



The Appearance of Early Vernacular Plays: Forms, Functions, and the Future of
Medieval Theater

Author(s): Carol Symes

Source: *Speculum*, Jul., 2002, Vol. 77, No. 3 (Jul., 2002), pp. 778-831

Published by: The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the Medieval Academy of
America

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3301114>

REFERENCES

Linked references are available on JSTOR for this article:

[https://www.jstor.org/stable/3301114?seq=1&cid=pdf-
reference#references_tab_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/3301114?seq=1&cid=pdf-reference#references_tab_contents)

You may need to log in to JSTOR to access the linked references.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

The University of Chicago Press and Medieval Academy of America are collaborating with
JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Speculum*

The Appearance of Early Vernacular Plays: Forms, Functions, and the Future of Medieval Theater

By Carol Symes

My title signals a twofold interest in appearances: the physical appearance of plays on their manuscript pages and the historical circumstances in which medieval drama made its appearance on the European stage. In brief, I argue that the unfamiliar guises and settings in which many early plays appear should invite the revision of current theories about the forms in which dramatic activities were handed down and enrich our understanding of how such activities functioned within a culture increasingly characterized by the give-and-take between what was written and what was performed. The sources to which I will refer constitute the entire canon of vernacular drama from the period before 1300, according to the current methods used to identify certain texts as “plays.” But a systematic overview of the evidence will not only challenge the parameters of that canon, it will broaden the horizons of theater generally speaking, with respect both to vernacular plays and to those in Latin, whether worldly or liturgical. This is because the artifacts upon which the study of medieval drama has hitherto been based are preserved in manuscript books alongside an array of materials usually classified as “nondramatic,” yet the plays share the formal characteristics of those materials. In most cases, then, the ambiguous appearance of a given text may have little to do with whether or not it was performed or regarded as a play.

For the most part, the formats of plays were as flexible as those of other texts, which were routinely tailored to conform to the overall presentation of the parent codex. In some cases, different versions of the same piece reveal that it could be altered or annotated to suit changing conditions of performance or the needs of different readers. Still other, more fundamental variations in layout and rubrication indicate that the generic definition of a play as such was in flux for most of the Middle Ages. As I shall demonstrate in the following pages, there was no foolproof method for transmitting the nuances of performance practice, at least prior to the fourteenth century. Plays were recorded using techniques borrowed from sources musical, didactic, scholastic, and poetic. Many of them, as a result, do not look very much like plays. Conversely, many texts currently considered to be unlikely candidates for performance are either juxtaposed with plays or laid out and rubricated in similar ways. And because all of these texts—even those

This study expands upon a chapter of my doctoral dissertation, which is currently being revised for publication: “A Medieval Stage: Theatre and the Culture of Performance in Thirteenth-Century Arras” (Harvard University, 1999). In that incarnation it received the welcome attention of Thomas Bisson, Michael McCormick, Eckehard Simon, Jan Ziolkowski, Matilda Bruckner, and Andrew Hughes. It has since been strengthened by the comments of many readers, among whom I owe special thanks to John Haines and Stephen Partridge.

now designated and widely accepted as “plays”—do not conform to modern dramatic paradigms, they have always been subject to a high degree of scholarly intervention. Critical editions and literary analyses present them as isolated entities, surgically removed from their settings and provided with stage directions, character designations, and other aids.¹ This means that the vestiges of medieval theater have been measured and shaped by critical tools fashioned in later eras, beginning with the advent of print, with the result that valuable clues provided by the plays’ positions within their own manuscripts have been obscured, further deepening the mystery surrounding the circumstances of their composition, performance, and preservation.

A collective analysis of the earliest vernacular play scripts will therefore prove that the criteria used to find, extract, classify, and edit the surviving artifacts of medieval theater are inadequate, even gravely flawed. Rather than looking at individual plays as unusual examples of an emerging art form, or as the remnants of two divergent aesthetic traditions, the sacred and the secular, an assessment of features or practices common to the texts as they were originally transcribed will reveal both the protean quality of medieval plays and their tendency to take on protective coloring in manuscripts; it will also reveal some of the mechanisms whereby more visible and specialized performance pieces began to appear in the last decades of the thirteenth century. While a nuanced understanding of the myriad ways in which information for performers could be encoded—and lost—in transmission shall require further investigation and a broader temporal scope, the argument presented here questions both the basis and the agenda of medieval theater studies. On the one hand, the indeterminate appearance of a representative set of medieval plays strongly suggests that there are many more such texts still to be recovered; on the other, their very indeterminacy exemplifies the degree to which theatrical documents should be viewed as integral to their manuscripts and to the conditions that produced them. Most urgently, the appearance of early vernacular plays indicates that the study of medieval drama is not the study of rarefied literary monuments but the study of a vital performative element within the surrounding culture. The new foundation of theater studies must be, consequently, a historical one. At the same time, the serious study of plays must begin to inform the work of scholars whose primary materials do not usually include theatrical artifacts and whose methodology does not yet account for performance.

HEURISTICS: LOCATING AND COLLECTING THE SURVIVING PLAYS

In a bibliographical essay devoted to the state of research on medieval French drama in 1991, Alan Knight counted only nine plays in French dialects dating

¹ The rigor of English theater studies (focused on the period after 1300) has made scholars increasingly sensitive to such issues. However, editors are still being urged to refrain from “helping” the modern reader by providing stage directions where none appear in the manuscripts or by altering extant rubrics in any way. See the remarks of David Bevington, “Drama Editing and Its Relation to Recent Trends in Literary Criticism,” and of Peter Meredith, “Stage Directions and the Editing of Early English Drama,” in *Editing Early English Drama: Special Problems and New Directions*, ed. Alexandra F. Johnston (New York, 1987), pp. 17–32 at 29–31 and 65–94 at 88–91, respectively.

from the eleventh through thirteenth centuries.² They are the Occitan and Latin *Sponsus*, copied just before 1100 at the Abbey of Saint-Martial at Limoges;³ the incomplete *Seinte Resurreccion* and the *Ordo representacionis Ade* (cited as the *Jeu d'Adam*), both composed during the mid- to late twelfth century in Anglo-Norman French;⁴ the *Jeu de saint Nicolas* of Jehan Bodel, datable to the years between 1191 and 1202 and composed in Picard French;⁵ *Courtois d'Arras*, also in Picard, from the first quarter of the thirteenth century;⁶ Rutebeuf's *Miracle de Théophile*, dating from around 1261 and composed in the Francien dialect;⁷ *Le garçon et l'aveugle*, written down after 1266 in Picard;⁸ and Adam de la Halle's *Jeu de la feuillée*⁹ and *Jeu de Robin et de Marion* (c. 1277 and c. 1282–85, re-

² Alan E. Knight, "France," in *The Theatre of Medieval Europe: New Research in Early Drama*, ed. Eckehard Simon, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 9 (Cambridge, Eng., 1991), pp. 151–68 at 155–58. Graham Runnalls's "Répertoire du théâtre religieux français du moyen âge" lists some 220 plays, only 5 of which date from the era before 1300 (*Jeu de saint Nicolas*, *Jeu d'Adam*, *Seinte Resurreccion*, *Courtois*, and *Miracle de Théophile*). See his *Etudes sur les mystères: Un recueil de 22 études sur les mystères français, suivi d'un répertoire du théâtre religieux français du moyen âge et d'une bibliographie*, Champion-Varia 14 (Paris, 1998), pp. 479–87. Richard Axton and John Stevens have defined the canon for English-speakers in *Medieval French Plays* (Oxford, 1971), which includes all the texts named by Knight with the exception of *Sponsus*. For a similar definition of the canon in French, see Charles Mazouer, *Le théâtre français du moyen âge* (Paris, 1998).

³ See below, n. 55.

⁴ See below, nn. 92, 101–2, and 129.

⁵ The dating is based on internal evidence, summarized by Albert Henry in *Le "Jeu de saint Nicolas" de Jehan Bodel*, 3rd ed., Mémoires de la Classe des Lettres, Collection in-8vo, 2nd ser., 65/2 (Brussels, 1981), p. 33.

⁶ Camille Kennedy Vandenberg, "Authorship Theory: The Case of *Courtois d'Arras*" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 1984), p. 9. The terminus ante quem is usually taken to be 1228, the year when Gerart Lenoir, a wealthy Arrageois mentioned in the play, died. See also Grace Frank, *The Medieval French Drama* (Oxford, 1954), p. 219; and Knud Togeby, "*Courtois d'Arras*," *Travaux de linguistique et de littérature* 11 (1973), 603–14 at pp. 607–8. Togeby prefers the title *Courtois d'Artois*, reflecting the incipit as given in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (henceforth cited as BnF), MS fr. 19152, but concedes that the subject matter is specifically Arrageois. It used to be assumed, oddly, that "*Courtois*" was the name of the author of the play, and to this fictional personage the fabliau *Boivin de Provins* was often ascribed; see Adolphe Guesnon, "Publications nouvelles sur les trouvères artésiens," *Le moyen âge* 21 (1908), 57–86 at pp. 57–67. The source of the confusion may well be P[ierre] J[ean]-B[aptiste] Le Grand d'Aussy, *Fabliaux ou contes du XIIIe et du XIIIe siècle, traduits ou extraits d'après divers manuscrits du tems* [sic], 4 vols. (Paris, 1779–81), 1:cvi.

⁷ *Le miracle de Théophile* appears in two known manuscripts: BnF fr. 837 and BnF fr. 1635. See Rutebeuf, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Edmond Faral and Julia Bastin, 2 vols. (Paris, 1959–60), 1:10–11.

⁸ The terminus a quo is 6 January 1266, when Charles of Anjou was crowned king of Sicily—an event alluded to in the play. See Frank, *The Medieval French Drama*, pp. 222–23; and Jean Dufournet, *Le garçon et l'aveugle: Jeu du XIIIe siècle*, Textes et Traductions des Classiques Français du Moyen Age 1 (Paris, 1989), pp. 87–88.

⁹ *Li jeus de le feuillie* or "The Play of the Bower" is the title as given in the explicit of BnF fr. 25566, fol. 59vb. It is important to note here, however, that the incipit of the piece in the same manuscript (on fol. 48vb) calls it *Li dis Adan*, "The Speech by Adam," perhaps referring both to the author and his alter ego, the character called Adam whose lines open the play. It was not until some later time that the scribe changed the intitulation to read *Li jus Adan*, "The Play by Adam"—a significant change, but one noted only three times before in the entire history of the play's scholarly reception. See Jane B. Dozier, "Mimesis and *Li jeus de la feuillie*," *Tréteaux* 3 (1981), 80–89 at pp. 88–89. Dozier suggests, intriguingly, that the scribe himself may have been "suddenly confronted by the question of *genre*" or

spectively), both in Picard.¹⁰ Yet this modest list is actually of more far-reaching significance than even Knight may have recognized: in fact, it comprises nearly all known plays composed in *every* European vernacular prior to the fourteenth century, not just those of France—or (more accurately) those couched in the vernaculars of the regions in which the langue d’oil and the langue d’oc were spoken. Charlotte Stern’s enumeration of the vernacular plays extant before 1300, published in 1996, adds only the Castilian *Auto de los reyes magos*.¹¹

This roster of nine or ten texts, the remains of the earliest vernacular drama produced in the medieval West, presents some fundamental problems. For if it is to include the *Sponsus*, elsewhere classified as a Latin play,¹² a scholarly consistency would call for the inclusion of the many liturgical dramas with vernacular elements: the *Suscitio Lazari* of Hilarius, the *Danielis ludus* from Beauvais, and the Benediktbeuern Passion play are well-known examples. The thirteenth-century Easter office from the convent of Origny-Sainte-Benoîte is another text that is routinely left out of the reckoning, misleadingly described in at least one instance as a Latin play.¹³ Moreover, it should be noted that the *chantefable* sui generis, *Aucassin et Nicolette*, is often regarded as a play,¹⁴ as is Rutebeuf’s *Dit de*

that he merely decided on a “substitution of undifferentiated/undifferentiable terms.” Besides Dozier and Pierre-Yves Badel, who includes the original rubric in a footnote to his *Lettres Gothiques* edition of the play in the *Œuvres complètes* of Adam (Paris, 1995), p. 286, the only other scholar to have noted the discrepancy is the Arrageois historian Adolphe Guesnon, in his “Adam de la Halle et le *Jeu de la feuillée*,” *Le moyen âge* 28 (1915), 173–233 at p. 209. One might conclude that the many mistaken references to the wording of this rubric ultimately derive from the description of Guillaume de Bure, who did not note the earlier incipit in his *Catalogue des livres de la bibliothèque de feu M. le Duc de la Vallière*, 2 (Paris, 1783), pp. 226–42. Yet the change is clearly visible even on microfilm. A more extreme example of what can happen when modern readers misconstrue medieval practices of intitution is the erroneous inscription on the flyleaf of the Tours manuscript of the *Ordo representationis Ade*, better known as the *Jeu d’Adam*: “Ne pas donner le MS 927 en consultation—Exemplaire unique du Jeu d’Adam de la Halle.”

¹⁰ Jean Dufournet summarizes the evidence for the dating of the *Jeu de la feuillée* in his edition (Paris, 1989), p. 9, following Roger Berger, *Le nécrologe de la Confrérie des jongleurs et des bourgeois d’Arras (1194–1361)*, Mémoires de la Commission Départementale des Monuments Historiques du Pas-de-Calais, 11/2 and 13/2 (Arras, 1963 and 1970), 2:106. On the dating of the *Jeu de Robin et de Marion*, see Shira I. Schwam-Baird in *Le jeu de Robin et Marion*, Garland Library of Medieval Literature A/ 94 (New York, 1994), p. xv.

¹¹ Charlotte Stern, *The Medieval Theater in Castile*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 156 (Binghamton, N.Y., 1996), pp. 6, 42–45, and 48–49. See also Ronald E. Surtz, “Spain: Catalan and Castilian Drama,” in *The Theatre of Medieval Europe*, pp. 189–206; and “The *Auto de los reyes magos*: An Old Spanish Mystery Play of the Twelfth Century,” ed. and trans. Charles E. Stebbins, *Allegorica* 2 (1977), 118–43 at pp. 118–19. On the dating of the surviving plays in other European languages, see the relevant bibliographical essays in *The Theatre of Medieval Europe*, esp. pp. 119–28 (English), 170–71 (Italian), 208 (German), and 227 (Dutch).

¹² E.g., in the volume *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, ed. and trans. Peter Dronke, Cambridge Medieval Classics 1 (Cambridge, Eng., 1994).

¹³ Lynette R. Muir, *The Biblical Drama of Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, Eng., 1995), p. 18. Robert Marichal gives the dates of this *Visitatio* as 1315–17; see “Les drames liturgiques du ‘Livre de la trésorerie d’Origny-Sainte-Benoîte,’” in *Mélanges d’histoire du théâtre du moyen-âge et de la Renaissance offerts à Gustave Cohen* (Paris, 1950), pp. 37–45. However, the greater part of the manuscript (Saint-Quentin, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 86 [75]) is dated 1286 in the sacristan’s own colophon on p. 335. See below, n. 90.

¹⁴ BnF fr. 2168, fols. 70rb–80rd. There is an edition, without music, by Jean Dufournet (Paris, 1984).

l'herberie,¹⁵ while such an argument has also been advanced in favor of Hermann de Valenciennes's *Roman de sapience*, or at least for its "play fragments" of Creation and Epiphany.¹⁶ One might mention, too, the lost scroll containing the Middle English *Interludium de clerico et puella* or the brief *Dame Sirith*, both written down around 1300.¹⁷ And there are many other pieces, in a variety of vernaculars, that would qualify for admission.

This suggests that any attempt to fix the parameters of the medieval dramatic canon, even the narrower canon of early vernacular plays, should give us pause. If one acknowledges, for example, that Hermann's popular verse Bible is really a play, or was at one time a play, or is at least partially composed of elements suitable for performance, one must likewise acknowledge that the distinction hitherto posited between plays and other such texts is practically meaningless.¹⁸ The *Courtois d'Arras*, to take a counter example, is labeled "a play" by modern scholars but is never so designated in its four extant manuscripts; instead, it circulated as a *lai* or *fabliau*, features narrative material in verse, and was not graced with a dramatic apparatus (in the form of stage directions and character designations) until editors took note of it.¹⁹ In fact, Jean-Pierre Bordier has asserted that the relative abundance of its manuscripts, combined with that narrative material, probably indi-

¹⁵ Among others, Jean-Claude Aubailly has argued for an expansion of the literary basis of medieval drama to include not only *Aucassin* and the *Dit* but other pieces as well. See "Aux sources du théâtre: Le 'poème' de *Piramus et Tisbé* (vers 1170)," in *Naissances du théâtre français (XIIe–XIIIe siècles)*, ed. Jean Dufournet, *Revue des langues romanes* 95 (1991), 15–30.

¹⁶ André de Mandach, "Le rôle du théâtre dans une nouvelle conception de l'évolution des genres," *Stylistique, rhétorique et poétique dans les langues romanes* 8 (1986), 27–46 at pp. 36–37. On the title of Hermann's poem see Jean Bonnard, *Les traductions de la Bible en vers français au moyen âge* (Paris, 1884), pp. 11–12. Besides arguing that Anglo-Norman was the original dialect of Hermann's oeuvre, de Mandach seeks to prove that Hermann should be regarded as the author of three dramatic cycles, intended for performance at appropriate liturgical seasons: the Creation for summer and autumn, the lives of Mary and Jesus for Advent and Epiphany, and the Passion and Resurrection for Easter time. See "The Creation of Herman de Valenciennes: An Unpublished Anglo-Norman Mystery Play of the Twelfth Century," in *Anglo-Norman Anniversary Essays*, ed. Ian Short, Anglo-Norman Text Society Occasional Publications 2 (London, 1993), pp. 251–72 at 251–53; "Le *Jeu des trois rois* de Herman de Valenciennes: Trois cycles anglo-normands inédits du XIIe siècle," *Vox Romanica* 48 (1989), 85–107; and "Comment éditer un mystère inséré dans un texte biblique? Le '*Jeu des trois rois*' de Herman de Valenciennes," in *Le théâtre et la cité dans l'Europe médiévale*, ed. Jean-Claude Aubailly et al., *Stuttgarter Arbeiten zur Germanistik* 213, *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 13 (Stuttgart, 1988), pp. 597–613.

¹⁷ Peter Dronke, "Narrative and Dialogue in Medieval Secular Drama," in *Literature in Fourteenth-Century England*, ed. Piero Boitani and Anna Torti, *Tübinger Beiträge zur Anglistik* 5 (Tübingen, 1983), pp. 99–120 at 109–14; repr. in *Latin and Vernacular Poets of the Middle Ages*, *Collected Studies Series* 352 (Aldershot, Eng., 1991). See n. 47, below.

¹⁸ This point was made a generation ago by E. Catherine Dunn, "French Medievalists and the Saints' Play: A Problem for American Scholarship," *Mediaevalia et humanistica* 6 (1975), 51–62.

¹⁹ BnF fr. 1553 refers to the story as a "lai" in the incipit and explicit (fols. 498r and 501v), while the piece is said to be simply "about the Courtois of Arras" in BnF fr. 837 and in Pavia, Biblioteca universitaria, MS Aldini 219, or "about the Courtois of Artois" in BnF fr. 19152. Jean Dufournet addresses the problem of character attribution only in passing and does not mention, in a brief summary of the manuscripts' characteristics, the absence of rubrics—which he supplies without comment. See *L'enfant prodigue*, GF-Flammarion 813 (Paris, 1995), pp. 7–8; for the narrative material, see vv. 91–95, 102, 336, 340a–b, and 450a–b.

cates that *Courtois* should be excluded from the realm of theater.²⁰ He is ruthless in his approach to “l’irritant problème des ‘passages narratifs,’” which, in his opinion, either disqualify a play as such or must be ascribed to the meddling of errant copyists; even when a narrative verse rhymes with an accompanying verse of dialogue, he advocates treating both as interpolations.²¹ A further irony: texts that were carefully provided with rubrics to facilitate performance are often dismissed as didactic or relegated to a no-man’s-land of the “semitheatrical.” This is the usual fate of every Latin verse drama composed during the Middle Ages, for instance.²² Preserving the distinctions between liturgy and theater, debating the artistic merits of surviving texts, determining the degree of representation and impersonation in them, or attempting to decide what constitutes true “performance”: these were among the favored pursuits of medieval theater studies in the twentieth century, and they are only now giving way to other types of inquiry. Paradoxically, some scholars of medieval literature per se are becoming more attuned to the possibilities of performance than are many of those whose chief business is the study of drama.²³

²⁰ Jean-Pierre Bordier, *Le jeu de la Passion: Le message chrétien et le théâtre français (XIIIe–XVIe s.)*, Bibliothèque du XVe Siècle 58 (Paris, 1998), pp. 25–26. Bordier’s definition of “theater” is avowedly narrow and (unintentionally?) anachronistic: “Dans ce livre, nous donnerons au mot du *théâtre* son acception la plus stricte” (p. 16). This effectively marginalizes the thirteenth century, coverage of which is promised in the volume’s title.

²¹ “Il est bien improbable qu’un vers narratif se soit malencontreusement glissé sous la plume du dramaturge . . .”: Bordier, pp. 26–30 at 27. I interpret the evidence differently: narrative elements, whether in verse or prose, helped to preserve the integrity of spoken dialogue, especially in unrubricated manuscripts.

²² Hrotsvit’s dramas are among the victims: see *La “comédie” latine en France au XIIe siècle*, ed. Gustave Cohen, 2 vols. (Paris, 1931); and Jean Andrieu, *Le dialogue antique: Structure et présentation*, Collection d’Etudes Latines, Série Scientifique, 29 (Paris, 1954). Andrieu’s work was strongly influenced by Edmond Faral, e.g., “Le fabliau latin au moyen âge,” *Romania* 50 (1924), 320–85. A more nuanced view is offered by Peter Dronke in two essays, “Narrative and Dialogue” and “A Note on *Pamphilus*,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 42 (1979), 225–30; repr. in *Latin and Vernacular Poets*. The latter is a reply to Bruno Roy, “Arnulf of Orleans and the Latin ‘Comedy,’” *Speculum* 49 (1974), 258–66. Editions of the Latin plays are best found in *Commedia latina del XII e XIII secolo*, ed. Ferruccio Bertini, 6 vols. (Genoa, 1976–98). On the potential significance of the Latin contribution to medieval theater, see Jody Enders, *Rhetoric and the Origins of Medieval Drama* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1992). A recent study of Hrotsvit’s plays, while shedding light on the author’s artistry, nevertheless sidesteps issues of dramaturgy by essentially ignoring the format in which the works appear: Stephen L. Wailes, “Beyond Virginity: Flesh and Spirit in the Plays of Hrotsvit of Gandersheim,” *Speculum* 76 (2001), 1–27.

²³ To cite but a few exemplary studies by scholars of medieval literature: Evelyn Birge Vitz’s *Orality and Performance in Early French Romance* (Woodbridge, Eng., 1999) and Joyce Coleman’s *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 26 (Cambridge, Eng., 1996) both evoke a vibrant performance culture created by active engagement with texts. I also admire E. Catherine Dunn’s extremely liberal approach to liturgical artifacts in *The Gallican Saint’s Life and the Late Roman Dramatic Tradition* (Washington, D.C., 1989). Among recent works by scholars of medieval theater, I have drawn inspiration from the volume of essays edited by Eckehard Simon, *The Theatre of Medieval Europe* (cited above, n. 2), since many of the contributors are sensitive to such issues; and Meg Twycross has addressed the problem of genre directly in the introduction to *Festive Drama* (Woodbridge, Eng., 1996). It is salutary that the recent collection of studies *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, ed. Thomas J. Heffernan and E. Ann Matter (Kalamazoo, Mich., 2001), published by the Consortium for the Teaching of the Middle Ages (in

Leaving aside the difficult issue of canonization, we should notice that the available dossier of vernacular plays, whether articulated by Knight or Stern, exhibits a narrow geographic distribution and linguistic register. The vast majority of the nine or ten designated texts are in dialects of the langue d'oïl: two are Anglo-Norman, the *Ordo representationis Ade* and the *Seinte Resureccion*, and were probably composed and performed in England; one is in Francien, the *Miracle de Théophile* of Rutebeuf; and five are in Picard, all of them associated with the town of Arras on the Franco-Flemish border.²⁴ The remaining plays, the *Sponsus* and the *Auto de los reyes magos*, represent the Limousin dialect of the langue d'oc and the Castilian Spanish of Toledo, respectively.²⁵ It is impossible to overestimate the significance of the fact that this list is heavily biased in favor of the regions in which vernacular literacy and book production first took hold. Moreover, the concentration of scripted theatricals—notably in and around Arras—points to certain local conditions as conducive to the production of plays, or at least to their

affiliation with the Medieval Institute at Western Michigan University), contains two chapters that challenge current parameters: Vitz's "The Liturgy and Vernacular Literature" (i.e., entertainment) and a collaborative effort by Kathleen Ashley, Pamela Sheingorn, and the late Clifford Flanigan, "The Liturgy as Social Performance: Expanding the Definitions." Unfortunately, however, the volume as a whole is framed very conservatively, opening with an introduction that explicitly invites the reader to apply inappropriate and unabashedly modern paradigms to the study of public ceremonial—"as all who have gone to plays and churches will immediately acknowledge, the liturgy is utterly unlike the theatre" (p. 6)—despite the fact that "the world of our medieval ancestors . . . was different from ours in so many fundamental ways" (p. 7). It is also dismaying that a new and potentially influential volume of documents edited by William Tydeman, *The Medieval European Stage, 500–1550* (Cambridge, Eng., 2001), declares on the first page that the "mere existence of theater in the Middle Ages denotes a recurrent pattern of victories over adversity" and stresses the "factors inimical to the medieval stage's outburst of creative vitality."

²⁴ *Le garçon et l'aveugle* is the only one of the five that is not explicitly connected with Arras. Mention is made of Tournai, a neighboring town (v. 30), but the play also mentions the uncle of the count of Artois, Charles of Anjou, in the song "Dou roy de Sesile" (vv. 83–90). Moreover, the Boy swears "by the faith I owe Saint-Vaast" ("Par la foi ie doi saint Vast," v. 99), the patron saint of the powerful abbey to which the town of Arras belonged. Hitherto these plays have not been studied as a group, although a few scholars have recognized the significant contribution of Arras to the theater of medieval Europe, e.g., Guy Paoli, "Taverne et théâtre au moyen âge," in *Théâtre et spectacles hier et aujourd'hui: Moyen âge et Renaissance*, Actes du 115e Congrès national des sociétés savantes (Paris, 1991), pp. 73–83. Lynette Muir devotes a few pages to drama in Arras, but while she remarks that "[s]ix plays survive from the thirteenth century, four of them from Arras," she does not examine the implications of this statement and excludes *Le garçon et l'aveugle* from the roster; see *Literature and Society in Medieval France: The Mirror and the Image, 1100–1500* (New York, 1985), pp. 94–100 at 95. Charles Mazouer allows the plays of Jehan and Adam to stand in for all of urban drama in the thirteenth century, without remarking on the fact that all the evidence is particular to Arras: *Le théâtre français*, pp. 89–121. Nor is the predominance of Arrageois material noted in Knight's review article (cited above, n. 2), although he does highlight the role of Arras in a shorter treatment of French drama in *The Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. Joseph R. Strayer, 4 (New York, 1984), p. 264. The only full-length study to consider the relationship between *Courtois d'Arras* and the three plays of Jehan and Adam, apart from my own, is the unpublished Ph.D. dissertation of Susan Johnson Clark, "The Theatre of Medieval Arras" (Yale University, 1973).

²⁵ Lucy Pick has made a convincing argument for the latter play's association with Toledo, its cathedral, and the work of the *Reconquista* in her paper "Performance and Polemic: The Case of Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada and the *Auto de los reyes magos*," delivered at the 34th International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, Michigan (8 May 1999). I am thankful to have had the opportunity to peruse a later draft of this study.

preservation as literary artifacts.²⁶ The earliest samples of vernacular theater thus intersect with a parallel development of the vernacular as a language of written record, and the scribes responsible for copying these plays were trained in the very places where new literate technologies were being deployed: the cathedral of Toledo, the monastery of Saint-Martial at Limoges, the Anglo-Norman realm, the Ile-de-France, and Artois were all in the forefront of important documentary movements.²⁷ The plays produced in these locales therefore reaped the benefits of techniques devised for recording the chant, biblical scholarship, the law, fiscal accounts, poetry, and the early polyphony whose wider dissemination was dependent on the development of mensural notation. Their reliance on the vicissitudes of specialized scribal practices begs two related questions: What were the perceived differences between plays and other forms of entertainment, display, or discourse? And can we readily distinguish a play text from another text copied in a similar way?

To date, no one has attempted to evaluate the particularity of the surviving evidence for medieval drama prior to the fourteenth century or asked what circumstances governed the transcription of plays into manuscript books. And, among scholars currently at work in the field, only Stern has given voice to the opinion that there may be many more plays hidden away in those books; she draws attention to the libraries of Castile, where manuscripts have been hastily catalogued (if at all), and she also remarks on the complacency of those who are content to relegate early Castilian theater to a “dark age” without proper consideration of the work remaining to be done. But scholars of other national literatures have not necessarily been more rigorous when it comes to the identification of plays.²⁸ Decades spent in the critique of Karl Young’s methodology have done little to reshape the agenda of theater studies, since rejection of a positivist stance vis-à-vis the development of Latin liturgical drama has not been accompanied by a rejection of other, more basic assumptions.²⁹ As E. Catherine Dunn observed in

²⁶ As David Mills observes, “the modern reader may forget that dramatic activities unconfined by text were the medieval norm, and that such activities provided a complex frame of reference for the appreciation of minority, text-centred drama.” See “Modern Editions of Medieval English Plays,” in *The Theatre of Medieval Europe*, pp. 65–79 at 65. Glynne Wickham has pointed out that theater scholars wrongly view vernacular elements “as indicative of steadily increasing ‘secularization’ of religious drama” rather than as part of the same process that dignified vernacular verse; see *The Medieval Theatre* (London, 1974), p. 56. Here, I am less concerned with the affective use of the vernacular (an important topic) than with its manifestation in writing.

²⁷ The very early advent of scripted liturgical drama in Occitan and Anglo-Norman would seem, in particular, to have something to do with the relatively early development of documentary habits in Languedoc and the important role played by the Norman Conquest in the use of the vernacular as a language of record: see, e.g., Richard Landes, *Relics, Apocalypse, and the Deceits of History: Ademar of Chabannes, 989–1034*, Harvard Historical Studies 117 (Cambridge, Mass., 1995), and Michael T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England, 1066–1307*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1993), p. 18. See also below, nn. 152–55.

²⁸ Stern’s plea for a closer look at theater in medieval Castile holds true for Europe as a whole in this period, since it is safe to assume that all regions have “a dramatic heritage much of which has been lost or still lies entombed in archives” (*The Medieval Theater in Castile* [cited above, n. 11], p. 3). See especially her chapter “The Medieval Record,” pp. 25–52.

²⁹ On the reception and impact of Karl Young’s *Drama of the Medieval Church*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1933), see John Wasson, “Karl Young and the Vernacular Drama,” and C. Clifford Flanigan, “Karl Young and the Drama of the Medieval Church: An Anniversary Appraisal,” *Research Opportunities*

1975, Young “refused to recognize the presence of drama unless a text contained rubrics calling explicitly for costume and action,”³⁰ and we shall see that it was not unusual for a play to lose its rubrics in transmission. So even those codices that have been catalogued and have, indeed, received a great deal of attention may harbor scripts that have passed beneath our gaze, unnoticed.

It is ironic that a similar observation was made as long ago as 1789, and by the man who might well be reckoned the founder of medieval theater studies, Pierre Jean-Baptiste Le Grand d’Aussy. Commenting on certain curious texts included in the first volume of his systematic study *Fabliaux ou contes du XIIe et du XIIIe siècle*, he declared: “I am convinced that these are not by any means the only old plays that are to be found in the manuscripts, if one wanted to dig for them.”³¹ But neither Le Grand d’Aussy nor subsequent researchers carried out this *grand projet*, and most of the texts that now constitute the body of medieval dramatic literature (Latin, liturgical, or vernacular) are those that came to light when a particularly sophisticated layout, or a certain modish flavor, attracted the attention of eighteenth-century bibliophiles. For Le Grand d’Aussy, the texts that signaled “la véritable origine du théâtre en France” were *Courtois*, the *Jeu de Robin et de Marion*, the *Miracle de Théophile*, the *Jeu de saint Nicolas*, and the portion of the *Jeu de la feuillée* known as “Le mariage d’Adam”: according to him, these were the true *pièces* included among fabliaux and verse stories in the manuscripts of the Bibliothèque du Roi and other private collections.³² Revealing something of the tastes that contributed to their positive identification, he invited his readers to appreciate the delicacy of *Robin et Marion*, and to join him in lamenting “le mauvais goût” of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when the proliferation of farces would indicate that “le genre absurde” pioneered by Rutebeuf and Jehan Bodel would be imitated more readily than “la pastorale charmante” of Adam de la Halle.³³ Guillaume de Bure’s catalogue of the library of M. le duc de la Vallière, published at about the same time, registered only a slightly different response, attempting to redeem the *Jeu de saint Nicolas* by comparing it to

in *Renaissance Drama* 27 (1984), 151–55 and 157–66, respectively. See also Flanigan’s “Medieval Latin Music-Drama,” in *The Theatre of Medieval Europe*, pp. 21–41; and, in that same volume, the introduction by Glynne Wickham (pp. 1–18), and Andrew Hughes, “Liturgical Drama: Falling between the Disciplines,” pp. 42–62. I also recommend the trenchant critique of Dunn, *The Gallican Saint’s Life*, pp. 3–9.

³⁰ Dunn, “French Medievalists” (cited above, n. 18), p. 55.

³¹ “Je suis convaincu que ce ne sont point là les seuls anciens *Jeux* qu’on trouvera dans les manuscrits, si l’on veut y fouiller”: Le Grand d’Aussy, 1:358 (cited above, n. 6).

³² Le Grand d’Aussy, 1:352–60 at 328. I discuss the “fragment” known as “Le mariage d’Adam” below, p. 815. The codex containing the *Sponsus* has a similar history of reception; it became part of the Bibliothèque du Roi (now the Bibliothèque nationale de France) in 1730 and was catalogued in 1744. “A l’aide de cette indication, les Bénédictins, en 1746, firent remonter l’origine du théâtre au XIe siècle,” according to Edmond de Coussemaker, *Drames liturgiques du moyen âge* (Rennes, 1860), p. 311. See also Guy De Poerck, “Le MS. Paris B.N., Lat. 1139: Etude codicologique d’un recueil factice de pièces paraliturgiques (XIe–XIIIe siècle),” *Scriptorium* 23 (1969), 298–312 at p. 301.

³³ Le Grand d’Aussy, 1:358. The balance was redressed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when *Robin et Marion* was very much in vogue among musicians and *metteurs-en-scène*. See John Haines, “Paraphrases musico-théâtrales du *Jeu de Robin et Marion*, 1870–1930,” *Revue d’histoire du théâtre* (forthcoming). I am grateful to the author for the opportunity to read an advance copy of this article.

Corneille's *Le Cid*.³⁴ Revealing something of modern preferences, a recent critic greeted the worldly setting of this same play as a welcome departure from the pieties of most medieval drama. And the seeming familiarity of the plays from Arras still guarantees their favorable reception and relative popularity today.³⁵

Thanks, then, to their physical appearance—and their conformity to literary fashion—certain texts have been hailed as “monuments précieux pour l’histoire du théâtre,” specifically “du Théâtre François.”³⁶ And in the centuries since their recovery, the few plays most readily recognizable as such have been labeled as prototypes of “secular,” “French,” and (above all) “modern” theater.³⁷ Perhaps in an unwitting effort to bolster these claims, their scripts have been edited in accordance with philological principles that Bernard Cerquiglini has characterized as Procrustean.³⁸ A central tenet of this editorial philosophy is that the original context and format of a text are irrelevant. As a noted authority on vernacular diplomatic explained in 1975: “The transcription of the text . . . implies giving it a modern appearance so that reading may be facilitated. . . . The transformation of the text, however, concerns only the external aspect, for the content must never be altered.”³⁹ Yet this “transformation” of a text’s manuscript presentation poses a distinctive threat to the medieval play, whose existence as such has been seen as dependent on its appearance.

Cerquiglini was right to point out that the process whereby the vernacular was put into writing has not received enough attention from medievalists, given the fact that its literary emergence coincided with “the institutionalization of the writ-

³⁴ De Bure (cited above, n. 9), p. 232.

³⁵ Mazouer, *Le théâtre français*, p. 95. The number of literary studies devoted to the *Jeu de saint Nicolas*, the *Jeu de la feuillée*, and the *Jeu de Robin et de Marion* is vast, owing to more than two centuries’ worth of critical and editorial interest in these particular plays. I engage an array of interpretations, and offer an extensive bibliography, in “A Medieval Stage.”

³⁶ Le Grand d’Aussy, 1:330; De Bure, p. 228. Indeed, Paris BnF 25566 is also a seminal source for the scholars of early vernacular song, ranking high in the medieval musicologists’ repertoire of early chansonniers. See Elizabeth Aubrey’s discussion of Occitan and French materials under “Sources, MS,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell, 2nd ed., 29 vols. (New York, 2001), 23:791–930 at pp. 848–52.

³⁷ The laurels of modernity and Frenchness are still being variously awarded. Compare, for instance, the pronouncements of Michel Rousse, “Le *Jeu de saint Nicolas*: Tradition et innovation,” in *Arras au moyen âge: Histoire et littérature*, ed. Marie-Madeleine Castellani and Jean-Pierre Martin (Arras, 1994), pp. 153–62 at 153; and that of Guy Mermier, “*The Play of Madness*: A Translation of “*Jeu de la feuillée*” by Adam d’Arras, *Studies in the Humanities* 22 (New York, 1997), pp. xiii–xxiv at xxi. Most recently, Charles Mazouer called the *Jeu d’Adam* “notre première pièce de théâtre français,” exulting that, with this play, French theater was detached from the liturgy and the language of the church at a single stroke: *Le théâtre français*, p. 89.

³⁸ “Monsieur Procuste, philologue” is the villain of Cerquiglini’s *Eloge de la variante: Histoire critique de la philologie* (Paris, 1989).

³⁹ Egidio Rossini, “Introduction to the Edition of Medieval and Vernacular Documents (XIII and XIV Centuries),” trans. Christopher Kleinhenz in *Medieval Manuscripts and Textual Criticism*, North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures 173, Symposia 4 (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1975), pp. 175–210 at 175; see also Kleinhenz’s “Introduction,” pp. 19–25. A more helpful introduction to the problem is that of Alfred Foulet and Mary Blakely Speer, *On Editing Old French Texts*, Edward C. Armstrong Monographs on Medieval Literature 1 (Lawrence, Kans., 1979), pp. 1–39.

ten thing” in the twelfth century.⁴⁰ Even his critics have joined him in emphasizing the importance of a text’s physical appearance, its close proximity to other texts, its vulnerability. The new school of material philology is predicated on the maxim that “context determines text” and that context itself is not stable. It is devoted to the study of what Stephen G. Nichols calls the “manuscript matrix,” defined as “the historical fact that medieval texts were written in a manuscript format which is both multivoiced and temporally open-ended.”⁴¹ While I prefer to say that medieval plays are “preserved in” their manuscripts, rather than “written in” them, they are certainly multivoiced and open-ended. Their evaluation requires a *mise en regard* and a *mise en mouvement* in the most literal sense, a sensitivity to the fact that plays are not complete in and of themselves, and were not supposed to be.

This is more than the “joyful mobility of medieval writing,”⁴² it is the mobility of performance. Drawing upon the important concepts of *mouvance* and *variance* articulated by Paul Zumthor, scholars have become increasingly attuned to “modalities of performance.”⁴³ Medievalists working in many fields, from history to paleography, are now considering the ways in which an awareness of the possibilities for performance can illuminate both the written artifact and the historical circumstances surrounding its reception. Influential manuscript studies have posited a direct connection between the way a text was read and the way it was presented on the page.⁴⁴ Musicologists have come to regard individual manuscript variants as evidence for localized performance conditions, rather than dismissing them as copyists’ “errors.”⁴⁵ Inquiries into the development of musical notation

⁴⁰ On the “banalisation” of the *mise en écrit*, see Cerquiglini, *Eloge*, pp. 33–43.

⁴¹ Cerquiglini, *Eloge*, pp. 17–20 and 26–29. See Stephen G. Nichols, “Philology and Its Discontents,” in *The Future of the Middle Ages: Medieval Literature in the 1990s*, ed. William D. Paden (Gainesville, Fla., 1994), pp. 113–41 at 119 and 127 (and pp. 131–35, for a critique of Cerquiglini); and *The Whole Book: Cultural Perspectives on the Medieval Miscellany*, ed. Stephen G. Nichols and Siegfried Wenzel (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1996), pp. 1–3. See also Nichols’s article in that volume, “‘Art’ and ‘Nature’: Looking for (Medieval) Principles of Order in Occitan *Chansonnier* N (Morgan 819),” pp. 83–121 at 85–87. On the logic of manuscript compilations in general, see Barbara A. Shailor, “A Cataloguer’s View,” in the same volume, pp. 153–67.

⁴² Cerquiglini, *Eloge*, p. 114.

⁴³ Paul Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale* (Paris, 1972), and *La lettre et la voix de la “littérature” médiévale* (Paris, 1987). Zumthor’s work is actually at the root of Cerquiglini’s *Eloge*, although this debt is not properly acknowledged. The phrase quoted above is that of Vitz, *Orality and Performance* (cited above, n. 23), pp. 164–227; see also pp. 267–84 (“On the Advantages of a Performance-Oriented Approach to Medieval Romance”). For an evocative reading of a “literary” source as theatrical event, see Nancy Freeman Regalado, “Staging the *Roman de Renart*: Medieval Theatre and the Diffusion of Political Concerns into Popular Culture,” *Mediaevalia* 18 (1995), 111–42.

⁴⁴ Paul Saenger, *Space between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading* (Stanford, Calif., 1997), p. 2; Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record* (cited above, n. 27), pp. 132–35; and Matthew Innes, “Memory, Orality, and Literacy in Early Medieval Society,” *Past and Present* 158 (1998), 3–36 at p. 14. In general, see Malcolm B. Parkes, *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* (Aldershot Eng., 1992).

⁴⁵ Elizabeth Aubrey, *The Music of the Troubadours* (Bloomington, Ind., 1996), pp. 26–65, 131, and 237–73. For an overview of editorial trends as they relate to the manuscripts of troubadour and trouvère material, see Margaret L. Switten, *Music and Poetry in the Middle Ages: A Guide to Research in French and Occitan Song, 1100–1400*, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities 1102, Garland Medieval Bibliographies 19 (New York, 1995), pp. 1–82, esp. 21 (on the effects of printing), 37–59

have shown that, just as performance practice affected manuscript format, so new formatting techniques could facilitate the development of ever more complex performance pieces. Some specialists have consequently traced the development of polyphony to the availability of scribal technologies for recording it, or at least to the new clarity and coherence of the musical *mise en page*.⁴⁶

Such innovative research has far-reaching implications for the study of theater, and it is time to ask how and why dramatic artifacts took shape in the way(s) that they did. This topic has been neglected in the many reevaluations of editorial praxis published in recent years, perhaps because the problems posed by the existence of multiple manuscript variants rarely arise when dealing with plays, thereby obviating the need for collation and other common editorial tasks. On a more elementary level, though, it appears that medieval play scripts have been considered cut-and-dried, obvious. Certainly, editors have labored to make them appear so. And by the end of the thirteenth century, it is true, one can point to the beginnings of established convention, as certain scribes developed techniques that helped to ensure the differentiation of parts and inclusion of stage directions.⁴⁷ But the earlier processes of play transcription have never been documented, even though scholars of medieval theater have often expressed the need for a full-scale codicological analysis of manuscripts.⁴⁸ In 1988 Elisabeth Lalou and Darwin

(on the influence of Meyer, Paris, Petit de Julleville, and Bédier), and 59–69 (on trends in the 1980s and 1990s). A pioneering study that appeared prior to the publication of Zumthor's *Essai* is that of Hendrik van der Werf, "The Trouvère Chansons as Creations of a Notationless Musical Culture," *Current Musicology* 1 (1965), 61–68.

⁴⁶ John Stevens, "The Manuscript Presentation of Adam de la Halle's Courtly Chansons," in *Source Materials and the Interpretation of Music: A Memorial Volume to Thurston Dart*, ed. Ian Bent (London, 1981), pp. 29–64 at 29. Paul Saenger argues that the coherent transmission of musical notation was one of the major phases in the development of "separated text format" and gave rise to a "greater degree of verisimilitude between the exemplar and the copy": *Space between Words*, p. 142. In general, see Willi Apel, *The Notation of Polyphonic Music, 900–1600*, 5th ed., Mediaeval Academy of America Publication 38 (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), pp. 271–81; and the contribution to the article "Notation" by David Hiley and Thomas B. Payne in *The New Grove Dictionary*, 18:73–189 at pp. 119–25. See also Switten, *Music and Poetry*, pp. 9 and 13.

⁴⁷ Elisabeth Lalou, "Les rôlets de théâtre: Etude codicologique," in *Théâtre et spectacles* (cited above, n. 24), pp. 51–71 at 53–54. The earliest part sheet she cites, now lost, is a parchment fragment of a role prepared for a Nativity play from Périgueux; see the edition (p. 70) and her list of other surviving roles (pp. 60–62). The second oldest role hitherto identified in France is a parchment fragment from Sion, dated sometime after 1290 and probably written in the Lyonnais. Its existence was first noted by Joseph Bédier, "Fragment d'un ancien mystère," *Romania* 24 (1895), 87–90. It has been transcribed by Paul Aebischer, who includes a photograph of the artifact in "Un fragment de rôle comique datant du début du XIV^e siècle retrouvé dans un manuscrit déposé aux Archives cantonales du Valais à Sion," *Vallesia* 22 (1967), 71–80. Other roles, written on paper at Vevey around 1520, have been edited by Graham Runnalls, "The Actors' Roles Found in the Fribourg Archives," *Pluteus* 4–5 (1986–87), 7–67. Another very early role is British Library, Additional MS 23986, missing since 1971 and containing the text of the Middle English *Interludium de clerico et puella* and, on the reverse, a French *chanson des barons*. See Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, p. 143; and Andrew Taylor, "The Myth of the Minstrel Manuscript," *Speculum* 66 (1991), 43–73 at pp. 68–69.

⁴⁸ E.g., Clifford Davidson, "Material Culture, Writing, and Early Drama," in *Material Culture and Medieval Drama*, ed. Clifford Davidson, Early Drama, Art, and Music Monograph Series 25 (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1999), pp. 1–15; and Elisabeth Lalou, "Le théâtre et les spectacles publics en France au moyen âge: Etat des recherches," in *Théâtre et spectacles*, pp. 9–32. Geneviève Hasenohr's brief

Smith gestured toward the problem in their paper “Pour une typologie des manuscrits du théâtre médiéval,” although their survey was limited entirely to the playbooks and part sheets of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁴⁹ Smith returned to the topic a decade later, in an article provocatively entitled “Les manuscrits ‘de théâtre’: Introduction codicologique à des manuscrits qui n’existent pas,” but still he discussed only those plays dating from the second half of the fifteenth century.⁵⁰ Graham Runnalls has also focused exclusively on the period after 1300, when, he asserts, plays can be more easily differentiated from other kinds of texts.⁵¹ Yet looking at some late-medieval scripts within a broader context, Donald C. Baker has shown that there are persistent similarities between the manuscripts recording the public spectacle of Christ’s Passion, as played out on Corpus Christi, and the internal monologue of a sixteenth-century meditation on the burial and Resurrection of Christ.⁵² Even at this late date, it appears, some plays do not look distinctive enough to suit modern paradigms. Before expending effort on the formulation of more complete typologies, or planning more systematic assaults on the archives, we might stop and ask: Do we know what we are looking for?

CONTEXT: EXTRACTING PLAYS FROM THEIR SETTINGS

The habit of confining an overview of medieval play scripts to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries allows one to downplay the potential impact of liturgical models and to emphasize instead the extent to which plays relied upon formats developed independently, or with limited reference to secular literature in the vernacular.⁵³ This strategy is not unique to theater studies, to be sure. Consider our

overview of the *mise en page* of plays is helpful, mainly because it reproduces a number of different examples from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries: “Les manuscrits théâtraux,” in *Mise en page et mise en texte du livre manuscrit*, ed. Henri-Jean Martin and Jean Vezin (Paris, 1990), pp. 334–40. However, Hasenohr prefers to look ahead to the “grands mystères” of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, a focus that distorts the evidence and her interpretation of it.

⁴⁹ Lalou and Smith, in *Le théâtre et la cité* (cited above, n. 16), pp. 569–79.

⁵⁰ *Gazette du livre médiéval* 33 (1998), 1–10. In this article Smith alerts the reader that he is preparing a book entitled *Jeux, histoires et vies des saints dramatisées, en français, des origines au milieu du XVI^e siècle*, and says that this will lead to a *Répertoire et bibliographie des manuscrits, éditions et travaux* with “an analysis of texts and documents from a historical perspective.”

⁵¹ Runnalls remarks on the “high degree of variability that distinguishes play manuscripts from non play manuscripts,” a judgment that should only apply to texts from the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: “Towards a Typology of Medieval French Play Manuscripts,” in *The Editor and the Text (In Honour of Professor Anthony J. Holden)*, ed. Philip E. Bennett and Graham A. Runnalls (Edinburgh, 1990), pp. 96–113 at 96–97. See also “When Is a ‘Mystere’ Not a ‘Mystere’? Titles and Genres in Medieval French Religious Drama,” *Tréteaux* 2 (1980), 23–28.

⁵² Donald C. Baker, “When Is a Text a Play? Reflections upon What Certain Late Medieval Dramatic Texts Tell Us,” in *Contexts for Early English Drama*, ed. Marianne G. Briscoe and John C. Coldewey (Bloomington, Ind., 1989), pp. 20–40 at 35. The manuscript Baker refers to is Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS e Musaeo 160, an annotated Carthusian *meditatio*.

⁵³ This is what happens in Hasenohr’s “Les manuscrits théâtraux.” For a helpful introduction to the chief features of vernacular *mise en page*, with many facsimile examples, see Carleton W. Carroll, “Medieval Romance Paleography: A Brief Introduction,” in *Medieval Manuscripts and Textual Criticism* (cited above, n. 39), pp. 39–82.

continued reliance on the manuscript sigla established in the nineteenth century to help scholars trace the “evolution” of a given text. While this species of codicological shorthand allows one to dispense with the repetition of cumbersome shelf marks, it encourages a disregard of the manuscript context. Hence, a troubadour lyric occurring in *Chansonnier W* (Paris BnF fr. 25566, the codex now containing the *libellus* featuring the works of Adam de la Halle and the *Jeu de saint Nicolas*) is more readily comparable to a similar lyric in *P* (Paris BnF fr. 847) than to the other pieces with which it was copied.⁵⁴ Similar practices make it difficult to recognize the juxtaposition of Latin and vernacular elements in liturgical books, to the extent that at least one discussion of the earliest Occitan songs seems rather reluctant to acknowledge their appearance in a liturgical manuscript—as it happens, the same one that contains the earliest play with a significant vernacular component.⁵⁵

Copied into a proser-troper from the Limousin abbey of Saint-Martial (Paris BnF lat. 1139, fols. 32–79), the sequence now known as *Sponsus* is a dramatization of the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matt. 25.1–13). It appears in the same manuscript as a six-line vernacular verse introduction to the chant *Tu autem Dominus*, beginning “Be deu hormais finir nostra razos” (fol. 44r),⁵⁶ and two striking songs. The first, *In hoc anni circulo* (fols. 48r–49r), is a Nativity hymn consisting of nineteen four-line strophes in alternating Latin and Occitan verse, with the fourth line being a refrain that plays on the similarities between the two languages (“de virgine Maria”); as in the *Sponsus*, the vernacular is an integral part of the song’s meaning, not a mere demotic device.⁵⁷ The second song,

⁵⁴ The sigla of manuscripts containing important collections of secular French song were assigned by Karl Bartsch in 1872; see Aubrey, “Sources” (cited above, n. 36), p. 850 and ff.

⁵⁵ Switten, *Music and Poetry*, p. 3; cf. Aubrey, “Sources,” p. 848. Here I draw upon my own examination of BnF lat. 1139, which has been analyzed numerous times. The most complete account is that of Sarah Fuller, “The Myth of ‘Saint Martial’ Polyphony,” *Musica disciplina* 33 (1979), 5–26. But see also Hans Spanke, “St. Martial-Studien: Ein Beitrag zur frühromanischen Metrik,” *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur* 54 (1930–31), 282–317 and 385–422 at pp. 387–405; and De Poerck, “Le MS. Paris B.N., Lat. 1139” (cited above, n. 32). With regard to the *Sponsus* and its manuscript setting, I recommend perusal of the facsimile pages provided in the edition of D’Arco Silvio Avalle, *Sponsus: Dramma delle vergini prudenti e delle vergini stolte*, *Documenti di Filologia* 9 (Milan, 1965). Other editions of the play with music are those of de Coussemaker, *Drames liturgiques* (cited above, n. 32), pp. 1–10; and A. Gastoué, *Le drame liturgique Les vierges sages et les vierges folles* (Paris, 1906). Editions without music are those of Dronke in *Nine Medieval Latin Plays* (cited above, n. 12), pp. 14–23; Lucien-Paul Thomas, *Le “Sponsus”: Mystère des vierges sages et des vierges folles* (Paris, 1951); Young, *Drama* (cited above, n. 29), 2:362–64; and François-Just-Marie Raynouard, “Extrait du Mystère des vierges sages et vierges folles,” in *Choix des poésies originales des troubadours*, 2 (Paris, 1817), pp. 139–43.

⁵⁶ Edited by Raynouard, “Extrait,” p. 134. The edition of Thomas transposes verses 3 and 6: *Le “Sponsus,”* p. 195.

⁵⁷ This is the contention of (among others) Young, *Drama*, 2:367–68. See also William Tydeman, *The Theatre in the Middle Ages: Western European Stage Conditions, c. 800–1576* (Cambridge, Eng., 1978), p. 44. An edition is available in Thomas, *Le “Sponsus,”* pp. 196–98. This same song is described as an Annunciation dialogue in the vernacular by Peter Dronke, who gives the incipit as “Mei amic e mei fiel,” which is actually the first verse of the second stanza; see *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, pp. xxi and 5; and *The Medieval Lyric*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, Eng., 1996), pp. 50–51. Although the song may well have been performed as a dialogue, the illustrative stanzas translated by Dronke are not presented as consecutive in the manuscript.

immediately following the first, is a hymn composed entirely in the vernacular, *O Maria Deu maire* (fols. 49r–50r), meditating on the parallels between Eve and Mary and the miracle of human redemption after the Fall.⁵⁸ And this manuscript is remarkable not only for its preservation of the Latin and Occitan *Sponsus* and allied songs, but for a third reason: it contains what may be the oldest polyphonic sequences, once characterized as “hidden polyphony” but more appropriately described by Sarah Fuller as examples of “successive notation,” representing “the earliest solution” for recording two simultaneous voices, whose melodies are supplied over consecutive lines of text.⁵⁹ While Fuller and Leo Treitler have demonstrated that there was no such thing as a polyphony unique to Saint-Martial, the “school” so called by Jacques Chailley, this powerful and ambitious abbey was among the first to develop a system of notation that transmitted music that could (in theory) be sung by someone not already familiar with it.⁶⁰

I regard the coincidence of early vernacular drama, early vernacular song, and early polyphony as suggestive of some fundamental link between the textual survival of complex performance pieces—whether plays or part-songs—and the individual initiative of an unusually innovative performer-scribe working within a flexible liturgical tradition, a tradition that, at Saint-Martial, precociously developed mechanisms for the literary preservation of performance practice. The scribe of the *Sponsus* manuscript was so innovative, indeed, that the parchment on which he worked was ruled in accordance with an older template still in use in the monastery’s scriptorium, one that (in Fuller’s phrase) “makes no concessions to the requirements of musical notation.” The scribe had to compensate by writing text on alternate rulings. The degree of innovation is further indicated by near-contemporary revisions, showing that the new system of successive notation also “posed grave problems for a would-be reader.”⁶¹

The very fact that these samples of early polyphony were “lost” until the latter part of the twentieth century is telling. Their disappearance, or lack of visibility, prompted Fuller to ask, “How many pieces in the manuscript may be similarly disguised?”⁶² In other words, how likely is it that such scribal initiatives—whether taking the form of attempts to preserve multivoiced musical works or multivoiced plays—might be relegated to obscurity because the methods adopted were novel, or never further developed, or never subsequently recognized? Hendrik van der Werf has argued that there were polyphonic repertoires all over Europe that were

⁵⁸ Edited by Thomas, *Le “Sponsus,”* pp. 199–200; cf. Raynouard, “Extrait,” pp. 135–37.

⁵⁹ There is disagreement over the number of polyphonic (or “duophonic”) pieces in the manuscript, but Fuller’s authoritative count is seven rendered in successive notation, four in score notation. See her “Hidden Polyphony: A Reappraisal,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 24 (1971), 169–92 at p. 175. The terminology is that of Judith Marshall, “Hidden Polyphony in a Manuscript from Saint Martial de Limoges,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 15 (1962), 131–44.

⁶⁰ Leo Treitler, “The Polyphony of Saint Martial,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 17 (1964), 29–42; “Oral, Written, and Literate Process in the Transmission of Medieval Music,” *Speculum* 56 (1981), 471–91; and “Reading and Singing: On the Genesis of Occidental Music-Writing,” *Early Music History* 4 (1984), 135–208. Chailley’s seminal study is *L’école musicale de Saint-Martial de Limoges jusqu’à la fin du XIe siècle* (Paris, 1960).

⁶¹ Fuller, “Myth,” pp. 19 and 20–21; and “Hidden,” p. 173.

⁶² Fuller, “Hidden,” p. 170.

“notationless” and that some of them may have remained unrecorded for long periods of time, with the result that “a composer may seem to have created a new genre when, in reality, he or she merely transferred an old genre from the notationless realm to the market for printed music” or (one might add) the growing manuscript market of the thirteenth century.⁶³ He calls songbooks like the one containing the *Sponsus* “collector’s items,” gatherings of bits and pieces that appealed to a particular group of performers and that could have been used on any number of occasions. They appear in manuscripts not because they are the only such pieces but because “occasionally someone was interested in collecting some music in writing” and had the wherewithal to do so. If the copies are imperfect, it is not because the scribes were poorly trained (quite the contrary), but because there was not yet an awareness that precision was the ultimate desideratum.⁶⁴ The immediate purpose was to prompt performance.

In my estimation, circumstances analogous to those help to account for the survival of certain texts in forms that render them identifiable as plays. The rare witness of the *Sponsus*, which is not only the oldest play with vernacular elements but one of the oldest liturgical dramas properly speaking, suggests that performance pieces will be lost if they do not find a skilled amanuensis, or at least that they will be lost to us if we do not recognize the format in which they make their appearance. I take a very different view of the evidence from that of Johann Drumbl, whose *Quem quaeritis: Teatro sacro dell’alto medioevo* (Rome, 1981) was enthusiastically endorsed by Peter Dronke in 1994 and has influenced some English-language scholarship of the past decade.⁶⁵ Drumbl theorized that the plays collected by Karl Young in *The Drama of the Medieval Church* document the failure of a movement toward liturgical drama, not its inevitable triumph. In opposition to Young, he argued that the limitations of the surviving record (compiled by Young himself) tell the story of the church’s successful suppression of mimetic impulses; all dramatic elements were actually “alien” or “extraneous” to the liturgy, and the “real” medieval theater has consequently left few traces. “There is no such thing,” Drumbl concluded, “as ‘liturgical drama.’”⁶⁶ If that is so, there is really no such thing as medieval drama *tout court*—at least, until the burgeoning records of the fourteenth century begin to provide a firm textual basis for its existence.

The strength of Drumbl’s argument lies in its rejection of any teleology of theatrical development. He perceptively noted that most scholarship on the origins

⁶³ Hendrik van der Werf, *The Oldest Extant Part Music and the Origin of Western Polyphony*, 2 vols. (Rochester, N.Y., 1993), 1:155.

⁶⁴ “[C]lose scrutiny suggests that the imprecision was not caused by a lack of ability on the part of the scribes, but by a relative indifference to precision among all musicians of the time, including the scribes”: van der Werf, *Oldest Extant Part Music*, 1:12.

⁶⁵ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, p. xviii. One of the few English-language reviews of Drumbl’s work was that of Anselme Davril, “Johann Drumbl and the Origin of the *Quem quaeritis*: A Review Article,” *Comparative Drama* 20 (1986), 65–75. For a cautious critique, see Flanigan, “Medieval Latin Music-Drama” (cited above, n. 29), pp. 27–30.

⁶⁶ “Il ‘dramma sacro’ non è nato come ampliamento della liturgia conformemente alle tendenze catechetiche dei contenuti liturgici ‘normali’, ma in opposizione a questa ‘normalità’. . . [L]a qualità espressa dal sostantivo *dramma* si realizza solo in opposizione alla liturgia stessa. . . Non esiste dunque un genere ‘dramma liturgico’”: Johann Drumbl, *Quem quaeritis*, p. 365 (emphasis original).

of medieval theater is based on the twin assumptions that the birth of a peculiarly Christian drama was inevitable and that we can apply our own criteria in order to determine when and how it occurred. Instead, he insisted that medieval theater is characterized by “a double alterity,” both alien to us (here I agree) and to its own cultural surroundings (here I disagree).⁶⁷ The weakness of this stance is that Drumbl must eventually fall back on an idea of theater that is as difficult to reconcile with the material conditions of the Middle Ages as was Young’s. Drumbl’s definition of drama ushers us back into a shadowy realm where theater is a “cultural fact” but cannot actually be studied because it has been systematically negated by the juggernaut of the church. If we share this outlook, we can only hope for a glimpse of the dramatic art now lost to us by studying the process by which it was annihilated. This theory is too extreme, and it assumes more centralized control over the liturgy than was possible in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Moreover, it shuts out the contexts of surviving plays, which were assiduously divorced from their manuscripts by Young (Drumbl’s main source) and his successors. Young deplored any conflation of drama and liturgy; more recent studies of medieval theater have followed suit, presenting secular and religious plays as mutually exclusive.⁶⁸ In actuality, however, separating spiritual and worldly impulses is an exercise in hairsplitting, and it is usually difficult to tell where liturgy ends and plays begin.

Invariably, the plays transmitted before 1300 are presented as organic to their manuscript surroundings, suggesting in turn that drama was not categorically removed from worship or daily life. Yet the available editions tend to ignore or distort the manuscript presentation of plays. Sometimes, in fact, those editions go so far as to deny context altogether: witness the difference between the “facsimile” of the first page of the *Sponsus* provided in Edmond de Coussemaker’s highly influential *Drames liturgiques du moyen âge*, published in 1860 (Fig. 1), and the manuscript page on which the “Sponsus” rubric actually appears (Fig. 2).⁶⁹ Eliminating the troublesome ambiguity of the play’s parameters, de Coussemaker has joined the last line of folio 53r to folio 53v and has blotted out the first portion of that line for good measure. While a careful eye can discern a slight break between the “first” line of the play and the following lines, there is no editorial indication that anything precedes the rubric that has usually given the play its title. Indeed, de Coussemaker refers to this plate as “un fac-similé de la première page

⁶⁷ Drumbl, *Quem quaeritis*, pp. 14 (“la duplice estraneità”) and 11 (“un teatro estraneo a noi che ci avviciniamo ad esso, ma un teatro estraneo anche alla cultura contemporanea dell’alto medioevo”).

⁶⁸ To cite only one of many recent examples: when the journal *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* asked two leading scholars to write review articles on the study of medieval French theater, the field was divided into “Religious Drama” and “Comic Drama,” and neither expert commented on the purported exclusivity of those classifications: Graham A. Runnalls, “Medieval French Drama: A Review of Recent Scholarship. Part I: Religious Drama,” *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* 21 (1978), 83–90, and 22 (1979), 111–36; and Alan Hindley, “Medieval French Drama: A Review of Recent Scholarship. Part II: Comic Drama,” *ibid.*, 23 (1980), 93–126.

⁶⁹ De Coussemaker, *Drames liturgiques*, p. 7. Avelle hedges bets in his edition, printing the title as “Sponsus” and leaving the interlocutor of the first speech open to question: *Sponsus*, p. 71.

du drame,” provided so as to give the reader “une idée exacte de la notation.”⁷⁰ For him, as for most editors of the play, this selective view of the page has been necessitated by the scribe’s seeming incompetence, in not providing the play with an adequate title. Plays independent from liturgical context are what scholars have wanted to see, and they will occasionally go to great lengths in order to ensure that this is all there is to be seen.⁷¹

As Figure 2 demonstrates, however, the “Sponsus” rubric is immediately preceded by a five-line sequence labeled “Oc est de mulieribus,” a variation on the *Quem quaeritis* trope used at Easter and adapted, at Limoges and elsewhere, for Christmastide.⁷² The ensuing exchanges among the Wise and Foolish Virgins, the Merchant of lamp oil, and the Bridegroom—which make up what is now regarded as the entire play—are in turn followed by a sequence without musical notation, an *ordo prophetarum* that was also part of the liturgy of the Christmas season.⁷³ There is, furthermore, no break between the “end” of the dramatized parable and the “beginning” of the prophet play on folio 55v (see Fig. 3), while some sort of relationship between the “Sponsus” rubric and the preceding trope, “This is concerning the women” or “This is for the women [to sing],” is suggested by the unity of page layout, notation, rubrication, and even subject matter.⁷⁴ Exhibiting a catholic taste, the text’s first editor, François-Just-Marie Raynouard, included all of these elements within the scope of his “Extrait du Mystère des vierges sages et des vierges folles” in 1817. He took it as axiomatic that the Messianic Bridegroom would punish and reward the Foolish and the Wise Virgins, respectively, and then go on to invoke the prophets that had testified to his coming.⁷⁵ Marius

⁷⁰ De Coussemaker, *Drames liturgiques*, pp. 311–19 at 313. De Coussemaker later remarks, in passing, that the play begins on the last line of fol. 53r, but he makes no reference to the doctored “facsimile” or to the text preceding the rubric on that same line.

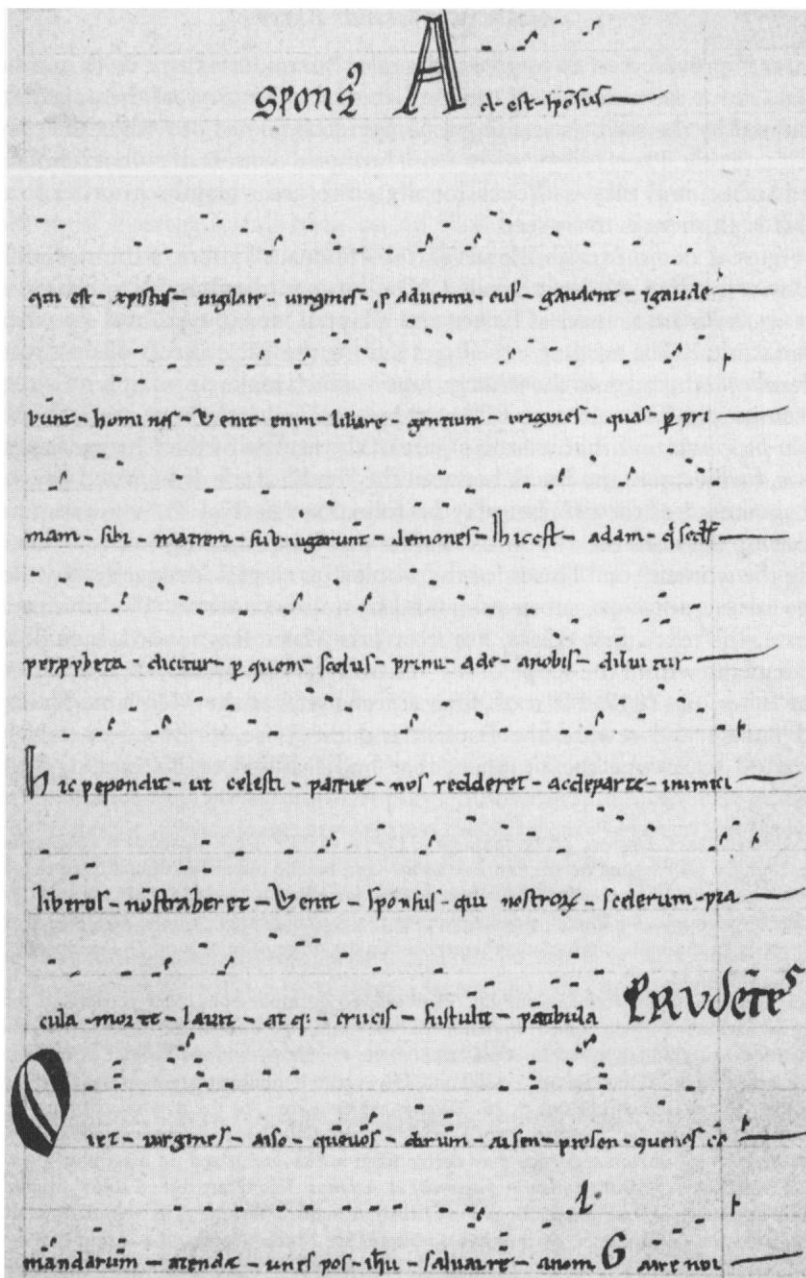
⁷¹ Take, for example, De Poerck’s description of the *Rachel* liturgy on fols. 32v–33r of the same manuscript as “a dramatic interpolation” interrupting the office of matins on 28 December: “Le MS. Paris B.N., Lat. 1139,” pp. 303–4.

⁷² Most elements of the chant in BnF lat. 1139 are recognizable from other versions of this office, some of the earliest of which come from Saint-Martial itself, e.g., BnF lat. 1240, fol. 30v, copied early in the tenth century and adapted for Christmas in the eleventh—witness BnF lat. 887, fol. 9v. The texts are available in Young, *Drama*, 1:210 and 2:4. Avelle wrongly asserts that the *Quem quaeritis* is always an Easter trope: *Sponsus*, p. 25. Thomas makes a case for the play’s lectionary ties to the first Sunday of Advent: *Le “Sponsus,”* pp. 52–54. See also Chailley, *L’école musicale*, pp. 373–74.

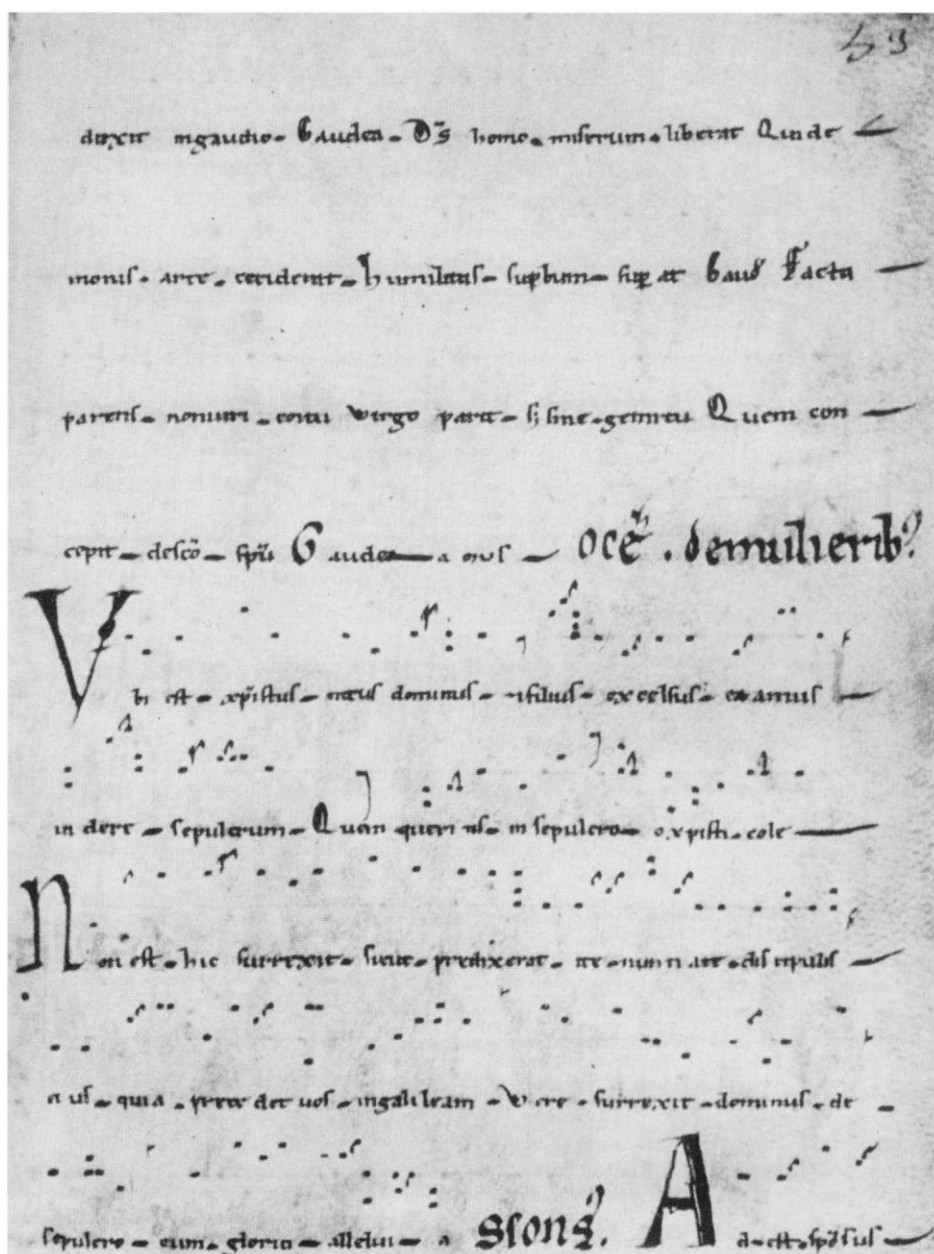
⁷³ The *ordo prophetarum* sequence may derive from a dialogue based on a sermon (or a sermon based on a dialogue), *Contra Iudaeos, paganos, et Arianos*, falsely attributed to St. Augustine and frequently appearing among the readings for Christmas matins. Several of its very early manuscripts are rubricated for performance by multiple speakers. See Marius Sepet, “Les prophètes du Christ: Etude sur les origines du théâtre au moyen âge,” *Bibliothèque de l’Ecole des chartes*, ser. 6, 3 (1867), 1–27. A text is printed by Young, *Drama*, 2:133–38.

⁷⁴ Spanke admits that the beginning of that play “does not stand out graphically from the *Sponsus*”: “St. Martial-Studien” (cited above, n. 55), p. 298 and nn. 8–9. De Poerck divides the three into “subsections” but allows that “they are not materially separate”: “Le MS. Paris B.N., Lat. 1139,” pp. 304–5. The absence of notation in the *ordo prophetarum* can be accounted for in a number of ways. If, for instance, the melodies were borrowed from similar well-known plays, it might have been deemed a waste of time to copy them; or perhaps the copyist never got around to finishing the job.

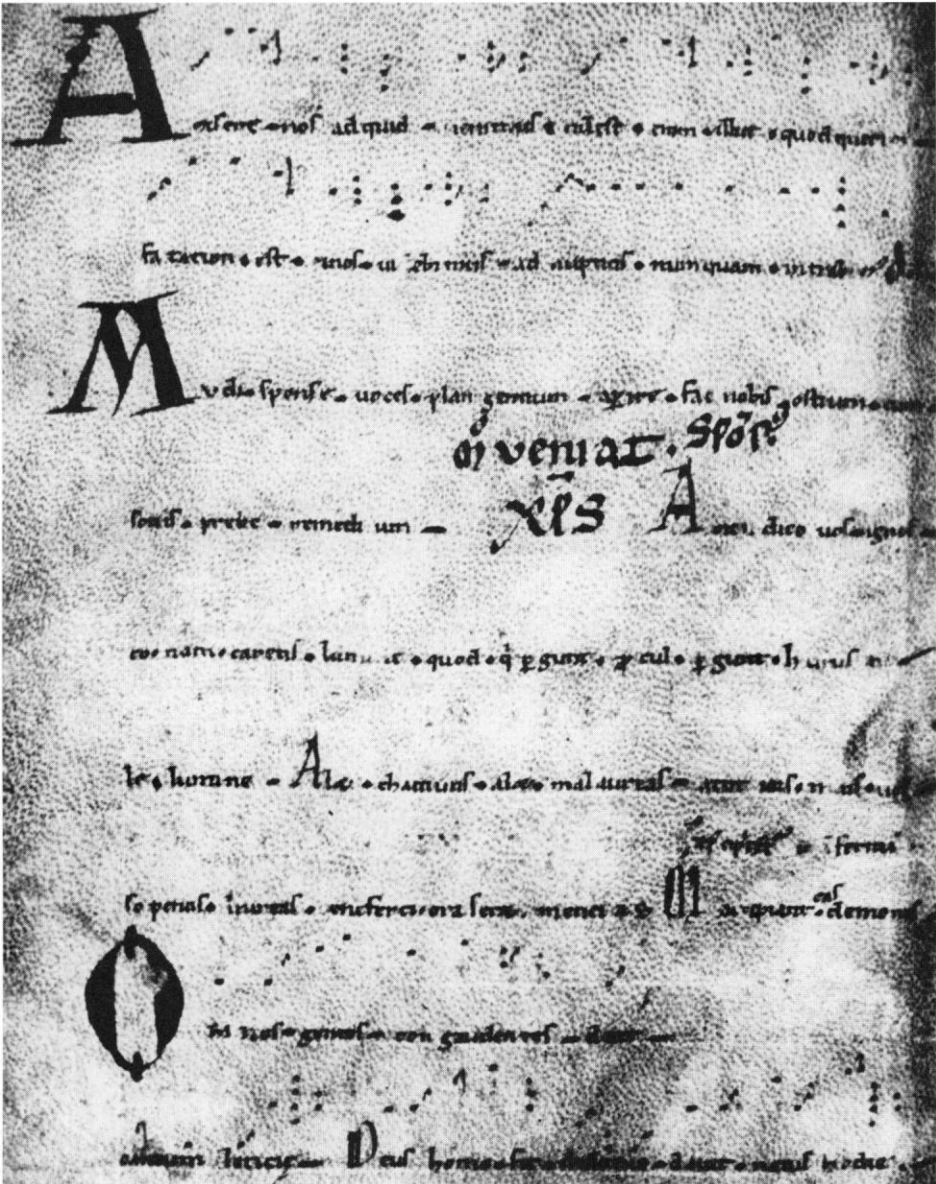
⁷⁵ “Dans la suite de la pièce, l’époux évoque l’un après l’autre divers saints, tant de l’ancien que du nouveau testament, et même des personnages du paganisme, tels que Virgile qui tous rendent témoignage de la venue du messie et de l’accomplissement de prophéties”: Raynouard, “Extrait,” p. 142.



1. "Facsimile" page of the *Sponsus* in de Coussemaker, *Dramas liturgiques*.



2. *Mise en page of the Sponsus,*
Paris BnF lat. 1139, fol. 53r.
(Figs. 2–8: Cliché Bibliothèque
nationale de France, Paris)



3. Mise en page of the Sponsus,
Paris BnF lat. 1139, fol. 55v.

Sepet also argued that the liturgy of the Bridegroom and that of the prophets were connected.

But contextual readings have been rejected by subsequent editors, who are uncomfortable with the “conflation” of apparently disparate genres and themes.⁷⁶ Obviously, each of these later editorial treatments has dramatic implications, since any attempt to remove the play from its manuscript setting has the potential to alter its meaning. For example, de Coussemaker’s composite page not only gives a false impression of independence, it necessitates further changes: for if “Sponsus” is the title of the piece, who sings the verses following the rubric? Some editors, mindful of the iconographic tradition of the parable, allot these lines to “Ecclesia,”⁷⁷ and the verses assigned in the manuscript to the Wise Virgins (“Prudentes”) on folio 53r are then given to the angel Gabriel, who is mentioned in their song.⁷⁸ In the most recent edition of the text, Dronke explained that his rationale for redistributing the various lines comes from a fourteenth-century German version of the parable in which Ecclesia has a role; this seems to be reading the record backward. Intriguingly, though, Dronke also noted that the verse form used in the first chant labeled “Sponsus” is the same as that in the chant later allocated to the Bridegroom “Christus” and that “Vigilate” is the constant refrain of Christ’s teachings, as reported in the Gospels.⁷⁹ It is likely, then, that the lines allocated to “Sponsus” were sung by the Sponsus character, later identified as “Christus” after the rubric “Modo veniat Sponsus” on folio 55v (Fig. 3). As the chant puts it, “Adest sponsus qui est Christus: Vigilate, virgines.”⁸⁰

“All who have studied the *Sponsus* agree that there are flaws in the text as it

⁷⁶ E.g., Thomas, *Le “Sponsus,”* pp. 188–89; see also pp. 24–26 for his annotated bibliography. While the *ordo prophetarum* following the *Sponsus* is serviceably printed by de Coussemaker in *Dramas liturgiques* (pp. 11–20), he does not establish a link between the two liturgies. It should be noted, moreover, that he misreads the rubrics. In the manuscript the appearance of each prophet is signaled by the rubric naming him or her; the words of the prophecies then begin with a *titulus* designating each prophet’s *responsum*. For example: “Isaias, verum qui scis / veritatem cur non dicis?” Isaiah then replies, “Est necesse / Virgam Jesse / de radice provehi.” Elizabeth is indicated as standing among the crowd: “Illud Elisabet in medium.” Finally, the rubric for John the Baptist is clearly presentational: “De Baptista.” In de Coussemaker’s edition, the rubrics have been taken to mean that each prophet introduces himself in the third person, while the lines attributed to him have been allotted to the choir. Characteristically, the original wording is dismissed as an error.

⁷⁷ Thomas, *Le “Sponsus,”* pp. 175 and 188–89; Young, *Drama*, 2:362–64; see also Tydeman, *Theatre* (cited above, n. 57), p. 44. Gastoué’s edition (cited above, n. 55) gives these lines to a choir. On the allegorical interpretation of the parable, see Tony Hunt, “‘Le sensus moralis’ du *Sponsus*,” *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale, Xe–XIIe siècles* 26 (1983), 327–34.

⁷⁸ The manuscript reads “Gabriels soi eu trames aici” on fol. 53v, a verse that has been altered in various ways by modern editors, the most radical being the addition of punctuation and a reflexive verb: “Gabriels soi, eu m’a trames aici.” Following Avalle’s edition, Dronke translates the emended phrase as “I am Gabriel, he has sent me here,” as if to justify his apportioning of the line to that character; see *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, p. 16. Avalle, however, leaves the line to the Wise Virgins, even though he offers a similar translation: *Sponsus*, p. 73. Raynouard’s reading is accurate. Thomas hypothesizes that a hole in folio 53 may mask a desirable note to the rubricator, reading “Gabriel ad Prudentes” (*Le “Sponsus,”* p. 189); this is wishful thinking.

⁷⁹ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, pp. 3–4 and 10.

⁸⁰ Raynouard reads, “Modo veniat Christus,” a mistake (understandable, given the circumstances), which may explain why he thought that the first “Sponsus” chant might have been sung by the angel guarding the sepulchre: “Extrait,” pp. 132 and 139.

has come down to us.”⁸¹ For the most part, however, the flaws are not in the text but in the rubrics: a further indication of a play’s fragility, or permeability, in manuscript form. Lucien-Paul Thomas was the first to notice that the scribe carefully provided instructions for the rubricator in the margins, but that the latter still made several mistakes on folio 55v, the “last” page of the *Sponsus* (Fig. 3).⁸² Not only did the rubricator fail to supply the repeated designation for the Foolish Virgins (“Fatue”), he also placed the “Modo veniat Sponsus” rubric indicated by the scribe on the line following the Bridegroom’s appearance—evidently because his “Christus” took all the space allotted, so that he had to squeeze the “Modo” rubric above it, thus compounding his error. The fact that the rubricated A of the word “Audi” is really an M suggests some further breakdown in communication. There is also a problem lower down on the page, since the scribe has left room for some type of rubric but the space has not been filled in; later cropping has obscured any marginal clues as to what the stage direction might have said. Luckily, the scribe himself was responsible for the stage direction describing the Foolish Virgins’ fate: “Modo accipiant eas demones et precipitentur in infernum” (“Now let demons grab them and throw them into hell”). One wonders whether those demons remained behind, to perform their customary office for the Old Testament prophets, Virgil, and the Sibyl, as they do in the *Ordo representationis Ade* and other prophet plays. It should also be noted that the *Visitatio sepulchri* segment above the first “Sponsus” rubric (Fig. 2) shares in the unified scheme planned by the original scribe, whose abbreviated instruction to the rubricator (“o/c/e’/de/mu/li/eri/b’”) was duly executed.

In the end, the apparent unity of the *Visitatio* sequence, the so-called *Sponsus*, and the *ordo prophetarum* is not so important as the fact of their juxtaposition in Paris BnF lat. 1139. We are invited by the manuscript, which has been described as “meticulously organized,”⁸³ to examine a number of elements side by side and to make an assessment that takes due consideration of their context within the *libellus* as well as within the liturgical life of a particular community. The eleventh-century composers of these pieces were trained in a tradition that encouraged the imaginative application of a careful training in grammar and rhetoric, as William T. Flynn has recently shown, with festive ritual as the forum for their poetic and musical exegesis.⁸⁴ If they produced ambiguous texts, like these, it was because they were working within a closed milieu and could expect to rely on local traditions of performance practice passed on by word of mouth. It is salutary, once

⁸¹ Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, p. 14.

⁸² Thomas, *Le “Sponsus,”* pp. 188–89.

⁸³ The *versarium* containing the *Sponsus*, songs, and polyphonic melodies consists of six *quaternionia*, and a breakdown of the contents shows that tropes and prosae for Christmas give way to more complex pieces, like the *Sponsus* and its surrounding liturgies, some *Benedicamus* tropes, and troped epistles. (In the present foliation, the second *quaternionium* belongs at the end, as an appendix.) See Fuller, “Myth” (cited above, n. 55), pp. 6–9 and 26; “Hidden” (cited above, n. 59), p. 169.

⁸⁴ William T. Flynn, *Medieval Music as Medieval Exegesis*, Studies in Liturgical Musicology 8 (Lanham, Md., 1999), pp. 48–49. I discuss these sequential elements further in “A Few Odd Visits: Unusual Settings of the *Visitatio sepulchri*,” in *Music and Medieval Manuscripts: Paleography and Performance. Essays in Honour of Andrew Hughes*, ed. John Haines and Randall Rosenfeld (forthcoming).

again, to recall the implications of the “hidden” polyphony of Saint-Martial: hidden not by the manuscript’s scribe, but because future generations did not discern its presence.

The manuscript treatment of a better-known liturgical drama with vernacular elements, the thirteenth-century *Danielis ludus* from the cathedral of Beauvais (London, British Library, MS Egerton 2615, fols. 95–108), serves to highlight the vagaries displayed by its much older cousin. Unlike the undifferentiated liturgies linked to the *Sponsus*, it is very carefully delineated as an entity unto itself, exhibiting the precise markers “Incipit Danielis ludus” and “Finit Daniel” on its first and last pages and maintaining a careful system of rubrication throughout. As Mark Everist has argued, the importance of layout and notation in this manuscript is paramount,⁸⁵ and its clarity must certainly be one of the main reasons why it is so often studied and performed. The formal difference between *The Play of Daniel* and the *Sponsus*, then, is the difference between a piece designed for performers distant from the original circumstances of production, whether in time or space, and a piece well known to a community that had its own, internal mechanisms for ensuring faithful re-creations of performance from year to year.

A more extreme example of the latter type, the script as aide-mémoire, is the Castilian *Auto de los reyes magos* mentioned above, which lacks rubrics of any kind. Here the shift from one character’s lines to those of another character is simply marked with a cross, while a different symbol indicates a pause for stage business.⁸⁶ Clearly, the originators of this piece carried most of the information they needed for its repeat performance in their heads and were not concerned with transmitting the whole play in writing. By contrast, the scholars at Beauvais in the years around 1230 vaunted their achievement, not only in elaborate rubrics, but in the text itself—a double assurance that future audiences would know just where the play had been composed and by whom: “Ad honorem tui Christe, Danielis ludus iste. In Belvaco est inventus, Et invenit hunc iuventus.” Even if the rubrics had been obliterated by a careless scribe, its title, with the place and circumstances of its composition, would remain embedded in the chant. Yet it would be a mistake to assume that, with the *Daniel*, we have a drama separable from its context. On the contrary, Margot Fassler has argued that this celebration of the Feast of Fools can only be understood in conjunction with its companion Circumcision Office, since the two had joint “liturgical, religious, and social circumstances.” Hers was the first attempt in a long history of scholarship to look at the two side by side, and the damage done by disregard for even the most basic contextual information prompted her plea that all music dramas be studied in situ.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Mark Everist, *Polyphonic Music in Thirteenth-Century France: Aspects of Sources and Distribution* (New York, 1989), pp. 30–96 at 64–71.

⁸⁶ Stebbins, “The *Auto de los reyes magos*” (cited above, n. 11), p. 119 and n. 4 on p. 122.

⁸⁷ Margot Fassler, “The Feast of Fools and *Danielis ludus*: Popular Tradition in a Medieval Cathedral Play,” in *Plainsong in the Age of Polyphony*, ed. Thomas Forrest Kelly, Cambridge Studies in Performance Practice 2 (Cambridge, Eng., 1992), pp. 65–99 at 66–67. The gauntlet has since been taken up by Richard K. Emmerson, “Divine Judgment and Local Ideology in the Beauvais *Ludus Danielis*,” in “*The Play of Daniel*”: *Critical Essays*, ed. Dunbar H. Ogden, Early Drama, Art, and Music Monograph Series 24 (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1996), pp. 33–61.

This applies to the so-called *Sponsus* from Limoges, as well as to a host of other medieval scripts.⁸⁸

PRESENTATION: THE PROBLEMS INHERENT IN TRANSMITTING PLAYS

Most of the Latin liturgical plays known to us are more elaborately rubricated than the Latin and Occitan *Sponsus*, but nearly all betray their utilitarian character as documents descriptive of very localized practices. They are not prescriptive models provided for outside performers. Plays appear to be hurriedly jotted down, side by side with other materials, and are sometimes inadequately distinguished from one another. Even in the celebrated Fleury Playbook (Orléans, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 201 [178], pp. 176–242), a much later hand has labeled individual pieces by writing “1ere” and “2eme” in the margins.⁸⁹ Here, as in other liturgical manuscripts, character designations and descriptions of staged activity are written in between staves of the musical notation, and careful scribes would leave room for them. But an inexpert copyist could find it difficult to calculate the space necessary for the rubrics, as at Fleury. Or, as in the case of the sacristan who copied the bilingual *Visitatio* liturgy into the all-purpose ordinal of Origny-Sainte-Benoîte, the rigors of transcribing music, text, and *didascalia* all at once were combined with the necessity of economizing on ink and parchment. The presence of chant notation was a further clarifier in these cases, providing a scaffolding for the sung text and helping to distinguish it from the stage directions that were not, in the frugal scriptorium of Sainte-Benoîte, presented in red ink.⁹⁰ In contrast to the service books from Limoges and Beauvais, these are given in French, a linguistic device that aligns the play’s apparatus with the body of the manuscript,

⁸⁸ For a similar approach applied to romance materials and the role of the manuscript compiler, see Murray J. Evans, *Rereading Middle English Romance: Manuscript Layout, Decoration, and the Rhetoric of Composite Structure* (Montreal, 1995).

⁸⁹ See the facsimile photographs printed in *The Fleury Playbook: Essays and Studies*, ed. Thomas P. Campbell and Clifford Davidson, Early Drama, Art, and Music Monograph Series 7 (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1985), pls. 8–74. The provenance of this codex, once thought to have been written at the monastery of Fleury (Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire) outside Orléans, has been in dispute since Solange Corbin claimed the manuscript for the Abbaye de Saint-Laumer at Blois: “Le manuscrit 201 d’Orléans: Drames liturgiques dits de Fleury,” *Romania* 74 (1953), 1–43. Her arguments have been refuted by numerous scholars, e.g., Fletcher Collins, Jr., “The Home of the Fleury Playbook,” in *The Fleury Playbook: Essays and Studies*, pp. 26–34. More recently, however, Michel Huglo has endeavored to show that the manuscript was written in Paris; see “Analyse codicologique des drames liturgiques de Fleury (Orléans, Bibliothèque municipale, 201),” in *Calames et cahiers: Mélanges de codicologie et de paléographie offerts à Léon Gilissen*, Publications de Scriptorium 9 (Brussels, 1985), pp. 61–78. It is, of course, probable that many of the plays, perhaps all, were composed and transcribed elsewhere. But there is as yet no conclusive evidence to show that they were not performed at Fleury, or in many other places for that matter.

⁹⁰ Saint-Quentin, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 86 (75), pp. 609–25. The page numbers were probably added to the manuscript in the fifteenth century, when a later hand made a number of changes, as in the order of the ceremonies for the abbey’s great feast in November. See A. Molinier, “Catalogue des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de St. Quentin,” *Extrait du tome III du Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France, Départements* ([Paris, n.d.]), pp. 238–40; see also n. 13, above.

both facilitating performance and helping to differentiate instructions from the sung text, in Latin and French.⁹¹

However, the structural support provided by musical notation was not available to scribes faced with the task of transmitting plays in spoken verse. Different methods for dealing with such texts had to be developed independently of one another. Consequently, the *mise en page* of an individual play owes everything to its manuscript context. The model of the *Ordo representationis Ade*, to take the best-known example, was still liturgical, but it was a liturgy stripped of music. Written on paper in the Midi, this manuscript (Tours, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 927) was copied from Anglo-Norman exemplars by two or three scribes working at the end of the twelfth or beginning of the thirteenth century. The four texts indisputably attributed to the “Adam” scribe are a *Visitatio* liturgy partly sung and partly spoken in Latin, an office in honor of the Blessed Virgin, a small collection of Marian hymns, and finally *The Service for Representing Adam*.⁹² The fact that its scribe was probably not a seasoned professional is, in this case, a boon, for it allows us to follow him through the process of inventing a layout for a new and unfamiliar kind of text. Whether the innovations are his or those of his exemplar hardly matters; the point is that the first scribe to transmit this play in writing was apparently forced to compensate for the loss of notation, with its established conventions of rubrication and format.

⁹¹ Another instance of this technique can be found in the most complete manuscript of the Winchester *Regularis concordia*, copied during the eleventh century (London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius A.III, fol. 21r–v). The scribe was apparently following an exemplar that gave both rubrics and text only in Latin, for he has gone through and added an interlinear translation of the stage directions into Anglo-Saxon. This would have facilitated performance in a community that preferred to take direction in the vernacular but where the singers were still obliged to perform in Latin. That the gloss is original to this manuscript is implied by the fact that its scribe has, once or twice, erased Anglo-Saxon words mistakenly provided as translation for the sung Latin. See, for example, the gloss above line 18 on the facsimile page (fol. 21v) reproduced by Ian Lancashire in *Dramatic Texts and Records of Britain: A Chronological Topography to 1558*, Studies in Early English Drama 1 (Toronto, 1984), pl. 4. For a facsimile of the first page (fol. 21r), see Young, *Drama*, 1:251, pl. vii. An older manuscript of the service (London, British Library, Cotton Faustina B.III, fols. 188v–189v) does not feature such a gloss.

⁹² This is the oldest manuscript in French to be written on paper. There is no dispute over its provenance, but there is much disagreement as to when and how it was executed. A. Dorange ascribed the entire book to a single copyist working from a Plantagenet exemplar in the middle of the thirteenth century; see *Catalogue des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de Tours* (Tours, 1875), pp. 409–10. Others have since concluded that only the first four texts were copied by the “Adam” scribe, who worked in the late twelfth century, and that the remaining materials were added in the early thirteenth century by a second scribe; see Paul Aebischer’s edition, *Le mystère d’Adam* (Geneva, 1963), p. 11. Aebischer himself ascribed the text immediately following, *Les quinze signes du Jugement*, to the same copyist and argued for the unity of the two (pp. 19–25). This argument has also been advanced by others: see Wolfgang van Emden’s preface to his edition, *Le jeu d’Adam*, British Rencesvals Publications 1 (Edinburgh, 1996), pp. v–ix. My own view is that there were three scribes at work and that the second was responsible only for *Les quinze signes*. Whatever the case, the first four texts are certainly the work of the same scribe, whose style marks him as an amateur. The remainder of the manuscript is much more clearly written and laid out and includes the Anglo-Norman life of St. George, with Wace’s lives of Our Lady and St. Margaret. For a full list of texts, see Aebischer, *Le mystère*, pp. 11–13. The Easter play has been edited by de Coussemaker, *Drames liturgiques*, pp. 6–48. The Marian material is described by Aebischer as “[h]ymnes et chants divers” and was published by V. Luzarche in *Office de Pâques ou de la Résurrection* (Tours, 1856).

As it happens, the copyist would adapt a technique used in the Easter play that precedes the *Ordo representationis Ade*, a text that features a long rubric followed by spoken dialogue, an exchange between the Merchant of ointments and the Three Marys (fol. 1v). His preliminary solution to the problem casts the narrative stage direction in the same undifferentiated, long-line format as the spoken words. This indicates that he continued to think in terms of the chant, whether or not he had notation to copy. His execution is crude, but he is not again faced with the anomaly of nonmusical dialogue. The problems posed by the *Adam* are of greater magnitude. While it begins with rubrics and a nonnotated chant similar to those the scribe had already copied, the remainder consists of rapid-fire exchanges in French verse, with little intervention in the form of stage directions. The revolutionary nature of this text might have suggested the need for a corresponding revolution in format; yet from folios 20v through 25r, the scribe continued to employ his old methods, transcribing the verse in long lines punctuated by initials standing in for the names of the characters speaking the text.⁹³

A glance at the manuscript pages reproduced in Leif Sletsj  e's facsimile edition of the *Ordo representationis Ade* will reveal that this technique is wholly unsuited to the demands of the piece. At any rate, the scribe himself appears to have concluded this, for we can watch him beginning to experiment with his layout. Folios 25v–26v exhibit an abrupt change from long lines to verse lines, which immediately helps to differentiate spoken text from the *didascalia* inserted into Adam's postlapsarian soliloquy. Not content with that, however, the scribe begins to capitalize the initial letter of each verse on subsequent pages, beginning with folio 26r. Finally, the very next folio shows him arriving, after this process of trial and error, at the system he will use to record the remainder of the play. The initials *F* and *A*, delineating speeches by the Figura and Adam, are now placed in the right-hand margin, above the first line to be spoken by the character so designated.⁹⁴

The manuscript presentation of the *Ordo representationis Ade* thus attests that the copyist entrusted with the task of transcribing this play in vernacular verse was unsure of how to capture it in writing. Perhaps he was not particularly skillful; as Michael Clanchy has observed, poor layout is the "commonest sign of an amateur writer."⁹⁵ But in this instance, the perennial problem of layout was exacerbated by the fact that no established format was available to guide him. While reluctant to abandon the techniques associated with the transcription of the liturgy, the "Adam" scribe nonetheless recognized that the play would be easier to follow if character designations were prominently placed in the margins, thus becoming place finders as well. The necessity for tidy presentation also prompted him to transcribe the verse lines as such, this time following models developed during the twelfth century for the presentation of new poetic forms in Latin and romance.⁹⁶

⁹³ Photographs of each page are published by Leif Sletsj  e in *Le myst  re d'Adam: Edition diplomatique*, Biblioth  que Fran  aise et Romane D/2 (Paris, 1968).

⁹⁴ This technique may be foreshadowed in a single instance on fol. 21r.

⁹⁵ Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record* (cited above, n. 27), pp. 131–33 at 132, and pl. 6.

⁹⁶ The formats used for rhythmic, quantitative, and rhymed verse in the *Carmina Burana* manuscript, for instance, are all different, designed to allow ease of access for the eye. See Pascale Bourgain, "La po  sie lyrique m  di  vale," and Genevi  ve Hasenohr, "Les romans en vers," in *Mise en page*, pp. 164–68 and 244–63 at 249–52, respectively. See also Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, pp. 97–114.

These innovations, part of a gradual effort to clarify the text and its format, were designed to allow a contemporary reader to find his place at a glance. However, they have proven unfriendly to modern eyes. So strong is the drive toward scholarly “correction” that Sletsjõe, whose diplomatic edition of the play promises to shun the liberties taken by others, nonetheless shifts the character designations to the left-hand margin, directly opposite each character’s speech. To leave them in their original position, he explains, would be too confusing.⁹⁷ As Cerquiglini warned, the diplomatic edition thereby succumbs to “the phantasm of facsimile,” all the more dangerous when it lacks photographic candor.⁹⁸

Admittedly, the inclination to modernize at least some portion of the medieval play—usually the format—does little harm in this case. But it would be harmful indeed if one assumed that all marginal character designations were meant to carry over to the following line in the fashion of the *Adam* play. Turning now to the near-contemporary Paris manuscript of the *Seinte Resureccion* (BnF fr. 902, fols. 97r–98v), we find an entirely different system at work. Figure 4 shows that here, characters’ names already appear directly opposite the speeches to which they refer and are placed in the left- or right-hand margin of the two-columned page, as appropriate. Very little adjustment must therefore be made to this dramatization of the Resurrection: it is immediately recognizable as a text with parts allocated to more than one speaker, and even the modern reader can locate the beginning of each speech with ease. However, it should be borne in mind that a less careful scribe, or a careless rubricator, could wreak havoc with such a system, while a performer used to scripts laid out like *The Service for Representing Adam* might be confused by the placement of character designations.

The distinctive features of this new system, again, owe everything to manuscript context. The Paris copy of the *Seinte Resureccion* is situated within a book of devotional material in Anglo-Norman French, possibly produced in Lincoln after 1255.⁹⁹ The texts immediately preceding it are the work of the same scribe and rubricator: a versified translation of Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth, with material from 1–4 Kings (fols. 1r–96r); so is the following text, a vernacular verse translation of Robert Grosseteste’s treatise on the Creation, known as “Chastel de l’amour” (fols. 99r–108va).¹⁰⁰ And as Figure 5 makes plain, the lay-

⁹⁷ Sletsjõe, *Le mystère*, pp. viii–ix. Van Emden is the only editor of this play who notes the changes in format, although he does not comment on their significance.

⁹⁸ Cerquiglini, *Eloge* (cited above, n. 38), p. 112.

⁹⁹ Paris BnF fr. 902 is traditionally thought to have been copied in the late fourteenth century, on the basis of an account of the mystical adventures of a group of Cistercians in Tripoli, dated 1347 and written on a page (fol. 96v) originally left blank. The differences in handwriting and layout indicate that this and other fourteenth-century texts were added after the initial transcription campaign. A terminus a quo for the original can be posited from one of the texts, “Hugo de Lincolnia,” which describes the alleged ritual murder of a Christian child by Jews in 1255. I am obliged to Robert Stacey for providing me with information on this ballad. Coupled with the treatise of Robert, bishop of Lincoln (d. 1253), it strongly suggests a manuscript provenance in that diocese. Based on linguistic analysis, however, the play itself can be dated as early as the late twelfth century: see Jenkins, *Seinte Resureccion*, pp. cxxxi–cxxxv.

¹⁰⁰ In many ways the contents of the Paris manuscript are not dissimilar to those of the Tours manuscript of the *Ordo representacionis Ade*: an Anglo-Norman life of St. George, Wace’s life of St. Nicholas, a treatise on the Last Judgment, a life of St. Thomas Becket, the bestiary of Guillaume le Normand, and part of the verse paraphrase of Psalm 44 originally commissioned by Marie of Champagne.

Sire pilate des mon conseil
 I o n port tort si lo v'ceul
 L iel lit iel t'elre.
 Q' la fu pendu comelre.
 I coo diste en son viant
 S iue li plusur melre d'ant
 Q' l. Al coez m' releneat
 O es m'e far est el q' coo aert
 L e sopntane f'mmes g'ardat
 Q' nel vengent li loen embler
 O dr il leu reient p'ort p'chant
 T p'le p'as denonant
 Q' l'ert de morte resur'at
 S i f'eat melre le ch'ant
 S il f'ist li lea p'z
 V u d'it ver coo m'est aus
 V ndes le g'nt d'it le d'it
 T a pilate ist par la
 S i lo m' me v'it don li ane
 I coo g'ardat le sopntane
 T si coo est p' m'entue
 Q' mal ne venge a iel t'me
 V e coo m'e q' embler le v'ille
 I a ne t'neat al ne le d'it
 R auert m'it a ne li t'ille
 I a ne auez q' f'ate m'it
 T v'it des al'it d'it leuere
 T m' p'ner a p'lerent
 B el coo m' od v'entum
 T le sopntane g'ardat
 R il m' vendat q' ne p'ngim
 R il ne leuere q' nel t'ebom
 T l'om' coo t'ardient
 S i p'ndu ben le monument
 S i m'it venge p' m' embler
 R' le f'ent p'nt pour m'er
 T la f'it q' d'it pilate
 S i m'it venge f'ent b'at
 T ele q' m'it coo li p'nt
 Q' del p'ner le t'ime
 T coo q' m'it vendat en f'it
 Q' si m'it dom f'it li b'ndi
 Q' p'nt le v'it venge li
 Q' p'nt le v'it venge li
 S i le coo v'it p'nt embler
 T u d'it il q' coo le f'it
 e co m'it en c'it place
 Q' q' f'ent p'nt v'it
 T il nen ait des p'nt g'ardat
 T ut f'it le f'it le p'ndre
 Q' ne est p'nt le m'it
 e co m'it le m'it a t'm
 v est le f'it f'it le v'it
 Q' f'it v'it p'nt q' ont a non leu
 S iout est le f'it le m'it
 v eoz la li f'it q' m'it f'it
 S i m'it d'it m'it a li d'it
 L e d'it com' m'it a li
 Q' p'nt est la le m'it
 Q' re m'it t'm f'it est
 v e t'm q' d'it v'it d'it
 T la f'it q' a est p'nt
 S i m'it venge coo m'it
 I co m'it m'it a li p'ndre
 a mon p'nt a v'it
 T la f'it v'it de coo leu
 e coo q' d'it t'm p'nt
 T coo t'm d'it p'nt
 T la f'it leu que m'it
 S i m'it coo leu
 I coo t'm d'it m'it de m'it
 T coo ensemble od v'it
 v e coo m'it v'it f'it
 S i m'it v'it q' f'it
 S i m'it v'it p'nt v'it
 T v'it m'it a li
 v n p'nt v'it m'it
 v en m'it a li
 T m'it a li
 v m'it a li
 Q' d'it q' leu m'it a li
 T a d'it coo p'nt com' m'it
 T il coo f'it en v'it
 v eoz a li v'it m'it
 Q' t'm le v'it od m'it
 Q' la f'it m'it com' m'it
 e re venge q' v'it
 Q' m'it m'it m'it m'it
 S i m'it d'it q' com' m'it
 T re est a li m'it
 T m'it le den p'nt
 S i v'it m'it a li f'it
 I m'it ne f'it m'it m'it

4. Mise en page of the Seinte Resureccion,
 Paris BnF fr. 902, fol. 98v.

ex quo oia
 i quo om
 nia p
 quibz
 omnia
 trelia q
 testm d
 i c. i c.
 Simbo
 fidel ac
 li
 un do i
 emitate

¶ Sed diebus fecit
 dñs cellū ⁊ terram
 ⁊ in septē die
 uis
 De pñs creatōis
 mūdi. In pñs creatōis
 dñs cellū ⁊ terrā.
 The. Et tunc hinc
 hinc tunc sūp
 septē pñs tunc
 in diebus.

mo Oia elem̃ta pp̃
hoiem facta s̃t
i cōsp̃ndē mē
tū s̃cūneuit

In die m̄ iudicii
am̄ uas ḡ luna
sp̄are sol̄ car
sol̄ reapiet sp̄
are q̄ am̄iat
p̄ canu. p̄ lōie

This content downloaded from
212.219.61.210 on Wed, 03 Feb 2021 09:29:32 UTC
All use subject to <https://about.jstor.org/terms>

out of the *Seinte Resureccion* was not applied uniquely to plays: it was equally handy for adding a Latin preface and gloss to the text on the opposite page, as well as for highlighting important features in the preceding biblical narratives. In contrast to the *Ordo representationis Ade*, then, the format of the Paris *Seinte Resureccion* has benefited from the development of various devices for indexing, glossing, and cross-referencing books, such as those used in the new universities at Paris and Oxford. During the 1170s, for instance, Peter Lombard had invented a sophisticated system of *punctus* to distinguish among the different texts to be found on a single page of his glossed Bible, giving the patristic expositors and the glossator discrete marks.¹⁰¹ In a sense, he was giving each authority a separate voice, providing a dramatic framework for the effective articulation of theological debate.

The utility of such a practice was not lost on the scribe who copied the *Seinte Resureccion* into BnF fr. 902 after the year 1255. Yet it *was* lost on the scribe of the play's second surviving manuscript, which has no textual apparatus whatsoever (London, British Library, Add. 45103) and which was the product of a monastic (rather than a scholastic) milieu, copied at St. Augustine's, Canterbury, around 1275.¹⁰² The very existence of a contemporary, but two-dimensional, version of the same play should prompt some vital questions: Could texts be turned into plays by the addition of rubrics or through the application of a system like that employed in the Paris manuscript of the *Seinte Resureccion*? And, conversely, how many plays have escaped notice because they have been deprived of their apparatus by careless copyists? Contemporary authors were aware that complex texts could become the victims of poor scribal practice. In the mid-thirteenth century, around the time that both manuscripts of the *Seinte Resureccion* were produced, Vincent of Beauvais noted that he never relied on supplementary glosses and symbols when preparing his own writings for publication, but always cited references in the main text because marginalia tended to get lost in the copying process.¹⁰³ It is likely therefore that the Canterbury manuscript preserves a flattened version of the play, although it is also possible that the scribe of the Paris manuscript took what had been a versified account of the Resurrection and made it into a play.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, "Statim invenire: Schools, Preachers, and New Attitudes to the Page," in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), pp. 201–25 at 209. See also their essay "Concordances et index," in *Mise en page*, pp. 218–28.

¹⁰² The texts of both manuscripts are combined in Jenkins's edition. He appears to have considered the lack of rubrication in the Canterbury manuscript to be a minor problem, mentioning it only in passing: *Seinte Resureccion*, p. xxii. Moreover, Jenkins's dating of the two texts is inconclusive. He considered the Canterbury text to be the older, but only because he relied on a mistaken dating of the Paris manuscript (see above, n. 99).

¹⁰³ Rouse and Rouse, "Statim invenire," p. 209; and Malcolm B. Parkes, "The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* on the Development of the Book," in *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to Richard William Hunt*, ed. J. J. G. Alexander and M. T. Gibson (Oxford, 1976), pp. 115–41 at 133.

¹⁰⁴ David Parry observed that Latin marginalia in the manuscripts of vernacular plays could have served a range of functions: as commentary, as rubrics, or as supplementary text for performance. Indeed, it is often hard to tell, since less competent scribes were apt, even in the later Middle Ages, to

In either case, the importance of proper layout is evident, since the narrative prologue included in both versions of the *Seinte Resureccion* is the only signpost that remains to guide the prospective performers of the Canterbury text, who would not necessarily be aware of the other version's existence. The inclusion of narrative verse further intimates that the composer of the play shared Vincent of Beauvais's distrust of copyists and tried to maintain control over certain key aspects of the piece, using similar means. If so, that would explain the emphasis placed on the rhymed stage directions provided in both manuscripts: "En ceste manere recitom / La seinte resureccion. / Primerement apareillons / Tus les lius e les mansions. . . ." ¹⁰⁵ Relying on a similar device, the near-contemporary scribe of the Latin comedy *Babio* labored to ensure that his script would not be lost to posterity as such or reduced to an illegible jumble of text and rubrics: "In order that what these verses mean should be more clearly understood, I set out beforehand a kind of account for those reading them, first of all to show what they are supposed to enact, for whom, and how. The author of these verses introduces five principal characters, each speaking to the rest in turn, so that it should seem just as if a discussion were taking place right in front of those who are present. And so, there should be no ambiguity as to which character speaks." ¹⁰⁶ Because of the efficacy of such instructions, not to mention the skills of the clerical scribes among

run text and commentary (rubrics or marginalia) together or to supply missing lines in the margins. See "A Margin of Error: The Problems of Marginalia in *The Castle of Perseverance*," in *Editing Early English Drama* (cited above, n. 1), pp. 33–64 at 57–58.

¹⁰⁵ It might also account for the Canterbury manuscript's substitution of the more dramatic verb "representon" in the first line of that prologue (instead of "recitom" in the Paris copy), as if to make up for deficiencies in layout. This might also imply individual rather than group performance, as some scholars have suggested; yet *recitare* was not interpreted as a static activity in the Middle Ages, and the verb could just as easily have a theatrical connotation. See Mary J. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 10 (Cambridge, Eng., 1990), p. 189; and Dunn, *The Gallican Saint's Life* (cited above, n. 23), p. 4. On the narrative prologue and its practical purpose, see Willem Noomen, "Passages narratifs dans les drames médiévaux français: Essai d'interprétation," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 36 (1958), 761–85; and W. H. Lyons, "Narrative and Drama in Medieval France," in *Studies in French Literature Presented to H. W. Lawton*, ed. J. C. Ireson et al. (Manchester, Eng., 1968), pp. 203–22. See also Graham Runnalls, "Mansion and Lieu: Two Technical Terms in Medieval French Staging?" *French Studies* 35 (1981), 385–93; repr. in *Etudes*, pp. 467–78.

¹⁰⁶ "Ut manifestius intelligatur quod isti versus volunt dicere, quamdam notitiam legentibus prepono, in primis ostendendo [*sic*] quid velint agere, et de quo, et qualiter. Introducit auctor eorum quinque principales personas, queque loquens ad se invicem, ut coram videretur sermo haberi tanquam a presentibus, et ne ambiguitas haberetur quae persona loquitur": *Babio: A Twelfth Century Profane Comedy*, ed. and trans. Malcolm M. Brennan, Citadel Monograph Series 7 (Charleston, S.C., 1968), p. 96 (my translation). This is from *Babio*'s oldest manuscript (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 53, fols. 35–42), where the play is sandwiched between a salacious tale "about a certain monk" and a group of hymns "to be sung in procession during Eastertide" and on other major feasts. See also *De Babione: Poème comique du XIIe siècle*, ed. and trans. Edmond Faral, Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes, Sciences Historiques et Philologiques 293 (Paris, 1948), pp. xxi–xxii. My interpretation of this passage differs greatly from that of most editors; but see the helpful translation and commentary of Alison Goddard Elliott, *Seven Medieval Latin Comedies*, Garland Library of Medieval Literature B/20 (New York, 1984), pp. v–xxvi and 77–103.

whom this play circulated, *Babio* survives in five manuscripts with rubrics intact—an unprecedented number for an early-medieval play in any language.¹⁰⁷

VARIATION: THE INTERPLAY OF MANUSCRIPT AND PERFORMANCE

Le garçon et l'aveugle, the oldest manuscript of any of the five thirteenth-century plays associated with the town of Arras, was copied sometime after 1266 on three leaves left over at the end of a *Roman d'Alexandre* completed some years earlier, according to the colophon dated May of 1228.¹⁰⁸ Among the discoveries of Paul Meyer, it was printed for the first time in 1865 and received a critical edition in 1911. This edition, by Mario Roques, provides the basis for Jean Dufournet's translation, currently the standard text.¹⁰⁹ But the appearance of the play called *The Boy and the Blind Man* (see Fig. 6) invites us to lay aside a single, definitive edition and to embrace, instead, the process whereby a play could be transcribed, annotated, and rearranged for multiple performances, each variation depending on the circumstances of production. In this respect, it resembles the *Seinte Resurreccion*, the two copies of which also display a tendency toward textual mutation. In other respects, the degree of editorial attention it has attracted may be unique: at least two hundred years separate the initial copying campaign and the latest of the manuscript's emendations, while the preparation of a printed version has involved highly selective use of the manuscript's testimony.

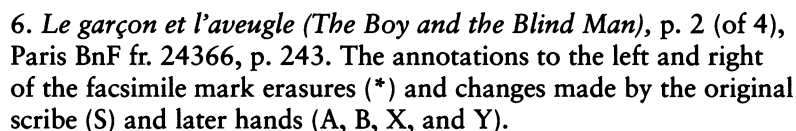
Inevitably, the successive metamorphoses of *The Boy and the Blind Man* have been obscured in print, since the purpose of a critical edition is to tame the disorderly contents of medieval manuscripts. Hence, the translation of Dufournet merely lists the "corrections" in line attribution as part of a brief note at the end of his text. He assumes that any internal confusion, or "ambiguity as to which character speaks" (to quote the scribe of the Digby *Babio*), must be the result of scribal error, and he declares that the thirteenth-century copyist whimsically placed character designations "sometimes after the first verse of the reply, sometimes following the last verse of the preceding speech,"¹¹⁰ implying an illogical approach to the material which does not match the evidence surveyed so far. Even

¹⁰⁷ Of the five extant manuscripts, four appear to have been written in England; one is now in Germany, but of uncertain provenance. Mentions of two further manuscripts are made in the library catalogues of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, and the abbey of Rievaulx, Yorkshire. See Faral, *De Babione*, pp. xxviii–xxxiv. Malcolm Brennan prints the incipits of the extant manuscripts in *Babio*, pp. 96–97. Two scribes call the text a "comedia" and two a "liber," and one does not comment on its genre. Faral (*De Babione*, pp. 70–77) provides a summary of the marginal notations in the various manuscripts, the Digby being the most systematic in its layout.

¹⁰⁸ The colophon appears on p. 242a of Paris BnF fr. 24366, the play on pp. 242b–245b. It is not mentioned by the play's editors or translators and has not, to my knowledge, been used to help locate the parent manuscript's scribe, perhaps to Saint-Quentin or Aisnes in Picardy, where there were prominent churches dedicated to the saint.

¹⁰⁹ Paul Meyer, "Du garçon et de l'aveugle, saynète du XIIIe siècle," *Jahrbuch für romanische und englische Literatur* 6 (1865), 163–72.

¹¹⁰ "Les indications du copiste du XIIIe siècle sont placées tantôt à la suite du premier vers de la réplique, tantôt à la suite du dernier vers de la réplique précédente; dans ce dernier cas le lecteur du XVe siècle les a grattées ou rayées ou a noté d'un trait le déplacement nécessaire": Dufournet, *Le garçon et l'aveugle* (cited above, n. 8), p. 113.



the *Adam* scribe, baffled as he may have been by his material, took considerable pains to develop a consistent and legible apparatus for that play. Dufournet is also wrong to attribute all of the alterations to the scribe or to a single editor working in the fifteenth century. The most cursory analysis of the paleographic testimony would refute that assertion, and I have reproduced the second page of the script as representative of the whole in order to show that one can discern at least five successive phases in the play's transmission: inscription, around 1270 (Scribe);¹¹¹ clarification, by a close contemporary (Hand A);¹¹² further clarification, effected between the end of the thirteenth and middle of the fourteenth centuries (Hand B);¹¹³ and two periods of radical revision—and censorship—in the mid- to late fifteenth century (Hands X and Y), the last two sets of changes closely coinciding with the development of the farce as a distinctive genre, a point to which I shall return.¹¹⁴

The only instructions supplied by the original scribe are the three narrative stage directions and one of the abbreviated character designations, all appearing on this page (Fig. 6): “/Or cantent ensanle” (“Now they sing together”) before the first song, line 14 of column 1; “/Or li gar” (“Now the Boy”) at the end of that song, line 20; “Or cantent en doi ensamble” (“Now they both sing together”), which occupies line 39 of column 1, before the second song; and “/li G.” after the second song, line 7 of column 2.¹¹⁵ This means that the scribe was concerned only with changes in the mode of performance, not with the delineation of character. The appearance of the first “Now they sing,” for which he did not leave enough room, further suggests that he had not planned even that much intervention when he began to copy out the play, while the two indications for the Boy's speeches are also the result of afterthought. Similar basic instructions as to variations in performance constitute the distinguishing feature of *Aucassin et Nicolette*, whose genus, *chanteable*, derives from the repeated directions provided in its single manuscript: “now they sing” (“Or cantent”), “now they narrate the story” (“Or fablent”), and “now they speak” (“Or dient”)—the last an indication that narration involved a more heightened register than dialogue. This piece, like *Le garçon et l'aveugle*, testifies that many medieval scribes (or playwrights) assumed that performers needed only minimal instruction in their craft, and it is hardly the only

¹¹¹ The basic characteristics of handwriting and layout resemble those of Chantilly, Musée Condé, MS 476, fol. 55 (copy of *L'image du monde* of Gossuin de Metz), dated 1270. See *Catalogue des manuscrits en écriture latine portant des indications de date, de lieu ou de copiste*, 1 (Paris, 1959), p. 35 and pl. 15.

¹¹² Hand A makes only minor clarifications or corrections with a different pen and is responsible only for the “or parole” phrases and some abbreviations on pp. 242 and 243.

¹¹³ Hand B adds further abbreviated designations throughout, as well as the erroneous “li valles” at the bottom of p. 244a, which may have been crossed out immediately.

¹¹⁴ Indeed, the later hands are not dissimilar to that responsible for the oldest manuscript of *Maistre Pierre Pathelin*, dated to the year 1484–85: Paris BnF fr. 25467 (fol. 48 ff.). See *Recueil de farces*, ed. André Tissier, 12 vols. (Geneva, 1986–98), 7:13 (facsimile page) and 32. I have made the distinction between them based on slight differences in *ductus* and consistently different spelling habits: Hand X writes “la veule” and “le garchon,” while Hand Y writes “ly aveules” and “le garchons.”

¹¹⁵ Carol Symes, “*The Boy and the Blind Man: A Medieval Play Script and Its Editors*,” in *The Book Unbound: New Directions in Editing and Reading Medieval Books and Texts*, ed. Siân Echard and Stephen B. Partridge (forthcoming).

“nondramatic” text to differentiate among personae or modes of performance.¹¹⁶ It is also worth recalling the innovations introduced by the *Sponsus* scribe: as a performer, or as the person to take down the record of performance, he was not looking ahead to posterity so much as to the next performance. But the successive changes made to the script of *The Boy and the Blind Man* prove that expectations regarding the layout of plays varied over time, to the extent that systems of line attribution, even those roughly contemporary with one another, could be construed as incompatible.

Further examples of the inherent ambiguities of medieval plays, or their infinite variety, are offered by two more texts from the thirteenth century, *Courtois d'Arras* and Rutebeuf's *Miracle de Théophile*, neither of which takes on a form determinate enough to satisfy the arbiters of genre. As I noted above, the fact that the dialogue of these (and other) texts is held together by narrative material in verse has long been a stumbling block to their full acceptance as plays. Moreover, they are preserved in large, miscellaneous collections of vernacular material, whose very size suggests that they would not have been part of a traveling performer's usual luggage. Two of the largest codices are available in facsimile, Paris BnF fr. 837 and 19152, both copied in the north of France during the last part of the thirteenth century and toward the beginning of the fourteenth, respectively.¹¹⁷ Together, they memorialize the “greatest hits” of the jongleurs' repertoire as it had developed during the preceding century, beginning not incidentally with Jehan Bodel of Arras and his contemporaries. For instance, in addition to *Courtois* (fols. 82vc–85rc), BnF fr. 19152 contains a number of the entertainer's more self-referential pieces, including the one “about the jongleur who went to hell and lost the souls at dice,” the parody of the scurrilous epic “about Audigier” quoted in the *Jeu de Robin et de Marion* of Adam de la Halle, and a version of the debate “between the two knavish fibbers.”¹¹⁸ BnF fr. 837 contains some of the same fabliaux set cheek-by-jowl with devotional verses, one of the two extant copies of Rutebeuf's *Miracle de Théophile* (fols. 298va–302va), and another version of *Courtois* (fols. 63ra–65vb) immediately preceded by the *Congés* of Jehan Bodel

¹¹⁶ Some time ago, Paul Zumthor pointed to similar evidence in manuscripts of Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* and the *Iwein* of Hartmann von Aue, arguing that any number of texts could have supported—were perhaps designed to support—performance by a group of entertainers. Referring to obsessive taxonomies of the dramatic and the “semidramatic,” the religious and the secular, Zumthor is unequivocal: “Only a modern, anachronistic viewpoint could justify such distinctions”: see *La lettre* (cited above, n. 43), p. 267; see also pp. 86, 119–23, 263, and passim. For some concrete examples, see Geneviève Hasenohr, “La prose,” in *Mise en page* (cited above, n. 48), pp. 264–71, esp. p. 266, pl. 212.

¹¹⁷ Sylvia Huot, *From Song to Book: The Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Narrative Poetry* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1987), p. 11. See *Le manuscrit 19152 du fonds français de la Bibliothèque nationale*, ed. Edmond Faral (Paris, 1934), pp. 13–14; and *Fabliaux, dits et contes en vers français du XIIIe siècle: Facsimile du manuscrit 837 de la Bibliothèque nationale*, ed. Henri Omont (Paris, 1932), p. 5. BnF fr. 19152 measures 338 × 200 mm. and contains twenty-eight parchment quires of 8 leaves each, written in three columns. BnF fr. 837 measures 315 × 210 mm. and contains 362 leaves written in two columns.

¹¹⁸ *Dun iugleor qui ala en enfer et perdi les ames as des* (fols. 45rc–47va), *De Audigier* (fols. 65vb–69vb), *De .iii. bordeors ribauz* (fols. 69vb–70rc). See Charles Muscatine, *The Old French Fabliaux* (New Haven, Conn., 1986), pp. 8–11, 59, and 70.

(fols. 59ra–62vb), a juxtaposition that may suggest scribal awareness, even promotion, of an Arrageois link between the two. Interestingly, *Courtois* and *Théophile* are the only pieces in this manuscript to carry both an incipit and explicit provided by the original scribe, which might indicate that they were viewed as something special by contemporaries.¹¹⁹ Yet before we take this as a clear-cut indicator of thirteenth-century generic distinctions, we should note that the very same codex also contains the first 174 verses of Adam's *Jeu de la feuillée* (fols. 250va–251va), described simply as “uns geus” in the explicit and missing all of its rubrics (see Fig. 7).

BnF fr. 837 thus contains three texts currently accepted as “plays,” but all without rubrics. One appears to be incomplete but is called a “play,” while the other two are not presented in formats that distinguish them from the 260-some other pieces in the same volume, nearly all of which contain comparable amounts of direct and indirect discourse. There is no more apt illustration of the caveat of Vincent of Beauvais, to the effect that rubrics and other apparatus will usually be lost in the copying process, than the pieces preserved here. Perhaps in order to guard against such potential distortions, Rutebeuf (or his scribe) cleverly adopted a method similar to that employed in the *Seinte Resurreccion*: prose lines adapted to the shape of the verse are inserted to indicate the change of speaker, a technique that is not reliant upon a complicated and expensive procedure like rubrication. (The fact that BnF fr. 837 was not supplied with rubrics until a century after it was initially copied underscores the wisdom of this strategy.) In the case of *Courtois*, the few narrative elements rhyme with, and are fully integrated into, the versified dialogue. In opposition to the prevailing opinion, that such elements indicate the degree to which a text has “departed from the domain of theater,”¹²⁰ I am persuaded that this was a strategy, deployed by composer or copyist, for ensuring that the overall shape of the piece would be retained after publication. Otherwise, the only internal clue to *Courtois*'s function as a play is given in its final line: “Let's sing *Te Deum laudamus*,” a traditional finale adopted from liturgical drama.

If we take account of the number of complete manuscripts that survive (four), *Courtois* was twice as popular as any of the other vernacular plays so far identified, and it almost certainly owes some of that popularity to the fact that it left performers free to determine the shape of performance, even to the allocation of parts.¹²¹ Pieces that required a large cast, an audience knowledgeable about cur-

¹¹⁹ All other incipits have been added by one or more fifteenth-century annotators, who based them—with slight modifications—on the thirteenth-century explicits. See Omont in *Facsimile du manuscrit 837*, p. 6.

¹²⁰ Bordier (cited above, n. 20), p. 26: “mais cette abondance [des manuscrits] est probablement due au fait que, grâce en particulier aux éléments narratifs, il est sorti du domaine théâtral.”

¹²¹ André de Mandach described a possible scenario in “Le rôle du théâtre” (cited above, n. 16), pp. 29–30. Michel Rousse envisioned a similar process in “Le théâtre et les jongleurs,” *Naissances du théâtre français* (see above, n. 15), pp. 1–14 at 10: “Si l'on se rapporte aux différentes versions que l'on a conservées d'une pièce comme *Courtois d'Arras*, on peut constater que les parties non dialoguées ne sont pas identiques d'un manuscrit à l'autre, et il est aisé de comprendre que le copiste d'un texte destiné à la représentation se trouvait placé devant des problèmes de transcription qu'il résolvait par quelques vers narratifs.” Again, I must disagree with Bordier and others, who take the number of manuscripts as a further proof of the text's removal from the arena of performance (see previous note).

rent events and local affairs, or certain performance conditions—and the plays of Jehan Bodel and Adam de la Halle demand all of these—would not have been popular among traveling players. They could only be performed with the help of a specific community, that of Arras. But a piece of convenient length like *Courtois*, or a dialogue like *Le garçon et l'aveugle*, could fill any bill with ease.¹²² Their flexibility is underscored by the varied composition of the manuscripts in which *Courtois* appears and the composition of the audiences that can be deduced from these. The very message of the play could change depending on the circumstances of production. If the setting of *Courtois*, or the mood of its audience, was religious, then it was a religious piece.¹²³ Even *Le garçon et l'aveugle* could be construed as didactic or pious if provided with an appropriate frame.¹²⁴ Anachronistic disputes over genre or over a given play's origins in the sacred or secular spheres have tended to obscure the possibilities for performance encoded in medieval sources, which are usually not intent on promoting one binary component over the other.

Furthermore, the manuscript treatments of such mutable performance pieces provide vital clues for reconstructing the meaning of the missing rubrics in the 174 verses called “uns geus” in BnF fr. 837. Known to Le Grand d'Aussy and his contemporaries as “Le mariage d'Adam,” this text is comparable to the slightly shorter playlet of 170 verses preserved in the Vatican Library (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Reg. lat. 1490, fols. 131v–133v). Neither of these are “fragments” of Adam's *Jeu de la feuillée*. Rather, they represent two similar attempts to adapt a particular scene from that play so that it could be suited to the needs of performers who usually worked with pieces like *Le garçon et l'aveugle* or *Courtois*. Comparing Figure 7 (from BnF fr. 837) with Figure 8 (the opening of the *Jeu de la feuillée* in BnF fr. 25566), one can see that the scribe

¹²² Rousse puts forward an interesting theory of medieval “attention units” in “Le *Jeu de saint Nicolas*” (cited above, n. 37), p. 160: “La mesure de son temps d'attention pourrait bien être la durée d'une messe. Quelques siècles plus tard, la farce oscille entre trois cents et cinq cents vers octosyllabes. On peut penser que cela constitue une unité d'attention qui n'a pas dû beaucoup varier du XIIe au XVe siècle.”

¹²³ E.g., Pierre Groult, “Le drame biblique dans ‘*Courtois d'Arras*,’” in *Mélanges Cohen* (cited above, n. 13), pp. 47–53; or Jean-Claude Aubailly, “Variations dramatiques sur la parabole du fils prodigue à la fin du moyen âge,” in *Hommage à Jean Dufournet. Et c' est la fin pour quoy sommes ensemble: Littérature, histoire et langue du moyen âge*, Nouvelle Bibliothèque du Moyen Âge 25, 3 vols. (Paris, 1993), pp. 109–24. Pascale Dumont observed that *Courtois* never makes explicit its relationship to the parable of the Prodigal Son. As he puts it, “le décalage n'est pas dans la pièce: il est reconstruit par la compétence liturgique des spectateurs—et le nôtre—qui superpose par le jeu de l'analogie la parabole de l'enfant prodigue aux aventures de *Courtois*.” See “La perception de l'espace et du temps dans *Courtois d'Arras* et dans la *Moralité de l'enfant prodigue par personnages*,” in *Arras au moyen âge* (cited above, n. 37), pp. 175–95 at 184 and n. 2. MS A of *Courtois*, BnF fr. 1553, is part of a vast compilation copied around 1284 and consisting for the most part of devotional or didactic texts, including *Le roman de Troie* of Benoît de Sainte-Maure, a guidebook for pilgrims known as *L'enseignemens des sains lius d'Oltre mer*, a story *De Marie et Marthe*, and other tales of the childhood of Jesus, Adam and Eve, St. Anne (including a genealogy showing the progeny of Anne and her three husbands, with that of the Three Marys and their children), a life of St. Alexis, and so on.

¹²⁴ I have argued elsewhere (see n. 115, above) that it may respond to the popular preaching text taken from Matt. 15.14: “Leave them: for they are blind and leaders of the blind; for if a blind man offers to lead a blind man, they will fall into the pit together.”

q et ausi bien q'quant ou tout
 g or de cuer larges & courtois
 p ame & courtois & honore
 a insi puer venir audeure
 q amoi biaux doiz sans longue bione
 p e vous estondi ne orose
 d es selonc ce q'vous ferez
 d e ma pr ch teny seray
 a donc auez mamoie gquise
 b d usq' donc neire vostre amie
 a c e lachie & tout sans faulxide
 q ne sai se p blangere
 e lachie ou p buffon
 e anr q' ouillez for de moi
 c bancon va den & se h di
 q poi mamoie sueffre doloe
 q es amis brie leploie
 b astineur a doubles. c.
 l i doublerai sa ioe

Explicat opulente dimoie.

Le jeu d'au se l'eu d'au

Eignour
 luey poi qoi
 gai mon alre
 changie
 gai estre auoe
 faine. a
 oi reuon au
 clergie. a

ou auerrin ce a

q ue lai puet songie
 p oi ce vieng a vous coi
 a incois pende congie
 i ne poront pas dire
 aucun qui la luntre
 ue diler a parif
 s oie poi ment vintre
 c l'isunt puer reuener
 a uert si enchaincy
 q bien grant maladie
 e asur brie grant luntre
 aurre part ne au pas
 q si mon cens perdu
 q ue se uue a ame
 l caument attendu
 q quencore per il
 us car qu'il h pos fu

oi reuon a parif

chert q' feras tu

o nq's durtat tout clert n'ist
 z pa le veul fere de a
 c e feras grant aluisonf

n est mie ridert amonf
 b ont clert: & durtat & son luntre

o il poi. ij. d. le ttd.

j e ne voi q' liche aurre chose
 q el nuf rependie ne & ose
 e anr auez & muable chert

c undie & qu'il venist a chert
 b iust doiz amis de ce q' dist

c l'isunt mer polet despit
 c e me sible & gere m'ist luntre
 q es puis q' ce uier au besonf
 z q' p moi mastuer a dier
 s achies ie nui mie si chert
 l e seioi durtat ne la ioe
 q lapiendie leffor en doie
 p uis q' dier ma done engien
 e ant est q' ie le coine a bien
 j ai a assey ma baele escouffe

z q' deuendia la pagouffe
 a a gmetre dame mardoie

b iust sire auoe mon pere est a

q estres il nui mie ains
 s ele se puer mette a la voie
 q bien lai songt la gnuie
 q se le uol i l'auoir hui
 q le uol denain sans respa

z luey uol q' ie feras
 p oi h espauer meten
 d e la moultarde for mon uer

q estre tout ce ne & uol ment
 n e la chose a ce pour ne ment
 a insi nen poi uol aler
 q puis q' luntre p'giste apaire
 ij. gary ce nest mie a resaire
 p iende estuer garde a l'engrener

7. "Uns geus": Adam de la Halle, *Jeu de la feüllée*, vv. 1-174, Paris BnF fr. 837, fol. 250v.

of “uns geus” was working from a rubricated exemplar and that he probably intended to go back through the codex with red ink; in that case, he would have been able to add the manuscript’s missing incipits, too. But it is by no means certain that he would have supplied the names of Adam and his friends Rikiers, Hane, and Guillos as they appear in the deluxe manuscript preserving the whole play. Rather, the Vatican version of this scene shows that it circulated in a form suitable for a star jongleur who took on the persona of Adam and responded to unnamed interlocutors, whether planted in the audience, visible on stage, or played by the performer himself—or his ever-present straight man, the fool’s bauble.¹²⁵ Instead of naming the supporting actors, the Vatican script supplies narrative stage directions similar to those noted in *The Boy and the Blind Man* or *Aucassin*: “Now another character gets up and responds. . . . Now Adam responds. . . . And another responds. . . . Now another responds to that one. . . . Now Adam responds,” and so on.¹²⁶ This technique neatly generalizes a discussion that is, in the context of the *Jeu de la feuillée*, highly specific; the identity of the protagonist becomes irrelevant. Indeed, there is nothing in BnF fr. 837 to indicate that its scribe even knew the name of the poet who authored “uns geus.” The incipit, “The Play of Adam le Bocu of Arras,” was added in the fifteenth century.

NOTATION: THE ROLE OF MUSIC IN THE MANUSCRIPT LAYOUT OF PLAYS

In an attempt to enter into the mind of the medieval scribe, Michel Rousse once mused on the challenges faced by the pioneers who set about preserving the artifacts of medieval theater: “It’s plain that a fabliau, in contrast to a play, can easily be written down; but in a comedy, how does one keep track of the successive scenes without reducing the whole thing to a narrative, or without introducing narrative passages to make up for the absence of the on-stage action?” Trying to account for the extraordinary precision and coherence of the plays from Arras, he went on to say: “It takes the ambitious audacity of a Jean Bodel, confident of his own genius, or, three-quarters of a century later, that of Adam de la Halle, to commit to a manuscript a piece of theater which was also a text, and which holds together as such through the magic of lines and the inclusion of a few stage directions. Again, we have, for each of these plays, only a sole manuscript—a fact that proves without doubt that reading them was difficult and that one was scarcely tempted to obtain copies for oneself.”¹²⁷ There is reason to marvel at the ingenuity and relative complexity of the plays by Jehan Bodel and Adam de la Halle of Arras. In form and in function they may be unique among the artifacts of medieval theater. However, it is impossible that Jehan could have exercised any

¹²⁵ On the uses of the bauble see William Willeford, *The Fool and His Scepter: A Study in Clowns and Jesters and Their Audience* ([Evanston, Ill.], 1969), pp. 32–37 and passim.

¹²⁶ “Or se lieve un personnage et respont. . . . Or respont Adans. . . . Et uns autres respont. . . . Or respont uns autres a celi. . . . Or respont Adans.” The Vatican text is available in an appendix to Dufournet’s edition, pp. 219–23. It is interesting that its scribe labels his version: “This is the beginning of the play of Adam le Boçu of Arras” (“C’est li coumencemens du jeu Adan le Bocu”), as if to indicate that what follows is only the “beginning” of Adam’s play. But the wording is ambiguous.

¹²⁷ Rousse, “Le *Jeu de saint Nicolas*,” p. 155.

direct control over the transcription of the *Jeu de saint Nicolas* into BnF fr. 25566, since that manuscript was prepared at least seventy years after his death. The personal agency of Adam de la Halle is more likely, although the manuscript itself claims, both explicitly and implicitly, to have been put together in the wake of his tragic demise.¹²⁸ As for “the magic” of stage directions, we have seen that the scribes of medieval theater often had recourse to such devices, albeit in a variety of forms. Moreover, we should note that the *Jeu de saint Nicolas* is really the only one of the plays from Arras for which a sole manuscript (or sole audience) can be posited. For this reason—as for so many others—Jehan’s play is intriguing, and we will probably never know in what format it was originally transmitted or how Adam de la Halle first came to know it. One thing is certain: when it came to be juxtaposed with Adam’s later work, it reaped the lasting benefits of superior scribal technology. Of the plays composed by Adam himself, the *Jeu de Robin et de Marion* survives in three manuscripts, one lacking the music and ten lines of dialogue,¹²⁹ while, as noted above, the *Jeu de la feuillée* was known in part (if not by name) to at least two other scribes and to an untold number of performers and audiences. The fact that a fifteenth-century annotator could identify the author of the anonymous “geus” in BnF fr. 837 strongly suggests that the piece was easily recognizable over a hundred years later. Finally, insofar as the other plays we have looked at are concerned, it is very true that a great deal of labor went into the fashioning of a coherent text. But the difficulty of “reading” *Le garçon et l’aveugle* did not deter several generations of adapters from using the same script, and I have suggested that *Courtois* may have been a staple of the repertoire precisely because it left room for interpretation.

In one lone respect, the shortened version of Adam de la Halle’s play in BnF fr. 837 is more complete than that so carefully reproduced in BnF fr. 25566: it does not blush to include the word “vit” (slang: “prick”) in line 44. Such vocabulary is hardly out of place in a miscellany boasting *Le chevalier qui fist les cons parler*, the *Jugement des cons*, *Du cul et du con*, and many other plain-speaking tales. But in the deluxe manuscript of Adam’s complete works the term is untranscribed, perhaps because this *libellus* is the product of a polished, courtly milieu. Now part of a larger codex of Picard material (bearing the siglum Chansonniier W), it was compiled around the year 1288 by a team trained in Arras, and was probably commissioned by someone close to Adam’s immediate circle, which in the middle years of the 1280s had widened to include the courts of Robert II, count of Artois, and his uncle Charles of Anjou, the king of Sicily lampooned in a song in *The Boy and the Blind Man*.¹³⁰ The manuscript book as a whole retains 275 of some 283

¹²⁸ Huot, *From Song to Book*, pp. 68–69. The timing and location of Adam’s death are notoriously problematic. I assess the evidence in “A Medieval Stage,” pp. 375–77.

¹²⁹ The other two copies of the *Jeu de Robin et de Marion* are found in Paris BnF fr. 1569, fols. 140–44 (see below, n. 142), and in Aix, Bibliothèque Méjanes, MS 166, a lavishly illustrated (and notated) quire copied in the fourteenth century.

¹³⁰ Huot, *From Song to Book*, p. 67; and Aubrey, “Sources” (cited above, n. 36), pp. 858–59; cf. de Bure (cited above, n. 9), p. 226. Henri Roussel asserted that the manuscript book was made for Guy de Dampierre, count of Flanders from 1278 to 1305; however, he cited no evidence in support of this statement. See “Notes sur la littérature arrageoise du XIIIe siècle,” *Revue des sciences humaines* 87 (1957), 249–86 at p. 285.

parchment leaves, written in two columns and measuring 255 by 170 millimeters. The first 68 (of 84) folios are devoted to the oeuvre of Adam, with Jehan's *Jeu de saint Nicolas* capping the collection, the whole of which was designed as a comprehensive unit.¹³¹ This compilation is further distinguished by its use of miniatures to illustrate key scenes from each segment of Adam's career, which is represented as a progression of artistic forms and performance scenarios: from songs (fols. 10r–23va) to the versified debates known as *jeux-partis* (fols. 23vb–32va) to mensural rondeaux (fols. 32va–34va) to polyphonic motets (fols. 34vb–37ra) to the *Jeu de Robin et de Marion*, prefaced by the anonymous *Jeu du pèlerin* (fols. 37rb–48vb) and followed immediately by the *Jeu de la feuillée* (fols. 48vb–59vb), Adam's fragmentary epic *Le roi du Sezile* (fols. 60ra–65ra), a poem about love (fols. 65va–66va), Adam's farewell *Congés* (fols. 66va–67va), and a poem by Hélinant de Froidmont which symbolically announces Adam's death (fols. 67va–68ra).¹³² "Explicit Adan" ("Here ends about Adam") appears in black ink, with the rubric "Cest li ius de .S. Nicholai" immediately below. Jehan's play, in turn, ends with a second rubric and the word "Amen," thus bringing the whole to a conclusion.¹³³

Sylvia Huot has demonstrated that songs are usually arranged in chansonniers by author, with the result that each trouvère's corpus is promoted as a separate literary genre. The making of such collections would eventually lead to "a stabilization of the lyric tradition," as poets and performers attempted to save material from oblivion.¹³⁴ Only much later, in the course of the fourteenth century, did most chansonniers attempt to promote the idea of a canon. The Arrageois anthology is, therefore, a very early example of this phenomenon. It attempts to recapture some of the essential theatricality lost in the transition from live performance to literary medium, while at the same time constructing a narrative account of Adam's artistic development and his role in the public life of Arras. By placing the *Jeu de saint Nicolas* at the end of this trajectory, the compiler further suggests that Adam's lifework should be evaluated in conjunction with that of Jehan, or at least in conjunction with his play.

¹³¹ The Arrageois anthology begins with a rubric introducing the songs of Adam on fol. lv, "Chi commencent les canchons maistre adan de la hale," but this leaf was later separated from the rest of the *libellus* by an interpolated quire of eight leaves containing another collection of Adam's songs, similar in content to the first. The anthology therefore consists of the folios now numbered 10 to 83.

¹³² On the basis of its appearance here, Hélinant's poem is often wrongly attributed to Adam. The *Jeu du pèlerin* also appears to have been composed by someone else, as a prologue to repeat performances of the *Robin et Marion*. I discuss its purpose in "A Medieval Stage," pp. 364–70.

¹³³ Other Arrageois materials appear in a separate collection at the end of the book, written by a different scribe: "Che sont li congie baude fastoul daras" (fols. 253ra–258rb); "Chest li honeurs et li vertues des dames que Jehans petis daras fist," in prose (fols. 273rb–289rb); and "Ce sont li congie Jehan Bodel daras" (fols. 289rb–293ra). The middle section of the codex, from which many leaves are missing, was written in diverse hands and contains numerous prose and verse texts in Picard, none of which have any particular connection to Arras.

¹³⁴ Huot, *From Song to Book*, pp. 52–53 and 64–73. See also her "Transformations of Lyric Voice in the Songs, Motets, and Plays of Adam de la Halle," *Romanic Review* 78 (1987), 148–64. For the *mise en page* of chansonniers, see Geneviève Hasenohr, "Les recueils lyriques," in *Mise en page* (cited above, n. 48), pp. 328–33. On their organization, see van der Werf, *Oldest Extant Part Music* (cited above, n. 63), 2:183–87.

While it does not seem likely that Adam himself would have overseen this project (both because of the anthology's memorial tenor and because such acts of flagrant self-promotion were unknown before the days of Francesco Petrarca and Guillaume de Machaut), it is the case that some privileged composers, like some great scholars, were able to keep a sharp eye on their scribes: Thibaut de Navarre, for example, is said to have presided over the copying of his own chansons.¹³⁵ And because Adam was one of the first composers of two-voiced motets, he would have been aware from the outset that accurate transcription was an essential part of that artistic process. He was also well placed to ensure that his songs were properly presented to the public. After Paris, Arras was the center of the new music-publishing industry, as well as of the vernacular book trade.¹³⁶

In fact, the Arrageois anthology is one of the earliest manuscripts in the entire corpus of troubadour and trouvère song to feature examples of mensural notation.¹³⁷ Moreover, Adam "occupies a unique, though somewhat paradoxical position in the history of music" as the only secular composer known to have produced polyphonic songs before the fourteenth century.¹³⁸ The significance of Adam's expertise in a complex musical form cannot be overestimated, in my opinion, yet it has gone unnoticed by theater scholars and has never been regarded as having anything to do with the transmission of his plays, or that of Jehan.¹³⁹ But in many respects the practical problems posed by the layout and rubrication of multicharacter verse dramas are analogous to those of polyphony, whose dissemination calls for the development of reliable practices for recording the mensural demands of music for multiple voices. The earliest monophonic chant notations, including the notation used for sequential polyphony at Saint-Martial, were species of memorial shorthand. The number of notes in a given ligature (not to mention their temporal relationships) was flexible, and there was room for individual

¹³⁵ Everist, *Polyphonic Music* (cited above, n. 85), pp. 198–99.

¹³⁶ Everist, *Polyphonic Music*, p. 200; van der Werf, "Trouvère Chansons" (cited above, n. 45), p. 66. See also Mary E. Wolinski, "Tenors Lost and Found: The Reconstruction of Motets in Two Medieval Chansonniers," in *Critica musica: Essays in Honor of Paul Brainard*, ed. John Knowles, Musicology 18 (Amsterdam, 1996), pp. 461–82 at 461.

¹³⁷ Hans Tischler, "The Chansonnier Cangé and Mensural Notation in Trouvère Songs," *Orbis musicae* 11 (1993), 73–80; and Aubrey, *Music of the Troubadours* (cited above, n. 45), pp. 246–47. The transmission of medieval secular song is the subject of a forthcoming book by John Haines, *Reading the Troubadours and Trouvères: An Account of the Reception of Medieval Music*.

¹³⁸ Robert Falck, "Adam de la Halle," in *The New Grove Dictionary*, 1:136–40 at p. 138. See also van der Werf, "Trouvère Chansons," p. 60, and *Oldest Extant Part Music*, 1:22. The classic study of music in the *Jeu de Robin et de Marion* is that of Jacques Chailley, "La nature musicale du *Jeu de Robin et Marion*," in *Mélanges Cohen*, pp. 111–17; for a sophisticated critique of Chailley, see Matthew C. Steel, "A Reappraisal of the Role of Music in Adam de la Halle's *Jeu de Robin et de Marion*," in *Music from the Middle Ages through the Twentieth Century: Essays in Honor of Gwynn McPeck*, ed. Carmelo P. Comberiati and Matthew C. Steel, Musicology 7 (New York, 1988), pp. 41–60. On Adam's other uses of some of the melodies included in this play, see Linda Speck, "The Lives and Loves of Robin and Marion: Subjects Juxtaposed in the Late Thirteenth-Century French Motet," also in *Music from the Middle Ages*, pp. 34–39.

¹³⁹ On the general neglect of music as another tool for analyzing and interpreting medieval texts, see Leo Treitler, "Inventing European Music Culture—Then and Now," in *The Past and Future of Medieval Studies*, ed. John Van Engen, Notre Dame Conferences in Medieval Studies 4 (Notre Dame, Ind., 1994), pp. 344–61.

whim on the part of performer or scribe. The same was true of the dramatic pieces for traveling performers that circulated widely throughout Europe. The greater the number of performers, however, the more elaborate the required format: a recipe that calls for cooperation between the community that fosters the performers and the scribe skilled in capturing performance on parchment, as well as for sensitivity on the part of composer or playwright. With the new methods of transcription, which fixed a composition in space (the musical staff) and time (rhythm), a given performance could be recorded by one person and read—or duplicated—by others, however far removed in space or time. Eventually the layout of polyphony would demand the development of ever more sophisticated scribal techniques and reading skills, while allowing for ever more precise renditions by performers from other traditions or regions.¹⁴⁰ Our modern dependence on uniform scores and play scripts is one result of this progression.

Of course, the invention of these techniques did not ensure that they would be available to all or used by all. Nor should it imply that earlier systems of notation, or other types of performance, were “simple” or “less evolved”; rather, they had different aims and applications, some more localized than others. By Adam’s day, only a few scribes were specially trained in the new system of notation developed in Paris, and fewer still were adept at capturing pitch and relative duration in writing. As Mary Wolinski has observed, there is a discernible “lack of scribal control” over music copied in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Many of those who set out to copy complicated pieces did not always succeed in translating performance to page, even when they had an exemplar.¹⁴¹ The second copy of the *Jeu de Robin et de Marion*, part of a late-thirteenth-century codex of the *Roman de la Rose* from Picardy, is a case in point. It has been transmitted without music, even though the scribe was probably following a notated exemplar; he left adequate spaces, but they were never ruled or neumed. Yet while he may not have been equal to the task of transcribing the music, he was highly competent in other areas, and able to devise (or follow) a special system of rubrication for the spoken dialogue, providing a key to the abbreviated character designations at the bottom of the first page in red ink: “R. Robins. M. Marions. G. Gautiers,” and so on.¹⁴² The uneven quality of the transcriptions available even within a single codex is noteworthy: the famous *Chansonniere de Noailles* copied in Artois (now BnF fr. 12615) contains lavish *libelli* of works by Adam and a number of other trouvères, yet it also contains an important collection of songs composed in Arras and written down during Adam’s lifetime, none of which is accompanied by notation.¹⁴³ So, even though there were scribes in the region who were capable

¹⁴⁰ Switten, *Music and Poetry* (cited above, n. 45), pp. 5 and 12–13.

¹⁴¹ Wolinski, “Tenors Lost and Found,” p. 475.

¹⁴² Paris BnF fr. 1569, fols. 140–44. In this manuscript the play is entitled “Li jeux du bergier et de la bergiere.”

¹⁴³ The so-called “chansons et dits” are copied onto the leftover leaves of a quire. The transcription can be dated to the 1270s or perhaps a little later, as Mark Everist suggests: *Polyphonic Music*, pp. 175–78 and 186. Roger Berger does not discuss the *mise en page* or absence of musical notation in his edition or extended commentary, published as *Littérature et société arrageoises au XIIIe siècle*, Mémoires de la Commission Départementale des Monuments Historiques du Pas-de-Calais 21 (Arras, 1981), p. 181. On the erratic transcription of songs see van der Werf, “Trouvère Chansons,” p. 65.

of transcribing music—and music much more elaborate than that required by most songs—the local availability of this knowledge did not guarantee that all manuscripts would benefit from it.

Indeed, the Arrageois anthology containing the vernacular plays most accessible to us has been described as “surprising” in its precise presentation of Adam’s motets and rondeaux in mensural notation, as well as for its use of a separate system of nonmensural notation for the monophonic chansons and the musical interludes of the *Jeu de la feuillée* and *Jeu de Robin et de Marion*. Moreover, no expense was spared in its preparation, and there is an evident disregard for wasted space. Each rubric is given its own line, except on the occasions when sung dialogue requires the notator to leave room for rubrics within the long lines of music, as in the duets sung by Marion and the Knight. These plays thus resemble liturgical dramas in their layout—although they are neater and more impressive in appearance, because of the skill with which the notator, scribe, rubricator, and illuminator performed their several tasks. Unlike most manuscripts copied outside Paris, the Arrageois anthology exhibits a cutting-edge knowledge of the latest techniques.¹⁴⁴ Those techniques, largely devised for the transmission of music, were pressed into service in this singular case for the presentation of certain plays.

PRESERVATION: A CHALLENGE

The manuscript containing the most distinctive artifacts of early vernacular theater was the product of a conscious attempt to preserve the complete works of the poet and composer Adam de la Halle and to situate his lifetime’s achievement in Arras. For reasons that must have seemed obvious to the person responsible for the collection, the script of Jehan Bodel’s play was also included in this memorial book. Thus we have, in a single instance, an illustration of two extremes within the paradigm of textual preservation: exaltation versus extinction. Were it not for the unusual impulse that led to the publication of Adam’s work, Jehan’s play would not exist; and neither, for that matter, would 90 percent of the *Jeu de la feuillée*. Providentially, these plays were given into the care of copyists whose specialized training in the layout of polyphonic music carried over into the treatment of dramatic documents. As a result, their rich content was clarified, while the names of their creators were preserved—a fact noteworthy in itself, given the anonymity of most medieval texts.

While the anthologizing of the plays from Arras is not the only factor that may have played a role in their survival, it is to this anthology that they owe their format and therefore (to a great extent) their fame. Had they been copied using one of the other methods available for the transmission of vernacular scripts, they would not have been recovered so early or studied so often. Most medieval plays

¹⁴⁴ Everist, *Polyphonic Music*, pp. 203 and 205. Using the square neumatic notation deriving from plainsong, the scribe achieved “a careful alignment of musical and verbal text” by transcribing the words first and matching the notes to their syllables later. See also Stevens, “Manuscript Presentation” (cited above, n. 46), p. 31.

fall somewhere between these poles of obscurity and notoriety, a gray area of relative oblivion from which a few lucky texts have been rescued and edited.

To be sure, the plays of Jehan and Adam cannot claim to rival the scope of the great biblical cycles or mystery plays that are usually cited as the foundation texts of vernacular, secular drama.¹⁴⁵ And those who have looked into their historical background have been disappointed, largely because there is no positive evidence to prove that the plays of Arras were performed, let alone to allow for a careful reconstruction of their performance.¹⁴⁶ But if thirteenth-century documents are poor witnesses to theatrical tradition, it is merely because they cannot answer the questions that are usually asked of them.¹⁴⁷ Most of those who are (even now) searching the archives of Europe for the vestiges of a lost medieval theater have been trained to look for manuscripts sporting descriptive rubrics or for explicit mention of costumes, platforms, and other conventional properties.¹⁴⁸ Yet the very nature of early plays was scarcely conducive to their survival, still less to the

¹⁴⁵ Scholars of English theater tend to allow Insular evidence to represent all of medieval Europe when they speak of “community drama, as it emerged in the fifteenth century,” e.g., Alexandra F. Johnston, “What If No Texts Survived? External Evidence for Early English Drama,” in *Contexts for Early English Drama* (cited above, n. 52), pp. 1–19 at 6. Yet the oldest manuscript of English mystery plays is that of the N-Town cycle, which was not recorded until after 1468; see David Staines, “The English Mystery Cycle,” in *The Theatre of Medieval Europe* (cited above, n. 2), pp. 80–96 at 80. The York cycle may have existed in something like its present form by 1415, but the manuscript itself was written between 1463 and 1477, probably closer to the latter date. The Chester cycle, once thought to be the oldest and supposed to have been written in 1325, has recently been shown to be about two hundred years younger than that, and hence one of the latest of the cycles; see Johnston, “The York Cycle and the Chester Cycle: What Do the Records Tell Us?” in *Editing Early English Drama* (cited above, n. 1), pp. 121–43 at 123. On the Continent, play scripts for performance by craft guilds begin to appear in the fourteenth century; Graham Runnalls, “Medieval Trade Guilds and the *Miracles de nostre Dame par personnages*,” *Medium ævum* 39 (1970), 257–87. For Arras itself, the only hard evidence of scripted dramatic activity after 1300 appears to be the massive *Mystère de la Passion d’Arras*, which probably dates from the middle of the fifteenth century, even though a later hand has written on the flyleaf that it was “written around 1390” (Arras, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 697). It is usually attributed to Eustache Marcadé; see *Le mystère de la Passion: Texte du MS 697 de la Bibliothèque d’Arras*, ed. Jules-Marie Richard (Arras, 1891; repr. Geneva, 1976). G. Lecocq’s *Histoire du théâtre en Picardie depuis son origine jusqu’à la fin du XVIe siècle* (Paris, 1880) deals solely with the “origins” of local theater in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, after a nod in the direction of antiquity.

¹⁴⁶ The best, and most skeptical, treatment of the plays from Arras and their potential for performance is that of Ursula Peters, *Literatur in der Stadt: Studien zu den sozialen Voraussetzungen und kulturellen Organisationsformen städtischer Literatur im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert*, Studien und Texte zur Sozialgeschichte der Literatur 7 (Tübingen, 1983), pp. 61–96.

¹⁴⁷ The difficulties inherent in reading earlier documents are addressed by Johnston, “What If,” p. 3. She notes candidly that nearly all of the evidence for the existence of theater in England before the end of the fourteenth century is incidental.

¹⁴⁸ E.g., Ian Lancashire’s *Dramatic Texts and Records of Britain* (cited above, n. 91), in which a few “Doubtful Texts” are relegated to a separate chapter—despite Lancashire’s observation that “[s]ometimes what is and what is not dramatic is not obvious” (p. xxxiii). See also Johnston’s description of the activities sponsored by REED in “‘All the World Was a Stage’: Records of Early English Drama,” in *The Theatre of Medieval Europe*, pp. 117–29 at 119–21; and Hans-Jürgen Linke’s essay, “Germany and German-Speaking Central Europe,” in the same volume, pp. 207–24 at 215. For some frank remarks on the challenges of archival research, see Wim Hüskens, “Civic Patronage of Early Fifteenth-Century Religious Drama in the Low Countries,” in *Civic Ritual and Drama*, ed. Alexandra F. Johnston and Wim Hüskens, *Ludus* 2 (Amsterdam, 1997), pp. 107–23 at 107–11.

transmission of such information. Some plays may have taken the form of part sheets or roles, and these were ephemeral by definition, nor did they attain a status that would have guaranteed their preservation as literary or municipal documents until the fifteenth century. It is ironic that the earliest known actor's role, from the mid-thirteenth century, has been missing from the British Library since 1971; the second oldest, once in the archives of the Swiss canton of Valais, has also disappeared.¹⁴⁹ Where plays have been found, the documentary practices that would produce detailed stage directions or corroborative records of their performance would not be developed for at least another century, as the late dates of the more visible materials testify.

Even if such records had been made and kept, the historian of medieval Arras (to take but the most salient example) will be frustrated by the scarcity of the remaining documents produced in northeastern France and Flanders during the thirteenth century. The available source base was notoriously diminished during the First World War, when all but a few of the medieval *fonds* deposited in the archives of Arras, along with most of the medieval buildings and other physical features of the urban landscape, were destroyed or altered beyond recognition.¹⁵⁰ The manuscripts in the Bibliothèque municipale fared better in wartime but had already been barbarously served by some of their earlier custodians. The *bibliothèque* under Louis XVIII (1814–18), for instance, cut up hundreds of the more valuable and impressive books and sold leaves or miniatures to secondhand book dealers and philistine collectors. His successors estimated that, out of the 779 manuscripts in the collection at that time, he mutilated all but 45 in some way or other and that out of a total of 130,000 leaves, only about 89,000 remained. Henri Loriquet was later to discover 1,370 of the missing leaves in a shop at Calais in 1884, but these were deposited in the Archives départementales and therefore burned with the rest of the collection in the firebombings of 1914–15. Another trove, weighing in at thirty kilos, was purchased by Sir Thomas Phillipps from a dealer in Amiens, for the sum of nine hundred francs. Phillipps, having ascertained their provenance, offered to sell them to the town of Arras for the same price, but the town declined his offer.¹⁵¹ As a result of such factors, historical, accidental, or

¹⁴⁹ See above, n. 47. For the most part, individual roles for farces and other short plays were seldom prepared because parts would have been memorized by a performer from the full text, so becoming part of his repertoire. When such roles were made, they were often lost or thrown away. See Lalou, "Les rôlets de théâtre" (cited above, n. 47), p. 57.

¹⁵⁰ Surviving materials were inventoried by M. G. Besnier, "Pas de Calais," in "Chronique des Archives départementales. Années 1926 et 1927," *Bulletin philologique et historique (jusqu'à 1715) du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques*, ed. A. Vidier and H. Courteault (Paris, 1926–27), pp. 399–403. For an update, see *Etat des inventaires des archives départementales, communales et hospitalières au 1er janvier 1983*, 2 (Paris, 1984), pp. 854–71. Arras was mourned, among the "murdered towns of France," in a retrospective series entitled *Villes meurtries de la France*, published in 1915. The volume devoted to Arras was prepared by Adolphe Guesnon.

¹⁵¹ Philip Grierson, "La bibliothèque de Saint-Vaast d'Arras au XIIe siècle," *Revue bénédictine* 52 (1940), 117–40 at pp. 120–22 and nn. 2–3. The municipal collection now contains over a thousand items of interest to the medievalist, among them about 600 manuscript books from the library of the Abbey of Saint-Vaast and several hundred more from the Cathedral of Notre-Dame, as well as the remaining archives of the Carité de Notre-Dame des ardents d'Arras, the confraternity of jongleurs. I devote two chapters to this organization and its records in "A Medieval Stage."

criminal, we have no fiscal accounts of production expenditures, no lists of players, no actors' roles, and no contemporary witness to describe, with Philip Henslowe's entrepreneurial eye or Samuel Pepys's prurience, the details of an Arrageois play's premiere.

By contrast, the fantastic array of plays and production-related accounts dating from the later Middle Ages attests to the fact that the written paraphernalia facilitating production had come to be regarded as constitutive of community identity. The increased incidence of plays in these later centuries is not, therefore, the product of newly awakened theatrical impulses but the result of documentary innovation, coupled with a drive toward the retention and consultation of records in public archives.¹⁵² The overwhelming predominance of Arrageois material in the canon of vernacular plays before 1300, then, points to the precocious development of Artois as a heartland of manuscript patronage, production, and consumption. The romances of Chrétien de Troyes were for the most part composed in Champagne, for audiences at the court of Champagne, but the majority of the surviving manuscripts of his work come from Picardy or neighboring Flanders and are contemporary with the deluxe manuscript preserving the works of Jehan and Adam, as well as with the collections of fabliaux that bring us other plays germane to this study.¹⁵³ Vernacular versions of Scripture and of saints' lives also benefited from the literary climate of Artois, where the first important translator of the Bible, Guiart des Moulins, was a contemporary of Adam de la Halle.¹⁵⁴ And in the realm of politics, Gabrielle Spiegel has shown that the very instability of northeastern France in the decades that followed the territorial expansions of Philip Augustus gave rise to new literary trends and hundreds of expensively decorated manuscripts.¹⁵⁵ It is within this busy milieu of literary competition, revisionist history, accountancy, and record keeping that we must therefore situate the surviving texts of the first vernacular plays of the Middle Ages.

As we have seen, there were diverse methods for preserving the artifacts of early theater, and in many cases neither the methods nor the plays themselves can be said to observe the boundaries traditionally drawn between the dramatic and the nondramatic or, for that matter, the liturgical and the paraliturgical. The layout of a text in play form is less dependent on its status as a play than on its position within a given manuscript, the expertise or background of its copyist, and the

¹⁵² In general, see Clanchy's *From Memory to Written Record* (cited above, n. 27). For northern France, see Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, "Civic Liturgies and Urban Records in Northern France, 1100–1400," in *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, ed. Barbara A. Hanawalt and Kathryn L. Ryerson, *Medieval Studies at Minnesota* 6 (Minneapolis, 1994), pp. 34–55; see also her "Diplomatic Sources and Medieval Documentary Practices," in *The Past and Future of Medieval Studies* (cited above, n. 139), pp. 313–43.

¹⁵³ Sandra Hindman, *Sealed in Parchment: Rereadings of Knighthood in the Illuminated Manuscripts of Chrétien de Troyes* (Chicago, 1994), p. 2.

¹⁵⁴ On the vernacular Bible, see Bonnard, *Les traductions de la Bible* (cited above, n. 16), p. 5; and Samuel Berger, *La Bible française au moyen âge: Etude sur les plus anciennes versions de la Bible écrites en prose de langue d'oïl* (Paris, 1884), pp. 157–87. On the proliferation of other religious texts in the vernacular, see Peter F. Dembowski, "Literary Problems of Hagiography in Old French," *Medievalia et humanistica* 7 (1976), 117–30.

¹⁵⁵ Gabrielle Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France*, *New Historicism* 23 (Berkeley, Calif., 1993), p. 7.

needs of a particular community. Michel Huglo has shown that the format and size of liturgical manuscripts changed in the course of the thirteenth century in order to accommodate those who could no longer rely on oral tradition and aural memorization; chant notation and text were enlarged to allow them to be read at a distance, by a group of people.¹⁵⁶ For its part, the Beauvais manuscript containing the *Danielis ludus* adopted newly developed techniques in order to respond to the requirements of a large cast, all of whom may have been set to learn from the same script. It would have been prepared in accordance with precepts handed down by educators like Hugh of Saint-Victor, who had stressed the importance of a uniform layout in order to ensure accurate memorization.¹⁵⁷ Eventually, such changes would facilitate performance outside the community as well as within it, and plays were not the only texts to be treated in this manner. Numerous sermons would be rubricated in accordance with performance practice, adapting them to the needs of traveling preachers “in a new, rootless urban society.”¹⁵⁸ Above all, the layout of the glossed Bible was developed to provide “support for the various activities of memory” and a model for other important writings.¹⁵⁹ And just as the canon of the law, of the Mass, and of the Scriptures acquired notation to ensure that they were learned and performed correctly, so, too, did some plays.¹⁶⁰

Still, the very variety of techniques used to record theatrical texts indicates that fully rubricated scripts were documents unfamiliar not only to actors, as Dominica Legge suggested,¹⁶¹ but to those who transcribed them. Lacking an approved style sheet and working, moreover, in isolation from one another, scribes relied on individual initiative and built upon the conventions of their several scriptoria. As a result, most plays take on the chameleon’s camouflage. Some were cast in the molds familiar to monastic or clerical scribes. Others were based on the various

¹⁵⁶ The Dominicans and Franciscans were, as ever, in the vanguard. See Michel Huglo, “Notated Performance Practices in Parisian Chant Manuscripts of the Thirteenth Century,” trans. Kelly in *Plain-song* (cited above, n. 87), pp. 32–44.

¹⁵⁷ Carruthers, *Book of Memory* (cited above, n. 105), pp. 9 and 261–69.

¹⁵⁸ Rouse and Rouse, “*Statim invenire*,” p. 202. See also their “Concordances et index” (both cited above, n. 101), pp. 218–28 (especially pl. 141); and Parkes, “Influence” (cited above, n. 103), pp. 115–41.

¹⁵⁹ Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, pp. 214–15. See also Rouse and Rouse, “*Statim invenire*,” p. 207; Christopher de Hamel, *Glossed Books of the Bible and the Origins of the Paris Booktrade* (Woodbridge, Eng., 1984), esp. pp. 14–27; and Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, p. 133. A counter example, of a poorly organized early vernacular Bible from the thirteenth century, is that begun (but apparently not finished) by Jehan Malkaraume, preserved in Paris BnF fr. 903, fols. 1r–53v. The layout and execution are such that it would have been impossible for anyone but its scribe(s) to use it effectively.

¹⁶⁰ Saenger sees the copying of scholastic material as akin to that of music and musical notation, since both required the scribe to follow his exemplar very closely: *Space between Words*, pp. 142 and 167. Other vernacular manuscripts were supplied with critical apparatus at the same time: Hasenohr, “Les systèmes de repérage textuel,” in *Mise en page* (cited above, n. 48), pp. 272–87. For a discussion of contemporary systems of pointing and punctuation in the manuscripts of romance, see Frank Brandsma, “The Presentation of Direct Discourse in Arthurian Romances: Changing Modes of Performance and Reception?” in *The Medieval Opus: Imitation, Rewriting, and Transmission in the French Tradition*, ed. Douglas Kelly, Faux Titre 116 (Amsterdam, 1996), pp. 245–60.

¹⁶¹ M. Dominica Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and Its Background* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 318–19.

specialized layouts developed for kindred texts in the vernacular, fabliaux and versified stories chief among them.¹⁶² The unique character of the plays by Jehan Bodel and Adam de la Halle is thus dependent on their place within the history of a developing technology that owed a great deal both to the liturgy and to aristocratic patronage, as well as to a strong sense of local identity. Because Adam was a prolific composer, and one who ended his life at court, his plays and those of his forebear received special treatment at the hands of scribes trained in the new techniques developed for recording the polyphonic music that was emerging side by side with a literary Picard vernacular. The resulting *libellus* is a tightly woven tissue of elements ranging from the liturgical to the courtly, brought together in the service of plays designed for the complex urban milieu of thirteenth-century Arras. Needless to say, the many modern interpretations of these plays that represent them as politically subversive, anticlerical, or “bourgeois”—too many to list here—take no account of the mechanisms at work in their preservation.

Of course, it is arguable that the plays of Jehan and Adam, at least as they appear in Paris BnF fr. 25566, are not representative of the period before 1300, for they are no more than vestiges of the living theater of that lively era. They are embalmed; they have become literature. They are not ready to leap in sublime confusion off the page, like *The Boy and the Blind Man*. The theatrical utility of that piece was vested in the range of options it afforded, not in the degree to which it remained faithful to an urtext. Its historical utility is vested in these same features. Accordingly, we should learn to think of medieval theater as theme and variation, not as moving toward the apotheosis of an “authentic” text. We must also recognize that the manuscripts of theater are unconcerned with maintaining the proprieties we have imposed upon their texts: the lines between drama and liturgy, representation and impersonation, the sacred and the secular, the popular and the highbrow.

Clifford Flanigan once called for manuscript studies that would test his hypothesis (derived from reader-response theory) that artificial distinctions between theater and ritual should be replaced by an awareness of the uses to which a given text could be put at a given time.¹⁶³ We are now in a better position to assess the evidence, perhaps even to ask when it first became necessary to discriminate between what was and what was not performed. An example cited earlier, of the sixteenth-century meditation that had been turned into a play by one of its readers,

¹⁶² As Hasenohr has pointed out, the history of vernacular traditions of *mise en page* begins only when those manuscripts develop a degree of autonomy, discernible from the first quarter of the twelfth century. Still, she notes that the two primal texts in a French dialect, the *Chanson de saint Alexis* from the St. Albans Psalter and the Oxford *Chanson de Roland*, “résument les caractéristiques saillantes de la production codicologique en langue française du XIIIe siècle: large prédominance des copies anglo-normandes d’origine insulaire; immersion en milieu monastique.” See “Les origines monastiques,” in *Mise en page*, pp. 230–33 at 231.

¹⁶³ Flanigan, “Medieval Latin Music-Drama” (cited above, n. 29), p. 36. The classic articulation of *Rezeptionsästhetik* as applied to the Middle Ages is that of Hans-Robert Jauss, “Littérature médiévale et théorie des genres,” *Poétique* 1 (1970), 79–101. Recently, John W. Baldwin has strongly emphasized the central importance of a historical evaluation of audience response to the understanding of medieval literature and its context: *The Language of Sex: Five Voices from Northern France around 1200* (Chicago, 1994), pp. xxvi–xxviii and 235–36. According to Charles Muscatine, the (contemporary) audience is the best indicator not only of meaning but of genre; see *Old French Fabliaux* (cited above, n. 118), p. 152.

is instructive in this regard. It appears that anxieties over the status of a certain text as a play or as *something else* began to crystallize in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when the fixed medium of the printing press and the rise of professional theater companies conspired to overcome the ambivalence of medieval scripts. That is, the closer European culture came to a model of theater dependent on enclosed space, an authorized text, and a specialized acting profession, the less it was able to accept the indeterminacy of medieval plays.¹⁶⁴ We are the inheritors of that later phenomenon, with its received wisdom that “from the very beginning” speakers’ names were “carefully indicated” in medieval theatrical manuscripts, to quote the pronouncement of Geneviève Hasenohr.¹⁶⁵ Such is the case only with regard to a very few, very privileged texts—the ones most acceptable to us, in fact: the Beauvais *Danielis ludus* and the plays of Jehan and Adam, plays that were elevated to canonical status within specific communities when the heyday of their performance may already have passed. Even the *Ordo representationis Ade* can hardly be said to have been “carefully” annotated “from the very beginning.” And how many other plays, denuded of their rubrics and scribal apparatus, remain undiscovered? How many more, never possessed of such accoutrements, nonetheless deserve to be classed as “plays”?

The number of vernacular plays that survive from the years after 1300 has been taken to indicate a surge of dramatic activity in Europe. Not only does this assumption fail to acknowledge patterns of manuscript production and preservation, it reveals that later plays conform more readily to modern expectations. They are more clearly labeled, more often rubricated, available in discrete copies, deposited in archives. Understanding what could happen when a medieval play text was committed to parchment, rubricated, and read by successive generations of potential performers should therefore alert us to the possibilities inherent in other texts. This goes against the grain. According to Graham Runnalls, whose work with French *mystères* has helped to define medieval theater studies, plays are a species of literature, special because they are designed for performance. Other medieval texts have a “para-dramatic potential” and “were in some sense performed,” but “[t]he uniqueness of medieval drama is even reflected in the manu-

¹⁶⁴ See, for example, the compelling study of Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser, “Vile Arts: The Marketing of English Printed Drama, 1512–1660,” *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* 39 (2000), 77–165. Farmer and Lesser show that “whatever the actual conditions of playgoing, early modern publishers both shared the playwrights’ view of a [social and spacial] divide [between indoor and outdoor theaters] and helped to construct one. . . . In the end, the division of theatres—both in its early modern and recent forms—may have been as much a creation of the printing house as the playhouse” (p. 95). For some suggestive remarks on “the transition from public ceremony to commercial theatre” in sixteenth-century London, see Lawrence Manley, “Of Sites and Rites,” in *The Theatrical City: Culture, Theatre and Politics in London, 1576–1649*, ed. David L. Smith, Richard Strier, and David Bevington (Cambridge, Eng., 1995), pp. 35–54 at 36. This discussion of John Stow’s vehement attack on the Tudor government’s successful efforts to control common space and public activity reveals how a manipulative government could bring about “the replacement of outdoor, public recreation with indoor, commercialised leisure,” p. 51.

¹⁶⁵ Hasenohr, “Les manuscrits théâtraux” (cited above, n. 48), p. 336 (“Dès les origines, le nom des locuteurs est soigneusement indiqué”).

scripts.”¹⁶⁶ His research is based on two sets of documents: hundreds of discrete play scripts, mostly written between 1450 and 1550, and the supporting archival materials that describe, regulate, and facilitate performances.¹⁶⁷ But neither type of document is available for any of the designated plays transmitted before the fourteenth century. We have descriptions of some performances (although not of the plays that survive), and the scripts so far discovered are preserved in a variety of curious forms and as integral to manuscripts that do not, for the most part, differentiate them from other texts.

The testimony of the late fifteenth century must not, therefore, dictate the agenda of future research in medieval theater. In the later era, as Runnalls himself has shown, an idea of plays as generically different from other types of texts was established.¹⁶⁸ The printed book was instrumental in this process, and the catalogue of wares prepared by a bookseller at Tours sometime during the last decade of the fifteenth century (BnF fr. 2912, fols. 78–82) may be regarded as standing midway between current scholarship and the object of our studies. It itemizes 236 manuscripts and 29 printed books, signaling the existence of “plusieurs aultres” in both categories, and is divided into the following sections: “livres en francois escripts a la main” (over 185 items), “aultres livres en mistaires” (34 items), “moralites” (over 19 items), and “livres en francois en impression” (over 30 items), some of which are also described as “mystery” or “morality” plays. This roster indicates that distinctions were being made between plays and other texts, and among types of play—although Runnalls notes that the bookseller’s classification of what is a mystery, a morality, a farce is not consistent with modern critical taxonomies; that fact, alone, is worth bearing in mind. So is the low “survival rate” of medieval play scripts, which Runnalls calculates at about 40 percent: of the 52 named texts, 20 have survived; 11 have not survived but are mentioned in other sources; and 21 are lost.¹⁶⁹ The percentage would be much lower were it not for the printing press, since 9 of the 20 surviving plays exist only in printed copies. These figures suggest that only 20 percent of the plays recorded in manuscript during the later Middle Ages have come down to us.

What of the earlier period? On the one hand, it is certain that the number of surviving plays must be very low, compared with the number of entertainments that would have diverted and instructed people during the thousand years we call the Middle Ages. On the other hand, we must remember those many, many manuscript codices listed solely by their short titles in the catalogue of the Tours bookseller. Among the “plays about which nothing is known” are several devoted to particular saints, and their scripts may well be preserved in devotional books of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Achille Chereau observed that the titles

¹⁶⁶ Graham Runnalls, “Towns and Plays: Social Aspects of Drama in Late Medieval France,” in *Etudes* (cited above, n. 2), pp. 61–82 at 62; see also “The Theatre in Paris in the Late Middle Ages,” in *Etudes*, pp. 83–100 at 85.

¹⁶⁷ Runnalls, “Towns and Plays,” p. 63.

¹⁶⁸ Graham Runnalls, “The Catalogue of the Tours Bookseller and Late Medieval French Drama,” *Le moyen français* 11 (1982), 112–28; repr. in *Etudes*, pp. 397–411 at 399–400. My discussion of the Tours catalogue is based on an independent assessment of the edition by Achille Chereau, *Catalogue d’un marchand libraire du XVe siècle tenant boutique à Tours* (Paris, 1868).

¹⁶⁹ Runnalls, “Catalogue,” pp. 408–9.

of plays like *Le pelerinage saint Jacques* and *Theobaldus* are reminiscent of well-known versified *miracula* from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and even suggested that they could be “mises en mystère” of those texts.¹⁷⁰ Given what we have learned about the manuscript presentation of plays and their companion pieces, this rings true; it is likely that little alteration would be needed in order to bring them into line with the theatrical expectations of their age. Furthermore, I noted above that the campaign to clarify *Le garçon et l'aveugle* was carried out at about the same time that the Tours catalogue was put together—the very time when the appetite for farces was sharpened by the book trade, but when the oaths sworn “by God’s ass” (“cul bieu”) in the thirteenth century had to be altered to read “by God’s death” (“mort bieu”) in the sixteenth.¹⁷¹

As for the “unknown” plays *Le pelerinage du corps* and *Le pelerinage de l'ame*, which Runnalls says “make one think of Guillaume Digulleville’s narrative allegorical *Pelerinages* of the mid-fourteenth century,” they are explicitly identified by Chereau as scripts representing a “transformation en mystère” of the tripartite verse romance composed by Guillaume Deguilleville, a monk of Chaalis who died in 1363. This work as a whole comprised some 35,000 octosyllabic verses (“assez mauvais” in the estimation of Chereau), and at least some portion of it was preserved in one of the manuscripts for sale in the same shop.¹⁷² Indeed, a contemporary manuscript of the third part, known as *Le pelerinage de Nostre Seigneur*, is presently preserved in the Bibliothèque municipale d’Arras and is fully rubricated, as if for performance. Maybe it was conceived as a play in the first place: the narrator, called *Actor* in the rubrics, plays multiple roles in this representation of Christ’s ministry, death, and Resurrection (torturer, disciple, thief), and in these different guises interacts with other characters, human and divine.¹⁷³

Some of those missing plays may yet appear, if we learn to read the record with new eyes.

¹⁷⁰ Chereau, *Catalogue*, nos. 205–6.

¹⁷¹ See Fig. 6, p. 243b, line 12.

¹⁷² Chereau, *Catalogue*, nos. 203 and 204; cf. no. 109.

¹⁷³ This manuscript (only one of many) is Arras MS 845. It consists of 282 parchment leaves (measuring 330 × 230 mm.) and is decorated with hundreds of illuminated miniatures. The text in question appears on fols. 3–64, and the incipit reads: “Chi senfient li pelerinages no doulch sauveur Ihesu Xrist fais et compilez du moine de Chaalis apres ce quil eu fait le pelerinage humain & cetera.” The remainder of the codex contains devotional material in vernacular verse and is related to other books copied in the scriptorium of the Abbey of Saint-Vaast. I discuss the theatrical utility of such pieces in “A Medieval Stage,” pp. 214–27. Yet I should note that Runnalls’s examination of portions of a similar text (Paris BnF n.a.fr. 1263, fols. 15 and 16) leads him to the opposite conclusion: he argues that *because* these are fragments of Deguilleville’s *Pelerinage Ihesu Christ* and *Pelerinage de l'ame*—and because they contain narrative elements—they do not amount to “une pièce de théâtre.” See “Quatre fragments de manuscrits de mystères de la Passion,” in *Miscellanea di studi romanzi offerta a Giuliano Gasca Quierazza per il suo 65o compleanno*, ed. Anna Cornagliotti et al., 2 vols. (Turin, 1988), pp. 911–18 at 914–15. One wonders whether certain parts of long verse romances, such as these, could conceivably have been extracted from the parent text and joined together in new ways in order to heighten—or even create—a dramatic document.

Carol Symes is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Illinois, 309 Gregory Hall, 810 S. Wright St., Urbana, IL 61801 (e-mail: Symes@post.harvard.edu).