THE MEDIEVAL DRAMA OF EAST ANGLIA

Studies in Dialect, Documentary Records and Stagecraft

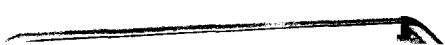in Two Volumes

Volume   One

Text

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to identify the extent and to begin to characterise the nature of dramatic activity in later medieval Norfolk and Suffolk.

The first chapter demonstrates the need for a detailed re-assessment of the evidence for the provenance of a number of later Middle English manuscripts containing plays. The Macro Plays, the Digby Plays, the 'N-Town' Plays and certain 'Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments' prove to be associated more or less vaguely with East Anglia by current scholarship, often on dialectal grounds.

Chapters Two, Three and Four set out to discover which plays belong firmly within a suggested tradition of copying dramatic texts in fifteenth and early sixteenth century East Anglia. Chapter Two discusses the feasibility of this scheme in the context of current trends in Middle English dialectology, with special reference to the graphemic approach to the localisation of literary texts developed by Professors McIntosh and Samuels. An inventory of dated and localised texts and documents from Norfolk and Suffolk is drawn up and (Chapter Three) a combination of typical orthographic features is extracted and documented. In Chapter Four the languages of the suspected East Anglian plays are compared with this independently established framework of information, and other matters relevant to the localisation of the texts are considered. A firmly identifiable group of plays copied in central East Anglia emerges.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven begin to consider some of the implications of the idea of 'The Medieval Drama of East Anglia'. Chapter Five assembles from a variety of sources (municipal, conventual, parish) documentary records of plays and playing in East Anglia. Chapters Six and Seven attempt to exploit some of this documentary material alongside textual evidence from certain East Anglian plays identified in Chapter Four by examining a

characteristic mode of staging ('scaffold-and-place')
apparently once prevalent in Norfolk and Suffolk.

ABBREVIATIONS

B.L.	British Library
C.U.L.	Cambridge University Library
DP	The Digby Plays ed. F.J. Furnivall, E.E.T.S. E.S. LXX, (London 1896)
E.E.T.S.	Early English Text Society
O.S.	Original Series
E.S.	Extra Series
S.S.	Supplementary Series
E.H.R.	English Historical Review
Ec.H.R.	Economic History Review
H.M.C.	Historical Manuscripts Commission
J.E.G.P.	Journal of English and Germanic Philology
LC	Ludus Coventriae ed. K.S. Block, E.E.T.S. E.S. CXX, (London 1922)
M.Ae.	Medium Aevum
ME	Middle English
M.E.D.	Middle English Dictionary
M.L.N.	Modern Language Notes
M.L.Q.	Modern Language Quarterly
M.L.R.	Modern Language Review
MP	The Macro Plays ed. M. Eccles, E.E.T.S. 262, (Oxford 1969)

M.P.	Modern Philology
M.S.	Medieval Studies
N.A.	Norfolk Archaeology
NCPF	Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments ed. N. Davis, E.E.T.S. S.S. 1, (Oxford 1970)
Nf.	Norfolk
N.M.	Neophilologische Mitteilungen
NS	New Series
OE	Old English
O.E.D.	Oxford English Dictionary
ON	Old Norse
P.M.L.A.	Publications of the Modern Language Association
P.Q.	Philological Quarterly
P.R.O.	Public Record Office
R.E.S.	Review of English Studies
R.O.R.D.	Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama
Sf.	Suffolk
T.P.S.	Transactions of the Philological Society
T.R.H.S.	Transactions of the Royal Historical Society

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTORY

In his well-known anthology <u>Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose</u>[1] Kenneth Sisam included a map giving his impression of the 'literary geography' of England and Scotland in the period covered by his book. Included on the map are two references to dramatic activity in England, the Corpus Christi plays of York and Wakefield. Their contemporary, the Chester play, was presumably omitted because the text survives only in late or post-medieval copies. In addition, a large part of the corpus of Middle English drama as a whole is missing: the 'N-Town' plays, moralities such as the <u>Castle of Perseverance</u>, <u>Wisdom</u> and <u>Mankind</u>, saints' plays such as <u>Mary Magdalene</u> and <u>St. Paul</u> and a number of other items, both complete play-texts and fragments.

Sisam's map, as it stands, is a pleasing and instructive two-dimensional way of presenting the regional diversity of later Middle English literature in general to the student. To those more intimately concerned with the drama of the period it will suggest the possibility of a fuller map, relating principally to the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries and illustrating some of the geographical variation in where the surviving play-texts were written down.

The body of material, which will be reviewed in detail in a moment, stretches chronologically from <u>c</u>. 1275-1300, with the Cambridge and <u>Interludium De Clerico</u> fragments, to the mid-sixteenth century; post-medieval copies of civic texts such as the Norwich Grocers' Play and the Newcastle Shipwrights' Play were evidently made from manuscripts of about this date. The bulk of the evidence falls in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, with the York and Wakefield registers, the 'N-Town', Macro and Digby manuscripts, and a variety of other texts: the <u>Play of the Sacrament</u>, the Brome and Northampton <u>Abraham</u> plays, two unprinted dramatic texts in a Winchester College manuscript, and several fragments. There is a noticeable

gap between this main body of evidence and the small group
of early texts from around the turn of the thirteenth
century. Any map showing the regional distribution of
Middle English drama should be viewed in the light of,
most probably, very considerable losses of material
between $\underline{c}$. 1300 and $\underline{c}$. 1400.

Another point to be borne in mind is the overlap in
the later period with the appearance of plays in print in
England. Widespread production and dissemination of
printed play-texts for use by troupes of travelling
professional performers is a second factor which a map
cannot take into account. As closer acquaintance with the
manuscript plays will show, the texts copied by hand are
more likely to be tied to a specific place or community,
often by annual usage, as is the case with the Corpus
Christi plays[2]. A regional map will therefore show the
survival of texts of a certain variety of Middle English
drama, rather than exhibit a total picture of all the
varieties which may have been in circulation at the time.
With factors of this kind in mind, together with a number
of others which will emerge in the following pages, we
may look briefly at the surviving texts and their
manuscripts for evidence of where they should be placed
on the proposed map.

(1). The Cambridge Prologue (C.U.L. Ms. Mm.1.18,
f.62r)[3] is generally accepted to be the earliest surviving
Middle English play-text. Robbins dated the single hand
involved in the copying 'not later than about 1300, and
possibly the last quarter of the thirteenth century'.[4]
It consists of the prologue to a play, written out first
in Anglo-Norman and then in a loose Middle English
translation of doubtful dialect.[5] The manuscript is a
composite of theological materials of various dates,
presumably of conventual origin and ownership. The section
in which the Prologue is found gives no clues as to its
original provenance.

(2). The Interludium de Clerico et Puella betrays
probable secular origins by occurring in a vellum roll

(B.L. Additional Ms. 23986) of an easily portable type.
Recent editors suggest a date around 1300 and point out
features of its north-east midland dialect.[6] R.S. Loomis
presented a case for the _Interludium_ having circulated in
Lincolnshire,[7] and the strong possibility that the play
derived from the fabliau _Dame Sirith_[8] (which mentions
Boston), is clearly relevant here.

(3). The _Rickinghall (Bury St Edmunds) Fragment_
(B.L. Additional Roll 63481B)[9] consists of the opening
speech of a play, or a section of a play, the same matter
being given twice, first in Anglo-Norman then in Middle
English. It is thought to have been copied in the early
years of the fourteenth century, but the single leaf on
which it was written appears to have been discarded as
'scrivener's waste' until 1370. Accounts for that year
relating to the Suffolk manor of Rickinghall (at that
time the property of the abbey at Bury St Edmunds) were
then copied on the back. The dialect of the English part
of the fragment is east-midland.[10]

(4). The _Shrewsbury Fragments_ (Shrewsbury School Ms.
VI, ff. 38r-42v), an unusual combination of Middle English
dialogue and sung Latin liturgical pieces, are thought to
have been copied in the early fifteenth century.[11] The
English parts of the texts have important affinities with
parts of the York Corpus Christi play, but their dialect
belongs to the north-west midlands, rather than Yorkshire.[12]
Another item in the manuscript relates to St. Chad, whose
cult centred on Lichfield. As Professor Davis has pointed
out, the diocese of Lichfield covered parts of the area
suggested by the dialect of the texts, an area with many
churches dedicated to St. Chad. The Latin liturgical
elements in the fragments, moreover, resemble performances
reported to have taken place at Lichfield much earlier, in
the twelfth century.[13]

(5). The _Durham Prologue_ (Durham Cathedral Library,
Dean and Chapter Ms. 1.2., Archdiac. Dunelm. 60, dorse),
like the Cambridge and Rickinghall texts, is a stray
prologue to a play; it has recently been dated in the early

fifteenth century.[14] The manuscript (a single leaf) is again of conventual origin, having strong connexions with the Cathedral Priory at Durham. On the other side are Latin notes concerning the question of a benefice, and these involve the Bishop of Durham, the Cathedral Priory and a Premonstratensian house just over the border in Northumberland. Professor Davis notes that the copy of the Prologue 'appears to have been made in a north-easterly dialect not significantly different' from its original.[15]

(6). The Pride of Life. The manuscript of this play no longer exists, having been destroyed (by explosion) in 1922. The piece is a substantial fragment of a morality play, and all texts derive from the early edition of Mills.[16] It was copied in the first half of the fifteenth century by two Anglo-Irish scribes working at the priory of the Holy Trinity in Dublin; one of them was 'quite unaccustomed to writing English'.[17] Heuser compared the language of the play with that of the Kildare poems, and concluded that it had been copied from an exemplar also in Anglo-Irish. Davis accordingly puts the composition of the play in Ireland 'as early as the middle of the fourteenth century'.[18]

(7). Dux Moraud (Oxford, Bodleian Ms. Eng. poet. f. 2) is the actor's part for the eponymous rôle in a play of incest, murder and repentance. The manuscript, a re-used vellum roll, has recently been dated between 1425 and 1450.[19] It had had an earlier career as an assize roll on which entries relating to cases heard by a well-known Norfolk judge, William Ormesby (d. 1317), were made. The dialect of Dux Moraud is markedly East Anglian, and Professor Davis adduces parallels with the Paston materials and other play-texts held to have been copied in the same area.[20]

(8). The Castle of Perseverance is found on folios 154 to 191 of the Macro manuscript (Washington, Folger Library Ms. V. a. 354); it has recently been re-edited and published in facsimile with the two other Macro plays

(nos. 12 and 13, below).[21] There is no evidence that the
Castle was bound with, or otherwise connected with these
two other play texts in medieval times. The accepted date
for the text as we now have it is c. 1440,[22] and for the
composition of the play perhaps a generation earlier.[23]
An internal reference hints that the Castle may once have
been connected with the neighbourhood of Lincoln,[24] but
the most recent editor follows F.J. Furnivall in arguing
that the text as we have it was copied in East Anglia.[25]

(9). The Northampton play of Abraham and Isaac was
copied in the manuscript now at Trinity College, Dublin
(Ms. D.4.18 (432)) in 1461.[26] As Professor Davis has
shown, the part of the manuscript where the play occurs
contains a good deal of material, including literary and
historical texts in the same hand as the play, relating to
Northampton. The language of the text - 'a midland
dialect with no strongly marked character' -[27] fits well
with the Northampton provenance.

(10). British Library Ms. Cotton Vespasian D. viii
(except for ff. 51-2 and 214-222; cf. nos. 22 and 11,
below). The compilation of plays in this manuscript is
known variously as Ludus Coventriae, the 'N-Town' plays
and the Hegge plays, for reasons which emerge in the course
of the introduction of K.S. Block's edition.[28] The
contents bear some resemblance to the northern Corpus
Christi cycles but are distinctively different in other
ways, e.g. the inclusion of a long series of plays on the
early life of the Virgin, found nowhere else. Internal
evidence of provenance is totally lacking, and there are
no indications that the plays were ever performed by the
craft gilds of a town, as was the case at York, Chester
and Wakefield. The hand responsible for the bulk of the
manuscript is thought to have been at work in the third
quarter of the fifteenth century, and the date 1468 has
been added at one point.[29] Palaeographical and
bibliographical evidence suggest that the scribe worked
on the compilation intermittently over a period of some
time.[30]

A second hand interpolated folios 95, 96 and 112 into the manuscript, and corrected the main hand's work.[31]

Attempts have been made to link the compilation with Lincoln,[32] but at present the only substantive evidence of where the manuscript was copied derives from the dialect, held by the most competent authorities to be East Anglian.[33]

(11). The 'N-Town' Assumption of the Virgin play occupies folios 214r to 222v of Cotton Vespasian D. viii. It is written on a variety of paper not found elsewhere in the manuscript, and in the hand of another scribe. A diplomatic edition by W.W. Greg was published somewhat before K.S. Block's edition of the manuscript as a whole.[34] The Assumption play hand is held to be contemporary with the main hand of the manuscript, and the latter has in fact rubricated and corrected the interpolated quire.[35] Though spellings and other minor indications of dialect differ slightly from the work of the main hand, Greg concluded that the scribe of the interpolated play was likewise an East Anglian.[36]

(12) and (13). The Macro texts of Wisdom and Mankind are the two other moralities accompanying the Castle of Perseverance in Folger Ms. V. a. 354.[37] Wisdom (no. 12, ff. 98-121) is all in one hand which is now thought to be the same one as is responsible for the bulk of Mankind (no. 13, ff. 122-132r; ff. 132v-134r of Mankind are the work of a second hand).[38] Both plays are thought to have been composed in the 1460's,[39] and the copyist (whose work is at present undated) is considered to have been an East Anglian; abundant internal evidence in Mankind suggests that it must have circulated in north-west Norfolk and east Cambridgeshire.[40] The earliest known owner of both manuscripts was a monk named Hyngham, again, probably an East Anglian; an early sixteenth century owner was a Richard Cake of Bury St Edmunds.[41]

(14). The Reynes Extracts are found in Bodleian Ms. Tanner 407, folios 43v-44v, the commonplace book kept by

a churchwarden at Acle (Norfolk), who usually signs himself Reynys.[42] He is known to have used the manuscript in the 1470's and 1480's, and as well as copying out the morality fragment and the epilogue which constitute the Extracts, also included other quasi-dramatic materials in his collection.[43]

(15). The Brome Hall Commonplace Book, containing (ff. 15r-22r) a play of <u>Abraham and Isaac</u>, is now in Yale University Library (Hamilton Ms.).[44] The contents of the manuscript were edited almost entire soon after it was discovered at Brome Hall, Suffolk, and recent research has shown that the main hand was at work perhaps as early as the 1450's and certainly as late as the 1490's.[45] The book was taken up again shortly afterwards by Robert Melton of Stuston (Suffolk) and used for personal and manorial accounts. Professor Davis considers the language of the play 'fully in keeping with the association of the manuscript with northern Suffolk'.[46]

(16). The <u>Ashmole Fragment</u> is written by one amongst many vernacular and Latin hands in a widely-travelled composite manuscript of the fifteenth century (Bodleian Ms. Ashmole 750, f. 168r).[47] Much work remains to be done on the provenance of the manuscript and the identity of many of its contents.[48]

(17). B.L. Additional Ms. 35290 contains the register of the York Corpus Christi play, printed in full by L. Toulmin Smith.[49] The provenance of the manuscript has never been in doubt, but its date is disputed. Miss Smith suggested 1430-40, but W.W. Greg preferred a later date, around 1475.[50]

(18). San Marino, U.S.A., Huntington Library Ms. HM 1. This manuscript is now widely accepted to contain the register of the Wakefield Corpus Christi play, and the reasons for thinking so were set out by Professor Cawley in his edition of parts of it.[51] The contents were printed in full by England and Pollard.[52] Recently discovered evidence has shown that the manuscript is unlikely to have been copied before the 1480's, and may

in fact date from the first decade or so of the sixteenth century.[53] An addition at the end of the manuscript (Play 32) is definitely of this later date.[54]

(19) and (20). A Winchester College manuscript (Ms. 33A) is now known to contain a semi-dramatic dialogue, <u>Lucidus and Dubius</u> (no. 19, ff. 54v-64v) and a play, <u>Occupation, Idleness and Doctrine</u> (no. 20, ff. 65r-73v). Neither text has been printed,[55] though the manuscript has been described in some detail recently.[56] Both texts are the work of the same mid- to late fifteenth century hand, and Professor Davis considers that <u>Occupation</u> should be dated at least 'a generation or so earlier' than the sixteenth century printed texts of 'Tudor Interludes', to which it bears a strong resemblance.[57] The dialect is east-midland, with certain unusual forms which have been mapped in the south Suffolk-north Essex area.[58] The rhymes suggest that the originals of both texts may have come from further north.[59]

(21). The Digby <u>Wisdom</u> fragment (Bodleian Ms. Digby 133, ff. 158-69) preserves about half the play found entire in the Macro manuscript (cf. no. 12, above).[60] The Digby manuscript is a composite, and neither this fragment nor any of the other three play-texts found therein are thought to have had any original connexion with one another.[61] Baker and Murphy date the <u>Wisdom</u> hand <u>c</u>. 1490-1500.[62] The orthography of the Digby fragment differs in various ways from the earlier East Anglian copy of the whole text, but the dialect is still clearly east-midland, and probably East Anglian.[63]

(22). Folios 51 and 52 of B.L. Ms. Cotton Vespasian D. viii are an interpolation by a much later hand (<u>c</u>. 1490-1500), on different paper, into the work of the manuscript's main hand (cf. no. 10, above).[64] The language of the interpolation is dialectally undistinguish-ed.

(23). <u>Saul</u>, or the <u>Conversion of St. Paul</u> is found in Bodleian Digby Ms. 133 (ff. 37r-50v).[65] The text was was copied by three hands, and is not thought to be

connected with any other play in the Digby manuscript. Hand A, the main hand, and hand B (f. 37v, first nine lines) are dated c. 1510-20. Hand C interpolated a scene on a different type of paper, and is dated 'perhaps thirty years later'.[66] The original editor offered no opinion about the dialect, but Chambers observed that it is east-midland.[67] On one occasion the main hand writes xal 'shall', often quoted as a feature of East Anglian work.[68]

(24). Bodleian Ms. Digby 133 also contains the play of Mary Magdalene[69] (ff. 95-145) in a single hand ('D') found nowhere else in the manuscript, and dated c. 1510-20.[70] Furnivall noted distinctively East Anglian features in the language, and Dobson observed that the most prominent linguistic features of the text are also found in B.L. Cotton Vespasian D. viii (no. 10, above).[71]

(25). The Digby play on the subject of the Slaughter of the Innocents (called by Furnivall the 'Killing of the Children' in his edition[72]) occurs on folios 146-157 of Ms. 133 in the Digby collection. Two hands collaborated on the copying (E, the main hand, and F, ff. 155v-157r, line four),[73] another has added the date '1512' at the beginning of the text, and yet another the observation that 'Jhon Parfre ded wryte thys booke' on f. 157v. Baker and Murphy connect the name Parfre with the Thetford area of Norfolk from the 1490's onwards.[74] Furnivall suggested that the dialect was midland, and H.R. Patch noted that east-midland would be more strictly accurate, associating the play with other east-midland and East Anglian dramatic pieces.[75]

(26). The 'Croxton' Play of the Sacrament[76] forms a separate gathering (folios 338-356) in a collection of otherwise unrelated sixteenth and seventeenth century tracts etc. in Trinity College, Dublin, Ms. F. 4.20 (652); it is the work of three hands.[77] At the end of the text the date 1461 is given for the actual occurrence of the episode dramatised, and Professor Davis suggests that the play 'may have been composed not long after ... but this

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text must be half a century or so later'.[78] The place-
names Croxton and Babwell Mill may be taken to refer to
places of those names near Thetford and Bury St Edmunds
respectively. The name of the quack-doctor in the play -
Brundyche, or Brendyche - could well relate to the Suffolk
place-name Brundish. The dialect of the text is certainly
east-midland, probably East Anglian, and Davis remarks
that 'The language as a whole has much in common with that
of the <u>Castle of Perseverance</u>' (cf. no. 8, above).[79]
Current research into the English language in medieval
Ireland has discounted a recent suggestion that the text
may be an Anglo-Irish copy of a Norfolk exemplar.[80]

(27). Oxford, Bodleian Ms. e. mus. 160, ff. 140-172.
F.J. Furnivall printed two quasi-dramatic texts on the
subjects of the Burial and Resurrection of Christ together
with the Digby plays (cf. nos. 22, 24, 25 and 26 above),
on the mistaken assumption that Digby 133 and e. mus. 160
were once a single manuscript. Baker and Murphy, who
deal with Furnivall's error, note that the dramatic
pieces are in the same hand as the rest of the manuscript,
which was being made <u>c</u>. 1518.[81] Morris, in a note in
Furnivall's edition, suggested that their dialect was
Northumbrian, with some west-midland features.[82]

(28). The Chester Mystery Cycle. Though the Chester
plays are known to have been in existence by the later
fourteenth century, the various manuscripts containing all
or parts of the cycle date from <u>c</u>. 1500 to the early
seventeenth century; all have recently been listed and
discussed in a new edition.[83]

(29). The York Scriveners' Play of the <u>Incredulity</u>
<u>of Thomas</u>, from the city's Corpus Christi cycle, exists
in a separate manuscript (Yorks. Philosophical Society,
Sykes Ms.); it has been definitively edited by A.C.
Cawley.[84] The text is the work of a single hand, dated
1525-50, and is often independent of the copy in the York
register (cf. no. 18, above).[85]

(30). Two copies of plays from the Coventry Corpus
Christi cycle have survived. A Coventry Corporation Ms.

contains the Weavers' Pageant of the _Presentation_ and
other matter from the cycle, 'corrected' by Robert Croo
in 1534, according to a note on folio 17.[86] The same
man is also known to have worked on the Shearmen and
Tailors' Pageant of the Nativity at the same time,[87]
but the manuscript has been destroyed; modern texts
derive from Sharpe's edition of 1825.[88]

(31). The Norwich Grocers' Play of _Adam and Eve_
from the city's Corpus Christi play exists in a modern
transcript (18th. C.) amongst the Kirkpatrick Papers in
the Norwich Record Office. Copies of the two versions
were made from now lost or destroyed sources dating from
c. 1534 - 1565.[89] Different late eighteenth century
copies of the Kirkpatrick text were published by Fitch[90]
and Waterhouse;[91] Professor Davis's recent edition rests
on a collation of these.[92]

(32). The earliest text of the Newcastle Shipwrights'
'Play or Dirge of Noah' from the Newcastle Corpus Christi
play is an eighteenth century copy printed by Bourne from
a late medieval original of unknown date; it has recently
been discussed and edited by Professor Davis.[93]

This I take to be the sum of generally accepted
evidence concerning the dating and localisation of the
surviving Middle English dramatic texts in manuscript.
It must form the basis for our projected map to show the
distribution of the drama in the later medieval period.
A certain amount of conjecture and half-knowledge has
been deliberately and necessarily admitted to the
summaries in those cases where older editions and studies
have been consulted. This may partly serve the purpose
of illustrating the relative neglect into which important
matters such as when and where a given text originated
or circulated have fallen. Substantial pieces or
collections such as the _Castle of Perseverance_, the
'N-Town' compilation and the Digby plays are widely
studied and discussed by literary students in a virtual
vacuum of knowledge about their origins and local

affiliations - factors which can act as primary determinants in studies and discussions of texts where they are readily available, for instance at York, or Chester, or Coventry.

The following table summarises the above evidence, and serves as a key to the accompanying map. The numbers employed in the foregoing account and the table are also used on the map to indicate the places where texts are known to have originated, or the areas with which they are associated on dialectal or internal evidence.

Table 1

1. Cambridge Prologue, c. 1275-1300.
2. Interludium de Clerico, c. 1300, Lincs.
3. Rickinghall Fragment, early 14th. C., Suffolk.

   A - A

4. Shrewsbury Fragments, early 15th. C., Lichfield area.
5. Durham Prologue, early 15th. C., Durham.
6. Pride of Life, early/mid-15th. C., Ireland.
7. Dux Moraud, c. 1425-50, East Anglia.
8. Castle of Perseverance, c. 1440, East Anglia.
9. Northampton Abraham, 1461, Northampton.

   B - B

10. 'N-Town' Ms. (main hand), c. 1450-75 ('1468'), East Anglia.
11. 'N-Town' Assumption, c. 1450-75, East Anglia.
12. Macro Wisdom, later 15th. C., East Anglia.
13. Macro Mankind, later 15th. C., East Anglia.
14. Reynes Extracts, 1470-90, Acle, Norfolk.
15. Brome Abraham, c. 1450-90, northern Suffolk.
16. Ashmole Fragment, later 15th. C.
17. York Register, later 15th. C. York.
18. Wakefield Register, c. 1480-1510, Wakefield.
19,20. Winchester texts, later 15th. C., east midlands.
21. Digby Wisdom, 1490-1500, east midlands (?E. Anglia).
22. 'N-Town' Ms., ff. 51-2, 1490-1500, prob. East Anglia.

    C - C

23. St. Paul, 1510-20, east midlands (? E. Anglia).

Map 1

Suggested Geographical
Distribution of the Surviving
Middle English Play Texts

Newcastle •
32

Durham •
5

York •
17,29

Wakefield •
18

Chester
• 28

Lincoln •

2

Lichfield •
?4

Norwich •
31

?7,8,10,11,12,13,15,
21,22,23,24,25,26

Coventry •
30

Northampton •
9

Bury •
3

Cambridge •

?19,20

LONDON ■

Note: Nos. 1, 16 and 27 (place of origin
unknown) and no. 6 (Dublin, Ireland) are
not shown.

24. <u>Mary Magdalene</u>, 1510-20, East Anglia.
25. Digby <u>Massacre</u>, 1510-20, east midlands (?E.Anglia).
26. <u>Play of the Sacrament</u>, 1510-20, East Anglia.
27. Bodl. e. mus. texts, <u>c</u>. 1518, (? north-west midlands).
28. Chester Mss., late 15th - early 17th. C., Chester.
29. York Scriveners' Ms., 1525-50, York.
30. Coventry Mss., <u>c</u>. 1534, Coventry.
31. Norwich Grocers' text, (16th. C.), Norwich.
32. Newcastle Shipwrights' text, (16th. C.), Newcastle.

<u>Line 'A'</u> distinguishes between those manuscripts dated before 1400 and those from after that date. Certain later manuscripts, such as those of the York and Chester civic cycles, are held to reflect texts written and performed before 1400.[94] Both, however, contain materials and changes relating to post-1400 revisions,[95] and it is not yet clear in what precise sense those manuscripts can be taken as evidence of fourteenth century dramatic activity in the places concerned.

<u>Line 'B'</u> indicates the date of the introduction of printing in England. The bulk of those texts above it are, of course, most unlikely to have been written down after that date, given that our present knowledge of their chronology is accurate. Of the texts below Line B, the first four <u>may</u> have been written down before that date. Many, if not all the texts below the line may reflect plays actually composed before the introduction of print.

<u>Line 'C'</u> relates to the first printed play texts, which date from the second decade of the sixteenth century.[96]

II

Though the preceding map and table speak largely for themselves, there are a number of points which can now be

emphasised as a result of presenting the generally accepted evidence about the survival of Middle English drama in manuscript in such a form.

From the map it is quite clear that there is a considerable preponderance of surviving play texts (in terms of number, if not bulk) associated more or less vaguely with East Anglia, as against other areas of the country. The north is primarily represented by the texts of the great civic cycles of York, Wakefield and Chester. The south and south-west are entirely unrepresented until one reaches the different language area of Cornwall.[97] But the most striking absentee from the list of places known to have produced play texts is surely London, and this situation as regards texts seems to parallel the equally surprising lack of non-literary documentation about plays and playing in the capital.[98]

The contrast between the map presented here and that provided by Sisam for the total literary geography of England in the fourteenth century (from which the present enquiry began) is of interest from more than one point of view. Sisam's map shows no evidence of vernacular literary activity of any kind in Norfolk and Suffolk, an altogether extraordinary fact when it is considered that these two counties constituted by far the most populous and wealthy provincial area in the country in the later Middle Ages.[99] Indeed, only two of the texts printed by Sisam later in the book may be said to be connected with East Anglia, and both appear to occur in hands of the fifteenth century.[100]

Dr. A.I. Doyle, as a result of his extensive investigations into the dissemination of vernacular manuscripts in England in the later Middle Ages, has commented upon the striking paucity of books from East Anglia in the fourteenth century as compared with the very much larger quantity from the same area in the subsequent hundred years.[101] The contrast between the evidence of Map 1 here and that of Sisam's map tends to verify Doyle's generalisation as regards one variety of vernacular literary activity. A considerable proportion

of the dramatic literature surviving from the Middle English period appears, on even the present evidence, to have originated or at least to have been copied out for some purpose in fifteenth or early sixteenth century Norfolk and Suffolk - the area which, according to Sisam, produced no vernacular literature worth mapping in the preceding century.

Even if we leave aside the early sixteenth century text from which the eighteenth century copy of the Norwich Grocers' play was made, as well as the later sixteenth century hand which interpolated into the Digby St Paul (nos. 31 and 23), we can still point to a possible total of over a score for the number of scribes involved in copying plays in or near fifteenth and early sixteenth century East Anglia. Moreover, as none of these play manuscripts is obviously a holograph and nearly all are certainly not so, there must have been earlier copies of the various texts available locally, or perhaps preserved in a single place. So much, indeed is obvious from the compilation of dramatic materials in B.L. Cotton Vesp. D. viii (no. 10), where the person responsible for making up the collection sometimes had two or more plays on a given subject before him to choose from.[102] And it seems that the compilation was still in some sense in use a generation later when a hand of about 1490-1500 was able to interpolate an episode from yet another source on folios 51-2 of the present manuscript, (no. 22). The textual situation with regard to the two surviving manuscripts containing all or part of the play Wisdom is also relevant here, (nos. 12, 21). The later fragment in the Digby manuscript (c. 1490-1500) happens to be independent of the earlier Macro text,[103] so we may posit at least one more copy once available in the area where the two known survivors are known to have originated. The survival of an apparently extraordinary number of play manuscripts from later medieval East Anglia must be seen in the context of the few rough statistics which we have for gauging the survival rate of Middle English manuscripts in general. It is of course a

15

commonplace to observe that only a small fraction of the entire output of vernacular manuscripts during the later Middle Ages has survived, and Dr Doyle (in the circumstances referred to in n. 101) has noted certain ways of quantifying the proportions with somewhat more precision: i) In 1493 Pynson printed 600 copies of _Dives et Pauper_, and of these about a score are known today, a survival rate of about 3%, though it might well be argued that incunabula stood a better chance of surviving the zeal of the Reformation than did manuscripts. ii) Of the 27 manuscripts containing English known to have been in the brethren's library at Syon Abbey in the early sixteenth century, only one is now known to exist, suggesting a similar sort of rate to that of the first example. iii) A fractional figure is indicated by the fact that of 2,000 fragments of manuscript used by Oxford book-binders between 1515 and 1620 (examined by N.R. Ker) less than a dozen contain English – though this of course must reflect to some extent the sort of materials available in a university town during the sixteenth century for use in pastedowns. The extreme infrequency with which books containing Middle English appear in Ker's _Medieval Libraries of Great Britain_ is obviously a comparable phenomenon. Survival rates may also be suggested by a rough computation of the potential output of the professional medieval English scribe in a career of, say, thirty years. The fact that only a very small minority of these men are known from work in more than one manuscript speaks for itself. Finally it is worth observing that plays – surely one of the most ephemeral of literary products whatever period is concerned – stood a much slimmer chance of survival in manuscript than most varieties of Middle English, and this makes the survival of the apparent East Anglian group little less than astonishing. These, however, are points to which I propose to return at a later stage of the investigation.

As regards the evidence presented in tabular form, it is clear that neither the introduction of printing

(Line B) nor the appearance of the first play texts in print (Line C) seem to have affected the production of manuscript copies of plays for use on a specifically local basis. The transmission of play texts, so far as we have evidence, continued by the traditional method of manuscript copy long after the introduction of print. We must look carefully at the early sixteenth century evidence of texts and local documents for the light such things may throw on conditions in the previous centuries. One case, that of the copy of the play Occupation, Idleness and Doctrine, (no. 20) is particularly relevant here. Had this text appeared in a sixteenth century manuscript or (more likely) a printed copy, we might very reasonably be inclined to classify it as a member of a well-established sixteenth century genre, the Tudor Interlude. But the text as we have it is very clearly a manuscript copy of the fifteenth century (and not a holograph), almost certainly made before the introduction of printing, and in any case well in advance of the earliest printed plays.[104] Our notions of the date of the origin of the genre must accordingly be revised.

<center>III</center>

Some ten years ago Arthur Brown published a paper calling for the re-orientation of the study of medieval English drama on a local and regional level. This paper does not seem to have attracted much attention, so it may be worthwhile to reproduce here the point particularly relevant to the present discussion:

> There is, perhaps, little to be gained
> at present from general historical surveys
> of the medieval drama in England; the
> evidence is too fragmentary. What seems to
> be needed now, apart from good editions,
> sound linguistic training and an ability
> to understand medieval habits of thought,
> is a series of detailed studies of medieval
> drama as it appeared in single localities

in this country. This kind of study will consider the drama of a single locality not so much from the point of view of its resemblances to drama elsewhere, not so much as a single manifestation of the great spirit of religious drama in Europe in the Middle Ages, but rather as a local product, influenced to a great extent by local circumstances, reflecting local conditions and attitudes, produced and performed by local people, often tradesmen, regarded as a local responsibility.[105]

These observations clearly locate what is perhaps the perennial and besetting problem of much of the scholarship applied to medieval English drama. This problem is perhaps best characterised as a tendency to reduce a genuine complexity of texts and related non-literary documents to a simple schematisation, generally in conformity with certain deeply-entrenched a priori assumptions. This tendency can sometimes be accompanied by an urge to simplify complexities in the interests of conveying some of the significance of the subject to a wide and popular readership for whom the religious drama is the most readily accessible area of an otherwise obscure medieval literary heritage.

A now well-known example of the type of approach I am referring to is to be seen in another branch of the study of medieval drama, the alleged transition from the Latin liturgical drama of the Church to the popular traditions in the various European vernaculars. Here, O.B. Hardison has recently had some success in drawing attention to one of the more deep-rooted and stultifying of the conventionally taught schemata, the long-accepted 'evolutionary' theory of the origins of drama in medieval Europe.[106] More recently still, R.P. Axton has published a study (complementary to Hardison's) characterised by a modest and lucid insistence on a multiplicity of origins and sources for medieval drama rather than a single one, and bringing properly into focus for the first time the importance of secular elements as a shaping power.[107]

'Reductive' tendencies have continued to hold their

place in many of the recent publications relating specifically to the later vernacular plays in England. The preference for the compendious <u>schema</u> and the comprehensive survey, with less than fair emphasis on local and regional variations, is markedly present in such studies as those of V.A. Kolve,[108] Rosemary Woolf and R. Potter.[109] There can, of course, be no question that the studies just mentioned are contributions of primary importance to the study of medieval drama from the strictly literary point of view. But to have identified that point of view as 'strictly literary' locates the chief limitation of that sort of approach. It is as if the texts of the Four Cycles, or the Moralities, on their own, conferred upon the scholar a kind of omniscience which absolved him from the complex contingencies and consequences of the study of medieval drama as what it in fact was - an essentially social organism intimately related to its own time, and more emphatically to it's own place.[110] In a fundamental sense, therefore, the local circumstances of play production which relate to a particular extant text, so far as they can be established, must be a primary factor which governs what we can say about a given medieval play from the 'literary' point of view.

Purely descriptive studies of the sort of material with which we will be concerned here have been much less frequent than literary-historical surveys. Perhaps the best known and most illuminating essay in the field has been Salter's work on the Chester plays, which made a distinct effort to take the text of the play and the non-literary documents together; but this has only ever been available in the lecture form in which it was originally conceived and delivered.[111] A common problem in studies of this sort has been the reluctance of scholars to go forth and search for or verify documents relating to the extant play texts for themselves. This has recently been partially remedied - as far as the Corpus Christi plays are concerned - by A.H. Nelson's work on the medieval and sixteenth century documents from various civic centres in

England and Scotland.[112] Nelson's account has a vitally important emphasis on the wide geographical and circumstantial variations in the type of place where Corpus Christi plays were staged, together with a lively, if somewhat eccentric awareness of the potential of the study of play texts and documents in conjunction with one another.[113]

There are still certain regions which would seem to offer opportunities for the investigation of documentary records of plays and playing together with texts which originated, or appear to have originated in them, and the most obvious of these is surely East Anglia. In 1971 R.R. Wright brought his researches amongst local archives in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex to a close with his unpublished thesis <u>Medieval Theatre in East Anglia</u> without, apparently, any awareness of the tradition of copying plays in manuscript in those areas, partially demonstrated above.[114] There is, therefore, clearly a need for an account of those texts which appear to have circulated in East Anglia, together with some consideration of the non-literary evidence for plays and playing in the same area. Naturally there can be no guarantee that the evidence of specific texts and particular documents will fall together to form a convenient whole for the purposes of study as they do automatically, for instance, at York or Chester. On the other hand it should be possible, working from the two different sorts of evidence, to formulate in general some sort of reasonably coherent pattern of dramatic activity which may at least be said to characterise rural East Anglia in contrast with the well-attested northern civic play centres.[115]

One or two points demand immediate attention before we can justifiably speak of being concerned with 'medieval drama in East Anglia'. First, the manuscripts themselves, or adequate reproductions of them, must be examined so that the bibliographical evidence offered in certain cases for associations with medieval East Anglia may be verified, and if possible augmented. Second,

where dialectal evidence is offered for regarding a play text as East Anglian, this may be re-assessed in the light of modern developments in Middle English dialectology.[116] Professors Angus McIntosh and M.L. Samuels have had considerable success in showing that the spelling systems used by the scribes of Middle English manuscripts have a demonstrable geographical distribution of their own, as distinct from the phonological significance of such sources, traditionally the raw material for the study of dialect. Their approach to the problem of the localisation of literary texts must certainly be brought into operation in assessing the language of the plays claimed to be East Anglian.[117] Other current projects and studies are also relevant. In re-editing the Paston Letters Professor Davis has been able to produce important evidence about the variations in the language used by the Norfolk family and their associates.[118] Renewed attention is also being given to such matters as the writings of John Capgrave of Lynn and the anonymous Suffolk scribe responsible for the Chaucer manuscript C.U.L. Gg.4.27.[119] But a more detailed exposition of the possibilities in this field must be developed in the following chapter.

If, after a detailed examination of the bibliographical and dialectal evidence concerning the materials in hand, we find some justification for the notion of 'East Anglian' drama, then we may legitimately open the way for comparisons amongst the texts themselves on such points as content, style, staging and so forth. These are possibilities which have been hinted at in the past but never properly explored,[120] and I would argue that the establishment of an objective basis on the lines which I have just suggested must precede such an investigation.

The chapters which follow are to some extent prolegomena to studies in the medieval drama of East Anglia. Chapters Two, Three and Four deal with the major problem of the East Anglian dialect in the time of the plays, and this lays the basis for other approaches to the subject, some of which are suggested in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

CHAPTER TWO

CURRENT TRENDS IN MIDDLE ENGLISH DIALECTOLOGY
AND THE STUDY OF LATER MIDDLE ENGLISH IN
EAST ANGLIA

At the end of the preceding chapter it was suggested that two main areas of study would need to be consolidated before we could justifiably concern ourselves with 'medieval drama in East Anglia', or look at the texts concerned as if they might be closely related from the literary or dramatic points of view; and these were the dialectal and the bibliographical approaches to the problem.[1] The case for medieval East Anglian drama is seriously weakened if no convincing account can be given of the distinctive regional dialect in which the plays are held to be written, or of the circumstances of early ownership of the manuscripts. Of the two approaches it is perhaps more profitable to turn to the matter of dialect first, for this in some ways determines what we can say about a given manuscript from the bibliographical point of view in some instances. That is to say, if we can establish that a certain play text is written in a particular dialect then this gives us certain geographical boundaries within which to search for clues about the early ownership of the manuscript, to say nothing of the circumstances of production, the literary affiliations of the text, and so forth.

At the point where we paused in the investigation in the first chapter we were able to indicate the existence of perhaps thirteen major and five minor dramatic texts associated more or less vaguely by current scholarship with later medieval or early sixteenth century East Anglia. For the sake of convenience they may be listed here again, retaining the system of numbering used hitherto, but adding the fairly obvious division into 'major' and 'minor' items on the basis of whether the text is reasonably complete or not.

Major 'East Anglian' texts:

     8. The <u>Castle of Perseverance</u>
   10. The 'N-Town' Plays (but cf. nos. 11 & 22)
   11. The 'N-Town' <u>Assumption</u> Play
   12. The Macro <u>Wisdom</u>

13. Mankind
15. The Brome Abraham and Isaac
19. Lucidus and Dubius
20. Occupation, Idleness and Doctrine
23. St Paul
24. Mary Magdalene
25. The Killing of the Children
26. The Play of the Sacrament
31. The Norwich Grocers' Play

Minor 'East Anglian' texts:

3. The Rickinghall Fragment
7. Dux Moraud
14. The Reynys Extracts
21. The Digby Wisdom fragment
22. The 'N-Town' Ms. ff. 51-2

As was indicated in the first chapter, we have the
judgement of major authorities associating some of the
texts mentioned here with later medieval East Anglia from
the point of view of dialect; for others we have very
little indication indeed for the hypothesis that they
belong to an East Anglian group. The task we are faced
with in the following pages is therefore quite clearly
defined: to develop a way of placing our knowledge of
the dialects of the various texts within a pre-established
framework of information about linguistic usage in East
Anglia gathered from localised texts and documents.

II

At the time of writing Middle English dialectology
is passing through a period of rapid change, and the
nature of the present investigation into the later
medieval 'East Anglian' plays and their dialects must be
placed in a historical context related to the nature of
this change. The developments referred to have taken
place over the last twenty years or so, and their origins
can be traced to a paper of fundamental importance given
by Professor Angus McIntosh to the Philological Society
in 1956.[2]

The significance of this paper is best seen against
the historical background of the study of Middle English

dialect over the last century. The study of dialect, or
dialectology, is the investigation of 'local peculiarities
of vocabulary, pronunciation and idiom'.[3] In the
narrowest sense this must be taken to refer to the speech
of living persons, and in more recent times to recorded
forms thereof. From a historical standpoint, however,
the materials which a dialectologist has to study are in
written form, and the statements he is able to make about
forms of speech he has never heard are formulated on the
basis of logical and analogical processes.

This system has been widely applied to Middle English,
a very substantial body of written language which has,
until recently, been quarried chiefly for phonological
and lexical information. The results of this type of
enquiry are to be found in the Oxford English Dictionary
and surveys of phonology and grammar such as those by
Oakden, by Moore, Meech and Whitehall and by Jordan,[4]
which all contain much dialectal material. Strictly
speaking, this form of the study of Middle English
dialect allows the placing of a hitherto unlocalised
literary text in one of the six broad regional divisions
of Middle English - Southern, Kentish, London, West
Midland, East Midland and Northern. Not all authorities
agree on the exact boundaries of these regions, and the
East Midland area is sometimes divided into northern and
southern parts. Norfolk and Suffolk are generally held
to fall in the southern part of the East Midland area,
together with Leicestershire, Northamptonshire,
Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Huntingdon-
shire, Cambridgeshire and Essex.[5] There is no widely
held opinion that the plays listed at the beginning of
the chapter were written down in the manuscripts as we
have them <u>outside</u> this southern East Midland dialect
area. What are clearly required are dialectal criteria
which will effectively distinguish texts written down in
Norfolk and Suffolk. This is, it appears, a task for
which a phonologically based dialectology is not primarily
fitted, and we must therefore turn to other approaches to
the problem.

It has just been observed that, though the vast bulk of linguistic evidence which has survived from the later Middle English period is in written form, this evidence has been chiefly studied by dialectologists for what it yields towards our knowledge of the spoken language of the time. This preference for the study of the phonological implications of the written form of Middle English is largely a question of historical development which need not concern us in detail here.[6] What is perhaps more significant for the purposes of the present investigation is the late growth of the realization of the significance for dialectal studies that speech and writing are two very different varieties of communication, and that the written form of English at least has always had a marked tendency to develop, in some ways, quite independently of the spoken language. An early statement of this kind of distinction was made over half a century ago by Henry Bradley, who observed in connexion with the question of the relationship between spelling and pronunciation:

> ...when a language undergoes change of
> pronunciation, the old spelling, now become
> phonetically incorrect, is often retained.
> In the mind of the man accustomed to reading
> the written form becomes part of the essence
> of a word. For him the best spelling of a
> word is the usual one, because it enables him
> most quickly to identify the word, and has
> acquired direct association with its meaning.
> It does not matter to him that the individual
> letters do not correspond to the individual
> sounds of which the words are composed...
> Among peoples in which many persons write and
> read much more than they speak and hear, the
> written language tends to develop more or
> less independently of the spoken language.[7]

Bradley's latter remark was obviously intended to apply to a particular social situation in later nineteenth and early twentieth century England, and to a then current debate about the 'rationalization' of English spelling. The application of his conclusion to a period like the fifteenth century, when rapid changes in pronunciation were accompanied by a widespread growth in vernacular literacy, is, however, clear.

The real impetus for the study of the written form
of language, or 'graphemic' analysis, did not follow
until the middle of the present century,[8] when Vachek
(amongst others) distinguished more clearly between the
independent functions of speech and writing. He made it
quite plain that the distinctions to be observed between
the graphemic and the phonemic were not intended to
disparage phonetic transcription:

> ...writing and phonetic transcription cannot
> be efficiently compared unless the diversity
> of their respective functions is taken into
> account...
> ...writing should not be blamed for being
> inaccurate in recording the phonic make-up
> of spoken utterances - it lies outside the
> scope of its function to do this.
>
> The study of concrete writings and concrete
> written languages, as well as research in the
> theory of writing and of the written language,
> is still in its infancy... Writing cannot be
> dismissed as an imperfect, conservative quasi-
> transcription...writing is a system in its own
> right, adapted to fulfil its own specific
> functions, which are quite different from the
> functions proper to a phonetic transcription.[9]

This, broadly speaking, was the historical position in the
approach to the written form of language when McIntosh
formulated his ideas about the analysis of written Middle
English referred to above.[10] He urged that the mass of
writings which survives in Middle English might be more
profitably exploited primarily on its own terms - as a
written system - as well as for what secondary information
it offers about speech habits in the later Middle Ages.
The wide breadth of variety in the spellings used by
Middle English scribes is perhaps best seen from this point
of view, where it is recognized that the written form of
the language is in some ways only a limited representation
of the spoken form, but on the other hand can be
relatively rich in other types of significance. And
amongst the latter we may count the possibility that
Middle English spelling systems may have a demonstrable
regional distribution, perhaps independent of the
phonological significance (if any) of the constituent

parts of such systems.[11] A further step is then to show that these spelling systems may themselves be of use in establishing the area of origin of unplaced literary texts by a procedure analogous to, but on a more geographically restricted scale than that employed when dealing with phonological criteria.[12]

The differences in precision and effectiveness between the two distinct approaches to Middle English dialectology which thus emerge depend partly on the number and type of criteria employed by each, and the accuracy with which these criteria have been established from dated and localised documents and texts. A graphemic system, deriving directly from the written form of the language, with its numerous and wide variations in spelling, is likely to be more efficient than a purely phonological approach. The latter is constrained to draw, for a limited number of criteria, on a written language not primarily designed to yield the kind of information sought.[13] This is not intended to imply that graphemics and phonology are mutually exclusive approaches to the study of written Middle English and the localisation of literary texts. In practice the two can work effectively as complementary systems of investigation - the phonology of a particular unlocalised text giving a general indication of its linguistic provenance, its spelling system giving a more precise guide to the locality in which it was produced. But it must be added that the study of Middle English spelling systems lags far behind the phonological exploitation of the material involved, and that a wealth of graphemic evidence (some of it of no phonic significance) remains to be harvested.[14]

The use of phonological criteria for the localisation of literary texts has a further limitation of a type not suggested in the foregoing theoretical discussion of the question. A most significant factor is the growth of Early Modern Standard English,[15] based in many respects on the language of London, during the fifteenth century. As a result, phonological criteria which are useful and

distinctive in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are of noticeably less value in the period between 1400 and 1500, the time during which most of the 'East Anglian' plays are thought to have been copied. Some of the most detailed information we have on this point derives from A. Kihlbom's extensive comparison between the spoken language of a variety of provincial letter writers of the fifteenth century with that of their contemporaries in London.[16] Her conclusion is well worth quoting in detail for it shows that regions as far apart as Devonshire, Oxfordshire and Norfolk were rapidly acquiring a number of the features of pronunciation of the language of the capital (as distinct from written forms) at that period:

> On the whole the language of the private letters we have examined agrees with the London usage, such as this is reflected in the contemporary official (London and State) documents, not only in its general features...but also in minute details... It is evident that the London language was felt as a Standard to be followed as closely as possible, and the dialectal deviations which do occur are more or less occasional, and generally appear by the side of the 'Standard' forms.[17]

Miss Kihlbom was not primarily concerned with spelling in her study, but her conclusion is again worth quoting because it clearly indicates that regional spelling was preserved longer than regional pronunciation, in the areas which she examined, during the fifteenth century:

> Often the influence of regional dialect is apparent only in the marked preference of one spelling when the Standard vacillates between two, thus, in the case of a+nd where the London language has a/o, the Devon letters have o always, while the a-forms prevail in the Paston letters.[18]

Here, then, is further reason to think that more detailed attention given to regional spelling systems in the fifteenth century will offer a firmer guide to the localisation of literary texts than the fading phonological criteria generally used. We may therefore turn to a more detailed consideration of the problems and

potentialities of graphemic analysis as an approach to
the localisation of the 'East Anglian' plays.

III

As the preceding section of this chapter will have
suggested, the following pages will assume some
familiarity on the reader's part with the work of
Professors McIntosh and Samuels towards the forthcoming
<u>Atlas of the Dialects of Later Middle English</u>. Two
articles by these co-workers in <u>English Studies</u>, volume
<u>44</u>,[19] give examples of the procedures which have gone
towards the making of this atlas, and some of the uses to
which it may be put, and both of these elements derive
primarily from the notions of graphemic analysis
suggested by McIntosh in 1956.[20]

What use can the graphemic approach to the localisa-
tion of literary texts be in connexion with the 'East
Anglian' play manuscripts and the problem of their
provenance raised in the first chapter? In the first
place, the graphemic approach clearly offers a technique
of 'contrastive analysis' which might function <u>within</u> the
traditional east or south-east midland phonological area.
If we can collect sufficient information from dated and
localised texts and documents from the two counties then
this should give us a framework of spelling evidence
within which we may hope to place or 'fit'[21] the graphemic
materials from the suspected East Anglian play texts.

Some detailed consideration of the nature of these
graphemic criteria and the use to be made of them for
the purposes of localisation is now necessary, for the
time being from a theoretical standpoint. The dialect[22]
of a text of unknown area of origin may be 'placed' in
its appropriate geographical region on the basis of
graphemic criteria provided that these criteria have been
established on independent grounds - i.e. collected from
dated and localised materials from that region. The

location of the unplaced text depends on the comparison of its separate graphemic components with those of the pre-established pattern. One point about this procedure is quite crucial; this is that these components from both the known regional pattern and from the unlocalised text are taken in combination.

For instance, if the combination of spelling features numbers 1 to 20 are typical of regional dialect X, and are also found in combination in unlocalized text α, then we have good grounds for supposing that α is the work of a scribe who acquired his spelling system in region X. The argument that features (say) 8, 9 and 10 of the X/α dialect are attested separately in different regional dialects W, Y and Z, therefore not solely typical of the X/α dialect and therefore not admissable as localising criteria, is of no force. The combination 8-9-10 within the X/α array of forms 1 to 20 distinguishes and excludes these forms from association with the separate examples W8, Y9 and Z10 of the other regions.

Similarly, the argument that spelling features numbers 4, 5 and 6 (from the same range 1 to 20) occur separately in diverse unlocalised texts need not, for reasons analogous to those given for the separate occurrences of 8, 9 and 10 above, lead us to confuse these examples with the 4-5-6 combination of the X/α dialect.

The notion of a combination of graphemic criteria demonstrably exclusive to a particular region is thus unassailable as a ground for localising a comparable unplaced text, in spite of the fact that some components of the combination may be separately attested in other dialects and texts. We may take a further example from the East Anglian materials with which we shall be more closely concerned presently. The typically East Anglian combination of spellings word for 'world', erde for 'earth' and whow for 'how' is not necessarily invalidated because word may be seen in a Shropshire text, erde in certain northern dialects and whow occurs in an isolated

instance in an Oxfordshire documentary source (as in fact is the case). To invalidate the East Anglian combination an identical one must be produced and documented from a single comparably restricted geographical region.

IV

The preceding sections of this chapter offer a theoretical basis for the investigation of a variety of fourteenth and fifteenth century East Anglian localised texts and documents which follows. It may be asked, however, whether East Anglia offers a sufficiently self-contained and self-consistent dialect area to sustain such an investigation? The answer to this arises out of the preliminary stages of such an enquiry, a process not worth repeating in detail here. We may, on the other hand, point to a number of observations by medieval writers from Norfolk and Suffolk (together with other related contemporary evidence) which show that East Anglian English was individual enough to call for comment from an early period.[23] This may then be supplemented with evidence of more modern recognition of the distinctive linguistic character of the area.

The significance of Jocelin of Brakelond's well-known remark about the English used by Abbot Samson of Bury can, I think, be taken as the earliest surviving reference to East Anglian varieties of Middle English. As early as the 1180's Samson took the unusual step of preaching to the lay people in their own language, and Jocelin's sly humour hints that the Suffolk congregation had difficulty in understanding the dialect of the Norfolk monk:

> Scripturam Anglice scriptam legere nouit
> elegantissime, et Anglice sermocinare
> solebat populo, set secundum linguam
> Norfolciae, ubi natus et nutritus erat.[24]

It is generally thought that Chaucer, writing some two centuries later, confined himself to the use of

northern dialect in the linguistic satire in the <u>Reeve's</u>
<u>Tale</u>. However, as Tolkien showed, Chaucer carried the
joke further by adding a tinge of eastern dialect to
his rendering of Oswald the Reeve's own speech, as well
as that of the Trumpington miller in the tale.[25]

The fifteenth century, however, furnishes more
explicit comments on the distinctive linguistic complexion
of the East Anglian region than those of the previous
centuries. The eminent and learned provincial of the
English Austin from 1453 to 1457 was John Capgrave of
Lynn[26] who drew attention to his local affiliations,
writing in one of his English works:

My cuntre is of northfolke, of þe town of Lynne[27]

As we shall see, Capgrave left a large body of English
evidently produced under his own supervision in his
priory at Lynne, which clearly has importance from the
dialectal point of view.

Working at Lynne at much the same time as Capgrave
was a philologically inclined Dominican traditionally
known as Galfridus Grammaticus who produced an early and
substantial English-Latin dictionary, the <u>Promptorium</u>
<u>Parvulorum</u>, completed in 1440.[28] Galfridus prefaced his
work with a perhaps mildly apologetic remark touching on
his own local dialect:

> Comitatus tamen norfolcie loquendi modum
> sum solum secutus, quem solum ab infancia didici
> et solo tenus plenius perfectiusque cognoui.[29]

A third native of Lynne might also be mentioned in
this connexion. Whilst Capgrave and Galfridus were at
work in the town Margery Kempe was finding problems in
putting her autobiographical writings into an acceptable
form. If her own account is to be believed, she was
unsatisfied with the original copy, made by one of a
number of slightly enigmatic 'Dutchmen' who appear in her
<u>Book</u>, and had it copied more to her satisfaction by a
local man. The text as we have it now also appears to
be the work of a scribe from the locality of Lynne.[30]

These points about Norfolk writers may be paralleled
by the contemporary example of Osbern Bokenham (writing

1443-7), the Austin friar of Stoke Clare in Suffolk.
Bokenham described himself as a Suffolk man, though it
appears that he came from, and took his name from the
village of Buckenham in southern Norfolk.[31] As he says
himself in the course of telling in verse the lives of
a number of female saints:

> ...spekyn and wrytyn I wyl pleynly
> Aftyr þe language of Suthfolk speche[32]

As well as writers responsible for original works in
fifteenth century East Anglia, there are examples of
widely diffused vernacular texts copied by local scribes
for local use. A particularly interesting example occurs
in C.U.L. Ms. Ii.4.9, a miscellany of didactic and
popular theological writings prepared by two scribes for
use (it may be presumed) in an East Anglian religious
house; whatever the exact details of the origins the
manuscript was certainly owned in the area from an early
period.[33] At the end of the manuscript (f.197v) one of
the scribes pauses to observe that the last item copied
(Rolle's Form of Living) has been 'translate oute of
Northarn tunge into Sutherne that it schulde be the
bettir understondyn of men that be of the selve countre.'

This interesting notion of a 'translation' from one
Middle English dialect to another has not perhaps been
given the wide attention it deserves,[34] but it is not
difficult to point to East Anglian 'translations' of some
of the most important vernacular texts of the period.
C.U.L. Ms. Gg.4.27 is a well-known and textually very
significant copy of the bulk of Chaucer's verse by a
scribe who certainly learned to spell in East Anglia.[35]
B.L. Ms. Harley 3954 contains amongst other items, a
mixed B and A text of Piers Plowman in East Anglian
English of the fifteenth century. Both the spelling
system used by the scribe and a number of the contents
of the manuscript are closely related to C.U.L. Ii.4.9,
discussed in the preceding paragraph.[36]

Professor Davis has dealt with in some detail the
regional complexion of the language of the Paston family

and their associates, and it is not surprising to find one of the Paston men alluding to a feature of local speech 'new browthe vp wyth my marschandys of Norwyche'.[37] This reference to East Anglian dialect brings us towards the close of the fifteenth century, and completes a series of contemporary observations on the matter which began in the twelfth.

Turning to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries we come to a period which initiates both the scholarly and the antiquarian interest in both the 'Standard' type of English and its regional variants. An instance of attention being paid to a local East Anglian dialect seems to underlie Coote's observation as follows, in his treatise The Englische Schoolmaister (1596):

> Some people speake thus: The mell standeth on the hell, for The mill standeth on the hill, so knet for knit, bredg for bridg[38]

Coote came from Bury St Edmunds, and was almost certainly alluding to a feature of local speech which has persisted in that area from medieval times to the present day.[39]

An early example of the 'antiquarian' interest in East Anglian dialect from a lexical point of view is to be found in Sir Thomas Browne's list of words 'of no general reception in England but of common use in Norfolk, or peculiar to the East Angle counties'.[40] This was followed by a good number of word-lists drawn from the speech of the East Anglian agricultural community during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The most important examples of this sort of investigation are the local dialect vocabularies of Forby and Moore,[41] the bulk of whose information eventually came to reside, with other materials collected from similar sources,[42] in Wright's English Dialect Dictionary.[43] The most up to date account of the current East Anglian dialect will be found in the relevant volumes of the Leeds Survey of English Dialects, and the maps deriving from it.[44]

Between the period of antiquarian interest and the Leeds Survey intervenes the phase of the enquiry into the language of later medieval East Anglia to which we owe

most of our present knowledge of the subject. The appearance for the first time in print of documents and literary texts produced in medieval East Anglia was accompanied by studies of the language with a particular interest in the phonological significance of the material. For instance, the publication of documentary material such as Gairdner's edition of the Paston Letters and Toulmin Smith's of the Norfolk Gild Returns of 1389 were followed by studies of the language such as those of Neumann and Schultz respectively.[45] Similarly, the appearance of literary texts by Capgrave, Bokenham and Margery Kempe led to studies of the language for what it revealed about the east midland dialect.[46] The results of this sort of work were incorporated into the comprehensive historical grammars of Middle English, and into studies of the east midland dialect,[47] but comments on the spelling systems in East Anglian materials (as distinct from the phonology) have been less common. Distinctive regional spellings may sometimes only be traced with difficulty amongst the citations from medieval texts in the Oxford English Dictionary, and in the Middle English Dictionary.

An important exception to this pattern were Furnivall's remarks on the dialect of the Macro plays in the 'Afterwords' to the first Early English Text Society edition of the texts,[48] and these remarks serve in some ways as a point of departure for the investigation conducted in the next two chapters. Furnivall never claimed to be one of what he liked to describe as the 'fonetic folk',[49] so it is of interest that his four tests of 'Norfolk speech' are more immediately arresting as idiosyncratic spellings rather than as phonetically significant features of the language. He mentions:

1.) x- instead of 'sh-' in forms of 'shall', 'should' etc.

2.) qw- instead of 'wh-' in numerous words usually so spelt.

3.) -t or -th for '-ght' in numerous words usually spelt thus.

4.) w instead of 'v' in numerous words where the latter is usually found.

We shall return to these observations presently; but
in the meantime it is worth noting how often later
remarks about, or identifications of 'East Anglian'
English, or texts written in Norfolk or Suffolk, can be
traced back to no other apparent source than Furnivall's
scarce-documented and whimsically expressed points about
the matter.[50]

<center>V</center>

In section III of this chapter it was suggested that
if we can collect sufficient information about later
medieval spelling systems in East Anglia, from dated and
localised documents and texts, then this will provide a
framework of evidence with which to compare the language
of the play texts of possible East Anglian origin. A
list of suitable documentary sources, together with
literary texts from Norfolk and Suffolk, is required.
The sources listed below are accompanied by brief
descriptions of their nature and a serial number for
brief citation in the chapter which follows. Printed
editions, where the orthographic forms to be cited will
be found throughout without difficulty, will be found in
the notes. For several items, however, unpublished
manuscript sources have been used. The materials are
listed in the following groups:

A: Localised documents and associated literary texts,
serial letter 'L'.

B: The Norfolk Gild Returns of 1389, serial letter 'G'.

C: The English Writings of John Capgrave of Lynn, serial
letter 'C'.

D: The _Promptorium Parvulorum_, serial letters 'PP'.

E: The Paston Letters and Papers, comprising (i) writings
of the Paston men, serial letter 'P'; (ii) writings
of Paston East Anglian amanuenses, serial letters
'PA'; (iii) writings of Paston East Anglian
correspondents, serial letters 'PC'.

A. Localised Documents and Associated Literary Texts

Bury St. Edmunds, West Suffolk Record Office:

L.1, Bury Wills:
(1) Jone Heryng of Bury, 1419.[51]
(2) John Baret of Bury, 1463.
(3) John Smith of Bury, 1480.
(4) Baldwin Coksedge of Felsham, 1467.
(5) Roger Rokewood of Euston, 1479.
(6) Margaret Odeham of Bury, 1492.[52]

L.2, Sudbury Wills:
(1) Thomas Wolfferston of Wolverstone, 1442.
(2) John Deye of Long Melford, 1452.[53]

L.3, Bury Corporation Document:
The Byelaws for the Weavers, 1477.[54]

Cambridge, University Library:

L.4, Additional Ms. 2830, The Writings of John Drury of Beccles, c. 1434. [55]
According to Meech, Drury probably belonged to a substantial Suffolk family of that name, and was school-master at Beccles in the 1430's. His grammatical and didactic treatises were copied in this manuscript by a Beccles scribe named Hardgrave.

L.5, Ms. Gg.4.27, Chaucer etc., copied 1410-20.[56]
The manuscript is a 'library' of Chaucerian and other verse by a scribe who also copied Bodleian Ms. e.mus.116 (= L.18). According to Samuels (in a note quoted by Doyle and Pace) the scribe's orthographic features are characteristic of west Suffolk.

London, British Library:

L.6, Additional Ms. 4733, The Register of Crabhouse Nunnery, Norfolk, 1470. [57]
Part of the text (folios 50v-53v) is written in English.

L.7, Additional Ms. 11814, A translation of Claudian, 'De Consulatu Stiliconis', 'translat and wrete at Clare', Suffolk, 1445. [58]

L.8, Additional Charters 40672-3, Dunwich (Suffolk) documents, 1405. [59]
The documents are two copies of an agreement between Sir Roger Swyllyngham and the citizens of Dunwich.

L.9, Arundel Ms. 327, verse legends of saints by Osbern Bokenham of Clare, 1443-7. [60]
The manuscript is not a holograph, being the work of three hands; Bokenham noted that he wrote 'aftyr þe language of Suthfolk speche'. [61]

L.10, Stowe Ms. 953, A translation of the 'Revelations' of Methodius, c. 1450, Norfolk. [62]
An early owner of the manuscript was 'William Gilberd de Toffet Monachorum' (Toft Monks, Nf.), probably to be identified with the William Gilbert who was rector of the adjoining parish of All Saints, Whetacre, 1450-1476.[63]

London, Public Record Office:

L.11, Ancient Correspondence, S.C.1, 59/8, 59/10
Two letters written by Robert Radclyffe of Attleborough, Norfolk, 1478-9. [64]

Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland:

L.12, Advocates' Ms. 18.7.21, John of Grimestone's Preaching Book, c. 1372. [65]
This manuscript is now thought to have been the preaching book of a Norfolk Franciscan; Grimston is in north-west Norfolk. [66]

Norwich, Norfolk and Norwich Record Office:

L.13, Norwich Corporation Documents, 1415-43:[67]
(1)   The Composition of 1415.
(2)   Petition to the Bishop and the Earl of Suffolk, 1443.
(3)   Contract for the re-building of the quay at Conesford, 1432.

L.14, Liber Albus Norowici, 1449-82:
(1)   Oaths of the City Officials, c. 1452.
(2)   Wetherby's Controversy, 1482.
(3)   Ordinances of the Crafts, 1449.
(4)   The Mayor's Proclamation 1453.
(5)   Forms of Oaths for Masters of Crafts.

L.15, Book of Miscellaneous Matters before the Mayor, c. 1442:
(1)   Petition concerning the Worsted Weavers.
(2)   St. George's Gild and the Corporation.

L.16, Norfolk Wills:
(1)   Sir Bryan Stapylton of Ingham, 1438.
(2)   Richard Edy of West Acre, 1438. [68]
(3)   William Tyllys of Thetford, 1500. [69]

Oxford, Bodleian Library:

L.17, Digby Ms. 99, the Prick of Conscience, a copy made at Thetford during the fifteenth century.
The manuscript contains i) Latin documents relating to the see of Norwich, and ii) the Prick, in several hands, one of which signs the explicit: 'Frater Johannes Stanys monacus Thetfordie constat istum librum'. [70]

L.18, _E musaeo Ms. 116_, Mandeville etc., c. 1410-20. The first part of the manuscript is the work of the west Suffolk scribe responsible for C.U.L. Ms. Gg.4.27, (L.5, q.v.). [71]

L.19, _Gough Ms. Norfolk 18_, a Thetford Priory Register, fifteenth century. The only English document in the manuscript is the will of Hugo Croo of Lynford, folio 18r. [72]

L.20, _Gough Ms. Norfolk 20_, a Register of St. Mary's Hospital Yarmouth, c. 1400. On folios 28v to 31v are the rules of the house in English. [73]

L.21, _Rawlinson Ms. D. 913, folios 44-51_; Ordinances, St. George's Gild, Norwich. [74]
This manuscript (_olim_ Rawl. misc. 1370) is a composite of materials from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries; the gild ordinances are in a fifteenth century gathering.

L.22, _Rawlinson Ms. poet. 18_, Capgrave's _St. Katherine_ etc., Wisbech c. 1440-50. [75]
The manuscript is the work of several hands copying in collaboration, one being that of William Gybbe of Wisbech, _fl_. 1440-1477. [76]

L.23, _Tanner Ms. 407_, the Commonplace Book of Robert Reynys of Acle, Norfolk, c. 1470-90. [77]
The manuscript is mostly in Reynys's own hand; cf. also no. 14, Chapter One. [78]

Privately owned, untraced and other materials:

L.24, _The Butler-Bowdon Ms_, Margery Kempe of Lynne, c. 1430-1440. [79]
The manuscript is the work of a scribe named 'Salthows', who, as Meech observes probably took his name from Salthouse, north Norfolk. It is known to have been made before 1440. [80]

L.25, _Swaffham Parish Library_, The Black Book of Swaffham, Norfolk, fifteenth century. [81]

L.26, _Tilney, Norfolk, Churchwardens' Accounts_.
The present location of the manuscript, which runs from 1443 onwards, is unknown. [82]

L.27, _Wymondham, Norfolk, Gild Books_, fifteenth century. Books of the gilds of Our Lady's Light (from 1442) and the Nativity of Our Lady (from 1469) are held by the vicar of Wymondham. [83]

L.28, _Long Melford Church, Suffolk, Inscriptions_.
Long inscriptions on the exterior of the church record later fifteenth century benefactions. [84]

Manuscripts abroad:

L.29, _Royal Library, Stockholm, Ms.X.90_; Medica and a Herbal, Fransham, Norfolk, c. 1425-1450.

A note on p. 49 in the main hand connects the manuscript with Fransham, near East Dereham. [85]

L.30, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York: Bühler Ms. 21, Medica, Norwich, fifteenth century. [86]
The contents include a calendar connecting the manuscript with the diocese of Norwich, and the cathedral.

L.31, Princeton U.L., Garret Ms. 141, The writings of John Metham, Ingham, Norfolk, c. 1450. [87]
The manuscript was made for Sir Miles and Lady Stapleton of Ingham; Metham appears to have been connected with their household.

L.32, Yale U.L., Hamilton Ms, Commonplace Book, Brome Hall, Suffolk. [88]
The hand of Robert Melton of Stuston, Suffolk, appears from c. 1499 onwards. Most of the manuscript is occupied by the work of the main or 'literary' hand, discussed under no. 15 in Chapter One.

B. The Gild Returns of 1389.

In writs sent out by the central government in 1388 all gilds and related bodies in England were required to send up to Chancery a document giving details of their foundation statutes and property, by February 1389.[89] Most of the documents, or Returns, are in Latin or Anglo-Norman, but no less than forty-six from Norfolk are in English.[90] English Returns survive from Norwich (12), Lynn (26), Wiggenhall (5), Oxborough (2) and East Winch (1). They constitute an important and early set of dated and localised East Anglian writings, and yield important evidence of orthographic habits in the area. Since J. Toulmin Smith's edition the documents themselves have been re-classified under 'Chancery Miscellanea' in the Public Record Office.[91] In subsequent references here they will be quoted by their serial letter (G) and numbers which correspond to the documents as they are ordered in the printed edition, as follows:

G1 - G12, Norwich Gilds; Toulmin Smith, English Gilds, nos. IV - XV. [92]

G16 - G38, Lynn Gilds; Toulmin Smith, English Gilds, nos. XVI - XLI. [93]

G39 - G43, Wiggenhall Gilds; Toulmin Smith, English Gilds, nos. XLII - XLVI. [94]

G44, East Winch Gild; Toulmin Smith, English Gilds, no. XLVII. [95]

G45 - G46, Oxborough Gilds; Toulmin Smith, English Gilds, nos. XLVIII - XLIX. [96]

C. The English Writings of John Capgrave of Lynn.

The writings of John Capgrave of Lynn (1393-1464) have attracted considerable attention in recent years, particularly from the bibliographical and textual point of view. Unfortunately, scholarly opinion is not unanimous about a group of manuscripts held to be from the writer's own hand. In 1969 P.J. Lucas[97] claimed that the following manuscripts containing Capgrave's vernacular writings (together with other manuscripts of his Latin works) were written by a single hand, that of their author: British Library, Add.Ms.36704;[98] Bodleian, Bodley Ms. 423;[99] Huntington Library Ms.HM.55;[100] Cambridge, U.L. Ms.Gg.4.12.[101] (These will be cited hereafter, preserving Lucas's numbering, as C2, C3, C4 and C5). More recently, E. Colledge, whilst accepting that all these manuscripts are the work of the same hand, has shown that both the Latin and the vernacular manuscripts yield evidence that the scribe and the author were not the same man.[102] A corrector has been at work on all of them putting right errors of a sort not likely to have been committed by an author copying his own work. Colledge therefore suggests that the corrector was Capgrave himself, who, as a distinguished scholar and man of affairs in his order, had a personal secretary for the relatively menial task of copying his works for presentation to various distinguished patrons.

On the precise matter of the production of the manuscripts Colledge's arguments are persuasive, and they need not diminish the value of the Capgrave manuscripts (as I shall hereafter refer to them) as evidence of the spelling system used in Lynn in the first half of the fifteenth century. Indeed, as Lucas has shown in another study,[103] many features of the language and spelling used in one of the manuscripts (C5) indicate the work of a man who has taken the trouble to develop a

system which constitutes a sort of compromise between the nascent London 'Standard' of the day and his own provincial usage. In spite of the fact that the group of manuscripts just mentioned are probably not from the hand of Capgrave himself, there is much in the language to suggest that we are dealing with his own quite individual linguistic system, one which was 'purged of obvious provincialisms, but not one that was "metropolitan" - though he may possibly have thought that it bore more resemblance to London English than it actually did. Apparently he was more interested in avoiding these obvious provincialisms than in attaining some specific identifiable standard'.[104]

D.   The 'Promptorium Parvulorum'.

Some details of the compilation of the English-Latin dictionary _Promptorium Parvulorum_ by a Dominican of Lynn, c. 1440, have been mentioned in the preceding section. A text of this sort is of limited usefulness, if, as is the present case, the enquiry seeks frequently occurring words of minor lexical interest. Nevertheless, worth while information can be extracted from the three East Anglian copies of the work which have appeared in print, in part or in whole. Six manuscripts of the work were known to the early editors, Way and Mayhew,[105] and of these the copies in King's College, Cambridge, Ms. 8, Phillipps Library Ms. 8306 and the Winchester Cathedral Ms. reproduce typical East Anglian spellings.[106] Way printed the text found in British Library Ms. Harley 221 - in his view the 'most ancient, the most correct and the most copious of the manuscripts' - with selected collations from the other sources.[107] The Harley manuscript, however, does not reproduce the dialect of the original text, assuming, that is, that the Lynn compiler wrote a variety of East Anglian English resembling that of the Capgrave and Margery Kempe manuscripts. On the other hand, the King's, Phillipps and Winchester texts exhibit in common some of the most

distinctive provincial spellings - for instance, the -t
and -th spellings for '-ght', and qu- or qw- spellings
in 'wh-' words, the 'Norfolk' characteristics claimed
by Furnivall. There is also evidence that the King's
manuscript was owned in Norfolk from an early period.[108]
Orthographic evidence from the Promptorium is therefore
cited as follows:
PP1 - Winchester Ms., PP2 - King's Ms., PP3 - Phillipps
Ms.

E. The Paston Letters and Papers.

The Paston Letters and the documents associated with
them are amongst the most copious vernacular writings
connected with fifteenth century East Anglia. For
linguistic purposes their variety has distinct pitfalls,
and Professor Davis, who is in the course of a re-
edition of the entire collection,[109] has written:

> The volumes known as 'The Paston Letters'
> are not one document but more than a
> thousand. Besides letters of multifarious
> origin and handwriting they contain
> petitions, memoranda, inventories,
> indentures, wills even more heterogeneous.
> If they are to be used as a quarry for
> linguistic study these facts must never
> be forgotten, and the nature of every
> document must be attended to.[110]

The orthography of the Pastons and their associates has
been studied in Professor Davis's new edition, and the
list below is keyed to his numbering of the documents.
The letters of the Paston men (i) must be treated with
some caution for various reasons, some of which are also
relevant to the work of the amanuenses (ii). Some of
the Paston men travelled widely, and often spent long
periods in London. As a result, the provincial spellings
which they used early in their careers were sometimes
replaced by London 'Standard' forms. At the same time
these more advanced spellings were beginning to appear
beside old-fashioned and regional forms in the provinces
themselves. Both these trends combine to change the
complexion of the Paston mens' letters in the latter half

of the fifteenth century,[111] and the same is true for the language of an amanuensis used principally by Margaret Paston in Norwich between 1448 and 1454.[112] Nevertheless it is possible to locate with some assurance the East Anglianisms used by the men and the amanuenses, and in a number of cases this is because of rather than in spite of the fact that some of them were abandoning the regionalisms in favour of the more advanced forms.

The letters received by the Pastons from their East Anglian correspondents (iii) usually consist of only a single document, and the place of origin is generally stated.

(i), The Paston Men.

The Paston men not only wrote letters on their own behalf, but also acted as amanuenses for other members of the family, and some documents produced in this way are noted here. All have been printed in Professor Davis's <u>Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century</u>, Part I. The following documents illustrate particularly clearly major features of East Anglian orthography in the fifteenth century, and are selections from the total surviving output of the writers.

<u>P1</u>, Edmond I, one letter, 1447; Davis, i, no. 79.

<u>P2</u>, John I, selected letters and documents, 1449-1465; Davis, i, nos. 37, 42A, 43-4, 73-4.

<u>P3</u>, William II, selected writings, 1452-67; Davis, i, nos. 81-4, 86, 92.

<u>P4</u>, Clement II, selected letters, 1461-4; Davis, i, nos. 114-6, 119, 120. [113]

<u>P5</u>, Sir John (II), selected letters, 1461-73; Davis, i, nos. 231, 235-6, 243-5, 248-9, 256, 258, 261, 264, 268, 270, 279. [114]

<u>P6</u>, John III, selected writings, 1462-5; Davis, i, nos. 318-20, 177, 188. [115]

<u>P7</u>, Edmond II, selected writings, 1469-80; Davis, i, nos. 201 (dorse), 203, 205, 212, 216, 397-8. [116]

<u>P8</u>, William III, selected letters 1478-87; Davis, i, nos. 406-7, 409.

<u>P9</u>, Walter, selected letters, 1478-9; Davis, i, nos. 402-4. [117]

(ii) Paston Amanuenses.

Many of the scribes employed locally by the Pastons remain anonymous, but the extent of their work has now been set out by Professor Davis.[118] Where their writings are of particular interest from the orthographical point of view they have been drawn upon as follows. Like two of those who have been identified, and who are mentioned below - Daubeney and Calle - the amanuenses appear to have been local estate or household servants. Gloys, the family chaplain, was also often employed in a scribal capacity. Many of the letters were taken down at the dictation of two of the Paston women, Agnes and Margaret.

PA1, Scribe A, an amanuensis employed extensively by Margaret Paston at Norwich between 1448 and 1454. Much information on his work has been assembled by Professor Davis in an important article on East Anglian orthography, 'A Scribal Problem in the Paston Letters'.[119] Several letters yield characteristic local forms: Davis, i, nos. 128, 129PS, 130-2, 135, 147, 149.

PA2, James Gloys, letters and documents 1449-69; Davis, i, nos. 36, 143, 166, 194, 199, 200.

PA3, Scribe B, amanuensis to Agnes Paston, mainly at Norwich, 1450-61; Davis, i, nos. 19-21, 24, 28-9.

PA4, Scribe C, the hand of two of Agnes Paston's letters, 1451; Davis, i, nos. 22-3.

PA5, Scribe D, amanuensis to John I and Margaret Paston, Norwich, 1452; Davis, i, nos. 40, 45, 144.

PA6, John Daubeney, letters for Margaret Paston 1459-62; Davis, i, nos. 153, 159-61, 233, 172, 174-5.

PA7, Scribe E, amanuensis to John I and Margaret Paston, 1463-5; Davis, i, nos. 66-7, 192-3, 195B.

PA8, Richard Calle, two letters on his own behalf 1465, 1469; Davis, ii, nos. 690, 861; letters on behalf of the family, 1460-75; Davis, i, nos. 56, 171, 225.

PA9, Scribe F, amanuensis to Margaret Paston, Mautby, 1475; Davis, i, nos. 221-3.

PA10, Scribe G, amanuensis to Margaret Paston, Mautby, 1477-8; Davis, i, nos. 226-8.

(iii) Paston East Anglian Correspondents.

The following selection from the very numerous letters received by the Paston family (Davis, Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century, Part II)

illustrates the use of East Anglian orthography by some of their local correspondents. The places from which most of them were written are indicated internally; some few locations have been added from other sources.[120]

PC1, the prior of Bromholm, 1425; Davis, ii, no. 422.

PC2, Robert Repps (Norfolk), 1440; Davis, ii, no. 439.

PC3, the prior of Bromholm, c. 1450; Davis, ii, no. 469.

PC4, John Clopton (Norwich), c. 1454; Davis, ii, no. 493.

PC5, Edmund Witchingham (Framlingham), c. 1450-3; Davis, ii, no. 489.

PC6, William Reynolds (Cromer), 1453; Davis, ii, no. 435.

PC7, the abbot of St. Benet's, Holme, 1455; Davis, ii, no. 517.

PC8, John Dory (Norfolk), c. 1456; Davis, ii, 556.

PC9, John Brackley, letters c. 1456-60 (Norwich); Davis, ii, nos. 557, 582-3, 609, 617.

PC10, John Davy (Paston servant), c. 1460; Davis, ii, no. 602.

PC11, William Naunton (Paston servant), 1461; Davis, ii, no. 648.

PC12, Robert Cutler (?) (Caister), letters 1461-3; Davis, ii, nos. 652, 680.

PC13, Robert Lethum (Plumstead), 1461; Davis, ii, no. 634.

PC14, 'Piers' (Norwich), c. 1461; Davis, ii, no. 714.

PC15, the abbot of Langley, 1463; Davis, ii, no. 739.

PC16, letters in the hand of John Mowth (Norwich), 1464-6; Davis, i, no. 176; ii, no. 693.

PC17, J. Strange (Norwich), 1467-9; Davis, ii, no. 756.

This completes the survey of the later Middle English materials from East Anglia to be drawn upon for orthographic evidence in the following chapter. It might be added that the survey is selective; and no doubt further research will identify other literary texts and documents from East Anglian hands.[121] A list of over thirty such items associable with west Norfolk alone has recently appeared.[122] The use made of the Paston materials is particularly selective, and any detailed assessment of their orthography must await the third part of Professor Davis's edition.[123]

A Note on Early Middle English Literary and Onomastic evidence from East Anglia.

Whilst this chapter has been in preparation the question of early Middle English in East Anglia has been re-opened by Professor McIntosh,[124] in his article on 'The Language of the Extant Versions of Havelok the Dane'. He argues that both the complete copy of Havelok in the Bodleian manuscript and the Cambridge fragments are the work of Norfolk scribes, and he places their work in the context of a body of early Middle English writings from East Anglia: the Genesis and Exodus in the Corpus, Cambridge, manuscript, the Bestiary in B.L. Ms. Arundel 292, and the work of a scribe (now usually referred to in Professor Dobson's terminology[125] as 'D') responsible for the 'corrections' in the copy of the Ancrene Riwle in B.L. Ms. Cotton Cleo. C. vi, and for contributions to Trinity, Cambridge, Ms. B.1.45.[126] In addition, Professor McIntosh points to copies of Old English documents partially 'translated' into early Middle English at Bury St. Edmunds abbey c. 1300.[127] Reference to this body of material has been incorporated at appropriate points in the discussion of certain East Anglian ortho-graphic features dealt with in the following chapter. The same is true of recently published onomastic evidence from a current Scandinavian project dealing with East Anglian personal names from 1100 to 1399.[128]

CHAPTER THREE

LATER MIDDLE ENGLISH IN EAST ANGLIA - SOME

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF ITS

WRITTEN FORM

In the preceding chapter a number of localised texts and documents from later fourteenth and fifteenth century Norfolk and Suffolk were indicated as sources for a study of some of the typical features of spelling used by scribes brought up or trained in those counties. The purpose of this chapter is to gather a body of orthographic evidence from these sources which will enable us to assess the spelling systems used by the scribes of the 'East Anglian' play texts.

The more distinctive characteristics of the written form of later Middle English in East Anglia are here divided into several groups for the purpose of study. The reasons for these divisions, and for the selection of features for study, will emerge at the head of each section. What follows makes no claim to completeness as a description of orthographic usage in the area. The features to be examined have been selected, generally on the basis of previous work on the subject, for their effectiveness in localising literary texts supposed to have been copied in Norfolk or Suffolk.

I

Primary Features of East Anglian Spelling in Later Middle English: Commonly Occurring Forms

In the course of Chapter Two F.J. Furnivall's four tests of 'Norfolk speech' were suggested as a starting point for an approach to the spelling systems used by East Anglians. Three of these 'Norfolk' features command immediate attention: x for usual 'sh' in ' shall' and 'should'; qw in words where initial 'wh' usually appears, and t or th where 'ght' is now written. Furnivall's fourth item, w for consonantal 'v', is known to have been more widely disseminated in south-east midland English than he thought; it is, however, highly characteristic of East Anglian texts and may have originated in the area.[1]

It is dealt with in more detail in section IV, below.

To Furnivall's three prime features of 'Norfolk' usage may be added a fourth, urged by Holmqvist,[2] where $\underline{t}$ alone is found instead of the normal southern Middle English $\underline{th}$ in the ending of the third person singular present indicative of verbs (hereafter '3rd. sg.pres. ind.').

I (i). $\underline{xall}$, $\underline{xuld}$ etc. for 'shall' and 'should'. Furnivall[3] appears to have been the first to note that later medieval East Anglians often wrote parts of the verb 'shall' with initial $\underline{x}$ rather than the $\underline{sh}$ or $\underline{sch}$ used elsewhere in the south and east. 'East Anglian' $\underline{xal}$, $\underline{xuld}$, etc. are often quoted[4] as a means of placing an unlocalised east-midland literary text. The O.E.D. refers to the tendency as follows:[5]

> In East Anglian texts of the 14th to the
> 16th century $\underline{x}$ is frequently written for
> initial $\underline{sc}$, $\underline{sch}$ in $\underline{xal}$ shall, $\underline{xuld}$; $\underline{xsal}$
> is also found in the Paston Letters;
> instances of other words so written are
> only occasional, e.g. $\underline{xad}$ shed (pa.pple.),
> $\underline{xowyn}$ shove, $\underline{xuldrys}$ shoulders.

Jordan likewise notes that the writing of $\underline{xal}$ is a characteristic of Norfolk English, instancing the Gild Returns of 1389, the Paston Letters and 'East Anglian' play-texts: _Ludus Coventriae_, _Wisdom_ and _Mankind_.[6] Professor Dobson also suggests that $\underline{xal}$, $\underline{xullen}$ (together with other features) serve to place _Ludus Coventriae_ and the Digby _Mary Magdalene_ in Norfolk.[7]

Whatever the phonic significance of the $\underline{x}$ spellings,[8] the localised materials from Norfolk and Suffolk examined here give good grounds for the notion that $\underline{xal}$, $\underline{xuld}$ etc. originated in and remained restricted to East Anglia. They appear commonly from the 1380's onwards. In East Anglian texts from before the later fourteenth century northern forms[9] such as $\underline{sal}$, $\underline{sul}$ and $\underline{suld}$ often appear; instances occur in the _Bestiary_, _Genesis and Exodus_, the work of Scribe D in B.L. Ms. Cotton Cleopatra C. vi and in the Old English documents copied at Bury $\underline{c}$. 1300.[10] Friar John Grimestone, probably at work in west Norfolk in the

mid-fourteenth century, regularly writes sal, sulen and
sulde (Chapter Two, L12). The tendency persists into the
1380's in Norfolk, where some of the Gild Returns use s
spellings beside sh and the apparently innovatory x,
e.g. Norwich (G7, G9), Lynn (G22, G33), Wiggenhall (G39,
G40) and Oxborough (G46).[11]

The earliest appearance of the x forms in dated and
localised materials appears in the Lynn Gild Returns of
1389 (G17, G19). Between this date and the early
sixteenth century the x spellings are very widespread
amongst East Anglian writers, often occurring beside
regular sh and sch forms of the midlands and south. Xal,
xuld etc. appear in many of the sources surveyed in
Chapter Two: Bury (L1(3), L3), Wolverstone and Long
Melford (L2(1) and (2)), Beccles (L4), Toft Monks area
(L10), Norwich (L13(3), L14(1) (2) and (5), L15(1),
L16(1), L30), Yarmouth (L20), Wisbech (L22), Acle (L23),
Lynn (L24), Swaffham (L25), Wymondham (L26).

John Capgrave of Lynn's approach to this very
obvious sign of East Anglian provincialism - as with
several others - is particularly instructive. P.J. Lucas
has noted the absolute consistency with which sch, never
x, is used in his manuscripts.[12]

The frequent x spellings in the writings of the
Pastons and their local associates are well known, and
appear in the work of the men, their clerks and in letters
from local correspondents, e.g. Clement II, Edmond II and
Walter (P4, P7, P9), Margaret Paston's Norwich scribe
(PA1) and several others (PA3, PA4, PA6 and PA10), and
correspondents at or from Bromholm (PC1) St Benet's,
Holme (PC7), Caister (PC12), Langley (PC15), Norwich
(PC14, PC16) and elsewhere (PC4, PC10, PC17).

Some of Professor Davis's detailed work on the
linguistic development of certain Paston writers over a
period years sheds some light on the fact that the x
spellings were regarded as a provincialism by users
themselves. Edmond II, for instance, ceased to use xall,
xuld etc. in 1470-1, and adopted the more orthodox and
widespread sch forms, a change which coincided with

periods of residence abroad and in London;[13] there are examples of a similar pattern in other Paston hands.[14]

The x spellings in forms of 'shall' and 'should' are, then, virtually the hallmark of many East Anglian scribes. Their frequent appearance in several of the play-texts thought to have been copied in the area must be given full weight in any discussion of localisation.

I (ii). The treatment of 'wh-' in East Anglian texts.

The fact that many later medieval East Anglian scribes wrote words now spelt with initial 'wh' in q (e.g. quan, qwan, qwhan, qhan, 'when') was another trait which attracted Furnivall's attention in connexion with the localisation of the Macro plays.[15] Holmqvist noted, in a similar context, that the East Anglian use of initial q in this way is a development independent of a similar feature in northern Middle English and Scottish writings.[16]

The O.E.D. holds that this spelling originated in Norfolk and Suffolk; qu (quu, qw)[17] appear

> first in East Anglian texts (once in the
> Bestiary, qual whale; regularly but not
> exclusively in Genesis and Exodus). It
> remained a feature of E. Anglian spelling
> till c. 1450 (as in the Paston Letters
> and the works of John Metham)...

The early evidence from Genesis and Exodus is important, showing the qu(u) forms in the majority of cases beside less frequent w; wh does not occur. Apart from the single instance of qu noted above the Bestiary has w for 'wh' throughout, a pattern followed by Scribe D in B.L. Ms. Cotton Cleo. C. vi. The Bury scribes who copied Old English documents sometimes replace the hw of their exemplars with w.[18]

Jordan associates the eastern q spellings in the Norfolk Gild Returns and the Paston writings with comparable features in B.L. Ms. Cotton Vesp. D. viii, the 'N-Town' plays. His map showing the southern limit of Northumbrian qu spellings clearly indicates the separate development.[19]

The early and independent use of q spellings for 'wh' have also recently been documented in studies of personal and place names in East Anglia. Selten's study of the personal names is emphatic in seeing a mixture of qw, qu and w/wh spellings as highly characteristic of Norfolk, especially as distinct from Lincolnshire. His evidence suggests that the q forms predominate in Norfolk, w in Suffolk, and he concludes:[20]

> All this evidence makes it possible to state that Q- spellings are a conspicuous feature of the Norfolk dialect of the fourteenth century and later, while they are exceptional in Suffolk. It is strange to note that "there is no evidence for [χw] in Li[ncolnshire]" (Kristensson 1967. 215) whereas [χw] beside [hw] and [w] seems to have occurred in the six northern counties.

Capgrave and the Pastons yield useful evidence of East Anglian copyists who attempted to adjust their provincial usage with respect to 'wh' in response to the nascent 'Standard' English of the time. Lucas has analysed the orthography of one of the Capgrave manuscripts (C5) in detail, and shows that the scribe virtually always writes wh, exceptions being qw (once) and w (twice): 'Apparently the avoidance of spellings with initial qw, which are a characteristic idiosyncracy of Norfolk writers, was deliberate; the one tell-tale exception suggests as much'.[21] Professor Davis has drawn attention to changes in habit amongst the Paston writers which also indicate that q for 'wh' was a recognised provincialism. John III, for instance, ceased to write a combination of whyche, wyche and qwyche, 'which', in 1467, confining himself to whych after travel abroad and residence in London.[22] An equally informative development occurs in the work of Margaret Paston's Norwich scribe, who was using qh and qwh frequently in 1448 but who had changed to wh by 1454.[23]

The q spellings are very numerous in the East Anglian texts and documents assembled in Chapter Two. Examples may be readily seen in materials from Bury (L1(3), (5)), Wolverstone (L2(1)), Beccles (L4), Dunwich (L8), Crabhouse Nunnery (L6), Toft Monks (L10), Attleborough (L11), in

the writings of Friar John Grimestone, west Norfolk
(L12), from Norwich (L13(1),(2); L14(1),(3),(4),(5);
L15(2); L21), Ingham (L16(1), L31), Thetford (L16(3),
L17, L19), Wisbech (L22), Acle (L23), Tilney (L26),
Wymondham (L27) and Fransham (L29). The inscriptions on
Long Melford church, in the extreme south of Suffolk,
have quose, 'whose', and are dated 1481 (L28). Similarly,
an inscription on the tomb of John Baret of Bury (St.
Mary's, Bury, 1463) has Qwerfor, 'wherefor'.[24]

The Norfolk Gild Returns of 1389 furnish the earliest
documentary (as distinct from literary) evidence of the
currency of q spellings in Norfolk, e.g. at Norwich (G8,
G10, G12), at Lynn (G16, G17, G18 and many others), at
Wiggenhall (G39, G40 etc.) and at East Winch (G44).
Further evidence of the form from the Lynn area appears
in odd instances in the Capgrave manuscripts (C2, C3, C4)
and in numerous examples in the East Anglian copies of
Promptorium Parvulorum (PP1, PP2, PP3).

The Pastons and their associates give further useful
information about the use of initial q by provincial
copyists in Norfolk and Suffolk. Instances occur in
several of the mens' writings (P3, P4, P6, P9) and in the
work of a number of amanuenses (PA1, PA6, PA9). They are
common in letters received from local correspondents
(PC2-6, PC8, PC11-14, PC17).

The evidence for qu, qw etc. for 'wh' as an East
Anglianism is substantial, and the feature may be placed
beside the x spellings in 'shall' etc. in the array to be
used in localising unplaced texts.

Associated with East Anglian q- is a directly
related tendency, in many hands, to write q w and wh
indifferently, where 'wh' is normal. Few hands confine
themselves to q forms exclusively,[25] and indeed most
scribes in the foregoing survey will be seen to use a
mixture of the three alternatives. An extension of this
tendency is the use of reverse spellings and other
aberrations whereby words where initial 'w' is properly
in place have wh, and even q instead: whas 'was', wher

'were', _qwreten_ 'written', _qwas_ 'was'. Words with usual initial 'q' also appear with _wh_: _whyke_ 'quick', _white_ 'quit'.[26]

Certain East Anglian hands confine themselves to _w_, or a mixture of _w_ and _wh_ for initial 'wh', a feature less arresting than the _q_ forms, but nonetheless typical of the area. Varied spellings in this position imply some sort of uniform pronunciation of words spelt with both 'w-' and 'wh-', a situation obtaining with many English speakers at present.[27] East Anglian indifference to the use of _w_ or _wh_ for earlier _hw_ is an early instance of the pattern, and has often been noted.[28] It is prominent in the Capgrave manuscripts, in the writings of the west Suffolk scribe of C.U.L. Ms. Gg.4.27, the copyists of the Bokenham _Legendys_ manuscript and the work of 'Salthows' in the Margery Kempe manuscript ('C' Mss., L5/18, L9, L24).

I (iii). The use of _t_, _th_ in words normally spelt in 'ght'.

Furnivall first noted his opinion that spelling of the type _ryt_, _ryth_ 'right', _brout_, _brouth_ 'brought', _caut_, _cauth_ 'caught' etc. were typical features of East Anglian English in his 'Forewords' to the Early English Text Society edition of Capgrave's _St. Katherine_.[29] He gave the matter further attention in the 'Afterwords' to the Society's earlier edition of the Macro Plays. On the former occasion his view was vigorously disputed by Skeat, who regarded such spellings as evidence of the work of Anglo-Norman scribes, French of course having no straightforward equivalent for the palatal or guttural spirants in the numerous English words involved.[30] Skeat drew his evidence from texts copied in the early Middle English period, and he elaborated his views in two further papers.[31]

There can be no doubt that the _ryt_ - _caut_ - _brout_ type spellings reflect a development in pronunciation, but it is by no means clear when or where this began to take place. Professor Dobson states unequivocally that the pronunciation without a fricative in 'ight' words 'was

predominantly Eastern' in the later Middle English period:[32]

> thus in Jordan, [cap.] 295, Anm.,
> the majority of the texts cited are
> Eastern. Among them is Ludus
> Coventriae, which is a Norfolk text...

Furnivall's opinion is sometimes quoted to furnish a criterion for localising unplaced texts in East Anglia, in particular the plays;[33] it is now time that the feature were better documented from localised materials. The evidence which emerges on this point (whatever opinions are held about the pronunciation of the words involved) suggests that the t, th spellings for 'ght' have a longer, more complex and more continuous history in East Anglia than present knowledge perhaps takes into account.

As I have indicated in a note at the end of Chapter Two, Professor McIntosh has recently shed new light on the study of early Middle English in East Anglia. He contends thāt 'a very considerable (if largely unexplored) orthographic revolution affected the written English of most areas over the course of the fourteenth century'.[34] East Anglian texts are characterised by the appearance of spellings in t and th (amongst others) for the voiceless fricative plus /t/ spelt gt, cht or ht in earlier texts.[35] These later East Anglian forms put in an early appearance in the Old English documents copied at Bury c. 1300, e.g. rith, cnyth, wrouth and numerous others.[36] The slightly earlier Genesis and Exodus uses forms such as thowte, sowte and dowter beside a variety of other spellings;[37] the related Bestiary has comparable features.[38] The most striking example of this pattern, however, is the work of Scribe D in B.L. Ms. Cotton Cleo. C. vi, who was writing in the 1280's. According to Professor Dobson the spellings imply the loss of all spirants in all instances.[39] Professor McIntosh has suggested that this scribe must be placed in Norfolk, to the south of Lynn;[40] the consistency with which he writes t for 'ght' is directly comparable to similar patterns in the Capgrave manuscripts, and in the work of the Macro Castle of Perseverance scribe.

The onomastic evidence for the development of OE
-ht in East Anglia confirms the pattern suggested by the
literary texts and documents of the early period;
Selten observes:

> The predominant - in Suffolk almost
> exclusive - spelling for OE ht ...is
> th in the Subsidy Rolls of 1327 and
> 1332...

These spellings extend to non-name forms in Selten's
material, e.g. knyt, wrytte.[41]

In the intervening period between this early
evidence and the first dated and localised examples of
the forms in the Norfolk Gild Returns of 1389 John
Grimestone's writings (L12, probably west Norfolk)
indicate a degree of continuity, with spellings such as
nith, rith, mithte etc. The Gild Returns themselves,
however, are the first clearly defined examples of what
Dobson holds to be the easterly phonic development
towards a modern pronunciation; examples are numerous
in the documents from Norwich, Lynn, Wiggenhall and
Oxborough.[42] These later thirteenth and fourteenth
century materials indicate that the use of t/th for 'ght'
was a firmly entrenched feature of East Anglian
orthography from an early period, and one must hesitate
before dismissing all the scribes involved as Anglo-
Normans. The later medieval evidence on this point from
East Anglia is considerable. As with the East Anglian x
and q spellings already discussed,the Capgrave manuscripts
and certain Paston hands prove to be important informants
about the exact status of the t/th forms in Norfolk and
Suffolk. Lucas's illuminating analysis of one of the
Capgrave texts (C5) shows that the scribe used a carefully
thought out and self-consistent spelling system for
dealing with 'ght' words based (I would urge) on a
traditional East Anglian habit. Furnivall had noted that
Capgrave's personally supervised work never has gh or 3
in 'ght' words,[43] and Lucas concludes that the scribe's
consistency in this respect in Ms. C5 is 'almost
startling'.[44] Spellings of the rite - brout - caut type

appear without exception in C5. Of the other Capgrave
manuscripts C4 differs slightly in having a number of
spellings in t_3 (e.g. brit3, brout3),[45] and one such
form appears in C3;[46] C2 conforms completely with the
regular pattern.

The example of the Pastons is equally instructive,
but from a different point of view. Professor Davis has
given examples of how, in some cases, travel outside
East Anglia and residence in London led to a change away
from the provincial t/th spellings towards patterns
conforming with the incipient 'standard' ght.[47]

'Reverse' spellings, whereby ght spellings appear in
words where they have no place historically, are also
quite frequent in East Anglian writings of the fifteenth
century, e.g. wright 'write', abought 'about' etc.[48]
The bulk of the evidence for t/th 'ght' as a typical
fifteenth century East Anglianism will be readily seen
in the texts from the following places, listed in
Chapter Two: Bury (L1(1),(2),(3)), Beccles (L4), Dunwich
(L8), Toft Monks (L10), Norwich (L14(2), L30), Ingham
(L16(1), L31), Westacre (L16(2)), Thetford (L16(3), L17),
Yarmouth (L20), Wisbech (L22), Acle (L23), Lynn (L24),
Swaffham (L25), Tilney (L26), Wymondham (L27), Fransham
(L29), Stuston (L32). Examples also occur in the west
Suffolk scribe of C.U.L. Ms.Gg.4.27's work (L5, L18), in
the Arundel Bokenham manuscript (L9) and in East Anglian
copies of the Promptorium Parvulorum (PP1-3). Examples
of comparable spellings in the Paston materials are very
numerous. They are found in writings of all the Paston
men specified in Chapter Two, and in the work of most of
the clerks employed by the family mentioned there.
Correspondents from various parts of East Anglia also use
the forms, e.g. Bromholm (PC3), Framlingham (PC5), Caister
(PC12), Langley (PC15), Norwich (PC9, PC16, PC18) and
elsewhere (PC2, PC8, PC10, PC11).

In conclusion it may be safely stated that the
characteristic East Anglian tendency to write t or th in
words where 'ght' normally appears was both frequent and

widespread, appearing from c. 1250 until the end of the
Middle English period. It ranks beside x in 'shall' etc.
and q for 'wh' as a distinguishing feature in the
orthography of the area, and, as we shall see in the next
chapter appears frequently in many of the play-texts of
suspected East Anglian origin.

I (iv). The use of final t etc. for 'th' in the 3rd.
sg.pres.ind. of verbs.

Norfolk and Suffolk belong to the south-east midland
dialect area in Middle English, and this means that, for
the bulk of the period, we should expect to find the 3rd.
sg. pres. ind. of verbs spelt th or þ in the inflexion,
rather than s, the northern form. According to current
teaching the s inflexion extends as far south as the
southern end of the Wash, the isogloss 'serving to separate
the Northeast from the Southeast Midland'.[49] The
beginnings of the use of modern 'standard' English s in
the inflexion may be fairly precisely dated in East Anglia
in the 1460's and 1470's, with the scattered examples found
in the writings of some of the better travelled and more
cosmopolitan Pastons.[50]

What often clearly distinguishes the work of East
Anglian scribes from writings produced in other south-east
midland areas are spellings of the usual 'th' in an
unusual or contracted form. Holmqvist noted that the use
of t alone, or beside the usual /th/ forms is a 'good
criterion of Norfolk dialect', and he gave examples from
Genesis and Exodus, the Bestiary, the Norfolk Gild
Returns and the Paston writings, together with instances
from 'East Anglian' play-texts. Dux Moraud, Wisdom,
Mankind, the Castle of Perseverance, Mary Magdalene.[51]
More recently M.C. Seymour has also suggested that the
weakening of th to t in the inflexion - characteristic of
the work of a particular scribe now placed in west Suffolk
- is a feature typical of East Anglian language.[52] This
t for /th/ also occurs in isolated instances in other
varieties of Middle English,[53] but Professor McIntosh has
recently observed that it is best attested in Norfolk.[54]

In the East Anglian texts it is not merely _t_ which appears for the inflexion, but also more idiosyncratic forms: _t3_ (common in the Capgrave manuscripts), _tht_, _hth_, _ht_ etc.

There are certain precedents for the later East Anglian _t_ inflexion in earlier Middle English texts probably from the area. The <u>Genesis and Exodus</u> scribe occasionally has forms such as <u>hauet</u>, <u>luket</u> and <u>holdet</u>, and comparable instances occur in the <u>Bestiary</u>.[55] Examples are also to be seen in the Old English materials copied at Bury _c_. 1300.[56] The strongest evidence, however, occurs in the work of the Fenland scribe of the 1280's who contributed to B.L. Ms. Cotton Cleo. C.vi and Trinity, Cambridge, Ms. B.1.45. According to Professor Dobson this copyist never uses the northern _s_ or the regular southern /th/ forms; instead, _t_ is always found.[57]

As with other typical East Anglian spellings, the 1389 Gild Returns give the earliest dated and localised documentary instances of the feature, though Friar John Grimestone (L12), using forms such as <u>hat</u>, <u>hat3</u> 'hath' <u>maket</u>, <u>dot3</u> 'doth', etc., offers a mid-fourteenth century precedent. These _t3_ forms are common with some Norfolk scribes, especially at Lynn, though not exclusive to that place.[58] It is interesting that the Lynn and Wiggenhall Gild Returns occasionally have the northerly _s_ endings for the inflexion (G18, G19, G24 etc.; G40); west Norfolk was presumably a marginal area between north-east and south-east midland in this respect. The _t_ and _t3_ endings, however, are fully established, e.g. at Norwich (G9-11), at Lynn (G16, G17, G19, G20, G25, G28-30 etc.) and at East Winch (G44). The use of _t3_ appears to have been especially characteristic of Lynn scribes, such forms occurring from time to time in the Capgrave manuscripts, about a generation later. Colledge and Smetana, in their study of manuscript C4 in the group, point out the use of these characteristic endings beside regular _th_ forms.[59] The _t3_ (sometimes _3t_) forms also occur further east in Norfolk, e.g. at Fransham (L29) and Norwich (L21).

Further evidence for the use of t̲, and related spellings, for the 3rd. sg. pr. ind. appears in texts from Bury (L1(4)), Beccles (L4), Dunwich (L8), Thetford (L17), Acle (L23), Lynn (L24), Wymondham (L27), Norwich (L30, PA1, PC4, PC9), Ingham (L31), in the work of several Paston hands (P2-5, P7) and in the work of a number of Paston clerks (PA3-7, PA9). As we have seen in the observation quoted from Holmqvist's study at the beginning of this section, t̲ for /th/ in the inflexion is common in a number of 'East Anglian' play-texts. The evidence indicated here will enable us to make confident statements about this feature of their spelling systems.

The assessment of these primary features of East Anglian orthography has involved discussion and documentation at first sight somewhat removed from the problem of the localisation of the suggested 'East Anglian' play-texts of Chapter One. This has been necessary in order to verify certain more or less vague statements about the matter, often based on Furnivall's informally expressed opinions, dating from a period very early in the systematic study of Middle English ortho-graphy.

We are now in a much stronger position to be able to state that these four major features - xal̲, xul̲d etc., q̲ (w̲, wh̲) for 'wh', t̲, th̲ for 'ght' and t̲ etc. for /th/ in the 3rd. sg. pres. ind. inflexion - are indeed highly typical of the later Middle English orthography used in Norfolk and Suffolk. Any unlocalised east-midland literary text using one, some or all of them consistently must have strong claims for consideration as the product of an East Anglian scribe.

Primary Features of East Anglian Spelling in Later Middle English: Less Commonly Occurring Forms and Rarities

II (i). Nyn for 'nor'.

The O.E.D. notes nyn as a rare variant form of ny = ne 'nor', and cites it only from two 'East Anglian' plays, the Castle of Perseverance and Ludus Coventriae (main hand).[60] Examples in printed versions of East Anglian texts are extremely uncommon, but confirm nyn as an East Anglianism; there is one instance in a Lynn Gild Return (G30) and a probable second in the work of the west Suffolk scribe of C.U.L. Ms. Gg.4.27. The proposed 'Atlas of the Dialects of Later Middle English' will cite nyn (nen) from only a handful of other Norfolk sources, examined in manuscript.[61]

II (ii). Hefne 'heaven', sefne 'seven'.

Hefne 'heaven' and sefne 'seven' both appear commonly (beside other forms) in the work of the main hand in the 'N-Town' manuscript. Both forms give every appearance of being most uncommon and in all probability restricted to East Anglia in the fifteenth century.[62] As well as citing efne, hefne from Cotton Vesp. D. viii the M.E.D. also indicates the latter form in a copy of Piers Plowman partially copied by a scribe brought up or trained in south central Norfolk.[63] Other instances from East Anglian sources are hefne (L1(5), from Euston, near Thetford), sefne, hefnely (L4, Beccles). The scribe of B.L. Ms. Sloane 2593, probably also from central East Anglia, likewise writes hefne.[64]

II (iii). Erdon, erdyn etc., 'errand'.

Professor Davis has noted that some East Anglian hands had an unusual and characteristic way of spelling the noun 'errand', and he compares herden, a form used by John Daubeney in a Paston letter, with erdon in the 'N-Town' manuscript (main hand) and erdyn in the Castle

of Perseverance.[65]

What little evidence there is elsewhere on the occurrence of comparable forms in Middle English lends colour to the idea of it as an East Anglianism.[66] The early west Norfolk <u>Genesis and Exodus</u> has <u>erdene</u> and <u>herdne</u> with some frequency,[67] and the East Anglian copies of <u>Promptorium Parvulorum</u> (PP1-3) all have <u>erdyn</u>. B.L. Ms. Sloane 2593 (also of East Anglian origin, cf. II (ii), above) has <u>ardene</u>.[68]

II (iv). <u>Serge</u> etc., 'search' vb.

Professor Eccles has drawn attention to another infrequent but nonetheless apparently typical East Anglian form in spellings of 'search' (vb., various parts) as <u>serg-</u>; the O.E.D. offers citations only from Norfolk and Suffolk sources, including 'East Anglian' plays: <u>Promptorium Parvulorum</u>, Capgrave, the Paston materials, <u>Ludus Coventriae</u> and <u>Mankind</u>.[69]

Further evidence from East Anglian sources comes from Clare (L7, <u>seergith</u>) Lynn (L24, <u>sergyth</u>) Wisbech (L22, <u>serge</u>), the <u>Promptorium</u> (PP2 <u>cergyn</u>, PP3 <u>cergynge</u>) and in Paston writings (P6 <u>scergyd</u>, PA1 <u>sergyd</u>, PA7 <u>serge</u>).[70]

II (v). '<u>Tys</u>, 'it is'.

E.P. Wilson has recently suggested that '<u>tys</u> for 'it is', whilst exceptionally rare in Middle English, appears first and occurs only in East Anglia before 1500.[71] The only instance known to the O.E.D. from this period occurs in the play <u>Mankind</u>, and more recently another example has been pointed out in another East Anglian play-text, <u>Ludus Coventriae</u> (main hand).[72] Wilson draws attention to a much earlier Norfolk example in the writings of John Grimestone (L12), and notes a comparable form in the work of Edmond Paston II.

Secondary Features of East Anglian Spelling in Later Middle English: Characteristic Forms in Words of Moderately Frequent Occurrence

Under this heading are considered more unusual East Anglian spellings for fairly frequently occurring words: whow etc. 'how', mende and kende 'mind' and 'kind', cure (vb.) 'cover', erde (n.) 'earth', dede (n.) 'death', werd etc. 'world'. Of these, only cure 'cover' can be claimed as a possible exclusive East Anglianism on present information, though whow and similar unusual spellings for 'how' are difficult to parallel outside the area in the fifteenth century. The other items are found severally and with varying degrees of frequency in other dialectal areas of Middle English: mende, kende in Kentish, erde, dede and werd etc. in various parts of the north. The important point for the present purpose is that they can only be found as a set in texts copied in Norfolk and Suffolk. There is no point in claiming them individually as East Anglianisms, but taken together with whichever primary features of East Anglian spelling (I, II above) happen to occur in a given unlocalised text, they will furnish a further argument for claiming Norfolk-Suffolk origins.

III (i). Whow etc. 'how'.

There is a very noticeable tendency amongst a number of East Anglian hands from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century to write forms such as whow and qwow for 'how'. Professor Dobson has noted the probable phonetic explanation for forms of this type, which occur from time to time elsewhere in early Middle English.[73] The fullest evidence about such spellings is to be found in the M.E.D. (s.v. how), and this includes citations from play-texts of 'East Anglian' origin: whou, whov in the Castle of Perseverance, whow, whov in B.L. Ms. Cotton Vesp. D. viii.

Early east-midland examples are the <u>quhu</u>, <u>quow</u> and <u>quuow</u> of <u>Genesis and Exodus</u> and <u>wu</u> of the <u>Bestiary</u>, both probably west Norfolk texts.[74] More evidence is found in fifteenth century Norfolk writings: <u>qwow</u>, <u>whow</u> in a <u>Promptorium</u> manuscript, <u>who</u> very commonly in the Capgrave manuscripts, <u>qwow</u> in Robert Reynys of Acle's manuscript and <u>who</u> in Paston sources.[75]

Colledge and Smetana have recently studied the use of these <u>wh</u> spellings for 'how' in East Anglia with special reference to the very common <u>who</u> of the Capgrave manuscripts. This is a particular peculiarity of Capgrave Ms. C4 (<u>who</u> x46, <u>how</u> x4), and it is also well attested in C2, C3 and C5; Lucas finds 22 instances of <u>who</u> in the latter.[76]

The <u>wh</u> (and occasional <u>q</u>) forms for 'how' give every appearance of being a distinct peculiarity of East Anglian orthography in the fifteenth century; further instances are: <u>qhow</u>, <u>whow</u> (L14(3), Norwich document), <u>whow</u> (L9, Bokenham Ms.), <u>whoghe</u>, <u>who(o)</u> (P6, PA3, PA7, Paston writings).[77]

III (ii). <u>Mende</u> 'mind', <u>kende</u> 'kind'.

The appearance of OE <u>y</u> as <u>e</u> in the east midlands (as distinct from the Kentish examples of the same thing) has often been discussed, for instance by Wyld and Serjeantson some time ago and more recently by Selten and Ek. The information which they offer relies heavily on onomastic evidence, but the general consensus is that the <u>e</u> forms can appear from time to time in any of the south-east midland counties between London and the Wash; they are held to be particularly numerous in Suffolk.[78]

A notable manifestation of this pattern has not, however, been widely discussed; this is the widespread use of <u>mende</u> 'mind' and <u>kende</u> 'kind' in Norfolk and Suffolk writings in the later Middle English period. Referring to these forms as 'East Anglianisms' requires both justification and qualification. The use of both for the purposes of rhyme with words like 'end' and 'wend' has been noted in a number of eastern and north-

eastern texts, e.g. the tail-rhyme romances and the writings of Robert Mannyng.[79] The independent appearance of the forms in East Anglian texts and documents deserves further attention.

Non-literary usage in the fifteenth century was studied by Miss Kihlbom, who found that the regional letter writers whom she investigated and compared with London writers agree in general with the i, y forms used in the documents copied in the capital.[80] The exception to this pattern proved to be William Paston III, with mende, one of a number of such forms in the Paston materials.

The M.E.D. (s.v. kind, n.) refers to kend(e) as an 'error', and apart from giving instances from Kentish sources and easterly literary materials of the type already referred to above, cites it from certain basic East Anglian texts: the Promptorium, the Fransham herbal (L29), the Capgrave manuscripts, occasionally from Lydgate's writings, but also from one of the 'East Anglian' plays, Ludus Coventriae.

Mend(e) and kend(e) are in fact fairly common in the East Anglian sources drawn upon here, appearing in texts and documents from Bury (L1(1)), Clare (L7), Toft Monks (L12), Thetford (L17), Wisbech (L22), Acle (L23), Lynn (L24), Norwich (L30), Ingham (L31), in the Capgrave manuscripts (C2-5), in the work of the scribe of C.U.L. Ms. Gg.4.27 (L5, L18), the Arundel Bokenham manuscript (L9), the Advocates' Grimestone manuscript (L12) and in the Paston materials (P7, P8, PA5).[81]

Strictly speaking, mende and kende cannot be referred to as unambiguously East Anglian in the same was, for instance, as xall, xuld etc. Nevertheless, taken together with a self-consistent set of Norfolk-Suffolk features, such forms can offer good supporting evidence for the placing of an unlocalised east midland text.[82]

III (iii). Cure etc. 'cover' (vb.)

Professor Davis has drawn attention to the use of

the verbal form _cure_ 'cover' as a probable East Anglian form embedded in the language of the _Play of the Sacrament_.[83] According to the O.E.D. the verb _cure_ is to be regarded as a 'phonetically reduced form of ME _cuure_', meaning to cover, conceal or protect, and the texts cited are connected with East Anglia: the _Promptorium_, Lydgate's writings and _Ludus Coventriae_. Compounds such as _discure_ and _uncure_ are similarly explained and cited from comparable sources. _Recure_ is more difficult to deal with, and two distinct meanings emerge: (i) _recure_ 'to recover from an illness' is quite common in ME generally, there having been some coalescence in meaning with _cure_ (from OF _cure_), i.e. 'to cure of an illness'. (ii) _recure_, signifying to recover in the sense of 'regain' or 're-possess', and this seems to have retained its narrower East Anglian distribution alongside the cognate forms quoted above.[84]

Further evidence concerning _cure_ and its compounds is given in the M.E.D. Apart from odd examples from unlocalised texts the citations strengthen the impression of the form as a probable East Anglianism: Capgrave, Bokenham, Lydgate frequently, Margery Kempe, certain Ipswich documents and _Ludus Coventriae_.[85]

Localised East Anglian materials examined for the present study yield further instances of _cure_ which serve to supplement the dictionary entries: Bury wills (L1(2),(5),(6)), John Metham, Ingham (L31), Lynn Gild Returns (G17, G26, G27, G34) and two Paston clerks (PA1, PA7).[86]

III (iv). _erde_ 'earth', _dede_ 'death', _werd_ etc. 'world'.

Whilst these spellings are clearly not exclusively East Anglian, they are certainly typical of texts written or copied in that region. They are principally of interest as 'northern' forms appearing in texts with a regular south-east midland phonology and morphology, and in some ways offer a good opportunity to discriminate between north and south in East Anglia itself. All three

forms are much more characteristic of Norfolk than of Suffolk texts.

III (iv) 1. The M.E.D. recognises erd (n.)[87] as a distinct word, with the same meanings as the more familiar noun erth. It is held to derive from the latter form through a confusion with erd (n.)[88] 'a dwelling' in the north and part of the east midlands. Citations show erd 'earth' from typical East Anglian sources: Margery Kempe, Capgrave and Paston writings. In an East Anglian context it tends to imply Norfolk rather than Suffolk origins, and early examples are found in John Grimestone's writings (he rhymes herd 'earth' and werd 'world').[89] Fifteenth century Norfolk instances also come from the Tofts Monks area (L10), Wisbech (L22) and in the Promptorium Parvulorum (PP2).[90]

III (iv) 2. The use of dede 'death' in East Anglian texts is closely comparable to erde. According to the M.E.D. ded (n.) is to be regarded as a spelling characteristic of the north and north-east midlands arising from a confusion with ded (adj.) 'dead'.[91] There is also, however, evidence for ded (n.) 'death' as a word in its own right,[92] and East Anglian examples are cited from Genesis and Exodus, the Bestiary and the Promptorium. Jordan notes a similar northern and north-eastern pattern of distribution for the form, and suggests a derivation from a Scandinavian source.[93]

Whatever its exact origins, dede 'death' appears to have been well established in west Norfolk in the later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, with instances in Genesis and Exodus, the Bestiary, the work of Scribe D in Cotton Cleo. C. vi etc. and the writings of John Grimestone. Fifteenth century instances in East Anglia tend to come from Norfolk rather than Suffolk texts, the pattern being set by Gild Returns from Wiggenhall and Oxborough in 1389 (G40, G45, G46); other instances are in texts from Crabhouse Nunnery (L6), Westacre (L16(2)), Wisbech (L22), in the Capgrave manuscripts and in the Promptorium (PP1-3). The weight of the evidence for dede 'death' in

East Anglia falls largely in the western half of Norfolk.[94]

III (iv) 3. According to Jordan, _werd_ 'world' is to be regarded as characteristic of eastern Middle English, a view largely substantiated by citations in the O.E.D. from _Genesis and Exodus_, _Havelok_ (probably extant in a Norfolk copy), Robert Mannyng, Bokenham and Paston sources, together with instances in 'East Anglian' plays, the _Castle of Perseverance_ and _Ludus Coventriae_.[95]

The East Anglian texts considered in the present survey use a variety of unusual spellings for 'world', commonly _werd(e)_, less often _word(e)_ and _ward(e)_. _Genesis and Exodus_ and the Cotton Cleo. vi. etc. Scribe D both write _werd(-)_ beside usual _werld_,[96] and the Bury scribe who copied OE documents in C.U.L. Ms. Ff.2.33, _c_. 1300, altered the _worldae_ of his examplar to _wordle_.[97] As has been pointed out above (III (iv) 1), John Grimestone rhymes _werd_ 'world' with _herd_ 'earth'; a Lynn Gild Return (L16) uses the same spelling. Comparable instances occur in many texts from various places in East Anglia: Beccles (L4), Toft Monks (L10, _ward(e)_ and _word(e)_, as well as _werd(e)_), Wisbech (L22), Acle (L23), Lynn (L24), Ingham (L31), in the _Promptorium_ (PP1-3) and numerous other sources.[98]

IV

Secondary Features of East Anglian Spelling in Later Middle English: Widespread Provincial Forms of Commoner Words

Certain typical East Anglian spellings of commoner words, whilst not restricted to Norfolk and Suffolk, offer particular points of interest in connexion with the localisation of literary texts in the area: 'much', 'such' and 'which', 'any', 'church', 'were' (vb., 'to be', preterite), 'where', numerous words with consonantal 'v'

(often spelt w in East Anglia), the present participles of verbs, 'their' and 'them' and 'give'.[99]

The last three items, 'their' and 'them' and 'give', are included principally for the information they yield concerning diachronic variation in East Anglian scribal habits in the mid- to late fifteenth century.

The caveat preceding the materials set out in section III may be briefly reiterated again here. There is no claim that the spellings to be discussed below are restricted solely to East Anglia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. On the other hand, there is good reason to think that taken together with one another, and with the features of orthography most typical of East Anglia (section I), they cannot be paralleled as a set anywhere else.

IV (i) 1. 'Much', 'such' and 'which'.

Characteristic spellings for 'much' in later Middle English from East Anglia are mech(e) and mekyl. Neither is restricted only to East Anglia and nowhere else, but the combination of the two forms in the same area is distinctive. A quite definite pattern of usage has been broadly indicated on a map drawn by Professor Samuels showing mekyl as a predominant form in Norfolk, mech(e) in Suffolk.[100]

The more northerly form, mekyl, is to be associated with an area where Scandinavian influences on the language were probably strong. As we shall see, mekyl goes together in Norfolk with other forms often held to be of Scandinavian origin: kirk 'church', wore, ware 'were' and present participles of verbs in -and(e).

The use of mech(e) in East Anglia is less well documented, but sound information on the point is to be found in Miss Kihlbom's discussion of the occurrence of 'much' in the fifteenth century dialects of London, Devon, Essex, Oxfordshire and East Anglia. By this time most of the areas studied had begun to conform with the moch(e), mych(e) of the London 'Standard', the exception being the eastern mech(e) which 'must by this time have been very

old-fashioned and vulgar, or, more likely, even had a strong dialectal flavour'.[101]   P.J. Lucas has recently shown that one of the Capgrave manuscripts uses mech with the utmost regularity beside swech(e) 'such' and whech 'which', a typical East Anglian pattern contrasting with the London usage of the period, muche/moche, such(e) and which(e).[102]

Certain provincial spellings for 'such' and 'which' also distinguish fifteenth century East Anglian English from the languages of London and the north. As regards 'such', Miss Kihlbom points to characteristic eastern spellings, syche, swyche, swich, suych, which contrast with the more regular such(e) or soch(e) of other southern and midland sources: 'These forms must have been distinctly vulgar or dialectal by now...'[103] More recently, Professor Samuels has published a sketch-map for 'such' in later Middle English suggesting a predominance of swech (beside swich) in East Anglia.[104] Capgrave's usage is clearly relevant here, with swech(e) and whech/wech contrasting with the such(e) and which(e) of the London writers of the time.[105]

'Which' was spelled in a great variety of ways in East Anglia owing to the variation in initial q/w/wh noted above, I (ii). In addition, forms in medial e are common with East Anglian writers, their qwech, wech, whech etc. contrasting with the which of the incipient 'Standard' language.[106]

IV (ii). 'Any'.

The usual spelling for 'any' in East Anglian texts and documents is ony, though the form is not of course confined to Norfolk and Suffolk in the east. The M.E.D. recognises the o spellings as characteristic of eastern texts,[107] and Samuels's sketch-map for the form clearly distinguishes the pattern in this area from the northern and central midland any and the southern eny.[108] The o forms make early appearances in East Anglian English in the OE documents from Bury c. 1300, the Bestiary and Genesis and Exodus.[109] Ony first becomes frequent in the

Norfolk Gild Returns, and is the characteristic form in a whole host of localised texts and documents in the fifteenth century.[110]

The east-midland ony is a notable contrast with the predominant eny and any of London English in the later period. Miss Kihlbom finds ony widely used in the Paston materials,[111] but regards it as the least common of the later Middle English forms, commenting that it 'must by this time have been fast becoming old-fashioned or vulgar, perhaps even provincial'. The form is extremely rare in London sources of the period.[112]

IV (iii). 'Church'.

The spelling of 'church' in later medieval Norfolk and Suffolk calls for no detailed documentation as the relevant map has been published in advance of the 'Atlas of the Dialects of Later Middle English'.[113] The map is of especial interest in connexion with Norfolk, where a characteristic complexity arises from the fact that it is the only area in England where the northerly kirk forms overlap with the east-midland cherch type spellings, as well as with central midland forms such as chirch and chyrch.[114] These variations within East Anglia itself may offer a way of making fairly subtle discriminations amongst unlocalised texts from the area in general.

IV (iv). 'Were' (vb., 'to be', preterite) and 'where'.

'Were' and 'where' are very likely to appear in fifteenth century East Anglian texts spelt in regular ways, were and (q-, w-) wher(e). However, occurrences of wore, ware 'were' and whare etc. 'where' call for comment as they are found in a number of localised texts and documents from Norfolk.

Wore and ware 'were' command attention on a similar basis to mekyl and kirk in that they are held to imply origins in a very restricted part of the east-midland dialect area where there was a strong Scandinavian influence on the early language.[115] Försstrom has examined the east-midland evidence for wore, ware, and comments:[116]

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> The ON preterite appears in the East
> Midlands ... mostly in the form <u>woren</u>
> with a>o in accordance with the <u>regular</u>
> phonological change of a in this district.
> It should be stressed, however, that only
> in the northern part of the area does
> <u>woren</u> (<u>waren</u>) seem to have been the
> normal form...

This may not appear to be very precise in itself, but taken together with strong evidence of East Anglian orthography (i.e. features discussed in section I) <u>wore</u> and <u>ware</u> are very likely to imply the work of a Norfolk scribe.[117]

Norfolk (rather than Suffolk) texts also have occasional <u>a</u> and <u>o</u> forms in 'where', which is spelled in a variety of ways because of the East Anglian initial <u>q/w/wh</u> variation noted above (I(ii));[118] <u>thare</u>, <u>thore</u> 'there' also appear occasionally, especially in rhyme.[119]

Early East Anglian examples of forms such as these occur in <u>Genesis and Exodus</u> and the <u>Bestiary</u>. Both texts have <u>wore(n)</u> beside the usual <u>were(n)</u>, 'were', and <u>Genesis</u> <u>quor</u>, <u>quar</u> 'where', the <u>Bestiary</u> <u>wor</u> 'where' and <u>dore</u> 'there'.[120] Later evidence from localised texts and documents comes from Norwich (L14(2)), Swaffham (L25), Acle (L23), Lynn (L24), Ingham (L31) and several Paston hands (P3, P5, PA10) for <u>wore</u>, <u>ware</u> 'were'; from a Lynn Gild Return (G29) and a Paston hand (P6) for <u>whar(-)</u> 'where'.[121]

IV (v). <u>W</u> for consonantal 'v'.

Furnivall suggested that the use of <u>w</u> for consonantal 'v' in numerous words was a primary feature of Norfolk orthography like <u>xal</u> etc. <u>q</u> for 'wh' and <u>t</u> etc. for 'ght'.[122] Whilst it is true that the feature is quite common in East Anglia in late Middle English - it is first recorded in later fourteenth century Norfolk - the dissemination is now known to have been rather wider than Furnivall supposed; according to Jordan it is found in other east-midland counties as well.[123] The earliest examples appear in the Norfolk Gild Returns, and many other examples are found in typical fifteenth century

East Anglian texts, e.g. in the Bokenham manuscript (L9), the writings of Robert Reynys of Acle (L23) and the Fransham manuscript (L27).[124]

IV (vi). The present participles of verbs.

The standard map illustrating the distribution of the different forms for the endings of present participles (M.E.D., Plan and Bibliography)[125] shows that East Anglian texts may be expected to have -ng or -nd, depending on which part of the area they originated. An important facet of this pattern, not illustrated on the map, is the use of -and(e) in Norfolk, beside the south-east midland forms in -ng and -end(e). There is a link here with other forms of probable Scandinavian origin found in northern East Anglia: mekyl, kirke, wore/ware 'were' have been mentioned in this respect.

The -and(e) ending appears in an early Norfolk text (the Bestiary), and later examples may be seen in texts and documents from Norwich (L13(1), G2, G3, G5 etc.) and Langley (PC15), and the Capgrave manuscripts.[126]

IV (vii). 'Their' and 'them'.

The treatment of the pronouns 'their' and 'them' in certain East Anglian writings of the fifteenth century may be mentioned here as a possible means of dating unlocalised texts thought to be from the same area. By a fairly clearly defined date in the mid-fifteenth century many copyists and writers were beginning to use the initial th forms of the incipient 'Standard' language in preference to the regular south-east midland forms in h, them and their etc. rather than hem and her(e).

As we have seen, the East Anglian dialect, in Norfolk in particular, combines a mainly south-east midland morphology and phonology with more 'northerly' forms of probable Scandinavian origin. The northern forms in initial /th/ for 'them' and 'their', however, have no place in this pattern. Before the mid-fifteenth century these forms for the pronouns are not known further south than southern Lincolnshire, on present information.[127]

In the early period her(e) and hem are the massively predominant forms for the pronouns in East Anglian texts.

The pattern set by Scribe D in Cotton Cleo. C. vi etc.,
the _Bestiary_, _Genesis and Exodus_ and the Norfolk Gild
Returns persists well into the fifteenth century in the
Capgrave manuscripts, the letters of William Paston I,
the Fransham manuscript and the Margery Kempe manuscript.[128]
     The first indications of change are limited to a
period between the 1430's and the 1450's when spellings
in /th/ begin to appear as minority forms in localised
East Anglian materials, e.g. Drury of Beccles, c. 1434
has _here_, _hem_ (_þem_), a slightly later text from the Toft
Monks area (L10) _here_, _hem_ ((_þem_)), and the Arundel
Bokenham manuscript (_post_ 1447) _her(e)_, (_ther(e)_, _þer(e)_)
and _hem(e)_ (_them_ _þem(e)_). Margaret Paston's Norwich clerk
is found to be using _hem_ (_þem_) and _here/there_ between
1448 and 1452, whilst William Worcestre, an important
Paston associate working mainly in East Anglia (though
not a local man) begins to use _th-_ forms in the later
1450's.[129]
     The writings of the Paston men shed further light on
the rate and nature of the change in the latter half of
the fifteenth century, though one must be careful to add
that their spellings were probably somewhat advanced by
local standards, after travel outside East Anglia and
residence in London. The following information is drawn
from Professor Davis's account.[130]
     John I was the first Paston to introduce the /th/
forms, and this he did in 1460, when _þer_ and _þem_ appear
as minority forms in his writings. William II, whose
writings survive from 1449 onwards, used _here_ less often
than _ther(e)_, but _hem_ more frequently than _them_. Sir
John (II) writing from 1464 onwards always wrote _ther(e)_
and nearly always _them_. The case of John III is of
particular interest. In a group of early letters
(1460-2) he used _ther_ (_her_) and _hem_ (_them_) but after
1467 the pattern is _the(y)m_ (_hem_) and _ther(s)_ ((_her_)).
William III, writing from 1478 onwards, was the first
Paston to use _th_ forms exclusively in the pronouns.
     The main period of change from forms in _h_ to

spellings in /th/ in East Anglian texts falls between the mid-1430's and the later 1470's, on the present datable evidence. This gives us one yardstick with which to compare unlocalised literary texts of suggested East Anglian origin in the mid-fifteenth century.

IV (viii). 'Give'.

Rynell has studied the rivalry of Scandinavian and Old English synonyms in Middle English,[131] and one feature of his work offers additional information about the dating and localisation of texts of suspected East Anglian origin in the fifteenth century. This is the rivalry of forms in initial g and /y/ in 'give' and its compounds. Rynell's study confirms the suggestion made in the O.E.D. that East Anglian texts retained the initial /y/ forms throughout most of the fifteenth century, and he notes that ʒ (y) is the usual initial consonant in 'give' 'even in late texts'.[132] Some of the texts examined in the present survey offer supplementary information, sometimes quite precise, on when East Anglians began to spell 'give' with initial g; the evidence forms a useful parallel to the treatment of 'their' and them in the area.

The later fourteenth and earlier fifteenth century texts - the Gild Returns, the Margery Kempe manuscript, the Fransham herbal and the Capgrave manuscripts[133] - all conform to the /y/ pattern. It is not until after 1450 that the forms with initial g become at all frequent in East Anglian work. Miss Kihlbom has collected instances from Paston sources which show that that forms like gyue, geue etc. appear in the writings of Clement II (1461-5) for the first time.[134] Undated East Anglian texts of the fifteenth century using /y/ forms only in 'give' are thus likely to belong to the period before 1450.

V

Two East Anglian Lexical Features

Two cases arise of words which, if found rarely

elsewhere in early Middle English, appear to have become confined to East Anglia in the fifteenth century: these are _swem_ signifying 'grief', 'affliction' and _therk_ 'dark', both with various compounds.[135]

V (i). _Swem_ etc.

The relevant forms are _swem_ (n.) 'grief, affliction', _swemful_ 'grievous' and _swem-_ (vb., trans.) 'to afflict', (intrans.) 'to grieve'. It is important to distinguish, with the O.E.D., between these forms and the commoner ME _sweam_ (n. and vb.) 'a swoon', 'to swoon'.[136] For the 'East Anglian' senses the Dictionary offers citations from texts and writers from or associated with East Anglia: Lydgate, the _Promptorium_, Metham, the Pastons and certain play-texts, _Mankind_, _Ludus Coventriae_ and the _Play of the Sacrament_. Further examples from the Margery Kempe manuscript (_swem(e)_ (n.), _swemful_) and a Capgrave manuscript (_swem_ (n.)) strengthen the impression that it may well have been an East Anglian 'dialect word'.[137]

V (ii). _Therk, therkness_.

The case for _therk_(-) as an East Anglian dialect word is more clear cut than that for _swem_, partly because of its obscure etymology.[138] The M.E.D. merely denominates _þerk_ an 'error' for _derk_,[139] but there are a significant number of occurrences.

The O.E.D. cites _therk_ from Laȝamon and the Auchinlech _Sir Beues_ and in later examples from _Jacob's Well_, Lydgate and _Ludus Coventriae_; _therkness_ is noted in _Genesis and Exodus_, _Jacob's Well_ and the Digby play _Mary Magdalene_.[140] Though not unambiguously East Anglian at first the forms seem to have become restricted to the area later. Sir Thomas Browne thought _thark_ to be 'of no general reception in England but of common use in Norfolk, or peculiar to the East Angle counties'.[141]

For additional evidence one may draw on a number of fifteenth century texts from East Anglia: the ME Claudian, from Clare (_thyrk_, _thirkenes_), the Bokenham manuscript (_therk_, _therkness_), Robert Reynys of Acle (_therk_), Capgrave (_þirkness_, _therkness_); manuscripts of

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the _Promptorium Parvulorum_ refer variously to 'myrke or thyrke ... myrknesse or thyrknesse', 'therk', 'therkness' and 'myrk or thyrke'.[142]

As with _swem_, the evidence for _therk_ as an East Anglian dialect word in the fifteenth century is reasonably strong, and probably as conclusive as the nature of such cases admits, given the limitations of our knowledge of the word - geography of later Middle English.[143] Instances of both words in certain 'East Anglian' plays will be considered in the following chapter.

VI

The foregoing survey provides a conspectus of evidence on the more prominent orthographic features of later Middle English in East Anglia, together with points of related interest in connexion with the dating and localisation of texts in the area. This now places us in a position to compare the written language of the play-texts which are thought to have originated in Norfolk and Suffolk with an independently established framework of information drawn from localised texts and documents. This is the work of the following chapter, and one or two prefatory observations are required.

Not all the items listed above are likely to occur in a single East Anglian text, especially in the latter half of the fifteenth century when provincial orthography was rapidly diluted by the adoption of features of the 'Standard' language. As the above classification is intended to show, not all the features quoted are of equal discriminatory power. The theoretical point made in the course of Chapter Two - that the combinations of orthographic features, not isolated items are to be considered - is crucial. Of the forms listed above the four items in section I are of primary significance in assessing the orthographic affiliations of a text of suggested East Anglian origins. It would be hazardous to

claim for Norfolk or Suffolk any unlocalised text of an east-midland complexion which did not show one of these four primary features, at least, with regularity. A self-consistent array of the commoner forms cited in sections III and IV, together with any relevant lexical features, must be seen to complement this.

With these qualifications in mind we may now turn to the language of the plays which were selected for attention towards the end of Chapter One, adding, however, that this does not exhaust the significance of the materials assembled here. The information may also be used towards the identification of many other types of text copied in East Anglia in the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE EAST ANGLIAN PLAYS – ORTHOGRAPHICAL,

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL AND INTERNAL EVIDENCE

FOR LOCALISATION

In Chapter Three attention was drawn to a selection of the more distinctive orthographic features employed by scribes known to have been at work in later fourteenth and fifteenth century Norfolk and Suffolk. The purpose of this chapter is to compare the language of the suggested East Anglian play-texts with this body of orthographic evidence from the area.

From the fifteenth century there are the following texts to be considered, involving the work of ten scribes:

    The <u>Castle of Perseverance</u>
    The 'N-Town' plays
    The 'N-Town' <u>Assumption</u> play
    The Macro <u>Wisdom</u>
    <u>Mankind</u>
    The Brome <u>Abraham and Isaac</u>
    The two Winchester texts
    <u>Dux Moraud</u>

From the first years of the sixteenth century there are five texts involving seven scribes whose work offers sufficient material for analysis here:

    The <u>Play of the Sacrament</u>
    <u>Mary Magdalene</u>
    <u>St Paul</u>
    The <u>Killing of the Children</u> (Digby Ms.)
    The Digby <u>Wisdom</u> fragment

Two other texts mentioned in East Anglian contexts in Chapter One - the Rickinghall (Bury St Edmunds) Fragment and the Reynes Extracts - are not dealt with here. They will be found placed in their local contexts in the survey of documentary materials relating to the drama in East Anglia, in Chapter Five.

I

<u>The Fifteenth Century Texts</u>

The present state of knowledge concerning the localisation and other relevant details of the texts to be reviewed here has been set out in Chapter One. In each case it is taken, generally on the basis of earlier work, that the several texts are the work of east midland

scribes, and are not associated in any way with other
Middle English dialect areas. No full account of their
orthography is to be anticipated; only those features
established in Chapter Three as contributing to typical
East Anglian combinations need be considered. The
intention is in the first place to discover or confirm
the areas of scribal origin for the various play-texts
as we now have them. These need not necessarily be
identical with the areas or places where the originals
in each case were composed, but certainly offer some idea
of where the manuscripts were circulating and where,
indeed, they may have been in theatrical use.

    (1). The Castle of Perseverance,
          Folger Ms. V.a.354 ff. 154-91.

Furnivall's early suggestion, that the Castle as it
stands in the Macro manuscript is the work of an east-
midland copyist from Norfolk, is plainly correct. Eccles
has recently supported this judgement, finding the
vocabulary, phonology and accidence consistent with such
origins.[1] The orthographic evidence collected in Chapter
Three enables us to be quite specific about this, and the
relevant features may be taken in the order in which they
were set out there:

    - East Anglian x in 'shall' etc. does not appear;
the regular spelling is in initial sch, with one example
of sulde (2480).[2]

    - initial 'wh' usually appears as wh, less often w,[3]
a common pattern in East Anglian texts where q does not
appear.

    - words with usual 'ght' are never spelt зt or ght,
the numerous forms are always in t or th: lyth, myth,
wrowth etc.[4] This is the regular usage of very many East
Anglian hands, and resembles in particular the ortho-
graphic habits underlying the Capgrave manuscripts; the
Castle scribe, as we shall see, was active in Norfolk at
very much the same time that Capgrave was working at Lynn.

    - the ending of the 3rd. sg. pres. ind. is often th,
as is to be expected in an East Anglian text of the earlier
half of the fifteenth century. Distinct examples of

spellings characteristic of the area also occur: <u>waxit</u> (418), <u>seruyt</u> (2614), <u>sytth(t)</u> (356, 1386), <u>getyh(t)</u> (1322) etc.[5]

Two of the rarer East Anglian forms documented in the preceding chapter are found:

- the very unusual <u>nyn</u> 'nor' occurs on a number of occasions (282, 490, 800, 872 etc.) and <u>nen</u> once (714).[6]

- <u>erdyn</u> is used for 'errand' (2498, 2896) and the same form occurs in three East Anglian copies of the Lynn <u>Promptorium Parvulorum</u>,and apparently nowhere else.[7]

A number of the more unusual secondary features of East Anglian orthography are also combined in the work of the <u>Castle</u> hand:

- 'how' is spelt with initial <u>wh</u> throughout (<u>whou</u>, 16, 738, 1337, 2892; <u>whov</u>, 1960, 2077, 2244; <u>whow</u>, 287, 348), a form particularly well attested in Norfolk.[8]

- <u>mende</u> 'mind' and <u>kende</u> 'kind' both appear, and are used in rhyme (786f., 2513).[9]

- Norfolk (rather than Suffolk) origins are perhaps suggested by the use of <u>ded</u> 'death' and <u>werd</u> 'world'.[10]

Spellings of a number of commoner words are found in a combination typical of East Anglia:

- 'much' is spelt <u>mekyl</u> in the vast majority of cases (76, 839, 1222 etc.), a form held to be more typical of Norfolk than Suffolk in East Anglian texts.[11]

- 'such' is usually spelt <u>swyche</u> (310, 1237, 1546), 'which' <u>weche</u> (1512, 1514) and 'any' <u>ony</u> (932, 1206), though more commonly <u>any</u>.[12]

- the spellings for 'church' in a possible Norfolk context are of some interest, and may be compared with recent mappings from the 'Atlas of the Dialects of Later Middle English':[13] <u>chyrche</u> (central and east Norfolk) is usually found (1216, 1225, 2336), but <u>kyrke</u> appears twice in rhyme (3146, 3393).

- <u>w</u> for usual consonantal 'v', a common feature in East Anglian texts,[14] appears in a number of words, e.g. <u>serwant</u>, <u>thrywe</u>, <u>ewyl</u>.

- endings of the present participles of verbs

usually take the common south-east midland form -nge, with the more dialectally distinctive -and(e) occurring twice, once in rhyme (with land, n.).[15] Taken together with a number of features noticed above, this probably indicates the work of a Norfolk rather than a Suffolk hand.

The combination of features already noted is sufficient to show quite clearly that the man who copied the text of the Castle as we now have it was an East Anglian. His work has been dated, on palaeographical grounds, about 1440,[16] and there are one or two orthographical features which serve to show that a date prior to 1450 is likely to be correct:

- 'their' always appears as her(e) and 'them' as hem; there are no instances of the /th/ spellings which arose in East Anglia in the 1450's.

- the initial consonant in 'give' is always 3 (except for one example of gyue (1002)), again clearly the pattern of the first half of the fifteenth century in East Anglia.

Several features, combined, suggest that the Castle scribe came from or acquired his orthography in Norfolk: beside typical East Anglianisms (t, th for 'ght', 3rd. sg. pres. ind. in t etc.) whow etc., mekyl, werd 'world' and ded 'death', chyrche (kirke) and the present participle in -and(e) all go together to suggest the northern half of East Anglia as the area of scribal origin.[17]

(2). The 'N-Town Plays; B.L. Ms. Cotton Vesp. D. viii, the main hand, hands 1 and 2. [18]

Professor Eccles has recently attempted to re-direct the study of the 'N-Town' compilation along a more profitable course by drawing attention to East Anglian features in the language of the main hand.[19] A more comprehensive account of the regional affiliations of the scribe's orthographic system remains desirable, however. As is well known, the phonology and morphology of the text are east midland.[20]

Assessment of the regional features found in the orthography of the main hand is complicated by two factors.

First, the hand is dated palaeographically in the third
quarter of the fifteenth century, and this accords well
with the date 1468 which the scribe has added on folio
100v.[21] Some features of the language are therefore
distinctly late - later for instance than those found in
the _Castle of Perseverance_ - but there is no shortage of
comparable material in the texts and documents surveyed
in Chapter Two and analysed in Chapter Three.

The second problem arises out of the bibliographical
complexity of the manuscript, which is considerable.
Block showed that the main hand was being required to copy
from a variety of exemplars, and that its work, in all
likelihood, took place over a period of time - the scribe
not only _writes_ in somewhat differing ways in different
parts of the manuscript but sometimes shows different
spelling patterns too.[22]

Despite these problems it will readily be seen that
the 'N-Town' copyist employs a typically East Anglian
orthographic system, the main features of which are
discernible throughout his work. Whatever diverse dates
and source materials underlie the process of copying, the
bulk of the 'N-Town' plays were written down by a hand
brought up or trained in central East Anglia, and most
likely to have been at work in the 1460's and 1470's. The
reasons for thinking so are as follows:

- 'shall' and 'should' are very frequently spelt
xal (_xul_) and _xulde_; this is the most distinctive East
Anglian feature of all, and appears throughout the main
hand's work.[23]

- _q_ spellings for usual 'wh' occur with varying
frequency; _wh_ is used in the great majority of cases
with _qw(h)_ a less common form, then _w_ and _qu_. _Wh_ may be
seen _passim_; instances of the _q_ spellings are: _qwyte_
(19/105), _qwelp_ (45/73), _qwall_ ('whale' 60/70), _qwyle_
(65/75), _qwhyl_ (68/144), _qwhat_ (68/147), _qwens_ (75/91),
qwere (102/149), _quan_ (109/16), _qwy_ (112/100), _qweche_
(259/822), _qwat_ (260/836) etc. There is a very noticeable
change of habit here. The _q_ spellings never occur for
common words in the Old Testament plays copied by the

scribe, only for the first three rarer items on the above list; thereafter they become much more frequent, especially amongst the Marian and Passion groups. This perhaps links up with the bibliographical evidence for the separate origins of these sections of the manuscript.[24]

- modern 'ght' appears in a variety of ways, the typical East Anglian _t_, _th_ spellings being amongst the most common, e.g. _myth_ (29/8, 70/208, 104/205, 115/4 etc.), _ffyth_ (228/91, in rh. with _dyspyte_), _ryth_ (1/19, 17/24 etc.), _ryte_ (2/42 in rh. with _debyte_ and _dyspite_), _lyth_ (17/25, 17/30 etc.), _syth_ (109/14), _nyth_ (267/1027, 1037), _bryth_ (17/32, 109/16), _browth_ (182/117, 11/372), _sowth_ (266/1015), _thouth_ (11/337), _wrouth_ (11/339), _bowth_ (11/368) and numerous other examples.[25]

- for the 3rd sg. pres. ind. of verbs the usual southern and midland _th_ forms preponderate, but there are numerous instances of the East Anglian _t_ forms to be seen, such as _alowyht_, _hatyht_ (32/143, 145), _menyht_, _grevyht_ (38/92, 94), _werkyht_ (55/135), _chargight_ (87/146), _discendit_ (107/s.d. 292ff.), _dystroyt_ (231/16), _prayt_ (233/83), _ffortefyet_ (256/721) _byddyt_ (262/s.d. 908ff.) and many other examples.[26] All the primary features of East Anglian spelling are therefore present in the main hand's work, usually beside the more widespread southern and midland forms.

A number of the very distinctive rarer East Anglian forms are also found:

- like the _Castle of Perseverance_ scribe, the main hand here sometimes uses _nyn_ for 'nor' beside the commoner _nor_, _ne(r)_; there are several examples, and it is interesting that they are all found as a cluster in the Marian plays (62/15 twice, 76/131, 117/66) and not elsewhere in the manuscript.

- _hefne_ 'heaven' and _sefne_ 'seven' are most unusual in later Middle English, apparently being confined to a few central East Anglian texts; it is particularly important, therefore, that both are found frequently in the main hand's work e.g. _hefne_ (also _hevyn_), 18/67, 33/127, 60/81, 67/123, 95/418, 111/84, 261/860 (_efne_),

and many other examples; sefne 60/79, 67/125, 75/97,
172/102 etc.

    - 'errand' appears as erdon (263/938) and 'search'
as serge (273/60), both forms being highly typical of
and probably restricted to East Anglia in later Middle
English.[27]

    - tys appears for 'it is' (266/s.d. 998ff.), a form
which can only be paralleled (in this period) in the work
of a few other East Anglian hands, including the minor
one involved in the copying of Mankind in the Macro
manuscript.

    A number of commoner words are spelt in unusual but
characteristically East Anglian ways by the main hand,
and all of them find numerous parallels in the localised
materials from the area:

    - 'how' is spelt with initial wh- several times,
such forms apparently being restricted to the limited area
of Norfolk: whow (65/78, 106/263, 270, 163/23), and whov
(164/64) appear beside usual how, and at 94/371 whow has
been altered to how. The close resemblance to the forms
used by the Castle of Perseverance scribe is striking,
and it is also interesting that the whow forms, like nyn
'nor', are mostly found in a cluster in the Marian plays.

    - mende and kende are very common forms for 'mind'
and 'kind' in the main hand's work, occurring commonly
in rhyme,[28] e.g. mende (rh. wende 234/117ff.), kende,
mende (rh. ende 80/245ff.) meende (rh. rende 268/1066ff.)
kende (rh. ende 268/1078ff.) and many other examples.

    - cure for 'cover' is found in various forms, and is
especially notable for being found in rhyme on a couple
of occasions - it was evidently a feature of the language
of the original author or authors of the plays, as well
as of the main scribe; examples are kure (49/179),
recure (rh. ensure 82/104ff., sewre 245/394ff.), curyng
(228/87), recuryn (281/279).

    - dede 'death', erde 'earth' and werd(e) 'world' are
all found, the first two minority forms beside usual deth
and erthe (herthe), the third as a majority form, with

<u>word</u> and more usual midland spellings found less commonly. The parallels to the forms used by the <u>Castle</u> hand are once again striking.[29]

Typical East Anglian orthographic patterns are found in the spellings of common words:

- 'much' is usually spelt <u>mech(e)</u>, the commoner form in southern East Anglia during the fifteenth century, but forms of probable Scandinavian origin are also frequent - <u>mekyl</u>, and less often <u>mekell</u> and <u>mykyl</u>.[30]

- 'such' is usually spelt in the 'Standard' form of the day - <u>such(e)</u> - and this may perhaps reflect the lateness of the text. The scribe sometimes uses regional forms: <u>swech(e)</u> (239/232, 240/280 etc.) <u>seche</u> (246/442) <u>suech</u> (76/122) <u>suych</u> (8/248).[31]

- 'which' is most often spelt in the 'Standard' form <u>which(e)</u>, but also in regional forms like <u>wech(e)</u>, <u>qweche</u> and <u>wheche</u>, which are typical of many East Anglian hands in this period. It is interesting that these <u>e</u> spellings suddenly become very noticeable in the scribe's work in the Passion plays, and this may be connected with the bibliographical evidence for the separate origins of these texts.[32]

- like the <u>Castle</u> hand discussed above, the main scribe here spells 'any' in the eastern form, <u>ony</u>, and in the more widespread midland way as <u>any</u>; <u>eny</u> does not occur.

- 'church'. Rynell has pointed out the differing ways in which the scribe spells this word, and they should be compared with the published provisional 'Atlas' map for the form.[33] The northern <u>kyrke</u> occurs once (in rh. with <u>irke</u> 168/194), <u>cherche</u> twice (once in rhyme with <u>werch</u> 'work' 55/130) and <u>chirch</u> once. Any or all three of these forms could merely have been carried over from exemplars, but the map indicates only a very limited area of south central Norfolk where the three forms would be likely to occur side by side.

- 'were' is normally spelt <u>were</u>, but there are a group of instances where forms of probable Scandinavian

origin appear, such as <u>wore</u> (<u>worn</u>) and <u>ware</u>, and these
are much more likely to indicate Norfolk rather than
Suffolk origins, in an East Anglian context. Examples
are <u>ware</u> (65/77, rh. <u>bare</u>, adj.), <u>worn</u> (122/24, rh.
<u>beforn</u>; 136/29), <u>wore</u> (84/50, 124/10, 137/50, rh. <u>bore</u>,
'born'; 91/271, 101/127). It will be noted that these
forms are grouped in the Marian plays, and that they
never occur in the Old Testament plays preceding.

    - numerous <u>w</u> for 'v' spellings of the sort common
in fifteenth century East Anglian work are found, e.g.
<u>hawe</u> (128/146), <u>dowe</u> (3/77, in rh. with <u>crow</u> 'crow'),
<u>stewyn</u> (90/244), <u>showe</u> (vb. 'shove', in rh. with <u>loue</u>
33/129 and <u>a-now</u> 'enough' 310/1118) etc.

    - the present participles of verbs are normally
found with the usual midland <u>-ng(e)</u> form, but a number
of forms in <u>-and(e)</u> occur, all of them in the Marian or
Passion sections: <u>pleand</u> (62/3), <u>neyhand</u> (162/4),
<u>shynand</u> (167/153); <u>Applyande</u>, <u>declinande</u> and <u>plesande</u>
are rhymed with <u>hande</u> (n., 229/10ff.).[34]

    The East Anglian 'dialect' words for 'grief' and
'darkness' are both firmly attested in the main scribe's
work:

    - <u>swem</u> (n., 65/53), <u>sweme</u> (n.) in rhyme with <u>deme</u>
'deem' and <u>seme</u> 'seem' (101/127), <u>swemyth</u> (vb., 138/97),
<u>swemful</u> (adj., 64/41), <u>swemynge</u> (vbl.n., 74/63). It is
worth noting that these forms are (with one exception)
found in the Marian plays.

    - <u>therkeness</u> (96/436), <u>thyrknes</u> (270/27). At
161/304 the main hand originally wrote <u>myrke</u> but hand 2
(see below) later altered this to <u>thyrke</u>.

    The scribe's usage with respect to 'their' and
'them' and 'give' runs parallel to the East Anglian
patterns of the 1460's and 1470's discussed towards the
end of the preceding chapter:

    - <u>here</u> and <u>hem</u> occur as the majority forms for the
two pronouns, but there are substantial numbers of forms
in /th/: <u>þer</u>, <u>ther</u> and <u>þem</u>, <u>them</u>.[35]

    - according to Rynell, 'give' (and compounds in
'forgive') are spelt with <u>ʒ</u> only slightly more often than

with g.[36] These forms are worth comparing with the
Castle scribe's regular _her_, _hem_ and _3_ forms in
comparable cases, dating from before 1450 in the same
area. The Cottonian main hand seems to have been working
perhaps a generation later.

The orthographic character of the main hand
responsible for writing the bulk of the 'N-Town' plays
deserves much more attention than these has been room
for here. The preceding account is at least sufficient
to show that the manuscript was copied by a man
accustomed to spelling in the East Anglian manner of the
latter half of the fifteenth century. His work has
features suggesting the period soon after the 1450's,
when 'Standard' forms begin to appear in the orthography
of the area beside or instead of earlier provincial
features - e.g. the preference for _such(e)_ (over _swech(e)_
etc.), _which(e)_ (over _qwech(e)_ etc.), the growing use of
/th/ in 'them' and 'their' and of _g_ beside /y/ in 'give'
etc.

However, there are abundant indications in the
above account to show that the scribe preserved all of
the more unusual graphemic idiosyncrasies of his area of
origin. And there are probably enough details to suggest
that he was a Norfolk rather than a Suffolk man - _whow_
etc., _mekyl_, _dede_ 'death', _erde_, _werd_, _wore/ware_ 'were',
-and(e) for the present participle and perhaps _kyrke_
beside _cherche/chirch_. Given that we are dealing an
East Anglian scribe in both cases, this is a combination
of forms that should lead us to 'place' both the 'N-Town'
main hand and the _Castle_ scribe in Norfolk.

The resemblances between the Cottonian hand and the
Castle hand merit a thorough investigation through a far
wider selection of forms than that employed here, where
some of the more obvious points of contact have been
mentioned. The _Castle_ scribe was evidently at work in
Norfolk _c_. 1425-50 and the Cottonian scribe must also have
been there in the two or three decades after the middle
of the century.[37]

The other feature of the work of the 'N-Town' main
scribe which merits more attention is variation in
orthography from place to place in the manuscript.
Several points mentioned above hint that at least two
areas of the text show clusters of unusual or
distinctive forms, the Marian plays and the two Passion
plays. This may well be connected with bibliographical
evidence that these two parts of the manuscript were
compiled from different sources, and that the Passion
section was copied at a different time from the rest of
the manuscript. More work on the orthography along these
lines could well be revealing. The heterogeneous origins
of the materials which make up the 'N-Town' plays may
eventually be demonstrable on both the bibliographic
and the linguistic levels.

The content of the texts in Cotton Vespasian D. viii
offers no shred of substantive internal evidence about
where any or all of them might have originated, or have
been performed. At present, the manuscript cannot be
proved to have had physical associations with any
particular place during the fifteenth or sixteenth
centuries. K.S. Block noted the names of those who had
access to it before it was acquired by its earliest known
owner, the antiquary and scholar Robert Hegge of Durham
and Corpus Christi College Oxford, from whom it passed
into the Cottonian library.[38] Most of the earlier names
are too commonplace to require attention, but at least
one is contemporary with the copying of the manuscript,
and is conceivably connected with the uses to which it
might have been put.

On folio 207r of the manuscript hand 2,which else-
where corrects the main hand's work and has interpolated
a couple of folios,[39] writes the words 'Vade Worlych'
(once) and 'Nota Worlych' (twice) in the margin. It is
natural to think that 'Worlych' is somebody's name,
conceivably somebody concerned with putting on a
performance of some of the material. If indeed it is a
name it is a rather unusual one. According to Reaney it
may be derived from OE weorþlic 'worthy', and all the

fifteenth and sixteenth instances of it which he quotes are from East Anglian sources.[40]

Some indication of the geographic distribution of this unusual name in East Anglia may be gleaned from fifteenth and earlier sixteenth century wills registered at Bury St. Edmunds and Norwich, where it occurs several times. Apart from outlying instances at Norwich (1518) and Wickhambrook, Sf. (1457), all the instances constellate in a surprisingly restricted area of south central Norfolk and north Suffolk. The parishes concerned are Denton (1538), Brockdish (1464, 1465), Hopton (Thetford) (1461, 1503), Bedingfield (1517), Kenninghall (1480), Lopham (1569, 1577), Ixworth (1457), Mildenhall (1468).[41] The accompanying map, to which the (independently) suggested linguistic localisation of the main hand of Cotton Vespasian D. viii has been added, will make the distribution clear.

Cotton Vespasian D. viii - the minor hands.

Hand 2 in the Cottonian manuscript interpolated three folios into the main hand's work, as well as correcting the latter and adding the name 'Worlych' on folio 207r.[42] This offers relatively little on which to judge its performance from an orthographic point of view - but several features are nevertheless distinctive:

- 'shall' and 'should' are usually spelt xall, xuld(e), as in the work of the main hand, e.g. 159/225, 229, 253, 160/263 etc.

- mekell (159/245) is used for 'much' - cf. the main hand's frequent mekyl.

- hand 2 alters the main hand's myrk (161/304) to the East Anglian dialect word thyrk. Otherwise the language is that of the east and south-east midlands in the latter half of the fifteenth century. Like the main hand, 2 appears to have been in the process of adopting 'Standard' forms, e.g. such, wich; gyff 'give' is used, but hem is written on the four occasions where the pronoun occurs. The indications, such as they are, suggest that the interpolator and corrector came from the same area as the main scribe.

N O R F O L K

● Lynn

Norwich ●

ELY

Ely ●

Thetford
(1461)

* (1480)
Kenninghall
●Lopham
●(1569,77)
Hopton
(1461,1503)
●Ixworth
(1457)

●Denton
(1538)
●Brockdish
(1465,9)

Mildenhall●
(1468)

Bedingfield
(1517)

Cambridge
●

Bury ●

C A M B S.

S U F F O L K

Ipswich ●
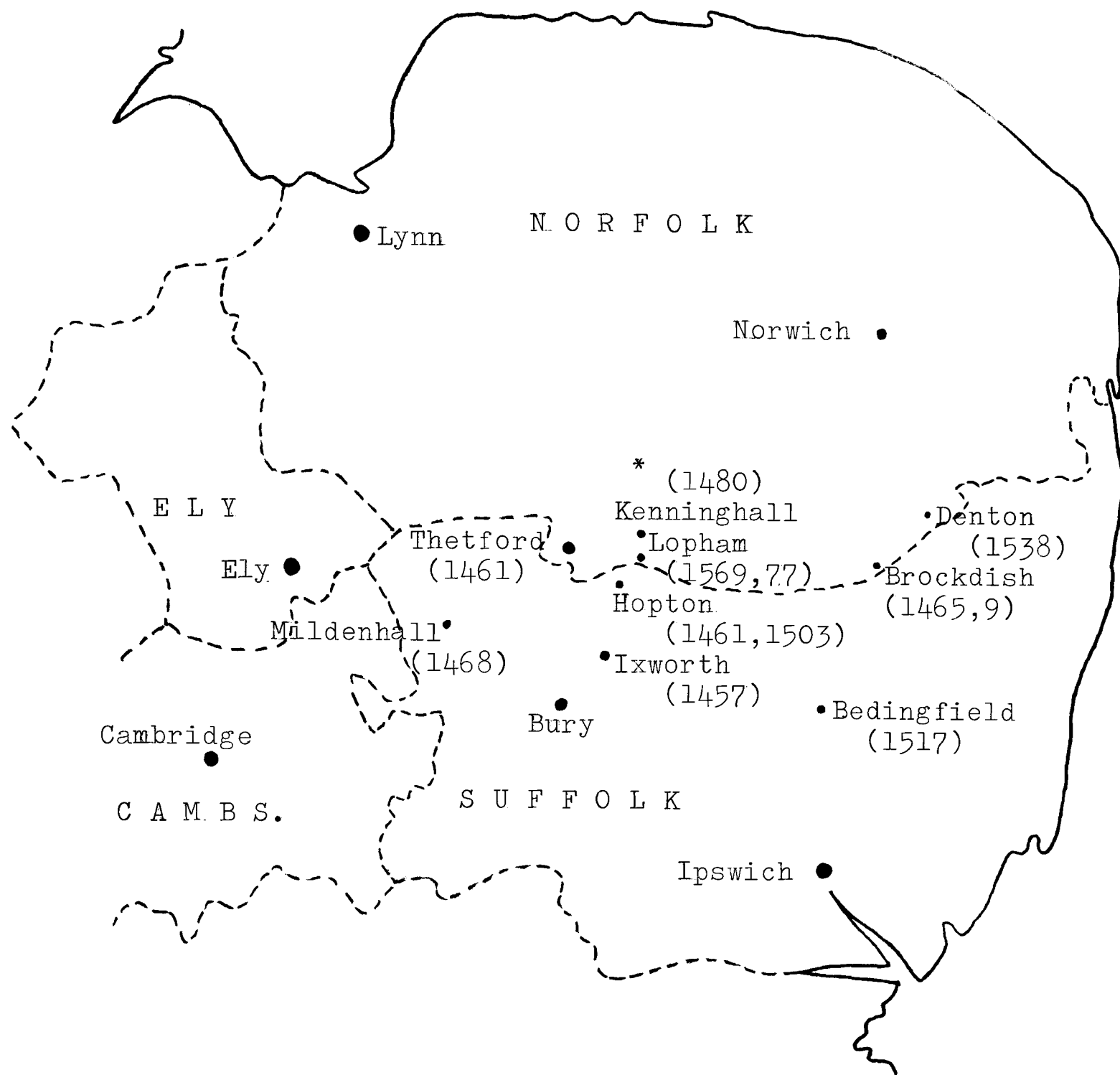
Map 2

Occurrences of the Name 'Worlych' in 15thC.
and 16thC. East Anglian Wills etc.

(* = suggested scribal provenance of B.L. Ms.
    Cotton Vesp. D. viii, main hand; cf. Map
    4, following p.124)

Hand 1 in Vespasian D. viii is dated palaeographically late in the fifteenth century, c. 1490-1500. It makes only a very minor contribution on folios 51-2, and none of the more notable East Anglian spellings are found except perhaps dowty 'doughty' (86/174), a form to be expected in the area and also used by the main hand (147/44, 152/15).

(3). The 'N-Town' Assumption Play;
      Cotton Vespasian D. viii, hand 3.

The Assumption play found in the Cottonian manuscript (A) has been the object of a separate diplomatic edition by Greg, and with good reason.[43] It is written on a type of paper not used by the main Cottonian hand, by a scribe who was (as will be shown below) at work measurably earlier. The main scribe rubricated A in accordance with his practice elsewhere in the bulk of the manuscript and he also made some corrections.[44] To all intents and purposes A is a text of quite separate origin, gathered into the Cottonian manuscript at the time of the main compilation; its orthographic system requires separate assessment.[45]

Greg gave an account of the phonetic character of the A language, concluding that it belonged to the east midlands. He also mentioned the orthography, and found reason to think that the A scribe was from the same area as the main one, whom he correctly regarded as an East Anglian.[46] The analysis may be taken somewhat further now, with a comparison between the latter aspect of the language and information from the localised East Anglian texts and documents:

- the A hand never writes x in 'shall' and 'should', or sh, the alternative favoured by the Cottonian main hand. In common with the Castle of Perseverance scribe, A always has sch in this position.[47]

- for 'wh' words the A hand usually writes wh, sometimes qw (358/90, 360/141, 362/193), a pattern similar to that used by the main hand.

- the spelling of 'ght' words is the most prominent East Anglian feature in the orthography of A, as Greg

noted.[48] No spellings with ʒ or gh are found; th or tht are the regular forms, ht appearing occasionally.[49] Thus forms like syth, rith, myth, lyth, brith, lithtis (pl.), outh ('ought') brouth, wrouth, bouth etc. are the rule. In most particulars the pattern is that found in the Capgrave manuscripts, the Castle of Perseverance and a good many other East Anglian texts.

    – no examples of the East Anglian t in the 3rd. sg. pres. ind. are found. The midland and southern th is regular, apart from louris (368/372 'lours', rh. with schowris, n.).

    The A hand uses one of the rarer East Anglian forms:

    – hefne 'heaven' appears quite frequently, and is regular, e.g. 359/113, 360/141, 372/479, 373/492 etc. The spelling is only recorded from a handful of central East Anglian scribes, amongst whom is the main scribe in the Cottonian manuscript.

    East Anglian patterns in commoner words are as follows:

    – like the main hand, the A hand often writes mend(e) 'mind' and kend(e) 'kind', frequently in rhyme, e.g. hende: kende (359/131ff.), mende: fende ('fiend' 359/125ff.), ende: mend (372/484ff.), kend: wend (372/486f.).

    – the distinctively East Anglian cure for 'cover' is found in curying (vb. 364/256).

    – 'world' appears twice, once as word (359/128) and once as world (360/145).

    – forms for 'much' are comparable with those used by the main hand, usually meche (occasionally myche) and once mekyl.[50]

    – 'such' is usually sweche, once swyche.[51]

    – 'which' is always spelt qwyche.[52]

    – 'any' is always spelt ony.[53]

    – 'church' appears but once, cherche (363/213), which may be compared with the East Anglian distribution for the form on the published 'Atlas' map.

    – present participles; these were discussed in some detail by Greg.[54] The A hand often uses the southern and midland -ng forms, but the originally Scandinavian -and

is found eleven times, mostly as a rhyme. As with the occurrences of this form in the work of the main hand, a scribal origin in Norfolk rather than Suffolk may be implied.

One of the East Anglian 'dialect' words is firmly attested:

- sweme (vb., inf.) is found at 361/172, in rhyme with teme 'time', queme 'to comfort' and seme 'seem'. It was evidently a feature of the language of the author.

The work of the A hand differs in one major particular from that of the Cottonian main hand. Apart from a single instance of there (355/5) 'their', the pronouns 'their' and 'them' regularly appear as here and hem in A. Unlike the work of the main hand, A in this respect resembles East Anglian texts of before about 1450, including the Castle of Perseverance. As we have seen, the main hand was probably at work in the 1460's or 1470's (? 1468), but on this evidence A could easily be earlier.

There is no doubt that the A scribe was an East Anglian, and it is notable that his work shows points of contact with both the main hand in the Cottonian manuscript and that of the Castle of Perseverance. Wherever the two more prolific scribes originated in central East Anglia, it is likely that the A scribe came from nearby.[55]

(4). The Macro 'Wisdom' and 'Mankind';
Folger Ms. V.a.354 ff.98-121 and 132-134.

The 'Macro' copies of Wisdom (W) and Mankind (M) now found together in the Folger manuscript pose special problems of unusual complexity with regard to their scribal origin. The question of localisation must be considered in the light of significant internal evidence in both texts. The author of Wisdom must have had some acquaintance with the legal world of later medieval London, and the text contains references to the quest of Holborn, Westminster and the parvise at St. Paul's. On the other hand, one of the characters swears by Saint Audrey of Ely.[56] The local associations of Mankind are

firmly East Anglian, with references to villages and their inhabitants in the areas immediately to the south and east of Cambridge and in north-west Norfolk, to Bury, Walsingham and again to Ely.[57]

A second problem is the number of hands involved in the writing of the two texts, a point that is, unfortunately, in dispute at the moment. In his recent Early English Text Society edition Eccles remarked, apparently for the first time, that most of Mankind was copied by the same scribe who wrote out Wisdom.[58] The latter part of Mankind (ff.132v-134r) is the work of another scribe, whose work is not extensive, and who may be left aside for the moment. Eccles's judgement has recently been questioned by Bevington, who observes in the introduction to facsimiles of the texts[59] that 'there seems no reason to assume that the scribe or scribes of any one manuscript had any connexion with the others'. Neither editor offers any detailed discussion to support his point of view, which is a shortcoming, and not least from the literary and historical points of view. Critics have argued on the one hand for the high moral and theological tone of Wisdom and on the other have condemned Mankind for its rustic scatology.[60] The fact that both might have been copied by the same scribe is not without consequences for our views of how Middle English drama was transmitted in manuscript and what audience two such divergent pieces might have had. As the following account is partly intended to show, it is not very difficult to indicate that Eccles is correct and Bevington in error on this point; but detailed consideration of the consequences of this must await its place.[61]

If it is accepted that both Wisdom and the bulk of Mankind are the work of the same hand then this in some ways multiplies the problems which the texts raise. There are not only palaeographical differences between the two performances of the scribe, but also a number of contrasts in the orthography used in the two texts, some of which clearly point to differing pronunciations for certain words. There are likely to be two kinds of variation

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underlying this - (i) the effect of copying from linguistically differing exemplars, and (ii) a change in habits on the scribe's part over a period of time. These two factors might operate independently, or in conjunction with one another to produce the kinds of difference in orthography that are found.

There is obviously a need for a more detailed procedure here than that which has been used in the cases of the East Anglian plays already dealt with. The point about the identity of the main hand in <u>Mankind</u> and that of <u>Wisdom</u> needs to be elaborated, and in the process certain facts about the scribal origins and dating of the texts will emerge. In the first place a more detailed selection of linguistic features is required, and the points of comparison and contrast between the scribe's work in the two texts will be more readily appreciated if this is set out in the form of a table. There are four groups to be taken into account:

<u>Group 1, Spellings with little or no variation.</u>

	W	M
'thy'	yi	yi
'thou'	yu	yu
'it'	yt	yt
'is'	ys	ys
'if'	yff	yf(f)
'you'	yow	yow
'your'	yowr	yowr
'shall'	xall	xall
'will' (vb.)	wyll (woll)	wyll (woll)
'any'	ony	ony
'through'	thorow	thorow
'high'	hye	hye
'heaven'	hewyn	hewyn
'evil'	ewyll	ewyll
'blessed'	blyssyde	blyssyde
'little'	lytyll	lytyll
'upon'	wp(p)on	wppon

<u>Group 2, Spellings with minor explicable variations.</u>

	W	M
'much'	moche	moche ((myche, mekyll))
'church'	chyrche	chyrche ((kirke, kerke))
'there'	yer, ther ((thore))	yer, ther
'were'	wer(e) ((wore,ware))	wer(e) ((wore))
'-and'	-onde ((-ande))	-onde ((-ande))
'while'	wyll	wyll ((whyll, qwyll))
'though'	thow ((though))	thow
'such'	suche	such

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Group 3, Major spelling variations without phonic significance

'they'	yey	yei
'where'	wer(e)	wher(e) ((were))
'who'	wo (who)	who
'what'	wat (what)	what
'why'	wy (why)	why
'yet'	yet, yit	3et(t), 3it
'year'	yer	3er(e)

Group 4, Major spelling variations with probable phonic significance

'their'	her(e), yer	yer ((ther, her))
'them'	hem (them)	yem ((them, hem))
'then'	yan ((than, then))	yen, then ((than))
'than'	yan, than ((then))	yen ((yan))
'when'	wen, wan ((when))	when ((wen))
'together'	togedyr, togydyr	togethere, togythyr
'hither'	hedyr, hydyr	hethyr, hether(e) ((hedyr))
'mother'	modyr	moyer ((modyr))
'well'	weell, wyll, well, wele	well
'self'	selff ((-sylff))	sylffe ((selff))
'give'	y- (g-)	g-

Certain verbal inflexions also belong with Group 4:

3rd. sg. pr. ind.:
W : -th, -t ((-s, x4 in rh.))
M : -th (-t) ((-s, x2 in rh., x2 within line))
Present participle:
W : -ynge ((-enge, and -ande in rh.))
M : -yng(e)
'To be', pl. pr. ind.:
W : be (ben(e)) ((beth, and are x2 in rh.))
M : be(n) (are, arn)

Note: the W-M scribe's habit of writing y for þ is retained in the discussion here.

Before considering in detail the implications of the comparisons in spelling implied above, it is perhaps worth noting briefly that there are certain palaeographic differences between the two texts as they appear on the manuscript page, and these may be readily seen in Bevington's recently published facsimile. The writing in W is better spaced, having an average of twenty-five lines to the page, where M usually has half as many again.[62] This is the most obvious factor contributing to the somewhat different visual impressions given by the two sets of writing, though there are also minor differences between the two involving different types of letter form; perhaps the scribe not only changed the way he spelt but also the way he wrote over a period of time.[63]

The best way of showing that W and the bulk of M are the work of the same hand is to compare the spellings along lines suggested above. Obviously, one has to show that a good number of forms remain the same from one to the other, down to matters of minute detail. This can be seen in the items noted in Group 1 and (with qualifications) in Group 2.

Most of the forms in Group 1 call for no comment. The forms for 'thy' and 'thou' remain precisely the same: y^i (W 81, 94, 770; M 73, 79, 84), y^u (W 310, 311, 312; M 108, 140, 202). The forms for 'is', 'it' and 'if', which all appear very frequently, remain the same, as do those for 'you' and 'your': yow (W 73, 288, 558; M 13, 25, 33), yow^r (W 20, 39, 71; M 13, 17, 18). 'Shall' is always spelt in the East Anglian way - xall, passim - and 'should' is treated similarly, always appearing as xulde. 'Will' (vb.) is usually wyll (W 102, 217, 353; M 23, 71, 88), occasionally woll (W 492, 765; M 371). 'Any' always appears in the eastern form ony (W 351, 618, 904; M 171, 451, 488), and 'through' appears as thorow in both texts (W 311, 760, 1049; M 282, 500).

Slightly less common words are also spelt with a high degree of consistency: hye (W 25, 61; M 241, 393), hewyn (W 116, 122, 159; M 175, 558), ewyll (W 1046; M 389, 613), blyssyde (W 156, 275; M 12, 15, 152), lytyll (W 465, 816; M 47, 87, 93), wp(p)on (W 1042, 1059; M 608, 620).[64]

Group 2 contains words spelt in similar ways in both W and M, though with some minor and probably explicable variations. For 'much' it was clearly the scribe's habit to write moche, which he did throughout W (9, 414, 482 etc.), and usually in M (58, 256, 694). In the latter text, however, mekyll appears twice (47, 601), in all probability having been carried over from an earlier and perhaps the original version of the play.[65] The same may be true of M's kirke (552 in rh. with yrke) and very unusual kerke (553) which stand in contrast to the scribe's regular chyrche elsewhere, (W 982, 984, 988; M 583, 633).

The handling of 'there' and to some extent 'were' in W
is also influenced by rhyme. In both texts _yer_ or _ther_
are the usual forms (W 223, 299, 302, M 42, 179, 227)
but W has the more provincially coloured _thore_ in rhyme,
twice (329 : _wore_ 'were' : _sorre_; 413 : _more_). 'Were'
usually appears as _were_ in both W and M (40, 107, 521;
53, 249, 251), with isolated examples of _wore_ in both
(W 489, M 588, not in rh.). W differs from M, however,
in often having (or requiring) _wore_ and _ware_ in rhyme.[66]
These north-easterly features were clearly part of the
original language of the former play.

For words in the '-and' group (modern 'hand',
'stand' etc.) the scribe habitually wrote -_onde_ in both
texts, except where rhyme occasionally constrained him
to use -_ande_.[67] Again, the originals of both texts
contained forms more northerly than those usually used
by the scribe in this respect.

For modern 'while' the forms shared by both texts
is _wyll_ (W 543; M 77, 259), but M also has examples of
whyll (414) and _qwyll_ (543). _Whyll_ here is easily
explained as part of a general shift from _w_ forms in W
to _wh_ forms in M, which is discussed in more detail in a
moment. _Qwyll_, however, in the east midland context, is
best interpreted as an East Anglianism, and probably a
residual feature of the original text of the play, or an
earlier copy.[68] The scribe seems to have recognized _qw_
as a valid alternative to _wh_ and _w_, but it was perhaps
a provincialism which he sought to avoid.[69] He also
uses _qwyppe_ ('whip' M 795) and _qwyst_ ('whist' M 557, 593).
The scribe usually writes _thow_ for 'though' (W 7, 362,
602; M 155, 586) with the single exception of _though_
W 75.[70]

The other form with minor variation from W to M is
in the writing of 'such', which regularly appears with
a final 'e' in W, _suche_ (304, 305, 441, 848), but without
in M (37, 180, 180, 363).

These spellings from Groups 1 and 2 must be
sufficient to indicate, beside the palaeographical
evidence, that the Macro texts of _Wisdom_ and _Mankind_ were

both written by the same scribe, who was an East Anglian.
Group 2 has also given some indications of the dialectal
colouring of the originals of the texts which he was
copying, and we will return to this matter presently.

Group 3 compares a number of spellings which show
quite clearly that the scribe's graphemic habits differ
in some respects in the two texts, and that they differ
in ways which would not affect spoken usage. For
instance, 'they' always appears in W as $\underline{y}^{ey}$ (46, 138,
146) but in M as $\underline{y}^{ei}$ (26, 165, 174). A variation of
another type is the treatment of 'these', where W has
$\underline{thes}$ (288, 402, 574 ($\underline{y}^{is}$ 760)) and M $\underline{y}^{es}$ (163, 309, 401).

One of the most striking contrasts in habit relates
to the treatment of words now normally spelt with initial
'wh'. A general pattern is very clearly discernible.
Leaving aside the instances of $\underline{qw}$ in M, discussed above,
a dual $\underline{w}$ ($\underline{wh}$) system in W contrasts with an almost
regular use of $\underline{wh}$ alone in M, e.g. for 'why', W $\underline{wy}$ (432,
913, 914) (($\underline{why}$ once, 108)), M $\underline{why}$ (53, 364, 428), and so
with a number of other words.[71] Equally noticeable is
the preference for initial $\underline{3}$ in a group of words in M,
where $\underline{y}$ is the rule W, e.g. M's $\underline{3et(t)}$, $\underline{3yt}$ for 'yet'
(70, 271, 276, 396, 406, 490) as against $\underline{yet}$, $\underline{yit}$ in W
(415, 483, 714, 890, 960), $\underline{3er(e)}$ for 'year' in M (353,
691, 728) as against $\underline{yer}$ in W (36, 198, 823). The
interpretation of contrasts of this type is best left
until the phonic implications of others in Group 4 have
been assessed.

Group 4 involves major variations in spelling which
probably or certainly do have implications for our
knowledge of how the W-M scribe spoke, and, more
importantly how, and at what period, his language underwent
certain fairly well defined developments. Some of them
also indicate very clearly which of the texts is the earlier
piece of work and which the later, and we may turn to these
first.

'Their' and 'them'. It was shown in Chapter Three
that East Anglian scribes first began to use the /th/
spellings for these words around 1450, and that they

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supplanted the use of <u>h</u> in the last quarter of the
century. The forms in W suggest the earlier part of the
intervening mid-century period, whilst M clearly belongs
to the later pattern. For 'their' W usually has <u>her(e)</u>,
less often y^{er}, and for 'them' <u>hem</u> is habitual, <u>them</u>
occasional. In M, on the other hand, y^{er} and y^{em} are
clearly established as the majority forms, with only
isolated examples of <u>her</u> and <u>hem</u>.[72]

'Give' - initial consonant. Like the use of /th/
in 'their' and 'them' the extensive or exclusive use of <u>g</u>
rather than /y/ in the various forms of 'give' is
characteristic of the last quarter of the fifteenth century
in East Anglia. This sheds further light on the different
periods at which W and M were copied, and again the
priority of W and the lateness of M are clear, W having
<u>y</u> about twice as often as <u>g</u>, but M using <u>g</u> exclusively.[73]

Another indication that M is a later piece of work
than W is shown in the scribe's change from intervocalic
<u>d</u> to <u>th</u> in such words as 'together', 'hither' and
'mother', as shown above in the table.[74] The pattern in
W is much closer to that of the earlier fifteenth century
East Anglian texts, such as the writings of Capgrave,
and the <u>Book of Margery Kempe</u>.[75] As Professor Davis has
pointed out the shift to the historically later forms of
the sort used in M takes place (in the cases of a number
of Paston associates) in the period between the 1450's
and the 1470's.[76] The pattern shown in M belongs to the
latest part of this period, or later.

A number of other changes in spelling found in Group
4 must also reflect differing pronunciations. For 'then'
and 'than' W usually has <u>yan</u> in both cases, and this
becomes <u>yen</u> in M. Similarly, the mixture of <u>wen</u> and <u>wan</u>
'when' in W is reduced to the almost uniform <u>when</u> ((<u>wen</u>))
of M.[77] The scribe's spelling of 'well' (adv.) also
undergoes marked modification in the period which
separates the two pieces of work. The <u>weell</u> (222), <u>wele</u>
(225), <u>wyll</u> (319) and <u>well</u> (359, 399) of W contrast with
the regular <u>well</u> in M (94, 101, 102, 246 etc.). The
spellings of 'self' in W and M are also quite different.

In W selff is regular, but by the time the scribe came
to copy M he had acquired the habit of always writing
sylffe, a provincialism characteristic of southern East
Anglia.[78]

The verbal inflexions which belong with Group 4 also
offer a number of contrasts and points of interest. For
the 3rd. sg. pres. ind. the scribe in W prefers the
East Anglianism -t; it occurs about twice as often as
the usual southeast midland -th in the first two hundred
lines or so. This contrasts with M where the provincialism
is absent, except for two examples of hat 'hath' (224,
500). W also has examples of the northerly s endings for
the inflexion, but these are part of the original text,
as they always occur in rhyme.[79] In M, however, the s
endings have begun to appear within the line, and this
is not surprising in a text of the last quarter of the
fifteenth century; the Pastons began to use the 'modern'
inflexion in the 1470's.[80]

Present participles are always spelt in the -yng(e)
form in M. W has examples of both -yng(e) and -eng(e)
(first s.d., 155, s.d. 550ff.) but also some instances
of the Scandinavian ending in -ande, characteristic of
the north and north east, all of which occur in rhyme.
It is of particular interest that -ynge endings are also
used for rhyme as well; the author of the text
obviously came from a marginal dialect area where both
the northern and southern endings for the present
participle were valid alternatives as rhymes.[81]

For the present indicative plural of 'to be' in W
the scribe always uses be, ben(e) etc. (3, 36, 46, 56,
257, 364 etc.); are occurs but once, in rhyme (104).
Are and arn are more frequent in M, beside be(n), and have
begun to appear outside rhyme (47, 128, 225, 706). In
common with a number of features already discussed the
variations here are probably best seen in two distinct
contexts; first, that the original text of W contained
quite a few features characteristic of northern or north-
eastern English, the present copy having been made by a
scribe from somewhat further south, probably not long

after 1450. Second, that M as we now have it is the
work of the same man, but is quite noticeably later.
Other contrasts between the two performances by the
scribe will be discussed in more detail presently.

Certain features already mentioned make it certain
that the W-M scribe was an East Anglian - <u>xall</u>, <u>xuld</u>, the
<u>t</u> endings for the 3rd. sg. pres. ind., the use of
occasional <u>qw</u> for 'wh' beside <u>w/wh</u>, <u>ony</u> for 'any', <u>w</u> for
'v' in various words and <u>wore</u> 'were'. There are also
other East Anglian elements in the orthography to be
taken together with these, and it is of interest that
some of them relate both to the copies made by the
present scribe and to the originals of the plays them-
selves. Another revealing feature (touched upon in
connexion with <u>qw</u> for 'wh' above) is that the W-M scribe
can be shown to have cultivated an intelligent and
critical attitude not only to the East Anglian provincial
spelling system in general, but also to quite minor
details of his own orthographic usage.

There is interesting evidence that the W-M scribe
clearly recognized and carefully avoided the use of the
primary feature of East Anglian orthography which has not
been mentioned - <u>t</u> or <u>th</u> for 'ght'. In both W and M the
usual spellings for 'right', 'brought' etc. have the
normal <u>ght</u> (occasionally <u>3te</u> in M), but both texts
contain spellings with regional forms, e.g. <u>sowte</u> (W18,
M296), <u>wrowte</u>, <u>bowte</u> (W20, M 116, 255), and both have
reverse spellings such as <u>smyght</u> (M 442), <u>lought</u> (sc.
'to bow' W 503, in rh. with <u>abowte</u> and <u>dowte</u>).
Particularly revealing are the scribe's 'corrections' of
rhymes involving East Anglian spellings in the original
text of W: <u>qwytte</u> : <u>fyght</u> (849ff.), <u>contryte</u> : <u>fyght</u> :
<u>bryghte</u> (W 1090ff.). Elsewhere in W he copies <u>ryth</u> from
his exemplar but crosses it out and puts in his usual
<u>ryght</u>, and in another place completely mistakes an East
Anglian form in the exemplar, writing <u>thowte</u> where the
text before him must have had <u>youth</u>, or <u>yowth</u> 'youth'.[82]

The scribe's attitude to regional spellings of 'mind'
and 'kind' is comparable to his treatment of 'ght' words.

He nearly always writes the conventional forms _mynde_
and _kynde_, a habit which he carries out with marked
consistency even in the face of rhymes in both texts
demanding otherwise, e.g. W 189ff. _mynde_ : _ende_; 904ff.
fend ('fiend') : _kynde_ : _ende_; M279ff. _frende_ :
mankynde. An exception is W 183, where _Mende_ is written
as a character's name. Again, the rhymes and the odd
exception go together to suggest that the W-M scribe
recognized spellings like _mende_ and _kende_ as regionalisms
which he took steps to avoid; they were evidently
characteristic of the original language of both texts.

Other East Anglianisms used by the W-M scribe are
whow(e) 'how', _word-_ 'world' and _-cure_ forms for 'cover'.
As we have seen in Chapter Three, _whow_ appears to have
been restricted mainly to Norfolk, and it is also used
by the main hand in Cotton Vesp. D. viii and by the
scribe of the _Castle of Perseverance_. The W-M scribe
uses it twice (W 763, 891) beside usual _how_.[83] For
'world' the scribe usually has _worlde_, but at W 405 writes
wordly for the adjective. The regional form _-cure_ 'cover'
was both part of the original dialect of W and a feature
of the scribe's own orthography. At W 216ff. the rhyme
sequence _sure_ : _recure_ ('re-possess') : _pure_ occurs, and
at 654 the scribe uses _recurythe_ independently in the
East Anglian sense. One very rare form used by the W-M
scribe is _thow_ for 'those' which occurs several times in
W, and is the regular spelling (686, 690, 1074; _yow_ 470).
I have only come across this form elsewhere in the work
of the literary hand in the Brome Hall Commonplace Book,
from north Suffolk, where it is also regular.[84]

The foregoing account has attempted to combine a survey
of the regional graphemic forms used by the scribe
responsible for the Macro _Wisdom_ and most of _Mankind_ with
some consideration of the more interesting and instructive
orthographic variations between the two pieces of work.
Some hints about where the original texts of the two
plays might first have been written down have also
emerged.

It has already been concluded that _Wisdom_ and most of _Mankind_ as we now have them are the work of one and the same scribe, but another remarkable fact has also come to light, namely that the two pieces of writing must certainly have been done with a gap of years between them. Eccles goes no further than suggesting that the scribe was at work in the later fifteenth century, and dates the composition of both texts between about 1460 and 1470.[85] I think it is possible to be more precise about this. They are certainly the products of an East Anglian hand in the period immediately after 1450 when the orthography of the region was changing in several distinctive ways. And as has been shown, the copy of _Wisdom_ as it stands has the characteristics of the earlier part of this period whereas _Mankind_ must have been done much later. The earlier text could easily have been copied between 1450 and 1460, the later after 1480.[86]

Another sort of evidence has also emerged which also bears on this problem. Several of the differences in orthography which distinguish the later text from the earlier are the result of systematically implemented changes of habit, sometimes evidently responses to 'unsatisfactory' or ambiguous regional spellings, sometimes a movement towards 'Standard' forms. In general, the shift towards historically later forms in _Mankind_ is accompanied by the adoption of a more internally consistent orthographic pattern.[87] And as we have seen, the W-M scribe had from the start a distinct attitude to regionalisms like _ryth, sowte_ etc. and _mende, kende_, whilst using _xall_ and _xulde_ quite freely.[88]

Detailed work like this on a scribe's orthography naturally leads to the forming of an impression about what kind of man the copyist was. He was in the first place remarkable for copying two such contrasting play-texts, and the gap of time between the two pieces of work betrays an interest in drama extending over a period of years. In some ways the W-M scribe furnishes excellent evidence for the proposal expressed in Chapter One, that there was a sustained interest in collecting and copying

plays in East Anglia during the fifteenth century. But one can only speculate from this point about the identity and status of this scribe, though his orthographic habits offer some hints. The general impression is that the W-M scribe was not careless or ignorant about spelling. He was an East Anglian who took an intelligent and to some extent rationalizing interest in what was after all one of the more bizarre later Middle English orthographic systems in a period of rapid change between the 1450's and the 1480's. I would compare him in some ways with the scrupulously methodical Capgrave, who was at work at Lynn for at least part of the period. All this might be borne in mind by the literary student of the two plays, considering the alleged wide contrasts in tone between the lively and demotic <u>Mankind</u> and the subtle and theologically sophisticated <u>Wisdom</u>. But matters of this sort may be left until the assessment of the linguistic provenances of the plays is complete. The later <u>Mankind</u>, where the internal links with East Anglia are undisputed, may be considered first.

<u>The original provenance of 'Mankind'</u>. Most of <u>Mankind</u> was copied by an East Anglian in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, but an assessment of the original provenance of the text (as distinct from this generalized scribal provenance) must rest on certain forms used by the main hand, especially in rhyme, but also others in the work of his collaborator (B), who wrote out the last four folios of the manuscript.[89]

B's orthography is also highly distinctive, and shows him to have been another East Anglian. He uses <u>xall</u> and the very unusual '<u>tys</u> 'it is' (828), <u>swhech</u> 'such' (891), <u>mech</u> (838), <u>word</u> 'world' (867), <u>-kend</u> 'kind' (823). W for 'v' is particularly common, the scribe taking virtually every opportunity to write it: <u>hawe</u> (822, 838, 847 etc.) <u>wyle</u> (819), <u>weyn</u> (853) etc. The more uncommon East Anglian <u>serge</u> 'search' also appears (908), and the scribe uses the 'dialect' word <u>swemyth</u> (875, 'grieves'). These two latter features, in particular, go together with the internal evidence for East Anglian authorship,

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which is also suggested in rhymes violated by the main hand, e.g. _frende_ : _kynde_.

There are certain distinct differences between what seems to have been the language of the original text and the copy made by the main hand, and it is useful to consider these together with the internal evidence in lines 505 to 515 of the play in order to reach a final verdict about where it was originally written. The linguistic differences are _kyrke_ (in rh.) and _kerke_ as opposed to the scribe's usual _chyrche_, _mekyll_ as opposed to the scribe's usual _moche_, and _-and_ (in rh.) in contrast with the scribe's usual _-ond_ in words like 'hand', 'land' etc. Taken together, these features are obviously more northerly than the W-M hand's usual forms. _Kyrke_, _kerke_ and _mekyll_ are probably of Scandinavian origin, and recent maps have shown that they were current in north and west Norfolk rather than anywhere else in East Anglia.[90] This compares interestingly with the internal evidence of lines 505-515, which is as follows.[91]

Three of the evil characters in the play, New-Guise, Nowadays and Nought, propose to create mischief in the neighbourhood, and each names three 'local worthies' and the villages where they live, though two of those named are J.P's, to be avoided. What is most remarkable about this is that not only the places but also the people were real and most of them have been or now can be identified. They fall into two groups, one being of six villages immediately to the south and east of Cambridge, the other of three settlements in west Norfolk, just east of Lynn and north of Swaffham. _Mankind_ was clearly intended as an informal travelling performance for East Anglian audiences, and what we are probably faced with here is a text which conflates two such performances. The Cambridgeshire villages are some 50 miles away from the places in Norfolk, and the amusing effect of the references would be partially spoilt in either place if the text were given as it stands.[92] The names were no doubt suitably altered for the area and audience where the play was performed, and for some reason the

Walsingham
.

.Massingham

•Gayton

•Walton

N O R F O L K

E L Y

Ely ●

Bury
●

Swaffham
.

(Cambridge) ●   .Bottisham

.Fulbourn   S U F F O L K

.Trumpington

Hauxton .   .Sawston

C A M B S.
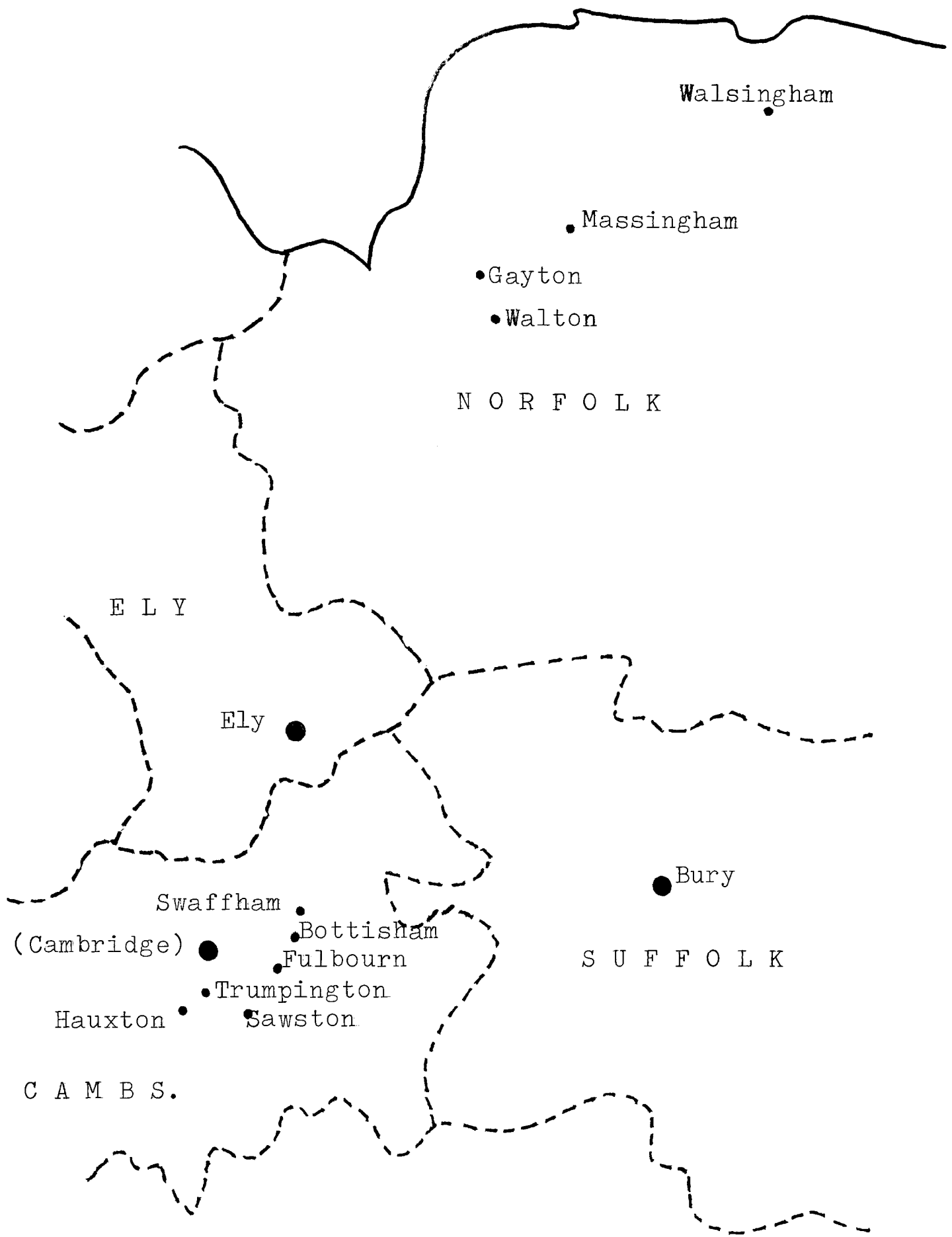
Map 3

Places Mentioned in Mankind

substitution is incomplete in the present text.

Of the Cambridgeshire men, (Thomas) Huntyngton of Sauston, Pycharde of Trumpyngton and (William) Hamonde of Saffeham (Swaffham Bulbeck) may all be readily identified,[93] likewise (William) Alyngton of Botysam and (Alexander) Woode of Fullburn, who were both, appropriately enough, J.P.'s.[94] Two of the three Norfolk men are also easily identifiable, Wyllyham Baker of Waltom and Wyllyam Patryke of Massyngham.[95]

The accompanying map illustrates the distribution of these and the other places mentioned in the text at this point, and it is clear that the north-west Norfolk group square surprisingly accurately with the linguistic provenance suggested above for the text.

To sum up, Mankind is an East Anglian play, probably composed in north west Norfolk in the later 1460's. The present copy was mostly made by a scribe from further south in East Anglia, and rather later - probably in the last quarter of the fifteenth century.[96] The text has obviously been used for a performance or performances in neighbouring Cambridgeshire.

The original provenance of 'Wisdom'. The internal and linguistic evidence for the original provenance of Wisdom are in conflict. On the one hand the play involves a series of familiar-looking references to aspects of the London legal world in the fifteenth century. But on the other, the Macro copy of the text is clearly the work of an East Anglian hand of as early as 1450-1460, the same as copied most of Mankind, with its very marked eastern associations. The only piece of internal evidence in Wisdom which might be taken as regional is the oath 'by St. Audrey of Ely' (832).

What may be inferred about the language of the original text of Wisdom must derive principally from the rhymes. It has already been shown that the W-M scribe was not a north or north-west Norfolk man - he evidently came from somewhere further south in East Anglia where forms like kirke and mekyll were not used. Several features in Wisdom force the conclusion that this text

too must have originated rather further to the north of the east midlands than did its copyist.

A number of these features are found in rhyme in _Wisdom_. Taken together they suggest that the author of the play was an East Anglian: _-cure_, 'cover'; *_kende_ and *_mende_ (which the scribe alters to _kynde_ and _mynde_); *_fyt_, *_bryt_ etc. (which the scribe alters to _fyght_, _bryght_). It is also relevant to note that the exemplar from which the Macro text was made also contained East Anglianisms - _ryth_, probably _-owth_ (for '-ought') and *_whow_, 'how', all of which are shown up by the scribe's errors.

Other forms in rhyme suggest a probable north-western East Anglian origin for the text: _wore_ and _ware_, 'were'; *_whore_, 'where', (scribal _were_);[97] _-ande_ (pr. pple.); _-ande_ in 'hand', 'land' etc.; occasional _-s_ for 3rd. sg. pres. ind.; occasional _are_ ('to be', pres. ind. pl.). Two features, in particular, suggest that the author came from a dialectally marginal area between the north and south: (i) the use of both _-ande_ and _-ynge_ (pr. pple.) in rhyme; (ii) the use of both _are_ and _be(n)_ ('to be', pr. ind. pl.) in rhyme. Taken together, these north-eastern forms could scarcely have been possible further south than Norfolk in the early to mid-fifteenth century; London, of course, would be quite out of the question. North-west Norfolk or the Fenland area looks the most likely place of origin for _Wisdom_, on the linguistic evidence.

The mention of St. Audrey of Ely may take us very close to the area where the play originated. It was certainly written by a man with two very distinct kinds of interest, firstly in the law and secondly in English mystical writings of the more advanced type - the translation of Suso's _Orologium Sapientiae_ and Hilton's _Epistle of Mixed Life_ are both extensively quoted in the play.[98] Ely would not be an inappropriate place to find a writer with such interests, especially in connexion with Hilton, who evidently began his career as a canon and civil lawyer at Cambridge and Ely before becoming a hermit

and subsequently an Austin canon, and producing the bulk of his mystical writings.[99]

Whoever wrote Wisdom had, like Hilton, a knowledge of the law and an interest in contemplative writings, and also connexions with the Ely area. The London legal satire would presumably be understood wherever lawyers were numerous and active, and this was certainly the case at Ely in the later fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.[100]

The references to unsatisfactory legal conditions and other 'abuses of the age' (which mostly fall between lines 551 and 872 of the play) seem to me to belong to a body of literature of satire and complaint common in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries,[101] rather than to relate to any very specific contemporary issues bearing on the localisation of the play.[102] Detailed consideration of these matters belongs in the context of a wider interpretation of the text as a whole, rather than here.

The early ownership of the Macro texts of 'Wisdom' and 'Mankind'. Wisdom and Mankind were not only written by East Anglians and copied by an East Anglian; the ownership, too, was East Anglian in the earliest period of their existence in the Macro copies. The fact that the two plays were copied by the same scribe at different times, but have nevertheless evidently remained together since then, implies a sustained interest in quite diverse types of drama on the part of this earliest anonymous owner. Something of the same must be true of the earliest named owner, a monk named Hyngham, whose rather florid ownership tag appears at the end of both texts.[103]

The settlement of Hingham in Norfolk lies some twelve miles to the south west of Norwich, and it is not surprising that a number of East Anglians, including several monks, bore the name in the period associated with the copying of the manuscript and immediately afterwards.[104] One of the more prominent monastic Hinghams was Richard, Abbot of St. Edmundsbury 1474-1479 about whom 'the historians of the abbey seem not to have

discovered a single fact'.[105] There were also monks
named Thomas Hengham at Norwich and Bury, both of whom
owned books.[106] A George Hengham was a monk at Norwich
Cathedral Priory in 1492; he evidently became prior in
his order's house at Lynn, c. 1514-1526.[107] John
Hengham was a particularly gross offender at the
notoriously slack and immoral Benedictine house at
Wymondham, according to Bishop Nicke's visitation of
1514.[108] Any of these monk Henghams might have owned
the Macro Wisdom and Mankind; the name cannot be used
to date the manuscripts with any precision, and can only
reinforce in general the East Anglian localisation.
Later sixteenth century names in the manuscript - in
particular Richard Cake of Bury, Robert Oliver and John
Plandon - are all traceable in Norfolk and Suffolk in
the relevant period.[109]

(5). Abraham and Isaac; the 'literary' hand
      in the Brome Hall Commonplace Book.

The Brome Hall Commonplace Book has recently been
studied by Professor Davis for his edition of the play of
Abraham and Isaac found therein.[110] There is strong
internal evidence to link the manuscript with the Stuston
area of Suffolk in the later fifteenth and early
sixteenth centuries, and there is no reason to think that
it was ever moved away from this region before its
eventual discovery in the muniment room at Brome Hall in
the nineteenth century.[111] The early link with Stuston
are the accounts entered into the book by Robert Melton,
a local estate servant, who had access to the manuscript
between 1499 and 1508.[112] Apart from two pages in a
later sixteenth century hand the rest of the book contains
the work of another scribe - the 'literary' hand - who
could easily have been at work soon after 1454 and who
certainly wrote in the book as late as 1492. According
to Professor Davis, the scribe's language is
'characteristic of the third rather than the fourth
quarter of the century'.[113] He was an east midlander who
used a number of typical East Anglian features of ortho-
graphy 'fully in keeping with the association of the

manuscript with northern Suffolk'.[114]

The following account of the spellings used by the main hand is designed to bring out its typically East Anglian features, and the information on the orthography of the play (P) is supplemented by instances from elsewhere in the manuscript, in particular from the legal formulary which the scribe copied out on folios 68r to 77r (F):[115]

- as Davis points out 'shall' and 'should' are always spelt with initial <u>sch</u> in P, but the scribe writes <u>xall</u> and <u>xulde</u> freely elsewhere in the manuscript, e.g. F pp. 134, 135, 137 etc.[116]

- 'wh' words are regularly spelt <u>w</u> in both P and F; <u>qw</u> and <u>wh</u> appear less often.[117]

- the usual spelling for 'ght' is <u>gth</u>, but there are numerous instances of typical East Anglian forms, e.g. P <u>allmyty</u>, <u>browt</u>, <u>nowt</u>, <u>owt</u>, <u>thowt</u>; F <u>knyth</u>, <u>ryth</u>.[118]

- the <u>t</u> spellings for the 3rd. sg. pres. ind. of the sort common in East Anglia occur frequently; P <u>lovyt</u>, <u>knowyt</u>, <u>schoyt</u>, <u>weryt</u>; F <u>abuttyt</u>, <u>deyet</u>, <u>apperyt</u> etc.[119]

Certain East Anglianisms more characteristic of Norfolk than Suffolk are also used:

- <u>dede</u> 'death' (beside usual <u>deth</u>) appears in P, rhyming with <u>stede</u> (280ff., vb. 'steady', <u>sc</u>. 'prepare').

- <u>erdely</u> (112/143) and <u>erdyly</u> (112/147) 'earthly' are used beside usual <u>erthe</u>; but on three occasions in the play the scribe violates rhymes requiring <u>erde</u>.[120]

- 'world' is spelt <u>ward</u> (P 238), which Professor Davis holds to be northern; it occurs, together with <u>werdly</u>, elsewhere in the scribe's work and can be paralleled in a south-east Norfolk hand of the period.[121]

The spellings of a number of commoner words fall together into a typical East Anglian pattern:

- 'much' occurs only as the common form <u>myche</u> in P, but the scribe often uses elsewhere <u>mekyll</u>, a form widespread in Norfolk.

- 'such' does not occur in P, but <u>swech(e)</u> is common elsewhere in the manuscript.

- <u>weche</u> sometimes appears for 'which'.

- 'any' is regularly spelt <u>ony</u>, as is to be expected in an East Anglian texts.[122]

- 'church' is not used in P; elsewhere in the manuscript the scribe writes <u>chyrche</u>.[123]

The appearance of two local 'dialect' words is particularly strong evidence for East Anglia: <u>sweme</u> 'grief', and <u>therke</u> 'dark'.[124]

The manuscript was evidently in use over some years, in the conventional manner of a commonplace book. A detailed examination of the different texts which it contains might expose evidence parallel to that offered above in the case of the <u>Wisdom-Mankind</u> hand for a prolonged period of activity. The literary hand could easily have been at work in the 1450's and 1460's, and in some respects the spelling shows features in common with the Macro scribe's work on <u>Wisdom</u>, which belongs to this period. For instance the early 3 forms in 'give' are always used in P, but on the other hand the later /th/ has come into use beside h in 'their' and 'them'. The Brome scribe was also obviously a contemporary of the Norfolk man who wrote out the bulk of Cotton Vesp. D. viii, and such hints of his precise area of origin as there are in the spellings point to south-central and south-eastern Norfolk.[125]

(6). <u>The Two Winchester Manuscript Texts</u>.

The language of the two Winchester 'dialogues' - <u>Lucidus and Dubius</u> (L) and <u>Occupation, Idleness and Doctrine</u> (O) - has been examined in detail by Professor Davis, who printed a number of extracts.[126] He observes that both texts were copied by one hand of the mid- to late fifteenth century; the dialect is, in general, an orthographically undistinguished variety of south-east midland English of the period. It might also be added that certain orthographic and linguistic features employed by the scribe are more characteristic of the first rather than the second half of the fifteenth century: the frequent use of þ (always distinguished from <u>y</u>) and 3,

hire/here and hem for 'their' and 'them' and 3 (never g)
as the initial consonant in forms of 'give'.[127]

Spellings of commoner words are mostly the south-
east midland forms of the incipient 'Standard'
language: such (55v, 57r) which (54v, 56r) moche (62v,
67r) eny (61r, 63v).[128]

The spellings most characteristic of East Anglian
hands in this period are almost entirely absent: 'shall'
and 'should' always have initial sh, 'wh' always appears
in the modern form, 'ght' words are always spelt with
either ght or 3t (with the one exception noted below)
and the 3rd. sg. pres. ind. of verbs always appears as
th (except in the rhyme cares : fares O 68v).

In general there is nothing on the surface of the
scribe's work which might suggest that the Winchester
texts are part of the emerging East Anglian tradition of
play copying. The only exception to this appears to be
the use of out 'aught' (L 58r), but no real significance
can be attached to such an isolated detail.[129]

Some features of the scribe's work do, however, have
a regional flavour. The use (in O) of bei 'they' and
bei(3) 'though' is held to be 'very rare in later texts'
as a combination; Professor Davis draws attention to
these and other forms which are 'most likely to appear
together in a part of Essex and southern Suffolk',
judging by recently published maps.[130]

Rhymes and other features also hint at regional
origins for the texts, and mostly point to the east or
north-east; some of them are often found in the East
Anglian plays:

- kende and ende are rhymed in L (56r), and the scribe
also writes kende and mende elsewhere in places where the
rhymes demand y forms; cf. also synne : renne 'run'
(O 72r), fyre : heere 'hear' (L 63r).[131] A half-rhyme of
this sort seems to be implied in wrecche : cherche (L 64v);
elsewhere the scribe writes chirche (67r).

- some rhymes (mostly in L, but once in O) imply the
northerly unrounded form from OE ā: mare : care (L 59r),

<u>thraw</u> 'thrown': <u>slaw</u> 'slain'(L 57r), <u>kan</u> : <u>boon</u> (L 56r),
<u>foon</u> 'foes' : <u>can</u> (O 67r).

It is clear from all this that there can be no
pressing claim to include the two Winchester texts with
the major East Anglian plays of the fifteenth century.
There are certain indications in the scribal spellings
and other features of the language that the eastern
connexions may once have been much stronger than are now
properly discernible.

The manuscript has no obvious marks of ownership
or other indications which might help to localise it -
though the other contents (including the <u>Abbey of the</u>
<u>Holy Ghost</u> and parts of the <u>South English Legendary</u>) may
suggest a connexion with a religious house.[132]

(7). <u>Dux Moraud; Bodl. Eng. poet. f.2.</u>

<u>Dux Moraud</u> is written on the back of an early
fourteenth century assize roll of East Anglian origin, in
a hand which Professor Davis dates in the second quarter
of the fifteenth century.[133] The language of the text
is east midland, with distinctive orthography of a
'strongly East Anglian character', comparable to that of
the Macro plays, <u>Ludus Coventriae</u> and the carols and
lyrics in B.L. Ms. Sloane 2593.[134]

The only point which may perhaps readily be added
to Davis's account is that the area of scribal origin is
likely to have been in northern Norfolk rather than
anywhere else in East Anglia. The distinctive features
of the orthography may be brought together briefly:

- <u>xal</u> (<u>xul</u>) and <u>xuld</u> are always used, except for one
example of <u>suld</u> (102), which compares with similar forms
in some of the early Norfolk texts, e.g. the 1389 Gild
Returns, and the writings of John Grimestone.

- 'wh' always appears as <u>qu</u>.

- forms in <u>t</u> or <u>th</u> are invariably used for 'ght'
words, e.g. <u>lyt</u>, <u>ryt</u>, <u>nyth</u>, <u>syte</u>, <u>bryth</u> (in rh. with
<u>tythe</u> (61), i.e. 'tyte', 'quickly'),[135] <u>douter</u>, <u>browt</u>,
<u>dowty</u>.

- the ending of the 3rd. sg. pres. ind. of verbs is
always <u>-yt</u>, e.g. <u>regnyt</u>, <u>comyt</u> etc.

All four primary features of East Anglian spelling
in the fifteenth century are therefore fully attested.
A further local peculiarity is the use of <u>che</u> 'she',
a rare form used only by a handful of other East Anglian
scribes.[136]

Other local forms for commoner words fill in the
picture: <u>kend(e)</u> (1) and <u>mend(e)</u> (3, 148) appear, in
rhyme with words like <u>sende</u>, <u>hende</u> and <u>wend</u>; <u>ded</u> (in rh.
with <u>qued</u> (101) 'villain') is written for 'death', and
<u>werd</u> (189) and <u>word</u> (15) for 'world'. Davis draws
attention to <u>quy(1)k</u> (219, 262) 'which', unusual in
Norfolk, but paralleled in a Norwich Gild Return of 1389;
in this context it appears to belong with certain north
Norfolk forms, e.g. <u>kyrk</u> (179). 'Any' appears in the
usual eastern form <u>ony</u>, and there are a number of
provincial <u>w</u> for 'v' forms - <u>weleny</u>, <u>ewyl</u> (39, 105).
For the present participle there are two examples of
<u>-end(e)</u> (75, 234) and one of <u>-ant</u> (178), which is probably
to be identified with the <u>-and</u> ending usually found in
Norfolk rather than Suffolk. Another telling form is
the regular <u>geue</u> 'give' (31, 87, 142 etc.). In other
East Anglian hands this implies a date well after 1450,
which is obviously not true in the present case; it must
go together with <u>quylk</u>, <u>ded</u>, <u>kyrke</u> and <u>-ant</u> (pr. pple)
to suggest that the scribe was a north Norfolk man of the
earlier half of the fifteenth century. He must have been
a contemporary of the <u>Castle of Perseverance</u> scribe, and
of the scribe of the <u>Assumption</u> play in Cotton Vespasian
D. viii.

II

<u>The Sixteenth Century Texts</u>

The early sixteenth century play texts which are
suspected to be of East Anglian origin have been listed
at the beginning of this chapter. They may now be
examined in turn on the pattern used above to identify

fifteenth century texts from the area. The currently accepted datings in the first two decades of the sixteenth century are sufficient warning that any statements about the provenance of the texts concerned must necessarily be more tentative than those made above about the fifteenth century materials. Nevertheless, at least two of the later plays may firmly be placed in East Anglia, one on purely linguistic grounds, the other on grounds which combine scantier linguistic evidence with strong internal indications of provenance.

(1). The Play of the Sacrament.[137]

A note at the end of the text of the Sacrament gives the date 1461 for the events depicted therein; this offers a terminus a quo of a kind for the composition of the play, but the text as we have it now dates from the early sixteenth century.[138] Fortunately, several pieces of internal evidence fall together to link the play with central East Anglia. The banns mention the performance of the play at 'Croxston', which is almost certainly the village of Croxton just north of Thetford in Norfolk. As Professor Davis has pointed out, this is the only place of that name where the audience would be likely to make sense of the reference to 'Babwell Myll' (621), the home of the quack-doctor in the play.[139] The doctor himself also seems to have taken his name - Master Brundyche (Brendyche) - from a Suffolk village, Brundish.[140]

The existing copy of the play is the work of three hands, A, B and C, and given the very late date it is not surprising that many of the more dialectally colourful features which were evidently part of the original orthography of the text have been overlaid by 'Standard' forms.[141] The lateness of the text is clearly exhibited in the complete establishment of /th/ forms in 'their' and 'them',[142] of g forms in 'give' (282, 539, 652 etc.) and the absence of the originally ON fro 'from', common in fifteenth century East Anglian texts.[143]

There are, however, clear traces of the typical East Anglian orthography of the fifteenth century underlying the work of all three scribes.

- x in xall etc. and q for 'wh' do not appear, though there is some variation between w and wh for the latter.[144]

- all three hands often use the modern form for 'ght', as is to be expected in a text of this date; hand A, however, uses exceptional forms typical of East Anglia at an earlier date: myt (207), my[g]th (496), mytheti (285), owyht 'ought' (567), -leyt 'light' (538). Hand C uses a few comparable forms: drawte 'draught' (340), strayt (351), bowt (721).

- for the 3rd. sg. pres. ind. of verbs some East Anglianisms appear beside the usual -th spellings: hat (A 2, 517, 556, 612), spekyt (A 571), Ms. sytthyt (A 531), commytht (C 375).

Of the more unusual East Anglian forms cure 'cover' was clearly part of the original language of the play. At 383f. hand C wrote the rhyme cure : treasure, but then crossed out cure and substituted couere.[145] At 659, however, the rhyme cure : sure is allowed to stand.

The scribes do not write mend(e) and kend(e), but such forms are implied in the rhymes onkynd : frende : pynde (vb. 'penned'): mynd (720ff.). 'World' is usually spelt in the modern way by A and B (2, 16, 91 etc.), but C writes worde (432), which fits in best with the other features here as an East Anglianism. Provincialisms also occur beside the 'Standard' forms for the commoner words, e.g. mekyll (A and B, 13, 62) and mykyll (C 750, 830) beside usual moche; ony (A 243, 273, B 93, 139) beside C's eny (452, 460 etc.). The use of w for consonantal 'v' is also well attested: hawe (A 519; B 173), sawe (B 77), awoyd (A 500).

Finally, the use of one of the East Anglian 'dialect' words three times is a more striking indication of the area of origin of the text: swymfull (809), swemfull (800, 805).

There are, then, various reasons for suggesting that the original text of the Sacrament play belongs with the major East Anglian group of the fifteenth century. The residual linguistic evidence from this period in the

orthography of the text as it stands supplements the
internal evidence in a favourable way.[146]

(2). 'Mary Magdalene'; Bodl. Digby 133ff. 95-145.

Mary Magdalene contains no readily identifiable
internal evidence of where it was first written, performed
or owned. The earliest known owner of this and other
plays in the Digby manuscript was, however, an East
Anglian, Miles Blomefield of Bury St. Edmunds and later
of Chelmsford (b. 1525).[147]

The single hand responsible for Mary Magdalene (now
known as Digby 133 hand D) is at present dated about
1510-1520.[148] This means it was probably contemporary
with the writing of the Sacrament manuscript, just
discussed. But whereas the East Anglian orthography of
the latter is overlaid by the 'Standard' forms of the
early sixteenth century, a glance at the orthography used
in the Digby text is sufficient to show that the scribe
has reproduced what is in all essentials East Anglian
language of the period between 1450 and 1500, rather
than later.[149] His work is most closely comparable with
that of the main hand in Cotton Vesp. D. viii, the later
work of the Macro W-M hand in Mankind and the literary
hand in the Brome manuscript.[150]

All four primary characteristics of East Anglian
orthography in the fifteenth century are abundantly
present:

- xal(l) and xuld usually appear for 'shall' and
'should'.[151]

- 'wh' is spelt in a variety of ways, sometimes with
wh (109, 455, 778 etc.), sometimes with w (57, 147, 591,
731 etc.) but often with q, e.g. qwy (1819), qwat (523,
726, 1462 etc.), quat (240).

- the t or th spellings for 'ght' are common:
bryth (690), syth (69, 226), knyttes (112), myth (651),
myte (580), ryth (538), lyth (689) etc.; dowtter (99),
browth (592), nowth (591), sowth (593), wrowth (1274) etc.

- the t ending for the 3rd. sg. pres. ind. of verbs
is regular; th is much less frequent, and s occasionally
occurs.[152]

Dobson has pointed out that the _e_ forms for 'mind' and 'kind' are less frequent than in the work of the Ludus Coventriae scribe, and that this perhaps indicates that Mary Magdalene is a later text; examples are kendnesse, kenrede 'kindred'.[153] The use of cure 'cover' is unambiguously East Anglian: curyd (1262), recure (311, rh. Induer;655, rh. suer), on-curyd (769).

'Death' is usually spelt deth, but examples of ded in rhyme (1319, 1336: godhed) hint at Norfolk rather than Suffolk origins in an East Anglian context. 'World' is spelt word several times (4, 31, 140, 156).

In the cases of commoner words a combination characteristic of East Anglia is found in company with 'Standard' forms: mykyl(l) (22, 1140, beside usual myche), swyche(e) (28, 40, 58 etc.) and whech(e) (weche) (79, 183, 1256 (1040), beside usual whyche), ony (never any or eny), war (1535 rh. more, beside usual wer(e), wher 'were'). W for usual 'v' is very frequent: weryfyyt (178), waryacyon (1815), weryauns (92), werely (675, 1791) etc.

Of particular importance are three occurrences of one of the East Anglian 'dialect' words: therknesse (689, 769, 773).

All this leaves no room for doubt that the Mary Magdalene scribe used an orthographic system characteristic of East Anglia in the later part of the fifteenth century,[154] and there are hints in forms like ded 'death' and the originally Scandinavian war 'were' and mykyl that the text may have come from Norfolk, rather than Suffolk.[155]

(3). St. Paul; Digby 133 ff. 37-50.

The play of St. Paul in the Digby manuscript is the work of three hands of which only the main one, A (dated 1510-20), will be considered here.[156] The play offers no internal evidence of the locality in which it might have first been written or performed, and there is no indication that it ever had any original connexion with the other texts now found in the Digby manuscript; on

the other hand its earliest known owner was an East
Anglian, Miles Blomefield of Bury, details of whom have
been given in connexion with <u>Mary Magdalene</u>, above.[157]

The orthographic evidence goes together with that
of the handwriting to indicate a date after 1500 for
the present copy of the text. The dialect is a variety
of east midland, but /th/ forms are completely
established in 'their' and 'them' and 'give' is always
spelt with initial <u>g</u>.[158] A few features of the ortho-
graphy offer a little evidence that the text may once
have circulated in East Anglia, but the surviving copy
is clearly too late for any definitive judgement about its
localisation. In some ways the case is similar to that of
the <u>Play of the Sacrament</u>, but <u>St. Paul</u> lacks the internal
evidence which makes the East Anglian placing of the
Croxton play acceptable. The spellings of Digby hand A
which are of interest in the present connexion are:

- a single occurrence of <u>xal</u> (193) beside the usual
<u>sh</u> forms for 'shall' and 'should'.

- some variety in the spelling of the 'ght' group;
beside forms with <u>3t</u> (104, 133) and <u>ght</u> (273, 291) there
are examples spellings like <u>knyth</u> (s.d. 14ff., 119ff.),
<u>syth</u> (220), <u>knytys</u> (62), <u>lythtys</u> (250), <u>flyt</u> (32, rh.
<u>perfyght</u>).

There are one or two other forms which go together
with these examples to hint at earlier East Anglian
associations: <u>mykyl</u> (once, 109, beside usual <u>myche</u>, <u>moch</u>),
occasional <u>ony</u> (47, 136 etc., but usual <u>eny</u>) and some
use of <u>w</u> for 'v': <u>wyage</u> (141), <u>wessel</u> (234), <u>awayle</u> (276).
The use of <u>swame</u> (298), which seems to signify the same
as East Anglian <u>swem</u> ('affliction') is also of interest
in this context: 'The swame ys fallyn from my eyes
twayne'.

Perhaps the safest judgement is that <u>St. Paul</u> as we
now have it is an early sixteenth century copy of what
was presumably once a much more dialectally colourful
text, assuming that the East Anglianisms just mentioned
are 'residual'. But this is scarcely sufficient to place
it in the main tradition of play-copying in that area in
the fifteenth century.

(4). 'The Killing of the Children'; Digby 133
       ff. 146-157.

In common with the Digby St. Paul, the Killing of
the Children is an early sixteenth century copy of an
east-midland text, and is the work of two hands, E and
F.[159] There is no internal evidence for localisation,
nor for any original association with the other texts
now bound together in the Digby manuscript - though the
possibility that this play too was once owned by Miles
Blomefield must be taken into account. Other relevant
factors are the date '1512' and the observation 'Ihon
Parfre ded wryte thys booke', which have been added by
different hands, not those of the scribes of the text
itself.[160]

   The forms for 'their' and 'them' and 'give' appear
with the standard spellings expected in an early
sixteenth century text.[161] The same is true in virtually
all the cases where regional spellings would appear in
East Anglian work - both E and F write sh in 'shall'
and 'should', wh where expected and ght in the standard
way, though there are some reverse spelling in rhyme
of the sort common in eastern texts in the previous
century; rought 'rout' : dought 'doubt' (178ff.),
ought : sought (196ff.).

   Other probable eastern forms which must have been
old-fashioned when the scribes were at work are F's
mend and mankend (rh. : wende 518ff.) and E's regular ony
'any' (86, 135, 160 etc.). But in most other respects
the language is indistinguishable from the 'Standard'
pattern of the time as far as the orthography is concerned.

   This evidence is clearly too scanty to press any
conclusions about the local affiliations of the text
from a linguistic point of view. At present - and like
St. Paul - it is of peripheral interest for the study of
medieval drama in East Anglia.

   (5). The 'Wisdom' fragment; Digby 133 ff. 158-169.

   A number of factors bearing on the localisation of
Wisdom were discussed in connexion with the complete
Macro copy of the play in a foregoing section, and it was

suggested there that the original text was a north west East Anglian composition, possibly connected with Ely. The Macro copy was dated c. 1450-1460, which is a good deal earlier than the currently accepted dating (1490-1500) for the fragment copied by hand G in the Digby manuscript.[162] There is no evidence that the Wisdom fragment was in any way connected with any of the other plays in the Digby collection when it was first copied; but in the later sixteenth century it was owned (together with Mary Magdalene and St. Paul at least) by Miles Blomefield.[163]

An examination of the scribe's work does not add a great deal to the evidence already in that Wisdom was originally written and later copied in East Anglia during the fifteenth century; many of the more marked East Anglian characteristics are obscured by the lateness of the copy. Features of probable Scandinavian origin such as ware, wore ('were') and -and (pr. pple.) remain in rhyme (105, 330 and 679ff.) as they do in the Macro copy. The same is true of recure (217, rh. sure); the scribe also writes recuryth (656) within the line, and sometimes uses Mend for 'Mind', the character's name, (cf. also 55, 183). Reverse spellings such as whight (s.d. 16ff.), yougthe (18), abought (501) and dought (502) occur and and 'wh' appears indifferently as w and wh (e.g. 5, 124, 125; 46, 115, 194 etc.); other probable signs of East Anglian origins are the scribe's preference for ony 'any', and the use of wardly 'worldly' (405).

What little orthographic evidence this late fragment offers suggests that Wisdom must have been circulating in Norfolk and Suffolk throughout the later fifteenth century. It is particularly important to note that the Digby fragment is textually independent of the Macro copy, and supplies missing lines and rectifies errors in the earlier text.[164] There must have been at least one other copy now lost available in the area.

III

The information gathered and the conclusions suggested in the preceding pages of this chapter may now be drawn together, with the aid of a map and a table.

The existence of a distinct tradition of copying play texts in Norfolk and Suffolk in the period from shortly before 1450 until the early sixteenth century was suggested towards the end of Chapter One, and this has been amply confirmed in the foregoing pages. Many, but not all of the texts examined gave clear signs that they were copied by scribes brought up or trained in the unusual and distinctive fifteenth century orthographic system of East Anglia, the main features of which had been pointed out in Chapter Three.

From the period between 1400 and 1450 three texts copied by East Anglian scribes have survived: the Castle of Perseverance, Dux Moraud and the Assumption play in Cotton Vespasian D. viii. The period of most intense scribal activity, however, stretches from the 1450's to the 1490's, when the following texts, involving the work of seven scribes, were produced: the Macro Wisdom and Mankind, the texts in Cotton Vespasian D. viii, the Brome Abraham and Isaac, the Digby Wisdom fragment. To these may be added the later fifteenth century 'Reynys Extracts',[165] and Mary Magdalene, where, in spite of an early sixteenth century palaeographic dating, the language can be shown to belong with the East Anglian texts of the later fifteenth century. The Croxton Play of the Sacrament, clearly copied in the early sixteenth century, gives every appearance of having belonged in East Anglia in the fifteenth century, perhaps as early as the 1460's. The chronology and extent of this scribal activity is set out in the accompanying table.[166]

Finally, I am grateful to Professor McIntosh for allowing me to reproduce a map drawn by him on the basis of information gathered for the 'Atlas of the Dialects of Later Middle English', showing provisional indications of

the area of scribal origin for a number of the most
important East Anglian play-texts.

Whether or not this gathering of evidence about the
copying of plays in East Anglia during the fifteenth
century and shortly afterwards can be said to constitute
a 'school' or tradition of drama is a question which
must take the present study away from the scrutiny of
the manuscripts and the language of the scribes. A good
deal more remains to be learnt in purely physical terms
about the production and dissemination of play manuscripts
in the area, and certain hints as to directions which
further work on this aspect of the subject might take
have been included from time to time in the preceding
discussions. Equally importantly, however, the way is
now properly open for studies of the style, staging and
dramaturgy of the East Anglian group in a local context,
rather than as apparently random survivals of unknown
origins. Some possible approaches are suggested in the
chapters which follow.

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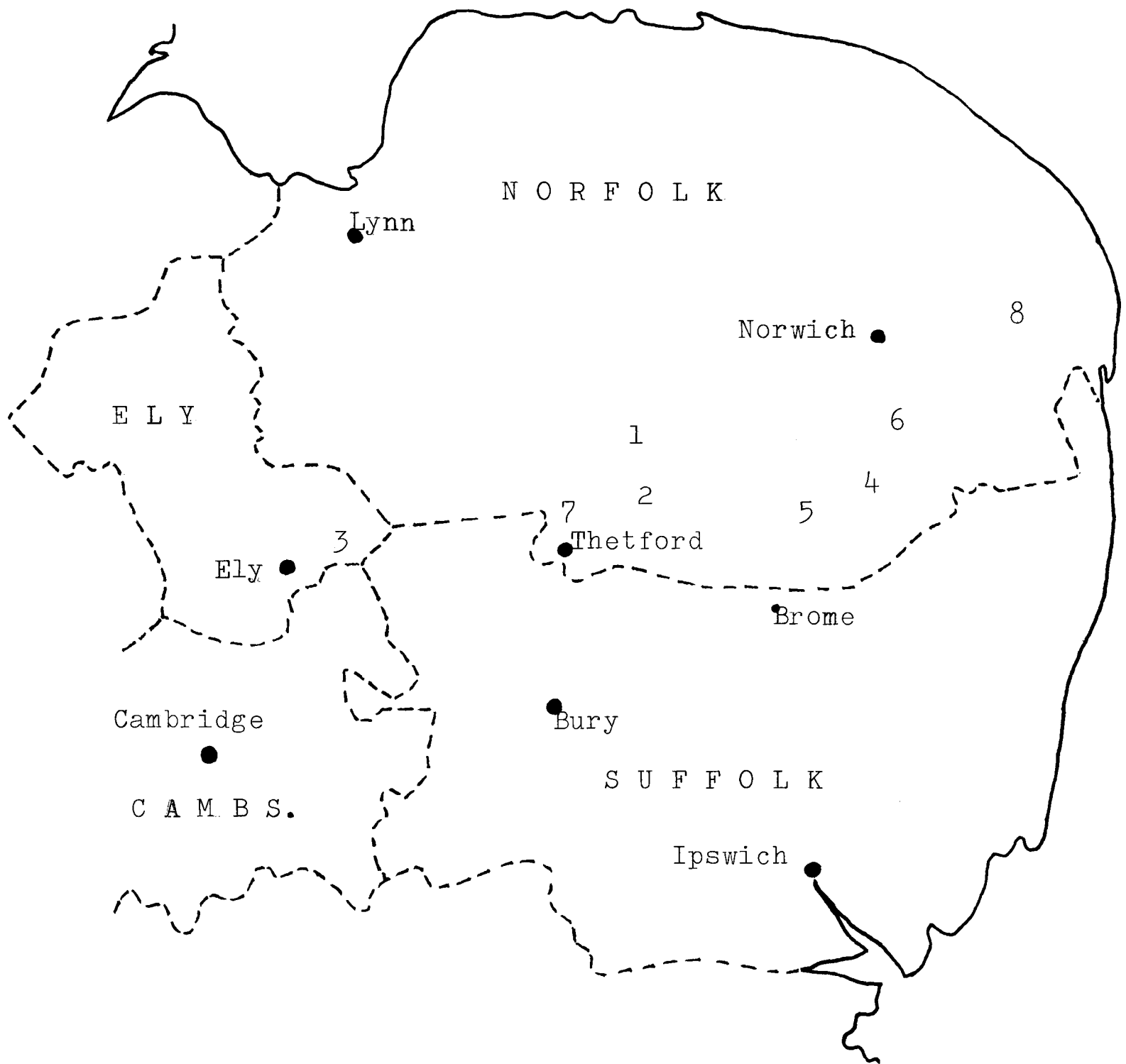
Map 4

Suggested Areas of Scribal Origin for Certain East
Anglian Plays (based on information gathered for
the 'Atlas of the Dialects of Later Middle English'
to 1974)

1 Macro Castle of Perseverance;   2 B.L. Cotton Vesp.
D. viii, main hand;   3 Cotton Vesp. D. viii, Assumption
play;   4 Macro Wisdom-Mankind hand;   5 Brome Ms., main
hand;   6 Bodleian Digby 133, hand D (Mary Magdalene);
7 Croxton, The Play of the Sacrament;   8 Acle, the
Reynes Extracts.
Not shown: Bodleian Eng. poet. f. 2 (Dux Moraud,
probably north Norfolk).

Castle of
Perseverance

Dux Moraud

'N-Town'
Assumption

1450

Macro
Wisdom

1460

Brome Ms.,
literary hand

'N-Town' main
hand, hand 2

1470

1480

Macro
Mankind

Reynes
Extracts

1490

Digby
Wisdom

'N-Town'
hand 1

1500

Mary
Magdalene

Play of the
Sacrament
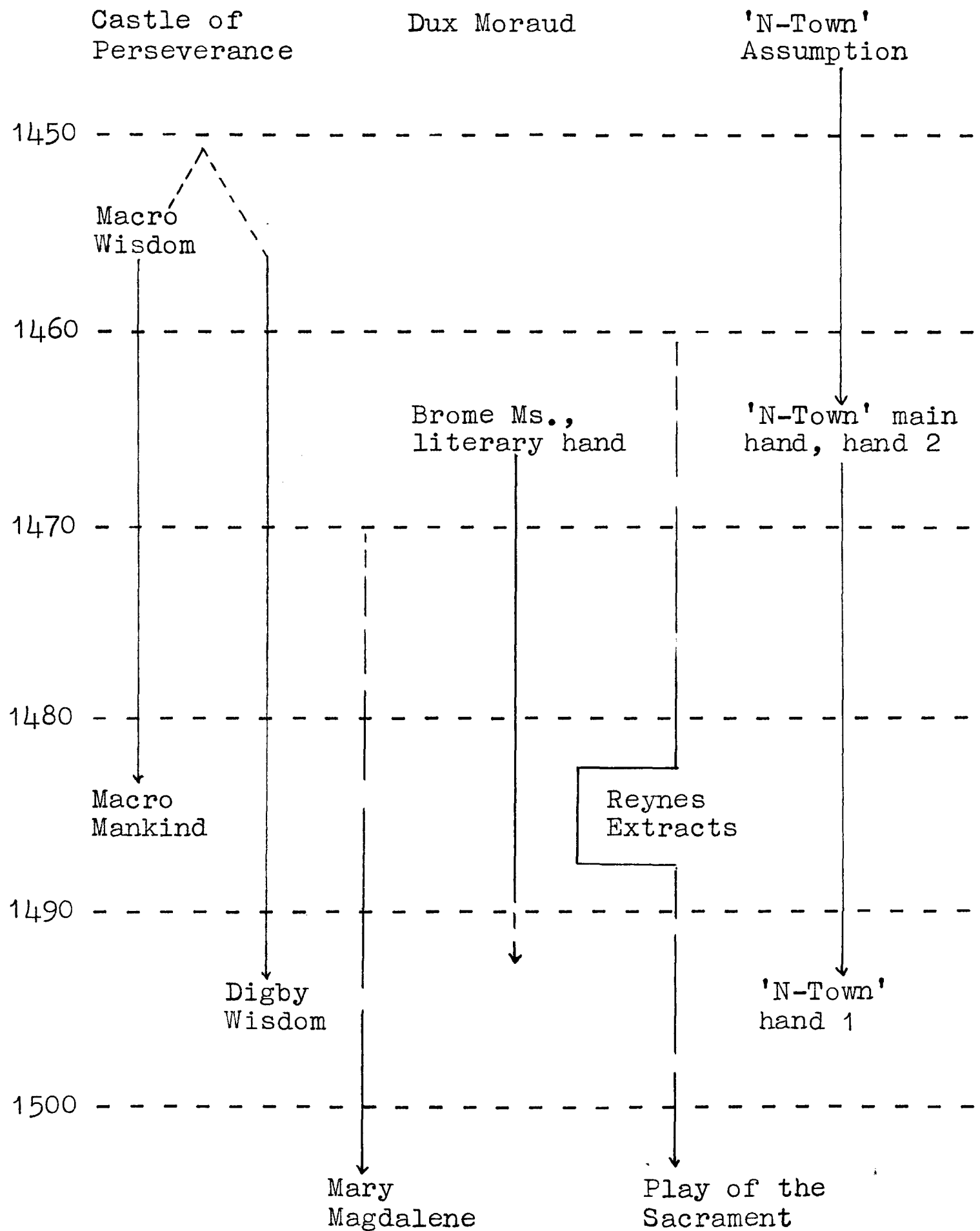
INTERCHAPTER

This is perhaps an appropriate point to return briefly to the position reached at the end of Chapter One, where the need for detailed work on the identification of the East Anglian play-texts, and its possible consequences, were first suggested. In particular it is important to recall the remarks quoted there from Brown's theoretical discussion concerning 'The Study of English Medieval Drama' to the effect that:

> What seems to be needed now ..... is a series of detailed studies of medieval drama as it appeared in single localities in this country.

The work embodied in Chapters Two, Three and Four has led to the firm identification of a substantial body of dramatic texts copied by East Anglian scribes during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. This effectively opens the way for the type of 'local' assessment of the drama which Brown advocated. The East Anglian plays form a group for the purposes of study both in relation to one another on a purely literary level, and also as a localised cultural phenomenon to be considered in the context of literary, artistic and social life of the area. The bulk of the detailed work which might be done along these lines must remain a subject for future research. The purpose of the three following chapters is to provide some signposts for the directions which such research might take, and to make an initial contribution which is intended to place one aspect of the medieval theatre in East Anglia in both its local context, and in the context of the study of medieval drama in general.

There are, it must be stressed, obvious temptations and pitfalls to be avoided here. One is the attribution of a spurious homogeneity to the group. The term 'East Anglian' is not intended to convey, in the first place, generic implications; it relates to the local biblio-graphical and dialectal complexions of the texts. Indeed, one of the most instructive possibilities suggested by

even a cursory inspection of their literary and dramatic qualities is that of a wide variety, even a heterogeneity in the types of drama available in East Anglia. If the survival rates for later vernacular manuscripts quoted towards the end of Chapter One are reasonably accurate, the East Anglian group is certainly an astonishing survival, and yet it can only represent a very small fraction of the quantity of dramatic literature produced or circulating in the area. What has survived must, then, be assessed carefully in the knowledge that the bulk of the evidence, and probably most of the important pieces of it, have perished.

Much the same goes for the documentary records of drama surviving from Norfolk and Suffolk, and here the temptation to be avoided is any facile identification of the play-texts with the facts of theatrical activity in a given place. This documentary evidence is reviewed in detail in the following chapter. Again, we must be content with the knowledge that the facts at our disposal are merely fractional and arbitrary survivals from a vast whole. Just how significantly the general picture of dramatic activity in the area can be altered by the discovery of a single document will be seen in due course when the references to drama in a register of Thetford Priory between the 1490's and 1540 are reproduced in full for the first time.

At present our best hope is to identify the scope and nature of dramatic activity in Norfolk and Suffolk from the documents, and then, tentatively, to begin attempts to square this in general ways with the evidence of the plays themselves. Chapters Six and Seven offer an example of how I think this might be attempted.

II

Another glance at Map 1 in Chapter One will be sufficient to remind the reader that no other similarly geographically restricted area of England can rival East

Anglia in terms of surviving later medieval play-texts.
If this is at first surprising it is perhaps largely
because of the modern notion of the two counties as one
of the more remote and rural parts of lowland England.[1]
Before considering the drama which the area supported in
the later medieval period it is important to revise this
impression in the light of some of the social, economic
and demographic factors known to have been at work at
the time. For instance, it is safe to say that in the
period between the Conquest and the Reformation the East
Anglian counties (together with, in the later part of the
period, the Fens) were the most obviously populous and
wealthy large area of the kingdom outside London and its
immediate environs.[2] And it is worth stressing from the
first that this density of population and prosperity drew
its strength from rural rather than urban sources. The
distribution of rural population in Norfolk and Suffolk
is of importance when it comes to considering the factors
which might have affected the audience of medieval drama
in the area, and some features of its staging.

The distinctive character of East Anglia as a
geographical and administrative unit was recognized from
early times, and much has been done to explore the unique
post-Conquest social systems which laid the basis for its
later medieval density of population and wealth. D.C.
Douglas has pointed out such factors as the subjection of
Norfolk and Suffolk (in this early period) to a common
bishop, and a common earl, the tendency of the central
government to address writs to magnates of the two
counties jointly, and the joint meetings of their shire
courts.[3] The most eloquent witness to the unique nature
of East Anglia, however, is the special treatment it
received in the Domesday survey, which revealed a number
of exceptional features in its social system. A separate
and more detailed survey (the 'Little Domesday Book') was
compiled for the area largely in response to the unusual
arrangements for taxation and property tenure prevailing
in Norfolk and Suffolk.[4]

The most immediately arresting fact revealed by the

East Anglian Domesday was the remarkable density of
population in Norfolk and Suffolk. Darby's mapping of
the Domesday information[5] shows East Anglia as by far the
most densely peopled area of the kingdom in 1086. Large
areas with over 15 persons per square mile, and some
with over 20 make a startling comparison with the whole
of the north, and the north-west midlands (taking a line
from Shropshire to Filey Brigg), where the population is
almost everywhere less than 2.5 persons per square mile.
It is also worth observing that the East Anglian
population was from the first rurally based. In Norfolk,
for instance, the only Domesday boroughs were Norwich,
Thetford and Yarmouth,[6] and this suggests that most of
the inhabitants were fairly evenly distributed over the
area in numerous small settlements, villages and hamlets.[7]

East Anglian social conditions at Domesday and in
the period immediately thereafter, especially as they relate
to land tenure and taxation, have attracted a good deal of
attention.[8] The area was primarily distinguished by a
large concentration of free peasantry, who constituted a
major element in its dense population. The population
was significantly augmented by the custom of partible
inheritance which prevailed in large areas of East Anglia,
but which was unknown elsewhere in England, except in
Kent.[9] The East Anglian free peasantry of this early
period were distinguished by their capacity to commute
most or all of their feudal service obligations to money
payments, giving them the right to sell or alienate their
land. Douglas found evidence of abundant money changing
hands in the area for these reasons in the twelfth century,
and refers to 'the form of a contractual complex which
has no parallel elsewhere at the period in England.'[10]
The numerous free landholders of East Anglia had a second
important effect on the topography of the region in that
their socially advanced or 'unfeudal' status led to the
early formation of the village (rather than the manor) as
the primary unit of social organization in the area.[11]

These, then, were some of the features which lent the
social and topographical nature of East Anglia its most

distinctive characteristics from an early period: a dense, rurally based population - often free of feudal obligations - dwelling in the astonishingly numerous and large villages which remain to this day the typical feature of the human geography of the region. The conspicuous prosperity of East Anglia was firmly based, and survived the depression of the earlier part of the fourteenth century, and the Black Death. The primary document for assessing the wealth of the different areas of England in this later period is the 'Lay Subsidy' taxation of 1334,[12] an exaction on personal property, mainly livestock and crops. The details have recently been mapped and tabulated by Glasscock, and the very considerable wealth of large areas of Norfolk, in particular, is immediately apparent.[13] Many areas were assessed at a rate indicating property worth £20 to £29 per square mile, with several areas at over £30; this is again worth comparing with the north and north-west midlands, with often under £5 per square mile, and nearly everywhere under £9.

Particularly striking testimony of the wealth and importance of East Anglia in the early half of the fourteenth century appears in Ekwall's work on the population of medieval London, and patterns of immigration from the provinces between 1250 and 1350.[14] He shows that not only was a very large proportion of the immigrants East Anglian - especially from Norfolk after 1300 - but also that the East Anglian merchants were amongst the most wealthy inhabitants of the capital.[15] East Anglian wealth in the later middle ages derived principally from the cloth industry, especially the manufacture of woollen products, and whilst this was primarily an urban occupation in most parts of the country before the later fourteenth century, Norfolk and Suffolk are again distinctive in their tendency to show a diffusion of such industry in rural areas.[16] It is thought that this pattern is connected with the early trend towards an unusually dense rural population in the area noted above.[17]

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By the later fifteenth century Suffolk had become the
major cloth-producing area in England,[18] and as is well
known the remarkable prosperity of the area is still
expressed in the magnificent Perpendicular 'wool churches'
such as those at Long Melford and Lavenham.[19]

In spite of the sharp reduction of the English
population in some areas during the Black Death the East
Anglian counties retained their high population in
relation to the rest of the country, as the details of
population density derived from the Poll Tax returns of
1377 show.[20] The particularly dense rural population in
the area at this time has much to do with the East
Anglian phase of the Peasant's Revolt in 1381. In the
1370's the central government had begun a series of fiscal
experiments in which the Lay Subsidy on property (i.e. the
type of tax mentioned above as being imposed in 1334) was
replaced by taxes levied on a per capita basis, the unit
of assessment being the parish. The impact of such a
measure was naturally most acutely felt in areas of dense
population with numerous parishes. E.B. Fryde has
recently described the effect of the Poll Tax of 1371
as follows:

> The tax on parishes had the effect of
> burdening particularly heavily the more
> densely populated counties......increases
> were particularly marked for some of the
> shires which were in the forefront of the
> revolt in 1381, because they belonged to
> an area of ancient and dense settlement
> and had numerous parish churches. [21]
> Thus the assessment of Norfolk increased
> by a third ... whilst the charge on
> Suffolk almost doubled. Its effect on
> the same well populated counties would
> have been even more crushing, if widespread
> evasion had not occurred in 1381. [22]

The East Anglian revolt of 1381 was characterized not only
by its unusual violence but also by its relative isolation
from the events in London, Kent and Essex, and its
noticeably more provincial character. There was, for
instance, no march on the capital. The rioters aimed
their fury at local targets, and were suppressed by local
forces under the Bishop of Norwich.[23] The precise local

conditions which determined the nature of the East Anglian revolt are yet to be properly determined,[24] and Powell's speculations concerning the unusually advanced social organizations amongst the rural population of the area remain to be substantiated.[25]

Social organizations which in some ways resembled the workers' conventicles which Powell had in mind certainly attracted the attention of the central government shortly after the revolt, in 1388. In that year a general inquisition was made into the wealth and composition of the urban and parish gilds of the kingdom, the returns coming in early in 1389. The motive for the inquisition is not properly known, though it has been suggested that the government was contemplating a tax on such bodies, or that it was looking narrowly into the nature of such popular organizations and their regular gatherings in the light of the recent rising.[26] Whatever the reasons for the move the 1389 Gild Returns offer early firm evidence of widespread popular oganization in East Anglia, especially in rural areas. Of the 500 or so surviving returns from the entire country well over a quarter are from Norfolk, and of these a number are exceptional in being written in English.[27] This extraordinary proportion of returns from Norfolk may be an accidental survival, but on the other hand it is also probable that they represent but a fraction of the total number of gilds supported by the inhabitants of the county. On the basis of his knowledge of the medieval wills from Norfolk, where gilds are often mentioned, W. Rye estimated that the total number in the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries would run to 'some thousands'. It is also interesting to note that the main period for the foundation of those for which returns survive is 1350-1400.[28]

The numerous East Anglian gilds represent an obvious possible source of support for a dramatic tradition relying (I shall argue) on a dense rural population in the area, and further discussion of this point will be found in the following chapter. Indeed, the density of Norfolk's rural population is one of the more surprising

features of the demography of the area in general in the later medieval period. At a time when urban settlements grew and proliferated throughout the country, Norfolk, in spite of its exceptionally large population, only ever had six boroughs - Lynn, Yarmouth, Norwich, Thetford, Castle Rising and New Buckenham.[29] This is not to underestimate the importance of the towns as a background to the flourishing of the East Anglian drama in the fifteenth century. It will readily be seen in the documentary evidence of plays and playing in the area quoted in Chapter Five that evidence from towns such as Norwich, Ipswich, Bury and Ely is curiously scanty compared with what is known in often quite small detail about the drama in towns elsewhere - York, Chester, or Coventry for instance. On the other hand, apparently minor places in East Anglia such as Wymondham and Bungay reveal a pattern in which rural settlements draw play-audiences in from the surrounding countryside, and yield remarkably detailed accounts for productions in single years in the early to mid-sixteenth century.

The social and economic geography of East Anglia retained in this later period the shape sketched out in the preceding pages. The impressive concentrations of wealth and population persist, and it is important to note that the area escapes the worst depredations and evils of the fifteenth century wars.[30] The fact that a significant proportion of the surviving Middle English drama originated in, or was at least copied in East Anglia need come as no surprise in the light of the factors adduced here.

III

The East Anglian drama also belongs with other local patterns of literary and artistic activity in the later medieval period. The well known East Anglian schools of manuscript illumination,[31] glass[32] and panel painting[33] in

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the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are parts of a wider artistic tradition which has led a recent writer to describe the area as 'one of the great centres of artistic creation in late medieval England'.[34] Wealthy lay and clerical patronage also extended to literary enterprises, and Moore has investigated the network of local support for writers such as Bokenham, Metham, Capgrave and Lydgate.[35] An equally interesting <u>coterie</u> is found in Sir John Fastolfe's circle after his retirement to Caister before his death in 1459,[36] and some of his interests are reflected in a book list left by his heirs, the Paston family.[37] Striking testimony of the literary and devotional fertility of East Anglia in this period is revealed by the fact that Norfolk produced, simultaneously, the two first English women of letters in Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe.[38]

Literary culture in the area is also revealed by books and manuscripts. The extent of monastic culture in East Anglia may be examined in N.R. Ker's lists of the manuscripts surviving from the medieval libraries.[39] Major collections were at Norwich and Bury, and urban houses of various orders at Thetford, Lynn, Wymondham, Yarmouth and Ipswich were also evidently well equipped, as were the pilgrimage centres at Walsingham and Bromholm. Vernacular literacy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries has been investigated through the surviving manuscripts of theological writings by A.I. Doyle,[40] and recently Professor McIntosh has published a list of over 30 vernacular manuscripts of various types which may be associated with west Norfolk alone on dialectal grounds.[41] Represented are copies of the writings of Rolle (Bodleian Ms. Bodley 467, B.L. Ms. Harley 2406, C.U.L. Ms. Ii.4.9) Hilton (St. John's, Cambridge, Ms. G.35), Lavenham (Bodleian Rawl. C.288),[42] copies of popular devotional texts such as the <u>Prick of Conscience</u> (Bodleian Digby 87, Digby 99), <u>Speculum Christiani</u> (Bodleian Laud. misc. 513), the <u>Privity of the Passion</u> (Durham University Library Ms. Cosin V.iii.8) and the <u>Northern Passion</u> (C.U.L. Ii.4.9), and a group of manuscripts containing lyrics and carols

(National Library of Scotland, Advocates' Ms. 18.7.21, B.L. Sloane 2593, Harley 7322 and Harley 1735).[43] It is not difficult to continue adding to the list with copies of major Middle English works made in Norfolk or Suffolk, e.g. Chaucer's writings (Glasgow University Library, Hunterian Ms. U.1.1, C.U.L. Gg.4.27),[44] Piers Plowman (B.L. Harley 3954, Society of Antiquaries' Ms. 687),[45] Nicholas Love's Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ (C.U.L. Ms. Hh.1.11),[46] the Cloud of Unknowing (University College Oxford Ms. 14).[47] Most varieties of Middle English literature seem to have circulated in the area, and where colophons and ownership marks fail the distinctive East Anglian orthography is often a sure means of identifying where a text originated. It is within this kind of background that the flourishing of the drama in Norfolk and Suffolk is to be seen.

CHAPTER FIVE

PLAYS AND PLAYING IN LATER MEDIEVAL
EAST ANGLIA – DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The following list gathers a number of references to plays and playing from documentary records of various kinds from later medieval East Anglia. Many have been extracted or reproduced from printed sources, others derive from unpublished manuscripts.

Three main types of document are represented: parish documents (churchwardens' accounts, gild records etc.), municipal documents (civic accounts of various kinds, gild and legal records) and conventual accounts (registers, account rolls etc. from religious houses). In each case the nature of the source is mentioned and the relevant references reproduced or paraphrased. The procedure is not entirely satisfactory in that it removes references to plays from their context in sometimes quite complex financial records of a given community or organization, and the relative social and economic importance of the drama at the given time and place is partially lost. A second problem is the looseness of medieval terminology regarding plays and playing. Whilst some sets of documents distinguish carefully between actors and minstrels (i.e. musicians) some clearly do not; for instance, a fifteenth century document from Lynn refers to the corporation there hiring 'histriones' (which almost invariably means 'actors' elsewhere) on an annual basis,[1] but it is clear from the context that minstrels or waits are the performers concerned, part of their duty being to go round the town with their 'instruments'. Words such as 'play' and 'game' and 'interlude' are also problematic in the balder documentary references, and anything from a sub-literary folk-play to something resembling a Corpus Christi cycle in scope may lie behind each at different times and places. Most of the references gathered below are quite certainly to play or players; in a few cases new material may bring a need for alterations in the list.

For several references to drama in the neighbourhood of Ely I am indebted to Mrs. D.M. Owen, and for transcriptions of them to Dr. A. Johnstone. Several

references have been taken from Mr. R. R. Wright's
Medieval Theatre in East Anglia (Bristol University
M.Phil. thesis, 1971), abbreviated as Wright, Thesis.
Titles of printed sources are cited in abbreviated form;
full details in all cases will be found in the
'Bibliography and List of Authorities' in Volume II of
this work.

The plan of the list follows the topographical and
chronological arrangement used in Appendix W of E.K.
Chambers's The Medieval Stage, 2, pp. 329-406. The
information is then mapped, and a discussion of some
salient points follows.

(1). Acle, Nf.

c. 1470 - Bodleian Tanner Ms. 407, the commonplace book
of Robert Reynys of Acle, contains a dramatic epilogue
and a fragment of a morality play; cf. the details cited
under no. 14 in Chapter One. Reynys was churchwarden at
Acle and copied into his book other quasi-dramatic
materials such as poems for recitation at gild celebrations
on St. Anne's Day (26 July), nos. 1560, 3207 and 3119 in
the Brown-Robbins Index of Middle English Verse. The Acle
gild of St. Anne was connected with the church of the
Augustinian Canons at Weybridge, adjoining the village,
according to Blomefield, History of Norfolk, 11 p. 93.

Reynys was also perhaps concerned with some kind of
secular pageants. On folio 32r the following stanzas
appear:

Artor: Lo kyng Artor ful manly and ful wyse
          Whan he slow gurnarde and alle his cheff ches
          CCC. was slayne as I understonde
          And yet is he levande in another londe

Charlys: Charlys the cheeff of Romanys and emperore
          Kyng of paynemmys and Conqueroure
          III relekys he browte into frauns
          For jhus love sufferyd penauns

Davyde: I am Kyng Davyde that in my lyff
          Lv. maydenys and wyffves I had at my wylle
          And afterward whan golyas was styntyd of stryff
          I made the sawter my mercy to fullfyll

On folio 32v is the following text, head 'IX Wurthy':

Ector de Troye :	Thow achylles in bataly me slow Of my wurthynes men speken inow
Alisandere:	And in romaunce often am I leyt As conqueroure gret thow I seyt
Julius Cesar:	Thow my cenatoures me slow in [constory] Fele londes byfore by conquest wan I
Josue:	In holy Chyrche 3e mowen here and rede Of my wurthynes and of my dede
Dauit:	Aftyr þat slayn was golyas By me the sawter than made was
Judas Macabeus:	Of my wurthynesse 3yf 3e wyll wete Seche the byble for ther it is wrete
Arthour:	The rounde tabyll I sette with knyghtes strong 3it shall I come a3en thow it be long
Charles:	With me dwellyd rouland olyvere In all my Conquest fer and nere
Godfrey de Boleyn :	And I was Kyng of Jherusalem The crowne of thorn I wan fro hem

The dramatic epilogue, Davis, Non-Cycle Plays p. 123, was designed for use at the end of a parish play ('oure game', line 24) which was to be followed by an 'ale' to cover the costs of the production, any excess going to the church (lines 27-30). There is no objection to the view that the other extract, a speech by 'Delight' from a morality play (op. cit. pp. 121-2), was from a piece performed as a parish occasion.

According to R.R. Wright Acle had a special enclosure for performing plays, 'a central playing space surrounded by a bank' (Theatre Notebook 28 1974 p. 38, n. 28; no further reference given). This was perhaps a game-place of the type built at Walsham-le-Willows (q.v.) in the early sixteenth century.

(2). Aldeburgh, Sf.

The Chamberlain's Accounts 1556/7-1592/3 record a series of payments to visiting professional players including those of the Queen, the Earl of Arundel, the Earl of Sussex, the Lord Admiral and Lord Morley. Stopes, William Hunnis and the Revels of the Chapel Royal p. 314.

(3). <u>Bardwell</u>, Sf.

Thetford Priory Register:

1505/6- 'in regard to Berdewell game   xijd.'
C.U.L. Add. 6969 f.72r

(4). <u>Bircham</u>, Nf.

Snettisham Churchwardens' Accounts:

1468-   'payd for cost of Bircham game   xiiijd.'
Wright, Thesis p. 62.

(5). <u>Boxford</u>, Sf.

The Churchwardens' Accounts mention a play in 1535.
Chambers, <u>The Medieval Stage</u> 2 p. 342.

(6). <u>Bramfield</u>, Sf.

Walberswick Churchwardens' Accounts:

1497-   'payd qwhen brownfeld [<u>sic</u>] game
                        was schewed here iijd.'
Lewis, <u>Walberswick Churchwardens' Accounts</u> p. 71.

(7). <u>Brome</u>, Sf.

The Brome Hall Commonplace Book contains the play of
<u>Abraham and Isaac</u>, <u>c</u>. 1450-90; cf. Chapter One no. 15, and
the citations there.

(8). <u>Bungay</u>, Sf.

A Bill of Riot of 1514 complains that five 'pagents'
customarily carried around the town on Corpus Christi Day
have been thrown down: Heaven, All the World, Paradise,
Bethlehem, Hell. Cited in full by Nelson, <u>The Medieval</u>
<u>English Stage</u> p. 183.

      <u>St. Mary's parish, Churchwardens' Accounts</u>, extracted
by G.B. Baker, <u>The East Anglian</u> 1 - 2 1864-1866, <u>passim</u>:

1526-   'payde for the Copying ow3t of ye game booke,
                                       iiijs.

       . . . .
      'payde to Ser prewett prest of Norwic for his
                        labour and costs   iiijs.'
Baker, <u>loc. cit.</u>, 1 p. 375.

1543-   'pd. for sewyn Serten abbs yt waz occupyd
       at ye game on corpus xxi day   jd.'

Baker, loc. cit., 2 p. 149.

St. Mary's also contributed funds towards the Holy Trinity parish plays in 1567/8, as shown below. 'Ser Prewett' was probably Stephen Prewett, a priest of St. Peter Mancroft in Norwich, who was concerned with a revision of the Norwich Grocers' Play in 1534; see Davis, Non-Cycle Plays p. xxxii.

Holy Trinity Parish Records 1537- , printed by G.B. Baker, 'Church Ale-Games, and Interludes', The East Anglian 1 1864 pp. 291-2, 304 and 334-6. The accounts give numerous details of plays staged by the parish of Holy Trinity in 1558, 1566, 1567 and 1568. The second and third of these were performed in the large churchyard then shared by Holy Trinity and St. Mary's, the fourth in the castle yard.

1558- 'paid to William Ellys for the
interlude and game booke   iiijd.'

'paid for writing the parts   ijs.'

'paid to William Holbruck for rydyng to
Yarmouth for ye game gere   xijd.'

1566- 'paid to Edward Molle and his sons ... for
making the scaffold for the interlude in
the church yarde meat and wags   vs.'

'paid at Norwiche for expence when my
lord of Surrey, his apparell was borrowed
for the interlude, with vjd. to lane for
his horse   xijd.'

'goven to Kelsaye the vyce for his pastyme
before the plaie and after the playe both
daies   ijs.'

'to holbrook for his visors   iiijd.'

'to cocke for carrying home the apparell
agayn to Norwich   xijd.'

'to Bransby for dying heares for ye
interlude players   ijd.'

'paid to John Denny for a paier of
shoes for Mr. Browns sone, one of ye
interlude plaiers   iiijd.'

1567- 'paid to Drane for wattchyng the scaffolld
for savyng all things   xd.'

'for a quayer of paper for wrytyng of
the parts of the interlude   iiijd.'

'paid for writing of all ye parts   iijs. iiijd.'

The entries for the performance in 1568 are given in some detail, and reveal in particular some of the financial arrangements involved. A group of women were organized to collect money from those attending the performance: 'Receyuyd the collecon made by the wife for the game ... xxjs. vd.', 'Rec. by the wife of John Underwood thelder in her purse ... iiijs. jd.', and so with the wives of eleven other men. There was also a collection made in the castle yard, and a contribution received from St. Mary's parish. Entries directly relevant to the performance are:

'paid for carryng home the apparell
to wyndham [Wymondham]   xijd.'

'for old stanyd clothes and for ij
Bords for the game   vijd.'

'for Bere when the Boothes were
made   iiijd.'

'for iiij li of gonepowder   iijs. viijd.
for ij li more   ijs.'

'to ffylld for taking downe the
boothes   iid.'

'to gallant for Alders for the boothes iijs.'

Under a separate heading is 'Provision for ye church ale and game' recording the very considerable quantities of food and drink provided at the play. Baker provides an aggregate: 5 calves, 11¾ lambs, 4 stone of beef, 4½ coombs of wheat, 3 gallons 7 pints of butter, 29½ gallons of cream, 13½ barrels 2 firkins of beer, 9 pints of honey, 200 eggs and numerous custards and pasties. Some idea of the number of people attending may perhaps be indicated by expressing the quantity of beer provided in pints - 4032.

(9). Bury St. Edmunds

1197 - Jocelin of Brakelond records that Abbot Samson prohibited shows in the cemetery: 'Conuenticula autem et spectacula prohibuit publice fieri in cimiterio'. Butler, The Chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond p. 94. c 1300 - The Rickinghall (Bury St. Edmunds) play fragment; cf. the details given under no. 2 in Chapter One.

<u>Conventual documents</u>:

In 1369/70 and 1401/2 the Sacrist Rolls of the Abbey
record a payment 'forthdrove et Wasseil, ijs.', perhaps
referring to some ludic winter ceremony.

1537:   'regiis mimis et aliis, diversis temporibus vjs.'
<u>H.M.C. XIVth Rept.</u> (London 1895) Part 8, Appendix,
'Seven Sacrist Rolls of the Abbey' pp. 124-5.

<u>Municipal documents</u>:

1389 - P.R.O., Certificate of the Gild of Corpus Christi.
The gild was founded 'ad honorem Corporis Christi', and
celebrated the feast on the appropriate day:

> et habebunt eodem die capicia de una
> secta, et quoddam interludium de Corpore
> Christi, ad quod quidem interludium
> manutenendum et sustentandum dicti fratres
> et sorores, quando de novo fiunt et
> creantur, astringentur vinculo iuramenti.

Young, <u>M.L.N.</u> <u>48</u> 1933 p. 85.

1477 - the Bye-Laws of the Weavers recorded amongst the
Corporation documents allude to

> the sustenacion and mayntenaunce of
> the pagent of the Assencion of our Lord
> God and of the giftys of the Holy Gost as
> yt hath be customed of old tyme owte of
> mynde yeerly to be had, to the wurshipe
> of God amongge other pagents in the
> procession in the feste of Corpus Christi.

Arnold, <u>Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey</u> <u>3</u> p. 361; cf.

Nelson, <u>The Medieval English Stage</u> pp. 189-90, 251 n. 38.

(10). <u>Caister</u>, Nf.

1473 - John Paston II writing to John III:

> W. Woode, whyche promysed yow and
> Dawbeney ... at Castre þat iff ye
> wolde take hym in to be ageyn wyth me
> þat than he wolde neuer goo fro me;
> and ther - vppon I haue kepyd hym
> thys iij yere to pleye Seynt Jorge and
> Robynhod and the shryff of Notyngham ... <u>etc</u>.

Davis, <u>Paston Letters and Papers</u> <u>1</u> p. 461.

(11). <u>Croxton</u>, Nf., near Thetford.

1460's - 1510-20 - the <u>Play of the Sacrament</u> perhaps
performed at Croxton; cf. Chapter One no. 26, and the

details given there.

Thetford Priory Register:

1506/7 - 'to the gylde of Crokeston   xxd.'

1524/5 - 'ad Gildam de croxston   xijd.'

C.U.L. Add. 6969 ff. 76r and 173v.

(12). Docking, Nf.

Snettisham Churchwardens' Accounts:

1488 - 'for costys of dockyng game   iid.'

Wright, Thesis p. 63.

(13). Downham, Ely.

Prior of Ely's Accounts:

1409/10 - ' Lusoribus de Iselham ludentibus coram
               Domino in die Circumcisionis [1st Jan.]
               apud Dounham   6s. 8d.'

C.U.L. Add. 2953 f.9 (post-medieval copy of a lost
document).

(14). Dunwich, Sf.

1542 - 'Payd to the game player   xvd.'

        'Payd to Mr Choppyng for Peeses
         of tymbre to set up the game upon
         and to Robt. Horle for ye workmanschip   vs.'

Wright, Thesis p. 248, quoting Suckling's History of
Dunwich f. 75. Cf. also H.M.C. Rept., Various Collections
7 (London 1914) p. 82.

(15). Ely.

Ely Cathedral Priory, Prior's Accounts:

1409/10 - 'Lusoribus de Iselham ludentibus coram
               Domino in die Circumcisionis [1st Jan]
               apud Dounham   6s. 8d.'

C.U.L. Add. 2953 f.9.

1526   -   'Dat. inter Histrionem in Festo Translationis
               Sancte Etheldrede Virginis [17th Oct] hoc
               anno   20s.'

           'diversis hominibus ludentibus coram
            Domino Priore ad duas vices hoc
            anno   7s. 4d.'

1532   -   'Dat. hominibus ludentibus coram
               Domino Priore infra Natale Domini
               3s. 4d.'

C.U.L. Add. 2957 ff. 76 and 82 (post-medieval copies of lost documents).

Ely Diocesan Records, B/2/1; undated, sixteenth century:

> Memorandum to know Mr. Chancellour his
> pleasour for order to be takyn for keepyng
> playes dawnsynges and mayegaymes in churches
> and Churchyeardes upon pretense to advauntage
> and proffyt the Churche by the same.

(16). Garboldisham, Nf.

Harling Churchwardens' Accounts:

1457 - 'For bread and ale to Garblesham game   vjd.'

Bolingbroke, Norfolk Archaeology 11 1892 p. 338.

(17). Harling, Nf.

Churchwardens' Accounts:

1452 - 'Pd. for the original of an Interlude pleyed
         at the Cherch gate'

1457 - 'Pd. for bread and ale when Lopham Game
         came to this town   xijd.'

       'For bread and ale to Garblesham Game   vjd.'

1463 - 'in expenses when Keningale Game
         came to town at Wrights   vjd.'

1467 - 'Bread and ale to ye Kenyngale Players'

Bolingbroke, Norfolk Archaeology 11 1892 p. 338.

(18). Haughley, Sf.

1537 - the will of Robert Cooke, vicar of Haughley:

> I geve to Sir John my brother...all my
> boks excepte the play boks.
> ...I geve to Robart my brother...all
> my play boks.

Tymms, 'Bury Wills', Camden Soc. 49 1850 p. 129.

(19). Hunstanton, Nf.

Accounts of the L'Estrange family:

1519 - 'to ye Lorde of Crystmasse at Ryngstede   iiijd'
         (cf. no. 32)

1522 - 'pd. to iiij pleyers yat sholde a pleyed
         ye same day yat Mrs. Owen cam hyther,
         in reward at my Mrs. commandment   viijd.'

1530 - 'Strangers [i.e. visitors]... the Kings pleyers'
       'in reward the xxiijd. day of Octobre
        to the King's Pleyers   vs'.
Gurney, Archaeologia 25 1834 pp. 422, 458, 489, 498.

(20). Ipswich.
Municipal documents - the Corpus Christi Procession and
Corpus Christi Play; I summarize information printed by
Chambers, The Medieval Stage 2 pp. 371-3, and Nelson,
The Medieval English Stage pp. 197-200.

     The Ipswich gild of Corpus Christi supported both a
play and a procession on Corpus Christi Day, the procession
being referred to between 1325 and 1542 and the play
between 1445 and 1531. The procession involved various
'pageants' - possibly tableaux vivants - and owing to the
looseness of the medieval terminology on this point it is
not always possible to decide whether a documentary
reference relates to a play proper or a mute processional
tableau.

     The earliest reference to the play occurs in 1445, when
a certain burgess is obliged to "care for all the ornaments
of the pageants of the guild of Corpus Christi, and provide
and supervise the repair of the pageants and furnish the
stages [lez Stages] for the players, those of the city as
well as those from outside the city", (Nelson, pp. 197-8).
The play is also referred to in a series of documents in
various years between 1504 and 1531, when it was abolished.
Its content is unknown. (Cf. Chambers, p. 372).

     The subjects of the tableaux shown in the procession
were listed three times in the White Domesday Book of the
town. The lists have been printed by Nelson (pp. 215-7),
and the subject matter gives little indication of dramatic
potential: St. George, St. John, St. Eligius, St. Thomas,
St. Luke, a Dolphin, the Assumption and a Ship. The
William Parnell who 'received a financial consideration
for his work on "lez pagent" in 1492' (Nelson, p. 199)
may well have been a relative of the 'Parnell of Ipswich'
who was hired by Norwich Corporation to stage a pageant
for Elizabeth Woodville's visit to Norwich (q.v.) in 1469.

The very numerous payments to visiting troupes of players recorded in Ipswich municipal documents between 1555 and 1613 are set out in H.M.C. IXth Rept., (London 1883), Appendix 1, pp. 248-51.

(21). Isleham, Ely.
Prior of Ely's Accounts:
1409/10 - 'Lusoribus de Iselham ludentibus coram
                Domino in die Circumcisionis [1st Jan]
                apud Dounham   6s. 8d.'
C.U.L. Add. 2953 f.9 (post-medieval copy of a lost document).

(22). Ixworth, Sf.
Thetford Priory Register:
1508/9 - 'to Ixworth pley   xvjd.'
C.U.L. Add. 6969 f. 90v.

(23). Kenninghall, Nf.
Harling Churchwardens' Accounts:
1463 - 'in expenses when Keningale Game
          came to town at Wrights   vjd.'
1467 - 'Bread and Ale to ye Kenyngale Players'
Bolingbroke, Norfolk Archaeology 11 1892 p. 338.

(24). King's Lynn.
Municipal documents:
'Extracts from the Chamberlains' Rolls':
1371 - 'iijs. given to 'ludenti' on May 1st.'
1386 - 'iijs. iiijd. given to certain players, playing
          an interlude on Corpus Christi day.'

            'iijs. iiijd. paid by the Mayor's gift, to
            persons playing the interlude of St. Thomas
            the Martyr.'
H.M.C. XIth Rept., Appendix, Pt. 3 (London 1877)
pp. 221, 223.
1409/10 - Lady de Beaufort came to see a play.
Chambers, The Medieval Stage 2 p. 374.
Chamberlains' Accounts, 1444-1462/3:
At Christmas 1444 Lynn Corporation financed dramatic entertainments for Lord Scales. The following references

are from transcriptions by R.P. Axton:

'sol' precepto Maioris pro ij soes[?]
servicie expenditis Apud Aulam Sancti
Georgii et Sancte Trinitatis in vigil
Epiphanie...quem ludus ostendebatur
ibidem...   iijs.'

'sol' precepto Maioris Johanni Hounset
pictori pro pinctione diversorum
vestimentorum et ornamentorum pro ludo
tempore Natalis Domini per Maiorem
et consilium huius ville ostend. xiijs. iiijd.'

'pro vino expendito circa luseres
apud tabernam Margarete Ffrank in
die lune   xiiijd.'

'sol' precepto Maioris Johanni Newhame et
..... passhelew et Stephano ..... peyntour
pictoribus pro pictacione diversorum
ornamentorum et vestimentorum pro ludo
coram domino de Scales tempore Natalis
Domini   vs. vd.'

'sol' precepto Maioris Johanni Clerk at
Seinte Nicholas et ..... Gilbert
informatur le Mary et Gabriel cantare
in dicto ludo   xxd.'

'sol' Willielmo Barbour in Gresmarket
et Ricardo Comber ludent coram dicto
domino in eodem ludo   xxd.'

'dat precepto Maioris histrionibus
Comitio Warre   iijs. iiijd.'

'sol' precepto Maioris pro expensis equorum
de carectis cum expensis de prandis de
Cartens apud Mydleton tempori ludo coram
domino de Scales ibidem   vjs. iiijd.'

'dat precepto Maioris hominibus aperantibus
apud Midleton cum domino Scales uno
tempore   iijs. viijd.'

'dat precepto Maioris histrionibus
Comitis Suffolciae   xl d.'

Wright, Thesis pp. 6-8.

1446/7 - 'sol' pro [various quantities of wine]
expendit eodem tempore quem ludus
erat in foro presenti ibidem Comite
Oxon. .... Thoma domino de Scales et
alijs militio   vjs.'

'dat precepto Maioris histrionibus et
harpouris domini Regis, Johannio
Archiepiscopi Cant., Canc. Anglie,
domini Ducis Norfolk, Ducis Exon.,
domini Willelmi de la Pole ducis
Suffolk, domini Comitis Arundelle,
domini Episcopi Sarum et domini
Welles per diversa tempora   xxxiijs. vjd.'

     'sol' pro expensis apud aulam
     corporis Christi quem ludus erat
     in foro   xxxd.'

1457/8 - 'sol' pro regardo lusoribus cuiusdem
     ludi in ffesto corporis xpi   vjs. viijd.'

1462/3 - 'sol' pro ij lagonis vini rubij expenditio
     in domo Arnuephi Tixonye per Maiorum
     et polliparias ffratrum suorum ..... ludum
     in festo Corporis Xpi.   ijs.'

Wright, Thesis pp. 9-10.

(25). Lavenham, Sf.

1492 - the Earl of Surrey rewarded the players of 'Lanam'
   on Jan. 8.

Chambers, The Medieval Stage 2 p. 375.

(26). Lopham, Nf.

Harling Churchwardens' Accounts:

1457 - 'Pd. for bread and ale when Lopham
    Game came to this town   xijd.'

Bolingbroke, Norfolk Archaeology 11 1892 p. 338.

Thetford Priory Register:

1504/5 - 'to lopham game   viijd.'
C.U.L. Add. 6969 f.66r.

(27). Middleton, Nf.

King's Lynn Chamberlains' Accounts:

1444/5 - 'sol' precepto Maioris pro expensis
    equorum de carectis cum expensis
    de prandis de Cartens apud
    Mydleton Tempori ludo coram domino
    de Scales ibidem   vjs. iiijd.'

    'dat precepto Maioris hominibus
    aperantibus apud Midleton cum
    domino Scales uno tempore iis. viijd.'

Wright, Thesis, p. 8, transcriptions by R.P. Axton.

(28). Mildenhall, Sf.

Thetford Priory Register:

1505/6 - 'to the pley of Myldenale   xijd'
C.U.L. Add. 6969 f.70r.

(29). <u>Necton</u>, Nf.

Churchwardens' Year Book, 1536-1699:

1543 - memorandum, 'to suffer shetyng and camping
       and other pleyes as hath been usyd
       hertofore.'

Wright, Thesis p. 236.

(30). <u>Norwich</u>

<u>Conventual documents</u>:

The Cellarer's Accounts of the Cathedral Priory in the
fourteenth century contain very numerous records of
payments to visiting players. They are summarized as
follows by Saunders, <u>An Introduction to the Obedientary
Rolls of Norwich Cathedral Priory</u>, pp. 182-3:

> In one department only is there any
> regular employment or engagement of
> players, that of the Camera. Though players
> were actors as distinct from minstrels,
> who were musicians, either accompanying
> some lord, or of the brotherhood of roving
> players, it is doubtful whether this distinction
> was maintained when referring to them in
> these rolls.
>   Until we came to the year 1328 the
> entries are almost confined to players at
> the monastery on the day of Holy Trinity,
> when they generally receive 6s. 8d., an
> amount, however, subject to considerable
> variation. From 1301 onwards, players at
> Newton are generally mentioned, the
> amounts varying from 6d. to 7s. The
> year 1314 is fuller in this respect and
> contains seven references:
>   Players, 1s.6d.; at Newton the King's
> Players, 4s.; the players of Sir E. Burnell,
> 3s.; players of Stephen de Estle, 6d.;
> Cressingham, a player, 6d.; players on Holy
> Trinity, 6s. 8d.
>   In 1328 we find players on the following
> feast days: Ascension, Epiphany, Easter,
> Nativity, and the day of the dedication of
> the Church. Also from about this time the
> players accompanying visiting nobility are
> mentioned as receiving rewards from
> the Prior. The rolls of 1354 and 1361
> contain no references whatever to this form
> of luxury, but by 1366 the normal
> asserts itself. Yet we see from the
> Hostilar's account of 1351 and the Precentor's
> account of 1354 that they were in the
> monastery.

Owing to the use of the word
'ministris' for minstrels or players, it was
at first thought that little was expended
in this channel after the Black Death.
There is, however, no doubt as to the
meaning of this word, the same feasts
occurring. Further, the minstrels of the
Earl of Suffolk attended regularly from
1366 to 1378, and there is frequent
mention of the 'ministris' of the Prince
they being called elsewhere 'players'...

Municipal documents:

References to payments to professional players in

Norwich municipal documents before the 1530s are

infrequent, though the following undated document is

calendared amongst fifteenth century materials: 'Petition

of the Mayor, Sheriffs, and others, to the Lords and

Commons, that an Act or Order be passed, to prevent

Players of Interludes from coming into the City; as they

took a large portion of the earnings of the poor operatives,

so as to cause great want to their families, and a heavy

charge to the City' - H.M.C. 1st Rept., Appendix, (London

1870) pp. 103-4. An assembly book of the Gild of St.

George records the following payment in 1449: 'In

histrionibus Dominorum, cum wavers xs.' (ibid. p. 104).

Records of payments to professionals in the sixteenth

century are very numerous, e.g. in the Chamberlains'

Accounts from 1534 to 1550 (printed by Wickham, Early

English Stages 2 (1) pp. 332-4) and in the Mayor's Court

Books from 1575 (printed by Murray, English Dramatic

Companies 2 pp. 335 ff.).

Records of civic drama in Norwich are unfortunately

very scanty, and late. The two versions of the Grocers'

Pageant of the Fall (cf. Chapter One, no. 31) and some

documentary references relating to it survive from the

period between the 1530's and the 1560's. For the

fifteenth century there is considerable evidence of

spectacular processions and shows in Norwich, and Nelson·

has recently reviewed this in The Medieval English Stage,

pp. 121-3. The Chamberlains' Accounts for 1469 give

details of quasi-dramatic shows on biblical subjects

prepared for the visit of Queen Elizabeth Woodville. For

this purpose the corporation employed one Parnell of Ipswich (q.v.), who was evidently well known as an entrepreneur in such things, for twelve days. The shows included giants, a representation of the Annunciation (with Gabriel played by a friar) and a pageant of the Visitation with an explanatory speech. The documents, which have not yet been printed in full, were summarized by Harrod in Norfolk Archaeology, 5 1859 pp. 32-7.

It is surprising to record that the only possible reference to a Corpus Christi play (as distinct from a procession) in Norwich in the fifteenth century occurs in J. Whetley's description to John Paston II of the Duke of Suffolk's behaviour at a manor court at Hellesdon, a Paston property just outside Norwich, in 1478:

> And as for Haylysdon, my lord of Suffolk
> was ther on Wednesday in Whytson weke,
> .....at hys beyng ther þat daye ther was
> neuer no man þat playd Herrod in
> Corpus Crysty play better and more agreable
> to hys pageaunt then he dud.
> (Davis, Paston Letters and Papers 2 p. 426)

The letter was 'Wryten at Norwych on Wednesday, Corpus Crysty Evyn', and this may obviously have prompted Whetley's comparison; nevertheless, he may have been using 'Corpus Christi play' generically, rather than with special reference to Norwich. Suffolk was at Hellesdon on May 13th, and Whetley wrote a week later, on the 20th.

Whetley's reference to Norwich plays is at best unconfirmed, and the earliest clear evidence for civic drama is much later, in a record of the assembly in 1527 at which the gild of St. Luke petitioned to be relieved of the entire responsibility for presenting pageants annually on Whit Monday and Tuesday; (Chambers, The Medieval Stage 2 p. 387. The text of another copy has recently been printed by Davis, Non-Cycle Plays pp. xxvii-viii). These Whitsun Pageants were described as 'divers disgisyngs and pageaunts as well of the lieffs and martyrdoms of divers and many hooly Saynts, as also many other light and feyned figurs and picturs of other persones and bests', and the gild found that they could no longer

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support the expense alone. They asked that 'every occupacion wythyn the seyd Citye maye yerly at the said procession ... sette forth one pageaunt', and the assembly agreed that 'one such pageaunt as shalbe assigned and appoynted by Master Mair and his brethern aldermen, as more playnly appereth in a boke thereof made' should be performed by each craft gild thereafter.

The book where the list of crafts and their pageants appears for the first time c. 1530 is the Norwich Corporation 'Old Free Book'. No earlier association of Norwich gilds and biblical plays is known, and the scope and nature of the cycle are eccentric:

> Creacion off the World - Paradyse -
> Helle Carte - Abell and Cayme -
> Noyse Shipp - Abraham and Isaak -
> Moises and Aron with the Children off
> Israell and Pharo with his knyghtes -
> Conflicte of Dauid and Golias -
> The Birth of Crist with Sheperdes, and
> iij Kynges off Colen - The Baptysme
> of Criste - The Resurreccion - The
> Holy Gost.
> (Davis, Non-Cycle Plays pp. xxix-xxx).

On the same page as this list is a much earlier (mid- to late fifteenth century) list of the gilds which processed on Corpus Christi Day, but there is no mention of a play, or pageants on biblical or any other subjects. Though this need not imply that such things never existed on Corpus Christi in fifteenth century Norwich, there is obviously the possibility that the Whitsun Pageants reconstituted c. 1530 were an entirely new departure.

The Norwich 'Grocers' Book' records the gild's participation in both the Corpus Christi procession and the Whitsun Pageants for a number of years from 1534 to the mid-1560's (Davis, Non-Cycle Plays pp. xxxi-xxxvi), and it is clear that two distinct occasions are involved. The Whitsun Pageant of the Fall was mounted on a wagon, and the detailed accounts for props and payments to actors in 1534 (Davis, p. xxxii f.), and an inventory of 1565 (Davis, p. xxxv) relate directly to the surviving texts of the play. Of particular interest is the payment made in 1534 'to Sir Stephyn Prowet for makyng of a new ballet'.

This man, who was a parish priest in Norwich, had already been employed at Bungay (q.v.) in 1526 to copy a 'game book'. The payment he received from the Grocers was relatively small (12d.), but it comes very shortly after the petition for the reorganization of the Whitsun Pageants in 1527, and may be a further shred of evidence that the Norwich cycle of plays appeared only in the sixteenth century.

(31). Ormesby, Nf.

The fifteenth century play-fragment Dux Moraud is copied on the back of an early fourteenth century legal document referring to judge William Ormesby, of Ormesby; cf. Chapter One, no. 7, for further details.

(32). Ringstead, Nf.
Snettisham Churchwardens' Accounts:
1475 - 'for Rynstew game   ijd'
Wright, Thesis p. 62.
L'Estrange family (Hunstanton) accounts (cf. no. 19):
1519 - 'to ye Lorde of Crystmasse at Ryngstede   iiijd.'
Gurney, Archaeologia 25 1834 p. 422.

(33). Sandringham, Nf.
Snettisham Churchwardens' Accounts:
1494 - 'payd for costys of sryng. game   vd.'
        'payd at sryng. game   xiiijd.'
Wright, Thesis p. 63.

(34). Shelfhanger, Nf.
Thetford Priory Register:
1508/9 - 'to Schelfangere pley   iiijd.'
C.U.L. Add. 6969 f. 90v.

(35). Shipdham, Nf.
B.L. Add. Ms. 23009 contains nineteenth century extracts from sixteenth century parish records:
1532 - 'Recd. of the Crismas Lord...   xvijs.'
        'Recd. of Richard Taylor gamens money vijs. vjd.'

1535 - 'In the time of Crystmas to the game players vjd.'
1564 - 'Pd. for gate posts and hinges of the
          Camping Land   ijs. ixd.'
Wright, Thesis pp. 226-7.

(36). Snettisham, Nf.

Churchwardens' Accounts 1468-1581:

1468 - 'payd for cost of Bircham game   xiiijd.'

1475 - 'for Rynstew [Ringstead] game   ijd.'

1484 - 'for costys of ye plays   ixd.'

1488 - 'for costys of dockyng game   iid.'

1489 - 'payd for costys of Walsynton [Walsingham]
          game   vd.'

1494 - 'payd for costys of sryng. [Sandringham]
          game   vd.'
        'payd at sryng. game   xiiijd.'

Wright, Thesis pp. 62-3.

(37). Thetford.

     C.U.L. Add. Ms. 6969 is one of several surviving
registers from the Cluniac Priory at Thetford, and it gives
remarkably detailed lists of expenditure on such things as
provisions, the upkeep of the priory's fabric, its estates
and entertainment. J.P. Collier extracted and published
a number of records of payments to entertainers between
the 1490's and 1540 whilst the manuscript was still in
private hands. These have often been quoted, e.g. (with
some suspicion) by Chambers, The Medieval Stage 2 pp. 245-6.
The references to plays, players, minstrels and other
entertainers are more numerous than Collier indicated.
Only those giving direct reference to drama are
reproduced here, though two payments to a gild at Croxton
(q.v.) are included for their possible relevance to
playing there. These appear to be the only payments made
by the Priory to a village gild.

At the priory:

1499   - 'menstrellys and pleyerys in festo
              Epiphanie   iis.' f.20v.

1500/1   - 'lusoribus in crystemesse   xijd.' f.37v.

1502/3   - 'lusoribus   xxd.' f.52r.

1503/4 -	'lusoribus partem xd. receptum	xd.	
	lusoribus domini principis	xxd.'	f.58v.
	'lusoribus	viijd.'	f.59v.
1505/6 -	'hominis ludentis cum puero	xijd.'	f.70r.
	'diversis lusoribus in tempore		
	Nat. domini	iijs. ixd.'	f.71r.
	'lusoribus domini principis	xxd.	
1506/7 -	lusoribus et menstrellis	xvijd.'	f.77v.
1508/9 -	'lusoribus ad duas vices	iijs. iiijd.'	f.89v.
1509/10-	'diversis lusoribus	ijs. viijd.'	f.95r.
1510/11-	'lusoribus diversis	iiijs. ivd.'	f.100r.
1511/12-	'to pleyerys in Crystemesse	iiijs.	
	histrionibus in diverca...[illeg.]xxijd.'		f.105r.
1512/13-	'to pleyerys	xiijd.'	f.110r.
1516/17-	'diversis lusoribus	vs.	f.128r.
1518/19-	lusoribus et le harpyrys	xvjd.	f.132v.
	Congyshende cum socijs suis		
	coram me ludentibus	iiijs.	f.133r.
	Magistro Congeshende vices Coram		
	domini Regis	xs.'	f.133v.
1519/20-	'jocatoribus	ijs.	
	jocatoribus cum adiutorio		
	conventus	ijs.'	f.139v.
1520/1 -	'jocatoribus cum adiutorio		
	conventus	ijs.'	f.147r.
1521/2 -	'jocatoribus in tempore Natale		
	domini	xxd.	
	jocatoribus	ijs.	
	thome Ballys et Willelmo freman		
	jocatoribus	viijd.'	f.154r.
	'jocatoribus Regine francisce	ijs.'	f.154v.
1522/3 -	'jocatores in tempore Natale domini		
	cum auxilio Conventus	xxd.	
	jocatoribus in Natale domini cum		
	auxilio conventus	xxd.'	f.161r.
1524/5 -	'jocatoribus cum adiutorio conventus	xd.'	f.175r.
1525/6 -	'lusoribus cum auxilio conventus	xxd.'	f.180v.
	'lusoribus cum auxilio		
	conventus	ijs. viijd.'	f.181r.
1526/7 -	'jocatoribus cum adiutorio conventus ijs.		
	to iiij playerys in die epiphanie	xxd.'	f.197v.
	'jocatoribus Domini Regis	vjs. viijd.'	f.198v.
1527/8 -	'jocatoribus Regine francisce	ijs. ixd.	
	partem, auxilio conventus'		f.205v.
	'to the kyngys pleyerys	xxd.'	f.207r.
1528/9 -	'jocatoribus Regine	xijd.'	f.211v.
	'jocatoribus cum auxilio conventus	ijs.	
	jocatoribus cum auxilio		
	conventus	iijs. iiijd.'	f.212r.

1529/30- 'jocatoribus cum auxilio conventus   ijs.'
          "   "   "   "   "
          "   "   "   "   "   f.219r.
         'jocatoribus Domini Barneys cum
          auxilio conventus   iijs. iiijd.
          le pleyarys Domini markys   xijd.
          jocatoribus Domini Ducis Norffolciae
          cum adiutorio conventus   vjs. viijd.' f.219v.

1530/1 - 'pro ludo in tempore natale Domini
          cum adiutorio conventus   iijs. iiijd.' f.225v.
         'jocatoribus Domini comitis de
          Derby   iis.' f.226r.

1531/2 - 'to the kyngys playerys   vs.' f.231r.

1532/3 - 'le playerys Domini regis cum
          auxilio conventus   vs.' f.238r.
         'jocatoribus Domini ducis Suffolciae
                                      iijs. iiijd.' f.239v.

1533/4 - 'jocatoribus Domini derby   xijd.
          jocatoribus de Wyndam [Wymondham] ijs.
          jocatoribus de Spaldyng [Lincs.]   ijs.' f.245r.
         'to the kyngys pleyerys   vs.' f.245v.

1534/5 - 'jocatoribus cum auxilio conventus iiijs.' f.251r.

1535/6 - 'jocatoribus Domini regis   vs.' f.257r.
         'jocatoribus Domini ducis
          norffolciae   iiis. iiijd.' f.258v.

1536/7 - 'playarys   ijs. viijd.' f.265r.

1537/8 - 'jocatoribus seruis Domini comitis
          le Darby   xvjd. f.271r.
         'jocatoribus Domini prevyccall
                                      iijs. iiijd.
              [Lord Privy Seal]
          jocatoribus ...ewynam [illeg.]   ijs.' f.272r.
         'jocatoribus domini regis   vs.' f.272v.
         'jocatoribus Domini Fywatyr comitis ijs.' f.273v.

1538/9 - 'jocatoribus domini
          schamberlain   iijs. iiijd.' f.278v.
         'jocatoribus domini ducis Suffolciae xxd.
         'jocatoribus domini principis   vs.' f.280r.
         'jocatoribus domini fyvewarys   xxd.
          jocatoribus domini comitis de derby xxd.' f.281r.

1539/40- 'jocatoribus domini regis   vs.' f.287r.
         'jocatoribus domini cancellarii,
          domini regis   iijs. iiijd.' f.287v.
         'jocatoribus   xijd.' f.288r.

In the town:

St. Cuthbert's Parish:

1510/11- 'to the pley in sent Cutberd parish ijs.' f.101r.

Holy Trinity Parish:

1521/2 - 'ad ludum sancti trinitatis   xd.' f.145r.

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Neighbouring communities:

1504/5 - 'to lopham game   viijd.' f.66r.

1505/6 - 'to the pley of Myldenale   xijd.' f.70r.
         'to Berdewell game   xijd.
          to Walsham game et Gyslyngham   xvjd.' f.72r.
         'to the gylde of Crokeston   xxd.' f.76r.

1508/9 - 'to Ixworth pley   xvjd.
          to Schelfangere pley   iiijd.' f.90v.

1524/5 - 'ad ludum fynchyngfeld [Essex]   xijd.' f.173r.
         'ad Gildam de croxston   xijd.' f.173v.

1533/4 - 'jocatoribus de Wyndam [Wymondham]   ijs.
          jocatoribus de Spaldyng [Lincs.]   ijs.' f.245r.

(38). Tilney, Nf.

Churchwardens' Accounts, All Saints parish:

1487 - 'pro quatuor luditoribus in tempore
         Nativitatis   vjd.'

1499 - 'Solutum luditoribus in die Epiphanie viijd.'

Stallard, Churchwardens' Accounts of Tilney pp. 66, 83.

(39). Walberswick, Sf.

Churchwardens' Accounts:

1493 - 'payd for bred and drynk qwen
         Wenyston [Wenhaston] game was
         schowyd here   iijd.'

1497 - 'payd qwhen brownfeld [Bramfield]
         game was schewed here   iiijd.'

Lewis, Walberswick Churchwardens' Accounts pp. 68, 71.

(40,41). Walsham-le-Willows, Sf.

Thetford Priory Register:

1505/6 - 'to Walsham game et Gyslyngham   xvjd.'

C.U.L. Add. 6969 f.72r. Gislingham (41) lies about five
miles east of Walsham.

Some time in the second decade of the sixteenth century
a 'game-place' specially appointed for outdoor dramatic
performances was built near the church at Walsham. It had
a central circular platea bounded by a ditch and a bank;
see K.M. Dodd, 'Another Elizabethan Theatre in the Round',
Shakespeare Quarterly 21 1970. (The East Anglian 'theatre-
in-the-round' is discussed in detail in the next two
chapters).

(42). <u>Walsingham</u>, Nf.

Snettisham Churchwardens' Accounts:

1489 - 'payd for costys of Walsynton game   vd.'
Wright, Thesis p. 63.   Cf. also Burtt, <u>Proceedings of</u>
<u>the Archaeological Institute</u> 1847 pp. 142-56.

(43). <u>Wenhaston</u>, Sf.

Walberswick Churchwardens' Accounts:

1493 - 'payd for bred and drynk qwen
        Wenyston game was schowyd here   iijd.'
Lewis, <u>Walberswick Churchwardens' Accounts</u> p. 68.

(44). <u>Wymondham</u>, Nf.

Thetford Priory Register:

1533/4 - 'jocatoribus de Wyndam   ijs.'
C.U.L. Add. 6969 f. 245r.

     The Wymondham annual 'Watch and Play' was clearly a
local event of major importance when Kett's rebellion
broke out there on July 1st. 1549. 'According to
Alexander Neville, the "ludi ac spectacula ... antiquitus
ita instituta" lasted two days and nights; according to
Holinshed, "one day and one night at least"'; Chambers,
<u>The Medieval Stage</u> 2 p. 398.

     The Kett family figure prominently in a set of accounts
of the 'husbands for the wache and play of Wymondham'
printed by Carthew (<u>Norfolk Archaeology</u> 9 1884 pp. 145-7)
from a loose paper dated 1538, once in Wymondham church
chest, now lost. Payments included:

       'ijs. vjd. for vj. li. of serpentyn powder
       xxjd. for iij. li. of pyle powder
       vijd. for di ml of sadellers nayle
       xvjd. for di reme of whight paper
       ijd. ob. for j. li. of glewe
       iijd. for foyle
       ijd. for bowstrings
       vd. for pakthrede
       vjd. in expenses for man and horse byeng
       the seid ware
       iijd. for bred and ale at the recordying the
       play
       jd. to John mannyng for a pece of asche for
       splentur
       ijd. to a man ryvyng the same spletur for
       the gyant

xixd. to Mr. Cusyng for canvas to the same
gyant
ijd. to John Usher cuttyng the clothyng of
the same gyant
ijs. iiijd. to Thomas Wennok werkyng the
same gyant
iijd. for pak thred and bowstring to the same
iiijs. for blew and red bokehm for ij vice cots
iiijs. to the trumpeters servyng the weche and
play
iiijs. viijd. to the mynstrales the revels and
dancers
xd. for canvas for a cote armor to John
Amyas'

. . .
'iiijd. to Thomas Chylderhowse for a payer
of devyls shoes'

. . .
'viijd. to William Garrard gravyng flaggs
and werkyng in the ...
iiijd. to Robert ludborugh werkyng in the
same place by ...
xd. to John Newman makyng the harthys
in the same place
ijs. viijd. for cariage of tymber cleye
flaggs and for old peces of tymber
xvjd. to William Kett for old tymber to
lay over the vulte
ixd. to Thomas Bell werkyng in the same
place by ij days'
. . .

This last group of six entries, for which Carthew's copy
appears to have been partly illegible, is of unusual
interest in that it indicates that Wymondham perhaps had a
game-place (cf. nos. 40, 45) designed for spectacular
effects. Further payments are:

'xijs. to Thomas Parker servyng the properties
of the play
xvjd. to William Cowper for flesche to the
pleyers.'

(45). Yarmouth

Borough Court Rolls:

1445/6 - 'solutum histrionibus comitis Suffolciae
in dono et expensis   vs. viijd.'

1492/3 - 'Henricus Ilberd pro lez Tentys [i.e.
scaffolds] iuxta le gameplace   iiijd'

Wright, Thesis pp. 139, 140.

1531/2 - 'vjs. datis in regard ludatoribus
domini Regis Ducis Suffolciae Trumpettes
berewardes et aliis forinsecis regardis
hoc anno   summa xls'.

1532/3 - 'paid in fees to the King's players,
          trumpets, bearwards etc. 18.0.0' [sic].
1533/4 -   - do. -

Murray, English Dramatic Companies 2 p. 286.

1540/1 - 'Et quod ... Henricus Skott, gampleyer,
          (and others) sunt alieni et custodent
          opellas ...' etc.

1563/4 - 'Super Reginaldum Turpyn pro firma de la
          Game place house hoc anno   vs.'

Wright, Thesis pp. 143, 144.

'Old Church Accounts':

'In 1473 and 1486 are mentioned plays on Corpus Christi
day; in 1489, a play at Bartholomew tide; in 1493, a
game played on Christmas day'. Chambers, The Medieval
Stage 2 p. 399, after Bolingbroke, Norfolk Archaeology 11
1892 p. 335.

Book of Entries:

1538/9: An indenture of this year between the assembly
and commonality of Yarmouth and Robert Copping, extracted
in Wickham, Early English Stages 2 (1) p. 166, reproduced
in full by Wright, Thesis pp. 141-3, from which the
following extracts are taken. (Note: the versions of
the part of the document reproduced by both Wickham and
Wright differ in several ways, and Wickham's readings
have been used here):

          '[the municipality] have granted, dimised
          and letten to ferme to the same Robert
          Coppyng and to his assign a certeyn garden
          lyeng on the sowthe syde of the parsonage
          gardeyn, extendyng in lenght by the same
          parsonage wall xxxv foote, and in brede
          xxj foote; and it abuttith upon the town
          wall agaynst the est, together with a
          certeyn howse calde the game place,
          to have and to hold ... etc.'

          '...the said Robert and his assigns shall
          permitt and suffre all suche players
          and ther audiens to have the plesure
          and ese of the said hous and gameplace,
          att all suche tyme and tymes as any
          interludes or playes ther shal be ministered
          or played at any tyme, withought eny
          profight therof by hym or by his assigns
          to be taken.'

1542 - '[several citizens] shall by ther advyces
            certifie unto the next assemble here the
            necessary course and ronne of dyverse
            noysome gutters, commyng down fro
            Hildegate into the Gameplace dyke ...etc.'
Wright, Thesis p. 143.

Chamberlains' Book:

1543/4 - 'ijs. payd to ye prensys players ye
            xxx day of october'

            'iijs. iijd. payd to my lord prewy sell
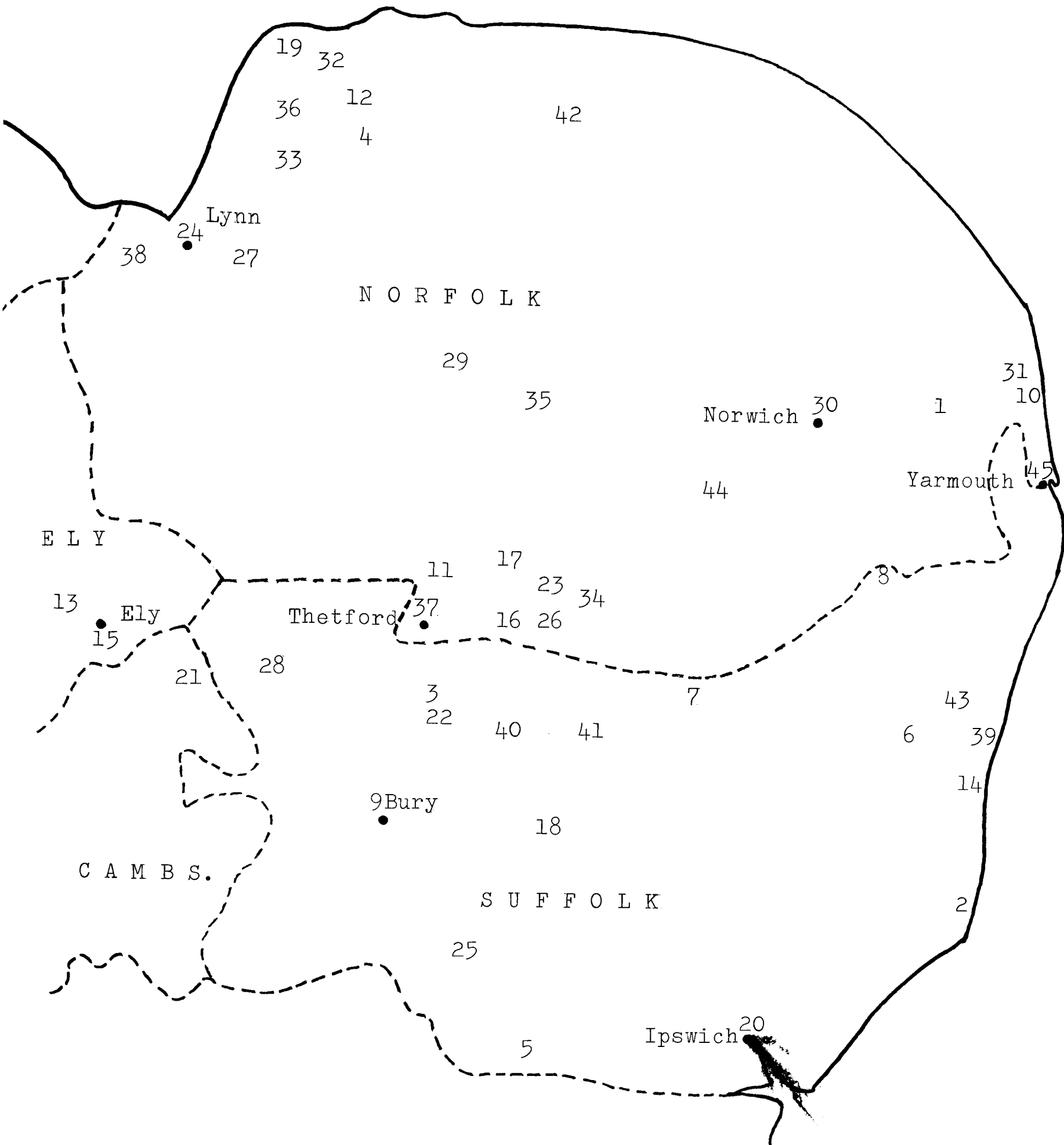   gamplayers ye xvj day of februaria'
Wright, Thesis p. 144.

Assembly Book:

1557 - ' Also at that assemblye yt was agreyd
            that my lorde of Norfolkys pleyarsse
            sholde have for a rewarde   xxs.'
Wright, Thesis p. 144.

        The accompanying map presents the topographical
features of the foregoing survey in two-dimensional form.
Because of the arbitrary and erratic ways in which the
records have survived this cannot be taken at face value.
For instance, the picture would be very materially
altered if the Thetford Register had not survived - this
would entail the removal of seven points of reference on
the Norfolk-Suffolk border (37, 3, 22, 26, 28, 40, 41).
A similar north-west Norfolk cluster (4, 12, 32, 33, 36, 42)
would be lost if the Snettisham Churchwardens' Accounts
were missing. If, on the other hand, a register from
every East Anglian religious house and churchwardens'
accounts from every parish had survived coverage would
probably be very dense. If the Thetford and Snettisham
areas were at all typical it would appear that most
communities in rural East Anglia either put on plays
themselves or supported performances in neighbouring
settlements at some time between the fourteenth and mid-
sixteenth centuries.

        This tendency for neighbouring communities in well
populated rural areas to support one anothers' dramatic
activities was probably widespread in East Anglia, and
there is also evidence of it in other east midland counties.
There is no way of knowing, however, what the nature of

160

19

32

36

12

4

33

Lynn

24

38

27

N O R F O L K

29

35

Norwich 30

31

10

1

44

Yarmouth 45

E L Y

8

13

17

11

23

34

Ely

Thetford 37

16 26

15

28

21

3

22

40   41

7

43

6   39

14

9 Bury

18

C A M B S.

S U F F O L K

2

25

Ipswich 20

5

Map 5

Documentary Records of Plays and Playing in East Anglia

the various mid-Anglian village 'games' to which
Thetford Priory contributed was. They may easily have
been quite large scale affairs. In 1505/6 the Priory
contributed to a 'game' at two nearby Suffolk villages,
Walsham-le-Willows and Gislingham (40, 41), and the fact
that Walsham is known to have had a circular 'game-place'
of the sort indicated in the Castle of Perseverance
staging diagram[2] gives pause for thought - especially as
Professor McIntosh locates the scribal origin of the
present Castle text in the same neighbourhood.[3]

The idea of relatively small settlements in a densely
populated rural area putting on plays by gathering
contributions from surrounding villages, and perhaps
having purpose built game-places in which to perform
them, seems to me an important factor in any assessment
of the East Anglian drama; it may well also bear on the
origins of some of the texts dealt with in the first four
chapters. If Thetford and Snettisham documents suggest
one side of this pattern, those from Wymondham and Bungay
perhaps indicate the other. The annual Wymondham (44)
watch and play appears to have been a large scale mid-
summer event at which people from the surrounding country-
side gathered, and which achieved momentary notoriety in
1549 when Kett's Rebellion broke out there. The pattern
at Bungay (8) may well have been similar, and the
documents refer to a group of women detailed off to
collect money from incomers; in return the organizers
supplied large quantities of food and drink at the
performance. The accounts of the actual plays at both
Wymondham and Bungay include the purchase of gunpowder.
East Anglian rural audiences evidently had a taste for
spectacular effects, and this may also be reflected in
the sensational incidents involving fire and explosions
in the Castle of Perseverance, the Play of the Sacrament
and Mary Magdalene.

One particularly full illustration of the exact
arrangements for large-scale rural playing occurs just
outside East Anglia proper, in connexion with the village
of Bassingbourn in south Cambridgeshire. A volume of

churchwardens' accounts show in detail the logistics of
a play of St. George given in a 'croft' at the village
on Sunday 20th July 1511, the holiday continuing on the
Monday and the Tuesday. Twenty-seven nearby villages
made financial contributions.[4] The funds were in the
hands of the Bassingbourn churchwardens, who disbursed
sums to people in the village who brewed and prepared
food for those coming to the performance from outside.
The accompanying sketch shows how these contributory
communities lay in relation to Bassingbourn (B).
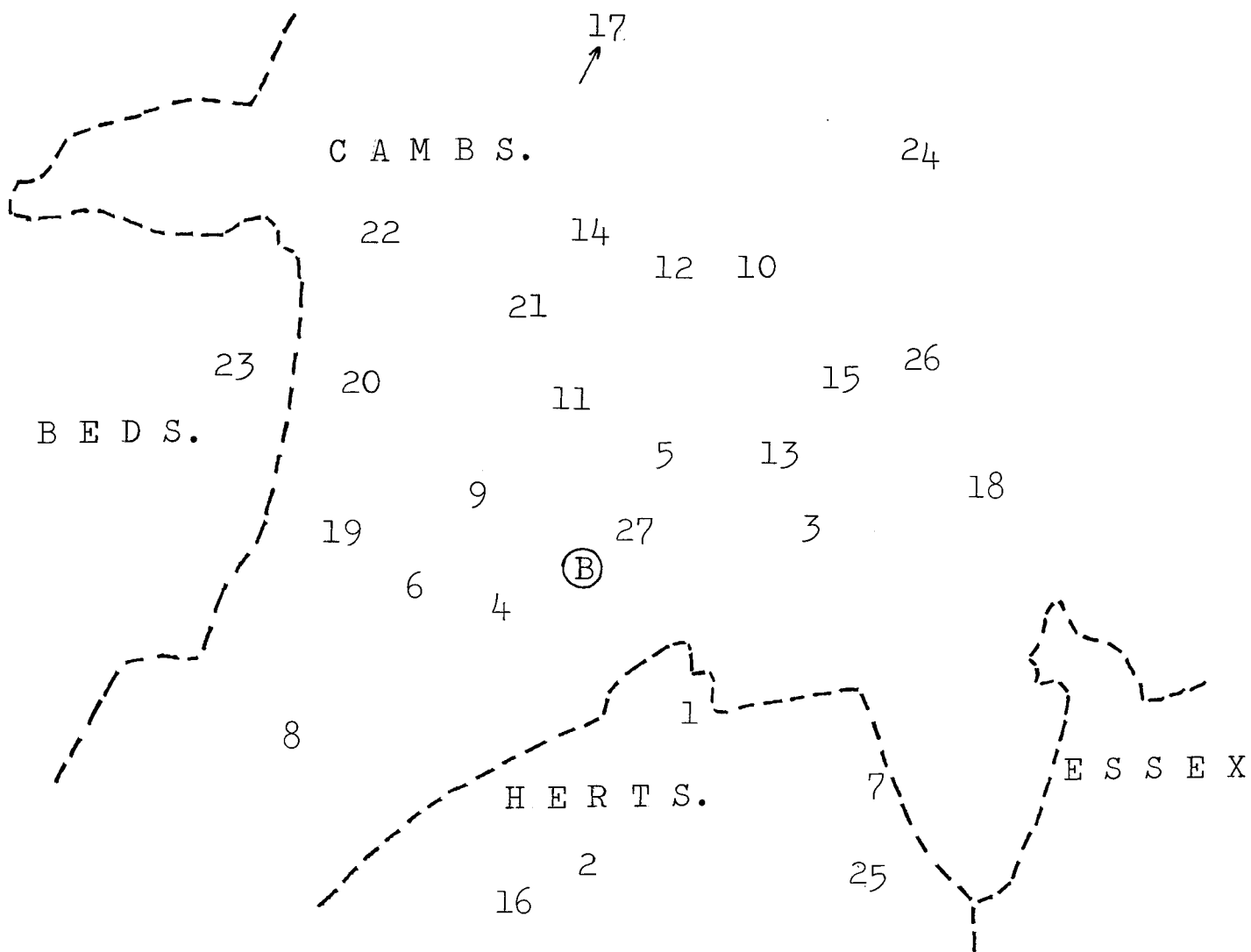
The churchwardens also made payments for services directly
connected with the play itself. A 'brotherhood priest'
(perhaps the director) was paid 2/6d. for 'beryng the
playe booke', and a 'garment man' received 15/2d. for
garments, properties and play books. A 'croft' near the
church was hired to play in, and there are payments in
connexion with the setting up of 'stages'. Comparable
sets of accounts have survived from Braintree and
Heybridge, Essex.[5]

    East Anglian parish plays formed a significant variety

of dramatic activity in the area in the fifteenth and
early to mid-sixteenth centuries. Their content must
remain largely a matter for speculation. Nearby in the
east midlands some are mentioned as saints' plays (St.
George, Bassingbourn; St. Eustace, Braintree), but they
could also be moralities - the Acle churchwarden's
commonplace-book (1) contains a speech from such a play.
Robert Reynys's book also hints at the association
between parish drama and village gilds; the Wymondham
(44) 'Watch and Play Society' documents were found
associated with several volumes of gild records in the
church chest, and Bassingbourn, as we have just seen,
employed a gild chaplain from the parish as régisseur.
Thetford Priory's payments to the gild at Croxton (11)
in the early sixteenth century are exceptional amongst
that set of accounts, and may hint at the performance of
a play in the village - conceivably the Sacrament play in
the Dublin manuscript.

Other forms of East Anglian dramatic activity call
for less comment, as the documents set out above speak
largely for themselves. In many cases the scantiness of
the evidence severely limits the conclusions which can be
offered. Evidence for the Corpus Christi play in Norfolk
and Suffolk is, for instance, surprisingly thin. Norwich
(30) apparently had processional pageants representing a
variety of subjects before the late 1520's, but their
exact content, and the extent to which they were dramatic
is unknown. The scope of the cycle of plays given in
various years between about 1530 and the 1560's is also
eccentric. Bury (9), Ipswich (20) and Lynn (24) also
show indications of plays given on Corpus Christi day,
but again the content is doubtful and there is at present
no way of knowing whether performances on the same scale
as those of the northern cycles were staged.

The payment of professional travelling players by
both municipal and conventual bodies is common throughout
the period studied, appearing as early as the fourteenth
century in Norwich Cathedral Priory accounts (30) and
persisting until the Dissolution at Thetford Priory (37).

Civic payments to visiting professionals begin as early as the fourteenth century (Lynn, 24). The burden of supporting travelling troupes had become so heavy at some stage in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries that Norwich (30) was forced to petition the government to limit their activities. Yarmouth (45) had a 'game-place' under civic control as early as 1492, and by 1538 documents refer to a permanent structure associated with plays and playing built on or near the site. This could be the earliest reference to a purpose-built and commercially run theatre in England.

An interesting feature of the drama in East Anglia from the documentary point of view is the evidence of co-operation between various places. This could involve the hiring of local men noted for their skill in writing or setting up plays and pageants. An example of the latter is the Parnell of Ipswich hired by Norwich for the Elizabeth Woodville pageants in 1469 (30); a family of that name are known to have been directly concerned with staging performances at Ipswich itself (20). A similar example is Stephen Prewett, the Norwich priest perhaps responsible for an early version of the Grocers' Pageant, who was hired to write in connexion with a play at Bungay in 1526 (30, 8). Bungay borrowed costumes at various time from as far afield as Yarmouth, Norwich and Wymondham.

The records of plays and playing surviving from East Anglia represent, it appears, a fair conspectus of the varieties of drama once common in the area, though the documents themselves are generally uncommunicative about the exact sort of play which they record. Speculation attempting to connect these documentary records in any precise way with the surviving East Anglian plays is surely otiose at this stage. For the time being it is necessary to keep the discussion fairly open, and for this reason I have chosen to examine in detail in the next two chapters first the background in dramatic

tradition, and then the documentary and textual evidence from East Anglia for scaffold-and-place playing (or as it is popularly known, 'theatre in the round') in the area.

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CHAPTER SIX

SCAFFOLD-AND-PLACE PLAYING IN LATER MEDIEVAL
EAST ANGLIA - THE BACKGROUND IN DRAMATIC,
LITERARY AND ARTISTIC TRADITION

The purpose of this concluding pair of chapters is to show one of the ways in which the kind of evidence gathered in the preceding pages may be exploited. They deal with a particular technique of staging plays and a distinctive type of dramaturgy which I believe prevailed in East Anglia during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Within the East Anglian group of plays identified in the course of Chapter Four lies a subdivision including the Castle of Perseverance, parts of the 'N-Town' compilation (most notably the two Passion plays), the Play of the Sacrament and Mary Magdalene. It has been suggested elsewhere that these pieces must have had in common a distinctive pattern of staging, perhaps being played in a formal structure, popularly known as a 'theatre in the round', but almost certainly involving a number of scaffolds (loci) disposed around an unlocalised playing place (platea). The audience are thought to have stood or sat, conceivably on earthen banks around the periphery of this playing area which would naturally often have been circular.[1]

One is readily struck by the mutual resemblances amongst the East Anglian texts just mentioned, both in their explicit and their 'sunken' indications of mise-en-scène. Taken as a group like this they begin to have something in common with the well-documented Cornish tradition in the same period - the Ordinalia cycle, Beunans Meriasek (with their manuscript staging diagrams) and the 'earthen amphitheatres' or plans-an-gwary (= playing places).[2]

What has not been suggested before is that this sub-group of East Anglian plays may be the fragmentary survivals of a once widespread pattern of staging in the east. Taken as a group they offer the best chance we have of recovering a theatrical tradition distinctively different from the 'processional' staging thought to have been used for the Corpus Christi Cycles and other plays in the north. And the East Anglian texts share not only

instructive resemblances amongst themselves, but also have important affiliations with the Cornish tradition just mentioned and with other kinds of theatrical, literary, artistic and documentary evidence from both England and the Continent.[3]

A key text in the East Anglian tradition is naturally the Castle of Perseverance, with its important staging diagram and internal evidence of mise-en-scène, and this will be given particular treatment in the next chapter. It may be mentioned here, however, in connexion with a wider problem regarding East Anglian scaffold-and-place staging. Until recently there was no known evidence of the existence in medieval East Anglia of any formal structure of the type suggested by the Castle diagram. This was not only true of Norfolk and Suffolk, but also of England as a whole[4] - a state of affairs which stands in marked contrast to the situation in Cornwall, where both the plays and the 'earthen amphitheatres' in which they were performed are amply documented. However, the case for the East Anglian 'theatre in the round' has recently been materially augmented by K.M. Dodd's discovery of a purpose-built circular 'game-place' at the village of Walsham-le-Willows, in northern Suffolk.[5] Walsham was and still is a very small settlement, and it is quite surprising that it should have had a permanent structure of the 'theatre in the round' type. What is perhaps more significant is that the villagers would scarcely have been likely to conceive of and build such a structure in total isolation. The circulation of texts like the Castle, Mary Magdalene, the 'N-Town' plays and the Sacrament in the same area at the same time is certainly strong presumptive evidence that the Walsham theatre was not an isolated phenomenon. It must have been but one instance of a more widely diffused East Anglian pattern.

The suggestion that 'earthen amphitheatres' or at least circular scaffold-and-place theatres may once have been a quite common feature of the East Anglian landscape receives some support from an unexpected (and hitherto

unnoticed) source, John Capgrave's description of Rome
in his <u>Solace of Pilgrims</u>.[6]   Capgrave was probably born
at and certainly spent most of his life in King's Lynn,
but in 1450 undertook a pilgrimage to Rome, and whilst
there made notes about the numerous monuments of the
city which he later worked into a kind of guide book for
pilgrims.   In the course of his account Capgrave takes
the opportunity to mention the theatres of ancient Rome:

> These emperoures eke had certeyn
> places whech þei clepid <u>theatra</u> and
> þat soundith in our tunge a place in
> whech men stand to se pleyis or
> wrestilingis or swech oþir exercises of
> myth or of solace. Summe of þese
> places wer called <u>ampheatrum</u> þat was
> a place all round swech as we haue her
> in þis lond, summe wer called <u>theatrum</u>
> and þat was a place was lich half a sercle
> of whech þere were uii in rome.[7]

The distinction between the two types of Roman theatre
derives ultimately from a definition by Isidore of Seville,
repeated frequently in the later Middle Ages: 'Amphi-
theatrum rotundum est, theatrum vero ex medio amphitheatro
est semicirculi figuram habens'.[8] Capgrave's additions to
this definition are most interesting. He was clearly
familiar with the 'place all round' as a theatrical
reality in the England of his own day, but this is of
no assistance to him when he comes to account for the
Colosseum later in his description. There is no suggestion
that it was ever an amphitheatre. Instead, Capgrave
quotes the views of conflicting authorities about the
purpose of the structure, and himself inclines to the
view that it was a temple to the sun and moon, originally
roofed, with a large statue of Phoebus Apollo in the
midst.[9]

Capgrave's familiarity with the notion of a native
English 'theatre in the round' is obviously important
for any account of early theatrical structures. It is,
in fact, the earliest direct non-dramatic testimony we
have to the prevalence of this form of staging in England,
and it is probably significant that it comes from a
fifteenth century East Anglian.

The independent discoveries of the medieval play
texts from East Anglia, the purpose-built 'theatre in
the round' at Walsham-le-Willows and Capgrave's casual
testimony to the form offers something of a new departure
for the study of the medieval theatre in England in
general, and in Norfolk and Suffolk in particular. But
before turning in detail to the East Anglian texts it
is necessary to review a body of evidence which makes it
clear that there were widespread, dramatic, literary and
artistic traditions which involved the recognition of
circular structures (or at least circular configurations)
of a symbolic nature specially designed for theatrical
or quasi-theatrical use. Some of the earliest evidence
is in the form of drama itself: the Tegernsee
Antichristus (c. 1160) could well have been an outdoor
production involving loci disposed around a circular
platea which is crossed and re-crossed in the course of
symbolic conflicts. I also believe that the twelfth
century Anglo-Norman play La Seinte Resureccion was
probably staged 'in the round' and that current
reconstructions of its mise-en-scène fail to recognize
that it is the first example of a form of staging which
was to become common in England, especially in Cornwall
and East Anglia.

Other pieces of evidence from medieval art and non-
dramatic literature may be brought forward, though with
the qualification that their direct bearing on theatrical
tradition per se is distinctly limited. For instance,
the 'theatre' designed by Theseus in the Knight's Tale,
the 'topography' of Winner and Waster and the setting
involving the Tower of Truth, the Field of Folk and the
Deep Dale which opens Piers Plowman all offer striking
fourteenth century allusions which draw on the image of
the 'theatre in the round'. The same is true of
pictorial allusions to the form, especially Jean Fouquet's
miniatures of the Martyrdom of St. Apollonia and the
Rape of the Sabine Women, which seem to me to subsume
theatrical features into the wider concerns of pictorial
design, rather than merely reproducing in two-dimensional

form a convenient illustration of a scaffold-and-place performance.

It would also be premature to open the matter of the 'theatre in the round' in East Anglia without a precise estimate of the significance of the Cornish evidence, which is at present fuller, of earlier origin and more exact than our present knowledge of the eastern tradition.

II

Crowd Configurations and Playing Places -
The Circle as a Medieval Cultural Symbol.

A configuration in which spectators gather themselves in a circle to witness an event is both a primitive or pre-literary phenomenon as well as a natural piece of human behaviour which enables the maximum number of people to see what occurs. The space defined by the circle suddenly becomes 'set apart', and what goes on within - a children's game, a ritual, a circus or a play is felt by the onlookers to have become somehow removed from real life, and to be a little world in its own right, with different rules of conduct, and different expectations about what may occur. It does not appear to matter that the spectators can see one another across the circle; the space defined is, as a recent study has it, a cercle magique.[10]

All this is commonly observable fact, and its bearing on the development of the medieval 'theatre in the round' in England need not be laboured. Richard Carew (1555-1620), who first described the 'earthen amphitheatres' in which the Cornish Ordinalia and other plays were staged, followed his description of the plan-an-gwary with an account of other Cornish pastimes, including wrestling:

> For performing this play, [_sc_. wrestling]
> the beholders cast themselves in a ring,
> which they call, Making a place: into
> the empty middle space whereof, the two
> champion wrastlers step forth...[11]

As far as Carew and the practitioners of both the Cornish
drama and popular sports were concerned there was no
formal distinction in the way in which the audiences
disposed themselves for the two differing purposes.
Both activities can naturally be described as 'play', but
of particular interest is the terminology used to describe
the playing area. Forming a ring for wrestling was known
as 'making a place' and of course 'place' or _platea_,
= 'unlocalised acting area', is an important term in the
language of the medieval theatre from at least as early
as the twelfth century in England, finding its most
widespread recorded use in the Cornish and East Anglian
plays of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

From the earliest recorded period in England
popular ludic activities and their 'place' have been
linked semantically with formal theatrical tradition.
The notion of a special area set aside for the purposes
of popular recreation in a settlement or community is of
considerable antiquity. It emerges clearly in the pre-
Conquest period with the later Anglo-Saxon glosses on
the Latin words for 'theatre' and 'amphitheatre',
plega-hus and _plega-stow_,[12] and whilst it is clear that
the former corresponded to nothing in reality during the
period, the frequent appearance of the latter as a
toponymic in England shows that playing-places were
familiar features of the village landscape. Like Capgrave
attempting a later 'elucidation' of the Isidorean
definition mentioned above, the Anglo-Saxon glossators
cast about to find a genuine contemporary equivalent for
amphitheatre, rather than relying on the confused and
obscure allusions to the ancient Roman forms in the
Latin dictionaries themselves.[13]

Carew's description of the Cornish playing places
relates directly to Capgrave's earlier supposition that
the Roman amphitheatre was 'a place all round swech as

we haue her in þis lond', and his reference in the same
passage to the theatre as a place where men 'stand to
se pleyis or wrestilingis' and similar activities. The
observations of both Carew and Capgrave bear in turn upon
the other piece of newly discovered evidence about the
medieval 'theatre in the round' in East Anglia, the
game-place at Walsham-le-Willows. As the documents
printed by Dodd show, the site on which the theatre was
built was originally the village's camping-close, a small
croft near the church of a type common throughout East
Anglia, where the villagers played a kind of primitive
Rugby football.[14]

The association, then, of the natural circular
disposition of spectators for the purposes of popular
amusement (especially wrestling and camping) and the
formal tradition of playing in the round in both East
Anglia and Cornwall was established as both a physical
fact on the medieval landscape and was recognized by
early observers and theatre designers. The 'place' or
platea could be the same for both activities.

The wide diffusion of the circle as a cultural
symbol need not be pursued in great detail here,[15] but
allusion must be made to certain medieval manifestations
of it which could have functioned as a shaping power
upon, and an analogy for, the 'theatre in the round' of
the period. Perhaps the most arresting of these was the
widespread conception of the world found in the medieval
mappaemundi, which appear in hundreds of manuscripts from
about the eighth century onwards.[16] The commonest
pattern in the mappamundi involved two exterior circles,
symbolizing the sea, enclosing a round land mass:[17]
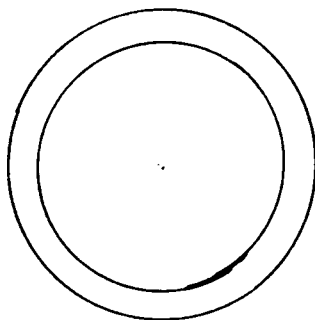
This form is of some importance in connexion with at least two plays given, or probably given, outdoor scaffold-and-place performances. Both the Tegernsee Antichristus and the Castle of Perseverance take the whole world for their stage and all mankind for their cast. The well-known staging diagram in the manuscript of the latter has been the object of a widely accepted study, which assumes that it is simply what a twentieth century set designer might draw.[18] Taken at face value, however, it has a good deal in common with the contemporary mappaemundi, and the dramaturgy of the play itself clearly embodies the notion of the platea, bounded by water, as the world.[19]

A related early tendency was to conceive of the medieval city as a cross within a circle, the circle being a wall or moat, the cross the intersection of two roads.[20] As I propose to suggest presently, twelfth century symbolic plans of Jerusalem in this circular form may have had some influence on the staging of the contemporary play La Seinte Resureccion, which circulated in England in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

As well as forming an image for the medieval city, the cross within the circle raises the interesting question of the geographical orientation of the mise-en-scène in the medieval 'theatre in the round' - the symbolic locations of the various loci on the periphery of the platea. The mappaemundi generally showed the lost Eden on the eastern axis, and the same sort of convention is followed in the Castle diagram, where the heaven scaffold is in the east. The more obvious influence is the cruciform image of the church itself, however, where the sanctuary in the east and the demonic associations of the north have probably influenced the placing of Heaven and Hell on those axes in the Castle diagram.[21] The diagram may well embody details of the 'set' for the Castle, but it also reflects the union of anciently established symbolic traditions with the

characteristic crowd configuration for medieval popular amusements.

The circle and the cross also come together as significant symbolic precursors of later medieval scaffold-and-place staging in the supposed superimposition of the earliest churches on the circular sites and earthworks of Celtic folk-moots in the British Isles. A mass of detail on this subject was set out by Allcroft in a study itself entitled The Circle and the Cross,[22] but any close assessment of the complex combination of archaeological and etymological evidence presented there lies well beyond the scope of this work. Nevertheless, Allcroft's case for the symbolic orientation of the church within the pre-existing circular meeting place for the community is a striking non-theatrical precursor to medieval staging in the round.

III

Scaffold-and-Place Staging in the Twelfth Century.

In this section I propose to discuss two major twelfth century plays, the Latin Tegernsee Antichristus and the Anglo-Norman Seinte Resureccion, as early examples of the kind of scaffold-and-place playing which I believe was common three centuries or so later in East Anglia. The possibility that there was such a thing as staging in the round at this date has not been widely entertained, and indeed these two texts offer the only real opportunity to shape a hypothesis.[23] Non-dramatic evidence for the form, however, is not lacking.

The well-known account of an outdoor Resurrection play given by masked actors in the churchyard at Beverley dates from c. 1220:

Confluebat eo copiosa utriusque sexus multitudo, variis inducta votis, delectationis videlicet, seu admirationis causa, vel sancto proposito excitandae devotionis.

> Cum vero, prae densa vulgi astante
> corona, pluribus, et praecipue statura
> pusillis, desideratus minime pateret
> acessus, introient plurimi in ecclesiam...[24]

As Richard Axton has recently pointed out, the behaviour of the crowd in forming a ring (<u>corona</u>) to see the play marks the performance off as an example of the lost popular drama of the period.[25] The chronicler, who only mentions the play in the context of another incident, gives no indication of any formal structures - scaffolds, or a <u>platea</u> - though the fact that the playing-place is next to the church is suggestive in connexion with the Cornish and East Anglian structures which were generally sited in fields adjoining churches.

Contemporary with the Beverley performance is the description of the infernal amphitheatre where the damned re-enact their sins for the amusement of their tormentors in the <u>Vision of Thurkill</u> (1206),[26] thought to be the work of Ralph de Coggeshall (1184-1224) the chronicler, an Essex man. Thurkill of Sistead (Essex) was evidently a real person, a labourer who also rented lands in the neighbourhood, and whose vision was a cause of some local celebrity in East Anglia during the early thirteenth century. Whether the description of the diabolic theatre is his own or that of a monastic redactor, certain features of the '<u>mise-en-scène</u>' are relevant to any account of the 'medieval theatre in the round'. A demon invites Saints Dominick and Julian, who are secretly accompanied by Thurkill, to witness 'ludis nostris theatralibus':

> Perrexerunt ergo ad plagam aquilonalem
> quasi montem ascendendo, et ecce in
> descensu montis erat domus amplissima
> et fuliginosa muris veternosis circumdata
> erantque in ea quasi multae plateae innumeris
> ignitis et ferreis sedibus circumquaque
> repletae. Sedes vero ex candentibus ferreis
> circulis et ex omni parte clavatis,
> superius et inferius, a dextris et a
> sinistris, exstructae erant, atque in eis
> homines diversae conditionis et utriusque
> sexus miserabiliter residebant, dum ex
> omni parte candentibus clavis transfigerentur
> atque ex ignitis circulis undique constringerentur

> pariter et exurerentur. Tanta erat multitudo
> sedium ignitarum ac hominum in eas
> residentium quod nulla lingua eas dinumerare
> sufficiret. Erant muri ferrei et fuliginei in
> circumitu platearum et sedes aliae juxta
> muros in quibus residebant daemones per
> circumitum quasi ad laetum spectaculum
> de cruciatibus miserorum ad invicem
> cachinantes et miseros subsannantes
> atque peccata improperantes...[27]

A series of representative sinners - the Proud Man, the Priest, the Adulterers, the Backbiters and so forth - are brought forward to 'play' in the middle of the arena, re-enacting their misdeeds in ghastly parody.[28]

Bigongiari has discussed the passage in detail: 'The unreal traits of this vision are obvious; the walls are _ferrei_; the blazing seats are also of iron. The only conclusion therefore we can draw from the passage is that the author knew something of the existence of the ancient theaters and their use, which of course was to be expected. In order to use it as an argument for the actual existence of theaters we should have to assume that the acts, persons and things of a vision must of necessity belong to the time in which the vision takes place.'[29] The first proposition here - that the author of the piece would 'of course' have known of the existence and nature of the Roman amphitheatres - is clearly suspect. We have already seen how Capgrave, probably the most learned Englishman of his day, drew on his knowledge of native playing 'in the round' to account for Isidore's definition of the ancient theatre, and had not the slightest notion of what the Colosseum really was when he actually saw it. This must considerably enhance the likelihood that round theatres of some type must have existed in the twelfth century, and that the pattern was incorporated into Thurkill's vision. And it should be urged that East Anglians of the fifteenth century, at least, were very likely to have seen personifications of the Vices performing in the round 'theatre' of the Castle of Perseverance.

I think there is some reason, then, to see the

diabolic theatre in the <u>Vision of Thurkill</u> as positive
evidence of a limited kind for a twelfth century
tradition of staging 'in the round'. The fantastic
details - the iron walls, the flaming seats and so forth -
may be left aside. What is chiefly of interest is the
broad notion of the circular playing-place, surrounded
by seats, in which mimetic activities of a sort typical
of the later medieval theatre take place. With this in
mind we may turn to what I believe are two important
twelfth century plays which exhibit such a form of
staging.

The manner in which the Tegernsee <u>Antichristus</u>[30]
was staged is at present disputed. Young included the
text with the corpus of the sung Latin liturgical drama
of the Church, and there is no doubt that the Tegernsee
play is contemporary with the great twelfth century
flourishing of that form. But in several respects the
association with the liturgical drama is unhappy. Though
the <u>Antichristus</u> is in Latin throughout it has no known
connexion with any liturgical ceremony - indeed, its most
obvious affiliations are with a specific mid- to late
twelfth century secular political world, which can be
reconstructed with some assurance.[31] And where the
liturgical drama is invariably sung the <u>Antichristus</u>
appears to have been mostly declaimed, notation for music
appearing but once in the manuscript.[32] A further point
also discriminates between the <u>Antichristus</u> and Young's
body of liturgical texts. Whereas the latter are known
to have always been performed inside ecclesiastical
buildings, the great eschatological battle play involves
a large cast (some sixty actors) and clearly sets out to
exploit to the full a large 'set' which involves wide
areas of symbolic space. As Young himself remarks, a
<u>mise-en-scène</u> of this scope could most conveniently be
accommodated outdoors.[33] The running together of the
Antichrist story with a political theme involving the
rulers of central Europe, Jerusalem, Babylon and Greece
makes it fairly clear that this 'set' was intended to be
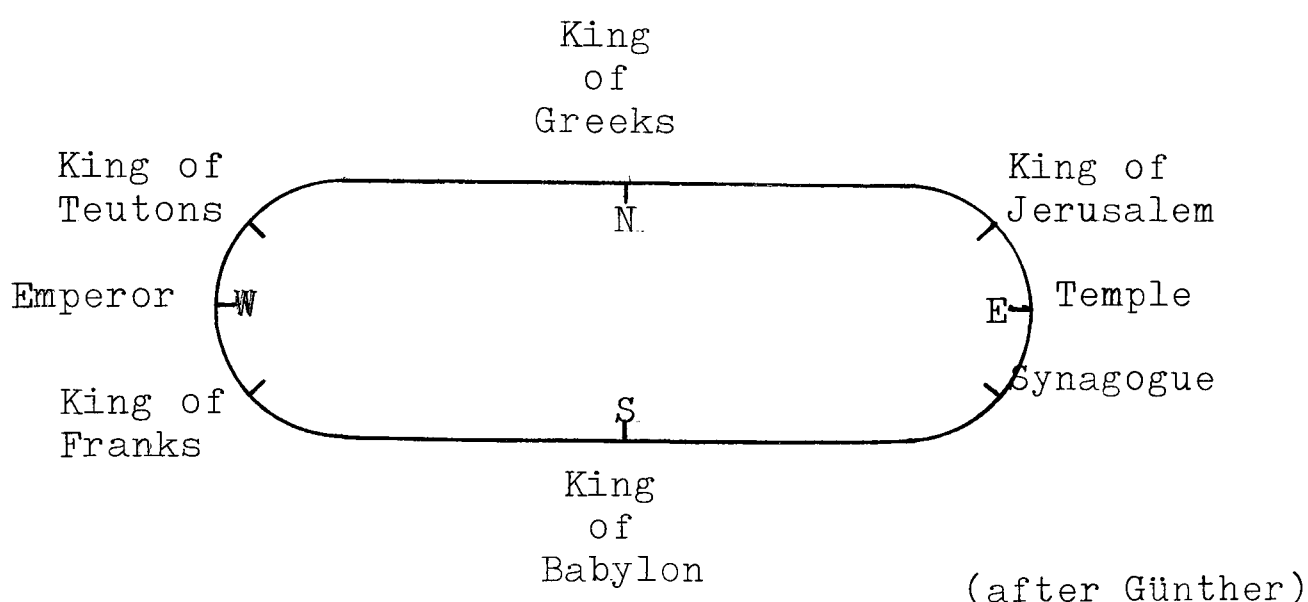a representation of the whole world, and that the cast

signified all mankind.[34]

The text is at present dated <u>c</u>. 1160, and the
political aspects of the action are thought to relate to
the central European imperialist ambitions of the emperor
Frederick Barbarossa I - in particular his proposal to
establish a Holy Roman Empire. The action of the play,
which involves elaborate marches, countermarches and
battles in a playing space surrounded by eight <u>loci</u>, is
well known and has been summarized elsewhere.[35] There
are, I think, good reasons for suggesting that such a
performance may be generically distinguished from the
Latin liturgical drama. Dr. Axton in particular has
drawn attention to the tradition of outdoor German battle
plays in the same period to which the <u>Antichristus</u> is
likely to have belonged.[36] The signs are that it was
intended as a spectacular outdoor entertainment, and the
details of the 'set' suggested by the opening rubric,
with their strong geographical emphasis, would easily fit
a large circular or oval arena:

>Templum Domini et vii sedes regales
>primum collocentur in hunc modum: Ad
>orientem templum Domini; huic collocantur
>sedes Regis Hierosolimorum et sedes Sinagoge.
>Ad occidentem sedes Imperatoris Romanorum;
>huic collocantur sedes Regis Theotonicorum
>et sedes Regis Francorum. Ad austrum
>sedes Regis Grecorum. Ad meridiem sedes
>Regis Babilonie et Gentilitatis.[37]

The placing of the <u>loci</u> around an outdoor arena can follow
quite straightforwardly from this, though the use of two
phrases to signify 'to the south' - <u>ad meridiem</u> and <u>ad
austrum</u> - is odd. If an outdoor 'round' presentation is
envisaged I can see two possible explanations for this.
As has been suggested before, <u>austrum</u> may simply be a
scribal error for <u>aquilonalem</u> (? a mistaken expansion of
<u>ad a</u>), which would place the Greek king's <u>locus</u> in the
north.[38] If the manuscript reading is in fact correct
there is perhaps some reason to suggest that the special
circumstances of the play as a <u>pièce d'occasion</u> might
involve the attendance of the Emperor himself, who might
be offered a seat of honour on the periphery of the

supposed platea, to the north.[39] If one or other of
these explanations for the puzzle in the opening rubric
is accepted, then there are good reasons for accepting
the plan suggested by the most recent editor of the
text: 'Zur Anordnung der Sitze auf dem kreisförmig oder
oval gedachten Spielfeld sagt der Text eindutig...'[40]

King
of
Greeks

King of   King of
Teutons   Jerusalem

                              N

Emperor   W   E   Temple

                              S   Synagogue

King of
Franks

King
of
Babylon   (after Günther)

Whether the setting was in fact oval, or as Günther
first suggests 'kreisförmig' cannot perhaps be finally
decided. My own preference for a circular set arises
from the argument of this chapter as a whole, and may
possibly be supported by one episode in the text, when
Antichrist triumphs and calls the five kings into a circle
on the platea:

    Pace conclusa sunt cuncta iura regnorum;
    Ad coronam uocat suos deus deorum.
Tunc omnes Reges conueniunt undique cvm suis usque ad
presentiam Antichristi... [41]

    The nature of the action in the Antichristus cannot
be explored in detail here. The various characters and
their followers speak (and sometimes sing) in carefully
arranged stanzas from their loci or whilst they march
about the platea in ordered sequences. As Dr. Axton
has shown in detail, the play as a whole has a bi-partite
structure itself, the second half serving as a mirror
image to the first.[42] This matching of dramaturgy and
setting is one of the most interesting and typical
features of scaffold-and-place playing;[43] it will be

examined presently in detail with reference to the
<u>Castle of Perseverance</u>.

The main facts about <u>La Seinte Resureccion</u>[44] are
well known. It is an Anglo-Norman play, of insular
origin, existing in two fragmentary copies both made in
England during the thirteenth century.[45] The original
play is thought to have been written in the later twelfth
century, perhaps not much after the <u>Antichristus</u>.[46] Of
the two extant fragements, one (C) was evidently produced
at Canterbury, and gives signs of having been adapted for
production there. The fragment in the Paris manuscript
(P) reproduces an earlier state of the text, copied at
an unknown location in England.

As is the case with the <u>Antichristus</u>, the staging of
the <u>Resureccion</u> is in dispute. Both fragments are
preceded by similar but not identical versified
introductory passages which give some details of how the
play was staged, and any interpretation of the <u>mise-en-
scène</u> must rest on a correct identification of these
introductory passages in relation to the text which
follows.[47] A 'linear' plan of the staging, in which the
audience faces rows of <u>loci</u> more or less as a modern
audience faces a set, has recently been put forward by
O.B. Hardison.[48] I propose to suggest that this rests
on the mistranslation of a key line in the introductory
passage, and the neglect of an important study of
medieval stagecraft which dealt in detail with the text.
The alternative mode of staging which I shall present -
involving the circular disposition of <u>loci</u> around a <u>platea</u> -
has been suggested in passing before, but not examined in
detail.[49]

Hardison's linear staging arrangement for the
<u>Resureccion</u> rests in part on a mistranslation of the
lines at the end of the introductory passages which
indicate the position of two of the <u>loci</u> in relation to
the rest. The P version runs:

> Si seit purveu que l'om face
> Galilee en mi la place;
> Iemaus uncore i seit feit
> U Jesus fut al hostel trait. (21-4)

and C:

> Seit purveu ke l'un face
> Galilee en mi la place,
> Et Emaus, un petit chastel. (31-3)

Hardison translates: 'Arrange it so that the spectator
faces / Galilee in the middle of the stage';[50] face in
21/31, however, is a subjunctive form from faire, thus
conforming in mood with nearly all of the other verbs in
the passage which refers to the staging.[51] Secondly,
place can scarcely be rendered 'stage' without assuming
a priori a virtually modern audience - action relationship.
The word must surely be the equivalent of platea, and
must signify the unlocalised acting area in the midst of
a group of loci, as commonly occurs in the vernacular
plays staged 'in the round' in the fourteenth and
fifteenth centuries. The mention of Emmaus as a petit
chastel in the middle of the platea in C is particularly
striking, and perhaps looks forward to the Castle of
Perseverance and Mary Magdalene, both of which had castle
structures in the middle of a place.[52]

   If a scaffold-and-place arrangement is posited for
the Resureccion it is possible to abandon Hardison's
linear hypothesis and to make sense of the disputed
narrative passages which precede the play itself in both
fragments. Quite varied interpretations of these
introductory passages have been offered.[53] The judgement
of the most competent modern authorities is that both
texts have been cast into a form more suitable for
reading than for acting, and that the present introductory
passages render what was originally a rubric - and this
would not of course have been spoken before the audience.[54]
The introductory passages are best described as
'versified rubrics', instructions on how the play should
be staged. The real problem is that in both texts these
'rubrics' assume knowledge of an established tradition of
staging involving loci and a platea. The metteur-en-scène
is expected to know what kind of a general layout is
involved, and the 'rubrics' merely furnish notes which
identify and list the loci. They do not for the most
part attempt to indicate how these lie in relation to one

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another, and the fact that the P and C versions differ in certain details shows that minor adaptions of the setting were possible within an established framework.[55] Paradoxically, because of its reticence about the precise nature of the 'set', the rubrics of <u>La Seinte Resureccion</u> offer good evidence of a well established tradition of scaffold-and-place playing as early as the twelfth century, and are a valuable supplement to the more tentative points made already in connexion with the <u>Antichristus</u>.

It would be a mistake to think that the exact details for the 'set' of the <u>Resureccion</u> can be deduced from the 'versified rubrics', but I think the general configuration may be discerned. If the inference that these rubrics relate to scaffold-and-place staging is accepted this effectively disposes of another problem, namely that both sets appear to refer to two distinct types of <u>locus</u>. The P version lists five <u>mansions</u> and six <u>lius</u> (the latter are also called <u>estals</u>) upon which characters sit or stand, and upon which part of the action takes place. C also refers to <u>maisuns</u>, of which two are mentioned as such, and also lists <u>lius</u> which are mostly the same as those mentioned in P, but are given in roughly the reverse order. C also refers to one <u>liu</u> as an <u>estage</u>.

Modern accounts of the staging of the play have attempted to preserve what is believed to have been a genuine distinction between two types of <u>locus</u>,[56] and they have uniformly ignored an important study by Cohen (published soon after the discovery of C), which argues that <u>mansion</u>, <u>maisun</u>, <u>liu</u>, <u>estal</u> and <u>estage</u> are all different words for the same thing.[57] The casting of the rubrics into verse for reading purposes seems to have involved the introduction of these differing terms primarily for metrical reasons. I would follow Cohen in arguing that no distinction of the sort regularly assumed is intended, and would add that such <u>loci</u> as are mentioned were probably disposed in a circular configuration on the periphery of a <u>platea</u>, with the <u>chastel</u> or <u>hostel</u> for Emmaus in the centre.

The following diagram embodies what I believe may
be inferred from the 'versified rubrics' of the
Resureccion texts, which I do not think will yield exact
details of the positions of all the loci in relation to
one another. It is slightly eclectic, and embodies two
assumptions intended to clarify slightly obscure
features of the texts: i) that P, like C, must have had
a locus for Longinus, though it is not mentioned in the
'rubric' to the former; ii) that the Tower of David and
Bartholomew referred to in the C 'rubric' is the same
thing as the gaol into which Longinus and Joseph of
Arimathea are put in the course of the action. This
gives 13 loci to be distributed at the periphery of
the platea, at the centre of which is Galilee - evidently
a general geographical region - and the chastel/hostel of
Emmaus. If, as appears was the case in later scaffold-
and-place productions, Hell was placed in the north and
Heaven in the east, then these may be placed there in
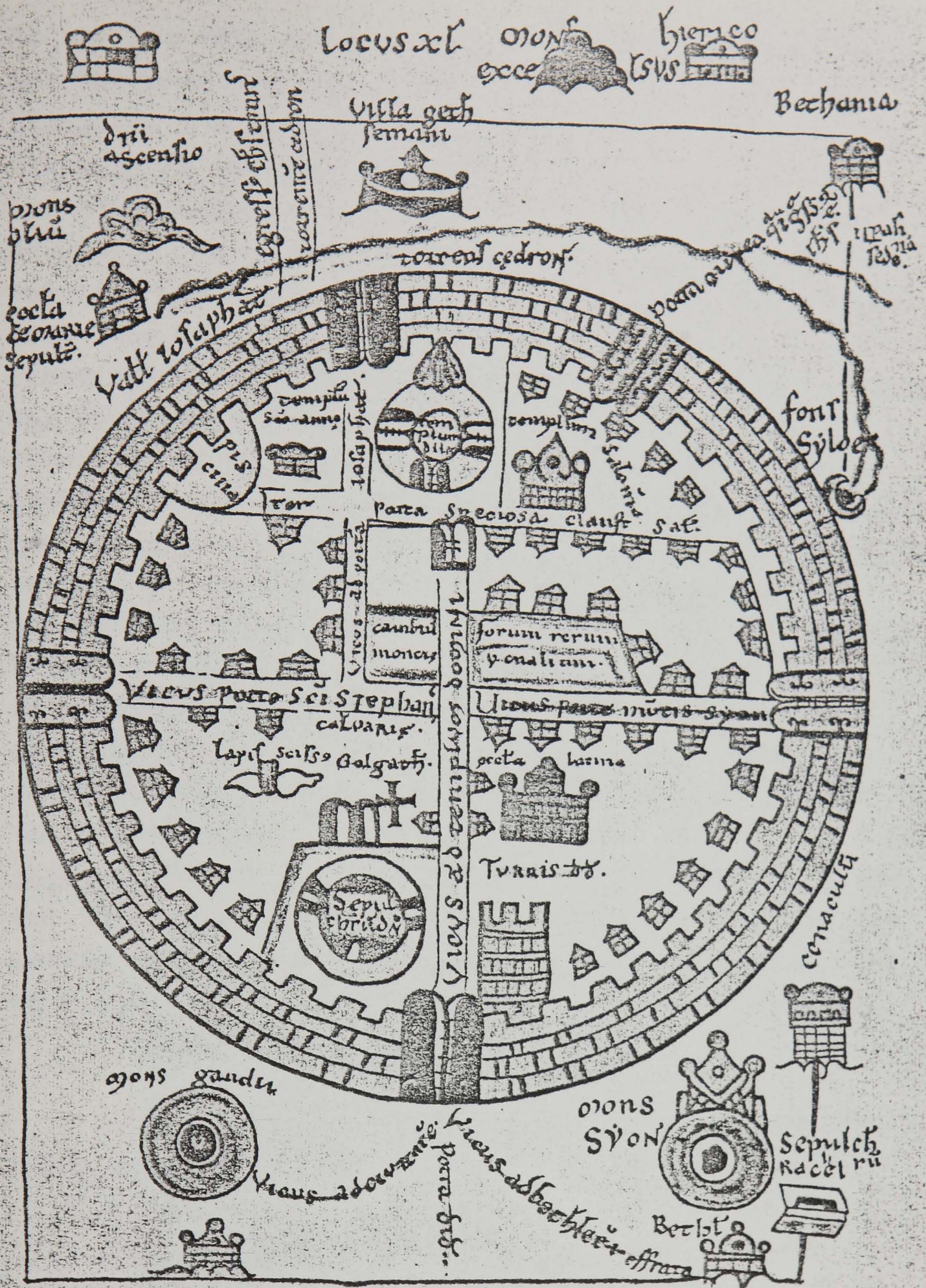the diagram, and the other ten loci indicated by numbers:
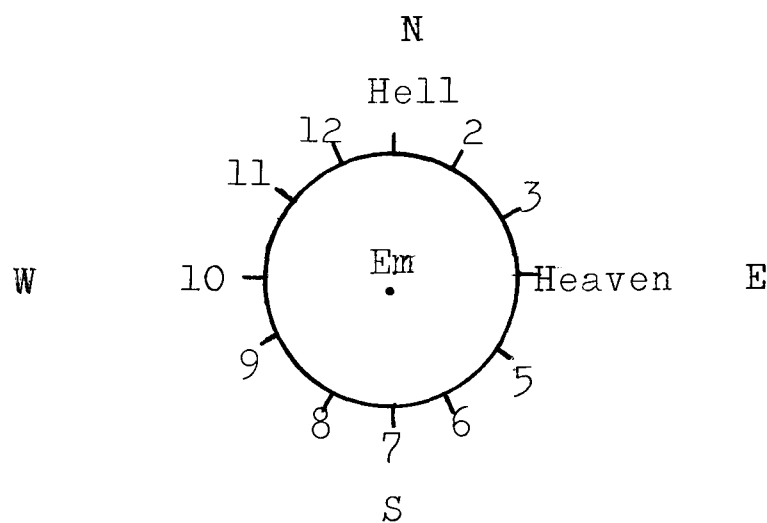
The twelve loci around the circumference of the platea
may look excessive compared with the five known to have
been used for the Castle of Perseverance, or the eight
indicated on the Cornish Ordinalia diagrams. It is,
however, one less than the number indicated for the other
extant Cornish play Beunans Meriasek, which also had an
additional structure in the middle of the platea.[58]

Hardison's important point that La Seinte Resureccion,

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in contrast to the Latin liturgical drama, 'appears to have been conceived...as representation'[59] holds equally well for this revised hypothesis of the staging. His analysis of the text has done a good deal to bring out the play's highly developed conventions in the use of space and the organization of action. It is certainly a play which belonged to an already clearly defined tradition of vernacular theatre, and the context of the present analysis is sufficient to show where the most marked affiliations of this tradition seem to me to lie, both in the twelfth century and later.

One final point may be made in contradistinction to Hardison's account of the symbolic use of space in the action of the play. He describes the set (in a phrase which applies more fittingly to the form of staging just suggested than his own) as 'the bounded container of all that exists. That it is geometrical rather than geographical space is easily seen from the fact that there is no attempt in the play to reproduce the geography of Jerusalem in the deployment of stations'[60] (i.e. loci). Whilst accepting that the set in one sense contains 'eschatological' space by including Heaven and Hell, I believe it can be shown that the contemporary conception of the geography of Jerusalem did affect the way in which it was conceived. Hardison's distinction between geographical and geometrical space is modern rather than medieval. The remarks above about the mappaemundi and the circle-and-cross town plans of the period are sufficient to show that the medieval conception of geographical space was in fact largely geometric.[61] Of particular interest in this respect is the accompanying circular plan of Jerusalem from the twelfth century St. Omer codex containing the Gesta Francorum Ierusalem Expugnantium, one of a number of widely circulating accounts of the Crusades.[62] It shows the newly built Tower of David,[63] mentioned in the C 'rubrics' of the Resureccion, by the west gate, opposite the Temple in the east. Golgotha and the Sepulchrum Domini, which answer

locus xl mons hiernco
exce lsus

Villa geth
semani

drñi ascensio

Bethania

p̃ons
oliu

egressus effrenans
torrentē cedron

mons galilee sepulc̃a

torrens cedron

fonr Syloee

Vall Iosaphat

templū Salomonis

templū Salomonis

templū dñi

piscina

Iosaphat

torr

porta speciosa claust̃ sal.

Vicus ad porta

cambiū moneta

forum rerum venalium

Vicus porte Sci Stephani
calvarie.

Vicus porte muris Syon

lapis scissus Golgatha.

porta latina

Sepulc̃rū
xp̃i

Turris dd.

monsgaudu

mons SYON

Sepulc̃ Rachel

Vicus ad boethlee effrata

Vicus adouarie

porta dd.

Bet̃lt̃

to the Crucifix and Monument of the <u>Resureccion</u> rubrics, are shown as separate sites within the circular wall, though of course Calvary had been outside the walls of the city in biblical times.[64]

The twelfth century belief that the site of Jerusalem was circular, and that features such as Golgotha and the Sepulchre were within the walls could well have acted as a convenient analogue for the set conceived for the <u>Resureccion</u>. Further evidence of this may be gleaned from the numerous itineraries and descriptions of Jerusalem from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, which enumerate the various holy places, and often the events which occurred at them. For instance, the 'rubrics' of the <u>Resureccion</u> bear an interesting resemblance to the 'Description des Saints-Lieux' by Philippe Mousket (13th. C.),[65] also in octosyllabic verse. Mousket describes the various <u>maisuns</u> and <u>lius</u> to be seen in Jerusalem, using, interestingly enough, the words used in the 'rubrics' of the Resureccion to describe the <u>loci</u>; these include the <u>maisuns</u> of Pilate and Caiaphas, as well as Calvary and the Sepulchre inside the city. The description of the latter is combined with mention of the Deposition, and will serve to show the resemblance with the 'rubrics':

> Josep fors de la crois l'osta,
> En .j. <u>Sepulcre</u> le coucha
> U nus om onques n'atouça
> Et là vinrent les .iii. maries... (10811-14).

The C rubrics call for:

> Le cruxifix premerement
> E puis aprés le monument
> Les serganz ke i agueterunt
> E les Maries ke la vendrunt (11-14).

The 'rubrics' of <u>La Seinte Resureccion</u>, then, offer evidence for a hypothesis that the play is an early example of the symbolic use of circular theatrical space, and it is naturally of some importance that both the original text and the two extant copies are thought to be of English origin. Together with the contemporary <u>Antichristus</u> from Germany, the <u>Resureccion</u> is at present the best available evidence for a tradition of outdoor

playing 'in the round' as early as the twelfth century.
This provides a sounder basis in theatrical tradition
than has hitherto been available for an examination of
East Anglian texts staged (I believe) on a similar or
identical basis.[66]

IV

Platea, Placea, Place

The term platea, or place has been used with some
frequency in the preceding discussions to designate the
acting area at ground level bounded by a circle of
spectators and scaffolds or loci at the periphery. It
is, from the mid-twelfth century at least, to be understood
as a specialized medieval theatrical term, though its
origins as a word signifying an 'open space, site, plot
or square' are perhaps a century or so older.[67] Placea
is frequently to be met with as the term used to describe
the plots into which the areas granted for new towns in
England and France in this period were divided up.[68] In
France in particular place was often used to describe the
open space in the centre of a town surrounded by buildings.
An important point about the placea was that unlike the
other unit of medieval town planning, the burgagium, the
plot was an enclosed piece of ground without buildings on
it.[69] It has survived with this sense in English dialect
as plack and place.[70]

The use of platea/place as a theatrical term seems
to have arisen, or is at least first recorded in this
period of the building of the new towns in twelfth to
fourteenth century England and France. Though Karl Young
used the term platea now and again to describe the
playing area in some of the more elaborate Latin plays -
notably the Antichristus - it seems to have had no place
in the rubrics or terminology of the texts which he
collected.[71]

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The earliest clear theatrical use of _platea_ occurs in the rubrics of the _Mystère d'Adam_, probably written in England during the latter half of the twelfth century;[72] the appearance of _place_ in the versified rubrics of _La Seinte Resureccion_ is immediately contemporary with this, and also from England. Fourteenth and fifteenth century English examples of the forms, almost entirely from the Cornish and East Anglian plays (and never from the northern mysteries) have been collected by Southern in an appendix entitled '"Place" and _Platea_'.[73]

V

Scaffold-and-Place Playing - Allusions in Non-Dramatic Literature and Painting.

The heading of this section is intended to make clear that I consider the use of certain materials from non-dramatic literature and the visual arts primarily as allusions to rather than as direct evidence of scaffold-and-place playing in the later medieval period. One example has already been used, that of the diabolical amphitheatre in the _Vision of Thurkill_, and where it might have there been possible to press for far-reaching conclusions it seemed preferable to limit the use made of the account to an allusion to something that is much more clearly demonstrable in purely theatrical terms in the twelfth century.

The uses made of the image of the circular theatre in the non-dramatic literature and painting of the period seem to me to be of this sort, involving a distortion to fit a particular artistic end - in the case of Thurkill and (as we shall see) Langland, a vision, in the cases of the _Knight's Tale_ and _Winner and Waster_ a tournament, and in the paintings of Jean Fouquet a peculiarly apt opportunity to exploit the new-found art of perspective. None of these examples, which will all now be examined, seems to me simply to reproduce or attempt to reproduce

the precise setting of a medieval 'theatre in the round'
as it may be discerned in the dramatic texts themselves,
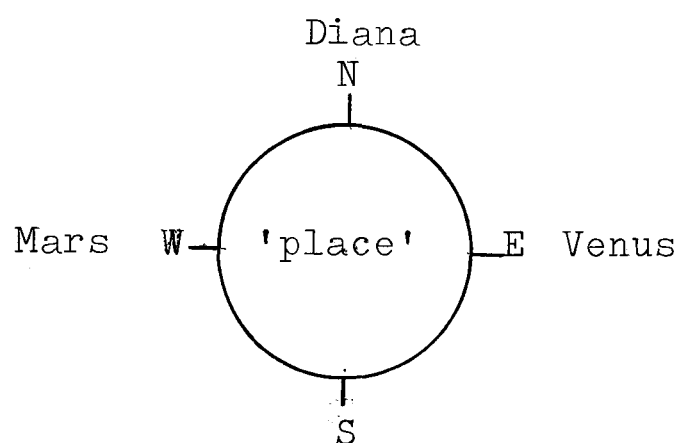and in the archaeological and documentary evidence.

A. Allusions in non-dramatic literature in English

The most striking allusive use of the shape,
structure and vocabulary of medieval scaffold-and-place
playing is the circular 'theatre' built by Theseus in
Chaucer's Knight's Tale, described in detail in lines
1881-1913[74] and referred to at various points in the
adjoining narrative. F.P. Magoun Jr. has conveniently
summarized the main features of the imaginary structure:

> The most conspicuous architectural
> monument of Theseus' Athens is a bowl-type
> stadium, presumably outside the town-walls,
> and constructed by Theseus especially for
> the tournament between Palamon and Arcite.
> Referred to as a theatre (A1885, 1901, 2091),
> a place (A2585, 2678, 2690), and more
> often as lystes (A1884, 2089, 2218, 2545, 2566,
> 2575, 2662), it is a circular stone structure
> (A1889) with a moat (walled of stoon and
> dyched al withoute, A1888), one mile in
> circumference, 60 paces high (pas A1890),
> and with rising tiers of seats (degrees
> A1890, 1891, 2579) banked to afford the spectator
> an unobstructed view (A1892), also called seetes
> in A2580. The number of rows of seats is not
> specified; the stadium is said to be ful of
> degrees, i.e. tiers of seats (A1890). The
> full diameter must be thought of as some 560
> yards, the height perhaps 150 feet, if one
> modestly reckons a "pace" as ca. $2\frac{1}{2}$
> feet. Stadium builders tell me that the
> playing surface might be reckoned as some
> 1,000 feet in diameter ... and that the
> edifice might have seated a couple of
> hundred thousand people. [75]

The main details of the structure derive of course from
the teatro described by Boccaccio at the corresponding
point in the Teseida.[76] Chaucer adopts the circular
shape, the one mile circumference, the gates at the east
and west axes and the 'degrees' from this source. He also
makes several additions and adaptions, which on the one
hand rationalize the more fantastic elements in Boccaccio's
description, but which on the other incorporate features
evidently borrowed from contemporary theatrical patterns
in England. Chaucer's arithmetical knowledge was

sufficient to tell him that Boccaccio's idea of 500 tiers of seats inside a structure one mile across was exaggeration beyond even the bounds of romance; there would simply be no room for a playing space.[77] More significant, however, is the transference in Chaucer of the temples of Mars, Venus and Diana from their scattered locations around Athens in the Teseida to the walls of the 'theatre' itself. The tranference clearly has much to do with the careful cultivation of various kinds of structural symmetry in Chaucer's poem,[78] but the analogy with what we know of the positioning of loci around a central platea in medieval scaffold-and-place staging is marked:

```
                        Diana
                          N
                          |
                     ___--|--___
                   /       |      \
                  /        |       \
        Mars   W-|     'place'     |-E   Venus
                  \        |       /
                   \___    |   ___/
                       ---_|_---
                          |
                          S
```

The description of the central area where the tournament occurs as the 'place' is Chaucer's most obvious borrowing from theatrical usage of the later medieval period, and it finds full warrant in the text, where it may be observed some five times.[79]

The influence of the tournament on the staging of medieval plays has been examined in detail by Wickham,[80] and the lists (which were sometimes circular, and usually orientated east-west) enclosed an area in some ways comparable to the theatrical platea, overlooked by scaffolds for spectators.[81] Chaucer's adaption of the teatro of Boccaccio's poem blends a recognizably English piece of theatrical setting and vocabulary with the more

obvious patterns of the contemporary tournament.[82] His
period as Clerk of Works to the Crown between 1389 and
1391 is known to have involved him in the construction
of lists with 'eskaffaldes' for jousts at Smithfield
(May and October 1390).[83]

Chaucer is not the only fourteenth century English
poet to have used a combination of contemporary
theatrical and chivalric 'settings' in his work. The
dream-vision and debate poem <u>Winner and Waster</u> (1351-2)[84]
has attracted comment not only for the 'dramatic'
character of its dialogue and action,[85] but also of its
'set'.[86] The poet falls asleep and dreams in a manner
conventional in the period:

> Me thoghte I was in the werlde, I ne wiste in
>   whate ende,
> One a louelich lande þat was ylike grene
> Þat laye loken by a lawe the lengthe of a
>   myle... [87]

The poet finds himself 'on a fair green plain bounded by
an earthwork a mile round'. In addition a <u>caban</u> or
pavilion is provided at a point on the mound for the
accommodation of the prince who adjudicates in the ensuing
debate.[88] It is clearly of interest that the size of the
arena envisaged in <u>Winner and Waster</u> is identical to that
built for the tournament in the <u>Teseida</u> and the <u>Knight's
Tale</u>. The <u>lawe</u> or mound which surrounds the arena also
serves to identify the whole as a kind of exaggerated
version of the Cornish <u>plan-an-gwary</u>, or the East Anglian
game-place.

A third fourteenth century English text which shows
signs of having assimilated features from contemporary
scaffold-and-place playing for imaginative purposes is
<u>Piers Plowman</u>, where again the first vision which the
poet experiences on falling asleep has a recognizable
symbolic topography. The A and B versions are similar
and leave the setting vague:

> [Ac] as I beheeld into þe Eeest, an hei3 to þe
>   sonne,
> I sei3 a tour on a toft trielich ymaked,
> A deep dale byneþe, a dongeon þerInne
> Wiþ depe diches and derke and dredfulle of si3te.
> A fair feeld ful of folk fond I þer bitwene
> Of alle manere men...   (B Prol. 13-18).[89]

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Commentators have noted that the 'tour on a toft' in the east, the deep dale and dungeon (which it seems fair to infer is in the west) and the fair field full of folk between bears some resemblance to the staging diagrams for the <u>Castle of Perseverance</u> and the Cornish <u>Ordinalia</u>.[90] <u>Sonne</u> in line 13 is perhaps a pun intended to draw attention to the theatrical allusion, involving the siting of the Heaven - <u>locus</u> in the east which was evidently conventional in scaffold-and-place playing. There are further allusions to the structures in A/B Passus I, where the 'toft' is referred to as a 'Mountaigne' (1), and the 'tour' as a 'Castel' (4) from which Holy Church emerges and where 'truþe' (12, cp. Bennett, B-Text, and Skeat, A and B Texts, <u>Treuthe</u>) dwells. The 'deep dale' and 'dongeon' are here described as the 'castel of care' (61), the dwelling of 'wrong' (63, cp. Bennett, B-Text, <u>Wronge</u>) and the context makes clear that the personage intended is Lucifer. The allegorical landscape is sketched in in the openings of the A and B versions with noticeable economy, as if castles, towers and dungeons inhabited by personified abstractions were familiar conceptions to the readers of the poem.

The entire image is much augmented in the C version of the poem.[91] Not only are the geographical and structural details of the opening elaborated, but a new passage is inserted in Passus II (= A/B Passus I) setting out further topographical points about the relative positions of the dwellings of good and evil around the 'edges' of the world. Langland's conception of this is not made explicit in CII 112-122, but the signs are that he had in mind the usual medieval image of the world as a circle, defined by the different compass points, familiar in the <u>mappaemundi</u> of the period.[92] On the other hand, the notion that inhabitable physical structures lie to the north, south, east and west and that the area bounded by them is the whole world also owes much to the use of a related image in scaffold-and-place playing - it is most noticeable in the <u>Castle of</u>

Perseverance, but is also present, as I have argued above, in the Tegernsee Antichristus.

In the opening of the C version (Passus I) the tower in the east, immediately identified as the dwelling of Truth, is opposed to the deep dale, now explicitly placed in the west and called 'Death'; the fair field remains between.[93] The further details given above from A/B I appear again in CII, with the addition of a passage which expounds the symbolic significance of north and south, as well as east and west. Like the A and B versions, C alludes to the Fall of Lucifer (AI 109ff., BI 111ff., CII 107ff.), but then C adds the following discursive expostulation on the matter by Holy Church:

> Lord! why wolde he tho, that wykkede Lucifer,
> Luppen alofte in the north side
> Thenne sitten in the sonne syde there the day
>   roweth?
> Nere hit for northerne men, anon I wolde yow
>   telle -
> Ac I wol lacky no lyf', quod that lady sothly.
> 'Hit is sikerere bi southe ther the sonne regneth
> Then in the north by many notes, no man leve
>   other;
> For theder as the fende fly his fote for to sette,
> Ther he faylede and ful and his felawes alle,
> And helle is ther he is, and he there ybounde.
> Even the contrarie sitteth Crist, clerkes wyteth
>   the sothe.
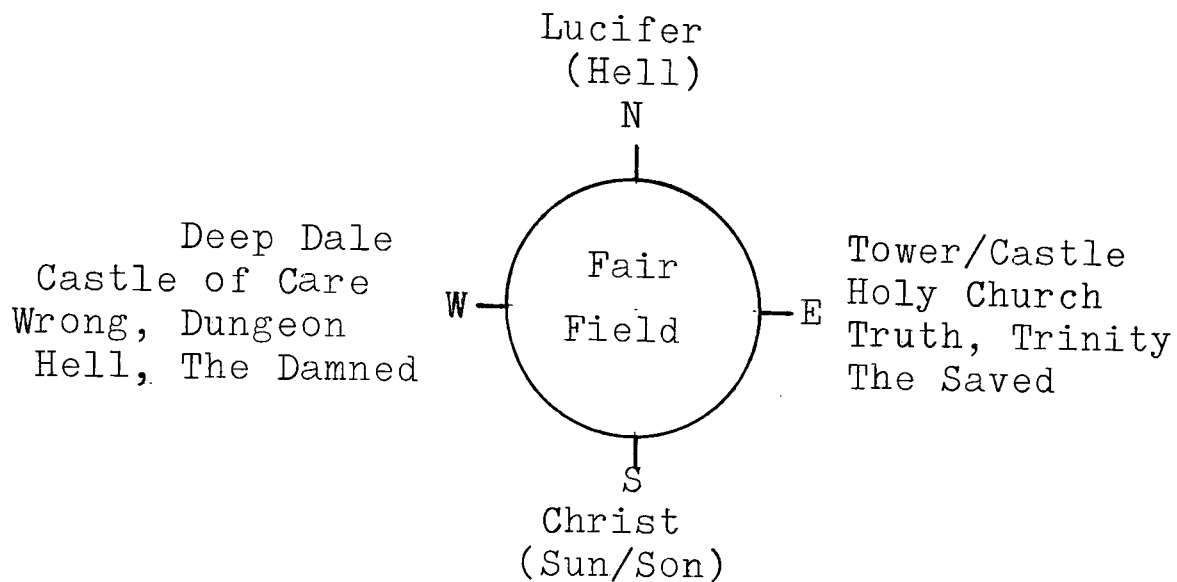>   (C II 112-22)

A good deal of learning, a certain amount of 'lore' and even a joke concerning the symbolic significance of the north and south are here incorporated into what is, in one way, a preacher's exposition of the biblical text which precedes the passage: 'Ponam pedem meum in aquilone, et similis ero altissimo'.[94] On the other hand the obvious indications of physical position and movement betray the play of the poet's mind over a dramatic realization of the Fall of Lucifer, conceived in terms of structures placed at opposing points of the compass. There is of course no attempt to define a literal mise-en-scène, and it turns out that the Devil and Hell are associated with both the west and north, Christ and Heaven with both the east and south.[95] Some elements in

the action are discernible. Lucifer 'leaps aloft' (almost as it were ascending to a scaffold) in the north (113), but is then visualized as sitting briefly upon God's own throne in the east (114). He is then cast down to Hell, once more in the north (121), which is at the opposite axis to where Christ sits (120, cf. 117). In the passage which follows the one just quoted there is a return to the symbolic pattern of the opening of the poem, with Hell in the west and Heaven in the east, looking forward to the Last Judgement:

> And alle that worchen that wikkid is, wenden
> thei sholle
> After here deth-day and dwell ther Wrong is,
> And alle that han wel ywrouhte, wende they sholle
> Estward till hevene, evere to abyde
> There Treuth is, the tour that trinite ynne
> sitteth
>   (C II 130-4)

The Judgement is alluded to here somewhat in the manner of the ending of a play on the subject in the type of 'set' underlying the first two sections of the poem. The Saved in the 'world' process to a structure in the east where the Trinity sit, the Damned to an opposing Hell-locus in the west.[96]

Langland's uses of theatrical images from the scaffold-and-place tradition in these opening passus of Piers Plowman are allusive and impressionistic, and are a good example of this characteristic feature of his imagination. There is no attempt to describe exact details of scaffold-and-place staging which contribute to his topographical image of the world and the eschatological space surrounding it - indeed, the fact that he alludes to such things as understood is a good argument for contemporary familiarity with such ideas.[97] His symbolism might be summarized in a diagram:

```
                          Lucifer
                          (Hell)
                            N
                            |
        Deep Dale         ,--+--.        Tower/Castle
      Castle of Care     /       \       Holy Church
      Wrong, Dungeon  W-|  Fair   |-E    Truth, Trinity
       Hell, The Damned  \ Field /       The Saved
                          '--+--'
                            |
                            S
                          Christ
                         (Sun/Son)
```

B. <u>Allusions in the Visual Arts: Jean Fouquet</u>.

   Several sources in medieval painting have been
adduced as representations of the 'medieval theatre in
the round', and they are not all uniformly relevant to
the subject. The theatrical performances illustrated in
certain early copies of Terence's plays,[98] the alleged
'arena theatres' shown in a Vienna manuscript[99] and
Professor Nelson's 'Early Pictorical Analogues to the
Medieval Theatre in the Round'[100] cannot claim the same
kind of attention as the best known and most widely
discussed use of the image of scaffold-and-place playing
in the work of the fifteenth century French miniaturist
Jean Fouquet.

   Fouquet's illustration of the <u>Martyrdom of St.
Apollonia</u> in the book of hours executed for Etienne
Chevalier in the mid-1450's has attracted most comment
in this respect,[101] though there is also clear use of a
similar theatrical model in an illustration of the <u>Rape
of the Sabine Women</u> in the manuscript known as the
'Tite-Live de la Sorbonne'.[102] There is no doubt that we
owe to Fouquet our clearest visual impression of the
nature of scaffold-and-place staging in the period.[103]
However, the nature of his use of the theatrical analogue
seems to me to have been obscured by a failure to see the
<u>St. Apollonia</u> miniature in the context of Fouquet's work
as a whole, in particular his relentless experimentation
with perspective in painting. There has been a tendency
amongst theatre historians in particular to suggest that

Fouquet set out simply to reproduce for their convenience a picture of a 'medieval theatre in the round' to be used as a sort of quarry for information on such matters of small detail as the exact sizes of the _platea_ and the _loci_. The use which can be made of the miniature for throwing light on contemporary theatrical usage seems to me to be very limited in that sort of direction, but relatively unexplored in others. The miniature exemplifies Fouquet's pervasive tendency to construct pictures with two and even three levels of space within them. It was one of a considerable number of exercises in the newly-discovered art of perspective and _trompe l'oeil_ of a kind which preoccupied Fouquet after a visit to Italy in the 1440's. This is the real context of any analysis of the miniature, and such elements as bear on our knowledge of theatrical practice in the period - the circular _platea_, the _loci_, the disposition of the audience and the _régisseur_ - must be recognized a subordinate in various ways to Fouquet's primary intention in producing the illustration.

The tendency to think that Fouquet set out to reproduce exactly what he 'saw' in contemporary staging has led theatre historians to draw almost exactly opposing conclusions about what is represented in the _St. Apollonia_ miniature,[104] and most of the misunder-standings arise simply from the failure to see it as part of a wider artistic enterprise on the painter's part.[105]

It is fortunate that the editors of the most recent reproduction of the _Hours of Etienne Chevalier_ have set forth the principles of pictorial composition employed by Fouquet, and have properly defined the scope and nature of his use of the theatrical image:

> One of the most important aspects of _The Hours of Etienne Chevalier_ seems to have gone unnoticed: the composition in depth of each scene, unprecedented in European manuscript painting of the middle of the fifteenth century. Fouquet has established the composition of each page on two, and sometimes three, successive picture planes.

In the foreground, beside a tomb or pedestal,
figures putti, or wild men support a vertical
placard bearing an elaborate initial. The
actual painting, with its action and
illusionistic suggestions ... is placed on a
raised platform in the second picture plane.
This scene recedes toward the background with
the help of a repoussoir formed by the
placard... This illusionistic composition ...
could only have been invented by Fouquet
after his Florentine experience; the French
artist had certainly seen the trompe l'oeil
frescoes of Masaccio, Uccello or Castagno...
[But] although it is indisputable
that Fouquet found in Florence a pictorial
solution to the problem of presenting such a
complex image in a convincing perspective,
France provided the artist with the germinal
source of the invention. It was in the
spectacle of the mystery plays ... that the
painter found some key elements of
his compositions: a stage platform and
the explanatory placards held by assistants...[106]

The Martyrdom of St. Apollonia has three successive
picture planes receding into the background. In the
foreground four figures, wild men and women, hold up the
arms of Etienne Chevalier and an 'explanatory placard'
referring to the martyrdom taking place in the second
plane of the composition. These figures in the foreground
are separated from the central scene by a convex wattle
fence, and the partially circular space thus defined is
a feature widely typical of Fouquet's work.[107] It is
described by Sterling as follows: 'Most action takes
place on a grassy circular platform whose design is echoed
by the placement of the figures. In this setting, which
reminds us of present-day revolving stages, processions
of figures seem to move in slow rotating motion.
Fouquet appears to have been haunted by circular form;
it endows his figures with a secret dynamism...'[108] The
circular form of most of the outdoor scenes in the
Etienne Chevalier miniatures is defined by a crack or
fault in the earth, which constitutes the 'platform' to
which Sterling refers. The use of wattle fencing in
the St. Apollonia has been taken as an allusion to
contemporary theatrical practice, but similar wattle

fences are common in French manuscript illumination of the period.[109]

The second plane in the picture space is occupied by the scene of the martyrdom itself, its circular articulation responding to the shape of the composition defined by the wattle fence. The four torturers all pull parts of the prone body of Apollonia in as many different directions, whilst the Fool on the left hand side of the picture walks into the depth of space thus created, simultaneously making an obscene gesture out of the picture at the viewer.[110] The suggestion is that the action takes place on a circular <u>platea</u> of the theatrical type, but the point is made in Fouquet's own terms of pictorial composition, not by direct representation of the theatrical feature.

The third level in the composition is the semicircular arrangement of scaffolds in the background, some of which support members of the audience, and others which are clearly <u>loci</u> related to the scene taking place in the second level.[111] Heaven and Hell face one another diametrically across the semicircle, whilst near the extreme of the arc the seat of the Emperior Decius stands vacant whilst he takes part in the action on the ground. Spectators are crowded underneath the scaffolds; and, as has often been pointed out, other spectators standing on a scaffold cut off by the left hand edge of the picture are probably intended to be understood as a hint that the structure of the theatre as a whole is circular.[112]

There are in effect two <u>plateae</u> in the miniature, though Fouquet's use of perspective gives the illusion that there is only one. The first is occupied by the action of the martyrdom taking place in the foreground, the second created by the configuration of scaffolds on the innermost plane of the composition. It is important to note that the foreground action is shown to be taking place <u>in front</u> of an imaginary line drawn across between the Heaven and Hell scaffolds, and it may be noted in addition that the two planes are yet further

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differentiated by the use of boldly contrasting colour schemes. The foreground action is shown in intensely bright colours against the dull monochrome background of scaffolds and audience. The composition as a whole functions as a <u>trompe l'oeil</u> intended to create the illusion of the viewer's presence in a circular theatre by combining different types of perspective.[113]

This account of Fouquet's theatrical miniature may have appeared unexpectedly negative in the context of the general argument of this chapter. I have, however, felt it necessary to estimate more broadly than is usual the painter's relationship to scaffold-and-place playing of his day. This, on the one hand, limits the detailed use which can be made of the <u>St. Apollonia</u> miniature for the precise 'reconstruction' of such staging techniques. On the other it opens the way for a wider assessment of Fouquet's use of theatrical form, in particular the impact of circular staging on his work. The debt rests not merely in the incorporation of particular theatrical details in the <u>St. Apollonia</u>; it is pervasive in Fouquet's work in the Etienne Chevalier miniatures. As Sterling puts it the circle is, for Fouquet, 'the key to a spherical universe',[114] and the contemporary form of staging 'in the round' supplied him with a kind of metaphor through which to explore a quite new conception of space and perspective in painting.

VI

<u>Scaffold-and-Place Playing in Later Medieval</u>
<u>England: The Cornish Evidence</u>.

Before turning finally to the detailed East Anglian evidence for circular scaffold-and-place playing, it is necessary to offer a brief account of the most clearly defined body of literary, antiquarian and archaeological evidence for the form in England. This is of course the

Middle Cornish <u>Ordinalia</u> and <u>Beunans Meriasek</u>,[115]
together with the remains of the type of physical
structure in which they were performed, the <u>plan-an-gwary</u>,
and various antiquarian descriptions of such things.

Richard Carew's well-known description of the
earthen amphitheatres or <u>plans-an-gwary</u> in which the
medieval Cornish drama was performed has already been
mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.[116] This is
generally held to be the earliest allusion to purpose-
built circular theatres in medieval England, though as
we have seen it is antedated by some 150 years in
Capgrave's remark about the Roman amphitheatre as 'a
place all round swech as we haue her in þis lond'. The
preceding pages have dealt with what I believe were
twelfth century examples of scaffold-and-place staging
probably involving physical arrangements of a related
type, and with allusions to analogous forms in art and
literature from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries.
Circular scaffold-and-place staging, I take it, was a
relatively familiar notion in England and on the
Continent from a surprisingly early period. There would
not be much point in attempting to make far-reaching
claims about any very precise details of such a theatrical
tradition on the basis of evidence such as this. Where
methods are necessarily to some extent eclectic and
evidence oblique conclusions must remain general. Apart
from direct information concerning some points of
nomenclature from the two twelfth century plays what
the evidence does yield is a strong image of a circular
theatre, with its <u>platea</u> surrounded by the audience and
<u>loci</u>, as a minor cultural symbol of the period, and one
which could be adapted for a variety of literary and
artistic ends.

The later medieval Cornish evidence, however,
brings us into contact for the first time with a combina-
tion of textual and physical evidence for such a
theatrical tradition, and this offers the most direct
and significant parallel to what I believe to have been
the case in fifteenth century East Anglia. Possibly the

most important point which emerges from the preceding survey, and one which is directly confirmed by the Cornish evidence, is that of a certain variety and fluidity in the size and arrangement of the scaffold-and-place setting from the twelfth to the early sixteenth centuries. The platea appears to have varied a good deal in size, and this is confirmed very clearly in the measurements of several plans-an-gwary extant (or recently extant) in Cornwall. The number of loci or scaffolds was also subject to alteration according to the scope and nature of the play to be performed. If the analyses of the Antichristus and La Seinte Resureccion offered above are correct the setting involved a platea surrounded by eight and twelve loci respectively, the latter having an additional structure 'en mi la place', a feature reproduced in both the Cornish and East Anglian traditions. The theatre imagined by Chaucer in the Knight's Tale adds three loci to the simple amphitheatre mentioned by Boccaccio, and describes the playing area as the 'place'. The cross-section of part of a scaffold-and-place theatre shown in Fouquet's St. Apollonia miniature has three loci with additional scaffolds for the accommodation of musicians and parts of the audience.

The Cornish Ordinalia are thought to have been written in the mid- to late fourteenth century by the secular canons of Glasney Priory, Penryn.[117] Beunans Meriasek probably originated a century or so later than the Ordinalia, and is likely to have been connected with Camborne, where Meriasek was patron saint.[118] These texts and the manuscripts which contain them offer two main features of importance to our understanding of the East Anglian tradition of scaffold-and-place playing. First, the clearly defined nomenclature in the stage-directions and in the dialogue (the 'sunken' stage-directions) referring to particular points of staging, and second the five diagrams in the manuscripts which are intended to indicate the different 'sets' for the successive days of playing.[119] The diagrams, depicting

a circular playing-place with _loci_ indicated at intervals around the periphery, also relate directly to the antiquarian and archaeological evidence for the _plans-an-gwary_ in the Cornish landscape.

The stage-directions in the _Ordinalia_ are in Latin and refer with some frequency to the _platea_ as the area in which characters walk about or perform actions requiring a certain amount of space.[120] Similar directions appear in _Meriasek_, with the additional defining feature that the characters descend into the 'place' on occasion.[121] A later hand has added stage-directions in English to _Meriasek_, and one of these refer to the 'place' (l.3941).

The _loci_ inhabited by certain characters in the Cornish plays are mainly referred to as _tenta_, (i.e. 'scaffold')[122] in the stage-directions and _tour_ 'tower', in the dialogue.[123] Directions to 'descend' from and 'ascend' to the _loci_ appear with some frequency[124] and a typical feature of the dramaturgy of the plays involves characters 'parading' on their scaffolds.[125] This is particularly common at the beginning of a fresh 'scene', or when the inhabitant of a _locus_ appears for the first time to introduce himself to the audience. Much of this terminology, and the kind of stage-configurations and actions which it implies, may be readily paralleled in the East Anglian 'scaffold-and-place' texts.

The five staging diagrams in the two Cornish play manuscripts[126] provide an immediate point of contact with the East Anglian tradition, where of course the _Castle of Perseverance_ diagram is of fundamental importance. They also connect the evidence for the staging embodied in the stage-directions and dialogue with the physical facts of the _plan-an-gwary_. The three _Ordinalia_ diagrams show a circular playing place, defined by two concentric circles between which are entered the names of the characters using the various _loci_ on the successive days of playing; there are eight of these. The two _Meriasek_ diagrams (as reproduced by Stokes) show a single circle
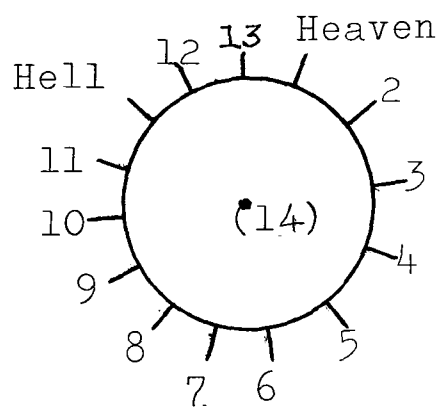
The Ordinalia (cf. Norris, The Ancient Cornish Drama 1 pp.200,478; 2 p.219).

Heaven

8

2

Hell

3

6

4

5
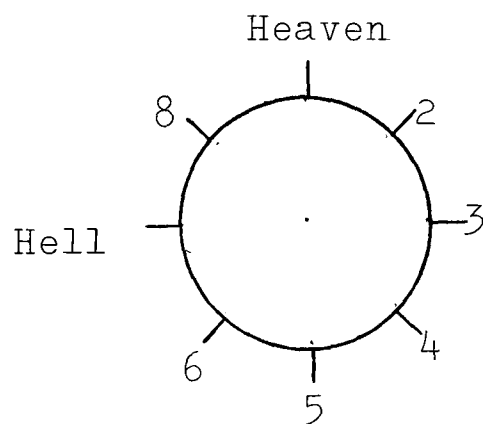
N ←——

Beunans Meriasek (cf. Stokes, ed. cit. pp. 144,266).

12 13 Heaven

Hell

2

11

3

10 (14)

9

4

8 5

7 6

around which are placed the names of the occupants of thirteen loci. An additional locus, a chapel, is also indicated in the centre of the platea in the diagram for the first day. Though in both cases the identity of most of the characters on the loci changes from day to day the actual number of scaffolds used evidently remained the same. Unlike the loci in the Castle of Perseverance diagram, those for the Cornish plays are not given with relative geographical positions, but it is clear that the 'church' orientation used in the disposition of the Castle set also determines the Cornish placings. A demon in Meriasek parades on his scaffold and speaks to the audience referring to the Devil as 'your patron saint of the north side', and this may be applied to the diagrams in both the Meriasek and Ordinalia diagrams, where Hell is shown on the left-hand axis of the circle, and Heaven at the top: north and east.[127] The signs are, therefore, that the Cornish plays have a traditional orientation relating to the positioning of loci around a platea, probably known as early as the twelfth century, probably familiar to Chaucer and Langland and certainly directly analogous to East Anglian usage in the same period.

The plan-an-gwary itself was a circular area surrounded by an earthen bank, and sometimes also by a moat or ditch, often found in the vicinity of a church.[128] It was, by all accounts, a commonplace feature of the Cornish landscape, and according to the most learned modern historian of Cornish culture, 'scarcely a Cornish-speaking parish could have been without one'.[129] The two major surviving examples at Perranzabuloe and St. Just in Penwith are still occasionally used for plays, and the earthworks of others were attested as late as the nineteenth century.[130] The examples known to Carew had a platea about forty or fifty feet across, and Polwhele (writing in 1803) gives measurements of sixty-six, ninety-three and one hundred and seventeen feet for the plateae of three he names.[131] The plans at St. Just and Perran are one hundred and twenty-six and one hundred

and thirty feet in diameter respectively.[132] The size
of the plan-an-gwary would presumably reflect the numbers
in the neighbourhood likely to make use of it.

The evidence from Cornwall of the later medieval
play-texts, the staging diagrams and the plans-an-gwary go
together to suggest the existence of an organized
theatrical tradition involving purpose-built community
theatres and plays specifically designed for performance
in them. I believe that similar circumstances prevailed
in East Anglia in the same period, and that we can
identify not only the texts involved, but also (with
research that lies beyond the scope of this work) the
places where they were played.

VII

Scaffold-and-Place Playing in East Anglia:
Material Evidence from Walsham-le-Willows.

When I began work on this subject of the medieval
theatre in East Anglia it appeared that a case for a
'theatre in the round' in the area would have to rest
almost entirely on the localisation of a group of texts
mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, and a
discussion of the mode of staging which they evidently
had in common. This is still the major basis for the
case, and forms the bulk of the next chapter. The
material to be set out there has lately been joined by
another piece of East Anglian evidence which conveniently
rounds off this account of the background to our
knowledge of scaffold-and-place playing in general, and
which supplements the evidence from the East Anglian
texts in the best possible way. K.M. Dodd's recent
account of the circular 'game-place' built at Walsham-le-
Willows in northern Suffolk has already been mentioned
in the opening section of this chapter,[133] and the
discovery clearly opens wide possibilities. The example
of Walsham seems to me to stand in the same relation to

the texts as the Cornish <u>plans-an-gwary</u> do to the <u>Ordinalia</u> and <u>Beunans Meriasek</u>.

The Walsham game-place was probably built towards the end of the second decade of the sixteenth century, at the west end of the village, which lies about 11 miles to the south-east of Thetford.[134] It stood at the opposite sector of a crossroads from the parish church, almost certainly on the original site of the village's camping-close, the traditional East Anglian setting for outdoor sports and entertainments.[135] The structure is described in detail in an estate document of 1577:

> Walsham Towne:
> Le Game Place.
> The sayd game place in the tenure of diuers
> men to the vse and behofe of the towne of
> walsham aforesayd is customarye ground
> holden of the sayd manor of walsham and a
> place compassed rownd with a fayer banke
> cast vp on a good height and havinge ...
> many great trees called populers growynge
> about the same banke, in the myddest a
> fayre round place of earth wythe a stone
> wall about the same to the height of the
> earth made of purpose for the vse of
> Stage playes... [136]   .

As Dodd remarks, this description summons up a fairly clear image of the type of theatre already discussed at length in this chapter, in particular the Cornish <u>plan-an-gwary</u>; unfortunately exact details such as the diameter of the <u>platea</u> and the height of the bank are wanting in this East Anglian example. Nevertheless, the most significant elements are clear. 'Place' is used twice in the description in its medieval theatrical sense, and, as seems to have been commonly the case, this was circular. The bank presumably accommodated the audience and perhaps any <u>loci</u> constructed <u>d'occasion</u>. A detail of particular interest is the 'stone wall about the [place] to the height of the earth' which must imply a ditch or moat separating the bank from the <u>platea</u>; as we shall see in the next chapter, this bears on any interpretation of the <u>Castle of Perseverance</u> staging diagram.

I suggested in the opening pages of this chapter
that the construction of the Walsham game-place is most
unlikely to have been an isolated phenomenon- indeed,
the fact that a group of East Anglian plays look to have
been staged under circumstances of this sort, and a
local man's remark about the 'place all round' built for
the purpose of viewing plays and other activities point
to the strong possibility that Walsham was one example
of a wider regional pattern. This, however, is a
departure for further research. Many East Anglian
villages had camping closes near their churches for the
purposes of popular entertainment and recreation,[137]
and it is obviously possible that there were game-places
on these or similar sites which have yet to be
identified.[138] The Elizabethan village survey used by
Dodd is one example of a fairly common class of document,
and a search through comparable East Anglian materials
could well be revealing.[139]
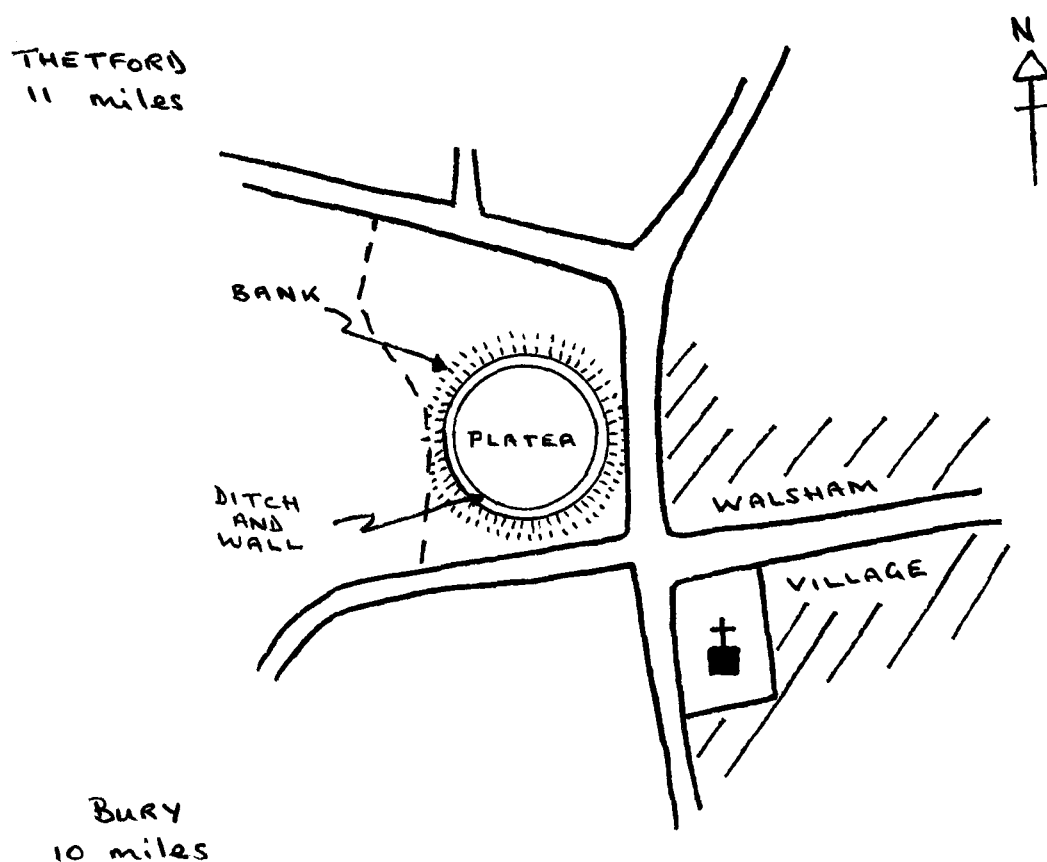
Site and Probable Configuration of the
Game-Place at Walsham-le-Willows
(after Dodd)

The East Anglian scaffold-and-place texts themselves
may now be considered in the light of the background
established in the preceding pages.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SCAFFOLD-AND-PLACE PLAYING IN LATER MEDIEVAL

EAST ANGLIA   -   THE EVIDENCE OF THE TEXTS

In the preceding chapter it was suggested that the coming together of literary and documentary evidence for scaffold-and-place playing in East Anglia offered a new departure for the study of a group of fifteenth century texts. The Castle of Perseverance, the 'N-Town' Passion plays, the Play of the Sacrament and Mary Magdalene have all been 'placed' in central East Anglia on dialectal and in some cases internal evidence. Their common principle of staging must now be considered in the light of the independent discovery of cognate theatrical practices in the area indicated by the Walsham-le-Willows documents and (probably) Capgrave's remarks about the 'place all round' resembling what he understood to be the Roman amphitheatres. In addition, the reader may be urged to make a comparison between Professor McIntosh's map showing the scribal origins of the texts (Chapter Four, Map 4) and the mapping of the documentary evidence of plays and playing in East Anglia towards the end of Chapter Five (Map 5). This shows quite clearly how the literary, documentary and quasi-archaeological (i.e. Walsham-le-Willows) evidence constellates in a central East Anglian area. No immediate or specific connexions between texts and documents need be made on the strength of this, however. The rôle of this final chapter will be to attempt to see the East Anglian scaffold-and-place plays as a regional group exhibiting in certain general ways a common approach to stagecraft and dramaturgy. As I suggested at more than one point in Chapter Six, the game-place at Walsham is unlikely to have been an isolated feature of the later medieval East Anglian landscape; but until we have much more evidence of the same kind from comparable sources there is little to be gained from the attempt to make specific links between the texts and documentary materials.

The discussion of scaffold-and-place playing in East Anglia must remain then, for the time being, largely

on a theoretical level, and here the perspective created by the wider survey of dramatic, literary and artistic materials relevant to the subject - the bulk of Chapter Six - may be brought into play. The Cornish evidence has shown that scaffold-and-place playing on a parish basis, involving purpose-built earthen amphitheatres and texts with staging diagrams, could be a commonplace regional phenomenon in England. The Tegernsee *Antichristus* and *La Seinte Resurrecion* show the scaffold-and-place tradition to have been current at least as early as the twelfth century, and the latter is particularly interesting (I have argued) as an early vernacular manifestation of the form in England. Both texts show how the circular arrangement of *platea* and *loci* lends itself to the organisation of action in terms of symbolic space, a feature which also affects the rhetorical texture of both pieces. This trend towards acute stylisation of words and movement is a notable feature of certain scaffold-and-place texts, and is, as we shall see, a prominent feature of the *Castle of Perseverance*.

The scaffold-and-place image is taken up in different ways in fourteenth and fifteenth century literature and art, and several instances have been suggested. The elaborate symmetrical pageantry and symbolism associated with Theseus's 'theatre' in the *Knight's Tale* is part of larger patterns of order in the poem. Langland's adaption of the image in *Piers Plowman* furnishes allusions to a distinctive eschatological topography found in plays where the *platea* represents the world and the *loci* include Heaven and Hell.

Scaffold-and-place playing was probably a fact of life in certain parts of England in the later medieval period. The direct evidence - from Cornwall and East Anglia - is perhaps scanty, but the potency of the image is clearly apparent in the literary and artistic consciousness of the time. In its origin the circular stage was probably both primitive and iconographic - the traditional and ritual configuration for witnesses

or onlookers, and the early image of the world characteristically drawn in the _mappaemundi_.

II

Turning now to scaffold-and-place playing in East Anglia it is as well to bear in mind that the surviving texts vary a good deal in date, quality and in many details of setting and organisation. The Cornish evidence noted in Chapter Six is sufficient to show that the size of the playing-place and the number of scaffolds disposed around it could vary considerably in response to a variety of factors; no two plans-an-gwary appear to have been identical in size (on the surviving evidence) and the two extant texts call for eight and thirteen _loci_ respectively. Indeed, diversity and heterogeneity amongst the scaffold-and-place texts should not be unexpected, as one of the most obvious qualities of the form was its flexibility - the scale could be fairly large or quite intimate. Variations in the dispositions of the scaffolds gave opportunities for structural and symbolic emphasis.[1]

Like Cornwall, East Anglia used scaffold-and-place staging for biblical cycles (the _Ordinalia_ and the 'N-Town' Passion plays) and for saints' plays (_Beunans Meriasek_ and _Mary Magdalene_). The interest of the East Anglian tradition is further diversified by the inclusion of a large-scale morality, the _Castle of Perseverance_, and by the more modestly cast but nevertheless spectacular _Play of the Sacrament_. Like the Cornish texts the East Anglian scaffold-and-place plays have a clearly defined nomenclature in both explicit stage-directions and dialogue ('sunken' stage-directions) for details of the staging. In addition the _Castle of Perseverance_ text is accompanied in the manuscript by staging diagram closely resembling those found in the _Ordinalia_ and _Beunans Meriasek_ manuscripts. What is now necessary is some attempt to define the conventions which

governed scaffold-and-place playing in East Anglia, and to link such information with the notion of a regional tradition of drama.

In many ways the most clearly defined example of the East Anglian scaffold-and-place tradition is the Castle of Perseverance, and it is probably no coincidence that its literary qualities are in many respects superior to those of the other surviving texts. The approach I adopt here is first to show in detail how I believe the Castle was intended to function in terms of structure, style and dramaturgy and then more briefly to place its local congeners - which are all measurably later texts - in relation to the framework of reference thus established.

III

The 'Castle of Perseverance': Structure, Style and Dramaturgy

The case for the Castle as a primary document in the tradition of scaffold-and-place playing in later medieval East Anglia must rest to some extent on the interpretation of the staging diagram in the Macro manuscript,[2] taken together with the references to staging in the stage-directions and the dialogue.[3] The content of the play and the nature of its action are well known. The life-cycle pattern of the morality hero from the cradle to the grave (and here beyond) proceeds in the Castle by means of an extended series of peripeteias in which Mankind falls twice into deadly sin, but is redeemed.[4] As we shall see, the scaffold-and-place setting contributes to the audience's impression of the hero's spiritual progress, and his physical relationship to the symbolically oriented scaffolds and central castle indicates from time to time his varying moral status. Closely linked with the fall and redemption cursus of the morality tradition in general is the image in the Castle

of Mankind's life as a pilgrimage, and here the set can be shown to provide a kind of 'moral landscape' through which he travels.[5] A third way of looking at the <u>Castle</u> might see it as a series of <u>tableaux</u> compiled thematically from contemporary devotional literature, sermon and art. Familiar themes and iconographic <u>topoi</u> crowd in one after another in the expected places: the Three Enemies of Mankind, the Seven Deadly Sins, the Seven Virtues, the coming of Death, the Debate of the Body and Soul, the Debate of the Four Daughters of God, the siege of the allegorical castle are amongst the most obvious. Seen in these terms, the play functions as a compendious conceptual framework designed to accommodate the whole range of contemporary spiritual values in the eschatological space delineated by the set itself, a world bounded by a circle, with Heaven and Hell on the periphery.

The notion of the <u>Castle</u> set as an image of the world is an important link between the stagecraft of the piece and its theme. Like the Tegernsee <u>Antichristus</u> the <u>Castle</u> takes the whole world for its stage and subsumes all mankind in its cast. The world conception is clearly embodied in the <u>Castle's</u> staging diagram, indicating a circular area of land, the <u>platea</u>, bounded by a ditch, and this has already been compared with the conventional medieval representation of the world in the <u>mappaemundi</u>.[6] In the diagram the <u>platea</u> is referred to as the 'place', and in the stage-directions as <u>placea</u>. In the dialogue it is variously styled: 'green', 'green grass', 'plain', 'plain place', 'croft', 'field' and 'ground'.[7] Many of these terms find significant parallels in the other East Anglian plays, and the same goes for the <u>Castle's</u> nomenclature for the scaffolds around the <u>platea</u>. <u>Loci</u> for the World, the Flesh, the Devil and God are positioned at the west, south, north and east axes of the circle, and an additional <u>locus</u> for Covetousness is provided between God and the Devil, in the north-east. These <u>loci</u> are referred to as 'scaffolds' in the diagram, and Southern has shown in detail how they

must answer to the numerous references to characters ascending and descending in the dialogue.[8] They were evidently reached by means of ladders, probably in the manner indicated in the Fouquet St. Apollonia miniature discussed in Chapter Six (Section V B). In the Cornish plays the scaffolds are referred to as Lat. tenta or (in the dialogue) as 'tower'. East Anglian terminology as expressed in the Castle dialogue includes 'tower', 'salle', 'hall', 'dais', 'stage' and 'bower'.[9]

The positioning of the scaffolds in the Castle set is partly traditional, and the factors which place Hell in the north and Heaven in the east have been dealt with in the preceding chapter. They clearly also operated to determine the similar positions of these loci in the Ordinalia and Meriasek diagrams. One of the most interesting features of the Castle diagram, however, is the denial of total symmetry by the inclusion of the extra scaffold for Covetousness, largely in response to his exceptional didactic and thematic importance in the play.[10] This tendency to disrupt a carefully arranged symmetrical organization for symbolic and didactic effect is not only characteristic of the play's physical arrangements. It is in many ways a key to the rhetorical and verbal patterns which pervade the text, and this forms a substantive link between the stagecraft and the dramaturgy of the piece.

The cultivation of elaborate physical and verbal symmetries in the Castle has occasionally been noted in passing before,[11] and the rhetorical elaboration is more often than not mistaken for mere prolixity.[12] A detailed examination of the text reveals that the symmetry in the set and the staging has a formalised counterpart in the dramaturgy: the play is 'built' out of stylised blocks of verse, very often organised in symmetrical groups in response to the exigencies of character and action. The disruption of these careful symmetries is the normal structural means of expressing the peripeteias. I would suggest, then, that the Castle shows a set of well developed structural conventions which are closely linked
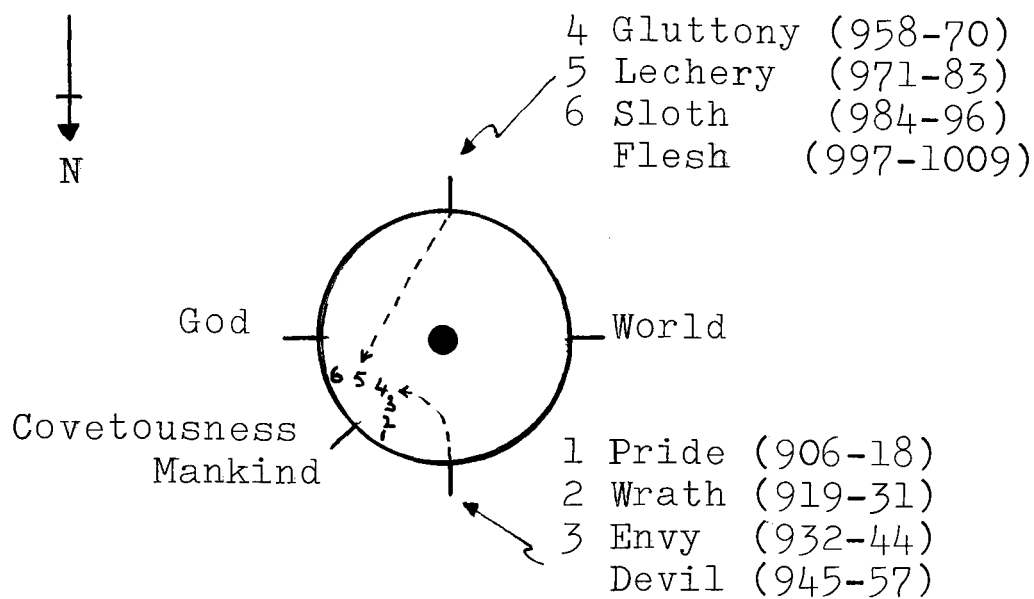
with the physical contingencies of a local tradition of staging. It was written with a particular theatre in mind, and it is natural to think that there were once other pieces circulating in the same area, and working within similar conventions.[13]

A detailed account of the structural conventions used in the <u>Castle of Perseverance</u>, with reference to the stagecraft, will make clear the direct link between the dramaturgy and the scaffold-and-place setting. As I suggested above, the play is 'built' out of blocks of verse, the characteristic unit being a well known thirteen line stanza of a type often used in northern English compositions of the period.[14] On some occasions in the <u>Castle</u> this is condensed into a nine line form, where the <u>frons</u> is halved to four lines, the bob-and-wheel <u>cauda</u> remaining with five. These thirteeners and niners are balanced against one another singly or in groups and much of the play is thus cast into extensive symmetrical patterns. In some places these stanza patterns are set up only to be halted or disrupted for a variety of effects. It is worth remarking that naturalistic dialogue is entirely absent from the play. The characters almost invariably speak a whole stanza or group of stanzas at a time, and on the rare occasions when a stanza is divided between two speakers this generally draws attention to a key moment in the action, and they each speak half of it.

These structural effects created by the manipulation of stanza patterns may be examined under several headings: (i) Episodes characterised by symmetrical groupings of stanzas, (ii) Disruptions of symmetrical stanza groupings for emphasis, (iii) Disruptions of symmetrical stanza groupings by the introduction of a different type of stanza, (iv) Disruptions of stanza patterns by the division of a single stanza, (v) The use of sustained speeches for emphasis.

(i) Episodes characterised by symmetrical groupings of stanzas. Examples of symmetrical groupings of stanzas

which reflect patterns of character, action and stage-craft are numerous. A clearly defined instance occurs when Backbiter brings Mankind, who has just lapsed into sin for the first time, to the scaffold of Covetousness standing at the north-east edge of the platea (815 ff.). Covetousness invites Mankind up to his scaffold and then calls across the platea for the other Deadly Sins to join them (893 ff.). Pride, Wrath and Envy appear on the Devil's scaffold to the north, and each speaks a thirteener. As they depart across the platea to assemble before Covetousness the Devil speaks one valedictory stanza of the same type (906-57). Gluttony, Lechery and Sloth then appear on Flesh's scaffold to the south, and the pattern is repeated (958-1009):

4 Gluttony (958-70)
5 Lechery (971-83)
6 Sloth   (984-96)
Flesh   (997-1009)

N

God   World

Covetousness
Mankind

1 Pride (906-18)
2 Wrath (919-31)
3 Envy   (932-44)
Devil   (945-57)

A more sustained and complex example of this kind of patterning occurs in the episode following Mankind's defection from the Seven Deadly Sins and Covetousness's scaffold to the Castle in the centre of the platea (1746 ff.). The Bad Angel instructs Backbiter to call out the forces of evil, and Backbiter goes round the platea to the scaffolds of the Devil, the Flesh and the World in turn. The exchanges which follow employ a combination of stanza forms, but an identical pattern is repeated three times. The Three Enemies of Mankind are informed of their victim's defection, they in turn summon out the Deadly Sins associated with them, descend from their scaffolds and beat the Sins in placeam: 2

monorhyming quatrains, one thirteener, a couplet, a
niner and a thirteener (1746-1898). This symmetrical
use of stanza forms of varying weight and length,
combined with both lateral and vertical movement must
signify the work of a writer thoroughly accustomed to
the theatrical conventions of scaffold-and-place
playing. The audience's attention shifts rapidly from
scaffold to place and back, the transitions being
skilfully 'covered' by Backbiter's direct address to
the audience as he moves around the platea. Many
episodes in the Castle can be analysed along these lines,
and a good deal of the action can be inferred from the
elaborate rhetorical patterning. Stagecraft and
dramaturgy are woven into a formidable artistic unity.[15]

(ii) Disruptions of symmetrical stanza groupings
for emphasis. The writer of the Castle not only
cultivated formalised patterns of stanza arrangement,
he also saw the stylistic and dramatic potential of
violating such patterns to locate significant points in
the action. For instance, the play begins with three
impressive boasts directed at the audience by the World,
the Devil and Flesh from their scaffolds around the
periphery of the platea. Each boast consists of three
of the thirteen line stanzas, except for the last, spoken
by Flesh (260 ff.), an irregular fourteen liner
ababcdddcefffg, in effect a double bob-and wheel. Flesh's
final stanza draws together the preceding speeches and
their drift: 'Behold þe Werld, þe Deuyl, and me!/...
besy we be/For to distroy Mankende'. Then a sudden
exhortation to the audeince is subjoined in the irregular
addition to the stanza just noted:

> Þerfor on hylle
> Syttyth all stylle
> And seth wyth good wylle
> Oure ryche aray.

The moment is a striking one for the audience. They have
been harangued from the west, the north and the south in
turn by the main agents of evil in the play, who
effectively make their world co-extensive with that of
the round theatre. The twist at the end of Flesh's

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speech suddenly points up this relationship, rounds off the opening of the play and initiates the action.

A particularly informative example of this means of communicating the significance of an episode through a combination of action and rhetorical device occurs in the siege of the Castle by the Seven Deadly Sins, followed by the discomfiture of the Virtues by Covetousness (2060-660). Though many details of the staging of the battle are not known, the formal and symmetrical organization of the verse up to the point of Covetousness's victory provides some evidence of how the dramatist conceived the scene and its didactic significance. The pairing of Vices and Virtues in allegorical conflict is a theme common in the didactic literature and art of the period,[16] and the way that it is handled in the verse of the Castle indicates that the writer had clear ideas of how the episode should be staged, given the theatrical mode within which he was working. In the following diagram four distinct phases of the battle are distinguished and anatomized. The figures which follow the name of each speaker indicate the scope of the speech and the type of stanza used, e.g. 13 x 2 = two thirteen-line stanzas:

I (2060)			II (2235)		
Devil	9		Flesh	13	
Pride	13		Gluttony	13	
Meekness	13	x 2	Abstinence	13	x 2
Wrath	13		Lechery	13	
Patience	13	x 2	Chastity	13	x 2
Envy	13		Sloth	13	
Charity	13	x 2	Busyness	13	x 2
Devil	13		Flesh	13	
(pugnabunt)			(pugnabunt)		
Pride	9		Gluttony	9	
Envy	9		Lechery	9	
Wrath	9		Sloth	9	
Bad Angel	9		Bad Angel	9	
(2234)			(2413)		

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III (2414)			IV (2544)	
World	13		Good Angel	13
Covetousness	13		Meekness	13
Largity	13	x 2	Patience	13
Covetousness	13		Charity	13
Mankind	13		Abstinence	13
Covetousness	13		Chastity	13
Mankind	13		Busyness	13
Covetousness	13		Largity	13
Mankind	13		Bad Angel	13
(2543)			(2660)	

Presented diagramatically the elaborate formalism in the handling of the episode becomes clear. Sections I and II of the battle at the Castle for Mankind resolve themselves into mirror-images which reflect one another in almost all details. The assault of each Vice is initiated in one thirteen-line stanza and each is repulsed in turn by the appropriate Virtue, who replies in two stanzas of the same type. This verbal encounter is then repeated in symbolic action: 'Tunc pugnabunt diu', and some details of the individual conflicts may be gleaned from the nine line 'discomfiture' stanza which each Vice afterwards speaks. Each group of Vices is exhorted in parallel speeches by its leader, the Devil or Flesh, and each group is abused by the Bad Angel after their failure to take the Castle.

Sections III and IV of the battle, as set out above, break down the pattern and establish from a structural point of view the extraordinary emphasis which the writer gives Covetousness for his part in the downfall of Mankind. Section III (2414 ff.) opens like I and II with an exhortation from one of the Three Enemies to a tributary Vice. Covetousness's thirteen-line assault-speech to Largity follows, and prevails, the latter's two thirteeners in reply admitting defeat instead of discomfiting the Vice, as had been the case in I and II. Covetousness thus gains access to Mankind himself, who renews his old relationship with sin in an exchange of three pairs of symmetrically arranged thirteeners. The pattern established in I and II is thus disrupted and the playwright's point about the primacy of Covetousness

in the downfall of Mankind is conveyed on the rhetorical and dramatic levels, as well as on the conceptual. Section IV, as it has been set out above, functions as another structural unit, and some parallel with III is suggested by the presence of a similar number of the same type of stanza. The speeches of the Good and Bad Angels form a frame to IV, and within this each of the Virtues gives a single stanza of lament and self-exculpation, emphasizing the power of Covetousness and man's free will.[17] The battle scene is rounded off with a single short section (2661 ff.) in which Mankind, the Good Angel and the World sum up the situation from their own points of view, each addressing the audience in a single thirteen-line stanza.

(iii) Disruptions of symmetrical stanza groupings by the introduction of a different type of stanza. Turning points and other significant features of the action in the Castle are from time to time indicated by the introduction of a special stanza form amongst the usual carefully apportioned thirteeners and niners. These usually take the form of a series of monorhyming quatrains in dimeter.[18] An example of the kind of effect achieved is the speech of lamentation delivered by the Good Angel at lines 1286 to 1297, after Mankind has fallen into sin for the first time. The rhythm is a sudden change from the alliterative rhodomontades of the more spacious stanzas. The three monorhyming quatrains sound a more urgent note, and effectively mark off a phase in the action, for Confession hears the Good Angel's lament and the movement towards Mankind's temporary repentance in initiated. Other examples of this use of a special stanza form to define a significant moment in the action are the moment when Mankind's soul is carried off to Hell (3121-3128), and the beginning and end of the episode of the Four Daughters of God (3229-3248 and 3574-3597). In both cases, it should be noted, the use of the monorhyme is linked to significant movements in the platea or in connexion with the loci.

(iv) Disruption of stanza patterns by the division of a single stanza. The writer of the Castle seems to have deliberately avoided cut-and-thrust dialogue of a realistic type, involving elaborate stanza divisions, such as is found elsewhere in Middle English drama.[19] There are, however, examples of stanzas divided between two speakers in the Castle, and these too function as structural devices which elucidate the significance of an episode. At lines 699 ff. Lust and Folly, having clothed Mankind in rich array, present him to the World. The World instructs Mankind to go from his scaffold to that of 'my tresorer, Syr Couetouse' (764) to be equipped with wealth. All this passes in the play's usual thirteeners. Some few lines later, however, there comes a moment which is given particular emphasis by means of dividing a single quatrain between Mankind and the World, as if to confirm their new relationship in the play's own stylistic terms:

> HUM. GEN. Syr Worlde, I wende,
> In Coueytyse to chasyn my kende.
>
> MUNDUS. Haue hym in mende,
> And iwys þanne schalt þou be ryth þende.
> (785-788)

The characteristic arrangement of thirteen-line stanzas then resumes, but the pause given by the split stanza creates an effective dramatic moment as Mankind leaves the World's scaffold to cross the platea to Covetousness.

Another example of an identical technique occurs much later in the play when the dying Mankind encounters the eerie figure of the nameless boy who inherits all his wealth (2895 ff.). Mankind, who by now has become embroiled with Covetousness for the second time, is appalled by the prospect that his accumulated wealth should go to the mysterious gadling 'I-Wot-Never-Who', and the passing of his possessions is handled with appropriate symbolic emphasis. The pattern of thirteeners and niners is broken once again to accommodate a single stanza divided between Mankind and the Boy:

> HUM. GEN. I preye þe now, syn þou þis
> good schalt gete,
> Telle þi name or þat I goo.

GARCIO. Loke þat þou it not forȝete:
My name is I Wot Neuere Whoo.
(2965-2968)

Just as Mankind's pact with the world and its goods was
sealed by structural and rhetorical means, so is the
pledge broken.

A third example of this technique of 'pledging' by
dividing an isolated quatrain between two speakers is
intimately bound up with the stagecraft of the Castle.
The elaborate symmetry of the scene in which Covetousness
calls up the other Deadly Sins to present themselves in
the place before his scaffold has been examined in detail
above, with the aid of a diagram (893 ff.). After an
exchange of courtesies between Covetousness aloft and
the Vices in the place (1010 ff.) each Vice makes an
introduction to Mankind in a single thirteen-line stanza,
and he replies in the same way, inviting each in turn to
come up and join him on the scaffold. The Vices present
themselves in the order in which they left their
scaffolds (an order which they keep elsewhere, e.g. the
battle scene, 2060 ff.) and after the exchange with
Mankind each Vice 'pledges' itself by dividing a single
monorhyme quatrain with him, much in the way that
Mankind and the World made their pact (785-788). For
instance, Envy ascends to join Mankind with the following
divided stanza to 'cover' and emphasize the symbolic
action:

INVIDIA. I climbe fro þis crofte
Wyth Mankynde to syttyn on lofte.

HUM. GEN. Cum, syt here softe,
For in abbeys þou dwellyst ful ofte.
(1144-1147)

The ascent of each Vice is handled in this way, and
eventually Mankind is surrounded by the whole panoply of
Sins on the scaffold, and the play resumes its normal
rhythm of thirteeners.

(v) The use of sustained speeches for emphasis.
Given the various formalised patternings of stanzas
examined above it is not surprising that the Castle
playwright was aware of the potential of sustained
speeches for lending particular emphasis to character or

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action. Only very few characters speak more than three of the thirteen-line stanzas in succession, and as is suggested in the foregoing analysis the bulk of the action is transacted in units of one and two stanzas, with occasional variations for emphasis. Exceptions to this pattern usually function in a fairly obvious way. The World, Flesh and Devil open the play with tumultuous three stanza boasts, and Covetousness is allowed structural prominence in a sustained exposition of his ways to the newly fallen Mankind (828-866). God concludes the play with a group of four impressive stanzas which universalizes the plight of Mankind by turning the moral of the piece outwards to the audience (3598-3648). Elsewhere, the main concentration of sustained speeches is found in the Debate of the Four Daughters of God, though the 'walking and wending' speeches of Death, Backbiter and Mankind also deserve attention in this context.

The discursive speeches of the Four Daughters of God before the throne of the Father concerning the possible redemption of Mankind occupy some 325 lines (3249-3573), excluding a number of Latin tags which are not part of the verse structure. Twenty-five of the thirteen-line stanzas appear, Truth speaking 6 (5 + 1), Mercy 8 (5 + 3), Justice 5 and Peace 6. The scene has been criticised for being 'dogmatic and actionless',[20] and this is in one sense so, probably because this was the author's intention. This view may be supported by the structural evidence. In spite of its considerable length the play's action is handled in a large number of small discrete units, often defined by stanza patterning. This feature, taken together with the diversified dramaturgy and staging which it answers to, has presented an image of Mankind pulled hither and thither by the contradictory forces which appeal to his free will. Accordingly, the audience's attention has been drawn briskly from scaffold to scaffold around the platea (with one very noticeable exception), and around the platea itself throughout the piece. Now for the first time in

the play God's scaffold in the east becomes the focus of attention. The representation of God evidently involved a _pietà_ image of the suffering Christ,[21] and in response the verse moves for the first time into a more spacious meditative dimension. As has been pointed out elsewhere, this extended version of the Debate of the Four Daughters is more dramatically effective than the briefer example in the 'N-Town' plays.[22] In the latter, the point at issue is whether humanity should be redeemed by the Incarnation. The placing of the debate in the _Castle_ resembles somewhat the treatment of the same episode in _Piers Plowman_,[23] where the context is the Harrowing of Hell episode: in both cases souls hang in the balance at a more intense and urgent moment, and the significance of the issues at stake is in clearer focus.

Long speeches are used elsewhere in the _Castle_ to give character in particular added emphasis or importance. The entry of Death, for instance, involves five stanzas of direct address to the audience, allowing the full impact of the image in a circuit of the _platea_ (2778-2842). Dramatic irony accumulates meanwhile as Mankind revels in the wealth provided by Covetousness for his old age.[24] Again, lines 647 to 698 are occupied by four stanzas from Backbiter, the World's messenger, who introduces himself to the audience, boasts to them of his activities and informs them of how he intends to lead Mankind into evil.[25] Like Death, Backbiter 'walks and wends' in the _platea_ (660), and it appears that these long 'walking and wending' speeches were partly conventional with characters of familiar thematic and symbolic significance for the audience.

The most instructive example of the 'walking and wending' speech is the one in which Mankind appears for the first time and introduces himself to the audience (275-325). It has been shown[26] that the four thirteen-line stanzas that he speaks contain 'sunken' stage-directions which reveal exactly where he is standing in the _platea_ at successive points in the speech. As we

have seen, in the opening boasts the World, the Devil
and Flesh have proclaimed themselves and their
intentions towards Mankind from their scaffolds to the
west, north and south of the _platea_. Mankind then
appears and delivers the first stanza of his 'walking
and wending' speech in front of Flesh's scaffold,
referring appropriately to his nakedness and birth (275-
287). The second stanza, 'Wherto I was to þis werld
browth' etc. (288ff.) is delivered in front of the World's
scaffold, whilst the third (301ff.), with its references
to 'þo dewlys' (308) and 'helle' (309) is appropriately
spoken in front of the Hell _locus_. The fourth stanza
is largely a prayer to 'Lord Jesu in heuene hall' (318),
i.e. God's scaffold in the east. A diagram will make
the movement clear:
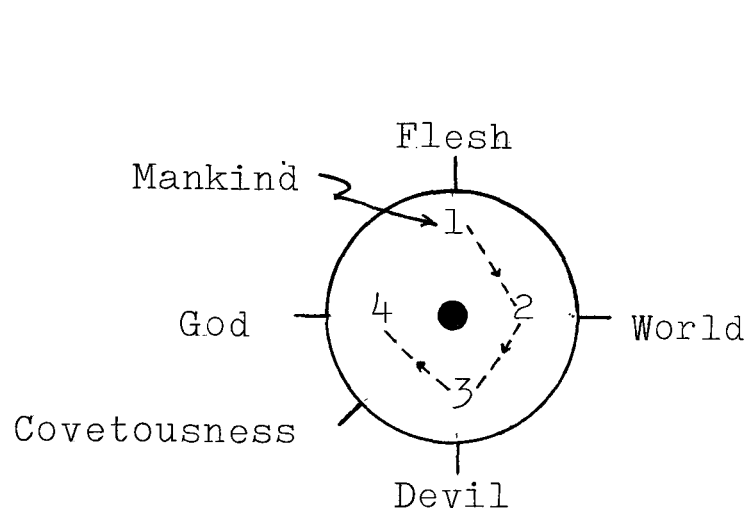
As has been pointed out, the speech constitutes a
striking prefiguration of the action of the rest of the
play, 'a microcosm, as it were, of the play as a whole,
with Mankind moving through each of the cardinal points
and ending with a plea for mercy before Deus skaffold'.[27]
    It would be otiose to multiply examples of how
the structural and rhetorical patterning of the Castle
is intimately connected with its stagecraft and set.
Criticisms alledging verbosity are in general ill-judged.
The text certainly expresses itself at length in some
places, but an understanding of the theatrical

conventions involved shows how this kind of elaboration is subsumed into a larger artistic purpose. A distinct dramaturgy has been evolved to meet the needs of the physical circumstances of scaffold-and-place playing.

The Castle of Perseverance is, then, a play written with a particular kind of setting in mind, and as I have suggested above is unlikely to have been an isolated or unique theatrical phenomenon. There is at present no way of knowing precisely where, or exactly by whom it was staged in fifteenth century East Anglia. A widely held view is that because the text is preceded by banns it must have been for the use of a band of travelling players - albeit a remarkably large one. This need not necessarily follow.[28] One of the patterns of playing in East Anglia noted in Chapter Five was the tendency to organise performances on a parish basis, with a central community receiving contributions from surrounding settlements towards the costs of the production. Banns might well have been sent round these contributory villages to advertise a forthcoming performance. A very clearly defined example of this pattern emerges from the early sixteenth century churchwardens accounts of Bassingbourn discussed towards the end of Chapter Five. Walsham-le-Willows, which built a game-place closely comparable to the set indicated by the Castle diagram, also appears to have gathered payments from neighbouring places on a similar basis (Chapter Five, documentary records, nos. 40, 41).

The Castle is certainly a long and ambitious production but its elaborate formalism, with characters speaking in careful sequential patterns, may also have been intended to serve as a mnemonic device. The production is almost rhetorically 'orchestrated', and it is tempting to suggest that a régisseur of the type shown in the Fouquet St. Apollonia and Sabine Women miniatures was involved. The Fouquet régisseurs both carry scripts and direct the productions with long wands; they may be compared with the brotherhood priest hired

to 'bear the book' at the Bassingbourn play just
mentioned.

Lastly, an East Anglian parish morality play need
not be unexpected. The play extracts found in the late
fifteenth century commonplace book of a Norfolk church-
warden strongly suggests that moralities formed part of
the local dramatic tradition on a parish level (Chapter
Five, documentary records, no. 1).

IV

The 'N-Town' Manuscript - Scaffold-and-Place Playing in the Passion Plays

The foregoing examination of certain aspects of the
Castle of Perseverance sets a pattern, on the textual
level, for scaffold-and-place playing in East Anglia in
the first half of the fifteenth century. This links up
with Capgrave's contemporary remark about the theatrical
'place all round' and the later documentary evidence of
the circular game-place at Walsham-le-Willows.

Plays found in at least three other East Anglian
manuscripts of the mid-fifteenth to early sixteenth
centuries give additional indications that scaffold-and-
place playing may once have been common in the area. Of
these the most difficult to deal with is the heterogeneous
compilation of dramatic materials in the 'N-Town'
manuscript, B.L. Cotton Vespasian D. viii. In Chapter
Four it was argued that this compilation was made in
central East Anglia, probably over a period spanning
the 1460's and 1470's, and that the manuscript was still
in use when a later hand interpolated material at about
the turn of the fifteenth century. Beyond this we know
virtually nothing of who made the collection, or
precisely where it was owned and used. Here one stands
on the brink of the formidable textual and bibliographical
problem of exactly how this unusually irregular manuscript
was made up.

The scope and nature of the 'N-Town' collection
resemble in general the pattern of the Corpus Christi
cycles of the north, York, Wakefield and Chester.
Close scrutiny of the manuscript itself, however,
forestalls any easy conclusion that it contains the
'lost' Corpus Christi cycle of some similar large town -
Lincoln was once a popular suggestion. The 'N-Town'
manuscript is small (8 ins. x $5\frac{1}{2}$ ins.), made of paper,
irregularly quired, and contains much evidence of
interpolation and alteration, both in the process of
compilation and afterwards.[29] This contrasts markedly
with the more carefully produced civic 'registers' from
the north, the (originally) regularly quired vellum
manuscripts from York and Wakefield. The 'N-Town' plays
also differ in crucial ways from the attested Corpus
Christi cycles in content. They include a series of
plays - evidently once a self-contained group - on the
early life of the Virgin, unparalleled elsewhere. The
episodes dealing with the Passion are combined into two
long continuous pieces (now usually known as Passion
Play I and Passion Play II) of around 1,000 and 1,600
lines respectively.[30] These were, at some time, given
as successive productions over two years in the same
place, and bibliographical and textual evidence suggests
that these parts of the manuscript were prepared at a
different time from the rest of the materials; they
may once have had an independent existence. The earliest
known owner of the 'N-Town' manuscript, Robert Hegge,
wrote his name twice on it, once at the beginning and
once on f. 164r, the first (blank) leaf of the Passion II
quires which Block describes as 'discoloured, having
apparently been an outside leaf at some time'.[31] There
may be a hint here that the manuscript was not all in
one piece when it passed into the Cottonian library,
where a good deal of disbinding and rebinding is known
to have gone on.[32] The early history of the manuscript
in the Cottonian library is curiously obscure. In
Dugdale's Warwickshire it is referred to as a series of
New Testament plays 'In bibl. Cotton. sub effigie Vesp.

D.9', which Block regarded as either a slip or another possible reference to the separate existence of the Passion sections.[33] References to the 'N-Town' collection in the seventeenth century catalogues of the Cottonian library do not confirm this latter possibility positively, but lend further colour to it. The system of classifying the manuscripts according to the names of Roman emperors was adopted in 1638, nine years after Cotton had acquired the play manuscript, and it is worth noting that it cannot originally have been marked 'Vespasian D. viii' under this system. That place was occupied by the present Caligula A ii, and subsequently by another manuscript which I have failed to identify, before accommodating the 'N-Town' manuscript.[34] Passion II is also distinguished by being written on paper not used elsewhere in the manuscript, occupying quires S and T, with a 'Crossed Keys' watermark.[35] Passion I occupies quires N, P, Q and R where the paper has a 'Bull's Head' watermark also used nowhere else in the manuscript.[36] The main hand's writing in this part is also distinguished in various ways from its work earlier in the text, and, as has been pointed out in Chapter Four, there are also graphemic differences present.[37]

There is, then, more than a suspicion that the 'N-Town' Passions were once self-contained and independent pieces, and perhaps more work on the bibliographical and orthographical evidence will reveal further distinctive features. The staging of these two Passion Plays was very clearly of the East Anglian 'scaffold-and-place' type, and their relationship with the other texts in the manuscript - where the mise-en-scène is markedly less well defined - is a difficult and probably unprofitable question in the present state of knowledge.[38] It is useful, however, to take the two Passion Plays together for evidence of staging comparable to though not as clearly defined as that yielded by the Castle of Perseverance. Unlike the Castle manuscript with its diagram, and unlike the bulk of the materials in the 'N-Town' manuscript, the Passion Plays have a

series of long and informative stage directions in English only paralleled by some in other East Anglian plays, the Sacrament and Mary Magdalene. These, together with information from the dialogue, enable us to reconstruct in some detail another example of scaffold-and-place playing in the area.

As has been shown in Chapter Four, the bulk of the 'N-Town' manuscript was written by a south Norfolk scribe who probably came from a very similar locality to the one responsible for the Castle of Perseverance, perhaps a generation earlier. If the writer of the 'N-Town' Passions also came from this area he may have had models like the Castle before him. The two Passions were at some time produced in the same place in subsequent years, and it may be that they were put on by some community with a suitable playing-place for performances of the scaffold-and-place type. At least one such existed in the early sixteenth century at Walsham, in the immediate neighbourhood of the scribal origin of the 'N-Town' manuscript. The sets for the two parts of the Passion narrative appear to have been similar, but were not necessarily identical.

It is important to note how the staging rubrics for the 'N-Town' Passions use nomenclature to describe the set quite similar to that in the Castle text and diagram. The platea is referred to as the 'place'[39] (233/80, 238/221, 295/697, 314/1226 etc.), and this was evidently a circular area - characters are led, or go 'round about' the place (273/69, 280/244, 287/465). One character perhaps refers to the platea figuratively as 'þis werd rownde', reminiscent of the important stage-world metaphor in the Castle (LC 266/1009; cf. Castle 2954).

Like the Castle both parts of the Passion employ a locus at the centre of the platea. In P. I the Bishops and the Pharisees meet in 'þe myd place and þer xal be a lytil oratory... lych as it were a cownsel hous...' (235/124, cf. 245/397). This locus reappears in P. II as the moot-hall (278/209, 279/218, 225, 280/244) or

council house (291/582, 293/635) in the _platea_ to which the prelates and Pilate descend from their scaffold for conferences.

Like the scaffolds in the <u>Castle</u> set the structures used in the 'N-Town' Passions are variously referred to: 'scaffold' (232/44, 279/214, 283/356, 289/522 etc.), 'hall' (243/359, 283/349, 327/1639), 'house' (245/392, 397, 254/669) and 'stage' (230/40). These scaffolds could be curtained off from time to time whilst action took place elsewhere on the set. As in the <u>Castle</u>, the characters speak of themselves or are referred to as ascending to or descending from the scaffolds (263/944, 264/956, 301/845).

The exact number of <u>loci</u> around the _platea_ is not altogether certain, particularly in P. II, which has undergone interpolation and dove-tailing with other material towards the end.[40] <u>Loci</u> for Heaven and Hell appear to have been present for both parts, and were perhaps placed to the east and north, the traditional positions used in the <u>Castle</u> diagram and elsewhere (258/792, 796, ?255/693, 263/944, 264/956, 288/502).[41] In addition (though this is not altogether certain) both P. I and P. II also employ three other peripheral <u>loci</u>. In P. I Annas and Caiaphas have scaffolds to themselves (230/40, 232/44) and a third is used as both Simon the Leper's house and the location of the Last Supper (245/397, 254/669). In P. II Annas and Caiaphas appear on the same scaffold (p. 271, opening rubric, and cf. 274/97) whilst Herod and Pilate have scaffolds to themselves (p. 271, opening rubric).[42]

It is perhaps co-incidental, but the 'N-Town' Passions may well have had a set surprisingly similar to that of the <u>Castle of Perseverance</u> - a circular _platea_, a central <u>locus</u> and five peripheral <u>loci</u>. If Heaven and Hell are placed in their traditional positions to the east and north, and the other peripheral scaffolds placed at points corresponding to those in the <u>Castle</u> diagram the resemblance is clear. In the accompanying diagram 1, 2 and 3 indicate possible positions for the scaffolds

of Annas, Caiaphas and Simon the Leper/Last Supper in
P. I, and Pilate, Herod and Caiaphas and Annas in
P. II; 4 signifies the central council house in both
cases:
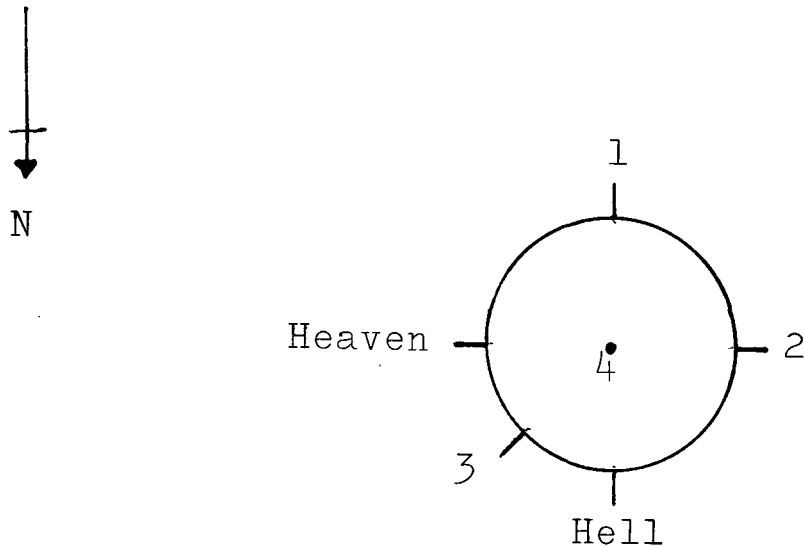
This I believe to have been the general layout of the
set for both parts of the 'N-Town' Passion, though it
does not solve all the minor problems posed by the
indications for staging in the rubrics and dialogue.[43]
        The dramaturgy of the Passions naturally has much
in common with the organization of action in the Castle,
but there are equally interesting differences in the
exploitation of the scaffold-and-place setting. There
is no opportunity for the N-Town dramatist to use the
symbolic potential of the set as the Castle playwright
does, making the loci and their disposition physical
correlatives for the hero's moral and spiritual state.
He is bound by the biblical narrative to regard the
scaffolds as local habitations for the main characters,
and there is no impropriety in mingling these
representations of historical locations with an
eschatological topography involving Heaven and Hell -
a twelfth century vernacular precedent for this in
scaffold-and-place playing exists in La Seinte
Resurrecion. As in several comparable examples for
which we have details, God and the Devil - often silent
for most or all of the action - preside over the events

which pass from scaffolds traditionally placed to the east and north of the _platea_. Other examples are the _Castle_ itself and the Cornish _Ordinalia_ and _Meriasek_. In Fouquet's _St. Apollonia_ miniature God and the Devil oversee the martyrdom, and as we shall see in a moment the East Anglian _Mary Magdalene_ involves _loci_ for the same two figures.

A distinctive feature of the handling of the scaffold-and-place setting is the use of simultaneous presentation, especially for the arrangement of set _tableaux_ and the contrivance of dramatic irony and surprise. The rubrics in the Passions have several instances of scaffolds being curtained off to prepare a later scene whilst action proceeds elsewhere on the set. For instance, in P. I what has been Simon the Leper's scaffold is curtained off and the scene changes to the Last Supper; meanwhile, in the _platea_, Judas is betraying Jesus to the Jews[44]... 'þan xal þe place þer cryst is in xal sodeynly vn-close rownd Abowtyn shewyng cryst syttyng at þe table and his dyscypulys ech in ere degre...' (254/669). The intention is to present a familiar iconographic image to the audience, a momentary _tableau_ to which they would be thoroughly accustomed in pictorial art. Another familiar scene which gains a different kind of potency through simultaneous presentation occurs in P. II, where Christ, who is being beaten on Annas and Cayphas's scaffold (274/97 ff.) sees Peter deny him thrice, evidently below in the _platea_ (277/173 ff.).

The 'N-Town' Passion Plays provide, then, a second important example of scaffold-and-place playing in East Anglia to lay beside the _Castle of Perseverance_ and the documentary evidence. As I have already suggested, it is rash - in the current state of knowledge - to go further than this and state that all the plays in Ms. Vespasian D. viii were staged in precisely this manner. Some of them may have been partially adapted, perhaps from a variety of sources, to the scaffold-and-place

pattern. Others give little or no evidence of how they were staged. The Banns, which do not relate to the two long Passion Plays appearing later in the manuscript, refer to a series of plays to be shown 'in oure pleyn place' (12/399), a phrase which certainly relates to scaffold-and-place playing in the Castle (160); a similar term appears in another East Anglian play, the Sacrament (506, see below). A rubric in the Noah play refers to the locum interludij (39/142), perhaps a literal rendering of 'playing-place', and the Visitation episode contains a rubric for characters to move circa placeam (116/22). References of this sort amount to relatively little beside the clear and extensive evidence for scaffold-and-place playing in the Passion Plays.

V

Scaffold-and-Place Playing in early Sixteenth Century East Anglia - the Digby 'Mary Magdalene' and the 'Play of the Sacrament'.

Two of the sixteenth century East Anglian texts show clear signs that their staging involved some variety of the scaffold-and-place setting characteristic of the area. In Chapter Four it was suggested that the Digby Mary Magdalene[45] and the Play of the Sacrament[46] were copied in Norfolk in the early years of the sixteenth century, with the qualification that both texts were probably circulating in the area in the latter half of the fifteenth. Both pieces offer further evidence for scaffold-and-place playing in Norfolk and Suffolk at or around the time when the Castle of Perseverance and the 'N-Town' Passions were in use, and they extend the period of currency for the pattern into the sixteenth century. Once again, the point about the construction of a circular game-place at Walsham in northern Suffolk in this later period is relevant.

Like the 'N-Town' Passions, Mary Magdalene yields
indications of its mode of presentation implicitly in
the dialogue and directly in a number of stage directions,
often in English. The suggestion that it was played in
the round in a manner similar to the Castle is not new.
It was made as early as 1909 by V.E. Albright,[47] who
produced an illustration of his conjectural
reconstruction of the staging. More recently Wickham
has taken up the subject and has pointed to other
possibilities, though, as the ensuing account will
indicate, I do not think they will be profitably pursued.[48]

A key point to be borne in mind, as Wickham has
observed, is that Mary Magdalene has largely been loosely
constructed out of pre-existing dramatisations of a
number of episodes. Legendary occurrences from the
saint's life are woven in with dramatic treatments of
her appearances in the New Testament narrative, and it
is noticeable that the treatment of these is modelled
on – if not actually borrowed from – a Corpus Christi
play: the Raising of Lazarus, the Visit to the
Sepulchre, the anointing of Christ's feet and 'Noli me
tangere' all follow this pattern. The wafting of the
Magdalene to Heaven is directly copied from the
Assumption of the Virgin, even down to the singing of
Assumpta est Maria. 'In short, there is a good case
for suggesting that the fons et origo of this play was
not a dramatic treatment of a legendary narrative of
Mary Magdalene's life per se, but the theatrical adaption
of an extensive stock of scenic units to a new purpose'.[49]

This is even more clearly true of the early part of
the play, where Mary falls into sin like a character in
a morality play. The compiler was obviously quite
familiar with a text very like the Castle of Perseverance,
and, as both plays are from Norfolk, conceivably the
Castle itself. This goes for both the form and content
of the earlier morality, and of course its staging, as I
shall indicate presently. In Mary Magdalene the World,
the Flesh and Devil all appear on scaffolds to boast,
and resolve to draw the heroine into sin. They are

accompanied by symmetrically arranged retinues of the
Deadly Sins after the pattern of the Castle. At this
point Mary occupies a 'castle' placed (as I shall argue)
in the centre of the platea. The Good and Bad Angels
of the Castle also re-appear. A siege of the castle
by the Seven Deadly Sins after the manner of the
morality takes place, and as Covetousness betrays
Mankind in the Castle, so Lechery overcomes Mary. Later,
when Mary repents, the Deadly Sins are beaten in the
place for failing to keep their victim in sin - again,
an episode from the Castle. A close resemblance, if not
a direct debt to the earlier play is unmistakeable.
Again, pre-existing materials, perhaps part of a local
dramatic tradition in Norfolk, have been incorporated
into the play. I shall now go on to argue that Mary
Magdalene was also staged after the pattern established
above for the Castle and the 'N-Town' Passions.

The platea in Mary Magdalene is referred to as
'place' in the English rubrics (563, 587, 1445, 1923)
and 'placea-' in the Latin ones (1716, 1879). The last
four of these references relate to the entry and exit of
a ship, and there is a close resemblance to the handling
of the ship episode of Noah in the 'N-Town' collection,
noticed towards the end of the previous section:

> tunc navis venit In placeam (MM 1716).
> Hic transit noe cum familia sua
> pro navi quo exeunte locum interludij (LC 39/141).

It is interesting that singing accompanies the movement
of the ship in both cases (MM 1436, LC 41/197). I take
the rubric at line 1879 to imply that the platea for
Mary Magdalene is circular:

> ...tunc navis venit ad circa[50] placeam.

A distinctive locus is the castle occupied by the
Magdalene's family. It is referred to as such several
times in the dialogue (59, 299, 417, and cf. 764, 'tower')
and the rubrics (845, 924). After line 439 it is
besieged by the Seven Deadly Sins, perhaps after the
pattern of the Castle of Perseverance. If the local
tradition established by the Castle and the 'N-Town'

Passions is anything to go by the castle locus in <u>Mary</u> <u>Magdalene</u> stood in the centre of the <u>platea</u>.[51]

The exact number and positioning of the peripheral <u>loci</u> is a difficult question, and I doubt if the text can be made to yield precise information on either count. As with a number of scaffold-and-place plays, Heaven and Hell are both present, and probably occupied traditional positions in the east and north. Heaven is described as 'heavenly towers' (1077), and, like <u>loci</u> in the 'N-Town' Passions, it opens and closes (1348). There are frequent references to ascents and descents in connexion with it (1375, 1596/7, 1598 etc.). The Hell <u>locus</u> is particularly clearly described, and the structure may be the pattern for Hells in other scaffold-and-place productions:

> Here xal entyr þe prynse of dylles
> In a stage, and Helle ondyr-neth
> þat stage ... (357).

Elsewhere the same <u>locus</u> is referred to as a 'tower' (360) and a 'stage' (563), and the Devil invites other characters to 'come up' and join him (725, 737). The correspondence of this kind of nomenclature to the regular East Anglian patterns is clear.

The resemblances between <u>Mary Magdalene</u> and the <u>Castle of Perseverance</u> are partly the reason for suggesting that the two other Enemies of Mankind, the Flesh and the World, also have scaffolds in the later play. The World in fact invites another character to 'come up' to his 'tent' (386, cf. Lat. <u>tenta</u> 'scaffold'). A <u>locus</u> for Flesh is not referred to explicitly, but like his counterpart in the <u>Castle</u> and his companions in the present case he makes a boast of the conventional type spoken from a scaffold before entering the <u>platea</u> to join in the action (334 ff.). A messenger, Sensuality (394 ff.), is used in this part of the action to communicate between the <u>loci</u>, after the manner of Backbiter in the <u>Castle</u>.

In addition to Heaven, Hell and the <u>loci</u> for the Three Enemies there were evidently other peripheral

scaffolds for the more significant characters, together with various temporary minor locations set (I suggest) in the _platea_. The text does not give anything approaching precise information about any of these. I would suggest that the other scaffolds include the Emperor of Rome's 'seat' (48, and cf. 1293) from which he opens the play with a conventional boast; it is also referred to as a 'town' (1331, 1335). Simon the Leper has a 'house' - as in the 'N-Town' Passions - where Christ sits at meat whilst Mary Magdalene anoints his feet (563, 618, 620). As is often conventional in scaffold-and-place plays Simon speaks from here (572 ff.) before entering the _platea_ to join in the action (587). The King of Marcylle also has a structure from which he delivers his opening boast (925 ff.) and where later he retires to bed (1578); it is also called a 'chamber' (1629).

A series of references to other minor locations used briefly, usually only once, suggests that certain makeshift _loci_ were set up and taken down as required, in the _platea_: the arbour (563, 571) where Mary remains briefly, likewise a lodge at the gate of Marcylle's palace (1578) and a 'wilderness' (1972, 1989 etc.). A scene in which she frequents a tavern in Jerusalem (469 ff.) may even have had a peripheral scaffold to itself. Other minor items which probably stood in the _platea_ are Lazarus's tomb (841, 894), an unidentified 'house' burned down in a spectacular but obscure incident after line 741, Marcylle's temple (also set on fire, 1562), and the rock upon which Marcylle's wife is stranded (1797-1915).

There is little point in attempting to draw a conjectural plan accommodating all these _loci_. The play is very loosely constructed - merely a concatenation of episodes linked only the figure of Mary - and it is not possible to say whether a given _locus_ might be used for more than one scene in the course of the performance.

In general, however, it is safe to posit a scaffold-

and-place arrangement of the type apparently common in East Anglia, involving the circular platea, a central locus and surrounding loci. As I have already remarked, this particular mode of playing was intended to be thoroughly flexible and accommodating, and Mary Magdalene is in part compiled out of scenic units already found in earlier East Anglian scaffold-and-place texts.

The Play of the Sacrament is an altogether smaller scale play than the other East Anglian texts dealt with here. It is presented in the manuscript in a distinctly sixteenth century commercial manner usually found in printed plays 'offered for acting': the list of players at the end is followed by the advertisement 'IX may play yt at ease'.[52] Like the Castle of Perseverance the text is preceded by Banns, and though this has been taken to imply a travelling performance it could be appropriate to an East Anglian parish play, as the discussion of the Castle above has suggested. Southern recognised that the Sacrament is a 'first-rate example of the Place-and-scaffold technique of presentation';[53] a comparison of its indications of staging with those of contemporary East Anglian examples of the same mode is likely to be illuminating. The Sacrament shares with Mary Magdalene, in particular, a taste for spectacular pyrotechnic effects of various kinds, and it is partly for these reasons certain details of the setting are not entirely clear. The nature of the basic configuration is not in doubt, however. Several loci of the conventional type are called for, but the bulk of the action, in which the Jews acquire a Sacred Host and attempt to prove that it is not the Body and Blood of Christ, proceeds on ground level in the platea, with a locus designed for special effects.

The platea. There is one clearly defined reference to the 'place' in a stage direction following line 524. The same area is also referred to as a 'plain' (506), a common term for the platea in the Cornish drama and comparable to the 'pleyn place' of East Anglian usage (Castle 160, LC 12/399). There is also, I suspect, a

pun on 'place' - _platea_, and 'general area' - when the
quack-doctor, looking for trade, asks his servant 'Knoest
any abut þis plase'; Coll replies yes, and leads him
to the 'gate' of the injured Jonathas (626-31). As in
the _Castle_, characters tend to refer to themselves as
travelling when they move from _locus_ to _locus_, but there
is nothing as clearly defined as the 'walking and wending'
speeches of the earlier play. Examples are characters
referring to 'thes pathes wyde' (145) and 'thes pathes
playne' (373). Jonathas, attempting to hurl the Host
into a vessel full of oil, finds that it sticks to his
hand, and he 'renneth wood':

      I renne, I lepe ouer þis lond (503).
The other Jews pursue him around the 'pleyn' and
evenutally pin him to a post (504 ff.). As is regular
in many scaffold-and-place plays, a messenger is sent
around the _platea_ by the main characters to communicate
with other _loci_ (137 ff., 248 ff.).

    The loci. Two very clearly defined _loci_ are scaffolds
occupied initially by Aristorius, the merchant who steals
and trades the Host, and Jonathas the leader of the Jews
who acquire it. Both of these are referred to in
conventional scaffold-and-place nomenclature, Aristorius's
as a 'hall' (223, 259, 270) and a 'parlour' (264), and
Jonathas's as a 'stage' (228) and a 'chamber' (521).
Both characters boast from their scaffolds before
initiating actions, in the usual way (81ff., 149 ff.),
and there are characteristic references to ascent and
descent (228, 271). A third clearly defined _locus_ is
described throughout as a 'church', and no other details
are apparent, except that it accommodates an altar (323,
367 etc.). It is from here that the Host is stolen
early on and to here it is returned at the end.

    The spot where the bulk of the play's more
spectacular action occurs is a problem. Unlike the
scaffolds of Aristorius and Jonathas it must be at ground
level, for Jonathas runs out of it into the _platea_. It
also accommodates a fire, a cauldron, an oven and other
apparatus (489-90, 494, 692, etc.). The oven must explode

impressively to reveal a child with bleeding wounds after
the Jews have placed the Host in it (712). It is not
clear whether this locus - which is once referred to as a
'parlour' (390) - stood in the midst of the platea or
at the edge of it. Jonathas tells the bishop of the
bloody child 'In my howse apperyng' (801) and it is
clearly possible that his scaffold was a two-tier
structure, with the oven and so forth beneath, on a level
with the platea. It could, for instance, have followed
the pattern of the Devil's locus in Mary Magdalene,
mentioned in the previous section: 'a stage, with Hell
underneath that stage'. This precise arrangement appears
in Fouquet's St. Apollonia illustration, incidentally.

The scenic indications in the Sacrament align
themselves in many details with the general picture of
scaffold-and-place playing in East Anglia which has
emerged in the course of this chapter. The nomenclature
used to describe the set calls once more for the platea
and the raised scaffolds, though as is the case with
Mary Magdalene one hesitates to present the evidence in
two-dimensional form, the text remaining reticent on
certain important points.

VI

Scaffold-and-Place Playing in East Anglia: Conclusion

The foregoing account has dealt for the most part
only with the raw materials of the evidence for a
distinctive local tradition, the references to staging
in the rubrics and dialogue of several East Anglian plays.
The more ample analysis of dramaturgy in the Castle of
Perseverance has shown how far the literary structure of
a text could be assimilated to these particular scenic
conditions. Analysis of the 'N-Town' Passions, Mary
Magdalene and the Play of the Sacrament within the
framework of the same scaffold-and-place setting would

necessarily occupy a good deal more space than is available here. Nevertheless, the way is now open for a movement away from the study of these pieces as isolated, purely literary texts of dubious provenance and obscure affiliations and stagecraft. My case is that they are a closely knit East Anglian group of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century, supported by increasing documentary evidence, and ripe for study in their appropriate local theatrical context. Chronologically speaking, they look both backwards and forwards. As the background to scaffold-and-place playing discussed in Chapter Six has suggested, I believe the East Anglian group to have been part of a much older and larger tradition of 'theatre in the round'. In the English context the East Anglian group also looks forward to the establishment of the first formal theatre in England by Burbage in 1576. The shape and probable disposition of the earliest Elizabethan theatres are thought to have owed much to the medieval tradition of playing in the round, and the early 'game-places'.[54] At present this East Anglian group offers an important chance to recover many details of this early tradition and to study comprehensively its distinctive dramaturgy.