clifford's arrival (see above, note 7), and he did not notice Richental's mention of a doctor accompanying Catterick and Wakering. While the case for Fleming being that doctor is admittedly circumstantial, it is worth noting that all of the other prominent English doctors at Constance – Richard Dereham, William Corff, Robert Gilbert, John Wells and Henry Abendon – had already been at Constance for some time when these bishops arrived. It is possible that Richental was referring to
Thomas Polton, who was named in Henry V's commission to the three bishops and played an important role at Constance in 1417, but he was only a bachelor of laws, not a doctor; see A.B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to 1500* (Oxford, 1959), 1494–5.

Crowdor, 'Re-examination', 105. See also Jean-Marie Vidal, 'Un recueil manuscrit de sermons prononcés aux Conciles de Constance et de Bâle', *Revue d'Histoire Ecclesiastique* 10 (1909), 498–9, 509–11. Vidal discovered and recognized the importance of this sermon, but the copy in his manuscript was unascribed; Finke later found copies ascribing the sermon to Fleming, and Crowdor explored the implications of this evidence.


Several short excerpts edited by Heinrich Finke (*Acta* 2, 482–3) have been superseded by a full edition by Thomas Morrissey in 'Surge, illuminare: a lost address by Richard Fleming at the Council of Constance', *Annuarium Historiae Conciliorum* 22 (1990), 86–130.

Morrissey, 'Surge', 110, n 81

"...fimbriarum talium, ut liquido constat, dilatacio effrenis viciosaque ecclesiastice potestatis abuso universo quasi scismati ministrat originem, et nisi contra hec provideat oportunitatis remediis hec utinam constans in hoc opere Constanciensis synodus ex simili causa deficiente consimilis necessario redibit defectus..." (Morrissey, 'Surge', 118). This passage is among the excerpts previously edited by Finke.

"...ut ergo ab his malis inviolabilis et infringende reformacioninis anphitodo purgareur ecclesia in capite et in membris, precipe congregata erat sanctissima ista synodus...". (Morrissey, 'Surge', 125); Finke did not edit this excerpt. The 'evils' referred to here had been defined as 'wicked pride', 'simoniacal ambition', and 'the debauchery of fornicating intercourse' (p 124). Between these two passages Fleming promises to treat these three evils, 'especially the simoniacal plague', more fully 'in another sermon before Easter' (p 125). He would fulfill this pledge in his Passion Sunday sermon, 'Accipiant qui vocati sunt', a very severe reform sermon which has been traditionally misascribed to a French bishop, Vitale Valentin; my article and edition of 'Accipiant' will be published in 1998 in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*.

'Chester' was a common appellation for the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, whose diocese includes the huge archdeaconry of Chester.


Forester's letter begins with an account of Sigismund's entry into Constance on 27 January; on that occasion he had also worn Henry's collar and the robes of the Order of the Garter.

Forester actually says that 'when [Sigismund] learnt that the duke of Bavaria and the burggrave were to eat that same day with my lord of London, he let it be known that he
himself wished to take dinner with them'. Clearly, either Forester was mistaken, or Sigismund's 'request' was actually pretended for the sake of decorum, for the emperor was surely the intended guest of honour at the lavish banquet described by Richental.  

Forester makes no mention of another such a dinner being held on 29 January; moreover, the duke of Bavaria and burgrave of Nürnberg are the only German princes besides Sigismund who are specifically mentioned by Richental as guests of Clifford, Hallum and the other English bishops. This independent evidence confirms the dating of the second banquet to 31 January; see above, note 4.  

23 Morrissey, 'Surge', 119.  
24 Morrissey, 'Surge', 129.  

CHRISTINE RICHARDSON

The Figure of Robin Hood within the Carnival Tradition

In medieval and early renaissance England, the May Games and Midsummer Feast represent one of the strongest manifestations of the carnival or popular festive tradition. The pre-Lenten Carnival, which was the focus for popular participatory dramatic and disruptive activity in continental Europe, was not the main period of carnivalesque activity in England. Such activity, centring on disguisings, inversion, licensed criticism and temporary disinhibition with respect to established social conventions and the dominant structures of authority, was found rather in the liminal period of early summer at the passage of the season. It is thus in the wide sense which Bakhtin applies to the terms 'carnival' and 'carnivalesque' that I shall be referring to carnival elements and the role of Robin Hood as a figure in the carnival tradition in England.

Appearances of the Robin Hood figure in late medieval and early renaissance Britain can be divided into three basic categories: historical or legendary references to an actual outlaw figure; ballads, or references to ballads (or 'rymes') recounting the exploits of such a named outlaw figure; and May Game records of disguisings, 'revels', 'gatherings' or 'ales' in which the identity of Robin Hood was assumed for festive celebrations and the collection of money (later used for parish matters), often in exchange for 'livery' which marked the contributor as one of Robin Hood's band for the duration of the celebration. All three of these categories are mutually linked and interrelated, but it is in particular with the ballad Robin Hood figure and the May Game Robin Hood figure that the carnival and especially the dramatic interest lies.

The May Game revels, gatherings, or ales were intrinsically dramatic events, imbued with that characteristically carnival aspect of dramatic representation which eliminates boundaries between performers and spectators, making the 'performance' a universalizing, participatory event, removing also the barriers between art and life, and presenting life itself, life seen as game, as the matter of representation. Hardly surprisingly, this kind
of spontaneous dramatic activity produced more highly developed dramatic texts of which
three examples survive: a 'fragment', from a manuscript of c1475, usually known as Robin
Hood and the Sheriff of Nottingham; a 'playe of Robyn Hooide' published by William
Copland, appended to his edition of the narrative Gest of Robin Hood, in 1560, which in
fact consists of two plays, known as Robin Hood and the Friar and Robin Hood and the
Potter.4 This double play is directly linked to the May Games in the title page statement
'for to be played in Maye Games'.

As a figure in the early ballads, Robin Hood is first and foremost an outlaw, a figure
(forcibly) removed from the network of established dominant authority and convention
and thus the representative of an alternative authority, the law of Robin Hood, which
consists in living in and off the King's Forest and stealing from the wealthy members of
the church and state hierarchy who travel through his 'domain'. Although the element of
'robbing from the rich to give to the poor' by which Robin Hood is almost exclusively
associated and identified in contemporary perception of the figure is hinted at in these
early appearances, this motif was in fact a later development brought about as part of
the general 'gentrification' process applied to the figure (including noble birth, wrongful
disinheritance, etc) by the Elizabethan interpreters of the legend. The appeal of the
ballad figure is in the implicit criticism of the dominant authority which it represents,
a channelled protest within the protective boundary of entertainment. Though the ballads
have come down to us in written form, they were originally transmitted and received as
oral performance art. Whether sung or recited, the structure of the ballad with its empha-
sis on dialogue and its 'montage' technique of episodic switching is inherently performa-
tive. The figure therefore contains the same kind of licensed protest which characterizes
the carnivalesque:

As opposed to the official feast, one might say that carnival celebrated
temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the estab-
lished order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privi-
leges, norms and prohibitions.7

The later Robin Hood ballads display an evolution of this alternative authority aspect
which is again inherent to carnival, the revelation of the ambivalence of all authority
and of its arbitrary nature, a concept at the root of the carnivalesque criticism of power.
In the series of artisan or 'Robin Hood meets his match' ballads circulated in broadside
version in the seventeenth century, the plot sequence is made up by the meeting of Robin
Hood with a representative artisan, a tanner, a potter, a butcher, etc, whom he challenges
to a fight. The outcome of this fight is Robin Hood's defeat at the hands of the artisan,
sometimes even notwithstanding his summons of help from Little John or others of his
band, and the subsequent invitation to the winner to join the band, invariably accepted.
Robin Hood's power thus is labile: he can be challenged and overcome. In addition, the
result of the challenge has no serious consequences, but rather contains the positive qual-
ties of equality and universalization. The antagonist joins the band, he is included and
incorporated into the system of Robin Hood's authority.

This is the carnivalesque interactiveness and open system of authority wherein hierar-
chies are not fixed or permanent but all members of society, or of a group, have the same opportunities. Leaders may be set up but challenged with impunity and replaced, crowned and uncrowned as the identity of authority switches, for the focus is continually on change and movement. The Lord of Misrule, or Robin Hood, is equally subject to the arbitrary changes of status which 'the second life' of carnival implies, and in the celebratory critique of power he represents, he is himself criticized by being deposed.

This critique of authority through the demonstration of its arbitrary and shifting nature is to be found in both the Robin Hood plays published by William Copland in 1560 and was therefore probably at work in other non-extant May Games plays of Robin Hood. These two plays are presented as one in the text, with no break and containing two quite distinct episodes which nonetheless follow the same structural outline. In the first play, Robin Hood sets out to challenge a Friar who had the previous day had the best of him, finds him, forces him to carry him across the river, and is consequently dumped into the water by the Friar who then begins a fight. Robin Hood by subterfuge calls on his band to assist him and then, having revealed his identity, invites the Friar to join his band. In the second play, this sequence is repeated with a Potter whom Robin Hood wishes to make pay a toll for travelling through 'his' forest. First he meets with the Potter's boy, Jack, breaks the pots the latter is taking to market, and insults his master who then arrives and, rather than pay the proposed toll, prefers to fight; Robin Hood calls upon Little John for help. In both cases Robin Hood's authority is challenged and although in the second play the outcome is uncertain, in the first play at least the successful challenger is rewarded by an invitation to join the band:

How sayest thou, frere, wylt thou be my man,
To do me the best servyse thou can?
Thou shalt have both golde and fee.  

In the first play, the point of conflict and the reversal of power is centred on being transported over water, water which is not actually present in the dramatic performance but is created through the dialogue:

Robin Hood: Harke, frere, what I say here;
Over this water thou shalt me bere;
The brydge is borne away.
Friar Tuck: To say naye I wyll not;
To let the of thine oth it were great pitie and sin;
But upon a fryers backe and have even in.
[Threatens to throw Robin Hood into water]
Robin Hood: Nay, have over.
[Robin Hood resists and throws Friar into water]
Friar Tuck: Now am I, frere, within, and, thou, Robin, without,
[Expresses intension] To lay the here I have no great doubt.
[Repeat] Now art thou, Robyn, without, and I, frere, within,
[Thows Robin Hood into water]
Lye ther, knave; chose whether thou wilt sike or swym.

Robin Hood: Why, thou lowsy frere, what hast thou doon?

[Reacts to change in situation]

No stage directions are given in the text but with this reconstruction of the action through the dialogue we have a sequence in which the essential carnivalesque changes of position, reversals, or even crowning and uncrowning in Bakhtin's terms, are punctuated and thus foregrounded by comments which draw attention to them. This reconstruction also removes the problem of the presumed inverted line in which the Friar contrasts 'with' and 'without' for the second time. It is now not a mistake or printing error, but a repetition which draws attention to the situation pregnant with change, the change which is accomplished at the following line.16

Being carried or carrying is a frequent feature found in rites of passage marking the passage from one status to another or one season to another, and is thus consonant with an early summer carnival celebration.17 However, the ducking of both characters into water can also be seen as a parody of a rite associated with one of the characters: baptism. The rite of baptism marks the conversion of an individual to the Christian religion and as such is, of course, a rite of incorporation. Here the symbolic touching with water used in the actual Christian ritual is materialized into a thorough immersion, first with the roles reversed as Robin Hood 'baptizes' the Friar, and then as the Friar returns the compliment. The result is indeed an incorporation – into Robin Hood's band.

Parody is a characteristic carnivalesque element, associated with the carnival perception of power and authority as arbitrary and reversible, a mockery of the ceremonial and accoutrements with which power is established and expressed in the real world, marking the people's refusal to be constrained by any fixed system. In another parody, this time in Robin Hood and the Potter, Robin Hood demands that the Potter pay a toll. Like tolls in the official world, Robin Hood's toll seems to be unjustified, and the Potter not only refuses to pay it, but offers to 'pay it materially in the blows with which he threatens Robin Hood.

A suggestive parallel offers itself here with another well-known medieval parody, that of the Nativity accomplished in the inner Mak play of Secunda Pastorum. The Shepherds Plays are an eminently carnivalesque location for such a feature for they celebrate a moment of immense change and renewal, the Birth of the Saviour who will bring in a new authority and order to society, removing the constraints of social status. The Shepherds Plays in general are rich in elements pertaining to the sphere of popular entertainment. While this material may have been drawn into the plays as an identification device useful for the didactic purpose of establishing the identity between the Shepherds as the first recipients of the message of Salvation and the audience of the cycle plays themselves implicated in the possibility of Salvation, it could be that another organizational strand of influence is represented by the moment of crisis and the sense of renewal which these plays represent. Insults, tricks, predictions and the feast, all strong features of the carnivalesque, are also to be found in the Shepherds Plays.

The breaking of the Potter's pots by Robin Hood may also be seen as an act of incorporation, a rite to accomplish the entry of the Potter into Robin Hood's band: 'The blows
here have a broadened, symbolic, ambivalent meaning; they at once kill and regenerate, put an end to the old life and start the new. Violence and blows, with quarterstaffs in particular, characterize both the Robin Hood ballad tradition and the Robin Hood plays and link them to that older form of carnival activity which was the pagan fertility rituals, and the evolutionary development of these represented by the folk drama. In this instance the blows intended to achieve the incorporation of the Potter into the band are delegated to the Potter's pots, which Robin Hood smashes. This metonymy is quite clear in the boy Jack's reaction: when Robin Hood threatens, 'I wil them breke for the cuckold thy maister's sake', Jack cries: 'Out alas! what have ye done? If my maister come, he will breke your crown'. The earlier Robin Hood play, Robin Hood and the Sheriff of Nottingham, makes the breaking of the antagonist's head more explicit. After several physical contests with the Knight, Robin Hood overcomes him and cuts off his head which he then bears away to Nottingham, having dressed in the vanquished Knight's clothes:

Now I have the maistry here  
Off I smite this sory swyre  
This knyghtys clothys wolde I were  
And in my hode his hede wolde bere.

In this case the antagonist is materially incorporated, for he becomes Robin Hood, or vice versa. The beheading, of course, is the ritual motif of the Winter King and Summer Knight, which seems to lie at the inspirational layer of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.

The two later plays are both marked by another form of carnivalesque violence, violence of language. Insults and oaths represent the transgressing of social conventions of courtesy and appropriate register. This kind of verbal rejection of social authority is to be found particularly in two more developed and self-conscious plays in relation to disruptive figures coming straight from the folk play carnivalesque tradition. Trowle, the wild Shepherds' boy in the Chester Shepherds Play and li Derves, the uncontrollable mad boy of Adam de la Halle's Le Jeu de la Feuillee are rural characters, as is Robin Hood, and as well as showing no respect for social authority—Trowle challenges and overcomes his Shepherd masters in a direct borrowing from the Hero-combat Play, li Derves eludes control by his father, the monk, the Doctor and local dignitaries—both also go beyond the bounds of socially acceptable language with imprecations and references to illicit topics (as such, entirely carnivalesque) such as farting and copulation.

Although Robin Hood and the Sheriff of Nottingham is much less sophisticated than the two later Robin Hood plays and its presentation in the manuscript gives indications neither of speakers nor stage directions, the physical contests which lie at the heart of the later plays are clearly present and this less-evolved form suggests how Robin Hood plays may have functioned in the May Games without the extended dialogue of Copland's two versions. They provided an opportunity for contests of physical strength with a minimum of contextualizing dialogue based on a figure both representing an alternative authority and carrying traces of the folk ritual seasonal new King, an occasion to
revolt against the existing structures of authority while maintaining links with an older agrarian rhythm of social organization. The outcome of these contests would not necessarily have been pre-determined: it may well have been truly the strongest who won. The c1475 piece is generally considered to be unfinished, as is the 1560 Robin Hood and the Potter, but both of these are complete enough in a carnivalesque context which abhors and refuses a fixed establishment of power and victory. Change and reversal are the organizational principals of carnival, and genuine outcomes to the trials of strength in both these pieces make equally satisfying carnival sense. Little John's closing lines of the play, 'I shall rappe him on the snoute./ And put hym to flyghte', would have heralded a true contest in which Little John's intentions may have been realised or not, depending on the relative strengths of the two opponents. Whatever the eventuality, after this fight the play indeed ended.

Robin Hood and the Sheriff of Nottingham seems to be linked to the Paston household. A letter from Sir John Paston to his brother (in 1473) records an occurrence which outside of establishing the direct link of the play to this family or otherwise nonetheless strengthens the connection of the Robin Hood figure with the Mummers' Play tradition. A servant of the household who had been kept 'to play St George, and Robin Hood and the Sheriff of Nottingham' has disappeared. Here Robin Hood appears in direct conjunction with the standard protagonist of the Hero-combat Mummers' Play, St George. A Mummers' Play with Robin Hood as the protagonist has survived from Kempsford and Shipton-under-Wychwood which uses the plot and indeed many of the lines from the ballad Robin Hood and the Tanner. In this, the play follows the sequence of the ballad until the death of the antagonist (Arthur A Bland, the Tanner) when it returns to the conventional plot with the entry of the Quack Doctor who is engaged to revive him.

Robin Hood was thus considered a direct equivalent of the folk drama protagonist. The carnivalesque represents a power for change and renewal, a concentration on the moment of becoming, of regeneration as a consequence of death, and a rejection of the fixed and inflexible. It is a criticism of the existing order and a desire, or a nostalgia, for a less hierarchical and constraining system of social organization. It is therefore not surprising that the carnival elements of Robin Hood should be stressed and developed during the 16th century as the Medieval gave way to the Renaissance and the Elizabethan world view took force. Robin Hood as a May Game figure flourished in this period, not merely frequently found in local celebrations but also attaining the status of two printed plays.

Notes

1 The causes for this transposition of carnivalesque activity in England, as opposed to European practice, are not entirely clear. The Celtic celebrations of Beltane and Midsummer doubtless played a part. It should be noted that 'May Games' is a generic term and does not refer exclusively to celebrations for 1 May, but covered celebratory activity throughout the early summer period, covering also the Midsummer Eve (which coincided with St John's Eve) and beyond into the Whitsun period. Cf. David Wiles, The Early Plays of

2 'This permits us to use precisely the epithet 'carnivalesque' in that broad sense of the word. We interpret it not only as carnival per se in its limited form but also as the varied popular-festive life of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance' (Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World (Bloomington, 1984), 218).

3 In particular, John Holt, Robin Hood (London, 1982), has investigated the historical possibilities of Robin Hood as have Dobson and Taylor, Rymes of Robyn Hood: An Introduction to the English Outlaw (London, 1976/Gloucester, 1989). Both these books also investigate the role of the Robin Hood figure beyond the Renaissance and Dobson and Taylor give the texts of many of the important Robin Hood ballads and plays.

4 A detailed description of the figure, though not directly named as Robin Hood, is to be found in Stubbes' Anatomy of Abuses (1583). David Wiles treats this figure at length, providing many other record references to the practice and suggests that the Robin Hood figure in this context is the direct equivalent of the Summer Lord or Lord of Misrule described by Stubbes.

5 Carnival 'is life itself but shaped according to a certain pattern of play...it does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators...Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people' (Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, 7).


7 Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, 10.

8 'The laughter of carnival...is also directed at those who laugh...The people's ambivalent laughter...expresses the point of view of the whole world; he who is laughing also belongs to it' (Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, 12).

9 Robin Hood and the Friar. Another reward is also given to the Friar in the form of 'a lady free' and the following stanza makes great use of double entendre with respect to the 'service' the Friar might perform for her. The materialization of the initially abstract duty, as indeed the inversion of the Friar serving Robin Hood rather than Robin Hood attending the religious service usually offered by friars, and the materialization in the form of sexual activity, the extreme opposite of the chastity associated with religious orders, is all firmly within the carnival key.

10 Cf. both Dobson and Taylor's note to this line and David Wiles' comment: Dobson and Taylor, Rymes, 212; Wiles, Early Plays, 74.

11 'For example, carrying and being carried is one of the practices which is found more or less universally in the various ceremonies through which a person passes in the course of a lifetime' (Arnold Van Gennep, The Rites of Passage (London, 1960/77), 185).

12 Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, 205.

13 Robin Hood and the Potter. The reappearance of the phrase 'What have ye done?' which has already been used in Robin Hood and the Friar is interesting. It also appears in the very stark dialogue of the c1475 play Robin Hood and the Sheriff of Nottingham. It
would appear to be a standard phrase of the Robin Hood drama and indeed links these more closely with the Mummers’ Plays, where the phrase commonly appears at the death of the antagonist in the Hero-combat plays.

Cf. John Matthews, *Robin Hood: Green Lord of the Wildwood*, (Glastonbury, 1993) for a detailed yet exclusive analysis of Robin Hood as the Green Lord or Summer Knight.


Le Jeu de la Feuillée, l.420–1; 1093.

The text of the play, collected in the nineteenth century but said to have been performed during the eighteenth century at least, was published by R.J.E. Tiddy in *The Mummers’ Play* (1923). It also appears as Appendix 6 in Wiles, *Early Plays*.

Cf. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 274. Peter Stallybrass, “Drunk with the cup of Liberty”: Robin Hood, the carnivalesque, and the rhetoric of violence in early modern England’, *Semiotica* 54 (1985), 113–45, examines the role of the carnivalesque in social protest with reference to Robin Hood. The latter part of his study explores the way in which the protest could be contained by, among others, fixing it clearly to a festive occasion and denying its relevance to everyday reality.

Theatre-Going Nuns in Rural Devon?

In the summer of 1329, not long after becoming bishop of the large and demanding diocese of Exeter, John de Grandisson sent a stern mandate to the Austin canonesses of Canonsleigh Abbey in eastern Devon. Canonsleigh, although not a famous or exceptionally wealthy convent like Sion Abbey, was nevertheless in the top 20% as far as income was concerned, with an income of £197 and eighteen sisters (including the abbess) at the time of the dissolution. It would be completely unremarkable, aside from its occasional presence in the bishops’ registers of Exeter, were it not for two factors, both connected with its founding c 1284 by Maud de Clare, countess of Hereford and Gloucester (the widow of Richard de Clare). First of all, the countess created her conven by converting an existing house of Austin canons into a house for women, a very unusual event and one resisted by the canons. Secondly, she gave her nuns a book to guide them in the religious life. This book, a copy of the Ancrene Riwle, is now bl: Cotton Cleopatra c.vi, one of only seven surviving English ms of that work, and the one from which it has been edited for the EETS. But by about forty-five years after its foundation, the diocesan bishop would appear to have thought that the current crop of professed sisters needed even more help in keeping their rule. In his mandate he ordered the nuns’ strict enclosure, or confinement, within the walls of their convent. Part of his reasoning was to cut them off from access to secular entertainment:
John, etc, to his beloved daughter, Lady ..., the abbess of the convent of Canonsleigh in our diocese, greetings, etc. Since it is not suitable for decent women to wander about nor to mix often with gatherings of men because, especially in the case of religious women, owing to the danger to their chastity, one must be on guard the more strictly lest, casting aside the modesty appropriate to a nun as well as the moderation of their sex in an unchaste manner, they rush about with foolish people as an offence to Him to Whom they vowed of their own free will their integrity of life as well as to the shame of the religious life and a scandal to many, we therefore command, firmly enjoining you for certain reasons, by virtue of your obedience and under pain of the greater excommunication, not to allow before our visitation any nuns of your house for any reason whatever to go outside the boundaries of your convent for a distance too great to allow them to return on the same day without our special licence so that they, cut off entirely from common and worldly shows in this way, may be able to serve God more freely and, with the opportunity for unrestrained play removed, guard their hearts and bodies more diligently for Him. Given at Crediton on 9 Kal. July (ie, 23 June).

On the one hand, this mandate must be set in an historical context of church discipline. Since the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the church, seized with a strong desire for reform which expressed itself, at least in part, in a new awareness of the holiness and separateness of people and places set apart for divine worship, had been engaged in periodic renewal movements. The emphasis on clerical freedom from secular control in the Gregorian Reform of the eleventh century and the movement to create and enforce a
clerical celibacy were part of this general desire for reform. Concern for the laity and their encounter with the holy in liturgy and sacrament, as well as redoubled efforts to keep secular business and secular pastimes out of churches and churchyard, bore fruit in the writings of the canonists and penitentialists leading up to the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215. Attitudes toward priests and nuns, churches and churchyards, sacramental bread and wine, all were touched by this new sense of transcendence and holiness. To attempt to set apart nuns, then, was part of on-going commitment to institutional and individual renewal, which included new attitudes towards priests and monks as well.

But while still part of this on-going clerical reform, the 1299 bull of Pope Boniface VIII, 'Periculoso', the most immediate canonical source for this mandate, was also part of a theological and canonical tradition that singled out religious women very strictly, more strictly indeed than religious men. It was directed at enforcing strict enclosure generally amongst nuns and canonesses of whatever order, as Eileen Power observes. Under its terms, no nun was to be permitted to leave the confines of her convent for any reason except grievous illness nor were outsiders to be permitted to visit them within the cloister. Boniface only allowed for exceptions that involved an illness so severe that the sufferer could not remain in the community or a situation in which feudal law demanded the personal attendance of the abbess upon a secular lord from whom the abbey held land. De Grandisson thus stopped far short of enforcing the full provisions of 'Periculoso'. Only less than a month later, in July of 1329, he issued a second letter to the nuns of Canonsleigh, in which (although his visitation had still not been carried out) even the original mandate was considerably softened by allowing sisters accompanied by more senior members of the community to be absent for as much as two weeks to visit friends or relatives.

But there are two strong reasons to see in this mandate a specific response to specific problems at the abbey. One lies in its timing and the other in its wording. The normal occasion for correction of abuses in a religious house of either sex is at or following the visitation, in which the responsible authority, such as the diocesan bishop, gets an opportunity to see at first hand what is going on there. It is clear from reading mediaeval registers that visitation was frequently a response to a reported abuse or other problem. But here de Grandisson orders a stringent enclosure even before his visitation had taken place, which argues for the report of some particularly scandalous event.

As to the language of the order, this text is very largely a cut-and-paste of language contained in 'Periculoso'. But Power ignored an important difference between the two when she called de Grandisson's letter a verbatim copy of 'Periculoso'. Boniface wanted nuns set apart from common and worldly sights ('a publicis et mundanis conspectibus separate'). De Grandisson changed that wording from 'sights' to 'shows', thus shifting its focus from something to which the nuns might be exposed willy-nilly in the course of travel outside the cloister to an event which they might choose to attend. Whether we perceive Boniface's concern as paternal or paternalistic, to wish to keep religious women from certain sights was a very different thing in the raw and tumultuous world of the mediaeval town from de Grandisson's desire to keep them from shows.

What 'spectacula' might the ladies of Canonsleigh Abbey have upset their bishop by going to see? What little we know about entertainment in early fourteenth-century Devon
comes from de Grandisson's registers, where he naturally only noted what violated canon law in one way or another. Still, in the six injunctions against specific plays or pastimes in Devon the bishop covers a wide range of activity, from clerical misrule at the cathedral and collegiate churches elsewhere in the county to plays and other pastimes at various locations within Exeter. Since any form of clerical misrule equivalent to the highjinks of choristers and minor clergy at St Nicholas' Day or Christmastide would have taken place at the nunnery itself, the type of 'spectacula' which the nuns were to stay away from is more likely to resemble the one of three lay-sponsored events for which Wasson found evidence in Exeter.

These took place in 1339, 1348, and 1352. The latter two events appear to be popular pastimes. De Grandisson's 1352 order was directed against some kind of satiric 'ludus' directed against some of the city's shoemakers that offended the bishop's Sabbatarian tendencies. The 1348 mandate fulminated against an unknown group called the Brotherhood of Brothelingham, whose mockery of a religious order extended to calling its leader an abbot. Their actual activities sound as if they were directed toward fund-raising, since the abbot's followers were detaining passers-by and demanding money, but certainly involved a lot of people, both on horseback and on foot, in a procession or parade. Both these letters make reference to a 'theatrum', or theatre, in Exeter but (as Wasson argues) it is far more likely, especially given the wording of the 1348 letter, that a open public space of some kind is indicated rather than anything like an ancient or modern 'theatre'. Certainly the 1339 mandate makes the existence of a theatre in Exeter at that date unlikely, for de Grandisson's efforts there were directed against a fourteenth-century impresario named Robert Lucy who had set up a covered space in the churchyard of St Martin's, Exeter, in which a variety of undesirables plied their trades, including actors engaged in putting on plays. All three of these orders suggest a lively tradition of popular entertainment in Exeter which only surfaced in the bishops' registers when it spilled over into sacred time or sacred space or made fun of sacred people or things.

De Grandisson's restriction that the nuns were to go no farther from the nunnery than a day-trip may be in fact have been intended to keep them from going to Exeter. The round trip of about forty miles that would have been required would put it effectively outside the bishop's bounds. Certainly de Grandisson's predecessor, Walter Stapleton, was worried about the behaviour of nuns from Canonsleigh and Polsloe Abbey when they went to Exeter on visits. Canonsleigh was located near the border between Somerset and Devon: Wellington in Somerset and Tiverton in Devon, neither known to have had any dramatic activity in the fourteenth century, were the nearest towns of any size. We will of course never be able to know for sure unless further evidence turns up for fourteenth-century Devonian drama, but what we now know suggests that it was the bright lights and excitement of Exeter, a place where they would likely have been able to see 'spectacula' of every kind, that was drawing the county's nuns from their devotions.

Notes

1 Canonsleigh Abbey was of course dissolved by Henry VIII. Canonsleigh appears on John
Speed's map of Devon as a village in Bampton Hundred; it also appears on the first edition of the one-inch Ordnance Survey map of England. On the modern O.S. map, its name survives as that of a farm near the village of Westleigh, about five miles south-west of Wellington, along the Great Western Canal.


5 The abbess at this time was Margaret Aucher or Aunger (1320-45). The use of the double dot in this way was the mediaeval equivalent of the modern use of 'A.B.' or 'C.D.' instead of real names or initials in examples of legal forms. It is improbable in the extreme that neither the bishop nor his clerks knew the name of the current abbess of Canonsleigh. Rather it appears to be the custom in this register to use double dots for most mandates directed to a person by virtue of his or her office rather than to copy that person's name into the register.

6 *Medieval English Nunneries* (Cambridge, 1922), 353. The whole of this chapter (chapter ix, 'Fish out of Water') is a valuable discussion of the phenomenon of strict enclosure in women's houses.


8 The full text of 'Periculoso' is given in Boniface's Liber Sextus, lib. iii, tit. xvi (*Corpus Iuris Canonici*, 2, cols 1053-4). See *Nunneries*, p 344, for Power's translation of the introduction (in which the language borrowed by de Grandisson comes).

9 See John M. Wasson (ed), *Devon, Records of Early English Drama* (Toronto, 1986), 6-14 (text); 319-27 (translation).

10 Wasson, *Devon*, xxx, 439.

11 Stapleton's concerns are addressed in 1319 orders to the nuns at Polsloe and Canonsleigh; among other injunctions designed to make the nuns' enclosure stricter, he ordered that they only go to Exeter or elsewhere for meals under supervision and that they return the same or the following day. Furthermore they are not to go again to Exeter and go from house to house wandering as they had done in the past. See F.C. Hingeston-Randolph (ed), *The Register of Walter de Stapleton, Bishop of Exeter (A.D. 1307-1326)* (London and Exeter, 1892), 95-6 and 316-18, and Power, *Nunneries*, 354-5. The site of Polsloe Abbey is in the modern city of Exeter, being about a mile from the University grounds.

**News from the REED Office**

Our most important news of the season is the publication of Mark C. Pilkinton's edition of *Bristol* in October, bringing the series total to 17 collections in 17 volumes. The custom-
ary launch party on 30 October gave us the opportunity for a double celebration of Mark’s book and his birthday the same week. The Reed staff are already busy preparing the next volume for typesetting in 1998, when we expect to publish the combined collections of Dorset, edited by Rosalind Hays and Ted McGee, and Cornwall, edited by Sally Cross and Evelyn Newlyn. Dorset/Cornwall will complete Reed’s survey of the south-western region, bringing to the spotlight many new entertainment records of travelling performers, local festive customs, and communities undergoing cultural and political change, not always placidly. After the south-west, we will move, logically enough, in the direction of the south-east where the enormous body of records for Kent: Diocese of Canterbury and Sussex beckons. These south-east coast volumes are being edited by James Gibson (Kent) and Cameron Louis (Sussex) and production work has been generously sponsored by our patron, Father Edward Jackman, o.p., and the Jackman Foundation.

Reed continues its own sponsorship of interdisciplinary sessions at the annual Leeds International Medieval Congress. This year Barbara Palmer organized two stimulating sessions on culture and politics in the North, with four more planned by Bob Tittler and myself to come in 1998 on cultural expression and urban identity in late medieval and early modern urban centres. We also look forward to the recreation of the York Cycle on pageant wagons by PLS and many friends in Toronto in June, followed by a selection of cycle plays in the streets of York produced by Jane Oakshott in July.

We also have cause to celebrate individual achievements by our editors, led by Alexandra Johnston, Reed’s Director, who was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada this year. Also on the honour roll is John McGavin, who was awarded a prestigious Modern Humanities Research Associateship to further his research on the dramatic records of provincial Scotland. Jim Stokes, now working on the Lincolnshire records, has been granted a fellowship at the Institute for Research in the Humanities at the University of Wisconsin Madison, while Peter Greenfield held a two-month fellowship from the Hampshire County Council this summer at the Hartley Institute, University of Southampton to pursue his work on the Hampshire collection.

This year also brought a new staff member to the ranks of Reed after Sheena Levitt’s retirement. We welcomed Gissy Yun as our new administrative assistant in January and expect that many of our associates will benefit from her energetic attention to our accounts.

Finally, as 1997 draws to a close, we wish all our friends and supporters a happy and prosperous new year!

Sally-Beth MacLean
Executive Editor
Announcements

The York Cycle

Mark your diary now!

Poculi Ludique Societas presents
the first complete production of the forty-eight plays of the
York Cycle in more than twenty years, performed at the
University of Toronto by groups from around the world.

Friday, 19 June 1998: Symposium The York Cycle Then and Now (Part 1)
Saturday, 20 June 1998 (begins at dawn): Performance The York Cycle
Sunday 21 June 1998: Symposium The York Cycle Then and Now (Part 2)

Location: Victoria College, University of Toronto

Symposium Speakers will include Peter Meredith, A.F. Johnston, Richard Beadle, Douglas Hayes, Robert Potter, Martin Walsh, John McKinnell, and Jane Oakshott.

Symposium registration brochures will automatically be sent to the REED Newsletter mailing list.

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Left to right: Mark Pilkinton (Bristol editor), Chet Scoville (PLS jester), and Father Edward Jackman (REED patron)

Photo: RITA LEISTNER / U OF T BULLETIN