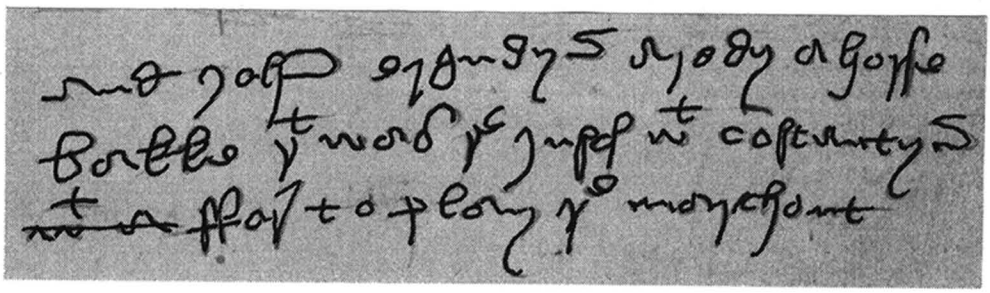
Functions of Medieval English Stage Directions

Analysis and Catalogue



And John ergudyn aredy a horse bakke y^{t} was y^{e} Justis w^{t} constantyn ffor to play y^{e} marchont

[And John Ergudyn, who was the Justice with Constantine, on horseback ready to play the merchant]

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Philip Butterworth

ROUTLEDGE

FUNCTIONS OF MEDIEVAL ENGLISH STAGE DIRECTIONS

When we speak of theatre, we think we know what a stage direction is: we tend to think of it as an authorial requirement, devised to be complementary to the spoken text and directed at those who put on a play as to what, when, where, how or why a moment, action or its staging should be completed. This is the general understanding to condition a theatrical convention known as the 'stage direction'. As such, we recognise that the stage direction is directed towards actors, directors, designers, and any others who have a part to play in the practical realisation of the play. And perhaps we think that this has always been the case. However, the term 'stage direction' is not a medieval one, nor does an English medieval equivalent term exist to codify the functions contained in extraneous manuscript notes, requirements, directions or records. The medieval English stage direction does not generally function in this way: it mainly exists as an observed record of earlier performance. There are examples of other functions, but even they are not directed at players or those involved in creating performance.

More than 2000 stage directions from 40 or so plays and cycles have been included in the catalogue of the volume, and over 400 of those have been selected for analysis throughout the work.

The purpose of this research is to examine the theatrical functions of medieval English stage directions as records of earlier performance. Examples of such functions are largely taken from outdoor scriptural plays. This book will be of great interest to students and scholars in theatre, medieval history and literature.

Philip Butterworth is a visiting scholar in Medieval Theatre at the University of Leeds, UK.

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FUNCTIONS OF MEDIEVAL ENGLISH STAGE DIRECTIONS

Analysis and Catalogue

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Cover image: Stage direction from *Beunans Meriasek*. Peniarth MS 105B, fol. 37r. © The National Library of Wales.

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PREFACE

Not all plays in the canon of English medieval theatre contain stage directions. Readers will be aware of a number of well-known plays that have not been included for analysis. This is because either they do not contain explicit stage directions or they do not present any of significance. Of the five extant English morality plays, only four, *The Castle of Perseverance*, *Mankind*, the *Pride of Life* and *Wisdom*, contain stage directions worthy of examination. *Everyman*, the fifth, contains only simple records of entrances and exits to and from unknown stages. In the catalogue of this work, it would be academically sound and administratively neat to be able to say that the work presents coverage of all medieval English stage directions. But there are many stage directions, important in their context, that simply determine comings and goings, in both their Latin and English versions. Although I shall not ignore stage directions that simply record players 'entering' and 'exiting', I shall not concentrate on their examination.

I have imposed a restriction on the period under investigation, from the late fourteenth century to 1560. This is principally because of the difference in the nature and purpose of so-called stage directions prior to 1560 and those that appear after this date. The date is not a watertight one, and exceptions occur around this time. Stage directions that appear after this date, into the seventeenth century, have been admirably considered by Alan Dessen, Linda McJannet, Tiffany Stern and Leslie Thomson.

Some modern theatrical terminology is used in this work in relation to medieval theatrical processes. These are terms not used in the medieval era. As such they are used as a shorthand to refer to medieval roles, processes and conventions. They should be regarded with appropriate scepticism and suspicion in order to avoid superimposing unacknowledged modern perceptions on to medieval English practice. For a discussion of the inappropriate use of modern theatrical terminology in the context of medieval practice, see the Introduction in my *Staging Conventions in Medieval English Theatre*.

More than 2000 stage directions have been listed in the catalogue, and over 400 of those have been selected for analysis throughout the work.


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PRELUDE

This work examines early English explicit stage directions in use before 1560. The evidence to be examined consists of the stage directions themselves. These selected stage directions not only determine the evidence to be examined but also condition the framework by which examination is to take place. They determine the content and issues drawn from some 2000 stage directions contained in the accompanying catalogue. Stage-direction content has dictated division and organisation of the contained subject matter into eight chapters that encompass the principal recorded features of theatre in performance. These include the actions of players, player–spectator relationships, staging conventions and recorded practice. The range of topics delivered by these eight chapters is not a theoretically determined construction but a theatrically sequential one arising from the importance of theatrical criteria dictated by production.

In Chapter 1, 'Observers, Options and Beneficiaries of Stage Directions', the function of observing and recording action is identified as the principal function of medieval English stage directions, with information only tangentially aimed at organisational personnel in a position to affect subsequent performance. Chapter 2, 'Didacticism', discusses the importance of didactic conventions embedded in explicit stage directions to promote teaching, instruction, learning and devotion through 'extraneous parts'[1] such as the expositor, the narrator and the conveyour. Analogous functions are drawn upon from *The Persian Passion Play* (*Ta'zieh*) to amplify and explain some English conventions. The contractual arrangements between players and spectators established through the exercise of 'agreed pretence'[2] are discussed in Chapter 3, 'The Nature of Pretence', in relation to the use of representation, signs, symbols and signalling readiness for action. In Chapter 4, 'Biblical and Other Narrative Sources', stage direction adherence to narrative sources is examined together with the function of stage directions that make comments upon the narrative. Here, the concept and practice of 'vanishing' is discussed.

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Actions of denominating space are conducted in Chapter 5, 'Spatial Practices', through records of walking around, pomping, parading and boasting; coming and going, voyding, avoyding and devoyding; going up and down and going home to tents and scaffolds. Action leading to the establishment of conventions is recorded in Chapter 6, 'Characteristics of Playing', through the creation of stillness, silence, waiting; sorrow, sobbing, wringing of hands and wailing; wonderment, smiling and laughing; astonishment and anger; group voices and simultaneous and sudden action. Chapter 7, 'Playing Alone', is concerned with the action of the player playing alone with no others present and the convention of playing alone in the presence of others; additionally, accustomed conventions of being seen and not being seen, listening, hearing and not being heard are given prominence. The roles of banns players, prologue and epilogue players, expositors, narrators and storytellers are discussed in relation to stations and processions. Additional and alternatively named versions of properties are recorded in Chapter 8, 'Ornaments and Effects', as ornaments, implements, appurtenances, utensils, stock and parcels. The relationships between ornaments and effects are discussed in relation to the Star of Bethlehem and effects using taut cords; cloud effects; use of pulleys and block and tackle arrangements; knives, swords and spears and the processes of boiling and burning.

Thus, given these points of focus, I shall concentrate my discussion on the reconsidered criteria that determine the purpose and function of pre-1560 English stage directions as the kind of project that Linda McJannet, in her work on Elizabethan stage directions, describes as one where she makes 'no claim to have described the full range and variety of medieval directions, though this strikes me as a fascinating and worthwhile project'.[3]

Theatrically speaking, we all think we know what an explicit stage direction is: we tend to think of it as an authorial requirement, devised to be complementary to the spoken text and directed at those who put on a play as to what, when, where, how or why a moment, action or its staging should be completed.[4] This is the generally understood term to determine a theatrical convention known as the 'stage direction', the more modern extremities of which may be demonstrated by the descriptive fullness of stage directions provided by George Bernard Shaw and the brevity of stage directions prescribed in the plays of Harold Pinter. Shaw's use of stage directions has frequently been criticised for being overly prescriptive, leaving no room for directors and actors to create and interpret the text. He considered it his responsibility as a dramatist to provide such staging detail through stage directions. Pinter, on the other hand, has been both criticised and praised for the brevity of his one-word stage directions, often requiring the actor to, simply, 'pause' or engage in 'silence'. Both dramatists provide strong contextual reasons for the purpose and character of their stage directions. Shaw's purpose in his use of stage directions is explained in correspondence with Henry Arthur Jones in 1894:

> I don't agree at all about the stage directions. They may bother *you*; but they make to the ordinary reader all the difference between an intelligible and readable drama and a mere dialogue [...] Take the ordinary actor at a

> rehearsal. How often does he divine without a hint from you which way your lines are to be spoken in scenes which are neither conventional nor otherwise obvious? [...] But I defy anybody to convey a complete impression of an acted play by dialogue alone. It is an attempt to do so that produces the literary play.[5]

Shaw clearly takes the stance that the playwright's use of stage directions is to condition through description rather than guide actors in their performance. In a letter to Louis Wilkinson he states: 'A stage direction need not tell an actor *how* to act: it should tell him *what* he is to act. There is only one effect to be produced; but there may be fifty different ways of producing it'.[6] He is also conscious that his plays may be simply read, and his prescriptive stage directions are necessary 'for the mass of readers who live too far from theatres to make the acquaintance of dramatic works by witnessing actual performance'.[7] Pinter, however, provides more leeway for actors to interpret his stage directions. Requirements for the 'pause' and the 'silence' can only be made theatrically meaningful if the modern actor can make them so through feeling, rhythm and timing. These stage directions in Pinter plays are effectively elastic in their required responses.

However, the term 'stage direction' is not a medieval one, nor does an equivalent English medieval term exist to codify the functions contained in extraneous manuscript notes, requirements or records that may be designated as stage directions. It needs to be recognised that the term 'stage direction' is a designation imposed upon medieval scribal and theatrical practice. This condition provides a caveat to my use of the term 'medieval stage direction'.

The genesis of the term appears to be that coined by Alexander Pope when he referred to staging notes as 'notes of direction' in his *The Works of Shakespear in Six Volumes*: 'And in others the notes of direction to the *Property-men* for their *Moveables*, and to the *Players* for their *Entries*, are inferred into the Text, thro' the ignorance of the Transcribers'.[8] The earliest English record of the term 'stage direction' appears to be that coined by Lewis Theobald in his work *Shakespeare Restored*.[9] Theobald is critical of the misuse of the convention that the 'stage direction' represents when he says: 'I must now pass over to another Species of Errors [...] where Stage-Directions are either misplac'd, or erroneously adopted into the Text'.[10] Without using the term 'stage direction', Thomas Hawkins acknowledged the difference between the conventional text and those additional requirements that were considered to condition stage action when he stated: 'the Knights are directed "to walk about the Stage," while "Mary and the infant are conveyed into Egypt" in the *Slaughter of the Innocents* (1512).[11] In 1774 Thomas Warton, in his *The History of English Poetry*, referred to a stage direction in the Chester Drapers Playe of *Adam and Eve; Cain and Abel* (Play 2) by saying: 'They propose, according to the stage-direction, to make themselves *subligacula a foliis quibus tegamus Pudenda*. Cover their nakedness with leaves, and converse with God'.[12] The term 'stage direction' was sufficiently well established by 1790, when Edmond Malone, in his edition of *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare*, wrote: 'That the very few stage-directions

which the old copies exhibit, were not taken from our author's manuscripts, but furnished by the players' and 'All the stage-directions therefore throughout this work I have considered as wholly in my power, and have regulated them in the best manner I could'.[13] Malone considered stage directions to be poorly represented in the early manuscripts and not written by the authors but 'furnished by the players' and, by implication, providing authority to action. Pope also considered 'notes of direction' to be addressed to 'the Players for their Entries' together with the 'Property-men for their Moveables' (properties). Theobald interpreted the function of stage directions to be concerned with 'a Memorandum to the Promptor'. Malone clearly expected stage directions to be sufficient in number and quality to direct the player and concomitant action. Thus, by 1790, the identity and function of the English stage direction had been established and developed as a means of directing players and all forms of staged action. Pope, Theobald, Hawkins, Warton and Malone seemingly took their interpretations of stage direction functions from the late sixteenth century onwards. Even though the term 'stage direction' is not recorded before 1726, the function of directing players and all forms of staged action can be traced back to *c.*1560. Before this date, the so-called explicit English stage direction performed different functions. Identification and analysis of these functions and their influence on the nature of medieval English theatre are the subject and purpose of this work.

I propose to demonstrate that the predominant function of explicit medieval English stage directions was to record observed action from earlier performances. Focus on the dominant function of these stage directions has not been given due recognition or attention. It has generally been assumed that pre-1560 stage directions were addressed to players in the manner of modern stage directions. But this is not the case.

The selected period under examination ranges from the late fourteenth century to the mid sixteenth century—specifically, 1560. This artificial cut-off date is one that I have selected because it represents a point at which the principal function of the stage direction had, by this time, evolved into the kind that we recognise in more recent theatre. That is, a requirement to direct those who intend to put on the play as to how, when, why and where they should do it. The post-1560 stage direction projects action forward; it does not, like the medieval stage direction, refer to previously performed action, and this difference makes for a major distinction in function between pre- and post-1560 stage directions.[14] Auréliu Weiss, in her early twentieth-century generalised consideration of the stage direction, states: 'The function of stage directions is to tell enough about what has already taken place to make what is about to happen easily comprehensible'.[15] Although this perspective on the function of stage directions does not refer to previous action, it does take account of existing circumstances as it builds towards knowledge of projected action. In this work I shall make exceptions to the 1560 demarcation limit with reference to the York, Chester and Coventry cycles of mystery plays, which were effectively suppressed in 1568, 1576 and 1579, respectively, and the 'plaie commonlie called Corpus Christi plaie [...] in the towne of Wakefeld', which

was similarly suppressed in 1576.[16] It is not clear or proven that the 'plaie commonlie called Corpus Christi plaie [...] in the towne of Wakefeld' is the same as the *Towneley* collection of plays which purportedly belonged to the city of Wakefield, although it is the stage directions in that collection that I shall discuss. The long histories of each of these cycles and collections projected beyond 1560 into the 1570s, and in the case of the Chester cycle the play texts were further modified and recorded in the 1590s. The other major collections of stage directions occur in the *N.town Plays* and the Cornish plays of the *Cornish Ordinalia*, *Beunans Meriasek: The Life of St. Meriasek*, *Bewnans Ke: The Life of St. Kea* and the *Creacion of the World*.[17] The auspices of the first three of these Cornish collections occur before 1560, and those of the last one, the *Creacion of the World*, after this date in 1611. Individual plays containing explicit stage directions that predate 1560 also occur in the broader East Anglian region.

Some stage directions in these predominantly outdoor plays present functions over and above the task of recording action from earlier performance. For instance, plays of *The Chester Cycle*, in their late sixteenth-century manuscripts, clearly present some stage directions recorded before 1560 as records of performance and other post-1560 stage directions addressed to those who present the plays. These Chester manuscripts may therefore be seen to straddle my 1560 demarcation in layering the provision of records of earlier performance with the function of promoting future requirements for presentation. They thus present a range of stage directions that may be seen to exhibit different functions in transition, where the intended recipients of stage directions change from those benefiting from records of earlier action, referred to by Linda McJannet and Walter J. Ong as 'producers', to those employed as production organisers and players.[18] Stage directions in the *York Cycle*, the *N.town Plays* and the *Towneley Plays* all predate 1560, as do their recording functions. Similarly, the *Cornish Ordinalia* (fifteenth century), *Beunans Meriasek: The Life of St. Meriasek* (1504), *Bewnans Ke: The Life of St. Kea* (1453–60) also contain stage directions that principally function as records.

These functions have determined my choice of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century plays that contain explicit stage directions which identify and record observed action. The function of recording observed action makes for a more secure strengthening of stage direction content as evidence of what actually happened in performance. Carol Symes demonstrated her concern for the possible gap between that which was supposed to have happened in the performance of medieval English plays and that which did happen.[19] Had she concentrated on the evidence produced by explicit stage directions as records of observed performance, she might have located a means of clarifying and confirming previously staged action. Such observation is not qualitatively different from the sort of action that might be described as an eyewitness account. The observer's function is to record that which he sees and hears. That which he records arises from his deliberate task to observe the performed action. He is not an accidental eyewitness of the kind that may have been a passing witness to an accident or crime.[20] He is a deliberately employed eyewitness of the performed event. Given the formality of his appointment, is he

seen by those whom he is observing? Does his visible presence affect that which he observes? How do the players and others involved in the production regard him? The observer's role is to record that which he sees and hears, and, as John Berger observes: 'We only see what we look at. To look is an act of choice'.[21] From an observational standpoint, Berger's assessment may also be reconsidered to apply to the reception of sound as: 'We only listen to what we hear. To listen is an act of choice'. In the case of the medieval observer's role, he chooses to look at and listen to the action of the play in front of him, and what he sees and listens to is not only affected by his choice, it is also determined by those who put on the play and the way the activity is chosen to be focused for him and others. According to Richard Tauerner: 'One eye wytnesse, is of more value, then tenne eare wytnesses, y^{t} is to saye, Farre more credite is to be gyuen to suche as reaporte the thynge they sawe wyth theyr eyes, thā to such as speake but by heare saye'.[22] Given the purpose of the observer's role, his witness and record of the performed action are likely to be of a high order.

It is not always clear whether explicit stage directions were provided by the author, someone else or the scribe(s). Given that the scribe's function was that of a copyist, it is less likely that he provided the content of the explicit stage direction. So, provision would seem to lie with the author or 'someone else'. And, of course, Malone erroneously considered them to be 'furnished by the players'. There is often more than one scribe involved in the completion of a manuscript. There are many examples of this condition, but the position with the Cornish *Beunans Meriasek* provides a typical example of the layering of information and commensurate evidence provided by sequential scribal activity. Myrna May Combellack-Harris, in her *Critical Edition of Beunans Meriasek*, identifies the scribal contributions as follows:

> On internal evidence, it would appear that Scribe A was responsible for the main writing down or copying of the text, certainly from pp. 11–179, that Scribe B wrote down the first ten pages, that Scribe C added some stage directions to the existing ones which Scribe B had included in his text, and that there is a possible fourth scribe, Scribe D, who wrote in some comments and made some doodles (or tried to overwrite something which had previously faded almost away). Examination of the binding shows that undoubtedly, the first ten pages are written on their own quires, and that the watermarks of those quires differ from those of the paper on which the main text is written. [...] My conjecture, from examination of the watermarks, the binding of the quires, the texture of the papers and the colour and fadings of the inks, as well as the condition of the early pages of the manuscript, is that Scribe A wrote the whole script. Scribe C wrote the extra stage-directions and made some corrections in the script. He was possibly a producer, or a potential one. B found the manuscript, some years later, to be getting damp and faded towards the front, and he undertook to re-write the first ten pages. (It will be noted that none of Scribe C's work appears until the eleventh

> page, after which it is consistent throughout the manuscript). D made some very slight alterations and remarks on the manuscript at some point. The existence of Scribe D is very dubious indeed, and is discussed fully in Appendix B [of the thesis].[23]

Subsequent editors of medieval plays have often considered it necessary to add their own stage directions to original or existing ones where it is thought that insufficient staging information is provided. Such editors have created amended stage directions on the mistaken premise that the original stage directions should be complete in directing subsequent action. They assume that the original stage directions were intended to function like stage directions of today and thus fall short in providing adequate staging or performance information. Mostly, the newly created stage directions are spurious additions that impose unacknowledged modern staging preconceptions on the originals or make obvious statements that may be deduced by anyone attempting to understand the text.[24] Fortunately, most scholarly editors present their interpolated and extended stage directions differently from original ones by, for example, enclosing the additions in square brackets.[25] In my analysis of medieval stage directions I shall therefore attempt to distinguish between original stage directions in manuscripts, later manuscript additions, first-printed texts and later editorial treatments. I shall largely disregard the latter. Where a named author is declared, and is responsible for the printing of his text, it is almost certain that he wrote the stage directions and determined their function. In such cases, the purposeful correspondence between the text and its stage directions was deliberate and synchronised in such a way as to promote the play and its production. The same point cannot be reliably made in relation to the anonymously written play and its stage directions. The principal named authors in this work are Medwall, Skelton, Rastell, Bale and Redford.[26] Each of their plays contain explicit stage directions seemingly written by them. Had Salz (n. 2 above) been specifically referring to the stage directions of these authors when he wrote 'With a few notable exceptions, stage directions in plays from the medieval and early modern periods in Europe indicate little beyond entrances and exits', he may have been reasonably accurate, for the stage directions in other writers' work are limited in scope and mainly targeted at ways of coming into and retiring from focus or action. Stress is laid upon the manner of arrival or leaving of scenes which tend to be described and emphasised. Another distinctive feature of these stage directions is that they refer to indoor performances, whereas plays produced outdoors are predominantly written by unidentified authors. It is also the case that plays written for outdoor performance tend to be scriptural in content and purpose. Thus, these kinds of plays written for outdoor performance provide the principal focus for the vivid and varied volume of stage directions to be examined in this work.

Ostensibly, the explicit medieval stage direction is addressed to those who put on the play or cause to put on the play. If this is the case, why do many explicit stage directions appear to be incomplete in their contained information and instruction? Part of the reason is because the addressees are not normally the players. Most

plays written for outdoor performance contain stage directions that were written as records of earlier performed events: they were not written as directions or instructions to players as to how they should play.[27] This is why stage directions in these plays appear to be incomplete when they are assumed to be constructed to direct players. The reason for apparently incomplete and obscure stage directions involved with outdoor production is that they are made by observers who do not necessarily understand the requirement or do not know of the practical or technical means of delivering the outcome.[28] The observers simply record what they see and hear.

A clear example of this condition occurs in a stage direction in the Chester Drapers Playe (Adam Cain) where the relationship between the observer's function as a recorder and the nature of his recorded observation make for a generalised record that does not establish theatrical relevance: 'Then goinge from the place where he was, commeth to the place where he createth Adam'.[29] This stage direction no doubt accurately records the action as seen by the observer but, because the observation relates to a given performance that the reader of the stage direction may not have seen, the relationship between the recorded 'places' is not described with sufficient detail to establish the theatrical means by which the purpose or significance of the description can or could be achieved. Thus, the stage direction is of no use to the player, even if he had been the presumed recipient of it. The same sort of condition might be seen to apply through two identical stage directions in *The Castle of Perseverance*, where it is recorded 'Tunc pugnabunt diu'[30] (Then they shall fight for a long time). There is no sense in these stage directions as to what constitutes a long time. And there would be no value in these descriptions as instructions to players, who would need more specific information to determine how long they should fight or what was required of their fighting skill. The recorded length of time is that which the observer perceives as a long time within the context of the observed play.

Medieval stage directions record what has previously happened and they do this somewhat indiscriminately and interchangeably in the past and present tenses. Most stage directions are written in the present tense, with fewer examples recorded in the past tense. Both tenses are employed because the observer records what he sees in the present tense, but his purpose is to create a record of what has happened and this may thus be recorded in the past tense. The present tense records action that is happening at those points in the play which thus become recorded observations. Different tenses are sometimes used in the same stage direction. For instance, in the *Ordinale de Resurrexione Domini Nostri Jhesu Christi* of the *Cornish Ordinalia*, a stage direction uses both the future simple and present tenses in saying: 'dimittet eum et recedit non procul' (He shall let him go and he retires to no great distance).[31] Other utilised tenses such as the past historic and subjunctive will be seen throughout this work.[32]

Notes

1 Martha Gause McCaulley, 'Function and Content of the Prologue, Chorus, and other Non-Organic Elements in English Drama, from the Beginnings to 1642', in *Studies*

in English Drama, First Series, ed. by Allison Gaw (New York: Appleton, University of Pennsylvania, 1917), pp. 161–258.

2 The fundamental theatrical concept of 'agreed pretence' is discussed in some of my earlier work: Philip Butterworth, *Staging Conventions in Medieval English Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), Introduction; Philip Butterworth 'Magic through Sound: Illusion, Deception and Agreed Pretence', *Medieval English Theatre* 21 (1999), 52–65; Philip Butterworth, *Magic on the Early English Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) pp. 1–2; *European Theatre Performance Practice, 1400–1580*, edited by Philip Butterworth and Katie Normington (Ashgate: Farnham, 2014), pp. 347–367.

3 Linda McJannet, *The Voice of Elizabethan Stage Directions: The Evolution of a Theatrical Code* (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 1999), p. 30.

4 *OED Online*, *stage direction n.* (a) a direction inserted in a written or printed play where it is thought necessary to indicate the appropriate action, etc.; (b) stage-management (also *fig.*); *The Oxford Companion to the Theatre*, ed. by Phyllis Hartnoll, 4th edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983; repr.1988), pp. 787–88: 'Stage Directions, notes added to the script of a play to convey information about its performance not already explicit in the dialogue. Generally speaking, they are concerned with the actors' movements and the scenery or stage effects'; this edited and shortened entry concerning stage directions was written as a longer entry in earlier editions by Richard Southern and displayed little of his obvious understanding of medieval theatre for he referenced his definition to later Elizabethan and proscenium theatre forms, as does Hartnoll in this edition. The same is the case in Phyllis Hartnoll and Peter Found in *The Concise Oxford Companion to the Theatre*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), online ebook. Most commentators who attempt to define 'stage directions' do not include medieval contributions and usually go back to the Greeks or late sixteenth-century theatre for their evidence. David Z. Salz writes: 'With a few notable exceptions, stage directions in plays from the medieval and early modern periods in Europe indicate little beyond entrances and exits': *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre & Performance*, ed. by Dennis Kennedy, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), II, p. 1277. Salz's so-called 'notable exceptions' form the majority of stage directions examined in this work.

5 Doris Arthur Jones, *The Life and Letters of Henry Arthur Jones* (London: Victor Gallancz, 1930), p. 146; Erika Meier, 'Realism and Reality: The Function of the Stage Direction in the New Drama from Thomas William Robertson to George Bernard Shaw' (published doctoral thesis, University of Basel, Winterthur, 1967), p. 243, later published with the same title by the Cooper Monographs (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1967).

6 *Frank Harris on Bernard Shaw: An Unauthorised Biography Based on Firsthand Information with a Postscript by Mr Shaw* (London: Victor Gallancz, 1931), p. 245.

7 Ibid.

8 *The Works of Shakespear in Six Volumes*, ed. by Mr. [Alexander] Pope (London: Jacob Tonson, 1723), I, p. xviii [the collection is dated 1725; the first volume is dated 1723].

9 Lewis Theobald, *Shakespeare restored: or, A Specimen of the Many Errors, as well Committed, as Unamended, by Mr. Pope in his late Edition of this Poet. Designed not only to correct the said Edition, but to restore the True Reading of Shakespeare in all the Editions ever yet publish'd* (London: R. Franklin, T. Woodman, Charles Davis, and S. Chapman, 1726); see also Lewis Theobald, *The Works of Shakespeare*, 7 vols (London: A. Bettesworth, C. Hitch, J. Tonson, F. Clay, W. Feales, and R. Wellington, 1733), V, p. 443; VII, p. 295.

10 Theobald, *Shakespeare restored*, pp. 154, 138, 157, 158.

11 Thomas Hawkins, *The Origin of the English Drama*, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1773), I, p. vii; *The Digby Plays Facsimiles of the plays in Bodley MSS Digby 133 and e Museo 160*, intro. by Donald C. Baker and J. L. Murphy, Medieval Drama Facsimiles, III (Leeds: School of English, University of Leeds, 1976), fol. 150^{v}; *The Late Medieval Religious Plays of Bodleian MSS Digby 133 and e Museo 160*, ed. by Donald C. Baker, John L. Murphy and Louis B. Hall Jr., Early English Text Society OS 283 (Oxford: Oxford Univerity Press, 1982), pp. 96–115 (p. 104).

12 Thomas Warton, *The History of English Poetry, from the Close of the Eleventh to the Commencement of the Eighteenth Century*, 4 vols (London: Dodsley, Walter, Becket, Robson, Robinson, Bew and Fletcher, 1774–81), I, p. 243, n.t: II, pp. 362, 363, n.b: III, pp. 219, 380, n.m. [Volume 4 was not completed].

13 Edmond Malone, *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare*, 10 vols (London: J. Rivington and others, 1790), p. lviii; see also Edmund Malone, *Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the English Stage, and of the Economy and Usages of the Ancient Theatres in England* (Basil: J. C. Tourneisen, 1800), pp. 11, 13 where he repeats use of the term 'stage direction' and also coins the term 'scenical direction', p. 12; Robert Dodsley, in his 12-volume edition of *A Select Collection of Old Plays* (London: R. Dodsley, 1744), does not use the term 'stage direction'. The earliest edition of Dodsley's works to make use of the term occurs in *A Select Collection of Old Plays in Twelve Volumes*, ed. by Robert Dodsley, 3rd edn, rev. by Isaac Reed, Octavious Gilchrist and the Editor, 12 vols (London: Septimus Prowett, 1825–27), IV, p. 225n: 'This stage direction is not in any of the old copies. It is however a necessary explanation'; XI, p. 64n: 'This necessary stage direction is not marked in either of the old Copies'. The term 'stage direction' also occurs in William Hazlitt's subsequent edition of Dodsley's works, *A Select Collection of Old English Plays*, 15 vols, 4th edn (London: Reeves and Turner, 1874), IV, p. 154, VI, pp. 21, 318n, 488n.

14 See Robert Carl Johnson, 'Stage Directions in the Tudor Interlude', *Theatre Notebook*, 26.1 (Autumn 1971), 36–42.

15 Auréliu Weiss, 'The Author, the Work, and the Actor: G. B. Shaw and Stage Directions', *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, 8.1 (January 1968), 49–53.

16 An account in the York *House Books* for 1568 records the effective suppression of the *York Corpus Christi Play*: 'Assemblyd in the Counsell Chambre of owsebrige of this Citie/ whan & where my L*ord* Mayo*u*r declaryd to these presens/ that dyverse co*m*moners of this Citie were muche desyerous to haue Corpuscrysty play this yere/ wherunto these presens woll not agree, but that the book thereof shuld be p*e*rused/ and otherwaise amendyd/ before it were playd'.The play book was subsequently not released by Dean Hutton: *Records of Early English Drama: York*, ed. by Alexandra F. Johnston and Margaret Rogerson (Dorrell), 2 vols (Toronto, Buffalo, London: Manchester University Press; University of Toronto Press, 1979), I, p. 354; *Records of Early English Drama: Cheshire including Chester*, ed. by Elizabeth Baldwin, Lawrence M. Clopper, and David Mills, 2 vols (Toronto Buffalo: The British Library; University of Toronto Press, 2007), I, pp. 161–2, 168–74; *Records of Early English Drama: Coventry*, ed. by R. W. Ingram (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1981), p. xix; Harold C. Gardiner, *Mysteries' End: An Investigation of the Last Days of the Medieval Religious Stage*, Yale Studies in English, 103 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1943; repr. Archon: 1967), p. 78.

17 The only other possible evidence of another play is the fragment that is known as *The Middle Cornish Charter Endorsement* or *The Middle Cornish Interlude*. Interpretation of the text as evidence is divided between those who consider the text to have been part of a drama and those who do not. See *The Middle Cornish Charter Endorsement: The Making of a Marriage in Medieval Cornwall*, ed. by Lauran Toorians (Innsbruck: Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft, 1991); Evelyn S. Newlyn, 'The Middle Cornish Interlude: Genre and Tradition', *Comparative Drama*, 30.2 (Summer 1996), pp. 266–81: Newlyn makes a compelling case for this fragment to be considered as a player's part consisting of three 'groups of spoken lines' (speeches) that are divided by 'bars' to indicate 'pauses for responses by other characters'. The case for 'pauses' does not seem appropriate, although these bars may well indicate a replacement for cue words as found in other extant parts. It might therefore be expected to find 'bars' written at the equivalent points in the other players' written parts—if they existed. See also David N. Klausner, 'Drama in Cornwall, Wales, Ireland, Scotland and Brittany' in *The Routledge Research Companion to Early Drama and Performance*, ed. by Pamela M. King (London, New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 60–80 (p. 63): writing of stage directions in the Cornish drama Klausner says: 'This

is an area of research in serious need of attention, for all the Cornish plays provide extensive stage directions that have largely been ignored'. My purpose in this work embraces an attempt to address this omission.

18 See McJannet, *The Voice of Elizabethan Stage Directions*, pp. 38, 42–44; Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London, New York: Routledge, 1982; Methuen, repr. 2002), p. 120.

19 Carol Symes, 'The Medieval Archive and the History of Theatre: Assessing the Written and Unwritten Evidence for Premodern Performance', *Theatre Survey*, 52.1 (May 2011), pp. 29–58.

20 Eyewitness accounts and their credibility are most frequently scrutinised in legal cases in courts of law. The science of the reliability of eyewitness accounts has undergone much investigation in recent years. See: the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, 'Improving Witness Testimony', *Postnote*, 607 (July 2019), 1–6, www.parliament.uk/post [accessed 9/7/21]; Adele Quigley-McBride, Laura Smalarz, and Gary Wells, 'Eyewitness Testimony', *Oxford Bibliographies* (2018), DOI:10.1093/OBO9780199828340–0026 [accessed 9/7/21]; Cara Laney Thede and Elizabeth Loftus, 'False Memory', *Oxford Bibliographies* (2018), DOI:10.1093/OBO/9780199828340–0216 [accessed 9/7/21].

21 John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (Harmondsworth: British Broadcasting Corporation; Penguin Books, 1972; repr. 1982), p. 8.

22 Richard Tauerner, *Proverbes or adagies with newe addicions gathered out of the Chiliades of Erasmus* (London: Ricardum Bances [Richard Bankes], 1539), sig. F. iii^{v}.

23 Myrna May Combellack-Harris, 'A Critical Edition of Beunans Meriasek' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Exeter, 1985), pp. 11–12; see also *Beunans Meriasek: The Life of Saint Meriasek, Bishop and Confessor. A Cornish Drama*, ed. and trans. by Whitley Stokes (London: Trübner, 1872).

24 For examples of this kind of misdirected intervention, see Dodsley, *A Select Collection of Old Plays*, XI (1827), p. 32, n. 23: 'The stage direction ought to run *Exeunt all excepting Queen Elinor, Jean and Glocester*'; p. 82, n. 104: 'The whole of this stage direction is confused: it ought to run [...]'; p. 96, n. 135: 'In this stage direction perhaps the reading ought to be "Enter Messenger, *express* from Mortimer"'; Robert Lee Ramsay, in his introduction to *Magnyfycence*, regards the play to be 'strikingly poor in its indications of scene and staging [...] No part of the play has suffered more at the hands of the printers than the stage directions [...] and a great many of the most necessary directions have been omitted'. Ramsay's judgement is based on the presumption that medieval stage directions were the same as modern ones in their function of directing players in their action. He brings unacknowledged modern criteria to bear on medieval practice: John Skelton, *Magnyfycence: A Moral Play*, ed. by Robert Lee Ramsay, the Early English Text Society ES98 (London: Oxford University Press, 1908; repr. 1958), p. xliv; for more cautious and nuanced thinking on this issue, see David Bevington, 'Drama Editing and Its Relation to Recent Trends in Literary Criticism' in *Editing Early English Drama: Special Problems and New Directions*, ed. by A. F. Johnston (New York: AMS Press, 1987), p. 31.

25 See, for example, Paula Neuss, *The Creacion of the World: A Critical Edition and Translation*, ed. and trans. by Paula Neuss (New York, London: Garland, 1983), p. lxxx: 'Stage-directions, which are mainly written in the right-hand margin of the manuscript [...] have been placed next to the line to which they appear to refer, although they sometimes occur earlier in the manuscript for the convenience of the stage-manager, or occupy a whole stanza's space. A few directions have been added to help the reader visualise the action: these appear in square brackets'. Although Neuss's intention is clear and laudable, she does not consistently use square brackets to distinguish her added stage directions from those of the manuscript. She introduces two stage directions (not in Stokes) at ll. 535 and 551 (not in square brackets).

26 The descriptions of John Shirley as a copyist/recorder of Lydgate's texts bear some superficial resemblance in descriptive terms to those of recorded stage directions, although Shirley appears not to have had much interest in performance itself. Shirley's annotations

are not records or descriptions of action and are therefore excluded from this work. See John Lydgate, *Mummings and Entertainments*, ed. by Claire Sponsler, TEAMS Middle English Text Series, Medieval Institute Publications (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 2010); Claire Sponsler, *The Queen's Dumbshows*: *John Lydgate and the Making of Early Theater* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), pp. 21–25.

27 This is a conclusion that I came to in a paper I offered to one of the early Medieval English Theatre (METh) meetings at Westfield College in 1981 when discussing stage directions in the *Towneley Plays*: 'What we could have here are not stage directions as we know them but a record of the event or moment previously created' [my paper]; Peter Happé, 'Stage Directions in Lyndsay's Ane Satire of the Thrie Estaitis', *The Best Pairt of our Play: Essays presented to John J. McGavin*, *Medieval English Theatre*, 37, 2 parts (2015), 57–72: Happé considers the conception of stage directions to be twofold: 'Firstly the author, or someone connected with the production, needs to prescribe details which are necessary for the enactment, or, in a complementary sense, the stage directions might be a record of what had actually been done onstage'. I put more stress on explicit stage directions as observations, descriptions and records and not as directions to players.

28 Elisabeth Dutton, in her 'The Croxton Play of the Sacrament' in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama*, ed. by Thomas Betteridge and Greg Walker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 68, refers to stage directions in the play being 'more descriptive than practical, that they can describe the action of the play as if it were real, rather than acknowledging its theatrical illusion and giving any hint as to how the illusion is to be achieved: these might well be stage directions which would be more useful to a reader, imagining a performance, than a troupe having to realize one'. This may well be the case. However, plays considered to be created for 'reading' as opposed to 'performance' are often cited by scholars when the evidence for their performance is not clearly demonstrated. Often, the assumption is that, if the play is not to be considered for its performance, then it must have been written for reading. These oppositional viewpoints miss recognition of stage directions as records of observed performance. What the observer records is 'real' in terms of described action.

29 Lumiansky, R. M. and David Mills, eds, *The Chester Mystery Cycle*, The Early English Text Society, 2 vols, SS 3, SS 9 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974 and 1986), I, p. 16.

30 *The Macro Plays The Castle of Perseverance Wisdom Mankind*, ed. by Mark Eccles, Early English Text Society, OS 262 (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 68, 73. See also Chapters 6 and 8.

31 Norris, Edwin, ed. and trans., *The Ancient Cornish Drama*, 2 vols (Oxford: University Press, 1859), II, p. 138.

32 See the notes provided by Michael Spence in the Introduction to the Catalogue.

1

OBSERVERS, OPTIONS AND BENEFICIARIES OF STAGE DIRECTIONS

Observers

Just as it is not always clear who provided explicit stage directions, it is similarly not always clear to whom medieval stage directions were addressed. Nor, indeed, are the purposes of such stage directions always transparent. On the face of it, many medieval stage directions appear to be addressed to the performer. This may be perceived to be so because of the practical information contained in them. However, as indicated in the Prelude, such practical details are often not sufficient to specifically direct the player or the action. The practical information generally exists because it has been witnessed in a previous performance, although its articulation is conditioned by descriptive incident of the kind that might be observable in performance but not as internal directives to the player. This implies that the writer of the stage direction may have observed the required outcome but not the means of its production. Thus it appears that the purpose of the stage direction is simply to record the details of earlier performance and, in doing so, fulfil official or religious requirements, and only by extension—if at all—to determine what could or should happen in subsequent performance.

In their introduction to the *York Play: A facsimile of British Libray MS Additional 35290*, Richard Beadle and Peter Meredith discuss the scribal progress of stage directions in the play and make the following distinction: 'Stage directions, or perhaps it would be more accurate to call them descriptions of stage action, have been added to a number of the pageants by later hands, among them John Clerke'.[1] This difference in the identification of stage directions may appear to be a simple one, but it is critical in determining the derivation, purpose and function of explicit medieval stage directions. Stage directions such as these exist by virtue of previously observed theatrical action. Thus, Beadle and Meredith's 'descriptions of stage

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action' point to a much more accurate identification of stage directions brought about by earlier observed performance.

This recognition partly answers the question 'Why were some stage directions written in Latin?' They were presumably written in Latin because the observer knew Latin and/or was expected to be able to operate in Latin as part of his formal or commissioned duties. It was the duty of John Clerke at York, 'seruaunt and deputy' to the common clerk, Miles Newton, whose task it was in 1542 to check players' performances against the city's text or register:

> Item p*ai*d to the s*er*uant of the co*m*mon Clerk for kepyng of the Regist*er* at the furst place where as ∧ ˜the play of Corp*us* chr*ist*i˜ [play] was playd of Corpus chr*ist*i day this yere accustomed xx d.[2]

John Clerke was responsible for including some of the stage directions or, more accurately, 'descriptions of stage action' in the York register.[3] The same, or similar, role is recorded in the Smiths Accounts at Coventry through payment to John Harryes: 'It' paid to John Harryes for berying of þ^{e} Orygynall þ^{t} day vj^{d}—1506. Resevyd amonge bredren and other good ffelowys toward the Orygynall ij^{s} ix^{d} in sums of 1d. & 2d each'.[4] At Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire, the Churchwardens' Book for 1500/1 records payment towards a 'playe book': 'Item paid uppon Wytson Mondaye for a playe book \ii^{d}/, the berer theroff \ii^{d}/, John Best ~~clerk and~~ taberer, the mynstrell \iii^{d}/'.[5] The apparent mistake in labelling 'John Best' as the 'clerk' does at least indicate the possible presence of a clerk, even if he is not John Best, with the task of bearing the 'playe book'. The book bearer at Bassingbourn is more clearly identified in 1511 as the priest, John Hobard: 'Item rec' off John Hobard, preste, towardes theys costes in all out of his labour for beryng the play booke, with iii^{d} for a bos' of malte, summa [2*s* 8*d*]'.[6] At Chester, the Cordwainers' and Shoemakers' Accounts for 1549–50 record payment to an unknown 'Reygenall beyrer xii d.'. Later, in 1572–73 and 1574–75 at Chester, the Bowyers', Fletchers', Coopers' and Stringers' Accounts identify payment to 'hugh sparke for rydyng [reading] of the Ryegenalle ij s.' and 'houghe sparke for redinge the regynall ij s.'.[7] What were the respective purposes of 'kepyng of the Regist*er* at the furst place', 'berying of þ^{e} Orygynall', 'beryng the play booke' and 'redinge the regynall' at York, Coventry, Bassingbourn and Chester? It appears that the occupants of these roles were relatively well paid for their reading and observational functions. The relatively substantial amounts paid to Hugh Sparke at Chester 'for redinge the regynall' (ij s), John Clerke at York for 'kepyng of the Regist*er* at the furst place' (xxd) and John Harryes at Coventry for 'berying of þ^{e} Orygynall þ^{t} day' (iv^{d} plus ii^{s} ix^{d} from 'other good ffelowys') suggest their roles required them to follow the performance by reading the master copy of the play. Checking the players' performances against the recorded text must have been the primary function, with the possible, but not inevitable, added task of prompting.[8] John Clerke, John Harryes, John Hobard, Hugh Sparke and possibly John Best were named and well-paid observers engaged in formal roles to carefully observe their respective performances and, as such, were

in prime positions to create stage directions from their observations. Most other observers were not named or even identified in their roles. Such observers may have come from diverse backgrounds and occupations, but their common task was a formal one, often requiring knowledge of Latin, determined and dictated by those who put on the plays or those from a larger authority who sanctioned the plays.

Optional Action

There are a number of stage directions that record optional opportunities as a means of realising their requirements. Such options seem to have existed because performance had been previously witnessed both with and without enactment of the discretionary action. The practical detail contained in the stage direction might initially suggest that it was the player who would most benefit from the direction, for it was he who was seemingly able to choose action from the options. However, the player was not the intended recipient of the stage direction. The purpose of the recorded stage direction appears to be simply that—to record previously witnessed action. In which case, the intended recipient of the stage direction appears to be someone with access to the manuscript, or, in Walter J. Ong's and Linda McJannet's terminology, the 'producer'.[9] It is not clear how the player was able to respond to the recorded options, although it is possible and likely that he was able to relate to customary practice as his guide.

The options are often conditional on the ability of the players or stage hands to produce the required action. For instance, in the Chester Goldsmythes Playe of the *Massacre of the Innocents* (Play 10), a stage direction records:

> Tunc ibunt et Angelus cantabit, 'Ecce dominus ascendet super nubem levem, et ingrediatur Egiptum, et movebuntur simulachra Egipti a facie domini exercituum'; et si fueri [fieri] poterit [cadet] aliqua statua sive imago.
>
> [Then they shall go, and the Angel shall sing: 'Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and is to come into Egypt; and the idols of Egypt shall be moved by the presence of the armies of the Lord'; and if it can be done, some statue or image shall fall.][10]

The imperative that 'some statue or image shall fall' is contained in Isaiah 19:1, and the stage direction is clearly intended to respond to this stipulation in the biblical narrative. The staging option, 'if it can be done', indicates some uncertainty on behalf of the observer. What, therefore, produces this uncertainty? Is it the observer's lack of knowledge or experience of the working of this effect? Or is it an expression of doubt as to the ingenuity and/or ability of the Goldsmiths to produce the effect on their pageant carriage?[11] The implication from the stage direction is that the observer knows that this effect can be produced, presumably because he has seen it done previously, but is unsure of whether the Goldsmiths are capable of reproducing the effect. What might be regarded as constructional skill clearly plays a role in the possibility of producing this effect.[12]

The proviso, 'if it can be done', is again stipulated in a stage direction in the Chester Webstars Playe of the *The Last Judgement* (Play 24):

> Finitis lamentationibus mortuorum [descendet] Jesus quasi in nube, si fieri poterit, quia, secundum doctoris opiniones, in aere prope terram judicabit Filius Dei. Stabunt angeli cum cruce, corona spinea, lancea, et instrumentis aliis; ipsa demonstrant.
>
> [When the laments of the dead have ended, Jesus shall come down as if in a cloud, if it can be contrived, because according to the opinions of scholars, the Son of God shall give judgement in the air close to the Earth. The angels shall stand with the cross, the crown of thorns, the lance, and the other instruments; they display them].[13]

These qualifications of 'if it can be done' (*Massacre of the Innocents*) and 'if it can be contrived' (*The Last Judgement*) suggest doubt on behalf of the writer of the stage direction. In either case, the writer appears to be someone detached from or ignorant of the necessary understanding of the practical means of producing the desired result. Even so, he knows of the effect that is required to satisfy the needs of the biblical narrative and 'doctoris opiniones' and appears to have previously experienced the stated outcome.

A similar option is provided by another Chester play by the Waterleaders and Drawers of Dee play of *Noyes Fludd* (Play 3), where a stage direction stipulates: 'And firste in some high place—or in the clowdes, if it may bee—God speaketh unto Noe standinge without the arke with all his familye'.[14] The stage direction poses a number of interesting questions. First, does the pageant vehicle itself represent the whole of the ark? If it does, and this seems likely, to what does 'standing without the arke' mean? Where does Noah stand? The implication is that he stands in the street.[15] If this is the case, then the position that God occupies 'in some high place' or 'in the clowdes' accentuates the height difference between God and Noah. The height of the 'shipp' (and not the pageant) is alluded to in the early Chester Banns (1539–40):

> The water leders and drawers of dee
> loke that noyes shipp be sett on hie
> that you lett not the storye
> And then shall you well cheue [do].[16]

A choice is apparently offered by the stage direction as to where God stands. I say 'apparently', for what God stands on may be the same platform but with or without clouds positioned at his feet. The suggestion here is that the clouds are represented two-dimensionally and attached to the front of the platform in some way (possibly, nailed). The option, 'if it may bee', seems to refer to the ability to construct a platform with or without 'clowdes'. Another offered option to exercise judgement of a different kind is required in the Chester Wrightes Playe of *The Annunciation and*

the Nativity (Play 6), where a stage direction offers the player the following opportunity: 'Tunc Angelus cantabit "Haec est ara Dei caeli"; fiat notam secundum arbitrium agentis, etc.' (Then the Angel shall sing 'Haec est ara Dei caeli'; [Let the setting be according to the judgement of the performer, etc.]).[17] Lumiansky and Mills propose that the choice 'probably suggests a free form, perhaps a chant at the discretion of the performer'.[18]

The options described in the stage directions in the Chester Goldsmiths, Websters, Waterleaders and Drawers of Dee plays beg further questions as to the authority of the stage-direction writer. How does the writer or writers know of the possible options available in the individual plays? The writer of these stage directions is not likely to be the writer of the play. Where the author of a play is named and is recognised as being the authour, it is more likely that he wrote the stage directions. In the case of these Chester plays, the stage directions appear to have been created by an observer who had previously witnessed production of the plays both with and without enactment of the options. Although the observer knows of the accessibility of the options, he does not know of the judgement or skill involved in their selection and operation. This condition suggests that he is an official whose responsibility is to record the proceedings without any obligatory theatrical understanding. If these stage directions are written as observations of previous performances, then they must also have been added later to the exemplar text from which the remaining texts derive.[19] There are five extant texts of the Chester plays, all compiled between 1591 and 1607, and thus published much later than the last recorded performances in 1575. Though copied from a common exemplar, none of these five manuscripts 'can be shown to have been a producer's copy or a "Reginall", a civic master-copy'.[20]

David Mills discusses the significance of stage directions written in the manuscripts 'in line' with the text and those located in the margins and concludes that the marginal ones were added later. If the stage directions were recorded by observers of plays in performance, then even those laid out within the text of the play must also have been added later to the exemplar. Matthew Sergi's recent careful analysis of the use of cues in the Chester plays also discusses the use and value of stage directions in the respective manuscripts. His conclusions similarly refer to the layering of qualitatively different kinds of information in the manuscripts, developed from separate lost exemplars through accumulative scribal and production processes:

> The simplest explanation, given the frequency of copying and recopying at varying levels of formality necessary for ongoing traditional performances, is that lost exempla included some late short-hand additions alongside an array of earlier shorthand notes that had already been partially or fully absorbed—strongly suggesting that there were multiple distinct instances when Cestrian performances generated ad hoc additions, which were sometimes absorbed into the main text and given a more permanent look, in copy after copy.[21]

Although some of the stage directions in the *Chester Cycle* offer options as to production alternatives performed on pageant 'carriages', they are not the only ones to operate in this way. Recording of optional choices for action also occur in the Cornish plays when performed in the round at ground level. For instance, stage directions in the *Cornish Ordinalia* and *Beunans Meriasek: The Life of St. Meriasek* both record the opportunity for personages to 'walk about the place'.[22] In the *Ordinalia de Origine Mundi* of the *Cornish Ordinalia*, a stage direction states: 'hic pompabit rex salamon si voluerit' (Here Solomon shall walk about if he likes).[23] A similar option is offered to the Crozier-Bearer in the *Passio Domini Nostri Jhesu Christi* of the *Cornish Ordinalia*: 'et tunc iet ad principem annam et dicit crociarius et pompabit si velit' (And then he shall go to the prince Annas, and the crozier-bearer speaks; and he shall walk about if he likes/wishes).[24] Later, in the *Passio Domini Nostri Jhesu Christi*, Lucifer is similarly directed: 'pompabit lucifer si placet' (Here Lucifer shall walk about if he pleases].[25] In the *Beunans Meriasek: The Life of St. Meriasek*, the Bishop of Kernou is also offered a motional option: 'Hic pompabit episcopus kernov si placet' (Here the bishop of Kernou shall parade if he likes).[26]

Clearly, the option, 'if he likes', outlined in these Cornish stage directions, offers players and their personages choices as to their actions. Although the options contained in these stage directions are those that are necessary for the player to act upon, the stage directions themselves do not appear to be addressed to the player. Like the stage directions in the Chester plays above, they appear to have been written by an official for other officials or some organisational figure who operated on behalf of or in conjunction with the player. It is also clear that the content of these stage directions implies knowledge of earlier performances where the options have been made available or taken up. Like the Chester writer[s] of the plays cited above, the writers of these stage directions appear to have witnessed the optional action in performance. Thus, by further implication, the stage directions display their principal function to be records of performance. Additionally, there is no evidence that medieval players read or responded to explicit stage directions in original manuscripts and thus are unlikely to have responded to stage directions in their written form.[27] Players learned their lines from sections copied from original manuscripts that did not contain stage directions.[28] These sections, known as 'parts', contained one player's distinctive lines and cues. Further, there is no evidence that players received the lines of other players. The performed playing order of the players' lines was established through responses to their respective cues.[29]

The theatrical term 'cue' is defined by the *OED Online* as '1.a. *Theatre*. The concluding word or words of a speech in a play, serving as a signal or direction to another actor to enter, or begin his speech'. The earliest example of the term in the *OED Online* is of '1553 in J. Strype Eccl. Mem. III. App. xi. 31 Amen must be answered to the thanksgevyng not as to a mans q in a playe'.[30] In modern theatrical use, the cue is not soley determined by the 'word or words'. It can also be activated by audible (non-verbal) and visual moments or signals. Again, in modern theatre, activation of the cue is the means of establishing, maintaining and developing the rate of development, or pace, of the play's action. Pace is determined

by the uninterrupted rate or flow of action governed and developed through the player's timed response to the signal. The means of achieving appropriate pace is predominately through the incoming speaker 'sitting' his first word on the last word of the outgoing speaker, without any negligent gap between the words. If the cue is a visual or audible one of some duration, then prior agreement needs to have been established to determine the precise moment of delivering the cue. However, it is unlikely that the medieval English cue was intended to operate with such timed precision. There is no evidence of the timed enactment of the medieval English cue. The importance of the medieval cue appears to be concerned with its position, order, sequence and the incoming speaker's 'turn' to speak.[31] Although cues are important in today's English theatre, they are not as important as they were to the medieval player. Without responsiveness to the medieval cue, the player was stranded unless prompted. So much is clear concerning the predominant English practice, although other conventions occurred in other countries. A French custom provided parts as '*roole, rollet, roullet* etc. They were rolls or scrolls of paper, which the actor unrolled as the play progressed [...] They are designed for use at rehearsals (and perhaps even at performance)'.[32] Some correspondence may be seen in accounts of players remembering, or not remembering, their parts in the Persian/Iranian *Taziyeh Passion Plays*:

> As oral literature, the *ta'ziya* text is not memorized word for word. If a player forgets a part, he improvises. The text is written, as an aid to memory, but it cannot be checked against one written version that is correct. In oral literature, every version is correct. In *ta'ziya*, each copy (*nuskha*) is treated as correct: the composers, performers and spectators do not seek an authoritative version.[33]

Another option that occurs in a stage direction in the *Beunans Meriasek: The Life of St. Meriasek* is of a different kind and represents a staging convention not encountered elsewhere in the play. It reads: 'Exulatores hic pompabunt vel vnus pro omnobus' (Outlaws shall here parade, or one for all).[34] The option that one outlaw should stand in to represent all the outlaws requires the terms of reference of this convention to be established for the audience in order that it may understand that this is what is happening. The stage direction may hide a representational convention whereby symbolic action of the kind outlined in the stage direction is clearly understood through the encouragement of 'agreed pretence'. Parading around the playing space is a common convention found in all the extant Cornish plays, and, most frequently, the practice is a preliminary activity to the introduction of a personage before he speaks. He displays himself to the spectators by way of announcing his arriving presence.[35]

Another kind of option is provided for the prologue speaker, Poeta, at the end of the first section of *The Conversion of St. Paul*, where a stage direction states 'Poeta—si placet' (the Poet—if he wishes or it is agreed).[36] The stage direction refers to the option offered to Poeta in delivering a concluding speech to 'þis stac[y]on'—the

first section of the performed play. Should the speech be offered or not? The reason for the option appears to be connected to the perceived success, or otherwise, of didactic intention. Was it considered that the audience needed further clarification of the process or not?[37]

In the *N.town* play of *The Last Supper; The Conspiracy with Judas* (Play 27), a slightly confusing stage direction offers yet another option as to implementation of the text:

> Þan Judas xal gon ageyn to þe Jewys. And, yf men wolne, (the devil) xal mete with hym and sey þis spech folwyng—or levyn't whether þei wyl—þe devyl þus seyng:[38]

As it stands, the stage direction is unclear in its intention. However, if it is made clear that it is 'þe devyl' who 'xal mete with hym', then the sense and the option become clearer. The option, 'yf men wolne' (if men will) is to 'levyn't whether þei wyl', that is, to omit the following devil's speech. Judas's actions are associated with those of the Devil, as represented iconographically, and the stage direction permits an option as to whether the devil is alowed to offer Judas a priviliged place in hell. If the option to leave out the devil's speech is taken up then, as Peter Meredith suggests, the devil acts 'as John the Baptist does, simply as a prologue'.[39]

Staging Notes

Similar information of the kind contained in medieval stage directions is also to be found in what I shall call 'staging notes', delivered in different forms to those of stage directions, that are directed at organising figures of plays whose responsibility is to the overall structural and spatial presentation of the play and its organisation. At Norwich, in the *Grocers' Play* (1533, 1565), alternative prologues are permitted depending on whether any other play might precede it in procession. Two stage directions are presented in the form of notes aimed at those in charge of the play's production. These notes of recommendation do not refer to any internal requirements for action other than the contribution of the prolocutor:

> Item. Yt ys to be notyd that when the Grocers Pageant is played withowte eny other goenge befor yt then doth the Proloctor say in this wise:
>
> Note that yf ther goeth eny other pageantes before yt, the Prolocutor sayeth as ys on the other syde and leaveth owte this.[40]

The content of the alternative prologues reflects the different conditions laid out in the options outlined above. If no other pageant precedes the Grocers' Pageant, then the prolocutor provides contextual information about the play and presumably the other pageants. These background details are not required if other pageants go before the Grocers' Pageant. It seems likely that one or other of these pageants

would have taken on the task of providing the necessary contextual detail and declaration of purpose on behalf of the other pageants.

In *The playe of this tretye. or meditation off the buryall of criste and mournyng þerat* (Christ's Burial; c.1520), a similar option is recorded in a staging note of the kind made in the Norwich Grocers' Pageant:

> (This is a play to be played, on part on Gud Friday afternone, and þe other part opon Ester Day after the resurrection in the morowe, but at <the> begynnynge ar certen lynes which <shuld> not be said if it be plaied, which ... [remaining words cut off at bottom]).[41]

Presumably the 'certen lynes' alluded to in this note, which should or should not be spoken, refer to those of the delivery of an optional prologue that advises its audience to be in awe of the 'sorow of Mary'. Use of the option appears to be related to the nature of the composition of the audience to which the prologue is addressed, for the opening content of the prologue is clearly didactic in its targeted purpose:

> A soule that list to singe of loue
> Of Crist that com tille vs so lawe,
> Rede this treyte, it may hym moue,
> And may hym teche lightly with-awe
> Off the sorow of Mary sumwhat to knawe[42]

If the prologue is brought into use, then this clearly lengthens the play; conversely, the play is shortened if the prologue is not used. This form of editing is straightforward enough. But reasons for including or excluding sections of text may occur for internal purposes of narrative manipulation or external ones where the playing time of the play needs to be taken into account. In *A new iuterlude and a mery of the nature of the .iiij. element*es *declarynge many proper poynt*es *of phylosophy naturall and of dyuers straunge landys and of dyuers straunge effec*tes & *causis* (1530?), a staging note offers the presenters of the play an option to shorten the play by omitting specific sections:

> A new iuterlude [*sic*] and a mery of the nature of the .iiij. elemen*tes* declarynge many proper poynt*es* of phylosophy naturall/ and of dyuers straunge landys and of dyuers straunge effect*es* & causis/ whiche interlude yf y^{e} hole matter be playdt wyl conteyne the space of an hour and a halfe/ but yf ye lyst ye may leue out muche of the sad mater as the messengers p*ar*te/ and some of naturys parte and some of experyens p*ar*te & yet the matter wyl depend conuenyently/ and than it wyll not be paste thre quarters of an hour of length.[43]

This staging note is contained as an elaboration of the title and is quite specfic in its recommendation of the means of shortening the play by 45 minutes. Speeches belonging to the Messenger, Nature and Experience are each targeted to produce

a balanced cutting of the scenes. The understanding implicit in these suggestions is that of someone with the assured knowledge of the play and its construction. Such a person is likely to have been the author or someone overseeing a former production. The insights contained in these staging notes demonstrate a theatrical authority not often seen or shared with readers or instigators of presentations.

The staging notes contained in the staging plan of *The castel of perseueraunse* (*The Castle of Perseverance*; c.1400–40) contain a major option concerning delineation of staging arrangements (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2).

Performed in the round, the performance space is delineated by one of two options: either a ditch filled with water or a strong fence-type structure surrounding the round playing space. These options are clearly ones to determine the playing space and, more than likely, ones intended to affect audience conglomeration.[44] To whom are these staging options addressed? Mark Eccles, in his edition of *The Macro Plays* that contains his interpretation of these notes, suggests that

> The writing on the plan gives directions to the players about the placing of five scaffolds and the cupboard of Covetousness, the number of 'stytelerys' or marshals, the gunpowder to be used by Belial and the mantles to be worn by the Four Daughters of God.[45]

It seems that Eccles chooses 'players' as the supposed recipients of the staging notes, no doubt because of the practical nature of their content that may be aligned to the practical needs of players. However, the notes write of players but they do not write to them. The notes do not appear to be directives to players: they have more sense and purpose if seen to be directed to organisers and authority figures whose tasks are to establish staging conditions and audience configuration. The option as to whether the 'place' is surrounded by a ditch filled with water or strongly 'barryd' all about clearly exists because of previously observed action where both options, on different occasions, have been observed.[46] Like the stage directions examined in this work, *The Castle of Perseverance* plan contains many recorded details drawn from earlier performance. Although there has been much scholarly endeavour, argument and conjecture in interpreting the plan as a drawing, there is no apparent dispute about the words in the plan.[47] One exception concerns interpretation of the option alluded to above concerning the description written between two circular lines that states:

> þis is þe watyr a bowte þe place if any dyche may be mad þer it schal be pleyed. or ellys þat it be strongly barryd al a bowt. & lete nowth ouyr many stytelerys be wyth Inne þe plase.

Although the two possible methods of demarcating the 'plase' as stated inside the two circular lines is clear, the point at issue appears to be concerned with that which the two lines encircle. Do the two lines simply circumscribe immediate space around the castle? Or do they delineate the larger playing place? The words within

the two circled lines state that if a 'dyche' is employed then it operates 'a bowte þe place'. I take the word 'a bowt' in this context to refer to the act of circumscribing 'þe place'. This means that it surrounds the place.[48] The alternative option is to let the same space 'be strongly barryd al a bowt', with the implication that the required 'strength' of the construction is so required in order to withstand potential spectator pressure. The optional 'dyche' and the presumed wooden barrier are alternative and optional types of construction intended to fulfil the same intention. There is no sense that the purpose of these options changes their function according to which is selected for use. Although the interpretation to encompass the castle with the 'dyche' or the 'strongly barryd' barrier may be made to service requirements of the play, the words between the two circular lines clearly state that the delineation exists 'a bowte þe place' and not specifically about the castle.[49]

Some dispute has focused on the intended purpose of the plan: is it a plan of a theatre space or a set design?[50] My interpretation acknowledges elements of both considerations, and a forced discussion that reduces the identity of the plan to one or other of these distinctions is one brought about by modern perceptions and preconceptions that distinguish drawings of theatre form and set designs. The diagramatic plan clearly represents staging configuration and the means of dressing the space. The relevant *OED Online* definition of the term 'plan' states:'2. a. A drawing, sketch, or diagram of any object made by projection on a horizontal plane; *esp.* one showing the layout of a building or one floor of a building'. The earliest example of its use is from 1664. The notion of a plan is that it presents a view from above that looks down upon its subject. But the plan of *The Castle of Perseverance* also presents views as elevations of the 'castle' and the 'bed'. Drawing conventions in which plans and elevations were formally arranged to reinforce dimensions of each other had not been established in 1425. The later convention and practice of orthographic projection as a system of drawing plans, front elevations and end elevations had not been formalised.[51] Thus, *The Castle of Perseverance* plan presents a hybrid means of presenting a two-dimensional plan, a two-dimensional elevation of the castle and a poorly executed three-dimensional elevation of the bed. The mixture of recorded viewpoints in the *Castle* diagram provides signifiance to its value as a working drawing where the contained information and not the presentational convention conditions its primary purpose. As such, the plan is not to scale, nor does it depict its visual features with any precision. Edmund Malone, in his *Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the English Stage*, might have described the plan as one containing 'scenical direction'.[52] The pyrotechnic accoutrements required of 'he þat schal pley belyal', while specifying his equipment, are not ones directed to the player: they are ones affected by the conduct of previous performance and directed to the role of 'belyal' and not the player.[53]

The use of options to realise authorial requirements is not one conventionally found in post-1560 stage directions. This is probably because it is increasingly the case that such stage directions are more particularly aimed at actors and people whose function is to oversee the event and those who create settings. The same

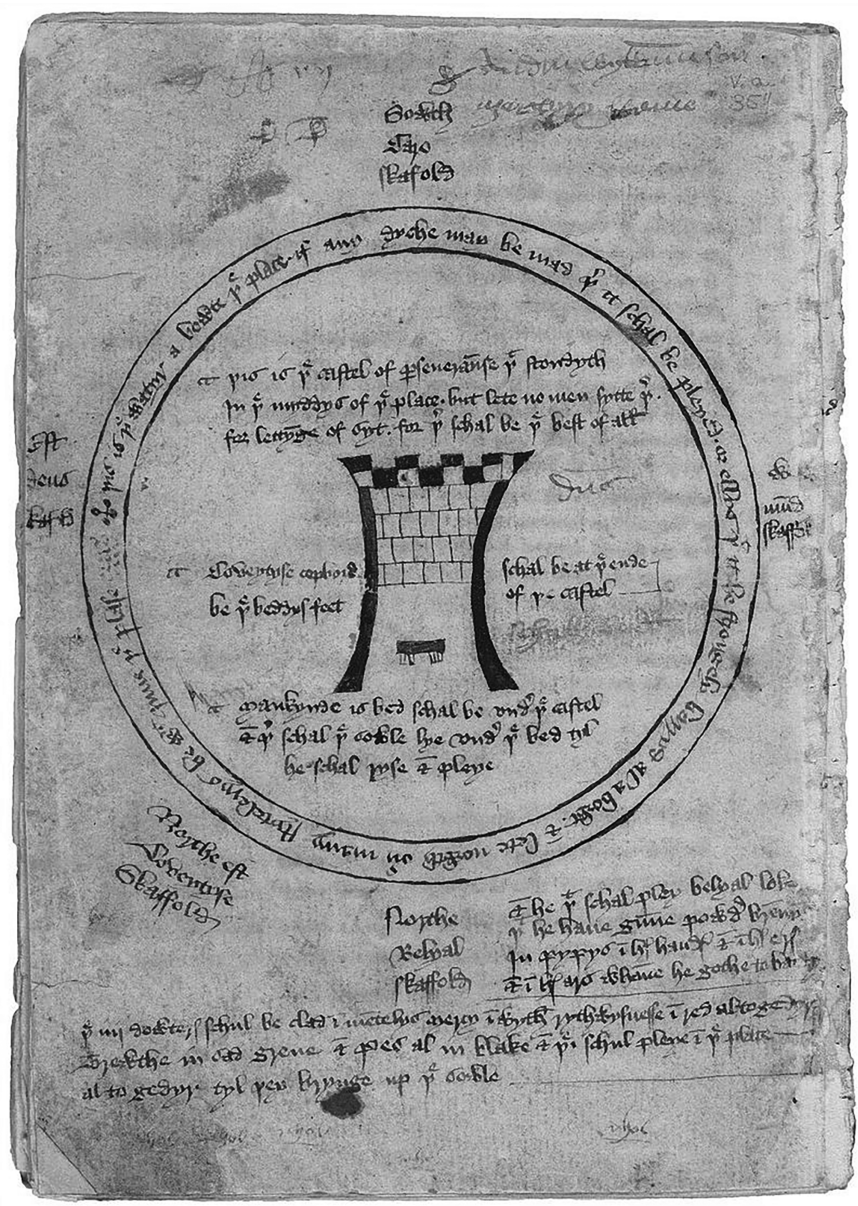

FIGURE 1.1 *The castel of perseueraunse* (*The Castle of Perseverance*). Folger MS.V.a.354 (formerly MS 5031), fol. 191v.

Source: Used by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

Sowth
Caro
skafold

[Written between the two circles]
þis is þe watyr a bowte þe place if any dyche may be mad þer it schal
be pleyed. or ellys þat it be strongly barryd al a bowt. & lete
nowth ouyr many stytelerys be wyth Inne þe plase

þis is þe castel of perseueraunse þat stondyth
in þe myddys of þe place. but lete no men sytte þer
for lettynge of syt. for þer schal be þe best of all

Est
deus
[s]kafold

Wes[t]
mund[us]
skaffol[d]

Coveytyse copbord
be þe beddys feet

schal be at þe ende
of þe castel

Mankynde is bed schal be vndyr þe castel
& þer schal þe sowle lye vndyr þe bed tyl
he schal ryse & pleye

Northe est
Coveytyse
Skaffold

Northe & he þat schal pley belyal loke
Belyal þat he haue gunne powdyr brennyng[e]
skaffold In pypys in hys handys & in hys erys
& in hys ars whanne he gothe to batay[l]

þe iiij dowterys schul be clad in mentelys Mercy in wyth rythwysnesse in red altogedyr
Trewthe in sad grene & Pes al in blake & þei schul pleye in þe place
al to gedyr tyl þey brynge up þe sowle

FIGURE 1.2 Transcription of Folger MS.V.a.354 fol. 191v.

condition does not apply to pre-1560 stage directions because the player does not appear to be the principal recipient of the direction.

Records as Stage Directions

Just as medieval stage directions and staging notes may be seen as records of previously played performances, so too may some records be seen to function in the manner of explicit stage directions. Although not presented within the variable range of stage-direction formats, the content of some records provides evidence of performance requirements of the same quality found in stage directions. For

instance, in the 1433 indenture drawn up by the pageant masters of the York Mercers' Guild in handing over responsibility of their Corpus Christi pageant and its properties to their successors, the document itemises all the assets belonging to the pageant and offers descriptions and theatrical reasons for their use.[54] One of the many items is: 'A brandreth of Iren þat god sall sitte vppon when he shall sty vppe to heuen With iiij rapes at iiij corners'.[55] This could easily be the kind of content found in an explicit stage direction if it was simply organised as an observation. In the same document, additional items are recorded as:

> a /Pagent with iiij wheles helle mouthe iij garmentes for iij deuels vj deuelles faces in iij Vesernes Array [masks] for ij euell saules [souls] þat/is to say ij Sirkes [shirts] ij paire hoses ij vesenes and ij Chauelers Array [wigs] for ij gode saules þat is to say ij Sirkes ij pair*e* hoses ij vesernes & ij Che/uelers ij paire Aungell wynges with Iren in þe endes[56]

The detail outlined here offers not only a clear legal list of items belonging to the Mercers' Guild, but also a record of the properties previously used in performance of the Guild's play of *The Last Judgement*. It is in this respect that the function that these details perform is the same one as those of explicit stage directions that act as records of earlier performance. The same point may be made in respect of a financial account contained in the Skinners' Renters Wardens' Accounts (1519) to provide 13 children with hired beards and diadems for their part in the Skinners' Pageant in the Midsummer Shows in London:

> Paid to 13 children playing God Almighty and His 12 Apostles, at 2 pence the piece . . . . . . 2s. 2d.
>
> Paid for 13 beards and 13 diadems hired for (the children that represented) God Almighty and the 12 Apostles . . . . . 2s[57]

Since payments were made for items of 'beards' and 'diadems', it may be inferred with some legitimacy that the accoutrements were used in performance of the Skinners' Pageant. In addition to explicit stage directions addressed to organisers and authority figures, the existence and purpose of some records in the form of authoritative financial accounts may be permitted to operate as formal ones that fulfil the same, similar, or additional functions as explicit stage directions. Given the content of these financial accounts, it would only require reorientation of them as records to qualify them as explicit stage directions. The intended recipients of such accounts, given their formality, legality or quasi-legality, may be the same or similar ones to those to whom more conventional explicit stage directions were addressed. Financial accounts of this kind also allude to previous performances.

Lists of stage items as contained in indentures, inventories and records are not fundamentally different from the kind of explicit stage directions under discussion: the principal difference exists in the recording of imperatives through words such as 'shall' in describing action. This condition is most apparent in some stage directions

where it is recorded that someone 'shall' do something or that some action 'shall' take place. Use of the word 'shall' occurs in both English and Latin translation. The imperative contained in the word clearly refers to the possibility of intended action, although its instigation is as a result of previously witnessed action. Historically, there are many different meanings of the word 'shall', but contemporary understanding tends to revolve around 'should', 'should be', 'ought', 'ought to be', 'is to', 'will', 'will have to' and 'must'.[58] This nuanced range of meanings appears to have influenced changes in function of explicit stage directions from the thirteenth century to 1560. Such changes may be seen in the interchangeable use of verbs in the present indicative, the future simple and the subjunctive. Towards the end of this period, emphasis upon 'will', 'will have to' and 'must' seems to have become more dominant in intention, even though the word 'shall' remains with some ambiguity. 'Shall' also implies a sense of formal obligation derived from a recorded observation that 'this is how the action has always happened' and that 'this is how such action should always be done' in order to fulfil religious, civic or institutional purpose.[59]

Lists of play properties, fixtures and fittings do not, as a matter of routine, contain requirements for action, but some do imply it. In the *Documents Relating to the Revels at Court in the time of King Edward VI and Queen Mary*, payments are recorded in 1552 to:

> The same Nich*ol*as [Leveret] for a dragons head and a dragons mowthe of plate w*ith* stoppes [tow, oakum] to burne like fier .v^{s}. for trymmyng of iiij^{or} boxes w*ith* plate for the same .ij^{s}. ij fyer boxes xij^{d}. iiij^{or} small cheines of yerne at xij^{d} the pece .iiij^{s}. xiiij y*ard*es of ynglish wier great at ij^{d} the y*ar*de .ij^{s} iiij^{d}. and for vj doz*en* of hookes ij^{s} in all for the furnyture of the pageaunt*es* of the Tryvmphe of Cupide[60]

Again, a simple reorientation of this account as a direction to Nicholas Leveret to provide the items in the list would qualify it as an explicit stage direction, for the intention of the 'stoppes to burn like fier' determines the required action. Each of the listed items corroborates the others in describing the means of containing fire in metal boxes in the mouth of the dragon, which can be seen by the spectators when its mouth is presumably opened by 'cheines of yerne' and 'ynglish wier'.

Another dragon's head is featured in the Drapers' Pageant at the Midsummer Watch in London in 1541. Two payments record the type of information encountered in stage directions for the production of fire in the dragon's head:

> payd for a galon of aqua vyte to bron in the dragons mowth iij^{s} viij^{d}
> Item to hym that kept ffyre in the dragons mowthe xvj^{d} [61]

This account describes what was needed to create the desired effect. Like the dragon's head provided by Nicholas Leveret, the fire appears to be contained in the dragon's mouth: unlike Leveret's dragon, the fuel is recorded as aqua vitae and not tow (oakum). Both fuels burn with different coloured flames. Aqua vitae burns

with an almost colourless flame and would need to be mixed with a salt of some description to intensify its appearance. The respective accounts do not provide any indication or requirement to project fire, although maintenance of the fires is required by both accounts.[62]

Beneficiaries of Stage Directions

A rare type of description that would not normally be considered as an explicit stage direction occurs in instructions to maintain and operate a semi-automaton known as 'The Iorge'. This was a working model that depicted the encounter between St. George and the dragon that was built by William Parnell of Ipswich, his son, John, and an apprentice, Wylliam Baker, in 1474 and housed in the church of St. Botolph, Billingsgate, London. These directions are precisely addressed to the would-be operators of the device and those whose responsibility it was to maintain its ability to work. The account reads as follows:

> Yt ys to be remembyrd. how þ[at] ye schall take hed, to the ymage off seynt Iorge stondyng in thys fforeseid ꝑysch And off alle þ[at] longyth vnto hym/In proses off tyme yf ther breke any lynes or any poynt off Iementry// thorow necclygens or vermyn or weryng/ye schall vnderstand where ye schall A mende yt Consyder And se/ that ther ys vnd*er* the hay[r]nys At the bak An hole there þ[ou] mayst nyppe owt the hole bak with a knyff and there thu schall se all the Iementry off the Armys off hym // Than loke vndyr the hors Croper vpon hys bak And there thu schall ffynd A lytyll dore Claspyd w[ith] a wyer And loke in there and þ[ou] schall se or ffele the Iementre off y[e] Iorges hede And off the horsys erys and hys tayle the whele lynes rynne down in the hynder [47^{r}] leggs off the hors into the beme and ffrom thens to the Castell Also fferthermore loke in the myddys off the dragons Bak And turne on [one] of the pynnes and pluk yt vp & there ys A lytyll dore & there y[e] mayst fele & se the werke off the dragon ffastenyd w[ith] lyne the wich lyne rennyth vnd*er* þ[e] planke þ[at] the hors stondyth on. to the Castell. And the lynes þ[at] doith the Mayde to turne & the kyng & y[e] quene steryth vpon ij. spendyls in the towrys./And in the Myddell off the fflower [floor]. of the Castell stondyth A Cranke ffor to turne the Iorge And the hors Crosse the beme /// And alle thes lynes þ[at] schuld be made for thys werke/yt most be made off ffyne stronge thred
>
> And thys seid ymage was made in the yere of ower lord god M CCCC lxxiiij Set vp at the ffestefull day of Seynt botolphe.
>
> And Alle thes foresaid werkes were wrowgt by the handwerk of wyll*ia*m ꝑrnell & wyll*ia*m Baker hys prentys, & Iohn ꝑrnell hys sonne Dwellyng in Epyswych in the schyre of Sowthffolke [63]

Although these instructions present considerable detail, compared with other explicit stage directions, the necessary information to complete understanding