Croxton Play of the Sacrament

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TEAMS • Middle English Texts Series

MEDIEVAL INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo

INTRODUCTION

Few works of Middle English drama are likely to strike their modern readers as more irredeemably "medieval" — with all of the negative stereotypes that that word popularly implies — than the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*.[1] The script, which survives in a single sixteenth-century copy, dramatizes the physical abuse by five Muhammad-worshipping Syrian Jews of a Host, the bread consecrated by a priest during the Christian Mass. The play opens with the arrival of the Jewish merchant Jonathas in the imaginary city of Heraclea in Aragon. Jonathas quickly seeks out Aristorius, his Christian counterpart, in order to purchase a consecrated Host from him so that by torturing it he might disprove the doctrine of transubstantiation, the teaching that the body and blood of Christ are made present in substance in the sacramental bread and wine of the Eucharist. To Jonathas' rational mind, transubstantiation is a simple "conceit" or trick intended to make the Jews "blind."[2] Aristorius balks at selling his God to a nonbeliever, but Jonathas is relentless and increases his offer until Aristorius finally consents to steal a consecrated Host from the local church.

Having acquired the Host, Jonathas gathers with four coconspirators at his lodging, where they first denigrate Christian teaching and then profane the Host by piercing it with daggers in five places in perverse imitation of the five wounds (hands, feet, and side) suffered by Jesus on the Cross. To the horror of the Jews, the afflicted Host spews blood from the dagger pricks. Astounded by this unanticipated result, the Jews decide to submerge the bleeding bread in a cauldron of hot oil, but the Host frustrates their efforts by stubbornly clinging to Jonathas' hand. His companions then attempt to nail the wafer and hand to a post, only to be interrupted by the entrance of the quack doctor, Brundich, who, with the aid of his assistant Colle, peddles his dubious services to the injured Jonathas. The Jews swiftly chase the doctor away with threats of still further violence and then renew their efforts to immerse the intractable Host, with Jonathas' wayward hand still unrelentingly attached, in the seething oil. This time they succeed, but the cauldron immediately and spectacularly boils over with yet more blood. Frantic, the Jews snatch the Host from the cauldron and enclose it in an oven, which explodes into an image of Jesus as a child with blood freshly streaming from the five wounds. Jesus reproaches the Jews for their unbelief and for their cruelty in subjecting him to a second Passion but proceeds nevertheless to

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[1] The play goes by this title in all its modern editions, but see Dox ("Representation without Referent" and "Medieval Drama as Documentation"), who proposes the alternate title of the Croxton *Conversion of Ser Jonathas the Jew by the Myracle of the Blessed Sacrament*, the title of the play given in the sole surviving manuscript copy following line 80.

[2] Kruger ("Bodies of Jews," p. 310) describes the Jews' double motivation in purchasing the Host: (1) skepticism about transubstantiation and (2) their intention to do violence to the Host.

restore Jonathas' hand. The *imago Christi* then commands the confounded assailants to present a full account of their actions to the local bishop.

After learning of the Jews' misadventures, the bishop goes to their house, where he bears witness to the Host's miraculous transformation into the *imago Christi* before entreating the image to revert to its previous form. Jonathas and the other Jews beg forgiveness for their errors and are baptized by the bishop, thus ending the play as newly converted Christians and fully integrated members of the community. They announce their intention to go on pilgrimage as penance for their offenses. The merchant Aristorius likewise confesses his own part in the proceedings and, as punishment for treating the body of Christ as just another commodity, renounces his profession and promises to repeat his story for the moral instruction of others susceptible to the blandishments of covetousness. The play concludes with the bishop calling upon the rest of the characters as well as the audience to join in singing the hymn *Te Deum laudamus* (We praise you, God).

The play's central scene, the staging of the bloody torture of consecrated bread, is consistent with widespread reports of Host desecration that circulated in chronicles and sermons throughout Europe beginning at the end of the thirteenth century.[3] Tales of the insidious Jew who dupes a corrupt, vulnerable, or simply gullible Christian into acquiring a Host for him to desecrate were also elaborated in poetry and visual representations, including theatrical entertainments like the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, even in parts of Europe where, officially at least, there were no Jews following expulsions such as those that were decreed in England in 1290 and France in 1394. Given the play's unabashed anti-Semitism and its almost ghoulish obsession with tortured, broken, and bloodied bodies, it is challenging for modern readers or spectators to conceive of the *Play of the Sacrament* as anything like entertainment.[4] Indeed, one is sorely tempted to excuse what is so abhorrent in a text that seems to celebrate acts of violence committed by and against cultural others with an evasive appeal to the playwright's benighted worldview as being no more or less than what we might expect from a man of his time and place. To do so, however, only trivializes the spectacular monstrosity at the heart of this play — not to mention the kinds of fear and misunderstanding that continue to fuel religious and ethnic hatred well into our own day — and turns the play into little more than a relic or curiosity left over from a distant and alien past. Dismissing the anonymous dramatist as naive or unenlightened also risks denying him his due as an artist, for the surviving text is the work of a playwright possessed of a tremendous theatrical imagination, notwithstanding his choice of subject

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[3] For the definitive study of the medieval history of Host desecration accusations and narratives, see Rubin, *Gentile Tales*.

[4] Maltman, "Meaning and Art," suggests that the play is, in fact, *not* anti-Semitic because in the end the Jews are converted rather than executed as they are in most other Host-desecration narratives. Similarly Walker ("Medieval Drama: The Corpus Christi in York and Croxton," p. 379) contends that the Jews' conversion in the play "was motivated, not by anti-Semitism per se, but by a desire to refute the arguments of the Lollards and reconcile them to orthodoxy: hence all the participants are offered the prospect of salvation, not simply the erring orthodox figure [i.e., Aristorius]." Nichols ("Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*," p. 137n61) describes the poet as charitable toward the Jews not only in his provision for conversion rather than execution but also in his avoidance of caricature. Kruger ("Bodies of Jews," p. 322n25) argues, however, that the diminished violence at the conclusion of the Croxton play notwithstanding, conversion is necessarily in and of itself an anti-Semitic way of resolving the tension between Christian and Jewish beliefs.

matter. This dramatic account of five unbelieving Jews who torture a Host in order to refute the sense-defying theological claims of Christians who "beleve on a cake" (line 200) also continues to warrant attention because it reveals the contours and complexities of a distinctive spirituality focused on the humanity of Christ that generated new modes of religious expression in the liturgy (the creation of the Feast of Corpus Christi),[5] new forms of personal devotion (e.g., pilgrimages to shrines throughout Europe that exhibited bleeding and other kinds of miraculous Hosts for veneration),[6] and new subjects for literature and the visual arts. The Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* thus lays bare the fine line between piety and persecution in medieval England and in doing so enables us to seek out and understand better the sources of religious violence both then and now. It also contrasts the tepid faith of Aristorius, a latter-day Judas willing to trade his God for gold, with the incredulity of Jonathas, whose earnest piety fuels his literalist testing of the Host but also leads the Jewish merchant to a confrontation with Jesus and His redemptive grace.[7] In the end, Jew and Christian alike are healed of their spiritual blindness, but only after the playwright has probed the distinction between rational disbelief on the one hand and mere doubt on the other.

HOST ABUSE IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE

Beginning late in the thirteenth century, European Jews were regularly subjected to claims from civil and ecclesiastical authorities that they tortured consecrated Hosts in ignorant rituals and depraved parodies of the Mass. The earliest fully documented case concerns events that were alleged to have transpired in the parish of Saint-Jean-en-Grève in Paris during Holy Week of 1290.[8] According to later homiletic and chronicle accounts of the incident, a poor Christian woman redeemed clothing that she had previously pawned to a local Jewish moneylender named Jonathan by bringing him the Host that she received at Easter Mass. Jonathan is supposed to have tortured the Host in a mock reenactment of the Passion of Christ.[9] This abuse purportedly culminated in the miraculous appearance of a crucifix above a cauldron of scalding water in which the Jew was alleged to have submerged the Host. It was reported that the moneylender's family witnessed this miracle and converted as a result, but that the perpetrator of the desecration remained intractable: his

[5] Celebration of the Feast of Corpus Christi was instituted throughout the church with the promulgation of the bull *Transiturus* by Pope Urban IV in 1264 and was furnished with a new liturgical office traditionally ascribed to Thomas Aquinas. See Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, pp. 176–77 and 185–89.

[6] For a discussion of blood cults, pilgrimage, and anti-Jewish fervor in late medieval northern Europe, see Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, pp. 23–81.

[7] Jonathas' literalism also recalls the insistence of the Oxford theologian and condemned heretic John Wyclif on the preeminent value of the letter of the text over allegorical interpretations. For the fictional Jews as figures for late medieval English heretics, see below, pp. 8–11.

[8] Bynum (*Wonderful Blood*, pp. 61–64) notes the existence of cases of Host abuse perpetrated by naive Christians that predate incidents of desecration blamed on Jews and identifies "a general pattern of change from Christian to Jewish perpetrators, accompanied by a growing paranoia of tone" in cases from Germany and elsewhere in northern Europe (p. 64).

[9] This summary of the 1290 incident in Paris is derived from Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, pp. 40–48.

depravities were eventually uncovered, however, and he was sentenced to death by burning. The Host itself and the knife used to pierce it acquired the status of relics, and a chapel known as the Chapelle des Billetes was built adjacent to the site to commemorate the miracle.[10]

From Paris, allegations of desecration spread rapidly throughout Europe. Indeed, after 1290, stories of Host abuse became the primary narrative vehicle for European anti-Semitism. This particular form of anti-Jewish polemic had its roots in the common medieval identification of contemporary Jews with the historical "murderers" of Christ.[11] What was perceived as the perfidy of the Jews of the Gospels was presumed to have endured throughout the generations only to be passed to their descendants, who, so it was claimed, expressed their own opposition to Christian teaching by denying the truth of Eucharistic theology. Documents attest to charges leveled against individuals or even against entire communities of Jews in parts of Franconia in 1298, in Deggendorf in 1337, Pulkau in 1338, Barcelona in 1367, Brussels in 1370, Prague in 1389, Crete in 1451–52, Wrocław in 1453, Passau in 1478, and many other parts of Europe before the end of the fifteenth century. Miri Rubin has shown how several elements of the Paris protonarrative recur in these later accounts of desecration. These include: (1) the collusion of a Christian conspirator who exchanges the Host for payment or some other favor; (2) the abuse of the Host in a private space and in a variety of forms that produce an effusion of blood and the subsequent transformation of the Host itself; (3) the Host's self-revelation to the surrounding Christian community, leading to punishment of the assailants; and (4) the development of a cult on the site of the Host miracle.[12] This high degree of narrative consistency implies a motive for Jewish persecution far more ideological and insidious than the widespread fear that Jews really might be abusing Hosts. As Gavin I. Langmuir has observed, "[w]hat inspires religious violence is the anger or fear aroused when believers who recognize that disbelief exists on the frontiers of their faith are seriously upset by the recognition that their faith is not unchallenged."[13] The particular contested belief that gave rise to allegations of abuse, and

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[10] According to Rubin (*Gentile Tales*, pp. 44–45) the appellation "des Billettes" derives from a "badge in the shape of a lozenge ('billette')" or diamond worn by the Brethren of the Charity of the Blessed Virgin, who eventually became the overseers of the chapel. See also Enders, *Death by Drama*, pp. 120–21.

[11] While Host desecration became the most common form of anti-Jewish narrative in the Middle Ages, it was not the only type. Charges of blood libel were leveled against Jews who, it was claimed, had ritualistically murdered Christians and especially Christian children, for which see "The East Anglian Context" below. Chaucer's Prioress's Tale is the best-known literary treatment in English of the blood libel.

[12] Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, p. 45. The first two of Rubin's elements are pronounced in the *Play of the Sacrament*. The third, the summoning of Christian authorities to the site of the desecration, is accomplished by the Jews themselves in response to the command of the image of Jesus that erupts from the Host. The perpetrators of the abuse are punished, although the fate of the Jews in the play, conversion, is milder than the sentence of summary execution typical of most accounts. While the play makes no reference to the development of a cult around the fictional miracle, the setting of the tale in a specific place (the city of Heraclea in Aragon) at a particular time (1461) creates the illusion of a community of supporters, as does the bishop's invitation to the audience to join in the singing of the *Te Deum*, to form, as it were, a proto-cult.

[13] Langmuir, "At the Frontiers of Faith," p. 139.

to the unspeakable violence perpetrated against innocent Jews in the wake of such baseless claims, was the Christian doctrine of transubstantiation.

Transubstantiation is the belief that in the sacrament of the Eucharist the bread and wine of the altar exchange their essential substances for those of the body and blood of Christ while retaining all of their original outward characteristics (size, shape, color, taste, texture, odor). This tenet of the faith was not without its detractors even from within the church, and while the term had been used earlier, the first attempt at a dogmatic definition of "transubstantiation" came out of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215. The first constitution promulgated by the bishops participating in the council contains a statement of "the catholic faith" (*de fide catholica*), which includes the declaration that the body and blood of Christ

> are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the forms of bread and wine, the bread and wine having been changed in substance, by God's power, into his body and blood [transsubstantiatis pane in corpus et vino in sanguinem potestate divina], so that in order to achieve this mystery of unity we receive from God what he received from us. Nobody can effect this sacrament except a priest who has been properly ordained according to the church's keys, which Jesus Christ himself gave to the apostles and their successors.[14]

Failure to believe in Christ's real presence in the miraculously transformed bread offered Christians a convenient and obvious excuse for persecuting Jews even when matters of faith were not explicitly at stake, as was the case with the famous retelling of the events of Paris in 1290 in a six-paneled *predella*, or frame, to an altarpiece painted by the Italian Paolo Uccello in the 1460s for a religious confraternity and now housed in the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino.[15] Across the six scenes of the *Profanazione dell'ostia* (Profanation of the Host), Uccello narrates the history of the Jew who purchases a Host from a Christian woman and then cooks it in a pan over a fire. The Host produces a copious stream of blood, which flows out into the streets through a passage in the wall of the Jew's house, thereby alerting Christian authorities to what has occurred within. The Jew along with his wife and two children are burned at the stake, while the Christian woman who procured the Host is spared hanging through the intervention of an angel, only to appear again in the final scene of the *predella* in a state of near-death stretched across a bier in front of an altar with two angels at her head and two devils at her feet. Uccello's paintings were intended to adorn an altar upon which another Host miracle, that of the Eucharist itself, was to be endlessly repeated. Yet

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[14] *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Tanner, p. 230: "corpus et sanguis in sacramento altaris sub speciebus panis et vini veraciter continentur, transsubstantiatis pane in corpus et vino in sanguinem potestate divina, ut ad perficiendum mysterium unitatis accipiamus ipsi de suo, quod accepit ipse de nostro. Et hoc utique sacramentum nemo potest conficere, nisi sacerdos, qui fuerit rite ordinatus secundum claves ecclesiae, quas ipse concessit apostolis et eorum successoribus Iesus Christus." The translation is Tanner's.

[15] See Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, pp. 146–47, figures a–f, for a color reproduction of the *predella*. The altarpiece itself depicts the Last Supper and was begun by Uccello as well but completed by Joos van Gent. See Gallagher and Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism*, pp. 85–109.

while Paris, 1290, may have been only a distant memory for Paolo Uccello,[16] understood within the political and economic climate of mid-fifteenth-century Urbino, this tale of Jewish perfidy also took on immediate relevance. As Rubin argues, to appreciate fully the meaning of Uccello's *predella* it is important to note that the sponsoring confraternity also undertook in 1468 to create the conditions in which Urbino might be rid of its Jewish community by eliminating the need for Jewish moneylenders through the establishment of institutions that supported nonusurious loans to Urbino's citizens.[17] The historical Host desecration is conveniently adduced as one more justification for purging the Jews from the city.

It was the pliability of the narrative of the Jew who challenged the integrity of the *corpus Christi* that enabled the story to take root almost universally, even in England and France, where all Jews were officially expelled in 1290 and 1394, respectively, and where anti-Jewish polemic nevertheless remained a viable vehicle for reinforcing Eucharistic orthodoxy among exclusively Christian populations.[18] The composition of the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* late in the fifteenth century in England is indicative of the staying power of this cultural narrative and of the anxiety occasioned by transubstantiation, as are accounts of Host desecration retold throughout the Middle Ages in a range of devotional media, including poems, altarpieces, windows, wall paintings, books of hours, and at least three other documented dramatic performances. A festival held in 1473 to honor Leonore of Aragon featured another play centered on a Host miracle and staged by Florentine performers.[19] It has been suggested that the 1473 event may explain the Croxton play's setting in Heraclea, "the famous city of Aragon" (lines 11–12).[20] A fifteenth-century Parisian play, *Le Mistere de la Sainte Hostie*, describes the torture of the Host in scenes strikingly similar to those of the torture in the Croxton play while simultaneously incorporating the role of the destitute woman known from the events alleged to have transpired in Paris in 1290. The Jewish merchant and moneylender of the French play, Jacob Mousse, comes to a grimmer end than his English counterpart: whereas Jonathas and his companions convert to Christianity at the close of the Croxton play, Jacob's refusal to abjure his faith results in his

[16] Rubin ("Desecration of the Host," p. 369) suggests that Uccello knew the Paris incident from a lost earlier version of a surviving sixteenth-century Italian play on the subject, which itself derived from the entry for the year 1290 in the *Cronica* of the fourteenth-century Florentine Giovanni Villani.

[17] Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, p. 149.

[18] Rubin (*Gentile Tales*, p. 193) cautions that while the "expulsions from England and France left the [Holy Roman] Empire as the home of most European Jews outside the Iberian Peninsula in the late Middle Ages," the Host-desecration narrative ought not be labeled a distinctly "'German' tale," for it "was located at the heart of late medieval religious culture, in its attitude to Jews, its knowledge about the eucharist, and in the desires for self-definition to which it gave form." Spain's Jews were later expelled and commanded to depart by August 2, 1492, the eve of Columbus' embarkation upon the "First Voyage."

[19] Davis, ed., *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, p. lxxiii.

[20] Barns, "Background and Sources," cited in Davis, ed., *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, p. lxxiv. See also Lampert, *Gender and Jewish Difference from Paul to Shakespeare*, pp. 109–11, for a discussion of the significance of the play's Spanish setting.

death.[21] And an Italian *Miracolo del Corpo di Cristo* survives from the sixteenth century and is likewise an embellishment of the 1290 incident.[22]

The popularity of the desecration narrative suggests that, despite the fact that the miraculous transformation of the bread and wine was repeated daily and ubiquitously in churches throughout Europe, the doctrine of transubstantiation nevertheless posed conceptual challenges not only for nonbelievers but even for Christians willing to believe. Langmuir observes that "[a]lthough belief in Christ's physical presence was reinforced by doctrine, dogma, and ritual, the basic challenge to the belief was not any abstract philosophical or theological argument; it was the contrast, evident to anyone, between the officially prescribed belief and the lack of any visible change in the Host."[23] Transubstantiation, in other words, defies "the evidence of the senses."[24] In the play, Jonathas' denial of the truth of the Eucharist is more a function of his rational inability to believe the seemingly unbelievable than of his Jewishness. He enumerates his objections to transubstantiation for the benefit of his fellow Jews and the audience at the conclusion of his long opening speech:

The beleve of thes Cristen men ys false, as I wene,	*belief; suspect*
For they beleve on a cake — me thynk yt ys onkynd.	*unnatural*
And all they seye how the prest dothe yt bynd,	*make it subject*
And be the myght of hys word make yt flessh and blode.	*by the power*
And thus be a conceyte they wolde make us blynd,	*trick*
And how that yt shuld be He that deyed upon the Rode.	*should; Cross*
(lines 199–204)	

For Jonathas, belief in "a cake" is *onkynd*, that is, unnatural. That a piece of bread might be something other than what it looks, feels, smells, and tastes like simply defies human reason. Jonathas calls particular attention to the absurdity of the proposition that a priest, through mere words uttered at the moment of consecration, could transform bread into divine flesh, which nevertheless continues to look and taste like bread. He repudiates the very idea as a "conceyte" foisted upon Jews to make them "blynd." It is perhaps worth noting that Jonathas does not seem to reject Christ's Messianic status but only that "He that deyed upon the Rode" could be made materially and perpetually present in simple bread.[25] Masphat, another of the Jews, echoes Jonathas' objections in declaring that

. . . ther feyth ys false:	
That was never He that on Calvery was kyld	*Calvary*

[21] Clark and Sponsler, "Othered Bodies," pp. 75–77. While various medieval iterations of the narrative preserve different details, the results are universally disastrous for the Jewish antagonist, who even in the most generous retellings, among which the Croxton play must be counted, is compelled to abandon his faith in favor of conversion to Christianity but who is more often than not simply sentenced to summary execution for his offenses.

[22] Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, pp. 169, 172–73.

[23] Langmuir, "Tortures of the Body of Christ," p. 292.

[24] Scherb, "Violence and the Social Body," p. 75.

[25] Kruger ("Bodies of Jews," p. 310) contends that the "Jews of the Croxton *Play* both boldly deny transubstantiation and act as though they believe in its truth."

Or in bred for to be blode: yt ys ontrewe als. *untrue also*
But yet with ther wyles thei wold we were wyld. *wiles; wish; mad*
(lines 213–16)

Jonathas and Masphat dismiss the identification of the sacramental bread with the body of the historical Jesus that was tortured and stretched out on the Cross at Calvary. The belief of the Christians is both "onkynd" and "ontrewe," unnatural and false. The reaction of the Jews in the play to transubstantiation is supremely rational, their response to the apparent trickery of Christians deeply empirical, for should not what claims to be flesh behave like flesh? If you prick it, should it not bleed? And so the play's miraculous Host responds to the Jews' demands for rational proof by behaving as flesh should: it does bleed.[26]

Given that Jews had been, for all practical purposes, absent from England for almost two centuries, it is perhaps little surprise that the question of the identity of the Jews has dominated modern scholarship on the *Play of the Sacrament*. As Michael Jones has succinctly put it, "[n]o two commentators seem to be able to agree on the Croxton play — its provenance, its uniqueness, its purpose, and the precise valence of its representation of the Jews."[27] Since there were no Jews in England (so the traditional thinking on the subject has gone), then the Jewishness of Jonathas and his cohorts must, in the final analysis, be symbolic. With no literal referent to turn to, most treatments of the Jews read them allegorically. The earliest and most enduring discussion in this vein dates to 1944 when Cecilia Cutts published what was to become a very influential essay.[28] Observing that previous scholarship had dealt only with the play's Continental analogues and predecessors, Cutts set about addressing what made the *Play of the Sacrament* specifically English.[29] In its emphasis on the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine of the Eucharist, the structure of penance, and the importance of baptism, the play seemed to Cutts to be responding directly to Lollardy, the loosely organized reformist movement inspired by the controversial fourteenth-century Oxford theologian John Wyclif that, in the decades following Wyclif's death, grew in popularity throughout England.[30] Lollardy never developed a coherent or uniform theology, but its adherents routinely called for reforms that would limit the power of the clergy as intermediaries between the laity and God, so that they would no longer be the indispensible conduits of divine grace in the sacraments or the necessary interpreters of the Latin Scriptures. The Lollards also objected to pilgrimages, devotional images, indulgences, Masses said for the dead in exchange for a fee or endowment — in short, to material practices that placed what they took to be unnecessary and often expensive obstacles on the

[26] Bynum (*Wonderful Blood*, p. 81) argues that mere hatred of Jews was not the source of Host-abuse accusations in the Middle Ages, since other claims, like the blood libel, would have served equally well as a justification for persecution. Rather, Bynum claims that "the texts construct their narrative to culminate not in a verdict of Jewish guilt (of which they [i.e., Christians] were, of course, completely convinced) but in the wonderful blood of God made visible in matter by Jewish desecration." Christians, in other words, "needed Jews to produce miraculous blood" which in turn made an invisible God materially and undeniably present.

[27] Jones, "Theatrical History in the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*," p. 250.

[28] Cutts, "Croxton Play: An Anti-Lollard Piece."

[29] Cutts, "Croxton Play: An Anti-Lollard Piece," p. 45.

[30] Cutts, "Croxton Play: An Anti-Lollard Piece," pp. 46–51.

laity's path to salvation. In Cutts' reading of the Croxton play, the Jews are stand-ins for the Lollards in a didactic play aimed at shoring up the faith of lay audiences in danger of being wooed away from obedience to ecclesiastical authority by a populist heresy.

Cutts' argument has proven durable. Many recent commentators have either reaffirmed her assessment of the play as anti-Lollard polemic or offered variations on it.[31] Yet a growing chorus of dissenting voices has been challenging Cutts' interpretation of the play in recent years on the grounds that Lollardy was less of a threat than Cutts suggested. Gail McMurray Gibson, for instance, describes East Anglia, the region in which the play originated, as especially tolerant of heterodoxy:

> [T]he attitude of both secular and ecclesiastical establishment in East Anglia throughout most of the fifteenth century was one of remarkable tolerance and leniency, indeed almost of resignation, about the presence of Lollardry [*sic*], a convenient label that was invoked for nearly any kind of religious nonconformity. There was tolerance, that is, if those nonconformists were discreet and if they presented no threat to the state.[32]

Gibson characterizes the heresy trials that did take place in East Anglia under William Alnwick, bishop of Norwich, in the early 1430s as more a demonstration of political might than a response to real religious agitation in the towns. Of those trials Ann Eljenholm Nichols has similarly observed:

> [b]y 1431 the proceedings were finished; the simple folk had abjured and gone home to complete their penances. We may doubt the extent of their conversion to orthodoxy, but they are the last Lollards to appear in Norwich episcopal records until after 1500. . . . Thus no documentary evidence exists to suggest that a dramatist would have been prompted by local heresy to write an anti-Lollard play, and there is little to suggest that Lollardy was a burning issue. In fact, as the lack of evidence suggests, Lollardy at this period was an underground movement; episcopal vigilance had made it so.[33]

For Nichols, the play is about Eucharistic piety, and the identity of the Jews is only of secondary importance, while Miri Rubin sees the figure of the Jew as "a didactic prop," one

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[31] See, e.g., Walker, "Medieval Drama: The Corpus Christi in York and Croxton."

[32] Gibson, *Theater of Devotion*, p. 30.

[33] Nichols, "Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*," pp. 118–19. See also Nichols, "Lollard Language," p. 25, where she retreats somewhat from this position by showing that the author of the Croxton play regularly employs a distinctly Lollard diction, using words such as "gloss," "groundid," and "unkynd," with reference to the preconversion Jews in the play, who also refer to the consecrated Host as a "cake" or "bread." But she cautions that this distinctive vocabulary only suggests that the playwright was familiar with the terms of the Lollard debate and that there is no internal evidence to suggest that the author had wittingly had any contact with actual Lollards. She concludes persuasively that "[t]he Jews in the Croxton play, of course, are no more real Lollards than they are real Jews: they are stage Jews who were given the contemporary language of unbelief. It is not surprising that a well-read cleric would have been aware of the special linguistic features of Lollard language. Neither is it surprising, given the literary sophistication of the author of the Croxton play, that he used them so deftly to characterize the non-believers in the *Play of the Sacrament*."

subordinate to the play's larger themes and whose eventual conversion simply emphasizes the power of the sacrament that is the real focus of the play.[34]

Other scholars have interpreted the Jews not as Lollards but as doubting Christians. Thus Heather Hill-Vásquez views the play less as propaganda intended to counter the advance of Lollard sympathy and instead as a celebration and reassertion of orthodox belief for the benefit of non-Lollard Christians whose faith might nevertheless need buttressing. She emphasizes the Jews' rationalistic motivations and contends that their "empirical desires . . . to test the Host rather than merely destroy it (as do their continental counterparts) suggest that they have more in common with late medieval Christians than might immediately be expected."[35] Sarah Beckwith also emphasizes the intensely rationalistic character of the Jews, whom she finds eager, like the Lollards, to separate appearance from reality, signifier from signified in the Eucharist. For Beckwith, the Jews' assault on the Host in the play "is part of a quest for belief, rather than an unmotivated act of desecration."[36] This "quest for belief" simultaneously challenges the authority of the clergy, who set themselves up as the privileged interpreters of the *corpus Christi*, a symbolic object that conflates signifier and signified, material bread with spiritual reality. For Beckwith, Jonathas is "a grotesque form of Christ, a grotesque priest,"[37] whose utterance of the words of sacramental consecration draws attention to clerical manipulations of authority and power. By showing that even a Jew can be a priest, the play unveils the instruments of control, including the Mass, through which the medieval clergy preserved their own authority over the laity. The play, then, becomes a means not only for reasserting orthodoxy but also for critiquing the habits of those responsible for safeguarding it.

For both Beckwith and Hill-Vásquez, the Jews represent Christians willing to believe who nevertheless struggle to come to terms with the demands made on their faith by a complex doctrine and a priesthood unwilling, or unable, to articulate its own workings. Paul Strohm has memorably remarked that the Eucharistic rite itself "not only does not make sense but is not supposed to; it functions precisely as a complete exception, a suspension of rules, a thing like no other."[38] About the play Andrew Sofer muses that "it is as if the entire Brechtian arsenal of stage techniques — pastiche, properties that announce their prop-ness, self-consciously theatrical effects — were to be harnessed in order to shore up an ideology rather than demystify it."[39] Whether or not the Jews represent a specific kind of doubt, like Lollardy, or just a more general sense of uncertainty in response to the incredible, Cutts and other scholars look beyond the literal Jewishness of the play's Jews for their symbolic significance.[40]

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[34] Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, p. 170.

[35] Hill-Vásquez, *Sacred Players*, p. 96n26.

[36] Beckwith, "Ritual, Church and Theatre," p. 73.

[37] Beckwith, "Ritual, Church and Theatre," p. 75.

[38] Strohm, "Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*," p. 33.

[39] Sofer, *Stage Life of Props*, p. 46.

[40] Gallagher and Greenblatt (*Practicing New Historicism*, p. 104) observe in the course of their analysis of the Uccello *predella* that "[t]he Jews are inevitably guilty in such stories because they do not believe and because at the same time they are made to act out, to embody, the doubt aroused among the Christian faithful by eucharistic doctrine."

Still other scholars have rejected Cutts' association of Jews with Lollards in order to return attention to the actual Jewishness of the characters, but in doing so they nevertheless extend the meaning of Jewish identity in the play beyond the bodies and identities of Jonathas and his cohorts. Jones situates the play within the broader scope of theatrical history, in which, by the late fifteenth century, "the conventions of Christian inscription of Jews are firmly established, and their roles as agents in a sacramental and theatrical economy fully codified."[41] Michael Mark Chemers also rejects the identification of the play's original audience with Lollards and contends that "it seems odd to imagine that the author of this play believed that the Lollards could have been convinced of their heresy by a rather silly and grotesque piece of stage business when they had not been convinced by violent persecution."[42] Instead, he sees the Jew as a figure for Christianity's great external foes generally, including Muslims, by whose prophet Muhammad the Jews of the Croxton play swear.[43] The play thus serves as

> a revision of a narrative of origin that exculpates an ethnically cleansed England for the failure of the Crusades and the fall of Constantinople and Trebizond, and rewrites history with an English victory over all infidel forces, embodied locally on the English stage by actors, loaded down with bladders full of animal blood, playing Jews invoking the Muslim Prophet while torturing the semiotically unstable host prop.[44]

Donnalee Dox goes a step further, arguing that the "reality" of Jewishness in the late fifteenth century was a social construction, the culmination of centuries of figuring Jewishness as "a hostile alterity" opposed to Christianity in every way that mattered.[45] In these readings, then, the play is not about specific Jews but about Jewishness as a means of displacing dissent and doubt, both internal and external, onto a scapegoat. The total eradication of the threat and the reinforcement of orthodoxy in the tidy conclusions to narratives like the *Play of the Sacrament* reassured their audiences that all really was well that ended well, even if the root anxiety — doubt about the real presence of Christ in the bread of the altar — remained somewhat uncomfortably unaddressed. Tales of Host abuse concentrated fears about the potential for Jewish unbelief to subvert Christian faith and hegemony, confusion about doctrine, and contemporary political, social, and economic anxieties onto a single narrative that proved over the course of the late medieval period to be an extraordinarily adaptable tool of cultural observation and critique. Miri Rubin has reminded us of "the need to think of narrative as historically *situated*, as drawing its meanings and weight, its relative urgency from performance, enactment and deployment."[46] We must now, therefore, consider in their specificity the historical, social, and devotional

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[41] Jones, "Theatrical History in the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*," p. 230. See also Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*.

[42] Chemers, "Anti-Semitism, Surrogacy, and the Invocation of Mohammed," p. 35.

[43] Chemers, "Anti-Semitism, Surrogacy, and the Invocation of Mohammed," p. 33 and passim. It should be noted that Chemers's rejection of Cutts is founded upon a perhaps too restrictive definition of heresy.

[44] Chemers, "Anti-Semitisim, Surrogacy, and the Invocation of Mohammad," p. 49.

[45] Dox, "Medieval Drama as Documentation," p. 104.

[46] Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, pp. 3–4 (emphasis original).

circumstances that informed the composition and production of the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* in order to understand the cultural work performed by this particular version of an insidious, and irrepressible, tale.

THE EAST ANGLIAN CONTEXT

Essential to any interpretation of the Jew as a signifier must be a consideration of the influence on the play of the artistic and devotional habits and economic conditions particular to the part of England known as East Anglia. The region of East Anglia spans the eastern peninsula of the island of Britain, which juts into the North Sea. Named for one of the Germanic peoples who settled there and elsewhere in the southern part of the island between the fourth and sixth centuries and whose settlements became the foundation for a later Anglo-Saxon kingdom, East Anglia consists primarily of the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk (where the Anglo-Saxon "north folk" and "south folk" dwelt in the early medieval period), and most descriptions of the fluid boundaries of the region include at least parts of neighboring Essex and Cambridgeshire.

The town of Croxton, announced in line 74 of the text as the site of the performance of the play "on Monday," is one of several English Croxtons; that the reference is to a village of that name in southwestern Norfolk about two miles from the town of Thetford and twelve miles north of Bury St. Edmunds seems to be confirmed by a reference to the Babwell mill (line 621).[47] Babwell had been the site of a Franciscan priory since the middle of the thirteenth century and lay just outside the powerful Benedictine abbey at Bury St. Edmunds, which dominated the economic and political affairs of the surrounding region. The presence of a mill at Babwell from at least a half century earlier is confirmed by the chronicler Jocelin of Brakelond, who reports that the mill, a pet project of the often-imperious Abbot Samson, was responsible for flooding neighboring farms around the end of the twelfth century.[48] The reference to Doctor Brundich's lodging near the "colkote" (line 620), a word usually glossed as "coal shed," has also been adduced as evidence for the play's composition somewhere within Bury's orbit of influence by Gibson, who conjectures that *colkote* is a misreading for *Tolcote*, the "tollhouse just opposite the [Babwell] friary near the North Gate of Bury."[49] Ann Eljenholm Nichols also associates the play with Bury based on the bishop's admonition late in the play that pyxes, the vessels used to contain consecrated but unconsumed Hosts, should be kept locked and their keys carefully guarded in order to prevent the kind of theft that initiates the play's central action (lines 924–27). She sees in the bishop's warning a possible allusion to a London incident of 1467 in which a number

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[47] Davis, ed., *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, pp. lxxxiv-lxxxv. The other Croxtons are in Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire. Incidentally, Fletcher ("N-Town Plays," pp. 166–67) makes a case for Thetford as "N-Town," the unnamed place associated with the large compilation of biblical plays assembled somewhere in East Anglia in the fifteenth century contained in British Library MS Cotton Vespasian D.8.

[48] Jocelin of Brakelond, *Chronicle*, p. 116. Upon learning from another monk of the destruction wrought by the rising level of the pond that fed the mill, Samson, "replied, with a flash of anger, that he was not going to sacrifice his fish-pond for the sake of our [i.e., the monks'] meadow" (p. 116). I am grateful to Johanna Kramer for pointing out Jocelin's account of the construction of the mill at Babwell.

[49] Gibson, *Theater of Devotion*, pp. 34 and 186n69. See also Bevington, ed., *Medieval Drama*, p. 756.

of pyxes were stolen from a church for the value of their metal.[50] In the fifteenth century, London was in close and regular contact with the abbey at Bury St. Edmunds, as witnessed by the career of the Benedictine John Lydgate, who was both poet laureate to the Lancastrian kings and a monk at Bury. Nichols speculates that news of the theft in London could have quickly reached the ears of a Bury monk writing a play that would eventually be performed several miles north of Bury at Croxton.[51]

The Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* seems appropriately at home in East Anglia, when viewed from the perspective of the region's curious history of anti-Semitism, which stretches back at least into the twelfth century, when East Anglian Jews were accused of murdering Christian children, first a twelve-year-old named William in Norwich in 1144[52] and then a boy called Robert in Bury St. Edmunds in Suffolk in 1181.[53] In the case of William, the entire Jewish community of Norwich was initially held responsible for the boy's death but was eventually spared through royal intervention, since English Jews were then subjects directly of the king. In his chronicle of Bury's powerful Benedictine abbey, Jocelin of Brakelond records Robert's martyrdom and directs his readers to a separate life of Robert also by Jocelin and now lost.[54] In 1190 lingering animosities toward Jews in Norwich, Bury, and elsewhere culminated in a series of pogroms. The most infamous of these took place in York, where some 150 Jews are thought to have died,[55] but the slaughter at York was preceded by violent attacks on Jews in the Norfolk towns of Lynn and Norwich and followed by the massacre of fifty-seven Jews in Bury in Suffolk on Palm Sunday of that year.[56] What Jews remained in Bury were soon after expelled by Abbot Samson.[57]

While these events were some three centuries or more distant from the dramatist responsible for the Croxton play, there is evidence to suggest that the supposed past crimes of East Anglian Jews were not quickly forgotten. Among the surviving works of the Bury monk John Lydgate, the most prolific English poet of the fifteenth century, is a prayer to Robert of Bury,[58] while a chapel housing Little Robert's relics existed at the abbey until at least the early sixteenth century.[59] Yet there is little reason to suspect that anti-Jewish feeling

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[50] Nichols, "Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*," p. 120.

[51] Gibson has also proposed Bury as the site of the morality *Wisdom*'s production and John Lydgate, the Bury monk, as the author of the N-Town Plays. See Gibson, "Play of *Wisdom* and the Abbey of St. Edmunds" and "Bury St. Edmunds."

[52] William's story was recorded and circulated by the Benedictine monk Thomas of Monmouth, whose *Vita et passio Sancti Willelmi martyris Norwicensis* (*Life and Passion of the Martyr St. William of Norwich*) was instrumental in establishing William's cult. See McCulloh, "Jewish Ritual Murder," and Cohen, "Flow of Blood in Medieval Norwich." Such accounts are colored by gross misperceptions of Jewish belief by Christian chroniclers and by the zealotry that accompanied the call to establish local cults around such child-martyrs.

[53] See Lampert, "Once and Future Jew."

[54] Jocelin of Brakelond, *Chronicle*, p. 15.

[55] Dobson, *Jews of Medieval York*, p. 22; Hillaby, "Jewish Colonisation in the Twelfth Century," p. 31.

[56] Hillaby, "Jewish Colonisation in the Twelfth Century," pp. 30-31.

[57] See Jocelin of Brakelond, *Chronicle*, pp. 41–42.

[58] See Lydgate, *Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, ed. MacCracken, 1:138–39.

[59] Lampert, "Once and Future Jew," p. 240.

was especially strong in the region during the late 1400s when the play was being written or that it extended beyond the hostility toward Jews characteristic of medieval Christianity generally. Following the expulsion of the Jews from England by royal edict in 1290, there was simply no occasion for the kinds of open aggression that routinely surfaced in places on the Continent, where the presence of Jewish communities within or near Christian ones often prompted outbursts of violence. East Anglia's easy access to international shipping lanes did, however, link the region to the Continent, where a tradition of anti-Jewish drama flourished.[60] While there is no evidence to suggest that this tradition exercised any direct influence on the composition of the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, East Anglia's relative proximity to, and frequent economic and cultural exchange with, the Low Countries may have increased awareness of Continental forms of anti-Jewish polemic not unlike the way that English spirituality of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was influenced by new modes of pious expression originating on the Continent.[61]

East Anglia's involvement in trade with the Low Countries is certainly visible in the Croxton play's negative view of commerce, evidenced by Aristorius' renunciation of his profession by play's end. Raw wool and the cloth produced from it dominated East Anglian trade in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and formed the basis for the economy of the many towns, like Norwich, that rose to prominence throughout the area. So important was trade in wool and textiles to East Anglia, in fact, that the many churches built or refurbished with gifts from wealthy merchants during this period came to be known as "wool churches."[62] But with worldly prosperity came spiritual unease; Gibson has surveyed surviving wills from the region that offer glimpses of East Anglians "with anxious hearts, if not guilty consciences, about their worldly and prosperous lives."[63] In detailing the bequests of their testators, these wills serve as postmortem confessions offered by Christians concerned that their worldly gains might interfere with their prospects for salvation. Aristorius' fall in the Croxton play attests to the perilously fine distinction between good business practice and the practice of covetousness. Concerns about accumulating material wealth recur in several plays written and performed in the towns of East Anglia, including *The Castle of Perseverance*, in which Covetousness stands at the head of the seven deadly sins and serves as the play's chief representative of worldliness,[64] and the Digby *Mary Magdalene*, a play Theresa Coletti has described as working "to resolve contradictions between a spiritual ideology whose highest value counseled renunciation of the world and a prosperous social and economic environment whose moral fissures are registered in anxieties about property, status consciousness, and promotion of charity."[65]

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[60] See Wright, *Vengeance of Our Lord*. I am grateful to Andrew Galloway for suggesting the connection between the Croxton play and Continental dramatization of the "Siege of Jerusalem" narrative.

[61] For the influence of Continental spirituality on England see, e.g., Atkinson, *Mystic and Pilgrim*; Kerby-Fulton, *Books under Suspicion*.

[62] For East Anglian "wool churches," see Gibson, *Theater of Devotion*, p. 26.

[63] Gibson, *Theater of Devotion*, p. 27.

[64] See Milla B. Riggio, "Allegory of Feudal Acquisition."

[65] Coletti, "*Paupertas est donum Dei*," p. 341.

Donnalee Dox's assertion that the Jew in the play figures a generalized alterity is especially instructive for thinking through the social dimensions and implications of the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* within its East Anglian contexts. Unlike the Jews of the play's Continental analogues, who often exercise some form of control over their Christian conspirators, the antagonists of the Croxton play are never socially menacing. Their Jewishness does not threaten to disrupt the community of Heraclea. Quite the opposite: Aristorius dispatches his servant to seek out the newly arrived Jewish merchants so that he might go so far as to welcome them into his home. He acknowledges their shared professional interests and the potential for profitability inherent in good relations with them with no apparent misgivings over religious difference. In Continental narratives of Host desecration, the Jewish presence is always inimical because it is immediate, unlike the situation in England after 1290; the only sure way to combat that presence and to preserve social unity is through the total destruction of the Jew. For the English playwright and his audience, converting the Jew and sending him on pilgrimage is sufficient for neutralizing the threat; rather it is the practice of commerce which must be eliminated in order to maintain a healthy society.[66] The Jews are, for the moment at least, welcomed into a body unified through faith, a community that sings together *Te Deum laudamus* at the play's conclusion, but it is the estrangement of Aristorius, the Christian merchant, from that community that is finally emphasized. The Jews, then, may represent unbelief, a lack of faith through either ignorance or an overreliance on reason, but it is the Christian merchant who should know better and whose susceptibility to greed frames the spectacular desecration that provides the central action of the play. The Jews of the play are the conventional villains of medieval English theater who oppose Christ in the temple with their misdirected learning in the N-Town "Christ and the Doctors" or on Calvary with their hammers and nails in the various Crucifixion pageants, but they are also what Christians risk becoming when they permit reason — whether the reason that cannot reconcile how God can be present in a hunk of bread or the reason that deems the exchange of that bread for one hundred pounds an offer too good to refuse — to triumph over their fear of God.

The Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* not only stages the conflict between the blandishments of the world and the commandments of God that preoccupied wealthy East Anglians and that simultaneously furnished morality plays, several of which also have their origins in the region, with their subject matter; it also reflects East Anglians' distinctive preferences for imagining God in His physical humanity. Gibson has memorably described East Anglia as a "theater of devotion" defined by an "incarnational aesthetic." This "deliberate and conscious effort to objectify the spiritual even as the Incarnation itself had given spirit a concrete form" emphasizes affective response to Christ's humanity, which in meditative texts, drama, and visual art was rendered in striking images that often foregrounded pain, suffering, and even torture but that above all celebrated human bodies and especially the body of Christ.[67] Gibson observes that it is "the truth of imagination, of imaging, which is the fundamental truth behind late medieval lay spirituality and is the shaping aesthetic for the religious drama and lyric."[68] For medieval East Anglians, in other words, seeing was

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[66] For a different reading of the work the Croxton play does to promote social unity, see Scherb, "Violence and the Social Body."

[67] Gibson, *Theater of Devotion*, p. 8.

[68] Gibson, *Theater of Devotion*, p. 10.

believing, as it had been for Christians from Doubting Thomas on. The mystery of the Incarnation, in which the invisible divine became materially present, provided Christians access to God through their shared humanity with Christ. East Anglian lay spirituality privileged "bodyes or bodily þinges," in the words of the Carthusian prior Nicholas Love, whose *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* ranks as one of the most widely read and influential English texts of the fifteenth century.[69] Love counsels that "contemplacion of þe monhede [manhood] of cryste is more likyng [pleasant] more spedefull [beneficial] & more sykere [certain] þan is hyȝe contemplacion of þe godhed" and encourages his readers to "sette in mynde þe ymage of crystes Incarnacion passion & Resurreccion so that a symple soule þat kan not þenke bot bodyes or bodily þinges mowe [might] haue somwhat accordynge vnto is [his] affecion where wiþ he maye fede & stire his deuocion."[70] Awash in blood and bedecked with wounded flesh, the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* places bodies and bodily things center stage as objects for contemplation and devotion while simultaneously avoiding the speculative theologizing about intangibles, such as the nature of God's divinity, to be found in the universities. Indeed, even the play's central symbol, the Host, is rendered literal and concrete by becoming an actual bloodied body. The playwright explores a wide range of meanings assignable to carnality. Human flesh is everywhere in the play, not only in the tortured and torturing Host or the abused body of Jonathas but also in the tantalizing aromas and tastes conjured by the exotic spices Jonathas enumerates among his wares in his opening monologue; in the priest Isoder's body's susceptibility to the soporific qualities of the food and drink with which, in a parody of the salvific power of the Eucharist, Aristorius plies him before stealing the consecrated Host from the church; and in the doctor's incomparable knack for misreading the symptoms of unsound bodies. The polysemousness of human flesh serves to unify the disparities of mood, tone, and language of the Croxton play and to emphasize the centrality of Christ's humanity, while the play's seemingly unstaunchable flow of blood "makes visible an invisible God."[71] For their part the Jews cease to be subjects in their own right and function instead as props; they become, in the words of Caroline Walker Bynum, "useful for making manifest a blood that excites devotion, precipitates pilgrimage, and defends the faith against all unbelievers."[72] This emphasis on the Host's agency can be seen in the title of the play given in the manuscript following line 80: *The Play of the Conversyon of Ser Jonathas the Jewe by Myracle of the Blyssed Sacrament*. Jonathas becomes an object; all of the play's agency is invested in the Host and in the flesh which unites Jesus and His human followers by means of an intimate and inviolable bond. In Continental narratives of Host desecration, the central miracle justifies condemnation, not conversion; in the Croxton play, the tone is pointedly devotional, and the Jews simply cease to be Jews once they have served their purpose in revealing God's presence. In its preference for the human over the divine, for the visible over the invisible, for the embodied over the disembodied, the *Play of the Sacrament* is thus typical of the spiritual and devotional sensibilities of its time and place; it is, in short, quintessentially East Anglian.

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[69] Love, *Mirror of the Blessed Life*, p. 10

[70] Love, *Mirror of the Blessed Life*, p. 10.

[71] Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, p. 73.

[72] Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, p. 72.

STAGING THE CROXTON *PLAY OF THE SACRAMENT*

The *Play of the Sacrament* consistently exhibits traits of the dramaturgy and stagecraft peculiar to East Anglia. John C. Coldewey has suggested that the Croxton play, like others from Norfolk and Suffolk, was less a vehicle for religious didacticism per se or for displaying civic pride but was instead performed primarily for profit.[73] Although profitability and didacticism need not be mutually exclusive motivations for staging drama, the *Play of the Sacrament*, with its disembodied hands and exploding ovens, surely takes advantage of its spectacular potential, and, Coldewey observes, "as modern entertainment has demonstrated beyond doubt, nothing pleases so well as spectacle."[74] For Victor I. Scherb, the conspicuous deployment of devotional images is what defines East Anglian dramaturgy. Building on Augustinian psychological models, Scherb suggests that for medieval Christians, drama, because of its appeal to multiple senses, created stronger impressions on the mind than other exclusively visual media and enabled spectators to recall with greater ease the images they witnessed during a performance for the purposes of devotional meditation.[75] Scherb contends that the deployment of physical space in the staging of these plays is crucial to achieving the plays' intended devotional effects. So-called place-and-scaffold plays highlight specific devotional images through juxtaposition. An unmarked *platea* or open playing area encourages debate and facilitates the incorporation of the audience within that debate. And large-scale plays with numerous *loca* (scaffolds or raised stages) are conducive to multiple presentations of time and place, thereby reminding the audience of the universality of the themes on display and of God's unique, eternal perspective on them.[76] The Croxton play, an example of the place-and-scaffold type, focuses the audience's attention on a web of images that all refer to the body of Christ and that generate meaning through juxtaposition. Most recently, Penny Granger has made the case for "liturgicality" as a particular characteristic of East Anglian drama. She contends that "liturgical material in the East Anglian plays seems to be incorporated into the text rather than merely added, almost as an afterthought, in the manner of a musical interlude" and that musical material drawn from the Mass and the Divine Office, the two major modes of formal worship in the medieval church, serves to emphasize climactic moments in these plays, as, for example, in the singing of the hymns *O sacrum convivium* (O holy banquet) and *Te Deum laudamus* in the Croxton play.[77]

It is important to note that there is no evidence that attests to the play's actual performance in Croxton — or anywhere else for that matter — at any time during the fifteenth century. Nevertheless, most scholars take for granted that the play was staged. The banns — the first eighty lines of the play in which a future performance is announced — have often been interpreted as implying the play's performance by an itinerant professional troupe. Banns are a feature of several medieval English plays, including *The Castle of Perseverance*, the N-Town plays (which takes its name from the anonymous site of its

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[73] Coldewey, "Non-Cycle Plays," p. 202.

[74] Coldewey, "Non-Cycle Plays," p. 206.

[75] Scherb, *Staging Faith*, pp. 49–50.

[76] Scherb, *Staging Faith*.

[77] Granger, *N-Town Play*, p. 149.

performance, "N-town," proclaimed in its banns), and the Chester plays (for which two different banns have survived, one pre- and one post-Reformation). The banns to the *Play of the Sacrament* provide for two *vexillatores*, or "banner-bearers," to advertise the play to potential audiences much like the modern film trailer. The second *vexillator*'s invitation to the curious passerby "to here [hear] the purpoos of this play / That ys representyd now in yower syght" (lines 9–10) might also suggest that the banns were accompanied by a "dumb show," in which the play's basic plot would have been pantomimed by costumed actors. The banns also call for minstrels, who "blow up with a mery stevyn [song]" (line 80). That the *Play of the Sacrament* might have been performed by a traveling company of professional players and minstrels is likewise intimated by the note that concludes the surviving copy of the text, which helpfully suggests: "[n]ine may play yt at ease." The ability to double or triple the number of roles undertaken by a single actor would be crucial to an itinerant troupe, since the smaller the cast the less the expense, although nine players would still have made for a large company by medieval standards.[78]

Scholars have also imagined medieval performances that do not depend on the *Play of the Sacrament* being a touring show. William Tydeman points to the non-traveling Passion and Resurrection play performed in New Romney in Kent during the sixteenth century and to records documenting the play's promotion by "cryers" in the nearby village of Hythe as possible evidence that the *Play of the Sacrament* was only ever intended for performance in Croxton but was proclaimed to audiences further afield.[79] John M. Wasson suggests that All Saints' Church in Croxton could have served as a general backdrop in front of which scaffolds were positioned around a *platea* with the audience situated on the facing slope. Tydeman conjectures that the audience might even have been invited to enter the church itself for the play's final scene, which could otherwise have been played outside and in front of the building.[80]

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[78] For a recent discussion of medieval English acting companies, see Palmer, "Star Turns or Small Companies?". Coldewey ("Non-Cycle Plays," p. 202) argues that the common denominator uniting the many different genres of play produced in East Anglia, which shows the greatest regional variety of dramatic types, was their performance for profit. For an account, albeit a fictional one, of the costs likely to be incurred by traveling players, see Unsworth, *Morality Play*.

[79] Tydeman, *English Medieval Theatre*, p. 58. See also Wasson, "English Church as Theatrical Space," p. 32.

[80] Wasson, "English Church as Theatrical Space," pp. 31–32. Scherb (*Staging Faith*, p. 68) also imagines All Saints' Church as part of the "set." See also Wasson, "English Church as Theatrical Space," p. 31, which describes the disposition of the landscape in greater detail:

> As it happens, Croxton has an ideal playing space for the performance of this particular play. On the main road, just across from the west front of the church, is a rather high embankment, running parallel to the street. If the audience were in the street below and most of the play were performed on this embankment, there would be good sight lines and plenty of room on the embankment for Aristorius's stage, the Jew Jonathas's stage, the post, the cauldron, and the oven. When the oven collapses, Christ can simply rise from the other side of the embankment. When the presbyter returns to the church, he need only cross the road to the parish church. Similarly, Aristorius can cross the road with the church key, open the door to the west front, go in, and return with the host.

Gibson offers an especially imaginative reconstruction of the play's possible performance history, with performances first at Bury and later at Croxton put on by local amateurs:

> The *Play of the Sacrament* was written in the latter part of the fifteenth century, very possibly in Bury St. Edmunds, and perhaps in the late 1460s like the N-Town cycle compilation which contains very similar banns, likewise spoken by "vexillatores." The *Play of the Sacrament* was a play performed on Corpus Christi Day, a play deliberately addressing the troublesome Lollard sympathies of the Suffolk-Norfolk border region, and it was probably a play produced by one or more confraternities of priests and pious laymen. In its original setting, it may have been performed in the open market square at Angel hill, just in front of the parish church of St. James, which could have served as the church setting for the Episcopus scenes. In the early sixteenth century, a copy of the play was made for a performance at the small neighboring Norfolk village of Croxton, perhaps, as was so often the case in East Anglian villages, to raise money for the parish church. This copy of the text was made by "R. C.," who noted helpfully the smallest number of players required to perform the play and who may have been Robert Cooke, a local vicar who by 1537 had collected enough drama manuscripts to refer to them in his will as "all my playbooks."[81]

No documentation exists to support Gibson's admittedly hypothetical reconstruction of the play's conception at Bury as a Corpus Christi entertainment, and Tamara Atkin has since argued that "R.C." is probably the printer Robert Copeland.[82] Nevertheless, Gibson's fantasy production is useful in reminding us of how prevalent dramatic performance was in East Anglia at the end of the Middle Ages and how imperfectly the surviving texts have captured the spectacles to which they bear witness.

In the absence of explicit records, we can nevertheless infer the general shape of a hypothetical fifteenth-century performance of the *Play of the Sacrament* by considering the staging conventions of other East Anglian place-and-scaffold plays as well as by examining the numerous stage directions in the manuscript. Scherb notes that plays of the place-and-scaffold type

> employ two or three scaffolds or stages, substantial casts, music, and the dramatic action of the procession in order to stage devotional moments. Most frequently, these dramas oppose sacred to profane space, the action often climaxing around a devotional image of some kind. The frequently spectacular and sometimes violent nature of the action allows these dramas to appeal to particular currents in late medieval piety, even as the dramas stress the healing potential of particular devotional attitudes, actions, and symbols.[83]

The *Play of the Sacrament* exemplifies this arrangement. Its stage directions identify three *loca* which establish the boundaries of "Heraclea": the Jews' house (line 228, s.d.), Aristorius' house (see line 271, in which Aristorius invites Jonathas "up" onto his scaffold), and a church (367, s.d.) wherein dwells Episcopus (the bishop). These *loca* surround and define the *platea*, but they are not merely physical markers of theatrical space; they serve also to establish the play's spiritual boundaries. Given that the play presumably opens with

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[81] Gibson, *Theater of Devotion*, p. 40. The initials "R.C." appear on the last folio of the manuscript following the note concerning the number of required players.

[82] Atkin, "Playbooks and Printed Drama," p. 197.

[83] Scherb, *Staging Faith*, p. 16.

Aristorius atop his stage, it is easy to imagine that his was the central scaffold, or raised platform, with the church (either another scaffold or else an actual building like All Saints' Croxton) to one side and the Jews' house, the site of the desecration, on the other.[84] Clifford Davidson has discussed the importance to medieval dramaturgy of "positional symbolism," or "the framework of meaning by which the action of the drama may be accurately understood."[85] Thus Aristorius' positioning between the play's two moral poles, the church and Jews' house, might have recalled familiar medieval depictions of the Final Judgment, the end of secular time, when Christ will divide humanity into flocks of sheep bound for eternal bliss and goats condemned to ceaseless torment (Matthew 25:31–46). Visual representations of this scene show the saved souls arrayed on Christ's right-hand side with the damned on the left. While signifying literally the houses and other buildings to be found on the streets of "Heraclea," this arrangement of scaffolds might also have triggered a visual association for the audience with the symbolic iconography of the Judgment. The Jews' house thus becomes a figurative Hellmouth, a place for the faithless, the damned, and the tortured, while the church — scaffold or actual building — becomes a symbol of heaven, the celestial kingdom awaiting those who believe in salvation through Christ. Movement to and between these scaffolds infuses the characters' actions with moral meaning. The *platea*, the undefined space between the scaffolds and the moral extremes for which they stand, likewise ceases to be a neutral space when we realize that Aristorius' approach toward the Jews' scaffold with the purloined Host separates him from heaven both physically and symbolically and simultaneously carries him closer to the playing space's allegorical hell. It is not clear from the dialogue or the stage directions where the meeting of the merchants following Aristorius' successful looting of the Host takes place, only that Aristorius moves through the *platea* before spying Jonathas approaching in the distance:

But now wyll I passe by thes pathes playne;	*flat*
To mete with Jonathas I wold fayne.	*meet; be glad*
Ah, yonder he commytht in certayn:	*certainly*
Me thynkyth I hym see.	*I seem to see him*
(lines 373–76)	

If we imagine the scaffolds arrayed so that the church and the Jews' house stand at opposite poles with Aristorius' house centrally positioned between them, Aristorius' traversing of "thes pathes playne" can only lead him away from the church, from salvation, and toward the damnation represented by the Jews and their unbelief.[86] How far Aristorius proceeds on the path to hell is not clear from the text: does he go beyond his own scaffold in the course of his dialogue with Jonathas? How great a sin has he committed? The answers to these questions are not clear; what is certain is that the Host itself pursues a trajectory during the play that takes it from the space symbolically associated with heaven through the in-between

[84] Both Scherb (*Staging Faith*, pp. 75–76) and Tydeman (*English Medieval Theatre*, pp. 67–69) imagine the Jews' scaffold in the middle, since the central scene of the Host abuse transpires there.

[85] Davidson, "Positional Symbolism and English Medieval Drama," p. 68.

[86] Tydeman (*English Medieval Theatre*, p. 61) imagines Aristorius delivering his opening speech from the *platea*, which would also enable him to begin in the neutral middle space, although the opposition between the Jews' scaffold and either the bishop's scaffold or an actual church might then be less clear if the Jews' scaffold were centrally located.

space of the *platea*, the terrestrial world, and into hell (the Jews' house). By play's end the Host has been processed ceremoniously back to the altar of the church that is also heaven whence it was originally stolen. Thus the play's most important and most polysemous object, the Host, moves from heaven through earth to hell and back again, following the path of the Son of God, whose body it encloses, in His descent to earth to redeem humanity, His rescue of the patriarchs from hell's clutches during the Harrowing, and His glorious return to the Father after the Ascension.

The playwright's reliance on positional symbolism and his attention to the play's allegorical associations do not, however, imply a lack of interest in the dramatic potential of the play's literal action, as demonstrated by the pronounced concentration of stage directions in the manuscript surrounding the "testing" of the Host by the Jews. The effects described in these stage directions indicate that the playwright not only had a flair for the spectacular but was also interested in employing realistic and believable effects in order to create his outrageous stage illusion. The stage directions call for a bleeding Host, fire, a detachable hand, a cauldron that overflows with blood, an exploding and bleeding oven, and a speaking "image" of Christ as a child "with woundys bledyng." None of these effects were beyond the capacities of medieval technicians,[87] although the concentration of so many in a single, relatively brief play is extraordinary. Some indication of how a few of the Croxton play's effects might have been accomplished is suggested by a sixteenth-century source. The cloth merchant Philippe de Vigneulles witnessed a performance of the *Play of the Sacrament*'s French analogue, the *Mistere de la Sainte Hostie*, or some version of it, in Metz in 1513. The production's spectacularity evidently captivated Philippe, who details the "secret" means by which an abundance of blood was repeatedly coaxed from the tortured Host. He approvingly records, for example, that the Jew placed the Host on a table and pierced it with a knife, and that "by means of a secret [*secret*] which was performed, a great abundance of blood issued forth and leapt up from the aforementioned Host, just as if it were a child who pissed, and the Jew was sullied and bloodied and played his role very well."[88] Philippe recalls that the Jew, "not happy about this, threw the aforementioned Host into the fire, and through some device [*engien*], it raised itself from the fire and attached itself to the flue of the chimney, and the traitor pierced it again with a dagger and through another device and secret [*engien et secret*] it again emitted blood abundantly."[89] Philippe leaves many of the play's spectacular effects unexplained, but his eyewitness account confirms that the stage directions in the Croxton play could indeed be accomplished with available medieval technologies.

In his study of the early history of pyrotechny, Philip Butterworth has analyzed documents surviving from the sixteenth century that point to a reasonably well-developed understanding of how to produce fireworks using various forms of gunpowder and other chemicals to create explosions and how to transform various tubes and casings into rockets, wands, and other incendiary devices.[90] The materials used by medieval and early modern pyrotechnicians are known primarily from records of payments made for firework

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[87] See Grantley, "Producing Miracles"; Butterworth, "Providers of Pyrotechnics"; Enders, *Death by Drama*.

[88] *Gedenkbuch des Metzer Bürgers Philippe von Vigneulles*, p. 244 (translation mine).

[89] *Gedenkbuch des Metzer Bürgers Philippe von Vigneulles*, p. 244 (translation mine).

[90] Butterworth, "Providers of Pyrotechnics."

ingredients. Butterworth has concluded that the primary purveyors of pyrotechnic materials were by and large members of England's various mercers', merchants', and grocers' guilds.[91] In support of this claim, he cites a document from 1453 attesting to the kinds of goods the London Grocers' Company might be expected to deal in, including not only familiar tools of pyrotechny like turpentine, verdigris, and saltpeter but also spices and other exotic comestibles such as "gynger," "galyngale," "pepper," "safron," "dates," "almaunds," "ryse," "reysens," "clowes," "greynis," "mac," "cynamon," and "long pepper" — all items in which Jonathas also claims to deal in his opening monologue.[92] While most of the records Butterworth has unearthed date from a century or more after the Croxton play, several of them come from Norwich and Wymondham in Norfolk; others from Canterbury, Maidstone, and New Romney in Kent; and still others from Cambridge, that is, from places in or around East Anglia. Given the importance of this region of England on the international trading scene, it is intriguing to imagine a playwright familiar with the kinds of goods that could be procured from merchants — perhaps, as Gibson has suggested, a monk at the cosmopolitan monastery at Bury St. Edmunds, an abbey that had occasion to host prominent guests, those with a taste for the kind of well-seasoned fare not typical of standard monastic cuisine.[93] The dramatist's knowledge of spices and medicinal herbs could simply have come from the kinds of encyclopedias familiar to a fifteenth-century monk of not trivial learning rather than from local merchants, and in any case the stage directions in the *Play of the Sacrament* call for blood more than explosions.[94] But in light of Butterworth's research into the early history of English pyrotechny and the importance of trade in East Anglia generally, the playwright's knowledge of exotic spices and fondness for special effects may not be entirely coincidental.

THE CROXTON PLAYWRIGHT: AN INCIPIENT BIOGRAPHY

The admittedly circumstantial case for the playwright's familiarity with the devices and materials of medieval pyrotechny raises the fascinating if ultimately unanswerable question of authorship. While the play has survived with no name attached to it aside from the enigmatic initials "R.C." at the conclusion of the only manuscript copy, certain details about the life, education, and milieu of the anonymous dramatist can be reasonably adduced. First and foremost, he was almost certainly a member of the clergy. Throughout the play he demonstrates his knowledge of Scripture, the Mass and the Office (the two primary forms of medieval Christian liturgy or institutional worship), and the Latin language. Sr. Nicholas Maltman, O.P., has convincingly argued that the likely source for the scriptural quotations that adorn the speeches of Jesus and the repentant Jews during the play's climax is the liturgy for Holy Week, while the appearance of a line from the compline hymn *Christe, qui lux es et dies* (see the note to line 753) and the play's resolution in a communal Corpus

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[91] Butterworth, "Providers of Pyrotechnics," p. 67.

[92] Butterworth, "Providers of Pyrotechnics," p. 69. For medieval Europe's fascination with exotic spices, see Freedman, *Out of the East*.

[93] Gibson, "Bury St. Edmunds."

[94] Grantley ("Producing Miracles," pp. 83–87) discusses the instruments, including bladders, bellows, and fountains, by means of which the *Play of the Sacrament*'s spectacular displays of copious blood could have been achieved.

Christi procession accompanied by the singing of the *Te Deum laudamus* justify labeling the *Play of the Sacrament* liturgical drama.[95] The playwright was clearly not only intimately familiar with the liturgy but capable of adapting it artfully to a new context.

In addition to using liturgical chant to enhance the play's action, the playwright also introduces a number of spoken Latin lines into his script, the sources for several of which have never been satisfactorily identified. The use of Latin to adorn the text raises further questions about the complex identity of the play's original audience: does the dramatist envision an elite audience of the kind that has been proposed to have witnessed the production of the East Anglian morality *Wisdom*?[96] Or might some of the Latin lines, especially those uttered by Christ following his spectacular entry from the exploding oven, have been added by a later scribe as a kind of scholarly annotation for the benefit of a learned reader familiar with the authoritative sources for the characters' vernacular speeches?

Whatever the purpose of his Latin citations, the playwright reveals himself to be an artist eminently capable of working in a variety of verbal registers to great dramatic effect. The *Play of the Sacrament* is remarkable for the variety of stanzaic forms it employs. Most common are an eight-line stanza rhyming *ababbcbc* and a quatrain with the pattern *abab*. Nearly three-quarters of the play's 1007 lines can be found in one or the other of these stanzas. While the surviving text includes several unique stanzas not found elsewhere in the script which may be attributed either to authorial shortcomings or to scribal sloppiness, many of the play's departures from these two stanzaic building blocks seem to signal important shifts in the dramatic action. Thus, the playwright uses a nine-line stanza rhyming *ababcdddc* to mark four significant occasions: lines 249–57 (the priest's announcement to Aristorius of the arrival of Jonathas from Syria), 274–82 (Jonathas' solicitation of Aristorius' aid in procuring a Host), 323–31 (Aristorius' revelation of his stratagem for acquiring the Host), and 368–76 (the speech immediately following the theft of the Host). These four speeches act as narrative crescendos, marking for the audience the path which leads Aristorius into sin.

The playwright departs from his basic stanzas in two other key episodes. The first is a scene featuring the corrupt doctor, Brundich, and his servant, Colle (lines 525–652). The majority of this comic interlude is written in a stanza rhyming *aaabcccb*. Successive rhymes combined with shorter lines during this interlude serve to enhance the scene's comic effect by leaving the audience with little opportunity to process what is being said by these swindlers. To take a single example, in lines 541–44, Colle heralds the arrival of his master with rapid-fire but ambiguous praise:

> He ys allso a boone-setter,
> I knowe no man go the better.
> In every taverne he ys detter: *debtor*
> That ys a good tokenyng! *sign*

It takes the audience a beat to recognize that Colle has averred not only the doctor's skill at mending broken bones but also his indebtedness at the tavern, and with comparable

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[95] Maltman, "Meaning and Art."

[96] See Milla Cozart Riggio, "Staging of *Wisdom*"; Gibson, "Play of *Wisdom* and the Abbey of St. Edmunds."

verve. Likewise, the sarcasm of the punchline — "that's a good sign!" — is simultaneously masked by the pace of the line and accented by the shift in rhyme. Indeed, the *b*-lines in these stanzas serve as a kind of verbal punctuation, a means of drawing attention to, and often of subverting, whatever precedes them.

Other instances of stanzaic variation likewise serve to propel this scene. Brundich uses a unique *aaaaaab*-stanza in lines 601–07, to which Colle responds in lines 608–21 with a series of seven rhyming couplets. In his speech, Brundich also revels in aureation, the use of Latinate words, by rhyming *congregacyon*, *negacyon*, *certyfycacyon*, *proclamacion*, *pausacyon*, and *declaracion*. Brundich's conspicuously gilded and affected diction reminds the audience that the good doctor is all talk but no substance. Colle's ensuing advertisement-in-couplets of services offered by the doctor — he can cure everything from fever to swollen genitals — likewise serves to emphasize the disjunction between rhetoric and action. The playwright here masterfully deploys a panoply of unique stanzaic forms to great effect in supporting the heavily ironized and comical language of the text to create the character of a doctor who is so (un)skilled that he can make healthy men sick.

This interlude has been the subject of much scholarly disagreement. As recently as 1994 the comic potential of the doctor scene has been described as "rather redundant" and contributive of "little to the development of the narrative."[97] Several scholars have labeled this scene an interpolation, in part because of its shift in metrical form, despite the fact that the *aaabccccb* stanza characteristic of the doctor and servant is employed by the Jews in the stanzas preceding the entrance of these two fraudulent interlopers.[98] The shift to lowbrow comedy in what is otherwise a devotional play has also been cited as evidence of interference by a later writer. Indeed, one of the few critics interested in actually redeeming this scene as an integral part of the play does so only by denying the comic potential of the scene.[99] Yet the playwright's facility for varying the poetry's structure in order to change the tone of the action, to increase dramatic tension, or to flesh out his characters in other scenes seems thoroughly consistent with the author's artistry throughout the play.[100] This episode also serves to prime the audience for events to come by juxtaposing the low comedy of the Brundich scene with the "swemfull [sorrowful] syght" (line 800) of a bleeding Christ erupting from the infernal oven to which the Host is finally consigned by its frenzied and frightened torturers. The dramatist baits the play's spectators into indicating their delight in the slapstick transpiring on stage by means of their audible laughter, laughter that is perhaps still ringing in their ears at the moment when the seriousness of the subject matter is rendered visible through the spectacular appearance of the bloody and wound-ridden *corpus Christi*. By repeatedly drawing attention to his master's "cunnyng" (lines 555 and especially 591 and 596) with its pun on the French *con* ("cunt"), Colle comically extends the tally of Brundich's sins to include not only ignorance, avarice, and pride but also

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[97] Grantley, "Saints' Plays," pp. 284, 286.

[98] See, e.g., Craig, *English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages*, pp. 326–27. Davis (ed., *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, p. lxxv) likewise suggests that there is good reason for believing the scene to be an interpolation.

[99] Homan, "Devotional Themes," pp. 332–35. But see also Scherb, "Earthly and Divine Physicians," who also treats the scene as integral to the play.

[100] See Kruger ("Bodies of Jews," p. 314), who argues that "in its emphasis on the body and bodily rebellions" the Brundich interlude "clearly has thematic connections to the remainder of the play."

lasciviousness. The remedies with which he plies his many female patients (on whom he expends all his "cunning") include ingredients such as scammony that were noted by medieval medical authorities for their aphrodisiacal properties.[101] Rather than a mark against his poetic and dramatic abilities, the playwright's easy and compelling blending of high and low indicates a certain sophistication and level of artistry of the kind frequently claimed for no less a poet than Chaucer and evident elsewhere in the drama, for example in the morality *Mankind*, where the play's action is similarly interrupted by the entrance of the devil Titivillus and in which crude, materialistic humor serves to propel the drama to its redemptive and ultimately transcendent conclusion.[102]

During the scene initiated by Jesus' explosive entry, the playwright experiments with stanzaic variation yet again. The bloodied Savior rebukes the Jewish conspirators with a series of three quatrains with concatenated rhymes that should probably be understood as a single twelve-line stanza rhyming *ababbcbccdcd*:

Oh ye merveylows Jewys,	*wonderful*
Why ar ye to yowr Kyng onkynd,	*cruel*
And I so bytterly bowt yow to my blysse?	*Although; redeemed you*
Why fare ye thus fule with yowre frende?	*behave; foully*
Why peyne yow me and straytly me pynde,	*torture; severely; constrain*
And I yowr love so derely have bowght?	
Why are ye so unstedfast in yor mynde?	
Why wrath ye me? I greve yow nowght.	*do you anger*
Why wyll ye nott beleve that I have tawght	*what*
And forsake yor fowle neclygence,	
And kepe my commandementys in yowr thowght,	
And unto my Godhed to take credence?	*believe*

(lines 719–30)

The second stanza of Jesus' speech continues his rapid, and incredulous, questioning in an *ababbccccb* stanza which, in its pace and insistence, seems to anticipate the kind of interrogational technique employed by the bad cop in crime dramas to confuse and shame the suspect into a tearful confession.

While many of the variations in the play's rhyme scheme are certainly deliberate, the appearance of several other unique stanzas in the play suggests simple errors in copying. Lines 497–503 show the unique pattern of *aaabccb*, but given this stanza's inclusion in a section of the play dominated by the *aaabcccb* stanza of the Brundich intermezzo, it is hard not to believe that the scribe mistakenly omitted a *c*-line as he copied. So, too, one could argue that the stanza formed by lines 646–52, with its pattern of *ababbcc*, is missing its penultimate line rhyming on *b*. These anomalous stanzas notwithstanding, the competence and subtlety with which the playwright constructs his scenes not only through his diction but

[101] See, e.g., Delany, "Constantinus Africanus' *De Coitu*," p. 65.

[102] See lines 459ff. in *Mankind*, ed. Ashley and NeCastro.

by means of the framework upon which he hangs his language is one of the particular marks of his artistry.[103]

Alliteration serves as another means by which the poet accents his dialogue. Several moments in the play are characterized by conspicuous and virtuoso displays of encyclopedic knowledge that emphasize the epistemological tension everywhere present in this play between what is knowable empirically and what must be taken on faith alone. Following the banns, the play proper opens with paired introductions by Aristorius and Jonathas, each of whom vaunts his mercantile prowess with an encyclopedic and alliterating boast. Lines 95–116 offer an alphabetical and alliterating attestation of foreign lands touched by Aristorius' business interests which implicitly serve to condemn Aristorius for his over-reliance on bookish learning at the expense of faith:

In Antyoche and in Almayn moch ys my myght.	*Antioch; Alemannia*
In Braban and in Brytayn I am full bold.	*Brabant; Britain*
In Calabre and in Coleyn ther rynge I full ryght.	*Calabria, Cologne; move about*
(lines 97–99)	

And so on. Aristorius' map-in-verse is paralleled by Jonathas' catalogue of goods for sale, from "dyamantys derewourthy to dresse [precious diamonds for adornment]" (line 165) to "Clowys, greynis, and gynger grene [cloves, grains of paradise, and green ginger]" (line 181). Rhetorical and encyclopedic excesses imply intellectual pride on the part of the two merchants, Christian and Jewish, who put their own materialistic fantasies of empire ahead of God's revealed truth. Conspicuous encyclopedism features in the Brundich interlude as well, when Colle announces his master's competency in treating whoever "hat the canker [cancer], the collyke [colic], or the laxe [diarrhea], / The tercyan, the quartan [varieties of recurring fever], or the brynnyng axs [burning fever]" (lines 612–13). Colle favors repetition or a theme-and-variation structure (e.g., the tertian and quartan fevers) over alliteration at times, but his penchant for listing, coupled with his overt sinfulness, is reminiscent of the speeches that accompany the entrances of Aristorius and Jonathas at the play's opening. Such stylistic resonances suggest again that the Brundich interlude was originally part of the script and not a later interpolation as has so often been claimed. Throughout the play the dramatist demonstrates his mastery of stylistic variation as a tool for defining his characters and creating effects through parallel speeches (the encyclopedic boasts of Aristorius, Jonathas, and Colle) as well as through contrasting juxtapositions (the low comedy of the Brundich scene and the devotional somberness of Christ's appearance from the oven) characteristic of place-and-scaffold plays as described by Scherb.

While the identity of the Croxton playwright will likely remain a mystery, we can nevertheless begin to discern the outlines of a biography for this remarkable dramatist. He may have been a monk at Bury St. Edmunds in the 1460s or 1470s and was in any case a member of the clergy who was at ease with Scripture and the liturgy. He may have associated with local merchants who traded in spices and the materials necessary to produce fireworks and other pyrotechnic effects. He was probably familiar with contemporary medical compendia and other kinds of encyclopedias popular in his day and therefore probably had

[103] The playwright's skillfulness in this regard went largely unnoticed in the early criticism because it was not until Davis' 1970 EETS edition that the stanzaic divisions in the script were properly recorded.

routine access to a significant library, such as the one at Bury. He was a poet of considerable skill who managed effectively to blend high devotion with low physical comedy within the compass of a relatively brief play. He adapted a familiar legend to a new set of cultural circumstances and in doing so created the only known play of its kind to survive from medieval England, a play that recounts not the story of salvation history familiar from biblical pageants nor the struggle of a universalized human soul against the allegorized powers of sin common to the moralities but a miracle that allegedly took place not too long ago nor too far away. And he had an eye for spectacle. He was, in short, a talented playwright who deserves a place among the most accomplished of Middle English writers but whose obscurity seems almost assured in the modern era by his anonymity and above all by his choice of subject matter.

THE MANUSCRIPT

The original script written by the Croxton playwright, whoever he may have been, has apparently been lost. The only surviving copy of the *Play of the Sacrament* appears on folios 338r–356r of what is now Dublin, Trinity MS F.4.20, catalogue no. 652. Since F.4.20 preserves the only surviving copy of the play, it is impossible to determine the play's original written form beyond what is contained in this text. This is an important point with regard to claims that the Brundich scene is an interpolation, since there is no textual evidence to support that theory, which has been advanced primarily on stylistic grounds. In any case, the version of the *Play of the Sacrament* in F.4.20 is a later copy datable by paleographical analysis to the early sixteenth century.[104] Nevertheless, the language of the text is mostly consistent with the dialect spoken and written in late medieval East Anglia.[105]

The paper leaves on which the play was written have been removed from the miscellany of which they once formed a part and are stored separately in a folder. The remainder of F.4.20 consists of widely ranging sixteenth- and seventeenth-century materials: the *Declaration of the Government of Ireland, Discovering the Discontents of the Irishry* addressed in 1594 to Elizabeth I by Captain Thomas Lee, who was eventually executed for conspiring to harm the queen;[106] an *Apologia pro se et aliis Catholicis* ("Apology for himself and other Catholics") attributed to Nicholas, bishop of Ferns;[107] a genealogy of the English kings and

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[104] Atkin ("Playbooks and Printed Drama," pp. 194–96) suggests that the watermark of the paper on which the play is copied probably dates from the mid-sixteenth century.

[105] Davis, ed., *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, pp. lxxvi–lxxxv. Davis reviews the linguistic evidence for attribution to East Anglia in greater detail, refuting, in the process, previous suggestions that at least one of the scribes responsible for the surviving postmedieval copy of the text may have been Irish.

[106] See James P. Myers, Jr., "'Murdering Heart . . . Murdering Hand': Captain Thomas Lee of Ireland, Elizabethan Assassin," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 22 (1991), 47–60.

[107] This is Nicholas French, Catholic bishop of Ferns during a brief period of Roman Catholic rule in Ireland in the 1640s by the so-called Confederation of Kilkenny. French fled Ireland in 1651 following the incursion of an English Parliamentarian army headed by Oliver Cromwell into Ireland for the purposes of reclaiming the island and was subsequently further disheartened by the treatment of Irish Catholics following the Restoration. French remained on the Continent until his death in Ghent in 1678. See Jane H. Ohlmeyer, *Ireland: From Independence to Occupation, 1641–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 123–24; James MacCaffrey, "Nicholas French,"

an illustrated history of the popes, both by one William Cambden; *Informations exhibited to the Committee on the Fire of London, 1667*; poems attributed to a Sir John Davis and others; and a map of Cabra in Ireland and its surrounding area.[108] The Croxton play at one time appeared as the sixth item in the book, following the testimony about the Great Fire.[109]

At first, this may appear to be a rather peculiar assortment of items for a miscellany, but some thematic and even ideological connections are discernible. The manuscript was donated to Trinity College in 1741 by John Stearne, bishop of Clogher in Ireland. Stearne had purchased the manuscript in 1703 following the death of its previous owner, John Madden,[110] who had been president of the King and Queen's College of Physicians in Ireland since 1694.[111] It is possible that the disparate items that now comprise F.4.20 were first compiled into a single volume for Madden. What is almost certain is that the text of the Croxton play circulated independently before it was collected into Madden's miscellany and brought to Ireland. Folio 338r, the first page of the dramatic script, shows significant wear, especially when compared to the other leaves that make up the three quires containing the Croxton play. This wear is likely the result of that page's having once been on the outside. What interest the volume's compiler had in a fifteenth-century play from England about Host desecration, or how he came across a sixteenth-century copy of it some two hundred years or more after its original composition, can only be guessed at, but the other materials in the miscellany suggest an Irish, Catholic owner with an interest in Catholicism's post-Reformation fortunes in both England and Ireland. The Croxton play, with its championing of the doctrine of transubstantiation, would certainly appeal to a person of such tastes.

No precise date for the composition of the play has been determined, although the attribution of the events recounted in the play to the year 1461 (line 58) provides a terminus post quem. The loss of the original play hinders attempts at more precise dating. That the text of F.4.20 is a copy of a lost exemplar can be inferred from the corrections that appear throughout the text. These corrections are clearly executed by the same scribes responsible for the main text, which suggests that the scribes were working from an exemplar that served as the source for, and also as a check against, their copy.

The Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 6 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909), <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06271b.htm>.

[108] Waterhouse, ed., *Non-Cycle Mystery Plays*, p. lv.

[109] The *Informations exhibited to the Committee on the Fire of London, 1667* is notable for the anti-Catholic and anti-Irish hysteria that seems to have motivated many of the witnesses to the events of early September, 1666, when what began as a bakery fire erupted into a conflagration that consumed much of the city of London. Among the casualties was St. Paul's Cathedral, which was famously rebuilt, along with many of the city's parish churches, by the architect Christopher Wren. Wren was also responsible for the monument to the fire erected not far from the Pudding Lane bakery where the fire erupted. For a century and a half, the monument bore an inscription around its base proclaiming the culpability of papists for the destruction wrought in 1666. For an analysis of the monument as "a site of struggle over English national memory" in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Frances E. Dolan, "Ashes and 'the Archive': The London Fire of 1666, Partisanship, and Proof," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31:2 (2001), 379–408 [396–97].

[110] Davis, ed., *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, p. lxx.

[111] Atkin, "Playbooks and Printed Drama," p. 194.

The text is written in three distinct hands, conventionally identified as A, B, and C. Norman Davis describes A as an initially "neat and careful" secretary hand that rapidly becomes "much looser, and rather sprawling" by the time the scribe has finished his work.[112] B similarly employs a secretary hand, one that is nevertheless more careful than A's. C writes in a noticeably larger Anglicana hand, which Davis describes as "of a type sometimes found in local records of the early sixteenth century."[113] A's work is interrupted by both B, who contributes only about 150 lines, and C, who also finishes the text.[114] The initials "R.C." appear at the bottom of folio 356r, although whether these belong to C and who R.C. might have been are not entirely certain. Recently, however, Tamara Atkin has convincingly demonstrated that the handwritten initials are nearly identical to the professional mark of the printer Robert Copland, known to have produced some twenty books between 1514 and 1548.[115] Davis identifies A and B with the early sixteenth century, and suggests that C, who must necessarily have been contemporary with A and B, consequently seems deliberately to imitate the style of an earlier period,[116] but he also notes that the language is consistent with forms of English common in the fifteenth century.[117] These observations lead to the conclusion that the manuscript contains the work of three sixteenth-century scribes copying a text probably composed in the late fifteenth century.[118]

The version of the play in F.4.20 is simply presented and generally unadorned. The text is relatively consistent in its inclusion of speech-prefixes indicating which characters speak when, with only minimal omissions, duplications, or misattributions. These prefixes typically appear in the left margin, although those appearing at the tops of pages are usually centered.[119] Individual speeches are separated by horizontal lines. Stage directions are also separated by horizontal lines, usually indented, and frequently preceded by a vertical line to the left, resulting in a three-sided box around the directions. Both speech-prefixes and stage directions are regularly highlighted in yellow crayon. T. H. Howard-Hill maintains that F.4.20 reflects the conventions of laying out a playscript common to the period of its

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[112] Davis, ed., *Non-Cycle Plays and the Winchester Dialogues*, p. 93.

[113] Davis, ed., *Non-Cycle Plays and the Winchester Dialogues*, p. 93.

[114] Changes in hand are indicated in the Textual Notes.

[115] Atkin, "Playbooks and Printed Drama," p. 197. Atkin (pp. 201 and 204–05) suggests that the exemplar used by the scribes may have been a no-longer-extant printed text of the play, although she dismisses that possibility as unlikely and argues instead for at least one scribe who was familiar with, and influenced by, the developing conventions of printed drama. As discussed above, Gibson (*Theater of Devotion*, pp. 35 and 40) hypothesizes that "R.C." could be Robert Cooke, vicar of the village of Haughley and collector of playbooks.

[116] Davis, ed., *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, p. lxxii.

[117] Davis, ed., *Non-Cycle Plays and the Winchester Dialogues*, pp. 93–94.

[118] The dating of the play's composition to shortly after 1461 is almost universally accepted. The one exception I know of is Bernard Glassman, who without explanation and clearly mistakenly dates the play to 1378. See Glassman, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes without Jews*, p. 24.

[119] Atkin ("Playbooks and Printed Drama," p. 203–04) notes that the appearance of speech prefixes in the left margin is consistent with the conventions of sixteenth-century printed drama rather than of fifteenth-century dramatic manuscripts, in which these tags typically appear in the right margin.

copying (the sixteenth century) rather than of its composition (the fifteenth),[120] while Tamara Atkin describes the text's *mise-en-page* as "a curious mix of manuscript and print conventions."[121]

THE POSTMEDIEVAL FORTUNES OF THE *PLAY OF THE SACRAMENT*

As the only instance in the surviving Middle English dramatic corpus of a nonbiblical, nonmoral play that takes as its subject a contemporary miracle, the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* is often cited for its uniqueness. Perhaps more interesting, however, is the fact that it is the only play for which we can document a revival of interest in the centuries since its composition and prior to the era of modern critical editions, and not only in England but also in Ireland. Whatever the reaction he might have expected from his original audience, the dramatist could not have foreseen the long and international afterlife that his play would enjoy. While our best guess locates the date of the play's composition in the latter decades of the fifteenth century, the extant copy dates probably from some time in the period 1520–40, from a time, that is, when the doctrine of transubstantiation was being debated anew among Protestant reformers and the adherents of what Eamon Duffy has famously labeled "traditional religion."[122] Seth Lerer has observed that the fifteenth-century play would have spoken easily to Tudor "fascinations with display, surveillance, and spectacular judicial punishment" and seemed to anticipate Protestant anxieties over idolatry.[123] Michael Jones likewise comments that the play is "both Catholic thesis and Protestant antithesis: a fifteenth-century play thoroughly imbricated with sixteenth-century concerns."[124] Then, at the turn of the seventeenth century into the eighteenth, that same copy found its way into the hands of an Irish antiquarian with interests in Catholic history and doctrine who included it in a miscellany he was assembling. And with the dawning of the era of modern textual scholarship in the nineteenth century, the play, which has been edited no fewer than eight times since 1860, gained still wider audiences.[125]

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[120] Howard-Hill, "Evolution of the Form of Plays," pp. 113–14 and 129.

[121] Atkin, "Playbooks and Printed Drama," p. 202. The inclusion of lists of dramatis personae, for example, was unusual in manuscript and even early printed play texts before 1530, according to Atkin, whereas the use of brackets to mark rhyming lines is very much a feature of medieval scripts and not found in printed texts.

[122] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*.

[123] Lerer, "'Representyd now in yower syght,'" p. 53. Lerer concludes that "[w]hat we have in the *physical artifact* of the play, then, is testimony to issues in the sixteenth-century religious imagination, rather than a record of fifteenth-century theatrical practice" (p. 54, emphasis original).

[124] Jones, "Theatrical History in the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*," p. 248.

[125] The critical edition of the text is in *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, ed. Davis, from 1970. In his review of Davis's edition, David Bevington noted the "lack of interpretative notes" necessitated by the play's inclusion in an anthology, as has been the case for every modern edition of the play prior to this one. See Bevington, Review of Norman Davis, *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, p. 735. Also missing from Davis' edition in Bevington's estimation was a full investigation of the play's many Latin quotations and liturgical referents, allusions that would eventually find treatment in the groundbreaking work of Sr. Nicholas Maltman three years later. See Maltman, "Meaning and Art." Bevington concluded his assessment by praising Davis' philological work before lamenting at greater

For better or for worse, and despite (or perhaps because of) its bloody and polemical content, the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* has maintained its power to fascinate and thrill. Nor, sadly, has the play become any less relevant topically, as evidenced by a bizarre Internet phenomenon from 2008. On July 8 of that year, P. Z. Myers, a biology professor at the University of Minnesota, Morris, published an entry on his personal blog entitled "It's a Frackin' Cracker!" in which he commented on a story that had been recently covered by media outlets in Orlando, Florida.[126] According to published reports, a student at the University of Central Florida attending Catholic Mass on campus received the Host during Communion but failed to consume it immediately, which prompted a member of the church to approach him following the Mass in order to demand the Host's return. The student initially refused the request but later returned the Host after allegedly receiving death threats. It was later intimated that the student had taken the Host as a means of protesting student fees that were being used to fund religious activities on the public campus. The incident generated outrage both from Catholic groups,[127] who demanded that the taking of the Host be treated as a hate crime, and from secularist defenders of the UCF student. Myers officially joined the fracas by concluding his blog entry with the following request:

> So, what to do. I have an idea. Can anyone out there score **me** some consecrated communion wafers? There's no way I can personally get them — my local churches have stakes prepared for me, I'm sure — but if any of you would be willing to do what it takes to get me some, or even one, and mail it to me, I'll show you sacrilege, gladly, and with much fanfare. I won't be tempted to hold it hostage . . . but will instead treat it with profound disrespect and heinous cracker abuse, all photographed and presented here on the web. I shall do so joyfully and with laughter in my heart. If you can smuggle some out from under the armed guards and grim nuns hovering over your local communion ceremony, just write to me and I'll send you my home address.
>
> Just wait. Now there'll be a team of Jesuits assigned to rifle through my mail every day.[128]

The response to Myers' appeal was not trivial. Some forty videos of desecration by a variety of means appeared on the video-sharing website YouTube. Shocked Catholics protested, and on October 1, 2008, the videos were taken down from the site only to be restored again later the very same day.[129] Myers, meanwhile, posted photographic evidence of his own act of desecration, committed with a rusty nail against a consecrated Host that was then thrown in the trash with coffee grinds, a banana peel, and pages from both the Qur'an and *The God*

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length the absence of any sustained discussion of genre, sources and analogues, or staging. The present edition takes advantage of the space afforded by a single-text volume to try to fill some of those gaps observed by Bevington and to take stock of the rich scholarship that has tremendously advanced our understanding of this play in the almost four decades since *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments* was published in 1970.

[126] P. Z. Myers, "It's a Frackin' Cracker," http://scienceblogs.com/pharyngula/2008/07/its_a_goddamned_cracker.php (accessed May 18, 2010).

[127] "Florida Student Abuses Eucharist," http://www.catholicleague.org/release.php?id=1458.

[128] Myers, "It's a Frackin' Cracker" (emphasis original).

[129] "Host Desecration Video Back on YouTube," http://www.catholic.org/national/national_story.php?id=29788.

Delusion, a book by avowed atheist Richard Dawkins, in a gesture presumably intended to demonstrate Myers' self-distancing from any ideology.[130]

In a peculiar twist, the perpetrators of these ghastly Internet spectacles, in assuming the role of the super-rational and empirically-minded Jew of the Middle Ages, appear to be guilty of what countless innocent Jews were wrongly accused of and for which they were summarily punished and even ruthlessly slaughtered. Ironically, Myers even cites the persecutory force of medieval anti-Semitism as a justification for his condemnation of contemporary Catholic theology:

> Declare something cheap, disposable, and common to be imbued with magic by the words of a priest, and the trivial becomes a powerful token to inflame the mob — why, all you have to do is declare a bit of bread to be the most powerful and desirable object in the world, and even if it isn't, you can pretend that the evil other is scheming to deprive the faithful of it. Now you could invent stories of Jews and witches taking the communion host to torture, to make Jesus suffer even more, and good Catholics would of course rise in horror to defend their salvation. None of the stories were true, of course — Jews and infidels see no power at all in those little crackers, and the idea that they were obsessing over obtaining a non-sacred, powerless, pointless relic is ludicrous — but heck, it's a cheap excuse to make accusations illustrated by cheesy woodcuts of hook-nosed Jews hammering nails into communion wafers and lurid tales of blood-spurting crackers and hosts that pulsed like and [*sic*] beating heart, and thereby providing a pretext to encourage massacres.[131]

Myers' reading of the Host-abuse legend as an instrument of exclusion and punishment is sensitive to the dynamics of the narrative and to its ideological power, as eloquently described elsewhere by Miri Rubin, and there is no question that medieval Christian communities were guilty of committing truly heinous deeds against the Jews within their midst. But far from rejecting the past, Myers revives it, and in a way that in one important respect exceeds the depravities of the Middle Ages: he and his disciples have perpetrated the very act which medieval Jews likely never carried through and, in choosing to express their rejection of the real presence of Christ in the bread of the Eucharist, have made real what medieval people, like the author of the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, could only conceive of in fantasies motivated, as Myers' own surely are, by fear and misunderstanding.

THE CURRENT TEXT

This text of the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* was prepared from Dublin, Trinity College MS F.4.20 and the facsimile edition of the play in *Non-Cycle Plays and the Winchester Dialogues: Facsimiles of Plays and Fragments in Various Manuscripts and the Dialogues in Winchester College MS 33*, ed. Norman Davis, Medieval Drama Facsimiles 5 (Leeds: University of Leeds, School of English, 1979), pp. 95–131.

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[130] P. Z. Myers, "The Great Desecration," http://scienceblogs.com/pharyngula/2008/07/the_great_desecration.php.

[131] Myers, "Great Desecration."

The current text adheres to the general conventions of the TEAMS Middle English Text Series.

- The Middle English letter thorn (*þ*) has been replaced by *th* and yogh (*ȝ*) by *g*, *gh*, or *y*.
- Use of *u* and *v* and *i* and *j* have been regularized in accord with Modern English practice.
- To avoid confusion with the definite article *the*, the second person pronoun, often spelled *the* in the manuscript, is regularly printed as *thee*.
- Roman numerals have been replaced with their Middle English equivalents.
- Abbreviations in the manuscript are silently expanded throughout this text.
- Punctuation is editorial and follows Modern English usage. Final *e* that receives syllabic value as a long vowel is marked by an accent (e.g. charité).
- Word division has been silently regularized in accord with Modern English practice. E.g., *tomorowe* (line 321) appears as *to morowe* in the manuscript, while *shal be* (line 435) is originally *shalbe* in the manuscript.
- Capitalization follows Modern English practice. Given the subject matter and implicit personifications of the play, I have capitalized words referring to God (including second and third person pronouns), Cross, Rood, Mass, Host, and the sacraments pertaining to the Passion, Crucifixition, and Resurrection.
- Latin words and both Latin and English stage directions are printed in italics.
- Speakers' names, spelled inconsistently in the manuscript, are regularized in this text.

All other deviations from the text of Trinity MS F.4.20 are recorded in the textual notes.

The Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* has previously been edited no fewer than eight times:

Play of the Sacrament: A Middle-English Drama, Edited from a Manuscript in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, with a Preface and Glossary. Ed. Whitley Stokes. Publications of the Philological Society. Berlin: Asher, 1862.

Manly, John Matthews, ed., *Specimens of the Pre-Shakesperean Drama, with an Introduction, Notes, and a Glossary*. 2 vols. Boston: Ginn & Company, 1897–98. 1:239–76.

Waterhouse, Osborn, ed., *Non-Cycle Mystery Plays, together with the Croxton Play of the Sacrament and The Pride of Life*. EETS e.s. 104. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1909. Pp. 54–87.

Adams, Joseph Quincy, ed., *Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas: A Selection of Plays Illustrating the History of the English Drama from Its Origin down to Shakespeare*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1924. Pp. 243–62.

Davis, Norman, ed., *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*. EETS s.s. 1. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970. Pp. 58–89.

Coldewey, John C., ed., *Early English Drama: An Anthology*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1993. Pp. 274–305.

Bevington, David, ed., *Medieval Drama*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975. Pp. 754–88.

Walker, Greg, ed., *Medieval Drama: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000. Pp. 213–33.

PLAY OF THE SACRAMENT

THE NAMYS AND NUMBERE OF THE PLAYERS:[1]

Jhesus	
Episcopus	*Bishop*
Aristorius, Christianus mercator	*Christian merchant*
Presbyter	*Priest (Isoder)*
Clericus	*Clerk (Peter Paul)*
Jonathas, Judeus primus, magister	*first Jew, master*
Jason, Judeus secundus	*second Jew*
Jasdon, Judeus tertius	*third Jew*
Masphat, Judeus quartus	*fourth Jew*
Malchus, Judeus quintus	*fifth Jew*
Magister phisicus	*Master physician (Brundich)*
Coll, servus	*servant*

Nine may play yt at ease.

RC

1 VEXILLATOR Now the Father and the Sune and the Holy Goste, *Son*
That all this wyde worlde hat wrowght, *made*
Save all thes semely, bothe leste and moste, *worthy people*
And brynge yow to the blysse that He hath yow to-bowght! *redeemed*
We be ful purposed with hart and with thowght *We fully intend; heart*
Of our mater to tell the entent, *subject; plan*
Of the marvellys that wer wondursely wrowght *miracles; miraculously*
Of the holi and blyssed Sacrament. *By; holy; blessed*

2 VEXILLATOR Sovereyns, and yt lyke yow to here the purpoos of this play[2]
That ys representyd now in yower syght, *your sight*
Whych in Aragon was doon, the sothe to saye, *truth*
In Eraclea, that famous cyté, aryght: *Heraclea; city, indeed*
Therin wonneth a merchaunte of mekyll myght — *dwelled; great ability*

[1] The list of dramatis personae occurs as a colophon in the manuscript.

[2] *Masters, if it pleases you to hear the argument of this play*

Syr Arystorye was called hys name —
Kend full fere with mani a wyght, *Known far and wide by many a person*
Full fer in the worlde sprong hys fame.

1 VEXILLATOR Anon to hym ther cam a Jewe, *Soon; came*
With grete rychesse for the nonys, *wealth, indeed*
And wonneth in the cyté of Surrey — this full trewe — *dwelled; Syria*
The wyche hade gret plenté of precyous stonys. *Who; abundance; gems*

Of this Cristen merchaunte he freyned sore, *inquired insistently*
Wane he wolde have had hys entente. *When; would; desire*
Twenti pownd and merchaundyse mor
He proferyd for the Holy Sacrament.

2 VEXILLATOR But the Cristen marchaunte therof sed nay, *said*
Because hys profer was of so lityll valewe: *offer; worth*
An hundder pownd but he wolde pay *hundred; unless*
No lenger theron he shuld pursewe. *longer; pursue*

But mor of ther purpos they gunne speke, *began [to] speak*
The Holi Sacramente for to bey, *to buy*
And all for they wolde be wreke, *And because they would be avenged*
A gret sume of gold begune down ley. *sum; lay*
1 VEXILLATOR Thys Crysten merchante consentyd, the sothe to sey, *say*
And in the nyght after made hym delyveraunce.
Thes Jewes all grete joye made they,
But of thys betyde a straunger chaunce: *befell an unexpected event*

They grevid our Lord gretly on grownd *injured; severely*
And put Hym to a new passyoun, *subjected*; *suffering*
With daggers goven Hym many a grevyos wound, *gave; grievous*
Nayled Hym to a pyller, with pynsons plukked Hym doune. *pillar; pincers*

2 VEXILLATOR And sythe thay toke that blysed brede so sownde[1]
And in a cawdron they ded Hym boyle. *cauldron; did*
In a clothe full just they yt wounde,
And so they ded Hym sethe in oyle. *boil*

And than thay putt Hym to a new turmentry, *torture*
In an hoote ovyn speryd Hym fast. *hot oven locked Him up securely*
There He appyred with woundys blody; *appeared; bloody*
The ovyn rofe asondre and all to-brast. *split asunder; shattered*
1 VEXILLATOR Thus in our lawe they wer made stedfast: *(i.e., Christian law)*
The Holy Sacrement sheuyd them grette favour. *showed*

[1] *And afterward they took that blessed bread so wholesome*

In contrycyon thyr hertys wer cast — *hearts*
And went and shewyd ther lyves to a confesour. — *confessed*

Thus be maracle of the Kyng of Hevyn, — *miracle*
And by myght and power govyn to the prestys mowthe, — *given; priest's mouth*
In an howshold wer convertyd iwys elevyn.
At Rome this myracle ys knowen welle kowthe. — *known very well*

2 VEXILLATOR Thys marycle at Rome was presented, for sothe,
Yn the yere of our Lord a thowsand fowr hundder sixty and on, — *one*
That the Jewes with Holy Sacrament dyd woth — *injury*
In the forest seyd of Aragon.

Loo, thus God at a tyme showyd Hym there — *made Himself known*
Thorwhe Hys mercy and Hys mekyll myght. — *Through*
Unto the Jewes He gan appere, — *did appear*
That thei shuld nat lesse Hys hevenly lyght. — *So that they; not lose*
1 VEXILLATOR Therfor, frendys, with all your myght — *friends*
Unto youer gostly father shewe your synne. — *your spiritual father (i.e., priest)*
Beth in no wanhope daye nor nyght; — *Be; despair*
No maner of dowghtys that Lord put in. — *Do not subject the Lord to any doubts*

For that the dowghtys the Jewys than in stode, — *then in stood*
As ye shall se pleyd, both more and lesse, — *played*
Was yf the Sacrament were flesshe and blode.
Therfor they put yt to suche dystresse. — *it*
2 VEXILLATOR And yt place yow, thys gaderyng that here ys — — *If it pleases you; gathering; is*
At Croxston on Monday yt shall be sen — — *Croxton; seen*
To see the conclusyon of this lytell processe, — *play*
Hertely welcum shall yow bene. — *Heartily; be*

Now Jhesu yow sawe from trey and tene, — *save; pain and suffering*
To send us Hys hyhe joyes of hevyne, — *high*
There myght ys withouton mynd to mene.[1]
Now mynstrell blow up with a mery stevyn! — *minstrel; song*

[*Explicit*. — *Here ends [the banns]*

[*Hereafter foloweth the Play of the Conversyon of Ser Jonathas the Jewe by Myracle of the Blyssed Sacrament.* — *Conversion; Sir*

ARISTORIUS Now Cryst that ys our Creatour from shame He cure us,[2]
He maynteyn us with myrth that meve upon the molde;[3]

[1] *Where power is beyond the ability of the mind to tell*

[2] *Now Christ, who is our Creator, may He protect us from shame*

[3] *May He preserve us who move upon the earth with happiness*

Unto Hys endelesse joye myghtly He restore us, *may He restore us*
All tho that in Hys name in peas well them hold; *those who; peace*
For of a merchante most myght therof my tale ys told,
In Eraclea ys non suche, whoso wyll understond, *none; whoever*
For of all Aragon I am most myghty of sylverys and of gold. *most wealthy in silver*
For and yt wer a countré to by now wold I nat wond.[1]

Syr Arystory ys my name,
A merchaunte myghty of a royall araye, *possessing royal magnificence*
Ful wyde in this worlde spryngyth my fame,
Fere kend and knowen, the sothe for to saye. *known widely*
In all maner of londys, without ony naye, *lands*
My merchaundyse renneth, the sothe for to telle, *circulates*
In Gene and in Jenyse and in Genewaye, *Genoa; ?; Geneva?*
In Surrey and in Saby and in Salern I sell. *Syria; Saba (in Arabia); Salerno*

In Antyoche and in Almayn moch ys my myght. *Antioch; Alemannia*
In Braban and in Brytayn I am full bold. *Brabant; Britain*
In Calabre and in Coleyn ther rynge I full ryght. *Calabria; Cologne; move about*
In Dordrede and in Denmark, be the clyffys cold, *Dordrecht*
In Alysander I have abundawnse in the wyde world. *Alexandria*
In France and in Farre fresshe be my flowerys. *Faeroe Islands*
In Gyldre and in Galys have I bowght and sold. *Gelderland; Galicia*
In Hamborowhe and in Holond moch merchantdyse ys owrys. *Hamburg; ours*

In Jerusalem and in Jherico among the Jewes jentle, *noble*
Among the Caldeys and Cattlyngys, kend ys my komyng.[2]
In Raynes and in Rome to Seynt Petyrs temple, *Rheims*
I am knowen certenly for bying and sellyng.

In Mayn and in Melan full mery have I be. *Maine; Milan; been*
Owt of Navern to Naples moch good ys that I bryng. *Navarre; wealth*
In Pondere and in Portyngale moche ys my gle. *?; Portugal; delight*
In Spayne and in Spruce moche ys my spedyng. *Prussia; success*
In Lombardy and in Lachborn there ledde ys my lykyng;[3]

In Taryse and in Turkey there told ys my tale. *Tharsia*
And in the dukedom of Oryon moche have I in weldyng, *Orléans?; control*
And thus thorowght all this world sett ys my sale. *throughout*

No man in thys world may weld more rychesse.
All I thank God of Hys grace for He that me sent,

[1] *For if there were a country to buy now, I would not hesitate*

[2] *Among the Chaldeans and the Catalans, known is my coming*

[3] *In Lombardy and in Luxembourg, there is my pleasure to be found*

And as a lordys pere thus lyve I in worthynesse. *lord's peer; honor*
My curat wayteth upon me to knowe myn entent, *curate (a priest)*
And men at my weldyng, and all ys me lent
My well for to worke in thys world so wyde. *will*
Me dare they not dysplese by no condescent, *in no way*
And who so doth he ys nat able to abyde. *remain*

PRESBYTER No man shall you tary ne trowble thys tyde,[1]
But every man delygently shall do yow plesance, *diligently; please you*
And I unto my connyng to the best shall hem guyde *to the best of my ability; them*
Unto Godys plesyng to serve yow to attrueaunce. *God's; for your edification*

For ye be worthy and notable in substance of good;[2]
Of merchauntys of Aragon ye have no pere: *Among*
And therof thank God that dyed on the Roode, *died; Rood (Cross)*
That was your makere and hath yow dere.[3]

ARISTORIUS Forsoth, syr pryst, yower talkyng ys good, *In truth, sir priest, your*
And therfor after your talkyng I wyll atteyn *in accord with your speech; act*
To wourshyppe my God that dyed on the Roode —
Never whyll that I lyve ageyn that wyll I seyn. *against; speak*
But, Petyr Powle, my clark, I praye thee goo wele pleyn
Thorowght all Eraclea that thow ne wonde,[4]
And wytte yf ony merchaunte be come to this reyn *learn; any; has come; realm*
Of Surrey or of Sabé or of Shelysdown. *Chalcedon*

CLERICUS At your wyll for to walke I wyl not say nay, *CLERK (i.e., Peter Paul)*
Smertly to go serche at the waterys syde; *Swiftly; water's*
Yf ony plesaunt bargyn be to your paye, *liking*
As swyftly as I can, I shall hym to yow guyde. *I shall guide him to you*
Now wyll I walke by thes pathes wyde
And seke the haven, both up and down,
To wette yf ony onkowth shyppes therin do ryde *To find out; unknown*
Of Surrey or of Saby or of Shelysdown.

[*Now shall the merchantys man withdrawe hym,*
and the Jewe Jonathas shall make hys bost:

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[1] *PRIEST (i.e., Isoder) No man shall delay or trouble you at this time*

[2] *For you are distinguished and well-known in the amount of your wealth*

[3] *Who was your maker and holds you dear*

[4] Lines 137–38: *But Peter Paul, my clerk (priest), I pray you go fully / Throughout all Heraclea so that you do not hold back*

JONATHAS Now, almyghty Machomet, marke in thi magesté,[1]
Whose lawes tendrely I have to fulfyll, *attentively*
After my dethe, bryng me to thy hyhe see, *throne*
My sowle for to save, yf yt be thy wyll,
For myn entent ys for to fulfyll,
As my gloryus God thee to honer.
To do agen thy entent, yt shall grue me yll, *frighten*
Or agen thyn lawe for to reporte. *to speak*

For I thanke thee hayly, that hast me sent *greatly, who*
Gold, sylver, and presyous stonys,
And abunddaunce of spycys thou hast me lent, *spices*
As I shall reherse before yow onys: *at once*
I have amatystys ryche for the nonys, *amethysts*
And baryllys that be bryght of ble, *beryls; color*
And saphyre semely I may show yow attonys, *sapphire beautiful; immediately*
And crystalys clere for to se.

I have dyamantys derewourthy to dresse, *diamonds precious; adorn*
And emerawdys ryche — I trow they be — *emeralds; trust*
Onys and achatys, both more and lesse, *Onyx; agates*
Tonpazyouns, smaragdys of grete degré, *Topazes, emeralds; quality*
Perlys precyous grete plenté; *Pearls; abundance*
Of rubés ryche I have grete renown, *rubies*
Crepawdys and calcedonyes, semely to se, *Toadstones; chalcedonies*
And curyous carbunclys here ye fynd mown. *exquisite carbuncles; may*

Spycys I hawe, both grete and smale, *have*
In my shyppes, the sothe for to saye:
Gyngere, lycoresse, and cannyngalle, *Ginger, licorice; galingale*
And fygys fatte to plesere yow to paye; *figs*
Peper and saffyron and spycys smale,
And datys wole dulcett, forto dresse; *very sweet*
Almundys and rys, full every male, *Almonds; rice, by the bagful*
And reysones, both more and lesse; *raisins; large; small*

Clowys, greynis, and gynger grene, *Cloves, grains [of paradise], and green ginger*
Mace, mastyk, that myght ys, *Mace (the spice), mastic; strong*
Synymone, suger, as yow may sene, *Cinnamon, sugar*
Long peper and Indas lycorys; *Indian licorice*
Orengys and apples of grete apryce, *Oranges; value*
Pungarnetys and many other spycys. *Pomegranates*
To tell yow all I have now, iwyse,
And moche other merchandyse of sondry spycys.

[1] *Now, almighty Muhammad, distinguished is your majesty*

Jew Jonathas ys my name.
Jazon and Jazdon, thei waytyn on my wyll;
Masfat and Malchus, they do the same,
As ye may knowe, yt ys bothe rycht and skyll. *right and just*
I tell yow all, bi dal and by hylle,
In Eraclea ys noon so moche of myght:
Werfor ye owe tenderli to tende me tyll,[1]
For I am chefe merchaunte of Jewes, I tell yow, be ryght.

But Jazon and Jazdon, a mater wollde I mene, *discuss*
Mervelously yt ys ment in mynde: *it is believed*
The beleve of thes Cristen men ys false, as I wene, *belief; suspect*
For they beleve on a cake — me thynk yt ys onkynd. *unnatural*
And all they seye how the prest dothe yt bynd, *make it subject*
And be the myght of hys word make yt flessh and blode. *by the power*
And thus be a conceyte they wolde make us blynd, *trick*
And how that yt shuld be He that deyed upon the Rode. *should; Cross*

JASON Yea, yea, master, a strawe for talis! *straw [i.e., something worthless]; tales*
Tha ma not fale, in my beleve. *That may not happen; opinion*
But myt we yt gete onys within our pales, *palace*
I trowe we shuld sone after putt yt in a preve. *put it to the test*
JASDON Now be Machomete so myghty, that ye doon of meve, *speak of*
I wold I wyste how that we myght yt gete. *knew*
I swer be my grete god, and ellys mote I nat cheve, *otherwise may I never prosper*
But wyghtly theron wold I be wreke. *vigorously; avenged*

MASPHAT Yea, I dare sey feythfulli that ther feyth ys false:
That was never He that on Calvery was kyld *Calvary*
Or in bred for to be blode: yt ys ontrewe als. *untrue also*
But yet with ther wyles thei wold we were wyld. *wiles; wish; mad*
MALCHUS Yea, I am myghty Malchus that boldly am byld. *made*
That brede for to bete byggly am I bent. *bread; vigorously; inclined*
Onys out of ther handys and yt myght be exyled,
To helpe castyn yt in care wold I counsent.[2]

JONATHAS Well, syrse, than kype cunsel, I cummande yow all, *sirs; keep*
And no word of all thys be wyst. *known*
But let us walke to see Arystories hall,
And afterwarde more counsell among us shall caste. *consider*
With hym to bey and to sel I am of powere prest.[3]
A bargyn with hym to make I wyll assaye: *bargain; try*

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[1] *Therefore you ought to pay attention to me carefully*

[2] Lines 219–20: *As soon as it might be taken out of their hands / I would agree to help make it sorrowful*

[3] *I am able to buy and sell with him immediately*

For gold and sylver I am nothyng agast, *deterred*
But that we shall get that cake to ower paye. *As long as; satisfaction*

[*Her shall Ser Ysodyr the prest speke onto Ser Arystori,*
seyng on thys wyse to hym. And Jonatas goo don of his stage. *saying; way; down from*

PRESBYTER Syr, be yowr leve I may no lengere dwell: *leave; longer*
Yt ys fer paste none, yt ys tyme to go to cherche, *far; nones (3 p.m.)*
There to saye myn evynsong, forsothe as I yow tell, *evensong (vespers), truly*
And syth coume home ageyne, as I am wont to werche. *afterwards; do*

ARISTORIUS Sir Isydor, I praye yow: wallke at yowr wyll,
For to serfe God yt ys well doune, *serve*
And syt com agen, and ye shall suppe your fyll, *afterwards*
And walke than to your chamber, as ye are wont to doon.

[*Her shall the marchant men mete with the Jewes.* *merchant's men*

JONATHAS A, Peter Pocole, good daye and wele imett! *well met*
Wer ys thy master, as I thee pray? *Where*
CLERICUS Long from hym have I not lett *Far; parted*
Syt I cam from hym, the sothe for to saye. *Since*
Wat tidyng with yow, ser, I yow praye, *What tidings*
Affter my master that ye doo frayne? *inquire*
Have ye ony bargen that wer to hys paye? *any*
Let me have knowlech; I shall wete hym to seyn. *I shall know how to speak to him*

JONATHAS I have bargenes royall and rych,
For a marchaunt with to bye and sell.
In all thys lond is ther non lyke
Of aboundaunce of good, as I will tell.

[*Her shall the Clerk goon to Sir Aristori, saluting him thus:*

CLERICUS All hayll, master, and wel mot yow be! *may*
Now tydyngys can I yow tell:
The grettest marchante in all Surré
Ys come with yow to bey and sell.
This tal ryght wele he me told. *tale*
Sir Jonatas ys hys nam,
A marchant of ryght gret fame.
He wolld sell yow, without blame,
Plenté of clothe of golde. *Plenty*

ARISTORIUS Petre Powle, I can thee thanke.
I prey thee rychely araye myn hall
As owyth for a marchant of the banke; *befits*

Lete non defawte be fownd at all. *lack*
CLERICUS Sekyrly, master, no more ther shall. *Surely*
Styffly about I thynke to stere, *Vehemently; intend; go*
Hasterli to hange your parlowr with pall, *Quickly; fine cloth*
As longeth for a lordis pere. *is suitable; lord's peer*

[*Here shall the Jewe merchaunt and his men come to the Cristen merchaunte.*

JONATHAS All haylle, Syr Aristorye, semelé to se, *worthy*
The myghtyest merchaunte of Arigon!
Of yower welfare fayn wet wold we, *gladly, know*
And to bargeyn with you this day am I boun. *ready*

ARISTORIUS Sir Jonathas, ye be wellcum unto myn hall!
I pray yow come up and sit bi me,
And tell me wat good ye have to sell,
And yf ony bargeny mad may be. *made*

JONATHAS I have clothe of gold, precyous stons, and spycys plenté:
Wyth yoll a bargen wold I make.
I wold bartre wyth yow in pryvyté *in private*
On lytell thyng, that ye wyll me yt take *[For] one; bring it to me*
Prevely in this stownd. *Secretly; place*
And I woll sure yow, be thys lyght, *promise*
Never dystren yow, daye nor nyght, *[to] constrain*
But be sworn to yow full ryght *completely*
And geve yow twenti pownd.

ARISTORIUS Sir Jonathas, sey me for my sake
What maner of marchandis ys that ye mene.
JONATHAS Yowr God that ys full mytheti in a cake, *mighty*
And thys good anoon shall yow seen.
ARISTORIUS Nay, in feyth! That shall not bene!
I woll not for an hundder pownd *hundred*
To stond in fere my Lord to tene, *fear; anger*
And for so lytell a walew in conscyence to stond bownd. *value*

JONATHAS Sir, the entent ys if I myght knowe or undertake *learn*
Yf that He were God allmyght,
Of all my mys I woll amende make *misdeeds; would*
And doon Hym wourshepe, bothe day and nyght.

ARISTORIUS Jonathas, trowth I shall thee tell:
I stond in gret dowght to do that dede,

To yow that dere all for to sell.[1]
I fere me that I shuld stond in drede, *danger*
For and I unto the chyrche yede, *if; went*
And preste or clerke myght me aspye, *see*
To the bysshope thei wolde go tell that dede
And apeche me of eresye! *accuse; heresy*

JONATHAS Sir, as for that: good shyffte may ye make, *may you find good means*
And, for a vaylle, to walkyn on a nyght *veil (i.e., a cover)*
Wan prest and clerk to rest ben take: *When; have gone*
Than shall ye be spyde of no wyght. *discovered; person*
ARISTORIUS Now sey me, Jonathas, be this lyght: *tell; by*
Wat payment therfor wollde yow me make? *What*
JONATHAS Forty pownd, and pay yt ful ryght, *immediately*
Evyn for that Lorde sake. *Even; Lord's*

ARISTORIUS Nay, nay, Jonathas, there-ageyn: *regarding that*
I wold not for an hundder pownd!
JONATHAS Sir, hir ys yowr askyng toolde pleyn: *here; demand counted out fully*
I shall yt tell in this stownd, *count; place*

Here is an hundder pownd, neyther mor nor lasse,
Of dokettys good, I dar well saye. *ducats*
Tell yt ere yow from me passe; *Count; before*
Me thynketh yt a royall araye. *It seems to me; display*

But fyrst I pray yow tell me thys:
Of thys thyng whan shall I hafe delyverance?
ARISTORIUS Tomorowe betymes, I shall not myse; *early; fail*
This nyght, therfor, I shall make purveaunce. *preparation*

Syr Isodyr, he ys now at chyrch,
There seyng hys evynsong
As yt ys worshepe for to werche. *pious to do*
He shall sone cum home — he wyll nat be long —
Hys sopere for to eate.
And when he ys buskyd to hys bedde, *gone*
Ryght sonee hereafter he shal be spedd. *his affairs will be done*
No speche among yow ther be spredd,
To kepe yowr toungys ye nott lett. *do not fail*

JONATHAS Syr, almyghty Machomyght be with yow, *Muhammad*
And I shall cum agayn ryght sone!

[1] *To sell to you that dear one [God]*

ARISTORIUS Jonathas, ye wott what I have sayd, and how — *know*
I shall walke for that we have to doun. — *that which; do*

[*Here goeth the Jewys away and the preste commyth home.*

PRESBYTER Syr, almyghty God mott be yowr gyde, — *may almighty God be; guide*
And glad yow wheresoo ye rest! — *comfort; wheresoever*
ARISTORIUS Syr, ye be welcom home thys tyde! — *time*
Now, Peter, gett us wyne of the best.

CLERICUS Syr, here ys a drawte of Romney red — — *drink; Rumney (a Greek wine)*
Ther ys no better in Aragon —
And a lofe of lyght bred:
Yt ys holesom, as sayeth the fesycyon. — *physician*

ARISTORIUS Drynke of, Ser Isoder, and be of good chere! — *up*
Thys Romney ys good to goo with to reste:
Ther ys no precyouser fer nor nere, — *more valuable*
For all wykkyd metys yt wyll degest. — *sickening; digest*

PRESBYTER Syr, thys wyne ys good at a taste,
And therof have I drunke ryght well!
To bed to gone thus have I cast, — *To go to bed; decided*
Evyn strayt after thys mery mele. — *Directly; meal*

Now, ser, I pray to God send yow good rest,
For to my chambere now wyll I gonne.
ARISTORIUS Ser, with yow be God almyght
And sheld yow ever from yowr fone. — *shield; foes*

[*Here shall Aristorius call hys Clarke to hys presens:*

Howe, Peter, in thee ys all my trust,
In especyall to kepe my counsell,
For a lytyll waye walkyn I must. — *For I must walk a little way*
I wyll not be long, trust as I thee tell.

Now prevely wyll I preve my pace, — *secretly; test my step (i.e., go)*
My bargayn thys nyght for to fulfyll.
Ser Isoder shall nott know of thys case, — *affair*
For he hath oftyn sacred, as yt ys skyll. — *consecrated [the Host], as is*
The chyrche key ys at my wyll;
Ther ys no thyng that me shall tary. — *shall hinder me*
I wyll nott abyde by dale nor hyll — *delay*
Tyll yt be wrowght, by Saynt Mary! — *done; [the Virgin] Mary*

[*Here shal he enter the chyrche and take the Hoost.*

Ah, now have I all myn entent! *desire*
Unto Jonathas now wyll I fare; *go*
To fullfyll my bargayn have I ment, *intended*
For that mony wyll amend my fare, *money; improve; condition*
As thynkyth me. *It seems to me*
But now wyll I passe by thes pathes playne; *flat*
To mete with Jonathas I wold fayne. *meet; be glad*
Ah, yonder he commyth in certayn: *certainly*
Me thynkyth I hym see. *I seem to see him*
Welcom, Jonathas, gentyll and trew! *noble; faithful*
For well and trwly thou kepyst thyn howre. *faithfully; your [appointed] time*
Here ys the Host sacred newe: *newly consecrated*
Now wyll I home to halle and bowre. *house*

JONATHAS And I shall kepe thys trusty treasure, *prized*
As I wold doo my gold and fee. *[movable] property*
Now in thys clothe I shall thee covere, *cloth; you (i.e., the Host)*
That no wyght shall thee see. *person*

[Here shall Arystory goo hys waye and Jonathas and hys servauntys shall goo to the tabyll thus sayng: *table*

JONATHAS Now, Jason and Jasdon, ye be Jewys jentyll; *noble*
Masfatt and Malchus, that myghty arn in mynd: *intelligent are*
Thys merchant from the Crysten temple
Hathe gett us thys bred that make us thus blynd. *obtained*
Now, Jason so jentyll as ever was the lynde, *linden (tree)*
Into the forsayd parlowr prevely take thy pase, *secretly make your way*
Sprede a clothe on the tabyll that ye shall ther fynd,
And we shall folow after to carpe of thys case. *discuss the situation*

[*Here the Jewys goon and lay the Ost on the tabyll sayng:* *Host*

JONATHAS Syrys, I praye yow all harkyn to my sawe. *speech*
Thes Crysten men carpyn of a mervelows case: *boast; marvelous*
They say that this ys Jhesu that was attayntyd in owr lawe, *Jesus who; condemned*
And that thys ys He that crwcyfyed was. *crucified*

On thes wordys ther law growndyd hath He,
That He sayd on Shere Thursday at Hys sopere: *Shrove (i.e., Holy) Thursday*
He brake the brede and sayd, "*Accipite*," *broke; "Take"*
And gave Hys dyscyplys them for to chere. *to comfort them*
And more He sayd to them there,
Whyle they were all togethere and sum, *one and all*
Syttyng at the table soo clere: *beautiful*
"*Comedite corpus meum*." *"Eat my body"*

And thys powre He gave Peter to proclame,
And how the same shuld be suffycyent to all prechors — *appropriate*
The bysshoppys and curatys saye the same — *curates (priests)*
And soo as I understond do all Hys progenytors. *successors*

JASON Yea, sum men in that law reherse another:
They say of a maydyn borne was Hee, *virgin*
And how Joachyms dowghter shuld be Hys mother, *Joachim's daughter (Mary)*
And how Gabrell apperyd and sayd, "*Ave*," *Gabriel; "Hail"*
And with that worde she shuld conceyvyd be, *become pregnant*
And that in hyr shuld lyght the Holy Gost. *into; descend*
Ageyns owr law thys ys false heresy,
And yett they saye He ys of myghtys most.

JASDON They saye that Jhesu to be owr kyng,
But I wene He bowght that full dere;[1]
But they make a royall aray of Hys uprysyng, *display; [the Resurrection]*
And that in every place ys prechyd farre and nere,
And how He to Hys dyscyples agayn dyd appere —
To Thomas and to Mary Mawdelen — *Magdalene*
And syth how He styed by Hys own powre. *afterwards; ascended*
And thys ye know well ys heresy full playn. *clear*

MASPHAT Yea, and also they say He sent them wytt and wysdom *understanding*
For to understond every langwage:
When the Holy Gost to them came,
They faryd as dronk men of pyments or vernage.[2]
And sythen how that He lykenyd Hymself a Lord of Parage: *High-rank*
On Hys Fatherys ryght hond He Hym sett. *sat*
They hold Hym wyser than ever was Syble sage *Sibyl*
And strenger than Alexander that all the worlde ded gett! *win*

MALCHUS Yea, yet they saye as fals, I dare laye my hedde, *wager*
How they that be ded shall com agayn to Judgement,
And owr dredfull Judge shal be thys same brede, *terrifying*
And how lyfe everlastyng them shuld be lent. *should be given to them*
And thus they hold, all at on consent, *maintain agreement*
Because that Phylyppe sayd for a lytyll glosse — *Philip; comment*
To turne us from owr beleve ys ther entent — *intention*
For that he sayd, "*Judecare vivos et mortuos*." *"To judge the living and the dead"*

[1] *But I believe He paid for that dearly (i.e., with the Crucifixion)*

[2] *They behaved as men drunk from piments (sweetened and spiced wines) or vernage (a strong, sweet Italian wine)*

JONATHAS Now, serys, ye have rehersyd the substaunce of ther lawe.
But thys bred I wold myght be put in a prefe:[1]
Whether this be He that in Bosra of us had awe. *Bozrah from us; reverence*
Ther staynyd were Hys clothys, this may we belefe; *stained (dyed); believe*
Thys may we know, ther had He grefe, *grief*
For owr old bookys veryfy thus.
Theron He was jugett to be hangyd as a thefe, *condemned*
Tinctis Bosra vestibus. *With dyed garments from Bozrah*

JASON Yf that thys be He that on Calvery was mad red, *Calvary; made*
Onto my mynd, I shall kenne yow a conceyt good:[2]
Surely with owr daggars we shall ses on thys bredde, *daggers; seize*
And so with clowtys we shall know yf He have eny blood. *blows; any*
JASDON Now by Machomyth so myghty that mevyth in my mode, *works on my mind*
Thys ys masterly ment, thys matter thus to meve,[3]
And with owr strokys we shall fray Hym as He was on the Rood, *attack*
That He was ondon with grett repreve. *undone (i.e., killed); shame*

MASPHAT Yea, I pray yow smyte ye in the myddys of the cake, *middle*
And so shall we smyte theron woundys fyve.
We wyll not spare to wyrke yt wrake *do; harm*
To prove in thys brede yf ther be eny lyfe. *test; any*

MALCHUS Yea, goowe to than, and take yowr space, *places*
And looke owr daggarys be sharpe and kene,
And when eche man a stroke smytte hase
In the mydyll part therof owr master shall bene. *be (i.e., our master's stroke shall be)*
JONATHAS When ye have all smytyn, my stroke shal be sene:
With this same dagger that ys so styf and strong
In the myddys of thys prynt I thynke for to prene. *impression; stab*
On lashe I shall Hym lende or yt be long. *I shall give Him a stroke before long*

[*Here shall the fowr Jewys pryk ther daggerys in fowr quarters thus sayng:*

JASON Have at yt! Have at yt with all my myght!
Thys syde I hope for to sese. *seize*
JASDON And I shall with thys blade so bryght
Thys other syde freshely afeze! *boldly terrify*
MASPHAT And I yow plyght I shall Hym not please, *promise*
For with thys punche I shall Hym pryke! *dagger*
MALCHUS And with thys augur I shall Hym not ease; *eel-spear*
Another buffett shall He lykke! *take*

[1] *But I would have this bread put to a test*

[2] *As I recall, I shall make known to you a good trick*

[3] *This is skillfully planned, thus to stir up this trouble*

JONATHAS Now am I bold with batayle Hym to bleyke, *turn pale [with fear]*
The mydle part alle for to prene, *stab*
A stowte stroke also for to stryke! *bold*
In the myddys yt shal be sene!

[*Here the Ost must blede.*

Ah, owt, owt, harrow! What devyll ys thys? *alas, alas, help; devil*
Of thys wyrk I am in were! *fear (confusion)*
Yt bledyth as yt were woode, iwys! *enraged, truly*
But yf ye helpe, I shall dyspayre! *Unless; despair*

JASON A fyre, a fyre, and that in hast! *haste*
Anoon a cawdron full of oyle! *Immediately [get] a cauldron*
JASDON And I shalle helpe yt were in cast, *cast in*
All the three howrys for to boyle. *Fully three hours*

MASPHAT Yea, here is a furneys stowte and strong, *hearth sturdy*
And a cawdron therin dothe hong.
Malcus, wher art thow so long *why*
To helpe thys dede were dyght? *done*
MALCHUS Loo, here ys fowr galouns of oyle clere.
Have doon fast! Blowe up the fere! *Be done with it quickly! Blow up the fire!*
Syr, bryng that ylke cake nere *that same*
Manly with all yowre mygthe. *Boldly*

JONATHAS And I shall bryng the ylke cak
And throwe yt in, I undertake.
Out, out! Yt werketh me wrake! *does me injury*
I may not awoyd yt owt of my hond! *remove it from*
I wylle goo drenche me in a lake, *drown myself*
And in woodnesse I gynne to wake: *I begin to go mad*
I renne, I lepe over this lond! *leap*

[*Her he renneth wood with the Ost in hys hond.* *mad*

JASON Renne, felawes, renne, for Cokkys peyn, *God's suffering*
Fast we had owr mayster ageyne! *Quickly to have*
Hold prestly on thys pleyn, *firmly; ground*
And faste bynd hyme to a poste.
JASDON Here is an hamer and naylys three, I seye.
Lyffte up hys armys, felawe, on hey *high*
Whyll I dryve thes nayles, I yow praye,
With strong strokys fast.

MASPHAT Now set on, felouse, with mayne and myght, *fellows; strength*
And pluke hys armes awey in fyght.

Wat yfe he twycche, felouse, aryght! *So what; properly*
Alas, balys breweth ryght badde. *evils come about*

[*Here shall thay pluke the arme and the hond shall hang styll with the Sacrament.*

MALCHUS Alas, alas, what devyll ys thys?
Now hat he but oon hand, iwyse!
For sothe, mayster, ryght woo me is
That ye this harme hawe hadde. *misfortune have*

JONATHAS Ther ys no more; I must enduer.
Now hastely to owr chamber lete us gon,
Tyll I may get me sum recuer. *remedy*
And therfor charge yow, everychoon, *swear; everyone*
That yt be counsell that we have doon. *secret*

[*Here shall the lechys man come into the place sayng:* *physician's*

COLLE Aha, here ys a fayer felawshyppe,
Thewh I be nat shapyn, I lyst to sleppe. *Though; inclined; wish; escape*
I have a master I wolld he had the pyppe, *disease*
I tell yow in counsel. *secret*
He ys a man off all syence *learning (science)*
But of thryffte, I may with yow dyspence: *Except for wealth; grant dispensation*
He syttyth with sum tapstere in the spence — *sits; barmaid; buttery*
Hys hoode there wyll he sell. *hood*

Mayster Brendyche of Braban — *Brabant*
I tell yow he ys that same man —
Called the most famous phesycyan
That ever sawe uryne! *urine*
He seeth as wele at noone as at nyght,
And sumtyme by a candelleyt
Can gyf a judgyment aryght *diagnosis*
As he that hathe noon eyn. *eyes*

He ys allso a boone-setter,
I knowe no man go the better.
In every taverne he ys detter: *debtor*
That ys a good tokenyng! *sign*
But ever I wonder he ys so long. *always; takes so long*
I fere ther gooth sum thyng awrong,
For he hath dysarvyde to be hong: *deserved; hanged*
God send never wurse tydyng. *news*

He had a lady late in cure, *recently in his care*
I wot be this she ys full sure: *I know by this she is fully taken care of*
There shall never Cristen creature
Here hyr tell no tale! *Hear*
And I stode here tyll mydnyght, *If*
I cowde not declare aryght
My masteris cunyng insyght
That he hat in good ale. *has*

But what devyll ayleth hym, so long to taré? *that he delays so long*
A seek man myght soone myscary. *sick man; die*
Now all the devyllys of Hell hym wari, *curse*
God gunte me my boon! *request*
I trowe best we mak a crye: *think; proclamation*
Yf any man can hym aspye,
Led hym to the pylleri; *Lead; pillory*
In fayth yt shall be don!

[*Here shall he stond up and make proclamacion, seyng thys:*

COLLE Yf ther be eyther man or woman
That sawe Master Brundyche of Braban,
Or owyht of hym tel can, *anything*
Shall wele be quit hys med. *paid; reward*
He hath a cut berd and a flatte noose, *beard; nose*
A therde-bare gowne, and a-rent hoose. *torn*
He spekyt never good matere nor purpoose.
To the pylleré ye hym led! *pillory*

BRUNDYCHE What! Thu boye, what janglest here? *do you chatter*
COLLE A! Master, master, but to your reverence, *only to your honor*
I wend never to a seen yowr goodly chere, *thought; have seen; face*
Ye tared hens so long! *away from here*
BRUNDYCHE What hast thow sayd in my absense?
COLLE Nothyng, master, but to yowr reverence
I have told all this audiense.
(And some lyes among!)

But, master, I pray yow: how dothe yowr pacyent *patient*
That ye had last under yowr medycament? *medical treatment*
BRUNDYCHE I waraunt she never fele anoyment. *guarantee; felt discomfort*
COLLE Why, ys she in hyr grave?
BRUNDYCHE I have gyven hyr a drynke made full well
Wyth scamoly and with oxennell, *scammony; oxymel*
Letwyce, sawge, and pympernelle. *Lettuce, sage; pimpernel*
COLLE Nay, than she ys full save! *cured*

For now ye ar cum, I dare well saye — *For now [that]*
Betuyn Dovyr and Calyce the ryght wey — *Between Dover; Calais*
Dwellth non so cunnyng, be my fey, — *faith*
In my judgyment.
BRUNDYCHE Cunnyng, yea, yea! And with prattyffe — *practice*
I have savid many a mannys lyfe.
COLLE On wydowes, maydese, and wyfe — *maids*
Yowr connyng yow have nyh spent! — *nearly*

BRUNDYCHE Were ys my bowgett with drynk profytable? — *Where; bag; healing*
COLLE Here, master, master! Ware how ye tugg: — *Beware; drink*
The devyll I trowe within shrugge, — *moves about*
For yt gooth rebyll-rable. — *rattles*

BRUNDYCHE Here ys a grete congregacyon, — *crowd*
And all be not hole without negacyon. — *undeniably healthy*
I wold have certyfycacyon: — *notice*
Stond up and make a proclamacion.
Have do faste, and make no pausacyon, — *Do it; do not delay*
But wyghtly mak a declaracion — *immediately*
To all people that helpe wolde have.

[*Hic interim proclamacionem faciet:* — *Here for a while he will make a proclamation*

COLLE All manar of men that have any syknes, — *manner; sickness*
To Master Brentberecly loke that yow redresse. — *address [yourself]*
What dysease or syknesse that ever ye have,
He wyll never leve yow tyll ye be in yowr grave!
Who hat the canker, the collyke, or the laxe, — *Whoever; cancer, colic; diarrhea*
The tercyan, the quartan, or the brynnyng axs, — *tertian, quartan, or burning fever*
For wormys, for gnawyng, gryndyng in the wombe or in the boldyro, — *(see note)*
All maner red eyn, bleryd eyn, and the myegrym also, — *eyes, inflamed; migraine*
For hedache, bonache, and therto the tothache, — *in addition to*
The colt-evyll and the brostyn men he wyll undertak.
All tho that have the poose, the sneke, or the tyseke,[1]
Thowh a man were ryght heyle, he cowd soone make hym sek. — *healthy; could*
Inquyre to the colkote, for ther ys hys loggyng, — *coal shed; lodging*
A lytyll besyde Babwell Myll, yf ye wyll have understondyng.

BRUNDYCHE Now yf ther be ether man or woman
That nedeth helpe of a phesyscian —
COLLE Mary, master, that I tell can,
And ye wyll understond.

[1] Lines 617–18: *The swelling of the penis and men suffering from hernia he will see / All those that have the catarrh (cold), the head-cold, or the phthisis (tuberculosis)*

BRUNDYCHE Knoest any abut this plase? *Do you know; about; place*
COLLE Ye, that I do, mastre, so have I grase. *grace*
Here ys a Jewe, hyght Jonathas, *called*
Hath lost hys ryght hond. *[Who] has*

BRUNDYCHE Fast to hym I wold inquere.
COLLE For God, master, the gate ys hyre. *Before; way*
BRUNDYCHE Than to hym I wyll go nere.
My master, wele mot yow be! *may*
JONATHAS What doost here, felawe? What woldest thu hanne? *have*
BRUNDYCHE Syr, yf yow nede ony surgeon or physycyan,
Of yowr dysese help yow welle I cane,
What hurtys or hermes soever they be. *harms*

JONATHAS Syr, thu art ontawght to come in thus homly, *not well bred; intimately*
Or to pere in my presence thus malepertly. *appear; impudently*
Voydoth from my syght, and that wyghtly, *Withdraw; immediately*
For ye be mysse-avysed.
COLLE Syr, the hurt of yowr hand ys knowen full ryfe, *widely*
And my master have savyd many a manes lyfe.
JONATHAS I trowe ye be cum to make sum stryfe.
Hens fast, lest that ye be chastysed!

COLLE Syr, ye know well yt can nott mysse:
Men that be masters of scyens be profytable. *beneficial*
In a pott, yf yt please yow to pysse,
He can tell yf yow be curable.
JONATHAS Avoyde, fealows! I love not yowr bable. *Get out*
Brushe them hens bothe, and that anon; *Drive*
Gyf them ther reward that they were gone! *so that*

[*Here shall the fowr Jewys bett away the leche and hys man.* *beat*

JONATHAS Now have don, felawys, and that anon. *finish*
For dowte of drede what after befall, *fear of*
I am nere masyd — my wytte ys gon! *nearly confounded*
Therfor of helpe, I pray yow all.

And take yowre pynsonys, that ar so sure, *pincers*
And pluck owt the naylys, won and won. *one by one*
Also in a clothe ye yt cure, *it (i.e., Jonathas' hand) cover*
And throw yt in the cawdron, and that anon.

[*Here shall Jason pluck owt the naylys and*
shake the hond into the cawdron.

JASON And I shall rape me redely anon, *hasten straightaway*
To plucke owt the naylys that stond so fast,
And beare thys bred, and also thys bone,
And into the cawdron I wyll yt cast.

JASDON And I shall, with thys dagger so stowte,
Putt yt down, that yt myght plawe, *Push; boil*
And steare the clothe rounde abowte, *stir*
That no thyng therof shal be rawe. *uncooked*

MASPHAT And I shall manly, with all my myght,
Make the fyre to blase and brynne *blaze; burn*
And sett therunder suche a lyght,
That yt shall make yt ryght thynne.

[*Here shall the cawdron byle, apperyng to be as blood.* *boil*

MALCHUS Owt and harow! What devyll ys herein?
All thys oyle waxyth redde as blood, *is becoming*
And owt of the cawdron yt begynnyth to rin! *run*
I am so aferd, I am nere woode! *nearly mad*

[*Here shall Jason and hys compeny goo to Ser Jonathas sayng:*

JASON Ah, master, master! What chere ys with yow? *How are you*
I can nott see owr werke wyll avayle. *do any good*
I beseche yow avance yow now *come forward*
Sumwhatt with yowr counsayle.

JONATHAS The best counsayle that I now wott, *know*
That I can deme, farre and nere, *conceive*
Ys to make an ovyn as redd hott
As ever yt can be made with fere, *fire*
And when ye see yt soo hott appere,
Then throw yt into the ovyn fast.
Sone shall he stanche hys bledyng chere; *stop the appearance of bleeding*
When ye have donne, stoppe yt; be not agast. *plug it [the oven]; frightened*

JASDON Be my fayth, yt shal be wrowght, *By; done*
And that anon, in gret hast.
Bryng on fyryng, serys, here ye nowght? *firewood; hear; not*
To hete thys ovyn be nott agast.

MASPHAT Here ys straw and thornys kene. *sharp*
Com on, Malchas, and bryng on fere, *fire*
For that shall hete yt well, I wene. *think*

[*Here thei kyndyll the fyre.*

Blow on fast that done yt were.

MALCHUS Ah, how thys fyre gynnyth to brenne clere! *begins; brightly*
Thys ovyn ryght hotte I thynk to make. *intend*
Now, Jason, to the cawdron that ye stere, *stir*
And fast fetche hether that ylke cake. *hither; same*

[*Here shall Jason goo to the cawdron and take owt the Ost with hys pynsonys and cast yt into the ovyn.*

JASON I shall with thes pynsonys, withowt dowt,
Shake thys cake owt of thys clothe,
And to the ovyn I shall yt rowte *throw*
And stoppe Hym there, thow He be loth. *shut Him up; unwilling*
The cake I have cawght here, in good sothe;
The hand ys soden, the fleshe from the bonys. *boiled*
Now into the ovyn I wyll therwith.
Stoppe yt, Jasdon, for the nonys. *Plug it*

JASDON I stoppe thys ovyn, wythowtyn dowte,
With clay I clome yt uppe ryght fast, *plaster*
That non heat shall cum owtte.
I trow there shall He hete and drye in hast.

[*Here the owyn must ryve asunder and blede owt at the cranys and an image appere owt, with woundys bledyng.* *split; crannies*

MASPHAT Owt, owt! Here ys a grete wondere:
Thys ovyn bledyth owt on every syde!
MALCHUS Yea, the ovyn on peacys gynnyth to ryve asundre; *pieces; begins*
Thys ys a mervelows case thys tyde! *now*

[*Here shall the image speke to the Juys, sayng thus:*

JESUS *O mirabiles Judei, attendite et videte*
Si est dolor sicut dolor meus.[1]
Oh ye merveylows Jewys, *wonderful*
Why ar ye to yowr Kyng onkynd, *cruel*
And I so bytterly bowt yow to my blysse? *Although; redeemed you*
Why fare ye thus fule with yowre frende? *behave; foully*
Why peyne yow me and straytly me pynde, *torture; severely; constrain*
And I yowr love so derely have bowght?
Why are ye so unstedfast in yor mynde?

[1] Lines 717–18: *O wonderful Jews attend and see / If there be any sorrow like to my sorrow*

Why wrath ye me? I greve yow nowght. *do you anger*
Why wyll ye nott beleve that I have tawght *what*
And forsake yor fowle neclygence,
And kepe my commandementys in yowr thowght,
And unto my Godhed to take credence? *believe*

Why blaspheme yow me? Why do ye thus?
Why put yow me to a newe tormentry, *subject; torture*
And I dyed for yow on the Crosse?
Why consyder not yow what I dyd crye? *proclaim*
Whyle that I was with yow, ye ded me velanye. *acted wickedly toward me*
Why remember ye nott my bytter chaunce, *fortune*
How yowr kynne dyd me awance *help*
For claymyng of myn enherytaunce?
I shew yow the streytnesse of my grevaunce, *seriousness of my injury*
And all to meve yow to my mercy. *move*

JONATHAS *Tu es protector vite mee; a quo trepidabo?*[1]
O Thu, Lord, whyche art my defendowr, *protector*
For dred of Thee I trymble and quake; *fear*
Of Thy gret mercy lett us receyve the showre,
And mekely I aske mercy, amendys to make.

[*Here shall they knele down all on ther kneys, sayng:* *knees*

JASON Ah, Lord, with sorow and care and grete wepyng,
All we felawys, lett us saye thus,
With condolent harte and grete sorowyng: *contrite*
Lacrimis nostris conscienciam nostram baptizemus.[2]

JASDON Oh Thow blyssyd lord of mykyll myght,
Of Thy gret mercy Thow hast shewyd us the path; *shown*
Lord, owt of grevous slepe and owt of dyrknes to lyght, *injurious*
Ne gravis sompnus irruat. *May grievous sleep not seize [us]*

MASPHAT Oh Lord, I was very cursyd, for I wold know Thi crede.
I can no mennys make but crye to Thee thus: *can make no complaint*
O gracyows Lorde, forgyfe me my mysdede; *offense*
With lamentable hart, *miserere mei, Deus.* *sorrowful; have mercy on me, God*

MALCHUS Lord, I have offendyd Thee in many a sundry vyse, *vice*
That styckyth at my hart as hard as a core. *strikes*

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[1] *You are the protector of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*

[2] *With our tears let us baptize our conscience*

Lord, by the water of contrycion lett me aryse:
Asparges me, Domine, ysopo et mundabor.[1]

JESUS All ye that desyryn my servauntys for to be
And to fullfyll the preceptys of my lawys,
The intent of my commandement knowe ye:
Ite et ostendite vos sacerdotibus meis. *Go and show yourselves to my priests*

To all yow that desyre in eny wyse *any way*
To aske mercy, to graunt yt redy I am.
Remember and lett yowr wyttys suffyce, *sense*
Et tunc non avertam a vobis faciem meam. *And then I will not turn away my face from you*

No, Jonathas, on thyn hand thow art but lame,
And ys thorow thyn own cruelnesse,
For thyn hurt thu mayest thiselfe blame:
Thow woldyst preve thy powre Me to oppresse. *test*
But now I consydre thy necesse: *necessity*
Thow wasshest thyn hart with grete contrycion.
Go to the cawdron — thi care shal be the lesse — *pain*
And towche thyn hand to thy salvacion.

[*Here shall Ser Jonathas put hys hand into the cawdron,*
and yt shal be hole agayn, and then say as folwyth:

JONATHAS Oh Thow, my Lord God and Savyowr, osanna! *hosanna*
Thow Kyng of Jewys and of Jerusalem!
O Thow myghty strong Lyon of Juda!
Blyssyd be the tyme that Thu were in Bedlem! *Bethlehem*
Oh Thu myghty, strong, gloryows, and gracyows oyle streme,
Thow myghty conquerrowr of infernall tene! *suffering*
I am quyt of moche combrance thorowgh Thy meane, *rid; trouble; mediation*
That ever blyssyd mott Thou bene! *For which; may*

Alas that ever I dyd agaynst Thy wyll,
In my wytt to be soo wood *mad*
That I so ongoodly wyrk shuld soo gryll! *That I such a wicked deed should thus commit*
Agens my mysgovernaunce Thow gladdyst me with good: *In return for; sin; comfort*
I was soo prowde to preve Thee on the Roode, *as to test*
And Thou haste sent me lyghtyng that late was lame; *relief who recently*
To bete Thee and boyle Thee I was myghty in moode, *beat; arrogant*
And now Thu hast put me from duresse and dysfame. *kept; suffering; reproach*

[1] *Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop and I shall be cleansed*

But Lord, I take my leve at Thy hygh presens, *leave*
And put me in Thy myghty mercy;
The bysshoppe wyll I goo fetche to se owr offens,
And onto hym shew owr lyfe, how that we be gylty.

[*Here shall the master Jew goo to the byshopp, and hys men knele styll.*

JONATHAS Hayle, father of grace! I knele upon my knee,
Hertely besechyng yow and interely, *sincerely*
A swemfull syght all for to see *sorrowful*
In my howse apperyng, verely: *truly*
The Holy Sacrament, the whyche we have done tormentry, *torture*
And ther we have putt Hym to a newe passyon, *subjected; suffering/passion*
A Chyld apperyng with wondys blody! *wounds*
A swemfull syght yt ys to looke upon. *piteous*

EPISCOPUS Oh Jhesu, Lord full of goodnesse, *BISHOP*
With Thee wyll I walke with all my myght!
Now, all my pepull, with me ye dresse *prepare*
For to goo see that swymfull syght. *sorrowful*

Now, all ye peple that here are,
I commande yow, every man,
On yowr feet for to goo bare,
In the devoutest wyse that ye can. *manner*

[*Here shall the bysshope entere into the Jewys howse and say:*

O Jhesu, fili Dei! *O Jesus, Son of God*
How thys paynfull passyon rancheth myn hart! *tears*
Lord, I crye to Thee, *miserere mei*, *have mercy on me*
From thys rufull syght Thou wylt reverte![1]
Lord, we all with sorowys smert, *suffer*
For thys unlefull work we lyve in langowr. *sinful; misery*
Now, good Lord, in Thy grace, let us be gert, *clothed*
And of Thy soverreyn marcy send us thy socowr, *assistance*
And for Thy holy grace forgyfe us owr errowr.
Now lett Thy peté spryng and sprede: *compassion*
Thowgh we have be unryghtfull, forgyf us owr rygore, *sinful; cruelty*
And of owr lamentable hartys, good Lord, take hede. *sorrowful; heed*

[*Here shall the image change agayn into brede.*

[1] *From this sorrowful appearance Thou will turn back (i.e., into the Host)*

EPISCOPUS Oh Thu largyfluent Lord, most of lyghtnesse, *generous; splendor*
Onto owr prayers Thow hast applyed! *With; complied*
Thu hast receyvyd them with grett swettnesse; *graciousness*
For all owr dredfull dedys Thu hast not us denyed.
Full mykyll owte Thy name for to be magnyfyed, *Greatly ought*
With mansuete myrth and gret swettnes, *gentle joy*
And as our gracyows God for to be gloryfyed,
For Thu shewyst us gret gladnes.

Now wyll I take thys Holy Sacrament
With humble hart and gret devocion,
And all we wyll gon with on consent,
And beare yt to chyrche with solempne processyon.

Now folow me, all and summe,
And all tho that bene here, both more and lesse, *those; more and less [important]*
Thys holy song, *O sacrum convivium*, *O holy feast*
Lett us syng all with grett swetnesse.

[*Here shall the pryst, Ser Isoder, aske hys master what this menyth:*

PRESBYTER Ser Arystory, I pray yow: what menyth all thys?
Sum myracle I hope ys wrowght be Goddys myght:
The bysshope commyth processyon with a gret meny of Jewys. *comes in procession*
I hope sum myracle ys shewyd to hys syght.
To chyrche in hast wyll I runne full ryght,
For thether me thynk he begynnyth to take hys pace. *there*
The Sacrament so semly ys borne in syght:
I hope that God hath shewyd of Hys grace.

ARISTORIUS To tell yow the trowth I wyll nott lett — *refrain*
Alas that ever thys dede was dyght! *done*
An onlefull bargayn I began for to beat: *sinful (unlawful); strike*
I sold yon same Jewys owr Lord full ryght,
For covytyse of good, assa cursyd wyght! *wealth; man*
Woo the whyle that bargayn I dyd ever make! *time*
But yow be my defensour in owr dyocesans syght, *protector; bishop's*
For an heretyke I feare he wyll me take.

PRESBYTER For sothe, nothyng well-avysed was yor wytt! *inclination*
Wondrely was yt wrowght of a man of dyscrescion *by*
In suche perayle yor solle for to pytt! *peril; soul*
But I wyll labor for yor absolucyon.

Lett us hye us fast, that we were hens, *hurry*
And beseche hym of hys benygne grace,

That he wyll shew us hys benyvolens *So that*
To make a menys for yowr trespas. *intercede*

[*Here shall the merchant and hys prest go to the chyrche, and the bysshop shall entre the chyrche and lay the ost on the auter, sayng thus:* *altar*

EPISCOPUS *Estote fortes in bello, et pugnate cum antico serpente, Et accipite regnum eternum, et cetera.*[1]
My chyldern, ye be strong in batayll gostly *spiritual*
For to fyght agayn the fell serpent, *wicked*
That nyght and day ys ever besy:
To dystroy owr sollys ys hys intent! *souls*
Look ye be not slow nor neclygent
To arme yow in the vertues sevyn;
Of synnys forgotyn take good avysement, *take careful thought*
And knowlege them to yowr confessor full evyn. *acknowledge; exactly*

For that serpent, the devyll, ys full strong
Mervelows myschevos for man to mene, *mischiefs; intend*
But that the Passyon of Cryst ys meynt us among, *meant for us*
And that ys in dyspyte of hys infernall tene. *his [the serpent's] malice*
Beseche owr Lord and Savyowr so kene *mighty*
To put doun that serpent, cumberer of man, *tempter*
To withdraw hys furyous froward doctryn bydene, *immoderate; immediately*
Fulfyllyd of the fend callyd Levyathan. *fiend; Leviathan*

Gyf lawrell to that Lord of myght, *laurel (i.e., Give honor)*
That He may bryng us to the joyows fruycion, *bliss*
From us to put the fend to flyght,
That never he dystroy us by hys temptacion. *So that*

PRESBYTER My father, under God I knele unto yowr kne,
In yowr myhty mysericord to tak us in remembrance, *mercy*
As ye be materyall to owr degré. *relevant; rank*
We put us in yowr moderat ordynaunce,[2]
Yf yt lyke yowr hyghnes to here owr grevaunce: *please; distress*
We have offenddyd sorowfully in a syn mortall,
Wherfor we fere us owr Lord wyll take vengaunce
For owr synnes, both grete and small.

EPISCOPUS And in fatherhed that longyth to my dygnyté,[3]
Unto yowr grefe I wyll gyf credens. *Your sorrow I will accept*

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[1] Lines 866–67: *Be strong in war, and fight with the ancient serpent, / And receive the eternal kingdom, etc.*

[2] *We submit ourselves to your reasonable authority*

[3] *And by the spiritual authority that belongs to my rank*

Say what ye wyll, in the name of the Trynyté,
Agaynst God yf ye have wroght eny inconvenyens. *offense*

ARISTORIUS Holy father, I knele to yow under benedycuté; *blessing*
I have offendyd in the syn of covytys: *covetousness*
I sold owr Lordys body for lucre of mony *monetary gain*
And delyveryd to the wyckyd with cursyd advyce. *thought*
And for that presumpcion gretly I agryse. *shudder (with fear)*
That I presumed to go to the autere, *altar*
There to handyll the Holy Sacryfyce,
I were worthy to be putt in brennyng fere.

But, gracyous lord, I can no more *I can [do] no more*
But put me to Goddys mercy and to yowr grace, *Except*
My cursyd werkys for to restore. *to make amends*
I aske penaunce now in thys place.

EPISCOPUS Now for thys offence that thu hast donne
Agens the Kyng of Hevyn and Emperowr of Hell,
Ever whyll thu lyvest good dedys for to done,
And nevermore for to bye nor sell.
Chastys thy body, as I shall thee tell,
With fastyng and prayng and other good wyrk,
To withstond the temtacyon of fendys of Hell.
And to call to God for grace looke thu never be irke. *slow*

Also thu, preste, for thy neclygens,
That thou were no wyser in thyn office,
Thou art worthy inpresunment for thyn offence: *deserve imprisonment*
But beware ever herafter and be more wyse.

And all yow creaturys and curatys that here be, *curates*
Of thys dede yow may take example, *lesson*
How that yor pyxys lockyd ye shuld see, *pyx*
And be ware of the key of Goddys temple.

JONATHAS And I aske Crystendom with great devocion,
With repentant hart in all degrees,
I aske for us all a generall absolucion,

[*Here the Juys must knele al down.*

For that we knele all upon owr knees,
For we have grevyd owr Lord on ground, *on earth*
And put Hym to a new paynfull passioun,
With daggars styckyd Hym with grevos wounde,
New naylyd Hym to a post, and with pynsonys pluckyd Hym down.

JASON And syth we toke that blyssyd bred so sownd, *sinless*
And in a cawdron we dyd Hym boyle,
In a clothe full just we Hym wounde, *very snugly*
And so dyd we seth Hym in oyle. *boil*

JASDON And for that we myght not overcom Hym with tormentry, *because*
In an hott ovyn we speryd Hym fast. *closed Him up*
There He apperyd with wondys all bloody.
The ovyn rave asunder and all to-brast. *tore; shattered*
MASPHAT In Hys law to make us stedfast,
There spake He to us woordys of grete favore;
In contrycyon owr hartys He cast, *moved*
And bad take us to a confessore.

MALCHUS And therfor all we with on consent
Knele onto yowr hygh sovereynté,
For to be crystenyd ys owr intent; *baptized*
Now all owr dedys to yow shewyd have we.

[*Here shall the bysshoppe crysten the Jewys with gret solempnyté.*

EPSICOPUS Now the Holy Gost at thys tyme mot yow blysse, *bless*
As ye knele all now in Hys name,
And with the water of baptyme I shall yow blysse, *baptism*
To save yow all from the fendys blame.
Now that fendys powre for to make lame,
In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Gost,
To save yow from the devyllys flame,
I crysten yow all, both lest and most.

JONATHAS Now, owr father and byshoppe, that we well knaw.
We thank yow interly, both lest and most. *sincerely*
Now ar we bownd to kepe Crystys lawe
And to serve the Father, the Son, and the Holy Gost.
Now wyll we walke by contré and cost,
Owr wyckyd lyvyng for to restore, *in order to rectify*
And trust in God of myghtys most,
Never to offend as we have don befor.

Now we take owr leave at lesse and mare;
Forward on owr vyage we wyll us dresse. *journey; advance*
God send yow all as good welfare
As hart can thynk or towng expresse!

ARISTORIUS Into my contré now wyll I fare,
For to amende myn wyckyd lyfe,

And to kep the people owt of care
I wyll teache thys lesson to man and wyfe.

Now take I my leave in thys place;
I wyll go walke my penaunce to fullfyll.
Now God, agens whom I have done thys trespas,
Graunt me forgyfnesse, yf yt be Thy wyll!

PRESBYTER For joy of thys me thynke my hart do wepe,
That yow have gyvyn yow all Crystys servauntys to be, *dedicated yourselves*
And Hym for to serve with hart full meke,
God full of pacyens and humylyté,

And the conversacion of all thes fayre men, *conversion*
With hartys stedfastly knett in on, *united*
Goddys lawys to kepe and Hym to serve bydene, *entirely*
As faythfull Crystyanys evermore for to gone!

EPISCOPUS God omnypotent evermore looke ye serve
With devocion and prayre, whyll that ye may.
Dowt yt not He wyll yow preserve *protect*
For eche good prayer that ye sey to Hys pay. *liking*
And therfor in every dew tyme loke ye nat delay
For to serve the Holy Trynyté,
And also Mary, that swete may, *maiden*
And kepe yow in perfyte love and charyté. *perfect*

Crystys commandementys ten there bee:
Kepe well them; do as I yow tell.
Almyght God shall yow please in every degré, *in every respect*
And so shall ye save yowr sollys from Hell.
For there ys payn and sorow cruell,
And in Hevyn there ys both joy and blysse,
More then eny towng can tell; *tongue*
There angellys syng with grett swetnesse.

To the whyche blysse He bryng us,
Whoys name ys callyd Jhesus, *Whose*
And in wyrshyppe of thys name gloryows,
To syng to Hys honore: *Te Deum laudamus!* *We praise you, God*

[*Finis* *The End*

[*Thus endyth the Play of the Blyssyd Sacrament, whyche myracle was don in the forest of Aragon, in the famous cité Eraclea, the yere of owr Lord God 1461, to whom be honowr. Amen.*

EXPLANATORY NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS: **Davis**: Davis, ed., *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*; **ME**: Middle English; **MED**: *Middle English Dictionary*; **MS**: Dublin, Trinity College MS F.4.20; **MSH**: Salatko Petryszcze, ed., *Le Mistere de la Saincte Hostie*, trans. Curtis R. H. Jirsa and John T. Sebastian, with the assistance of Alice Colby-Hall. ***OED***: *Oxford English Dictionary*; **s.d.**: stage direction; **s.n.**: stage name.

1–80 *Now the Father . . . with a mery stevyn!* The first eighty lines of the text constitute the play's "banns," a proclamation delivered several days in advance of the actual performance by two *vexillatores*, or banner-bearers. The banns served as the medieval equivalent of the present-day film trailer. First and foremost, the *vexillatores* announce the "entent" of their "mater" (line 6): to reenact miracles done by the Holy Sacrament in Heraclea in Aragon. The statement that these events are "representyd now in yower syght" (line 10) suggests that this proclamation might have been accompanied by a dumb show in which the main action of the play was mimed but not fully to the play's conclusion. In this regard, the banns serve as a teaser: a prospective audience is invited to witness the climax at the actual performance. The banns also announce the time and location of the impending performance (line 74: "At Croxston on Monday yt shall be sen"). Similar banns accompany the dramatic scripts of the *Castle of Perseverance*, the N-Town plays, and the Chester plays, for which two sets of banns, one pre- and one post-Reformation, survive.

9 *Sovereyns*. The standard gloss on *sovereyns* is "lords," a term of respect that does not necessarily carry class or status implications. See *MED*, s.v. *soverain* (n. 1d). Similar addresses can be found in the morality play *Mankind* and in the surviving epilogue of the so-called Reynes extracts. For a discussion of these and other terms for addressing audiences of medieval English drama, see Marshall, "'O Ye Souerens þat Sytt and Ye Brothern þat Stonde Ryght Wppe.'"

11 *Aragon*. Davis notes that a Host-miracle play was performed in Rome in 1473 in honor of Leonore of Aragon and conjectures that the author of the *Play of the Sacrament* may have known of it and had it in mind when selecting the location of his play (p. lxxiii). See line 56, where 1 Vexillator refers to knowledge of a Host-miracle in Rome. Lampert (*Gender and Jewish Difference from Paul to Shakespeare*, pp. 109–11) discusses the importance of the play's setting in Aragon given the thorny question of religious identity in Spain in the aftermath of several large-scale forced conversions of Jews as well as England's extensive trading contacts with Spain in the fifteenth century.

12 *Eraclea*. "Heraclea," the imaginary town in which the play is set, suggests some association with Hercules. Hercules' tenth labor, the retrieval of the cattle of Geryon, took him to a place called Erytheia, which was later associated with what is now southern Spain. In the course of completing this task, Hercules established his so-called Pillars, the promontories of Gibraltar and Ceuta which flank the Strait of Gibraltar. Medieval Christian historiographers further developed the mythical associations between Hercules and the Iberian Peninsula by writing various accounts of the foundation of important cities by Hercules. The compilers of the *Primera crónica general de España* (*First General Chronicle of Spain*) during the thirteenth-century reign of the Castilian king Alfonso X (Alfonso the Wise) record, for example, the founding of Seville by Hercules (with the aid of Atlas, who in the legend is well versed in astrology). See Robert B. Tate, "Mythology in Spanish Historiography of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance," *Hispanic Review* 22 (1954), 1–18. The playwright's association of an Heraclea with Aragon may ultimately derive from a similar legend concerning Barcelona. According to the thirteenth-century archbishop of Toledo, Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, after defeating Geryon, Hercules traveled about Spain, where new cities sprang up in his wake. Rodrigo recounts that having moored eight of his nine boats in Galicia, Hercules set out on the ninth along the coast and established another new city called "Barchinona," so named for that ninth ship, the *barca nona*. Barchinona in time would become Barcelona. See Rodericus Ximenius de Rada, *Historia de Rebus Hispaniae sive Historia Gothica*, ed. Juan Fernández Valverde (Turnhout: Brepols, 1987), p. 17.

19 *Surrey*. Syria ("Surrey") denotes less the actual place — the playwright's direct experience of the Near East was almost certainly nonexistent — than an exotic and distinctly anti-Christian otherworld against which Christendom might define itself. The Syrian Jews of the play therefore worship Muhammad in a conflation common during the Middle Ages in which the geographical and theological boundaries between Christianity's enemies were easily blurred. See Chemers, "Anti-Semitism, Surrogacy, and the Invocation of Mohammed"; Delaney, "Chaucer's Prioress, the Jews, and the Muslims"; Kruger, "Bodies of Jews"; and Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*.

26 *Because hys profer was of so litylI valewe*. In the play proper, Aristorius initially refuses Jonathas' offer not, as here in the banns, because the price is too low but rather because he fears offending God. See lines 287–90.

37 *grevid*. ME *greven* has a wide semantic range encompassing the infliction of both physical and figurative injury. See *MED* s.v. *greven*. In this line *grevid* could mean "injured," "harassed," or "offended," since the actions of Jonathas and his company result not only in actual physical injury to the Host, and consequently to the body of Christ, but also in blasphemy.

38 *new passyoun*. See note to line 732.

54 *And by myght and power govyn to the prestys mowthe*. The emphasis here is on the priest's instrumentality in the sacramental life of the church. The Jews' complaint echoes the "Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards," a syllabus of

objections to orthodox doctrine presented by the Lollards, a sect of reformers inspired by the teachings of the Oxford theologian John Wyclif, to Parliament and preserved in a later orthodox refutation by Roger Dymok. The "Conclusions" encapsulate several important criticisms of institutional priesthood that were voiced repeatedly throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, including the charge that priests were not necessary for the confession of sins (see line 52, where the process of the Jews' conversion is described by the banns as taking the form of an examination of conscience before the bishop). The ninth conclusion claims that "a feynid [feigned] power of absoliciun [absolution, i.e., of sins] enhaunsith [increases] prestis pride, and gevith hem [them] opertunité of privi [special] calling othir than we wele now say." For the "Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards," see Hudson, ed., *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, pp. 24–29 (p. 27). The playwright here reasserts orthodox teaching about the divine mandate given to priests to perform the sacraments. For the argument that the Croxton play was penned as a refutation of Lollard teaching, see Cutts, "Croxton Play: An Anti-Lollard Piece," although recent critics have questioned the play's concerns about Lollardy, for which see the Introduction above. See also lines 393–408, which imply Jonathas' similar doubt about the role of the priest in effecting the consecration of the bread and wine of the Eucharist through mere speech, a point likewise taken up in the fourth of the Lollard Conclusions: "for thei wene [believe] that Godis bodi, that nevere schal out of hevene, be vertu [by power] of the prestis wordis schulde ben closid essenciali [essentially, i.e., in substance] in a litil bred that thei schewe [show] to the puple [people, i.e., during the elevation of the Host at the moment of consecration during the Mass]" (Hudson, p. 25).

55 *elevyn*. Only five Jews are converted in the play proper.

56 *Rome*. See note to line 11 above for the association of Host-miracles with both Aragon and Rome.

57 *Thys marycle at Rome was presented, for sothe*. This line, spoken by 2 Vexillator, repeats with minor modifications 1 Vexillator's last line in the preceding stanza. The beginning of a dramatic speech with a variation of the ending of the previous speech is a mnemonic trick that features widely in late medieval English drama and is employed by the Croxton playwright elsewhere, as in lines 68–69.

58 *the yere of our Lord a thowsand fowr hundder sixty and on*. The year 1461 is taken as a terminus post quem for the original composition of the play, which is usually assumed to have been written down some time shortly thereafter. This date has never been seriously questioned, although if Davis is correct about the playwright's knowledge of the performance of a Host-miracle in Rome before Leonore of Aragon in 1473 (see notes to lines 11 and 56 above), then the terminus post quem could be shifted to 1473. Glassman (*Anti-Semitic Stereotypes without Jews*, p. 24) inexplicably claims that the *Play of the Sacrament* was presented first in 1378. Nichols ("Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*") sees a possible allusion in the bishop's exhortation to priests to keep their pyxes securely locked near the end of the play to an incident that took place in London in 1467, which

might suggest the play's composition some time after that year. See note to line 926 below.

64 *That thei shuld nat lesse Hys hevenly lyght*. The "heavenly light" is, of course, the eternal bliss of salvation. According to medieval theology, unconverted Jews were automatically damned on account of their nonbelief.

66 *Unto youer gostly father shewe your synne*. Here the *vexillatores* present the action of the play as an exemplum intended to encourage the regular practice of sacramental confession among the audience. Compare *Everyman*.

67 *wanhope*. "Wanhope," or despair, was considered the greatest of sins by medieval theologians, for the refusal to believe in the possibility of salvation necessarily denied God's power over sin. Chaucer's Parson describes "wanhope" as "despeir of the mercy of God, that comth [comes] somtyme of to muche outrageous sorwe, and somtyme of to muche drede, ymaginynge that he hath doon so muche synne that it wol [will] nat availlen [avail] hym, though he wolde repenten hym and forsake synne. . . . Certes [certainly], aboven alle synnes thanne is this synne moost displesant to Crist, and moost adversarie" (Parson's Tale, *Canterbury Tales*, X[I] 693, 697).

71 *flesshe and blode*. What is at issue for the Jews is the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, the belief that the bread and wine of the Eucharist are not merely symbolic of Christ's body and blood but actually *become* His body and blood in substance. Transubstantiation was first defined at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 but not officially declared dogmatic until the Council of Trent in 1551. The playwright may here again be superimposing on the Jews the rejection of transubstantiation by the Lollards. See the note to line 54 above.

74 *Croxston*. Several Croxtons have been identified as possible referents for this line. Of them, the one near Thetford in southwestern Norfolk seems the most likely candidate for the play. See the Introduction above and the note to line 621 below.

77 *trey and tene*. A ME commonplace: "pain and suffering." See *MED*, s.v. *trei* (n.2).

80 *mynstrell blow up with a mery stevyn*! This concluding line of the banns suggests that a musical performance followed the proclamation and the pantomime, if there was one. Compare *Castle of Perseverance*, ed. Klausner, line 156, "Trumpe up and lete us pace."

80, s.d. *Hereafter foloweth the Play of the Conversyon of Ser Jonathas the Jewe by Myracle of the Blyssed Sacrament.* The manuscript here names the play, which emphasizes not only the Host-miracle but also the conversion of the Jews. Nevertheless, almost all scholars have instead preferred the editorial title of "The Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*." The exception is Dox, who argues for the title given at this point in the manuscript ("Representation without Referent," "Medieval Drama as Documentation").

81–124 *Now Cryst . . . he ys nat able to abyde*. Aristorius' introductory speech, like Jonathas' in lines 149–204 (see also the note to those lines below), is reminiscent of the

boasting speeches of tyrants elsewhere in medieval drama. Aristorius' claim, for instance, that he is known far and wide echoes Herod's self-aggrandizing in the Towneley *Magnus Herodes*: "My name spryngys [springs] far and nere: / The doughtyest [boldest], men me call, / That ever ran with spere [spear], / A lord and kyng ryall" (16.157–60). See *Towneley Plays*, ed. Stevens and Cawley. The Coventry Shearmen and Taylors' Herod similarly claims dominion over the entire world: "For I am evyn [even] he thatt [who] made bothe hevin and hell, / And of my myghte [mighty] powar holdith vp this world rownd" (p. 96, lines 438–39). See *Coventry Corpus Christi Plays*, ed. King and Davidson. The Christian protagonist of the *Mistere de la Saincte Hostie* is likewise a merchant but one who has enjoyed considerably less success than Aristorius and therefore finds herself having to pawn her personal effects, despite personal shame, merely to survive:

> ***The Woman*** It would be shameful for me to beg for
> Bread with which to sustain myself
> Because I was never a beggar.
> I was instead a good merchant,
> Merry and very happy,
> Rich and in abundance all my life.
> Yet I have done so much with my two hands
> That I have come from more to less!
> That's how I am now, and I don't know why.
> But necessity knows no law! (MSH 18–27)

81 *Now Cryst that ys our Creatour from shame He cure us*. In light of Aristorius' self-representation in the ensuing speech, this line seems ironic; neither shame nor God appear to be foremost on Aristorius' mind.

95 *In Gene and in Jenyse and in Genewaye*. "Jenyse" has not been satisfactorily identified. In this cataloging of far-flung ports and markets wherein Aristorius and his goods are famous, the playwright highlights his encyclopedic knowledge of geography by means of nearly alphabetical, alliterating lines. Aristorius' listing echoes both the content and the organization of Book 15 of John Trevisa's popular late fourteenth-century translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus's *De Proprietatibus Rerum* (*On the Properties of Things*), one of the most important encyclopedias in England. Jonathas' boasting about his acquisition of precious stones and rare spices in lines 157–88 and Colle's conspicuous deployment of medical terms in the Brundich interlude likewise showcase the playwright's learning in rhetorically virtuoso passages. See note 96 below for Trevisa's commentary on "Saby."

96 *Saby*. Saba, perhaps more familiar as Sheba on account of the famous queen who visits Solomon in 3 Kings 10, is located in present-day Yemen. Saba is associated in the story of Solomon and the queen of Sheba, as it is elsewhere in the Bible, with tremendous wealth not unlike that associated in the opening lines of the *Play of the Sacrament* with Aristorius and Jonathas. See, e.g., 3 Kings 10:1–2, 10:10: "And the queen of Saba, having heard of the fame of Solomon in the name of the Lord, came to try him with hard questions. And entering into Jerusalem with a great train, and riches, and camels that carried spices, and an

immense quantity of gold, and precious stones, she came to king Solomon, and spoke to him all that she had in her heart. . . . And she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices a very great store, and precious stones: there was brought no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Saba gave to king Solomon." For additional biblical references to Saba as a land of spices, immense wealth, and trade, see Psalm 71:10, Isaias 60:6, Jeremias 6:20, and Ezechiel 27:22–23. See also the note to line 114 below. Trevisa, in his translation of Bartholomaeus (who follows Isidore of Seville and other authorities), tells us that "Sabea" is "a cuntrey in Arabia" nestled between the Persian and Arabian seas, Chaldea, and Ethiopia, and that the region produces frankincense and myrrh in abundance and may also have been the birthplace of the phoenix (*On the Properties of Things*, 2:802).

98 *Braban*. Brabant, Dordrecht (*Dordrede* in line 100), Gelderland (*Gyldre* in line 103), Holland (*Holond* in line 104), and Luxembourg (*Lachborn* in line 113) would have been familiar to fifteenth-century East Anglians on account of the steady commercial and intellectual trade between East Anglia and the Low Countries. Gibson (*Theater of Devotion*, p. 2) suggests that the Low Countries probably influenced the development of devotion in East Anglia. Granger (*N-Town Play*, pp. 150–63) explores the dramatic connections between the Low Countries and East Anglia.

102 *Farre*. Davis suggests the Faeroes, the small cluster of islands in the North Atlantic nestled between Britain, Iceland, and Norway and settled probably for the first time by Vikings from Norway in the early ninth century (p. 167).

111 *Pondere*. This place has not been identified.

114 *Taryse*. In one of the many surviving versions of his *Travels*, the fourteenth-century English knight John Mandeville describes Tharsia as a kingdom west of Cathay (China) from which hailed one of the Magi whose visit to the infant Jesus is recounted in Matthew 2. Mandeville identifies this region with "Turquesten," present-day Turkestan. See *The Buke of John Maundeuill*, p. 125. In the Middle Ages Tharsia was associated with expensive, probably silken fabrics. The opulence of Arthur's court in the opening scene of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is thus symbolized in the costly canopy made "of tars tapites innoghe," of plenty of tapestries of tars (here the material so-named for the place), that envelops Guinevere (1.77). See *Poems of the Pearl Manuscript*, ed. Andrew and Waldron.

115 *Oryon*. This place has not been identified. Davis suggests Orléans as a possibility (p. 168).

119 *as a lordys pere thus lyve I*. Aristorius imagines himself as a member of the peerage, England's hereditary nobility, his wealth equivalent to that of the realm's great lords, even if by birth he is restricted from their company. See also line 429 below and compare line 24 of the banns to the N-Town plays, where Lucifer's sin is to make himself his "Lordys pere," a social as much as a theological transgression (*N-Town Plays*, ed. Sugano).

129–36 *For ye be worthy . . . ageyn that wyll I seyn.* Scherb (*Staging Faith*, p. 70) observes that Aristorius fails to thank God, as he is encouraged to do by Sir Isoder, the presbyter, instead promising "never to say anything against God (a promise he equivocally keeps)."

140 *Shelysdown*. Probably Chalcedon in Asia Minor, site of an ecumenical council in 451. Davis suggests Chetidonia, a cape on the Aegean Sea (p. 168). Both places are in modern-day Turkey.

149 *Machomet*. See note to line 19. Jonathas here professes a mistaken (even by Islamic standards) devotion to the person of the prophet Muhammad in terms analogous to Christian worship of Jesus Christ. In the Digby *Mary Magdalene*, both Herod and the pagan King of Marseilles profess a belief in "Mahownd" or Muhammad as a god; the King's priest makes offerings to Mahownd and acknowledges a kind of pagan anti-Trinity of Muhammad, Dragon, and Belial (*Mary Magdalene* 1244–45 in *Late Medieval Religious Plays*, ed. Baker, Murphy, and Hall). See also the *Mistere de la Saincte Hostie*, where the Jewish moneylender's wife and children swear by *Mahé* (Muhammad) several times (e.g., lines 248, 318, 325, 364).

151 *hyhe see*. Jonathas maintains a conspicuously Christian view of the end of the world, in which Muhammad, like Christ, sits on a throne of judgment from which he saves and damns individual souls.

154 *honer*. Davis observes that the faulty rhyme here suggests that this line has been corrupted (p. 63).

158–72 *presyous stonys . . . here ye fynd mown.* The playwright may have derived his familiarity with this appreciable array of gems and precious stones from a medieval lapidary such as the one that forms part of Trevisa's translation of Bartholomaeus. See note to line 95 above.

175 *cannyngalle*. In the Digby *Mary Magdalene*, the "King of Flesh," who is sent by Satan to tempt Mary, is associated with spices like *galonga* (galingale), *pepur long*, and *synamom* (cinnamon). See *Mary Magdalene* lines 338–44 in *Late Medieval Religious Plays*, ed. Baker, Murphy, and Hall. Jonathas' association with exotic spices here may serve, then, to emphasize not only his wealth and prosperity but also his role as a tempter. A similar juxtaposition of precious stones and exotic spices can be found in the brief ME poem *The Land of Cokaygne*, about a mythical paradise west of Spain where all manner of good things is found in abundance, including an abbey where a tree of spices (including "gingeuir," "galingale," and "maces") grows and precious metals and stones (among them "saphir," "carbuncle," "smaragde," "beril," "onix," "topasiune," "ametist," "crisolite," and "calcedun") abound. For *The Land of Cokaygne*, see Bennett and Smithers, eds., *Early Middle English Verse and Prose*. For the cultural value placed on spices in the Middle Ages, see Freedman, *Out of the East*.

181 *greynis*. Grains of paradise. Freedman (*Out of the East*, p. 12) writes: "Among the new and fashionable spices of the medieval period was what the French called 'grains of paradise,' known more prosaically as malagueta pepper. Like long pepper, this spice is not in fact related to black pepper. It is sharp and peppery,

dark red, and grows in West Africa. It was first mentioned in Europe in the thirteenth century, and the designation 'grains of paradise' seems to be an early example of a commercial marketing and branding campaign. Grains of paradise enjoyed a tremendous vogue in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries."

183 *suger*. In the fifteenth century, sugar was still exotic. Trevisa notes that *zugurum* or *sucara* was produced from canes growing around ponds and lakes near the Nile. See *On the Properties of Things*, 2:1090. See also Freedman, *Out of the East*, pp. 12, 216–20.

184 *Long peper*. Freedman, *Out of the East*, p. 12: "Its dried fruit is extremely pungent, black, and rather large, the size of dry catfood or kibble."

191 *Malchus*. In John 18:10, Malchus is the name given to the high priest's servant whose ear Simon Peter strikes off following Judas' betrayal of Jesus. This biblical Malchus makes an appearance in the Towneley "Conspiracy and Capture," where he also swears by Muhammad (*Towneley Plays*, line 626). It is perhaps not surprising, then, to find the name associated with one of the Host's Jewish persecutors here.

195 *tende me tyll*. Jonathas echoes the title tyrant of the early fragmentary play called *Dux Moraud*, who, after boasting of his wealth and fame, demands that his audience "tende me tylle" (line 20, in Davis, pp. 106–13).

196 *For I am chefe merchaunte of Jewes*. Notwithstanding the play's anti-Semitism, Jonathas's presentation as a successful merchant-capitalist is romanticized to a much greater degree than the portrait of his counterpart, Jacob Mousse, in the fifteenth-century *Mistere de la Saincte Hostie*. In the French play, a poor Christian woman pawns her surcoat for thirty *sous* to Jacob, whom the woman immediately vilifies and whose wickedness as a nonbelieving Jew is inextricable from his profession as a moneylender:

> ***The Woman*** I will go without stopping
> Straight to the *Rue des Jardins*
> To speak with one of those devils,
> False Jews and stinking usurers,
> Full of sin and pennies. (MSH 11–15)

In the Middle Ages, Christians were prohibited from lending money at interest (usury) by the church, but Jews were not similarly bound and thus were found throughout Europe engaged in moneylending. But Jacob is noticeably less sanguine than Jonathas about his business prospects, as he laments the shortage of Christian customers because of the Easter holiday at the play's opening:

> ***The Jew*** For I loan to everyone
> At interest against good collateral
> Because I know no other source of income.
> It's my life; it's my labor.
>
> Won't anyone come today
> to borrow money? (MSH 32–37)

200 *cake*. The "cake" is the bread of the Host which, when consecrated, becomes the flesh of Christ.

202 *the myght of hys word*. A reference to the Words of Institution with which a priest during the Eucharist effects the consecration of the sacramental bread and wine. See also note to line 54 above. The words are based on Jesus' sermon at the Last Supper and are paraphrased in part by Jonathas in lines 397–404.

214 *That was never He that on Calvery was kyld*. Masphat acknowledges that Jesus of Nazareth was, indeed, put to death on Calvary as recounted in the Gospels. What he refuses to accept is that the substance of this same historical Jesus inheres in the consecrated bread of the Eucharist.

228, s.d. *And Jonatas goo don of his stage*. Scherb (*Staging Faith*, p. 68) identifies the Croxton play as one of a type he calls "simple place-and-scaffold plays," in which two or three individual structures could have served to demarcate a playing area: one each for Jonathas' house, Aristorius' house, and the bishop's house (or an existing church *in situ* may have been used). See the Introduction (pp. 17–22) for the particularities of staging the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*.

237 *A, Peter Pocole, good daye and wele imett!* Jonathas' familiarity with Peter Paul by sight and name implies the extent of his previous acquaintance and dealings with Aristorius.

265 *lordis pere*. See note to line 119.

265, s.d. *Here shall the Jewe merchaunt and his men come to the Cristen / merchaunte*. Scherb (*Staging Faith*, pp. 71–72) notes that Jonathas leads a Jewish procession here that anticipates the procession of the miraculous Host to the church by the bishop and the Jews in a kind of typological prefigurement of the play's conclusion. See also the note to line 844 below.

271 *I pray yow come up and sit bi me*. Scherb (*Staging Faith*, p. 72) remarks that Jonathas' acceptance of Aristorius' invitation to sit beside him visually renders the two as equals in the eyes of the audience not only professionally but also perhaps morally.

287–90 *Nay . . . to stond bownd*. Compare the Woman's initial revulsion at Jacob's proposition in the *Mistere de la Saincte Hostie*:

> ***The Woman*** You ask a very difficult thing of me!
> God help me, should I sell Him
> Like Judas? Alas, how sinful!
> By God, I'd certainly be damned
> If I sold the revered and holy Host,
> Which is the body of Jesus Christ,
> For a bit of profit!
> God, what a horrible thing! (MSH 211–18)

291–92 *the entent . . . God allmyght*. Compare Jacob's similar interest in "testing" the Host in the *Mistere de la Saincte Hostie*:

> ***The Jew*** If you agree to bring it [i.e., the Host] to me here
> Intact, so that I can test
> Whether it's true that the Christians
> Hold it to be a god, then by all I hold
> In my faith you will have the coat
> Without money, without fuss. (MSH 202–07)

302 *eresye*. Perhaps simply a failure to believe in and recognize the sacrality of the Host, a position associated with the Lollards. But see also Knowledge's complaint about sinful priests in *Everyman* and those who buy and sell the body of Christ:

> If pryestes be good it is so surely,
> But whan Jesu henge on the Crosse with great smarte, *hung; pain*
> There he gave out of his blessyd herte
> The same Sacrament in great tourment.
> He solde them not to us, that Lorde omnipotent;
> Therefore Saynt Peter the apostle doth saye
> That Jesus curse hathe all they
> Which God theyr Savyour do bye or sell,
> Or they for ony money do take or tell. *any; count out*
> (lines 750–58)

See *Everyman and Its Dutch Original, Elckerlijc*, ed. Davidson, Walsh, and Broos. In the N-Town "Last Supper," James the Lesser registers his disbelief at Jesus' revelation that one of their company will betray him: "A, Lord, who is that wyll chaffare [trade] you for monay? / For he that sellyth his Lord — to [too] grett is the trespace" (27.239–40). The Apostle Simon echoes James, decrying the still anonymous Judas as an example of a wicked merchant:

> To bad a marchawnt that traytour, he is, *Too evil a merchant*
> And for that monye, he may mornyng make! *mourning*
> Alas, what cawsyth hym to selle the Kyng of Blys?
> For his fals wynnynge [earning], the devyl hym shal take. *winnings*
> (27.245–48)

Shortly after this scene, Judas reveals his plan to betray Jesus as a matter of selling his master for money (27.269–76). See *N-Town Plays*, ed. Sugano.

313 *yowr askyng toolde pleyn*. Of course, Aristorius has explicitly stated in his last lines that he would *not* sell the Host even for a hundred pounds. Jonathas' response here suggests that the actor playing Aristorius might have been expected to deliver those lines with a noticeable lack of conviction. In lines 27–28 of the banns, 2 Vexillator announces that Aristorius will refuse to procure the requested merchandise *unless* he is offered one hundred pounds. The text of the play proper presents a less-certain Aristorius whose resistance is gradually eroded as a perceptive Jonathas applies increasing amounts of financial pressure.

316 *dokettys*. A ducat was a coin circulated throughout Europe worth, according to Trevisa's translation of Hyden's Rolls (1387), "a worthy half an Englisshe noble" and in Fabyans *Chronicle* (1494) four shillings three pence or more. See *OED ducat* n.1a.

332 *Machomyght*. See notes to lines 19 and 149.

340–42 *a drawte . . . lyght bred*. Scherb (*Staging Faith*, p. 75) observes that a "feast that consists solely of bread and wine may well have been perceived as a visual parody of the Last Supper, and chalice-like cups could easily have been used in order to emphasize the similarity."

343 *fesycyon*. Perhaps an implicit reference to the tradition of *Christus medicus* or Christ as the physician who heals the spiritually ill. See Scherb, *Staging Faith*, p. 75, and "Earthly and Divine Physicians" and also the N-Town "Entry into Jerusalem," in which Peter, preaching the necessity of confession, promises that "of all these maladys, ye may have gostly [spiritual] cure / For the hevynly leche [physician] is comyng now, for to vicyte [visit]" (*N-Town Plays*, ed. Sugano, 26.414–15).

371 *For that mony wyll amend my fare*. Here Aristorius reveals his motivation in stealing the Host and selling it to the Jews: covetousness, a vice railed against in other East Anglian plays, including the Digby *Mary Magdalene* and *The Castle of Perseverance*.

374–75 *To mete with Jonathas . . . he commytht in certayn*. In line 331, Aristorius promises to hand over the purloined Host the day after his initial meeting with Jonathas. Line 374 suggests that Aristorius is anxious to be rid of the ill-gotten goods, but whether Jonathas' sudden appearance sometime during or before line 375 is a reflection of that anxiety, an indication that the passage of time in the play has been compressed, or a reflection of the playwright's inconsistency is unclear.

383–84 *Now in thys clothe . . . shall thee see*. In using the personal pronoun *thee* twice in these two lines, Jonathas has already begun to treat the Host as more than an object.

384, s.d. *the tabyll*. See note 228, s.d. The *tabyll* to which Jonathas repairs is presumably located on his scaffold or stage. The following scene presents a parodic re-enactment of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the centerpiece of the Mass which follows the Liturgy of the Word and culminates in the consecration of the Host and Communion. In keeping with the Eucharistic symbolism and iconography of the ensuing scene, the table is presumably immediately recognizable as an altar.

385–468 *Now . . . or yt be long*. Compare the following lines from the *Mistere de la Saincte Hostie*, where the Jewish moneylender, after bidding farewell to his Christian accomplice, similarly justifies his "testing" of the Host to his family while decrying the ruse perpetrated against Jews by Christians who claim the Host to be the body of Christ:

> ***The Jew*** Goodbye, for now we must find out
> If the God in whom Christians believe —
> And because of whom they abuse us so much! —
> Has strength, power, or might.
> Arrange yourselves around that coffer and behold
> How Christians are deceived
> By believing in such a wafer,

Claiming that it has blood and life
And that it is truly their God.

The Wife They truly attest to it.
I do not know who puts them up to this,
But there's no better time to find out
Than now.

The Jew That's completely true,
And therefore I will test it
With this lancet you see here,
In contempt of you [i.e., the Host, whom Jacob identifies with Christ]
And of all those whom you created,
You, whom we're told came down
And took human flesh within a virgin. (MSH 343–62)

387 *Crysten temple*. While the playwright's apparent lack of specific knowledge of Judaism is typical of late medieval English attitudes generally, it is perhaps noteworthy that here he has Jonathas refer to the Christian church as a temple, although the playwright's choice is also guided by the rhyme scheme.

391 *Sprede a clothe on the tabyll that ye shall ther fynd*. The Liturgy of the Eucharist commenced with the Offertory, during which the altar and the gifts (the bread and wine) were prepared by the celebrating priest. During the preparation of the altar a piece of cloth called a "corporal" was placed on the altar. The various vessels used during the consecration of the bread and wine were then placed atop this corporal.

395 *They say that this ys Jhesu*. This parody of the Eucharist necessarily omits the actual consecration of the bread and wine, which could only be performed by a priest. This is compensated for by the fact that Aristorius has obtained for Jonathas an already consecrated Host.

398 *Shere Thursday*. Shrove Thursday, or Holy Thursday. In the liturgical calendar, this is the Thursday before Easter Sunday. It commemorates the historical day on which Jesus partook in the Last Supper with his disciples before his betrayal by Judas. This final meal shared by Christ with his followers is the origin of the Eucharist and thus the Mass.

399–404 *He brake the brede . . . "Comedite corpus meum."* These lines paraphrase the part of the Canon of the Mass, including the Words of Institution, that accompanies the consecration of the bread and wine: "Qui, pridie quam pateretur, accepit panem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas, et elevatis oculis in caelum ad te Deum Patrem suum omnipotentem, tibi gratias agens, benedixit, fregit, deditque discipulis suis, dicens: Accipite et manducate ex hoc omnes, hoc est enim corpus meum, quod pro vobis tradetur" ["On the day before He suffered, he took bread into His holy and venerable hands, and having raised His eyes to heaven to you, God, His Almighty Father, giving thanks to You, He blessed it, broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying: 'Take and eat of this, all of you, for this is my body, which will be given up for you.'"]. This part of the Canon derives from

Jesus' actions in the synoptic Gospels (Matthew 26:26, Mark 14:22–24, Luke 22:19–20) and their restatement in 1 Corinthians 11:24–25 with the further instruction that the taking and eating of the bread and drinking of the wine should be done in commemoration of Jesus' actions at the Last Supper. The phrase "hoc est enim corpus meum" has a storied past: Luther famously carved the words "hoc est corpus meum" into a table at the Marburg Colloquy in October of 1529 in defiance of the Swiss Reformation leader Ulrich Zwingli, who rejected the notion that Christ was more than symbolically present in bread and wine (Luther maintained a belief in what has since been called by some *consubstantiation*, in which Christ's body and blood are substantially present in the bread and wine, which nevertheless simultaneously retain their own substances). The phrase was alleged in the seventeenth century to be the source of the phrase "hocus pocus" then current among jugglers. See the *OED*, s.v. *hocus-pocus*.

405–08 *And thys powre . . . all Hys progenytors*. In 1 Corinthians 11:24–25, Jesus is reported to have commanded his disciples to "take" and "eat" in "commemoration of me." The disciples gathered at the Last Supper were the initial recipients of instruction to commemorate the Last Supper; this authority to celebrate the Eucharist was then transmitted to their successors, that is, ordained priests.

412 *Ave*. The first word spoken by the Archangel Gabriel to Mary at the Annunciation, reported in Luke 1:28, the basis of the prayer *Ave Maria*, or "Hail Mary." According to a medieval commonplace, Gabriel's "Ave" reverses "Eva," or "Eve"; that is, Mary's consenting to bear Jesus undoes Eve's consent to the serpent and the commission of the first sin.

417 *They saye that Jhesu to be owr kyng*. Some variation on the inscription "This is the King of the Jews" is reported to have been affixed to the Crucifix in each of the Gospels. See Matthew 27:37, Mark 15:26, Luke 23:38, and John 19:19–22.

422 *To Thomas and to Mary Mawdelen*. Christ's appearances following the Resurrection to the apostle Thomas ("Doubting Thomas") and Mary Magdalene occur respectively in John 20:26–29 and in Matthew 28:1–10, Luke 24:1–11, and especially Mark 16:1–11 and John 20:1–18.

423 *He styed by Hys own powre*. According to the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, Christ ascended into heaven forty days after the Resurrection. This event is celebrated in the Feast of the Ascension.

425–28 *Yea, and also . . . of pyments or vernage.* Masphat here recalls Pentecost, described in Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles in the form of flame and granted to them the gift of tongues. In line 428 Masphat echoes the apostles' detractors of Acts 2:13: "But others mocking said: 'These men are full of new wine.'"

429 *a Lord of Parage*. See the note to line 119 above.

430 *On Hys Fatherys ryght hond He Hym sett.* See Mark 16:19.

431 *Syble*. Any one of a number of ancient prophetesses associated with oracular pronouncements; here a figure for supreme wisdom.

432 *Alexander*. Alexander the Great, fourth-century B.C. Macedonian king and military leader whose conquests extended to most of the world known to the Greeks.

434 *Judgement*. The Final Judgment at the end of time. See Matthew 25:31–46 and Apocalypse 20:11–12.

435 *owr dredfull Judge*. According to tradition, Christ's appearance at the Judgment would be terrifying. See also John Milton's *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*:

> The aged Earth aghast
> With terror of that blast,
> Shall from the surface to the centre shake;
> When at the world's last session,
> The dreadful Judge in middle air shall spread his throne. (lines 160–64)

John Milton, ed. Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 8.

438–40 *Because that Phylyppe sayd . . . "Judecare vivos et mortuos."* For Christ as the judge of the living and the dead (*vivos et mortuos*), see 1 Peter 4:5 and 2 Timothy 4:1 and also the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. The significance of the reference to Philip as glossator is not immediately obvious, but see Acts 8 on the ministry of Philip, and especially verses 26–39, which relate Philip's encounter with an Ethiopian eunuch on the road between Jerusalem and Gaza. The eunuch is depicted in his chariot returning from Jerusalem and reading Isaias 53:7–8: "he shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth. He was taken away from distress, and from judgment: who shall declare his generation because he is cut off out of the land of the living?" The church understood the passage as prophesying the coming of Christ. Philip asks the eunuch if he understands the significance of the passage. Acts 8:34–35: "And the eunuch answering Philip said: 'I beseech thee, of whom does the prophet speak this? of himself, or of some other man?' Then Philip, opening his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached unto him Jesus." Shortly after, Philip baptizes the eunuch. Following Rabanus Maurus, the ninth-century theologian and commentator, the *Glossa ordinaria*, the standard gloss on the Bible at the time the playwright was writing the *Play of the Sacrament*, interprets verse 35 this way: "Mystice, os Ecclesiae Philippus aperuit, ut ex hoc Gentibus is praedicetur quem prius nesciebant" ["Mystically speaking, Philip opened the mouth of the church, so that from this [i.e., the mouth] that of which they were previously ignorant was preached to the Gentiles"]. From Malchus' perspective, Philip's "lytyll glosse" was thus the starting point for the spread of doctrinal misinformation concerning the Messiah. See also Nichols, "Lollard Language," p. 23n4, who states that the section of the Creed dealing with Christ's judgment of the living and the dead was traditionally associated with Philip.

443–44 *He that in Bosra . . . staynyd were Hys clothys*. See Isaias 63:1: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra, this beautiful one in his robe, walking in the greatness of his strength?" Bozrah was the ancient capital of Edom, a kingdom in what is now southern Israel and southwestern Jordan. Esau, son of Isaac and twin brother of Jacob, is given the name Edom, or "red," in Genesis 25:29–30: "And Jacob boiled pottage, to whom Esau, coming faint out of the field, said: 'Give me of this red pottage, for I am exceeding faint.' For which reason his name was called Edom." The nation of Edom is named for Esau. Numbers 20 recounts the Edomites' refusal to allow the Israelites to pass through their land freely during the Exodus. An abiding hostility between Israel and Edom is taken for granted throughout the Hebrew Bible. Prophesies of divine vengeance to be visited upon the Edomites can be found not only here in Isaias but also in Jeremias, Ezechiel, and Abdias. In an ironic reversal, Jonathas seems unaware that his actions will merit the judgment reserved in the Prophets for the nation of Edom. Sr. Nicholas Maltman ("Meaning and Art," p. 153 and note 19) notes the appearance of this passage from Isaias in the liturgy for Holy Wednesday. Kruger ("Bodies of Jews," p. 311) discusses the Croxton play's allusion to the prophecy of Christ as the one who will come from Bozrah. The N-Town shepherds interpret the appearance of the angel as meaning that the "prophecye of Boosdras is spedly sped [speedily done]" (*N-Town Plays*, ed. Sugano, 16.74 and p. 386n74.). See also the Chester cycle, where the act of Christ's Ascension prompts an angelic spectator to wonder: "est iste qui venit de Edom, tinctis vestibus de Bosra? [is this the one who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra?]" (20.104c in *Chester Mystery Cycle*, ed. Lumiansky and Mills). See also Kruger ("Bodies of Jews," p. 311) who describes this allusion to Isaias as "a bridge between the Jews' skeptical review of doctrine and the expression of their other, more malicious, intentions for the host."

456 *with grett repreve*. Here and elsewhere in the speeches that precede the Jews' physical assault on the Host, one is left with the sense that Jonathas and the others do not question the unjustness and cruelty of Jesus' death but only the doctrine of transubstantiation itself, or, as Jonathas puts it, "whether this [the Host] be He that in Bosra of us had awe."

458 *woundys fyve*. The traditional five wounds of the crucified Christ: one in each of the hands and each of the feet from the nails and one in the side from the centurion's spear. Throughout the following scene, the various wounds inflicted on the Host, here by the five torturers, symbolize and echo key moments from the Passion. See Bevington, ed., *Medieval Drama*, pp. 754–55; Maltman, "Meaning and Art," pp. 153–60.

469–80 *Have at yt! . . . In the myddys yt shal be sene!* The rhetoric of the battlefield which accompanies the rather pathetic action of attacking a piece of bread could have been intended to render the scene comical, albeit disturbingly so. See Davenport, *Fifteenth-Century English Drama*, p. 75, who applies the nonmedieval label "comedy" to the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, which "sounds in outline like a devout miracle-play, but . . . is, for much of the time, farcical." But see also Homan, "Devotional Themes," who argues that the playwright's representation

of the Jews and depiction of their assault on the Host engage seriously with late medieval devotional and meditative practices centered on the sublimely tortured body of Christ. Compare the aggression of Jonathas and his cohorts with the immediate sense of awe and attraction that grips the children of the Jewish moneylender in the *Mistere de la Saincte Hostie*:

> ***The Daughter*** Oh Mother, it [i.e., the Host] is so white and tender!
> Let me hold it for a little while.
>
> ***The Son*** And me! Let me hold it!
> By Muhammad, it's very beautiful!
> It's as white as a lamb!
> Ah! Hey! Show it to me, Mother!
>
> ***The Wife*** Peace! Lower your voices for your father.
> You will be beaten if he hears you.
> Leave that there, set it aside,
> Your father will blame me.
>
> ***The Daughter*** By Muhammad, there is nothing
> More beautiful. Look, brother:
> Its color is more perfectly clear
> Than crystal.
>
> ***The Son*** Ah! Yes! You speak the truth.
> There is nothing more beautiful to see in all the world! (MSH 315–30)

480, s.d. *Here the Ost must blede*. Compare with the analogous scene in the *Mistere de la Saincte Hostie*:

> ***The Wife*** Ha, it's bleeding! What blasphemy!
> Ha! By Muhammad, it's alive!
>
> ***The Daughter*** *(kneeling)* Ha, sweet Father, I beg you:
> Don't dismember it!
>
> ***The Son*** *(crying)* Alas, it's bleeding! Alas! Alas!
> My father, for God's sake, stop it!
> Alas, it is so beautiful and sweet.
> Give it to me: I'll protect it!
>
> ***The Jew*** *(very startled)* Peace, or I will beat you!
> Rascal, don't speak!
> Peace — be calm — no more babbling!
> This time I'll scourge you [i.e., the Host]
> With this whip, striking
> Until the pure blood flows
> From your sides and ribs
> Just as Jesus was [scourged]
> In the past, believe it well.

The Daughter Alas, my sweet father, I see
Blood flowing from all sides!
For God's sake, don't kill it.
Your face is too cruel!

The Jew I'm going in back to fetch
My large knife so that I can dismember
The flesh. I will make many pieces out of it!
One, two, three, four, five. . . . Great God,
It seems to be reuniting itself!
It is whole again, like before!
Now I'm furious.
I'm enraged. I don't know what to say.
I'll make you endure another martyrdom
If I can! (MSH 365–93)

The cloth merchant Philippe de Vigneulles attended a performance of a French Host-miracle play in Metz in 1513. He left behind him an account of the "secret" techniques for coaxing blood from the Host prop. He records that when the Jew placed the Host on a table and pierced it with a knife, "by means of a secret [*secret*] which was performed, a great abundance of blood issued forth and leapt up from the aforementioned Host, just as if it were a child who pissed, and the Jew was sullied and bloodied and played his role very well" (*Gedenkbuch des Metzer Bürgers Philippe von Vigneulles*, ed. Michelant, p. 244). Philippe further notes that the Jew, "not happy about this, threw the aforementioned Host into the fire, and through some device [*engien*], it raised itself from the fire and attached itself to the flue of the chimney, and the traitor pierced it again with a dagger and through another device and secret [*engien et secret*] it again emitted blood abundantly." The means by which the French play and the *Play of the Sacrament* accomplished these spectacular feats are not clear, but Philippe's account at least suggests that the Croxton play's stage directions are not merely fanciful. See also Enders, *Death by Drama*, p. 124; Grantley, "Producing Miracles."

485–86 *A fyre, a fyre, and that in hast! / Anoon a cawdron full of oyle!* The boiling of the Host is typical of desecration narratives, although the liquid is usually water rather than oil. See Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, p. 72.

488 *three howrys*. Perhaps paralleling the three days between Jesus' death on Good Friday and Resurrection on Easter Sunday.

506–11 *Hold prestly on thys pleyn . . . With strong strokys fast.* Jonathas is no longer a perpetrator but rather the victim of the Crucifixion-parody that the play enacts as his fellow conspirators set about nailing his hand to a post.

524, s.d. *Here shall the lechys man come into the place*. Some scholars have identified the following scene, featuring the quack doctor Brundich ("brown-ditch," perhaps a sewer trope) and his servant Colle as an interpolation. Craig (*English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages*, pp. 326–27) claims as much based on the play's shift in meter at this moment in the script, although the alteration is appropriate to the change in tone and consistent with the habits of contemporary playwrights. Grantley echoes Craig's suspicions about the origins of this scene, which he then

calls "a rather redundant comic episode" that "contributes little to the development of the narrative" ("Saint's Plays," pp. 284, 286), while Coldewey argues that the episode is "almost certainly interpolated, as it is not mentioned in the banns" (*Early English Drama*, pp. 274–75). The insolent servant in the employ of a corrupt master has a place not only elsewhere in drama (e.g., Garcio in the Towneley *Mactacio Abel* or Watkyn in the Digby *Killing of the Children*) but also, and perhaps most famously, in the *Canterbury Tales* in the figure of the Canon's Yeoman. This interloper is also familiar from the comedies of the Roman playwrights Plautus and Terence. The *place* is the playing space between, and distinct from, the three "houses" of Aristorius, Jonathas, and the bishop. Scherb (*Staging Faith*, p. 77) suggests that the doctor and boy enter from among the audience, a view shared by Jones, who conjectures that what has happened to Jonathas' hand is widely known because the doctor has been, with the audience, watching all along ("Theatrical History in the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*," pp. 236–37).

525 *Aha, here ys a fayer felawshyppe*. Colle's entry into the *platea* suggests that the *fayer felawshyppe* he refers to is the audience, not the Jews. Colle speaks directly to the audience, thus blurring the boundary between actor and spectator.

533 *Braban*. Brabant. Gibson (*Theater of Devotion*, p. 37) argues that Brundich's Flemish origin is not coincidental. The Flemings were major partners, and occasional competitors, with the English in the wool and woolen cloth trade during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and especially in East Anglia. The portrayal of Brundich as a professional bungler and swindler, Gibson maintains, reflects the playwright's cultural bias against these foreign rivals. Indeed, Gibson believes that the play's anti-Flemish attitude is "both more real and more repellent" than its characterization of the Jews, absent from England since their expulsion at the end of the thirteenth century. See also the note to line 620 below.

536 *That ever sawe uryne*. The viewing of a flask of urine becomes a commonplace signature for "doctor," and is often ridiculed in medieval literature and art. See *MED urine* (noun, 1b) for sixteen references to urine as a diagnostic medium. In the drawings of Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrims in the Ellesmere manuscript, the Physician examines a urine flask held on high even as he rides his horse; in the thirteenth–century misericords of St. Mary's Church in Beverely, East Riding of Yorkshire, a hunter kills a fox (a false friar) while an ape (a quack doctor) examines its "pius" urine in a flask. In the *Gesta Romanorum* tale "The Ring, the Brooch, and the Cloth," Jonathas poses as doctor before his false leman Felicite, who is dying of leprosy, "and whenne he hadde i-seyne hir uryne" diagnoses her moral illness, whereupon she dies of anger (Salisbury, *Trials and Joys*, p. 174, line 152).

566–71 The description of the drunken Master Brundich of Braban, with "a cut berd and a flatte noose" (line 569), threadbare gown, and torn hose, is a travesty of avaricious stereotypes. Compare *Piers Plowman* B.5.188–99.

580 *(And some lyes among!)* Delivered as an aside.

586 *Wyth scamoly and with oxennell*. Scammony, a purgative gum resin, and oxymel, a syrup of vinegar and honey. Brundich and Colle seem to have a sexual affiliation with their female patients where their remedies never give "anoyment" (line

583). The drink with scammony and other herbs perhaps serves as an aphrodisiac. See Don Constantine's *De Coitu*, mentioned in Chaucer's Merchant's Tale (IV[(E)] 1810-11). N.b., Paul Delany, "Constantinus Africanus' *De Coitu*," p. 65, on recipes using scammony and other tasty spices to stimulate and sustain sexual desire.

590–96 *Betuyn Dovyr and Calyce the ryght wey / Dwellth non so cunnyng*. Dover and Calais were the major English and French ports, respectively, that connected the two countries. The "ryght wey" between them is the English Channel. Colle is thus making another sexual joke at Brundich's expense when he claims that among all those dwelling in the "channel" Brundich is the most "cunyng" (line 555), with his "connynge" "nyh spent" on "wydowes, maydese, and wyfe" (lines 595–96), emphasizing the French pun on "con."

601 *Here ys a grete congregacyon*. Brundich's remarks here might be ironically addressed to the five Jews, but it seems more likely that during this comic interlude Brundich is directly engaging the audience with his lewd antics. Compare this scene to the entrance of the devil Titivillus in *Mankind*, whose appearance can only be guaranteed by generous monetary gifts from audience members (lines 475 ff., ed. Ashley and NeCastro).

612–18 *Who hat the canker . . . or the tyseke*. Colle's deployment, albeit to parodic ends, of his encyclopedic knowledge of physical ailments and Brundich's of medicines in lines 586–87 above recall Aristorius' and Jonathas' flamboyant recitations of place-names, spices, and precious stones earlier in the play. The playwright might have obtained his medical knowledge from recent ME translations of Latin texts in circulation in England in the fifteenth century. See, e.g., *Healing and Society in Medieval England*, ed. Getz. This translation of Gilbert's *Compendium medicine* includes entries, among others, on topics such as "canker" (which can be translated by Modern English "cancer," but which for Gilbertus most commonly identifies with pustules on various parts of the body), colic (the *passio collica*, an ailment of the colon), worms, toothache — in short, many of the ailments rehearsed by Colle.

613 *The tercyan, the quartan*. Tertian fever recurs every other day; quartan fever recurs every third day.

614 *boldyro*. Davis (*Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, p. 137) glosses *boldyro* as "some bodily organ," Bevington (*Medieval Drama*, p. 776) as "evidently some part of the body, perhaps the penis."

620 *colkote*. A coal shed, but see Gibson, *Theater of Devotion*, p. 37 and 187n83, where she argues that *colkote* is an error for "tolcote" and should be glossed as "toll shed." She notes the existence of a tollhouse at the North Gate in Bury St. Edmunds as well as St. Saviour's Hospital on Northgate Street. Brundich's familiarity with the local tollhouse thus reflects the playwright's disapproval of the stereotypical greed associated with Flemish merchants in England. Brundich's dwelling in a storage shed that houses coal is consistent with his earlier portrayal by Colle in lines 529–32 and 543 as incapable of managing his finances to the point that he must sell his hood in order to pay his debts (for

sexual favors?) to barmaids in the buttery. See also the note to line 533 above. "Coal shed" suits well his smutty, demonic behavior.

621 *Babwell Myll*. With "Croxston" in line 74, one of two identifiable East Anglian place names in the play. There was a Babwell near Bury St. Edmunds in Suffolk. A Franciscan priory existed at Babwell from the middle of the thirteenth century; the grounds are now the site of the Priory Hotel, operated by Best Western. The construction of the mill at Babwell is the occasion for an anecdote about the shortcomings of the twelfth-century abbot, Samson, of the Benedictine abbey at Bury St. Edmunds, recorded by the abbey's chronicler, Jocelin of Brakelond:

> There is another stain of evil-doing which the abbot will wash away with the tears of contrition, if God wills, so that a single bad deed may not mar all the good. He has so raised the level of the fish-pond at Babwell, for the new mill, that there is not one man, rich or poor, who has land next to the river between the town gate and the east gate, who has not lost his garden and orchards as a result of the flooding. The cellarer's pasture, on the other bank, has been ruined, and the neighbours' arable land is spoiled. The cellarer's meadow has been destroyed, the infirmarer's orchard is submerged, and all the neighbours complain about it. But when the cellarer tackled him [Samson] in chapter [i.e., a general meeting of the monks] about the damage, the abbot replied, with a flash of anger, that he was not going to sacrifice his fish-pond for the sake of our meadow.

See Jocelin of Brakelond, *Chronicle of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, p. 116. I am grateful to Johanna Kramer for this reference.

624 *Mary*. A mild oath.

631 *the gate ys hyre*. Colle and Brundich move here from the *platea*, where they have presumably been playing directly to the audience, toward Jonathas' "house," the site of their ensuing interaction with the Jews.

642 *Syr, the hurt of yowr hand ys knowen full ryfe*. In fact, it is not clear how Colle becomes acquainted with Jonathas' predicament in the first place, since the desecration and its aftermath have transpired in the private space of the Jews' dwelling, but Colle's close association with the audience up to this point suggests that he is one of them and therefore shares in their knowledge.

659 *in a clothe ye yt cure*. Jesus' body is wrapped in a shroud by Joseph of Arimathea (along with Nicodemus in John) following His deposition from the Cross and in preparation for His burial in the tomb, here symbolized by the cauldron. See Matthew 27:59–60, Mark 15:46, Luke 23:53, and John 19:40–42.

669–72 *And I shall . . . make yt ryght thynne*. Masphat's ministrations over the cauldron presumably provided cover for the actor's triggering the means by which stage blood would then surge forth from the vessel, as signaled by the direction following line 672.

683 *ovyn*. The oven symbolizes hell, and the Host's emergence unscathed from it symbolizes the apocryphal Harrowing, Jesus' sundering of hell's gates and freeing of the patriarchs and prophets whose salvation could not be effected without the sacrifice of the Crucifixion. The church maintained that the Harrowing occurred

on Holy Saturday (the Sabbath), the time between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. The oven's climactic position in the torture sequence also recalls the "Jewish Boy" tales discussed by Rubin (*Gentile Tales*, pp. 7–39) as a narrative precursor to the Host-desecration story. Such tales recounted the miracle that occurred when a Jewish boy emerged unscathed from the oven into which he had been thrown by his father as punishment for having participated in the Eucharist. In the various versions of this tale which circulated throughout medieval Europe, the Virgin Mary shields the boy from the flames into which the father is then often cast in retribution for his lack of faith, while the boy and his remaining family convert to Christianity. A similar salvation seems in store for Jonathas and his companions. The Harrowing is dramatically re-created in all four of the major English cycles of biblical drama (York, Towneley, Chester, and N-Town). A similar stage direction in the *Mistere de la Saincte Hostie* indicates that the Jew "throws it [i.e., the Host] into the fire, but it doesn't wish to remain" (MSH 421 s.d.).

704 *And stoppe Hym there, thow He be loth.* Jason has begun to refer to the Host as a person rather than an object. Jasdon does the same in line 712.

712, s.d. *Here the owyn must ryve asunder and blede owt at the cranys / and an image appere owt, with woundys bledyng.* Again, Philippe de Vigneulles' account of a performance of a French Host-miracle play proves instructive:

> And then, as if mad, he [the Jew] took the Host and hurled it into a cauldron of boiling water and it raised itself into the air and ascended in a cloud and became a small child while ascending on high and it did all this through devices and secrets [*par engiens et secrets*].

See *Gedenkbuch des Metzer Bürgers Philippe von Vigneulles*, ed. Michelant, p. 244. While the technical means by which the oven erupted and the image appeared from it remain obscure, Philippe's comments on his experience of the theater suggest that late medieval performers were certainly capable of accentuating scenes of devotional sublimity with spectacular pyrotechnics. For medieval theatrical "special effects" (*engiens et secrets*), and their impact on audiences willing to believe in the miraculous, see Enders, *Death by Drama*, pp. 156–68.

717–18 *O mirabiles Judei, attendite et videte / Si est dolor sicut dolor meus*. See Lamentations 1:12. Maltman ("Meaning and Art," pp. 154–55) observes that the more immediate context of these lines for the play's original audience would likely have been the Holy Saturday liturgy. She also remarks that Jesus' subsequent "complaint" to the Jews echoes the liturgy of the Adoration of the Cross. Variations on this theme appear in Middle English Passion narratives, lyrics, and complaints. See, e.g., *The Northern Passion*, lines 1680–81 in *Codex Ashmole 61*, ed. Shuffelton, pp. 232–74.

720–38 *Why ar ye . . . of myn enherytaunce?* In His use here of anaphora (the rhetorical repetition of words or phrases at the beginnings of successive lines or clauses), Jesus finally replies to the rationalist and empirical challenges to transubstantiation voiced by the Jews earlier in the play through a series of questions of His own. The answers to Jesus' questions are self-evident, which is to say that there are no answers. Implicit in the questions themselves is the Jews' guilt, which renders the logic of their previous denial irrelevant. There is *no*

good reason why the Jews should torture the one who died to redeem them. In response to the wounded and bleeding child standing before them, the Jews can only admit that their violent behavior was unjustified. The repetition serves to emphasize the undeniability of their guilt and the monstrosity of their crimes. Jonathas, in turn, can only respond with his own rhetrical question in line 741: "Tu es protector vite mee; a quo trepidabo?" [You are the protector of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?]

732 *newe tormentry*. The playwright's insistence that the Jews have subjected Christ to *new* tortures recurs throughout the *Play of the Sacrament* in a series of rhetorical gestures that collapse the geographic and temporal distance between this "new" crucifixion and the first-century event that serves as its reference point. The idea is introduced in the banns and returns many times in the final quarter of the script; see lines 37–38, 45–46, 802–03, 815, 933. Jonathas and his companions are stand-ins for those Jews responsible for the punishment and execution of Jesus. Their actions in the play repeatedly recall the Gospel narratives, and this recontextualizing of their assault on the Host within the broader trajectory of salvation history serves to universalize the action despite the appearance everywhere in the play of devotional and mercantile details particular to life in fifteenth-century East Anglian towns. The influence of contemporary meditative practices of the kind recommended for the laity by the Carthusian prior Nicholas Love in his English translation of the *Meditations on the Life of Christ* (misattributed throughout the Middle Ages to St. Bonaventure) can be felt here: Love invites his readers not only to meditate specifically on events from the life of Christ but also to imagine themselves participating in those events as they unfold. See also the *Mistere de la Saincte Hostie*:

> ***The Jew*** I remember well that long ago
> You [i.e., the Host] were crucified by our ancestors
> For your false deeds and wrongful errors.
> In remembrance of them,
> Know that you will be [crucified] again . . . . (MSH 406–10)

741 *Tu es protector vite mee; a quo trepidabo?* See Psalm 26:1.

749 *Lacrimis nostris conscienciam nostram baptizemus*. The source of these lines has not been identified.

753 *Ne gravis sompnus irruat*. From the Compline hymn for the first Sunday in Lent, *Christe, qui lux es et dies*:

Christe, qui lux es et dies,	Christ, you who are the light and day,
Noctis tenebras detegis,	You uncover the shadows of night,
Lucisque lumen crederis,	You are believed to be the light of light,
Lumen beatum predicans.	Proclaiming the blessed light.
Precamur, sancte Domine,	We ask, holy Lord,
Defende nos in hac nocte;	Protect us in that night;
Sit nobis in te requies,	Let our rest be in you,
Quietam noctem tribue.	Grant us a peaceful night.

Ne gravis somnus irruat,	May grievous sleep not seize us,
Nec hostis nos surripiat,	Nor the enemy snatch us,
Nec caro illi consentiens	Nor the flesh plotting with him
Nos tibi reos statuat.	Cause us to stand guilty before you.
Oculi somnum capiant,	When eyes are seized by sleep,
Cor ad te semper vigilet,	Let the heart always keep watch for you,
Dextera tua protegat	Let your right hand protect
Famulos qui te diligunt.	The servants who love you.
Defensor noster, aspice,	Our Protector, look,
Insidiantes reprime,	Hold back those lying in wait,
Guberna tuos famulos	Guide your servants
Quos sanguine mercatus es.	Whom you redeemed with blood.
Memento nostri, Domine,	Remember us, Lord,
In gravi isto corpore:	In this burdensome body:
Qui es defensor animæ,	You who are the defender of the soul,
Adesto nobis, Domine.	Be near us, Lord.

Breviarium ad Usum Insignis Ecclesie Sarum, ed. Procter and Wordsworth, 1:dlxxiii. Maltman ("Meaning and Art," p. 156) remarks on the appropriateness of the hymn to the play: the emergence from darkness into light emphasized in the former parallels the conversion of the Jews to Christianity in the latter.

757 *miserere mei, Deus*. See Psalm 50:3, appropriately the fourth of the group known as the Penitential Psalms.

761 *Asparges me, Domine, ysopo et mundabor*. Psalm 50:9, more of the fourth Penitential Psalm. Again, according to Maltman ("Meaning and Art," p. 156) the more immediate context for the Croxton play's earliest audiences may have been the liturgy, in this case an antiphon sung at Mass every Sunday except during the Easter season as the priest sprinkles the congregation with holy water:

> Asperges me, Domine,
> hyssopo, et mundabor:
> lavabis me,
> et super nivem dealbabor.
> Miserere mei, Deus,
> secundum magnam misericordiam tuam.
>
> [Sprinkle me, Lord,
> With hyssop, and I shall be cleansed:
> You shall wash me,
> And I shall be made whiter than snow.
> Have mercy on me, God,
> According to your great mercy.]
>
> (Psalm 50:9, 3)

765 *Ite et ostendite vos sacerdotibus meis*. Compare Luke 17:14.

769 *Et tunc non avertam a vobis faciem meam*. While Jesus' promise does not reproduce any scriptural text precisely, it nevertheless echoes a number of passages,

including Psalm 142:7, the seventh Penitential Psalm: "non avertas faciem tuam a me et similis ero descendentibus in lacum" ["turn not away Thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit"]. See also 2 Paralipomenon 30:9 and Jeremias 3:12.

778 *osanna*. The shout of praise with which Jesus is greeted upon entering Jerusalem in the Gospels. See, e.g., Matthew 21:9.

780 *Lyon of Juda*. For the Lion of Judah, see Genesis 49:9 and Apocalypse 5:5.

797, s.d. *Here shall the master Jew goo to the byshopp, and hys men knele styll*. This stage direction suggests movement of the action toward the last of the play's three scaffolds, that representing the church, unless an actual church could be incorporated into the playing area. Tydeman (*English Medieval Theatre*, p. 59) and Scherb (*Staging Faith*, p. 68) suggest the possibility of the play's having been performed before the church of All Saints' Croxton. Gibson (*Theater of Devotion*, p. 35) hypothesizes that the play might originally have been performed in Bury St. Edmunds, where St. James faced the market square.

804 *A Chyld apperyng with wondys blody*. In a reflection on the wonders of Eucharistic miracles in his instruction for meditation on the Last Supper, Nicholas Love takes pains to warn against mistaking Christ's dimensions within the bread for His true size upon the Cross, and in so doing, notes that the Son occasionally manifests Himself as a child within the Host:

> For what tyme [On those occasions] þat oure lorde Jesus appereþ in þat blessede sacrament to strenþynge of byleue or to confort of his chosen derlynges [darlings] auþer [either] in likenes of a litel childe, as we reden þat he dide to seynt Edward kynge & confessour [Edward the Confessor, d. 1066], or elles in a quantite of flesh all blodye as it is writen in þe lif of seynt Gregour [Gregory I, "the Great," pope 590–604] & in othere places, soþe [true] it is þat þat bodily likenes seene in þat quantité acordeþ not with þe verrey bodily quantité & shappe of oure lorde þat henge on þe crosse, & þat is soþely in þat sacrament hidde fro þe bodily siht [sight]. (Love, *Mirror of the Blessed Life*, p. 153)

In a similar vein, Love recounts an apparition of Christ as a child during the elevation of the Host before St. Hugh, bishop of Lincoln, in the English treatise *De Sacramento* (*Concerning the Sacrament*) that accompanies the *Mirror* in many of the extant manuscripts and serves as its epilogue:

> And as to oure purpose: what tyme it was come to the sacringe [consecration], as the bishope helde up goddus [God's] body in forme of brede, there aperede to the siht of the forseid clerke, bytwix þe preestes holy handes oure lord God Jesus bodily in likenes of a passyng faire litel childe. (Love, *Mirror of the Blessed Life*, p. 230)

Jesus' appearance to Jonathas in the form of a child is not mentioned until now, but see the following passages from the *Mistere de la Saincte Hostie* in which the Host's appearance to the Jewish family in the form of a child is also implied:

> ***The Son*** *(crying)* Stop, sweet Father! Ha! Alas!
> Do you wish to kill such a child?

See the blood flowing there!
Never has such a pitiful thing been seen! (MSH 432–35)

The Daughter Alas! Alas! What a crime!
I see the water all bloody
Where the body of the noble and worthy God
Plays just like an infant! (MSH 473–76)

808 *all my pepull*. It is not entirely clear who all the bishop's people might be. Presumably his people do not yet count among their number Jonathas and company, who have not yet converted. The bishop could refer to various non-speaking attendants whose presence would befit his rank but which would also seem gratuitous in a play designed so that "Nine may play yt at ease," as indicated in a note which concludes the manuscript. The bishop might also be gesturing toward the audience, who will soon become active participants in the play's culminating action, the formation of a Corpus Christi procession. Such an acknowledgment of the audience would also serve as an additional, albeit subtle, rebuke of the Jews, whose minority status would be further emphasized. But since the audience has already beheld the "swymfull syght," this possibility also seems unsatisfactory. The subsequent address in line 810 of "all ye peple that here are" seems somewhat gratuitously to be directed to the five Jews.

812 *On yowr feet for to goo bare*. In acknowledgment of the divine presence. See Exodus 3:5, where the voice of God calls to Moses from the burning bush and instructs him: "put off the shoes from thy feet: for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." For a contemporary visual analogue, see the *Nativity* by the fifteenth-century Flemish painter Petrus Christus. In this painting, St. Joseph is depicted wearing the clothing of a fifteenth-century Fleming but without his wooden clogs, which appear in the lower right corner of the painting, in acknowledgment, according to Erwin Panofsky, of the sacred ground on which Joseph stands barefooted (Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, 1:203). For an argument against Panofsky's interpretation of the clogs, see Hall, *Arnolfini Betrothal*, pp. 106–12.

816 *miserere mei*. See note to line 757 above.

837 *with solempne processyon*. The actors here form a procession resembling those that commonly accompanied the celebration of the summertime Feast of Corpus Christi, which was introduced into the universal church by Pope Urban IV in 1264 through the promulgation of the bull *Transiturus*. The feast occurs on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, which is the Sunday following the feast of Pentecost, which itself follows fifty days after Easter Sunday. In many European parishes the Corpus Christi procession became a focal point of civic and ecclesiastical celebration and devotion that quickly overshadowed strictly liturgical worship centered on the body (and blood) of Christ. Medieval processions enabled communities to celebrate important sacred and secular occasions in ways that nevertheless emphasized social distinctions between groups within those communities. For the social and symbolic significance of Corpus Christi celebrations see Phythian-Adams, "Ceremony and the Citizen," and James,

"Ritual, Drama and Social Body." While the specific form varied from parish to parish, the procession typically entailed conveying, often by means of an elaborate monstrance (a vessel which displays the Host) or tabernacle, the consecrated bread out of the church and into the surrounding village or town, perhaps only traveling around the exterior of the church itself but sometimes being carried throughout or even around the perimeter of the village. The Corpus Christi was invariably escorted by clergy, and other ecclesiastical as well as civic dignitaries including guild members were regular participants. The procession might also be accompanied by candles, bell-ringing, singing, the scattering of flowers along the route, and other demonstrations of reverence. The procession in the play returns the Host to the church from which it was stolen, much as annual Corpus Christi processions brought the Host out of doors and then in again. For the development of Corpus Christi processions, see Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, pp. 243–71. It is not unreasonable to suspect that the *Play of the Sacrament*, with its emphasis on Eucharistic orthodoxy and devotion, could at some time have been staged as part of a local Corpus Christi celebration.

840 *O sacrum convivium*. Editions of the *Play of the Sacrament* prior to Davis' erroneously read "O sacrum Dominum." The text here calls for the singing of an antiphon that features in the Office of Corpus Christi, the liturgy developed to celebrate the new feast in 1264. Authorship of the office has traditionally been ascribed to St. Thomas Aquinas, an attribution which has been subjected to some suspicion but which receives persuasive if circumstantial support in Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, pp. 185–88. The text of the antiphon reads:

> O sacrum convivium in quo Christus sumitur:
> recolitur memoria passionis ejus, mens impletur gratia,
> et futuræ gloriæ nobis pignus datur, Alleluya.
>
> [O holy banquet in which Christ is consumed:
> the memory of His Passion is recalled, the mind is filled with grace,
> and the promise of future glory is given to us, Alleluia.]

See Maltman, "Meaning and Art," pp. 150–51, who also states that *O sacrum convivium* also appears in a number of contemporary "processionales," or collections of texts and chants used in liturgical processions, in conjunction with the Corpus Christi procession. See the note to line 837 above for the Corpus Christi procession and the suggestion that the Croxton play may have been intended for staging on that feast day.

841 *Lett us syng all with grett swetnesse*. As with line 808, it is not clear to whom the bishop refers. It is possible that the playwright imagined the audience joining in the singing of *O sacrum convivium*, as they seem to be invited to do in the play's concluding communal singing of the *Te Deum laudamus*. Maltman ("Meaning and Art," p. 158) suggests that since antiphonaries were sometimes used as school texts, some audience members might have been able to sing along to *O sacrum convivium* or else that boys from the local choir may have been called on to add their voices to those of the actors. Rastall (*Heaven Singing*, pp. 35–36) observes that "sweetness" when used to describe singing in the fifteenth century

was a technical musical term indicating that the singing should be "satisfactory musically and intellectually" (p. 36).

844 *The bysshope commyth processyon with a gret meny of Jewys*. Corpus Christi processions frequently and publicly emphasized distinctions in rank among members of the ecclesiastical and civic community in what over time became increasingly political displays of rank and prestige. A Corpus Christi procession comprised almost entirely of Jews, then, would have seemed to fifteenth-century audiences accustomed to such ideological demonstrations startling if not subversive, hence Isoder's assumption that such a procession must herald some truly miraculous event. Also see the note to 265, s.d.

854 *For covytyse of good*. Aristorius declares his primary sin, covetousness, which is depicted as chief among the Seven Deadly Sins in East Anglian drama. It is, for instance, Avaritia ("Covetousness") who introduces Humanum Genus ("Mankind") to the other six sins in *The Castle of Perseverance*. Gibson (*Theater of Devotion*, pp. 27–29 and 67–106) has argued that East Anglian mercantilism and commerce occasioned much anxiety among lay Christians seeking to reconcile Christ's commandment to love one's neighbor as one loves oneself with the very notion of profit itself. This tension is explored with specific reference to the Digby *Mary Magdalene* in Coletti, "*Paupertas est donum Dei*." See also Milla B. Riggio, "Allegory of Feudal Acquisition," who offers the earliest exploration of the social preoccupations of East Anglian allegorical drama as a consequence of the region's particular forms of economic development. I am grateful to Victor I. Scherb for this reference. Pride, rather than covetousness, motivates the Woman in the *Mistere de la Saincte Hostie*. She agrees to deliver the Host to the Jewish moneylender in order to redeem her pawned coat so that she might appear well-dressed in front of her family and neighbors on Easter day:

> ***The Woman*** Alas, today is the day
> When I should be clothed
> As elegantly as my neighbors,
> My parents, and my cousins,
> And I'm as nude as a glass!
> By my soul, I will go mad
> And hate the hour that I was born,
> When it was destined
> That I should travel through town
> One day penniless,
> Without my surcoat or decent clothing! (MSH 115–25)

857 *heretyke*. Aristorius here reveals his fear of being mistaken for a Lollard. One of the distinguishing tenets of Lollardy was its staunch opposition to the evolving doctrine of transubstantiation. The fourth of the so-called "Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards" describes the Eucharist as "the feynid miracle of the sacrament of bred" that "inducith alle men but fewe to ydolatrie" (see Hudson, ed., *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, p. 25). Aristorius acknowledges his covetousness, and in doing so affirms his belief in the sacrament of the altar. He recognizes himself as a Christian, albeit a weak one; his faith, he hopes, remains unimpeachable.

After the 1401 promulgation of the statute *De heretico comburendo* ("On burning the heretic"), the legal punishment for heresy was death, hence perhaps Aristorius' concern that his transgression be properly understood by the local ecclesiastical authority. See also line 901.

866–67 *Estote fortes in bello, et pugnate cum antico serpente, / Et accipite regnum eternum, et cetera*. These lines come from the antiphon for second nocturn for Matins for the Feast of All Saints. See *Breviarium ad Usum Insignis Ecclesiae Sarum*, ed. Procter and Wordsworth, 3:967. Maltman ("Meaning and Art," p. 159) comments that the quotation is apt in reminding Christian audiences that they participate in a great contest between God and evil. Within the context of the *Play of the Sacrament*, the lines serve to initiate the bishop's subsequent verse homily on the theme of these lines.

873 *the vertues sevyn*. The traditional opposites to, or "remedies" for, their corresponding Deadly Sins. The following correspondences between Virtues and Sins are based on the pairings in *The Castle of Perseverance*: Humility (Pride), Patience (Wrath), Charity (Envy), Abstinence (Gluttony), Chastity (Lechery), Industry (Sloth), and Generosity (Covetousness).

883 *the fend callyd Levyathan*. Leviathan, the sea monster of the Hebrew Bible. See especially Isaias 27:1, where Leviathan is identified twice as a serpent to be conquered by God.

898–99 *Say what ye wyll . . . yf ye have wroght eny inconvenyens.* The bishop invites Aristorius to make a formal confession of his sins.

906 *There to handyll the Holy Sacryfyce*. In the Middle Ages the handling of a consecrated Host was a privilege reserved to the clergy alone.

915 *nevermore for to bye nor sell*. Aristorius' own conversion is signaled by the penance the bishop imposes on him: this character, whose identity has been fully tied to his profession as a merchant, is barred from participation in future commercial activity.

924 *creaturys*. Davis notes that Manly suggests *vicarys* or *prechorys*, since the advice that follows applies only to the clergy. See also line 406 in the text (p. 46).

926 *pyxys*. Nichols ("Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*," p. 120) cites a London incident of 1467 in which a number of pyxes were stolen from a church for the value of the metal that they contained. She also observes that the play's silence about a locked pyx in the scene of the Host's actual abduction seems inconsistent with the playwright's general attention to detail elsewhere. She therefore argues that "[i]t is hard not to read this special pleading as a reflection of the 1467 thefts" (p.132n18) and reads the reference to *pyxys* here "as a hasty addition to an otherwise carefully crafted play." Nichols speculates that the accounts of the incident could easily have penetrated East Anglia by way of the close ties between London and the abbey at Bury St. Edmunds and that the composition of the play can be narrowed to some time shortly after 1467 (p. 132n18).

930 *generall absolucion*. Jonathas asks the bishop to absolve all of the Jews of their sins without them first confessing individually. Unlike Jonathas, Jacob Mousse never admits his error in the *Mistere de la Saincte Hostie*. When asked why he continues to deny the truth of the Host despite having admitted that he witnessed its miraculous power, Jacob simply attributes the miracle to diabolical forces: "I hold it all to be complete fantasy. / The devil has restored this bread" (MSH 1214–15). Jacob is finally burned for his unbelief.

957 *In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Gost*. Part of the formula employed by a priest performing a baptism, derived from Matthew 28:19. The formula is completed in line 959 with the phrase "I crysten yow all," although it is interesting to note that the playwright substitutes *crysten* for ME *baptize*. By varying the formula slightly, the bishop avoids any imputation that what he has just performed is a valid baptism. The formula in English is recorded in John Gaytryge's translation of the instruction for parish priests written by William Thoresby, archbishop of York, in 1357:

> And to this sacrement falles foure thinges,
> If it sal [shall] rightly be taken als [as] halikirk [Holy Church] techis:
> Ane [One] is right saying and shap of the wordes
> That him augh [ought] for to sai, that gyffes [gives] this sacrement
> That er [are] thise: I baptize the [thee] in the name
> of the Fadir and the Son, and the Hali Gast.

See *The Lay Folks' Catechism*, ed. Simmons and Nolloth, p. 62. Thoresby's other three requirements are that only water be used, that the baptizer be of sound mind and well intentioned, and that the person about to be baptized be, to the best of his or her knowledge, unbaptized. The baptismal rite requires a threefold ablution, or cleansing with water, each ablution corresponding with the utterance of the name of one of the Persons of the Trinity. The bishop presumably baptizes the Jews by aspersion, that is, by sprinkling the heads of the Jews with water, rather than by affusion, with the water poured over their heads, or immersion. For the often fine line dividing dramatic from liturgical enactments of the sacraments, see Granger, *N-Town Play*, pp. 22–30. For medieval theater's ability to blur the boundary between spectacle and miracle generally and to engender belief through pretense, see Enders, *Death by Drama*.

964 *Now wyll we walke by contré and cost*. The Jews' first act as newly-minted Christians would seem to be embarkation on a pilgrimage, another practice condemned by the Lollards.

973 *wyckyd lyfe*. Lepow (*Enacting the Sacrament*, p. 31) suggests an anti-Lollard pun: *Wyclif / wyckyd lyfe*. See also line 965.

988 *God omnypotent evermore looke ye serve*. If the Jews and Aristorius actually exit the playing area following lines 971 and 979, respectively, then the bishop would address the audience directly here.

1007 *Te Deum laudamus!* A popular metrical hymn of praise and thanksgiving employed by the church on numerous occasions. Liturgically it serves as the conclusion to

Matins for most feasts and most Sundays in the church calendar, but the *Te Deum* can accompany other celebratory occasions as well:

Te Deum laudamus, te Dominum confitemur.
Te aeternum Patrem omnis terra veneratur.
Tibi omnes angeli, tibi caeli et universae potestates,
Tibi cherubim et seraphim incessabili voce proclamant:
Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus Deus sabaoth.
Pleni sunt caeli et terra maiestatis gloriae tuae.
Te gloriosus Apostolorum chorus,
Te Prophetarum laudabilis numerus,
Te Martyrum candidatus laudat exercitus.
Te per orbem terrarum sancta confitetur ecclesia,
Patrem immensae maiestatis,
Venerandum tuum verum et unicum Filium,
Sanctum quoque Paraclitum Spiritum.
Tu, Rex gloriae, Christe,
Tu Patris sempiternus es Filius.
Tu, ad liberandum suscepturus hominem, non horruisti Virginis uterum.
Tu, devicto mortis aculeo, aperuisti credentibus regna caelorum.
Tu ad dexteram Dei sedes in gloria Patris.
Iudex crederis esse venturus.
Te ergo quaesumus, tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso sanguine redemisti.
Aeterna fac cum sanctis tuis in gloria numerari.
Salvum fac populum tuum, Domine, et benedic haereditati tuae.
Et rege eos, et extolle illos usque in aeternum.
Per singulos dies benedicimus te.
Et laudamus nomen tuum in saeculum et in saeculum saeculi.
Dignare, Domine, die isto sine peccato nos custodire.
Miserere nostri, Domine, miserere nostri.
Fiat misericordia tua, Domine, super nos, quemadmodum speravimus in te.
In te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in aeternum.

[We praise you, God, we acknowledge you to be the Lord.
All the earth worships you, the everlasting Father.
To you all the angels, to you the heavens and the powers of the universe,
To you the cherubim and the seraphim proclaim with unending voice:
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts.
Full are the heavens and the earth of the majesty of your glory.
It is you that the glorious chorus of the Apostles,
You that the praiseworthy rank of the Prophets,
You that the shining multitude of the Martyrs praise.
It is you that Holy Church acknowledges throughout the world,
Father of infinite majesty,
Your venerable, true, and only Son,
And the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete [Comforter].
You, Christ the King of glory,
You are the eternal Son of the Father,
You, undertaking to free mankind, did not shrink from the Virgin's womb.
You, having conquered the sting of death, opened the realms of heaven to believers.
You sit at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father.

You are believed to be the judge who will come.
You, therefore, we pray: help your servants, whom you redeemed with your precious blood.
Count them among your saints in eternal glory.
Save your people, Lord, and bless your inheritance.
And rule over them, and raise them up into eternity.
We bless you day after day.
And we praise your name forever and ever.
Deign, Lord, to protect us from sin this day.
Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy on us.
Let your mercy be upon us, Lord, just as we hoped in you.
In you, Lord, I hoped; let me not be confounded eternally.]

Its frequent appearance at the end of the liturgy assured its similar function in much early paraliturgical drama, including the *Visitatio sepulchri* (*Visit to the Sepulchre*) plays from St. Lambrecht and Fleury, the Fleury *Ordo ad repræsentandum Herodem* (*The Service for Representing Herod*), the Beauvais *Danielis ludus* (*The Play of Daniel*), and the Fleury *[Ordo] ad repræsentandum conversionem beati Pauli apostoli* (*[The Service] for Representing the Conversion of the Blessed Apostle Paul*), all of which are edited by Bevington in *Medieval Drama*. Since much medieval drama in the vernacular continued to be influenced by and dependent on the liturgy, it is not surprising to find the *Te Deum* at the conclusion of, among others, the thirteenth-century poet Rutebeuf's *Miracle de Théophile* (*Miracle of Theophilus*) and the anonymous fourteenth-century *Jour du Jugement* in France, the German *Ludus de beata Katerina* (*The Play of St. Katherine*) probably written for performance in Erfurt in the province of Thuringia in the mid-fourteenth century, and, of course the Croxton play in England, as well as *The Castle of Perseverance*, the Digby *Mary Magdalene*, and the Towneley *Iudicium* (*Judgment*). English translations of the French and German materials may be found in *Medieval French Plays*, trans. Axton and Stevens (for Rutebeuf); *Antichrist and Judgment Day*, trans. Emmerson and Hult; and Wright, trans., *Medieval German Drama*, respectively. In the *Mistere de la Saincte Hostie*, a priest calls for the sounding of bells and the chanting of the *Te Deum* three times upon the return of the miraculous host to the Church of Saint-Jean.

after 1007 *Nine may play yt at ease*. The initials "R. C." appear below this line in the manuscript. Gibson (*Theater of Devotion*, p. 35) suggests that they could be those of one Robert Cooke, vicar of the Suffolk village of Haughley, whose sixteenth-century will includes a bequest of playbooks to his surviving brother, but Atkin ("Playbooks and Printed Drama," p. 197) persuasively demonstrates that the handwritten initials are nearly identical to the professional mark of the printer Robert Copland, known to have produced some twenty books between 1514 and 1548. Atkin (p. 201) also notes that lists of dramatis personae were uncommon in medieval playbooks and even in early printed playbooks from before 1530 and concludes that the "instruction at the end of the Croxton *Play* might therefore represent a scribal attempt to fashion the play along the lines of the contemporary printed playbooks that were being marketed to professional players" (p. 202).

TEXTUAL NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS: see Explanatory Notes

1, s.n. *1 VEXILLATOR*. MS: *primus vexillator*.

3 *all*. MS: inserted above the line by Scribe A.

4 *brynge*. MS: *bryne*.

7 *wrowght*. MS: *ro* written above two cancelled letters (*re*?).

8 *blyssed*. MS: *blbyssed*, "with [the] second *b* blotted," according to Davis, p. 58.

9, s.n. *2 VEXILLATOR*. MS: *secundus*.

9 *Sovereyns*. MS: *Svereyns*.

10 *ys*. So Davis. MS omits.

representyd. MS: *re presentyd*.

16 *fer*. MS: inserted above the line by Scribe A.

17 *hym*. So Davis. MS: *hyn*.

20 *The wyche hade gret plenté*. MS: ~~*off þis cristen merchante*~~, incorrectly copied from line 21, cancelled at the beginning of the line with *þe wyche hade gret plente* inserted above the line by Scribe A.

21 *freyned*. So Davis. MS: *freynend*.

23 *Twenti pownd*. MS: *xxti li*.

27 *hundder pownd*. MS: *c li*. Compare line 288 where the manuscript spells the number out.

30 *bey*. MS: *bye*. The scribes of Trinity F.4.20 occasionally employ alternate forms of words, as with *bye* here, that nevertheless violate rhyme patterns. Following Davis, I emend the forms to preserve the rhyme. See below, lines 102, 208 (where MS *praye* appears to be an error for *preve*), 311, 315, 505, 670, 675, 694, 820, 825, 860, 907, 934, 960, 967, and 968.

31 *they*. MS: *the*.

wolde. So Davis. MS: *woldr*.

38 *new*. So Davis. MS: *nell*.

39 *Hym*. Scribe A stops here. Scribe B begins with *many*.

42 *boyle*. So Davis. MS: *boylde*.

46 *ovyn*. So Davis. MS: *ob ouyn*.

55 *convertyd*. So Davis. MS: *counteryd*.

iwys. MS: *I* ~~*wyll*~~ *wys* (*wyll* is only partially cancelled).

56 *þe* occurs between *Rome* and *this*.

58 *our*. So Davis. MS: *your*.

a thowsand fowr hundder sixty and on. MS: *ml c c c c .c. lxj*. The fifth *c* is expuncted.

59 *woth*. So Davis. MS: *with*.

61 *Loo, thus*. MS: ~~*be*~~ *loo* ~~*thy*~~ *thus*.

63 *gan*. So Davis. MS: *gayn*.
65 *Thefor*. MS: *t* cancelled before.
77 *from*. So Davis. MS: *fron*.
trey. So Davis. MS: *treyn*.
78 *To send us Hys hyhe joyes of hevyne*. MS: *to send vs hys ~~withuton mynd to mene~~* with *hyhe ioyes of hevyne* inserted above the line by Scribe B.
80a *Explicit*. MS: appears in the right margin.
81, s.n. *ARISTORIUS*. MS: *Aristorius mercator*. The form of the stage name varies across the manuscript. It is spelled as *Aristius* at 334 and 338 and *Arystorius* at 850 and 972.
82 *He*. So Davis. MS: *be*.
molde. MS: *~~moulld~~ molde*.
83 *endelesse*. So Davis. MS: *enelesse*.
84 *Hys*. So Davis. MS: *thys*.
86 *whoso*. MS: *woso*.
96 *Surrey*. So Davis. MS: *Surgery*.
97 *moch*. MS: *I* cancelled before.
99 *In Calabre and in Coleyn ther rynge I full ryght*. MS: *In calabre & in ~~denmark be be chyffys cold~~* with *coleyn þer rynge I full ryght* inserted above by Scribe B.
100 *clyffys*. So Davis. MS: *chyffys*.
101 *abundawnse*. So Davis. MS: *abundawse*.
102 *flowerys*. So Davis. MS: *flower*.
104 *Holond*. MS: *Jherico* (from line 105) cancelled and *Holond* inserted above by Scribe B.
moch. MS: *among*. The scribe has mistakenly copied *among* from line 105.
106 *Among*. So Davis. MS: *Amog*.
109 *be*. MS: *be~~n~~* with final *n* cancelled.
117 *may*. MS: *~~my~~ may*.
120 *wayteth*. So Davis. MS: *waytheth*.
125, s.n. *Presbyter*. The form of the stage name varies across the manuscript. It is spelled as *Presbiter* at 229, *Presbitre* at 336 and 348, and *Presbiter* at 858, 888, and 980.
125 *shall you tary*. MS: *shall ~~tary~~ you tary*.
trowble. So Davis. MS: *towble*.
127 *connyng*. So Davis. MS: *comnyng*.
guyde. MS: *~~gyude~~ guyde*.
133 *ys*. MS: inserted above the line by Scribe B.
147 *onkowth*. So Davis. MS: *onknowth*.
148 *or of Saby*. MS: *~~of~~ or of Saby*.
or of Shelysdown. So Davis. MS omits *or*.
148, s.d. *bost*. So Davis. MS: *best*.
149, s.n. *Jonathas*. MS: *Jhonat tas*.
150 *Whose*. So Davis. MS: *Whoses*.
158 *Gold*. So Davis. MS: *Godd*.
159 *abunddaunce*. So Davis. MS: *abuddaunce*.
160 *As*. So Davis. MS: *A*.
165 *to dresse*. MS: *~~do~~ to dresse*.

167 *achatys*. So Davis. MS: *machatys*.
172 *And*. So Davis. MS: *A*.
179 *rys*. Davis conjectures that the *y* has been superimposed over an original *e*.
181 *greynis*. So Davis. MS: *grenyis*.
185 *and*. So Davis. MS: *a*.
188 *of*. MS: followed by *.ey* with abbreviation for *er* inserted above. The word has not been cancelled.
Scribe B stops at the end of the line. Scribe A resumes with the beginning of line 189.
189 *ys my name*. MS: *ys my ~~ys~~ name*.
194 *Eraclea*. So Davis. MS: *graclea*.
200 *they*. MS: *the*.
201 *And all they seye how the prest dothe yt bynd*. MS: ~~*and all þe they seye how þe preste*~~ written as the last line of fol. 341r then cancelled and repeated as the first line of fol. 341v.
203 *conceyte*. MS: four letters (*cnon*?) cancelled before.
they. MS: *þe*.
208 *in a preve*. So Davis. MS: ~~*in a pye*~~ with *in a praye* inserted above the cancelled text.
211 *swer*. So Davis. MS: *sever*.
212 *theron*. So Davis. MS: *the on*.
213 *ys false*. MS omits. Davis follows Manly's addition of *ys false* to complete the sense of the line and to preserve the rhyme, although there is no indication that anything is missing.
217 *Malchus*. The form of the stage name varies across the manuscript. It is spelled as *Malcus* at 493 and *Malchas* at 516, 673, 697, and 715.
228, s.d. *onto*. So Davis. MS: *ont*.
Arystori. So Davis. MS: *Acrystori*.
seyng. MS: ~~*seyg*~~ *seyng*.
229 *may*. MS: ~~*a*~~*may*.
no. So Davis. MS omits.
230 *Yt ys fer*. MS: an illegible word has been cancelled before *ys*, which is inserted above the line by Scribe B.
231 *forsothe*. An abbreviation for *er* sits above *forsothe*.
238 *thy*. So Davis. MS: *they*.
239 *Long*. So Davis. MS: *Lon*.
240 *I*. MS: a letter *a* cancelled before.
245 *bargenes*. So Davis. MS: *bargened*.
rych. So Davis. MS: *ryh*.
249 *mot*. MS: *moste* with *ste* cancelled and *t* added above by Scribe B.
253 *This tal ryght wele he me told*. MS: written in the right margin alongside lines 251–52 next to the rhyme bracket.
told. So Davis. MS: first *tell*, then *e* altered to *o*.
257 *Plenté of clothe of golde*. MS: written in the right margin between lines 255 and 256 next to the rhyme bracket.
Plenté. So Davis. MS: *Penté*.
262 *more*. So Davis. MS: *mre*.

269 *am*. So Davis. MS: *an*.
270 *myn*. A possible abbreviation sits above the *y*, potentially making the word *mynn*.
271 *sit bi me*. MS: ~~*fit bi me*~~ *sit bi me*.
276 *bartre*. MS: ~~*bar*~~ *vartre*.
277 *that*. So Davis. MS omits.
278 *Prevely in this stownd*. MS: written in the right margin alongside line 277 next to the rhyme bracket. The *nd* of *stownd* is written above the word because the scribe ran out of space.
279 *sure*. MS: several letters cancelled before.
280 *dystren*. So Davis. MS: *dystrre*.
282 *twenti pownd*. MS: *xxti li*.
284 *maner*. So Davis. MS: *man*.
ye. MS: inserted above the line by Scribe A.
286 *thys*. MS: ~~*þ*~~ *thys*.
anoon. MS: one or two letters cancelled before *anoon*.
yow. MS: ~~*yoll*~~ *yow*.
287, s.n. *ARISTORIUS*. MS omits. There is no speech tag, but a horizontal line clearly indicates that lines 287–90 belong to Aristorius.
290 *conscyence*. So Davis. MS: *conscyene*.
291 *entent*. MS: ~~*n*~~ *entent*.
297 *dere*. So Davis. MS: *bere*.
302 *eresye*. So Davis. MS: *tresye*.
308 *payment*. MS: ~~*ment*~~ *payment*.
309 *Forty pownd*. MS: *xl. li*.
311 *ageyn*. MS: *agen*.
312 *wold*. MS: *wld*.
hundder. MS: *.C.*
313 *yowr*. So Davis. MS: *wr*.
314 *yt*. MS y^{t} with superscripted *t* cancelled and *t* inserted after *y* on the line.
stownd. MS: ~~*stondy*~~ *stownd*.
315 *hundder pownd*. MS: *.C. li.*
lasse. So Davis. MS: *lesse*.
325 *ys*. So Davis. MS: *hys*.
326 Scribe A stops at the end of the line. Scribe C begins with line 327.
327 *Hys sopere for to eate*. MS: written in the right margin alongside lines 325–26.
331 *To kepe yowr toungys ye nott lett*. MS: written in the margin between lines 329–30.
350 *gone*. MS: *goonne*.
352 *rest*. Davis changes *rest* to *nyght* in order to preserve the rhyme with line 354, where the final *y* of *almyghty* has been erased, resulting in the current reading.
358 *must*. MS: ~~*wyll*~~ *must*.
372 *As thynkyth me*. MS: written in the right margin alongside lines 370–71.
376 *Me thynkyth I hym see*. MS: written in the right margin alongside line 375.

383 *covere*. MS: ~~*cure*~~ *covere*. The scribe originally wrote *cure*, presumably for the sake of preserving the rhyme with *treasure* in line 381 but then cancelled it and added *covere*.

385, s.n. *JONATHAS*. MS: The scribe repeats the speech tag following the stage direction although there is no change of speaker.

393, s.n. *JONATHAS*. MS: The scribe places the redundant speech tag — there is no change of speaker — in the margin left of the stage direction.

401 *to*. MS: ~~*th*~~ *to*.

403 *clere*. MS: ~~*ch*~~ *clere*.

432 *worlde*. MS: *worde*.

441 *ther*. So Davis. MS: *or*.

452 *yf*. So Davis. MS: *ys*.

475 *augur*. So Davis. MS: *augus*.

480, s.d. *Here the Ost must blede*. MS: written in the right margin alongside line 480.

484 Scribe C stops at the end of the line. Scribe A resumes with line 485.

488 *for*. So Davis. MS: *fo*.

489 *Yea*. MS *ye~~a~~*. The final *a* has been cancelled erroneously, giving *ye* for *yea*.

491 *art* is written above the line.

496 *Manly with all yowre mygthe*. MS: written in the right margin alongside line 495.

499 *Yt*. MS: *yt* ~~*yt*~~ *werketh*.
wrake. The *r* is added above the line.

504 *renne*. So Davis. MS: *reme*.

505 *ageyne*. So Davis. MS: *agene*.

508 *seye*. So Davis. MS: *sye*.

509 *on*. The *o* appears to be inserted above the line.

511 *strong*. So Davis. MS: ~~*strong*~~.

512, s.n. *MASPHAT*. MS: *Malspas*.

515b, s.d. *hang*. So Davis. MS: *sang*.

516 *thys*. MS: *thy~~se~~* with *s* inserted above the cancellation.

518 *woo me is*. A letter appears to be cancelled between *woo* and *me is*.

521 *gon*. Davis, p. 74, observes that *n* is "smudged and uncertain."

525 *COLLE*. The form of the stage name varies across the manuscript. It is spelled as *Coll* at 578, 608, 624, 627, 631, 642, and 646.

526 *shapyn*. So Davis. MS: *shpyn*.

528 *I tell yow in counsel*. MS: written in the right margin alongside line 527.

531 *syttyth*. So Davis. MS: *sytthyt*.

535 *phesycyan*. So Davis. MS: *phesyan*.

536 *That ever sawe uryne*. MS: written in the right margin alongside line 535.

539 *judgyment*. So Davis. MS: *judyyment*.

540 *As he that hathe noon eyn*. MS: written in the right margin alongside line 539.

544 *That ys a good tokenyng*. MS: written in the right margin alongside line 543.

546 *sum thyng*. Inserted above the line by Scribe C.

547 *dysarvyde*. So Davis. MS: ~~*desa*~~ *dysayde*.

548 *God send never wurse tydyng*. MS: written in the right margin alongside line 547.

550 *wot*. So Davis. MS: *wotr*.

sure. MS: A caret superimposed over the second letter (*a*?) points to the *u* inserted above the word.

552 *Here hyr tell no tale*. MS: written in the right margin alongside line 551.

556 *he*. MS: ~~*ye*~~ *he*.

That he hat in good ale. MS: written in the right margin alongside line 555.

557 *But*. So Davis. MS: *By*.

ayleth. So Davis. MS: *dyleth*.

560 *God gunte me my boon*. MS: written in the right margin alongside line 559.

562 *can hym*. So Davis. MS: *cam I*.

564 *In fayth yt shall be don*. MS: written in the right margin alongside line 563.

564, s.d. *proclamacion*. MS: *pro~~h~~clamacion*.

568 *med*. MS: the *d* in *med* is written above the *e* because the scribe has run out of room on the page after attaching line 568 to line 567.

569 *cut*. So Davis. MS: *tut*.

572 *To the pylleré ye hym led*. MS: written in the right margin alongside line 573.

573, s.n. BRUNDYCHE. MS: *Master Brundyche*. Hereafter Brundich's speeches are signaled with *MB* in the left margin.

576 *Ye tared hens so long*. MS: written in the right margin alongside line 575.

580 *And some lyes among*. MS: written in the right margin alongside line 579.

581 *pacyent*. So Davis. MS: *payent*.

583 *anoyment*. So Davis. MS: *anoyntment*.

586 *oxennell*. So Davis. MS: *ox ennell*.

588 A horizontal line incorrectly indicating a change in speaker at line 589 has been cancelled.

589 *now*. Inserted above the line.

592 *In my judgyment*. MS: written in the right margin alongside line 591.

593 *prattyffe*. So Davis. MS: *prattffe*.

594–98 Following line 594, the scribe has inserted and then cancelled lines 597–98: *wer ys my bowgett with drynke profetabyll / here master master ware how ye tugge*.

595 *wyfe*. So Davis. MS: *wyse*.

597 *my*. So Davis. MS omits but includes in the cancelled version of this line appearing after line 594.

bowgett. So Davis. MS: *bowgtt*.

598 *ye*. So Davis. MS: *þ*^{i} and *e* added.

tugg. MS: *tugg~~es.~~*

599 *shrugge*. Davis, p. 76, notes that a "[f]inal loop may be intended for *–ys*" to preserve the rhyme *tugges* in line 598 prior to correction.

605 *pausacyon*. So Davis. MS: ~~*pauu*~~ *pausayon*.

606 *mak*. MS: ~~*a*~~ *mak*.

607 *wolde*. So Davis. MS: *wlde*.

607, s.d. *Hic interim proclamacionem faciet*. This stage direction appears in the margin alongside lines 608–09.

611 *yowr*. So Davis. MS: *yow*.

613 *quartan*. So Davis. MS: *quartaid*.

brynnyng. So Davis. MS: *brynnyg*.

614 *gryndyng*. So Davis. MS: *gryndyg* with *r* inserted above the line.

615 *and the myegrym*. MS: ~~*mye*~~ *and the myegrym*.

617 *colt-evyll*. So Davis. MS: *Coltugll*.
618 *have*. So Davis. MS omits.
619 *were*. So Davis. MS: *wre*.
sek. Inserted between carets above the line because the scribe apparently reached the edge of the page.
621 *understondyng*. So Davis. MS: *undstondyn*.
622 *Now*. Inserted by Scibe C.
623 *phesyscian*. MS: *phesyscioun*.
625 *And ye wyll understond*. MS: written in the right margin alongside line 624. The lines are separated by a slash.
627 I_2. So Davis. MS omits.
629 *Hath lost hys ryght hond*. MS: written in the right margin alongside line 628.
633 *mot*. MS: This line appears in the left margin and is divided between *wele* and *mot*. Following *wele* at the end of the first line, two or three letters have been cancelled.
636 *yowr*. So Davis. MS: *yow*.
dysese. So Davis. MS: *dyse*.
637 *hermes*. So Davis. MS: *hermet*.
643 *master*. So Davis. MS: *maste*.
savyd. Inserted above the line by Scribe C.
644 *be*. Inserted above the line.
Scribe A stops at the end of this line. Scribe C resumes with line 645 and continues until the end.
647 *be profytable*. MS: ~~*can nott*~~ *be profytable*.
650, s.n. JONATHAS. MS omits, although the presence of a horizontal line in the MS suggests a change of speaker.
652 *that*. MS: Tironian *and* cancelled before *þ*^{t}.
670 *brynne*. So Davis. MS: *brenne*.
675 *rin*. So Davis. MS: *run*.
683 *Ys*. So Davis. MS: The scribe mistakenly copies *Ys* at the beginning of line 682.
689 *wrowght*. So Davis. MS: *wrowgh*.
694 *fere*. So Davis. MS: *fyre*.
695, s.d. *Here thei kyndyll the fyre*. Stage direction appears in the margin alongside lines 694–95.
696 *done yt*. MS: ~~*yt*~~ *done yt*.
702 *clothe*. MS: ~~*clowte*~~ *clothe*.
714 *bledyth*. So Davis. MS: *bedyth*.
718 *sicut*. So Davis. MS: *similis*.
721 *I*. So Davis. MS omits.
777, s.d. *the cawdron*. MS: a word has been cancelled between the two words, perhaps a repeated *the*.
folwyth. So Davis. MS: *fowyth*.
806, s.n. EPISCOPUS. The abbreviation of this stage name varies across the manuscript. It appears as *Eps* generally, but as *Epus* at 896, 912, and 988.
808 *pepull*. So Davis. MS: *pepnll*.
815 *passyon*. MS: ~~*sy*~~ *passyon*.

820 *gert*. So Davis. MS: *grett*.
824 *unryghtfull*. So Davis. MS: *unryghfull*.
825 *hede*. MS and Davis: *hed*.
825, s.d. *image*. So Davis. MS: *imge*.
832 *our*. So Davis. MS: *or*.
gloryfyed. MS: ~~*magnyfyed*~~ *gloryfyed*.
833 *shewyst*. MS: ~~*sue*~~ *shewyst*.
837 *solempne*. So Davis. MS: *solepne*.
840 *sacrum*. So Davis. MS: *scacrum*.
convivium. Davis, p. 84, notes that *conuiuium* had previously been misread as *Dominum*. The two *i*s are dotted in the manuscript, so the word cannot be *Dominum*, but there also seems to be a minim missing between the *o* and the first *i* in *conuiuium*.
841, s.d. *menyth*. MS: *h* is not visible in the facsimile and appears to have been cropped.
842, s.n. *PRESBYTER*. MS omits.
852 *I*. So Davis. MS omits.
853 MS: A horizontal line incorrectly indicating a change in speaker at line 853 has been cancelled.
854 *For*. MS: ~~*and c*~~ *for*.
This line begins with several words that have been struck out. MS: *As A c*.
860 *pytt*. So Davis. MS: *putt*.
865 *a menys*. So Davis. MS: *a menyn*.
865, s.d. *ost on*. So Davis. MS: *of non*.
866 *cum*. So Davis. MS: *co*.
874 *forgotyn*. So Davis. MS: *fogotyn*. The second *o* is superimposed over an incorrect *y*.
879 *tene*. MS: written below ~~*payne*~~.
886 *From*. MS: *Form*.
892 *to*. MS: ~~*the*~~ *to*.
899 *Agaynst*. So Davis. MS: *Agaynt*.
904 *presumpcion*. So Davis. MS: *presmpcion*.
907 *fere*. So Davis. MS: *fyre*.
922 *inpresunment*. MS: *inpresument*.
924 *creaturys*. Davis, p. 86, notes that "Manly suggests *vicarys* or *prechorys*, comparing 406."
926 *lockyd*. MS: ~~*be*~~ *lockyd*.
930, s.d. *Here the Juys must knele al down*. The stage direction appears in the right margin alongside lines 930–31.
934 *wounde*. So Davis. MS: *wondys*.
935 The stage name Jason occurs at the end of the folio (354r) but reappears at the top of the next folio (354v) alongside the rest of Jason's lines.
938 *wounde*. MS: ~~*bownd*~~ *wounde*.
947 *bad take us*. MS: ~~*us*~~ *take us* with *bad* inserted above the cancelled *us*.
960, s.n. *JONATHAS.* MS: *Ser Jonathas*.
960 *knaw*. So Davis. MS: *know*.
967 *Never*. So Davis. MS: *Neverer*.

befor. So Davis. MS: *befer*.

968 *leave*. So Davis. MS: *leae*.

mare. So Davis. MS: *more*.

974 *the*. MS: ~~*my*~~ *þ*^{e}.

998 *God*. MS: Inserted above the line by the scribe.

1007, s.d. *1461*. MS: *m*^{l}*cccc.lxi*.

whom be honowr. MS: *be* inserted between and slightly above *whom* and *honowr* in the colophon.

after 1007 *NAMYS*. So Davis. MS: *nanys*.

NUMBERE. So Davis. MS: *nmbere*.

Christianus. MS: *Xpanus*.

Presbyter. MS omits.

primus. MS: *jmus*.

secundus. MS: *ijus*.

tertius. MS: *iijus*.

quartus. MS: *iiijus*.

quintus. MS: *vtus*.

APPENDIX: MUSIC

The *Play of the Sacrament* quotes from the liturgy regularly and calls specifically for the singing of liturgical songs on two occasions:[1]

1. The Corpus Christi antiphon *O sacrum convivium* is sung by the bishop and Jews following line 841 as they process from the site of the Host's miraculous transformation to the church where it will be enshrined. The Feast of Corpus Christi was introduced into the church's annual cycle of worship in the thirteenth century and by the early fourteenth century was celebrated universally throughout the church, including in England. Authorship of the liturgy used to celebrate the feast, including *O sacrum convivium*, has traditionally been attributed to St. Thomas Aquinas.
2. The play concludes with the church's great hymn of thanksgiving, *Te Deum laudamus*, which might well have been the occasion for another procession comprised of the play's actors as well as its audience following line 1007. According to tradition the *Te Deum* was composed by Saints Ambrose and Augustine, and while their involvement has since been challenged, the hymn is nevertheless an ancient one. It was employed by the church on a variety of liturgical occasions, during processions, at the conclusion of liturgical as well as nonliturgical plays, and on individual occasions when the offering of thanks was deemed appropriate.

The music and Latin text given below are transcribed from Worcester Cathedral Library MS F.160 (the Worcester Antiphoner).[2] These two songs circulated in different versions throughout medieval Europe; the music that is reproduced here is intended to provide only a general impression of the kind of music likely to have been performed before medieval audiences and as an aid to modern performers interested in re-creating the music of the original play. English translations of the texts can be found in the Explanatory Notes.

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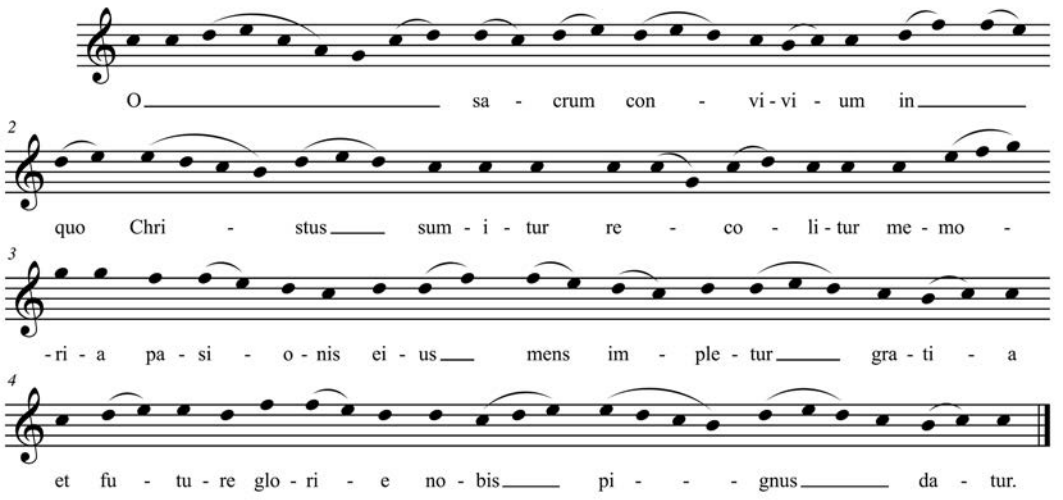
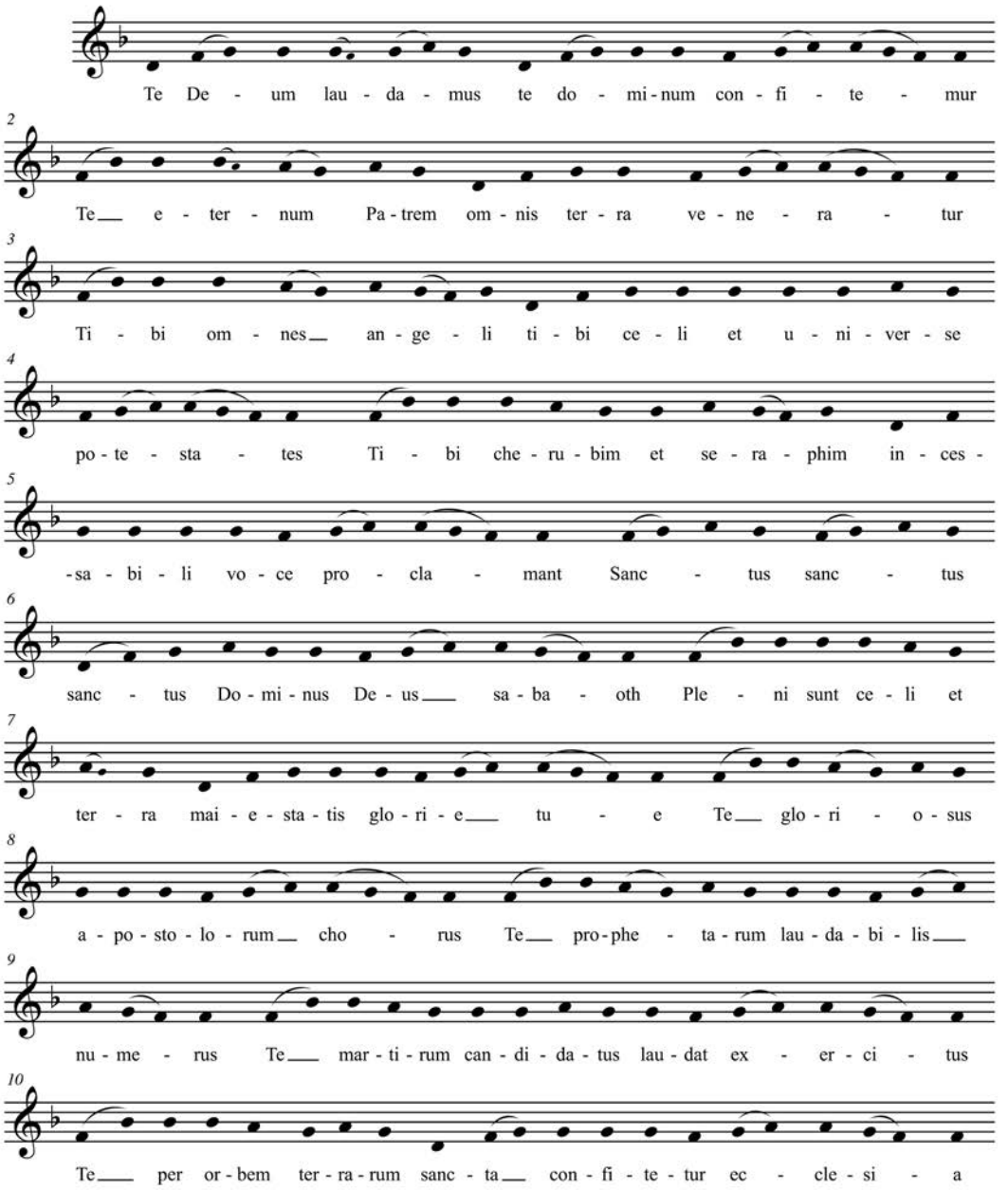
[1] The surviving text also calls for a minstrel to perform unspecified tunes at the conclusion of the banns (see line 80).

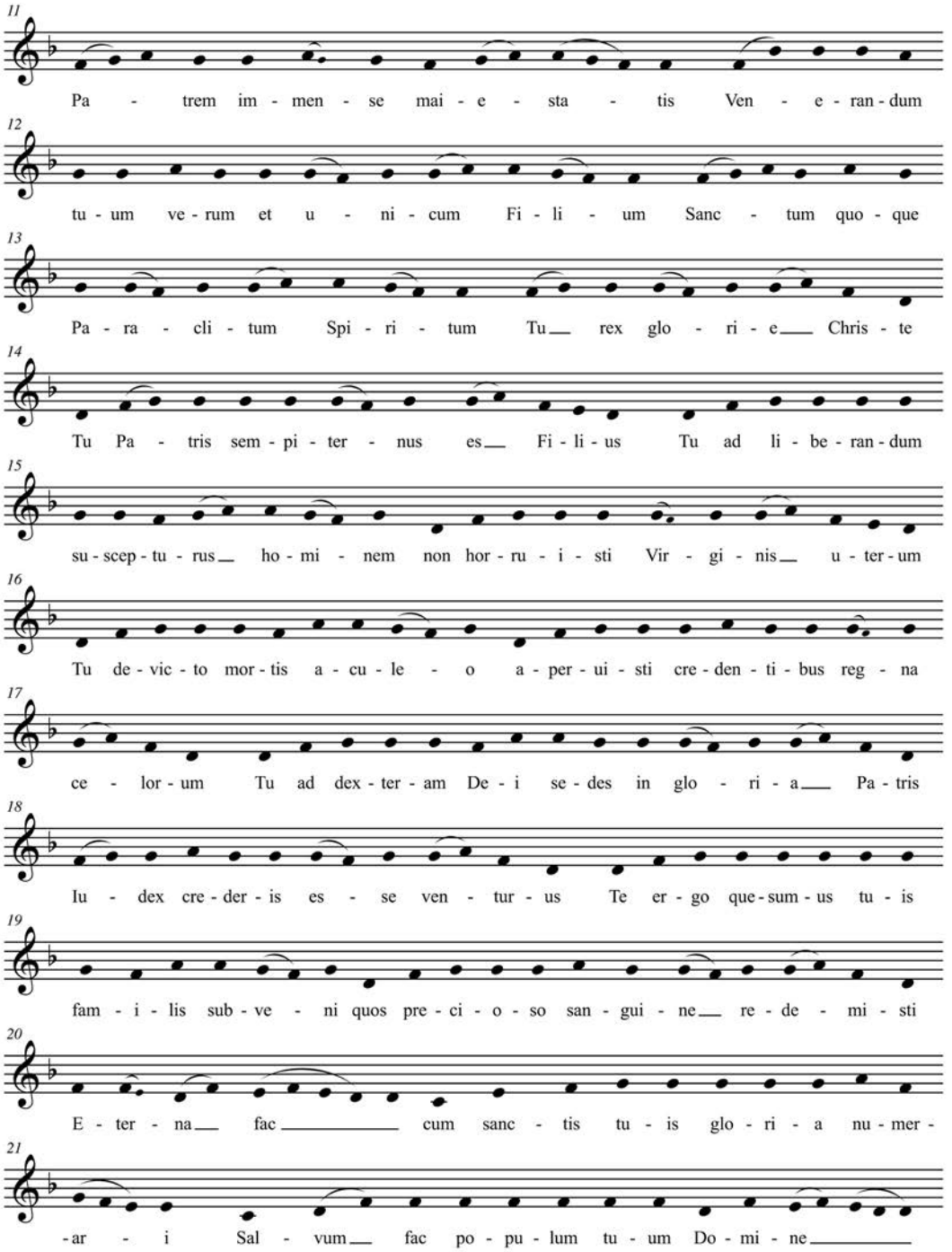
[2] The Worcester Antiphoner is published partially, although not including *O sacrum convivium*, as *Antiphonaire monastique, XIII^e siècle: codex F.160 de la bibliothèque de la Cathédrale de Worcester*, Paléographie musicale 12 (Tournai: Desclée, 1922).

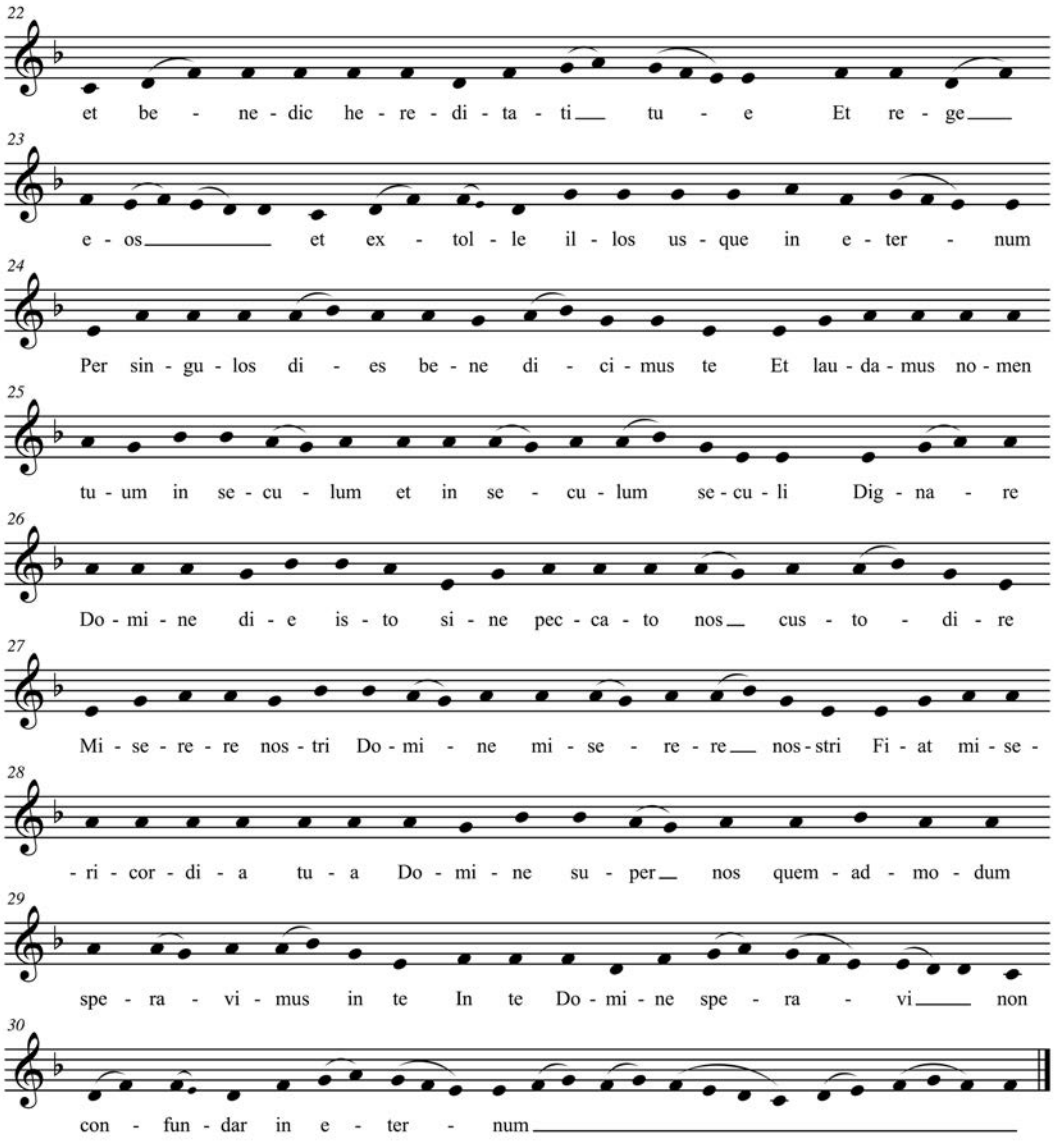
Following line 841: *O sacrum convivium* (Worcester Cathedral Library MS F.160 fol. 142v)



Following line 1007: *Te Deum laudamus* (Worcester Cathedral Library MS F.160 fol. 2v)




11
Pa - trem im - men - se mai - e - sta - tis Ven - e - ran - dum
12
tu - um ve - rum et u - ni - cum Fi - li - um Sanc - tum quo - que
13
Pa - ra - cli - tum Spi - ri - tum Tu rex glo - ri - e Chris - te
14
Tu Pa - tris sem - pi - ter - nus es Fi - li - us Tu ad li - be - ran - dum
15
su - scep - tu - rus ho - mi - nem non hor - ru - i - sti Vir - gi - nis u - ter - um
16
Tu de - vic - to mor - tis a - cu - le - o a - per - ui - sti cre - den - ti - bus reg - na
17
ce - lor - um Tu ad dex - ter - am De - i se - des in glo - ri - a Pa - tris
18
Iu - dex cre - der - is es - se ven - tur - us Te er - go que - sum - us tu - is
19
fam - i - lis sub - ve - ni quos pre - ci - o - so san - gui - ne re - de - mi - sti
20
E - ter - na fac cum sanc - tis tu - is glo - ri - a nu - mer -
21
- ar - i Sal - vum fac po - pu - lum tu - um Do - mi - ne


22
et be - ne - dic he - re - di - ta - ti tu - e Et re - ge
23
e - os et ex - tol - le il - los us - que in e - ter - num
24
Per sin - gu - los di - es be - ne di - ci - mus te Et lau - da - mus no - men
25
tu - um in se - cu - lum et in se - cu - lum se - cu - li Dig - na - re
26
Do - mi - ne di - e is - to si - ne pec - ca - to nos cus - to - di - re
27
Mi - se - re - re nos - tri Do - mi - ne mi - se - re - re nos - stri Fi - at mi - se -
28
- ri - cor - di - a tu - a Do - mi - ne su - per nos quem - ad - mo - dum
29
spe - ra - vi - mus in te In te Do - mi - ne spe - ra - vi non
30
con - fun - dar in e - ter - num

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GLOSSARY

abyde *remain; delay*
achatys *agates*
advyce *thought*
afeze *terrify*
agast *deterred, frightened*
ageyne *against; afterwards*
agryse *shudder*
Almayn *Alemannia (Germany)*
almundys *almonds*
als *also*
Alysander *Alexandria*
amatysts *amethysts*
amend *improve*
and *if*
ano(o)n *soon, immediately*
anoyment *discomfort*
Antyoche *Antioch*
apeche *accuse*
appere *appear*
appyred *appeared*
apryce *value*
aray(e) *display*
a-rent *torn*
arn *are*
aryght *indeed; properly*
asondre *asunder*
aspye *see*
assaye *try*
attayntyd *condemned*
attonys *immediately*
attrueance *command*
augur *eel-spear*
autere *altar*
avance *come forward*
avayle *do any good*
avoyde *get out*
awance *help*
awe *reverence*

baptyme *baptism*
bargyn *bargain*
baryllys *beryls*
be *by*
beat *atone*
Bedlem *Bethlehem*
belefe *believe*
beleve *belief, opinion*
bene *be*
benedycité *blessing*
bent *inclined*
berd *beard*
bete, bett *beat*
beth *be*
betuyn *between*
betyde *befell*
betymes *early*
bey *buy*
blase *blaze*
ble *color*
bleryd *inflamed*
bleyke *turn pale (with fear)*
blody *bloody*
blysse, blyssed *bless, blessed*
boon *request*
Bosra *Bozrah (capital of the ancient kingdom of Edom in present-day Jordan)*
boun *ready*
bowgett *bag*
bowght *redeemed; bought*
bowre *house*
Braban *Brabant*
brake *broke*

brast *shattered*
brede *bread*
brushe *drive*
brynne *burn*
Brytayn *Britain*
buskyd *gone*
but *unless*
bydene *immediately; entirely*
byggly *vigorously*

Calabre *Calabria*
calcedonyes *chalcedonies*
Caldeys *Chaldeans*
Calvery *Calvary*
Calyce *Calais*
canker *cancer*
cannyngalle *galingale*
carbunclys *carbuncles*
care *pain*
carpe *discuss, tell; boast*
case *affair*
cast *decided; moved*
caste *consider*
Cattlyngys *Catalans*
cawdron *cauldron*
certayn *certainly*
certyfycayon *notice*
charge *swear*
chaunce *fortune*
chere *face*
clere (adj.) *beautiful;* (adv.) *brightly*
clome *plaster*
clothe *cloth*
clowtys *blows*
clowys *cloves*
Cokkys *God's*
Coleyn *Cologne*
colkote *coal shed*
collyke *colic*
combrance *trouble*
conceyt(e) *fanciful idea, trick*
conceyvyd *become pregnant*
condescent *manner*
condolent *contrite*
congregacyon *crowd*
connyng *ability*
conversacion *conversion*
counsel(l) *secret*
covytys *covetousness*
cowd *could*
cranys *crannies*
crepawdys *toadstones*
crye (n.) *proclamation;* (v.) *proclaim*
crystenyd *baptized*
cumberer *tempter*
curat(ys) *curate(s), priest(s)*
cure *protect; cover*
curyous *exquisite*
cyté *city*

daggars *daggers*
ded *did*
defawte *lack*
defendowr, defensour *protector*
degest *digest*
degré *quality, rank*
delygently *diligently*
deme *conceive*
dere *dear, precious*
derewourthy *precious*
detter *debtor*
devyll *devil*
dokettys *ducats*
don *down*
Dordrede *Dordrecht (city in Holland)*
doun *do; down*
Doury *Dover*
dowghtys *doubts*
dowte *fear of*
drawte *drink*
dred *fear*
drede *danger*
dredfull *terrifying*
drenche *drown*
dresse *adorn; advance; prepare*
dulcett *sweet*
duresse *suffering*
dyamantys *diamonds*
dyed *died*
dyght *done*
dygnyté *rank*
dyocesans *bishop's*
dysarvyde *deserved*
dysfame *reproach*

dyspayre *despair*
dyspence *grant dispensation*
dystren *to constrain*

emerawdys *emeralds*
entent(e) *desire, intention*
eny *any*
Eraclea *Heraclea*
ere *before*
eresye *heresy*
ever *always*
everychoon *everyone*
evyn *even*
evynsong *evensong (vespers)*
example *lesson*
eyn *eyes*

fale *happen*
fare (n.) *condition;* (v.) *go; behave*
Farre *Faeroe Islands*
faryd *behaved*
fast *securely*
fatherhed *spiritual authority*
fayn *gladly*
fayne *be glad*
fee *(movable) property*
fele *felt*
fell *wicked*
felouse *fellows*
fend *fiend*
fer *far*
fere (adv.) *far;* (n.) *fire*
fesycyon *physician*
fey(th) *faith*
feythfulli *faithfully*
fone *foes*
forsothe *truly*
frayne *inquire*
freshely *boldly*
freyned *inquired*
froward *immoderate*
fruycion *bliss*
ful *fully*
fule *foully*
furneys *hearth*
fygys *figs*
fyryng *firewood*

gaderyng *gathering*
Galys *Galicia*
Gene *Genoa*
Genewaye *Geneva*
gentyll *noble*
gert *clothed*
gett *obtain, win*
glad *comfort*
gle *delight*
glosse *comment*
Godys *God's*
good *wealth, comfort*
gooth rebyll-rable *rattles*
gostly *spiritual*
goven *gave*
govyn *given*
grase *grace*
grefe *grief*
gretly *severely*
grevaunce *injury, distress*
grevid *injured*
grevous, grevyos *injurious, grievous*
greynis *grains of paradise (a spice)*
grue *frighten*
gryl *cruelly*
gunne *began; did*
guyde, gyde *guide*
Gyldre *Gelderland (in present-day Netherlands)*
gyngere *ginger*
gynne *begin*
gynnyth *begins*

Hamborowhe *Hamburg*
hanne *have*
harme *misfortune*
hart *heart*
hast *haste*
hasterli *quickly*
hat *has*
hawe *have*
hayly *greatly*
hede *heed*
hem *them*
hens *away from here*
here *hear*
hermes *harms*

hertys *hearts*
hether *hither*
hey, hyhe *high*
heyle *healthy*
hir *here*
holi *holy*
homly *intimately*
hong *hanged*
hoode *hood*
hoote *hot*
howrys *hours*
hundder *hundred*
hyght *called*

imett *met*
inconvenyens *offense*
Indas lycorys *Indian licorice*
inpresunment *inprisonment*
inter(e)ly *sincerely*
irke *slow*

jentle, jentyll *noble*
judgyment *diagnosis*
jugett *condemned*
just *snugly*

kend(e) *known*
kene *sharp, mighty*
knett *united*
kneys *knees*
knowledge *acknowledge*
kype *keep*

Lachborn *Luxembourg*
lamentable *sorrowful*
langowr *misery*
largyfluent *generous*
lashe *stroke*
lawrell *laurel*
laxe *diarrhea*
lechys *physician's*
lende *give*
lenger(e) *longer*
lepe *leap*
lesse *lose*
lett *parted; refrain*
letwyce *lettuce*
leve *leave*
Levyathan *Leviathan*
loggyng *lodging*
londys *lands*
long *far*
longeth *is suitable*
longyth *belongs*
Lorde *Lord's*
lordis, lordys *lord's*
loth *unwilling*
lycoresse *licorice*
lyght *descend*
lyghtnesse *splendor*
lyke *please*
lykke *take*
lynde *linden (tree)*
lyst *wish*

mace *mace (a spice)*
Machomet, Machomyght *Muhammad*
mad *made*
magesté *majesty*
makere *creator*
malepertly *impudently*
manar *manner*
manly *boldly*
maracle *miracle*
marke *distinguished*
marvelly *miracles*
masterly *skillfully*
mastyk *mastic*
masyd *confounded*
mater *subject*
materyall *relevant*
matter *trouble*
Mawdelen *Magdalene*
may *maiden*
maydese *maids*
maydyn *virgin*
Mayn *Maine*
mayne *strength*
meane *mediation*
med *reward*
medycamente *medical treatment*
mekyll *great*
Melan *Milan*
mele *meal*

mene *discuss; intend*
ment *intended, planned*
merve(y)lows *marvelous, wondrous*
mete *meet*
meve *stir up, move*
mevyth *works*
mode *mind*
mony *money*
mot(t) *may; might; must*
mown *may*
mowthe *mouth*
myddys *middle*
myegrym *migraine*
myght (n.) *power, ability;* (adj.) *mighty, powerful, strong*
mykyll *greatly*
mynstrell *minstrel*
mys *misdeeds*
myscary *die*
myschevos *mischiefs*
mysdede *offense*
myse *fail*
mysericord *mercy*
mysgovernaunce *sin*
mytheti *mighty*

nat *not*
Navern *Navarre*
non *none*
none *nones (3 p.m.)*
nonys *indeed*
noon *no one*
noose *nose*
nyhe *nearly*

of *among*
on *one*
ondon *killed*
ongoodly *wickedly*
onkowth *unknown*
onkynd *unnatural, cruel*
onlefull *sinful*
ontawght *not well bred*
ontrewe *untrue*
ony *any*
onys *at once*
orengys *oranges*
osanna *hosanna*
Ost *Host*
ovyn *oven*
owrys *ours*
owte *ought*
owyht *anything*
owyth *befits*
oxennell *oxymel (a syrup of vinegar and honey)*

pace *step, pace*
pacyent *patient*
pales *palace*
pall *fine cloth*
passyon *suffering*
pausacyon *delay*
pay(e) *liking, satisfaction*
peacys *pieces*
peas *peace*
perayle *peril*
pere (n.) *peer;* (v.) *appear*
perlys *pearls*
peté *compassion*
peyn *pain*
peyne *torture*
Phylyppe *Philip*
place *please*
plawe *boil*
playn *clear*
playne *flat*
plenté *abundance*
plesance *pleasure*
pleyd *played*
pleyn *ground*
plyght *promise*
Portyngale *Portugal*
prattyffe *practice*
precyouser *more valuable*
prene *stab*
preserve *protect*
prestly *firmly*
prestys *priest's*
preve (n.) *test;* (v.) *test*
prevely (n.) *secret;* (adv.) *secretly*
processe *play*
profytable *healing; beneficial*
progenytors *successors*

prove *test*
prynt *impression*
pryst *priest*
pryvyté *private*
punche *dagger*
pungarnetys *pomegranates*
pursewe *pursue*
purveaunce *preparation*
put(t) (v.) *subject*
putt (v.) *push*
pyller *pillar*
pyllere, pylleri *pillory*
pympernelle *pimpernel*
pynde *constrain*
pynson(y)s *pincers*
pyppe *disease*
pyxys *pyx*

quartan *quartan fever*
quit *paid*
quyt *rid*

rancheth *tears*
rave *tore*
Raynes *Rheims*
recuer *remedy*
redresse *address*
renneth *moves about*
reporte *speak*
repreve *shame*
reverence *honor*
reyn *realm*
reysones *raisins*
rin *run*
rofe *split*
Romney *Rumney (a Greek wine)*
Roode *Rood (Cross)*
rowte *throw*
rubés *rubies*
rufull *sorrowful*
rychesse *wealth*
rycht *right*
ryfe *widely*
ryght *completely; immediately*
rygore *cruelty*
rys *rice*
ryve *split*

Saby *Saba (in Arabia)*
sacred *consecrated*
Salern *Salerno*
saphyre *sapphire*
save *cured*
sawe (n.) *speech;* (v.) *save*
sawge *sage*
scamoly *scammony (a medical gum resin obtained from a root of the same name)*
sed *said*
see *throne*
seek *sick*
sekyrly *surely*
semelé *worthy*
semely *worthy; beautiful*
serfe *serve*
ses(e) *seize*
seth(e) *boil*
sett *sat*
sey *say, tell*
seyn *speak*
shapyn *inclined*
sheld *shield*
Shelysdown *Chalcedon*
sheuyd, shewyd *showed; shown; confessed*
shew *declare; make known*
shrugge *moves about*
shuld *should*
skyll *just*
sleppe *escape*
smaragdys *emeralds*
smert *suffer*
smertly *swiftly*
socowr *assistance*
soden *boiled*
solle, sollys *soul, souls*
sore *insistently*
sothe *truth*
sovereyns *masters*
sownd *sinless*
sownde *wholesome*
space *places*
spedyng *success*
speke *speak*
spence *buttery*

speryd *locked*
Spruce *Prussia*
spycys *spices*
spyde *discovered*
staynyd *stained (dyed)*
steare *stir*
stere *go; stir*
stevyn *song*
stode *stood*
stoppe *plug*
stownd *place*
stowte *bold, sturdy*
strayt *directly*
straytly *severely*
streytnesse *trouble*
strokys *attack*
styckyth *strikes*
styed *ascended*
styffly *vehemently*
suffycyent *appropriate*
suger *sugar*
Sune *Son (i.e., Jesus)*
sure (v.) *promise;* (adj.) *taken care of*
Surrey *Syria*
swemfull, swymfull *sorrowful*
swettnesse *graciousness*
Syble *Sibyl*
syence *learning*
syght *sight*
syknes *sickness*
synymone *cinnamon*
syr, syrse *sir, sirs*
syt(he) *since; afterwards*
syttyth *sits*

tabyll *table*
tal(is) *tale(s)*
tapstere *barmaid*
tare *delay*
tary *hinder*
Taryse *Tharsia*
tell *count*
tende *pay attention*
tenderli, tendrely *attentively*
tene (n.) *malice, suffering;* (v.) *annoy*
tercyan *tertian fever*
there-agene *regarding that*
thether *there*
thewh *though*
tho *those*
thorowght *throughout*
thorwe *through*
thynk(e) *intend*
tidyng, tydyng *news, tidings*
tokenyng *sign*
topazyouns *topazes*
tormentry *torture*
trew *faithful*
trow(e) *trust, think*
trusty *prized*
trwly *faithfully*
tugg *drink*
tyde *time*

unlefull *sinful*
unryghtfull *sinful*

vaylle *veil*
verely *truly*
voydoth *withdraw*
vyage *journey*
vyse *vice*

wake *go mad*
walew *value*
wan *when*
wanhope *despair*
waraunt *guarantee*
ware *beware*
wari *curse*
wat *what*
waterys *water's*
waxyth *is becoming*
weldyng *control*
well *will*
wend *thought*
wene *suspect, think, believe*
wer *where*
werche *do*
were *fear*
werketh *does*
wet *know*
wette *find out*
wheresoo *wheresoever*

whoso *whoever*
whoys *whose*
whyle *time*
wold *wish*
wole *very*
woll *would*
won *one*
wondursely *miraculously*
wonneth *dwelled*
wood(e) *mad, enraged*
worshepe *pious*
worthynesse *honor*
wot(t) *know*
woth *injury*
wrake *harm, injury*
wreke *punished, avenged*
wrowght *made; done*
wyght *person, man*
wyghtly *vigorously; immediately*
wykkyd *sickening*
wyld *wild*
wyles *wiles*
wyrk(e) *act, do*
wyse *way, manner*
wyst *known*
wyste *knew*
wytt *inclination*
wytte *learn*
wyttys *sense*

yede *went*
ylke *same*