

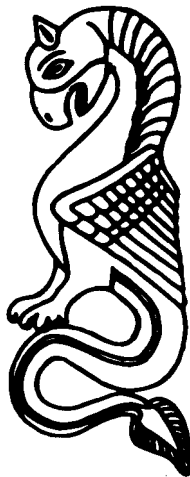
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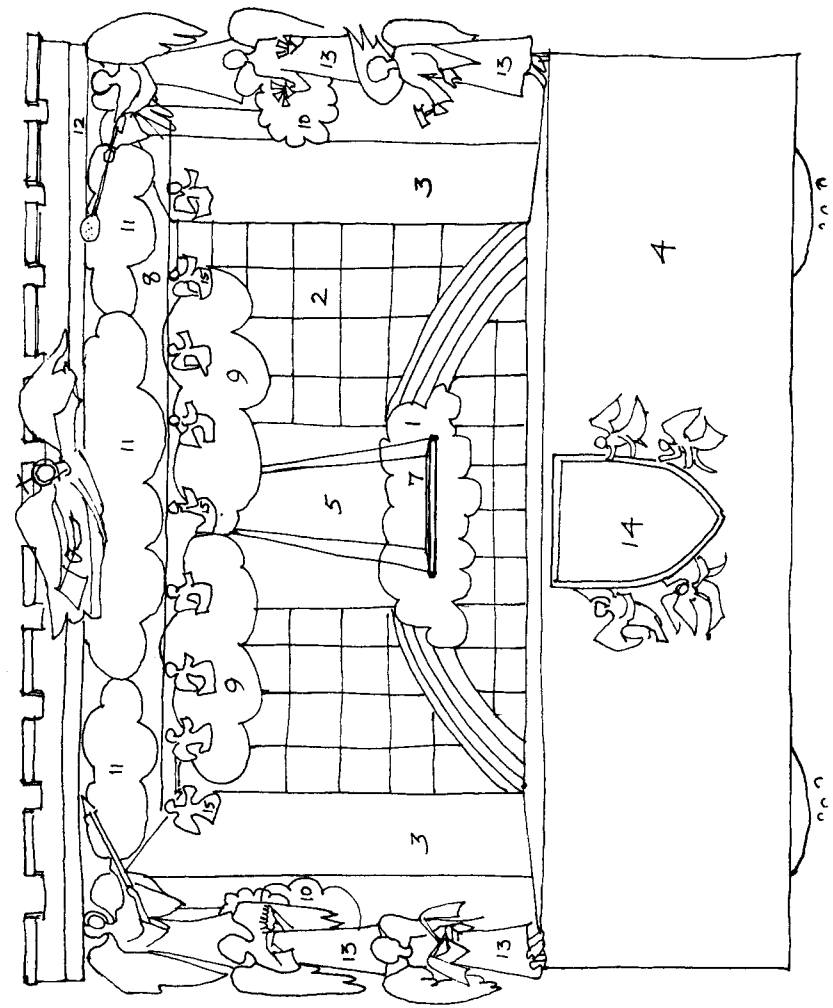
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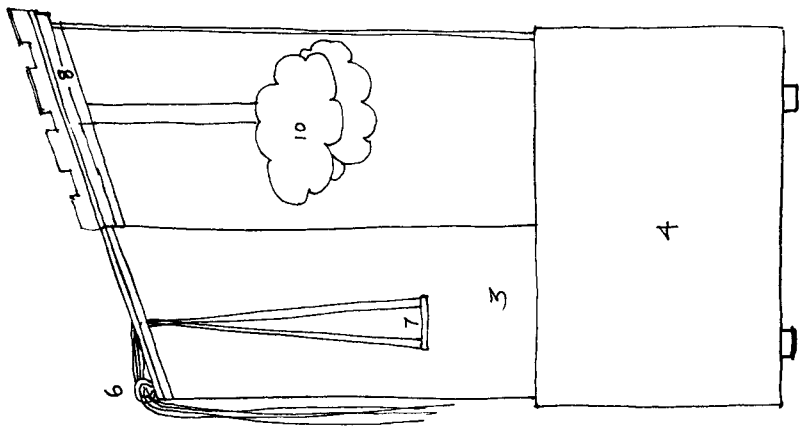


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Diagram of York Mercers' Pageant Wagon, 1433
 (see key on p. 15)



FRONT VIEW OF THE PAGEANT WAGON.



SIDE VIEW SHOWING
 BRANDETH AND BLUE CLOUDS.

THE YORK MERCERS AND THEIR PAGEANT OF DOOMSDAY, 1433-1526

By ALEXANDRA F. JOHNSTON and MARGARET DORRELL

1. *The York Mercers*¹

The Mercers' Guild of York is first mentioned as a trading company with its own internal organization in an entry in the civic records dated 1366.² It is also mentioned in the *ordo paginarum* of 1415 as the guild responsible for the pageant of Doomsday.³ Its own account rolls begin in 1432-33 when William Bedale was master. From this year until the present day there is an almost complete series of accounts. By the time its records begin in consecutive sequence in 1432-33 the Mercers' Guild was a powerful and wealthy company owning its own hall in Fossgate (frequently called the Hospital of the Holy Trinity or Trinity Hall)⁴ and much other property as well.

The mercers were the wealthiest citizens of York and played an important role in civic politics. Of the eighty-eight mayors between 1399 and 1509, sixty-eight were mercers.⁵ In some years they dominated the city council; for example, in 1420 twenty of the twenty-nine members of the council were mercers.⁶ Their influence declined in the sixteenth century, a decline which reflected the serious economic depression which affected the city, but even then "the number of mayors who were merchants exceeded that of all other vocations combined."⁷

Individual mercers dominated both the guild and the city in the fifteenth century. Thomas Scauceby, seven times master of the guild,⁸ was city chamberlain in 1442-43 and mayor in 1462-63; John Gylliot, five times master,⁹ was city chamberlain in 1450-51 and mayor in 1463-64 and 1474-75; and Thomas Wrangwish, twice master,¹⁰ was city chamberlain in 1462-63 and mayor in 1484. Of all the masters of the guild from 1432 to 1598, only John Calton, master of the guild in 1445, failed to become either city chamberlain or mayor; fifty-two of the sixty-seven masters in this period were mayor at least once.¹¹

Because the city council controlled the Corpus Christi play and because it is clear that the council was dominated by mercers, it is reasonable to assume that the Mercers as a guild took a special interest in the play. In any consideration of the records concerning their own pageant of Doomsday, then, it must be recognized that they were not a typical guild nor was their pageant a typical pageant as it formed the grand finale of the Corpus Christi cycle. The lavishness of their wagon and its properties reflects the Mercers' wealth and prestige. Therefore, to make analogies from this guild and its wagon to other guilds in York or elsewhere is dangerous.

2. *The Mercers' Documents*

The medieval and Tudor documents of the Mercers' Guild consist of a series of compotus (or account) rolls, a Chartulary and Minute Book of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, several paper account books and loose documents. Among the loose documents are deeds and indentures written on parchment, paper accounts (some in books and some on single sheets) and other miscellaneous items. There are several gaps in the fifteenth century compotus rolls; the accounts for the years 1438, 1452-58, 1462-63, 1467-71, 1473, 1475, 1479-80, 1482-84, 1495 and 1498 are missing. Of the rolls from 1499-1582 those for 1523, 1532 and 1558 are missing.

3. *The Pageant Masters and the Performance*

On March 26, 1443, the day Thomas Scauceby was first elected master of the Mercers, the guild passed a general ordinance concerning their pageant masters.¹² That day it was agreed that the pageant masters should be chosen "with þe assent of þe ffelship" on the Friday after Midsummer Day (24 June). They were charged with bringing forth the play and received all the "ornements" that belonged to the pageant "by Indentour." This last phrase refers to the indenture of 1433¹³ where it is specified that the masters received

all þir parcelles vndrewretyn [i.e. the properties listed in the indenture] langing to þaire pagent safely to kepe and to gouerne for þaire tyme And thos sam parcelles to deliuer forthe agayne in resonable tyme to þe nexste Pagent Maisters þat sall occupy in þe nexste 3ere after And so all Pagent Maisters to deliuer forth be þis endenture to other Pagent Maisters þat sall occupy for þe 3ere while þe Pagent gere lastes.

In 1443 it was further ordained that the masters "sall be countable to þe maister constables and ffellowship of all þair receytes and expenses resonable."¹⁴ Further the masters were to return the pageant wagon to the pageant house on Toft Green¹⁵ and store the portable gear "within iiij days next after corpus cristi day." Any master defaulting was to be fined 6s. 7d. "without any fforgiuiness." It is evident that the pageant wagon and its properties became the responsibility of the new masters very soon after the production on Corpus Christi Day.¹⁶

The pageant masters probably began their preparations in the first or second week of Lent,¹⁷ for it was then that the city council of York sent out billets reminding the guilds of their responsibilities towards the play.¹⁸ Between the issuing of the billets and the feast of Corpus Christi the pageant wagon and its properties had to be refurbished and arrangements made for the performance.

There is evidence that the Mercers hired clerks to choose the players and direct the play. In the 1451-52 roll a note is made for 6s. 7d. paid "of þe comon silvere to Wrangle¹⁹ for plaiyng of our pageante by þe assent of þe ffelship." This entry indicates that a formal proposal authorizing the pageant masters to make such a payment was brought before the guild. It could mean that this was the first time that the Mercers used "professional" players. As

many of the Mercers were aldermen or councillors, they would not therefore be available to take an active part in the production of their pageant because the mayor and the city council regularly saw the pageants at the Common Hall station along with any visiting dignitaries.²⁰ Possibly this was the original reason for engaging William Wrangle.²¹ The entry for payment to the players is a regular one in the accounts of the 1460s. The standard fee was about 18s., sometimes specified as "to þe klarke for playeng" as in 1461 and sometimes simply "to þe players for playenge" as in 1462. Two references are made to rehearsing. In 1463, 4d. was spent for cakes and ale "at þe ferst rehers," indicating that there was more than one rehearsal, and in 1467 10d. was paid to "Wylliam Clark and his players for rehersyng."

The expenses were covered by the pageant money, a tax levied on each member of the guild²² for the maintenance of the wagon and the production of the play. There are two specific references to the collecting of the pageant money. In 1462, 6d. was spent "for costes when we went about pageant silver" and, in 1463, 4d. was spent "qwene we went Ibotte for pagand syluere." There are also references in the pageant expenses for 1461 and again in 1462 to sergeants who were paid for going "with vs at dyuers tymes."²³ In 1443 the pageant money exceeded the costs of the production, for 5s. 7d. was received by the company from the pageant masters "ouer all expencs." In 1464 there was a surplus of 21d. and, in 1467, 13d. was returned to "þe master handes." But in 1461, a year when major repairs were done to the pageant wagon (see below, p. 16), only 15s. 4d.²⁴ was collected while the pageant expenses amounted to 45s. 8½d.,²⁵ and so the Mercers made good the loss incurred by the pageant masters from the general funds of the company.

On the vigil of Corpus Christi the formal proclamation of the play was made "of þe kynges be halue and þe Mair and þe shirefs of þis Citee."²⁶ The proclamation of 1415 ordered "euery player that shall play be redy in his pagiaunt at conuenyant tyme that is to say at the mydhowre betwix iiijth and vth of the cloke in the mornyng."²⁷ This is the only Corpus Christi proclamation recorded but the custom of proclaiming the play on the vigil of the feast continued until at least 1561 when the council made the following decision:

30 May 3 Elizabeth (1561)

And for soo moche as the late fest of Corpus cristi is not nowe celebrat and kept holy day as was accustomed it is therfor agreed that on Corpus euen my lord mayour and aldermen shall in makyng of proclamacion accustomed goe about in semely sadd apparell and not in skarlet.²⁸

But it is likely that the content of the proclamation changed, for in 1415 the play and the procession honouring the host were held on the same day and the recorded proclamation refers to both.²⁹ The performance of the Mercers' Doomsday pageant did not begin until late in the afternoon,³⁰ yet it is clear from the 1461 account which mentions that a breakfast and dinner were

provided for the players as well as supper (as in 1462, 1463, and 1464) that at least some of the players were with the pageant all day.

On the vigil or very early on the feast day itself the pageant masters probably arranged for the movable properties to be brought from the Mercers' Hall in Fossgate across the River Ouse to the pageant house on Toft Green. The account for 1461 specifies "Item for naylls and beryng of ger to þe pagant fro þe trenyte Hall ij d." The account of 1462 simply says "Item paide for þe pageant gere beryng to and fro iij d." The pageant wagon would then be set up. Provision was made to prevent the wheels from squeaking in 1464 when 2d. was spent "for sope to the whelys" and in 1467 when both soap and grease were used.

Labourers were hired to take the wagon out of the pageant house and to set it up. In 1461, 3d. was paid for "alle to þe puters." In 1462, 2d. was paid for "puttyng forth of þe pageant" and, in 1464, 2d. was again paid for "bryngyng forth of the pagyantes into the strette." In 1461, 8d. was paid for "putyng the pagant ouer ousse and setting vpe," that is for both setting up the wagon on Toft Green before the performance and returning it from the Pavement across the river to Toft Green after the performance (see Map, p. 64). In 1467, 6d. was paid for "puttyng þe pajand aboute on þe morn." Two to four "puters" must have been employed for these tasks. None of the payments is sufficient to be for the entire day of the performance³¹ (that is from four-thirty a.m. till after midnight).³² Therefore the putters do not seem to have been employed to move the wagon through the streets. Once the performance began the wagon must have been manhandled by the players themselves.

The physical effort involved in moving the heavy wagon from station to station was considerable. The route followed by the pageant³³ began by descending the hill from the gates of Holy Trinity in Micklegate to the River Ouse (the one hill of any size within the walls of York), stopping at least twice on the way and once on the actual slope. To keep the wagon from careering down the hill must have required both strength and skill. Once down the hill the wagon had to be dragged over the hump of the bridge. After the river was crossed there were still several corners to be manoeuvred. It is clear that there must have been some device attached to the axle of the wagon by which it was pulled. Yet the 1433 indenture specifies sufficient curtains to cover the wheels on all four sides.³⁴ A pole fixed to the axle would have disturbed the hang of the curtain. An item in the account for 1463 may throw some light on this problem. In that year a penny was paid for a "pottyng stang." "Stang" is defined in the *OED* as a "pole, or stake, wooden bar or beam."³⁵ It is possible that the "pottyng stang" was a pole fitted into a key on the front axle when the wagon had to be moved and taken out for each performance.

Money for drink for the players appears regularly in the accounts. In 1461, 5d. was spent on drink; in 1462, 6d. was spent for "drynk vpon corpus cristi day be þe way" and, in 1463, 4d. went for ale "thorow þe tone." In 1464, 16d. was spent "for our dynner and drynke to the players." In 1467,

Key to York Mercers' Pageant Wagon, 1433 (*see p. 10*).

a Pageant with iiij wheles
 iiij Irens to bere vppe heuen
 iiij finale coterelles

1. A cloud and ij peces of Rainbow of tymber.
2. A grete coster of rede damaske payntid for the bakke syde of þe pagent.
3. ij other lesse costers for ij sydes of þe Pageant.
4. iiij other costers of lewent brede for þe sides of þe Pageant.
5. A litel coster iiij squared to hang at þe bakke of god.
6. a Iren pynne.
7. A brandreth of Iren þat god sall sitte vppon when he sall fly vppe to heuen with iiij rapes at iiij corners.
8. A heuen of Iren with a naffe of tre.
9. ij peces of rede cloudes and sternes of gold langing to heuen.
10. ij peces of blu cloudes payntid on bothe sydes.
11. iiij peces of rede cloudes with sunne bemes of gold and sternes for þe hiest of heuen.
12. a lang small border of þe same wurke.
13. vij grete Aungels halding þe passion of god Ane of þame has a fane of laton and a crosse of Iren in his hede gilted.
14. iiij smaler Aungels gilted holding þe passion.
15. ix smaler Aungels payntid rede to renne aboute in þe heuen. A lang small corde to gerre þe Aungels renne aboute.

although there are two entries concerning drink, neither is specifically for the players. From 1461–67 there is a regular entry providing for supper for the players. This may have come midway through the performance but it was more probably a meal eaten in the Merchants' Hall in Fossgate in the small hours of Friday morning after the play was over.

After the performance, the pageant masters seem to have inspected and stored the gear and arranged for the immediate restorations to be done. In both 1461 and 1467 there are items specifying payment for "weshyng." In 1461 two pair of hose were washed. The curtains, costumes and other movable "gere" were then stored in the Hall and the wagon was returned to Toft Green. Once the "now pagand" was made in 1463 (see below, p. 18) it, too, was returned to Toft Green. In 1462 the entry concerns only one pageant wagon: "Item paide for puttyng hom of þe pageant" but in 1463 more than one pageant is mentioned: "hayng home of þe paggandes." Later the pageant masters drew up and submitted their account to the company and prepared to hand over their responsibility "by Indentour" to their successors on the Friday after Midsummer Day.

4. *The Pageant Wagons and their Properties*

(a) *The Pageant Wagon 1433–1501*

The most complete description of the Mercers' pageant wagon in the fifteenth century is found in the 1433 indenture.³⁶ The wagon's structure was a simple one: it seems to have been a platform set on wheels ("a Pagent with iiij wheles") with a superstructure consisting of four iron poles ("iiij Irens to bere vppe heuen"), probably sunk into sockets in the four corners of the platform, to which was bolted a roof made of wood set in an iron frame ("A heuen of Iren with a naffe of tre"). The roof may have tilted slightly towards the back to allow for perspective and also to conceal the mechanism for drawing Christ up to heaven ("A brandreth of Iren þat god sall sitte vppon when he sall fly vppe to heuen with iiij rapes at iiij corners"). There were three large curtains for the back and sides of the wagon, a smaller one for the "bakke of god,"³⁷ and various painted clouds. There also seem to have been twenty artificial angels.

(i) *Repairs to the Wagon 1433–67*

During the thirty-four years between 1433 and 1467 the Mercers undertook two major repairs to the wagon. The first is recorded in the account roll of 1451–52 when Robert Joynor and his servant were paid a shilling a day for three days' work and Pers Loksmith 3s. 8d. for "makyng and mendyng" the iron work. The major payment that year was 23s. 4d. to Robert Michell for "payntyng of þe said pagient newe" (i.e. giving the wagon a new coat of paint).

Ten years later, in 1461, another major repair was undertaken and 7s. 5d. was spent for materials and labour and 20d. for painting the wagon. The materials used included "iij stanschns,"³⁸ "ij stayes," "a wanskott"³⁹ and "a stauē of yryn." Four "staffs to þe pagant" and "bemys" were made from these materials. A wright (or carpenter)⁴⁰ was employed for five days to complete

the work, and a smith engaged to repair the iron work. It seems from the description of the materials that the repairs were to the superstructure.

Other repairs to the fabric are recorded in 1462, 1464, and 1467. In 1462, 10d. was spent for "mendynge of þe pageant" and an additional 2d. paid to a wright. Since the wright was paid 6d. a day in 1461⁴¹ the actual work involved must have been slight. In 1462, 2d. was paid for a new rope which may have been one of the ropes for the "brandreth" or a rope used to pull the wagon. In 1464, 8d. was spent for boards and three years later in 1467 more boards were needed. These are the last records of repairs to the 1433 wagon. No pageant masters' accounts survive after 1467 and there are no references to the pageant in the compotus rolls. Presumably repairs similar to these continued until the old large wagon was replaced in 1501-02.

(ii) *The Wheels*

The 1433 indenture specifies that the pageant had four wheels. In 1448 John Catryk was paid 13s. 3d. for "a newe whele to oure pageand." This is puzzling because in 1462 a pair of wheels cost only 3s. 8d.⁴² Possibly the earlier entry refers to the complete set of wheels including the axle, or possibly in 1462 only the outer rim of two of the wheels needed to be replaced. In 1464, 10d. was spent on "a wod axiltre" and three years later, in 1467, it was reinforced with "iren pykes and gret nales."

(iii) *The Hangings*

The curtains and other hangings were completely overhauled in 1449-50. That year 15d. was spent for two and a half yards of linen cloth "to heuyn of our pageant" and 2d. spent for sewing it. Since seven and a half feet of cloth would have been insufficient to line the roof or "heuen" it was probably used to replace some of the clouds or the "lang small border" that hung along the front edge of the superstructure. That same year Thomas Steynour was paid 13s. 4d. for "steynyng of þe clothes of oure pageand." In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the verb "to stain" had a specific meaning associated with the staining of banners and cloths, i.e. "to ornament with coloured designs or patterns."⁴³

(iv) *The Angels*

Among the properties of the 1433 wagon were twenty artificial angels: the "vij grete Aungels," the "iiij smaler Aungels gilted holding þe passion," and "ix smaler Aungels payntid rede" which were made to run "aboute in þe heuen" on "A lang small corde." Each of the seven great angels held one of the seven signs of the passion. One is specified as having "a fane of laton and a crosse of Iren in his hede giltid." It is possible that these angels were made of straw with only the heads, hands and the symbols they held made of some heavier material, perhaps wood or alabaster. There are three references to the angels in the subsequent records. In 1449-50 twenty shillings was paid "for þe aungels of oure pageand." As twenty shillings is more than all the costs for the replacing of some of the cloths and the staining of other hangings in the same year, this could indicate extensive repairs to the

angels or even suggest that the Mercers acquired some new ones. In 1462, 2d. was paid to repair the angels and, in 1464, another 2d. was paid for a "rope to the angels" which presumably refers to the "lang small corde" used to manipulate the little angels.

(v) *The Banners*

In 1461, 8s. 4d. was spent for the making of four banners from three and a quarter yards of red buckram decorated with gold and silver leaf. These probably replaced the four small Trinity banners that are mentioned on the dorse of the 1433 indenture.⁴⁴

(vi) *Hell Mouth*

Nothing appears in the documents subsequent to the 1433 indenture concerning hell mouth. In 1433 it seems to have been separate from the wagon itself, set up on the street during the performance but perhaps transported from station to station on the wagon.⁴⁵

(b) *The "now pagand" of 1463*

The 1433 indenture specifies a single large pageant wagon and hell mouth but in 1463 the Mercers constructed a special "now pagand . . . mayd for þe sallys to ryse out of."⁴⁶ Before 1463 the souls may simply have appeared from behind the wagon when the angels blew their trumpets to summon the dead to Judgment.⁴⁷ Perhaps the Mercers felt that the resurrection of the dead should have greater dramatic impact and so constructed this "now pagand." From the account of 1463 it appears to have been a frame of fir spars with lathes nailed to it wrapped in five yards of "now canuays" sewed together with pack-thread. Perhaps it was shaped like a coffin with a hinged lid.⁴⁸ It must have been large enough to hold the two good souls and the two bad as they waited for the sound of the trumpet. The entry later in the 1463 list specifying that 12d. was paid to Garnett Smeght "for yrne warke þat he mayd" may refer to iron work such as hinges for the "now pagand" as well as to iron work on the larger wagon. Neither here nor in the two later accounts concerning the "now pagand" is any mention made of wheels. It is possible that the "now pagand" was transported from station to station on the large wagon and then set on the street where the souls could climb into it before the pageant began.

In the repair list of 1464 nails and a "sparre and burdes" were needed for both pageants. Spars are mentioned only once in the records referring specifically to what appears to be the frame of the "now pagand." Three years later, in 1467, the frame of the pageant "where þe saulys lyes" was further strengthened by "stowres"⁴⁹ and two "Inglyshe" boards.

(c) *Thomas Drawswerd's Pageant, 1501*

(i) *The Wagon*

From 1467 until 1501-02 nothing has survived in the Mercers' records that refers to the pageant. In 1501-02 it was recorded that Thomas Drawswerd,⁵⁰ a carver, was admitted to the "broderheid" as partial payment for making "the pagiant of the dome belonging to the merchauntes newe sub-

stancialie in euery thing pervnto belonging." He was also to receive "vij marcs in money" and the old pageant wagon. In 1504 Henry Marshall was paid 12s. 6d. for "diverse stuff for paynting of þe pagiant." A further payment of forty shillings was made to Thomas Drawswerd "kerver pro pagina de Domesdaye" in 1507. Since the pageant was performed at least four times between 1502 and 1507⁵¹ it is possible that the 1504 entry refers to a second painting of the pageant. Presumably, by 1507, certain things needed altering or repairing and Drawswerd, as the original designer, was asked to undertake the work.

The major evidence concerning Drawswerd's pageant appears in an inventory made for Robert Wilde in his first year as master of the company in 1526. Little sense can be made of it unless it is assumed that the list on the left-hand side of the document and the items in the "wants" list on the right-hand side made up a complete inventory of the properties. One important change from the fifteenth-century wagon is that there is no mention of curtains, hanging clouds or borders. This could be because Drawswerd, as a carver, provided a solid wooden structure with the details of heaven carved into or painted on the fabric. The primitive machinery used for Christ's ascension to heaven was replaced by a windlass. This may have resulted in another change in the appearance of the wagon. In order to house the windlass, the flat roof of the fifteenth-century wagon was probably replaced by a gabled one. There appear to have been six items that could be detached from the wagon—four windows, the Trinity and the "trinette hus." If the body of the wagon was a solid structure closed on three sides, it would have been necessary to provide some means to let in light so that the players on the wagon could be seen in the gathering darkness of a midsummer evening. This may have been provided by the "wendows," which would not have been glazed but were probably ornately carved alabaster or wood frames set into the walls of the wagon. The Trinity was probably also of carved alabaster or wood and may have replaced the Trinity banners mentioned in the 1433 indenture and replaced in 1463. The "trinette hus," which presumably contained this representation of the Trinity, may well have been set into the gable at the front of the wagon, thus concealing the windlass and placing the symbol of the guild in a prominent position. There are eleven nails specified in the list. It is possible that these were used to secure the windows and the Trinity house containing the Trinity to the framework (two nails for each window and three for the symbol).

(ii) *The "chartts"*

There are only two possible meanings for the word "chartt." It can mean either a "charter" or a "small cart."⁵² The first meaning is unlikely, so it would seem probable that the "chartts" of the 1526 list are small carts on wheels. Further, there are listed in 1526 two doors—"pagand dure" and "hell dure." Possibly Drawswerd's design included a large wagon and two smaller ones each provided with a lid or "dure," one depicting hell mouth and the other a coffin for the souls to rise from. These small carts could have taken the

place of the hell mouth of the 1433 pageant and the "now pagand" for the souls constructed in 1463. The advantage in having these pieces of property set on their own wheeled carts is clear. There would be no need to lift them from the street to the wagon as the pageant moved from station to station; instead they could be pulled along by the actors playing the souls and the devils and placed in position quickly and easily. In 1514, 1½d. was spent for a stanchion and nails for the "pageant dore" and, in 1521, 2d. was spent mending the "pagant doore." These probably refer to one or the other of the "dures" of the 1526 list.

(iii) *The Angels*

The number of angels was reduced from twenty to twelve. The nine red angels of the 1433 wagon seem to have become four by 1526 ("iij lyttell angelles" in the major list and "j lyttell Angell" in the "wants" list). Two "grett angelles" and "iiij angelli" appear in the major list and "ij Angell" in the "wants" list. Since a distinction is made between the "grett angelles" and the "iiij angelli" in the main list, it is probable that the "iiij angelli" correspond to the "iiij smaler Aungels gilted holding þe passion" of the 1433 indenture⁵³ and that the number of the great angels has been reduced from seven to four.

Thomas Drawswerd's pageant was very different from the fifteenth-century wagon it replaced, but it was no less impressive. In 1541 it was used in the Royal Entry of Henry VIII and stationed "at Ousegate end as the kynges maiestie shall enter into Connyngstreyt." There a show "with as much melody as may be deuysed"⁵⁴ was to be displayed for the musician king.

(d) *The Costumes*

(i) *The Costumes in 1433*

The specifications for costuming in the 1433 indenture are precise. There were three devils' "garmentes" and three two-faced masks ("vj deuelles faces in iij Vesernes"). The two good souls and the two bad ones wore sarks (tunics), hose, masks and wigs. Christ's costume consisted of a sark bearing the marks of the passion ("a Sirke wounded"), a diadem and a gilded mask. The costumes for the eleven apostles and the two angels are not specified in detail. Four apostles wore "Aubes," three had diadems and masks, and four had diadems and yellow wigs. The angels were provided with wings "with Iren in þe endes."⁵⁵

(ii) *The Sarks*

In 1461, 15d. was spent for five yards of cloth to make two sarks. The making of the garmentes cost 3d. Two years later, in 1463, 2d. was paid for "ij sarkkes mendeng." Five and a half yards of "spannall" were used in 1464 to make two sarks at a total cost of 2od. In 1461, 3d. was spent for half a yard of cloth "to god" and, in 1462, 2s. 4d. was spent to make a new sark for Christ and to paint it with the marks of the passion. The custom of painting sarks was not limited to the one for Christ, for in 1464 there was a general payment for the "payntyng of serkes." It seems evident that all the costumes,

though perhaps of a simple design, were brightly decorated. This was especially true of the devils' gear, for in 1463, 12d. was paid to "master pantur" for "pantyng of þe dellwys gere." By 1467 the angels had been provided with special costumes since in that year "an angell cote" was mended.

(iii) *The Angels' Wings*

In 1433 the guild owned two sets of angels' wings for the two actors playing angels but, at least by 1461, one pair had fallen apart or been lost as in that year they paid 2d. for "boroweng of Angell wengs." In 1462 and 1463 they paid 4d. for "iiij aungelles weynges hyre." It is possible that the Mercers hired these wings from one of the guilds that portrayed the Old Testament scenes where angels appear.⁵⁶

(iv) *Miscellaneous*

The only reference to the various types of headgear that are specified in the 1433 indenture appears in 1463, "Item for tow chapletts iiij d." These "chapletts" would presumably replace two of the four diadems worn by the apostles. Gloves as specific items of costume appear in 1463 and again in 1467. The trumpets with which the angels summoned the dead to Judgment gave little trouble and the only repair recorded is in 1462 when 1d. was spent "for mendyng of þe tromppez."

(v) *The Costumes in 1526*

Very few items of costuming appear in the 1526 list. Of the actual garments, mention is made only of "ij dewell cottes," which must correspond to the "dellwys gere" of 1463. It is clear, however, from this entry and the next one ("ij dewelles heddes") that the number of devils has been reduced from three to two. The text provides for three devils who speak three separate speeches while Christ moves to the seat of Judgment,⁵⁷ but these three speeches could easily have been spoken by two devils. This discrepancy is similar to another problem presented by the 1433 indenture, which specifies wings for only two angels when three appear in the text.⁵⁸

Only four masks are specified in the 1526 list. In 1433 there were seven—a gilded one for Christ, three for three apostles and four for the good and bad souls. Only one mask appears to have been in the possession of the Mercers in 1526, since three appear in the "wants" list.

The remaining problem of the 1526 list is the entry "þe viij chyffes." "Chyffe" is a possible spelling of "chief." The *OED* gives as a possible sixteenth-century meaning "the head, top, upper end (of anything)"; the *MED* gives as a meaning "the end (of an object), top (of the head)."⁵⁹ It is possible, then, that "þe viij chyffes" are the eight wigs or "cheualers" needed for the good and bad souls and four of the apostles mentioned in the 1433 list.

5. *Conclusion*

The Mercers of York spent approximately thirty shillings annually on the maintenance of their pageant wagon and properties and the production of their pageant in the Corpus Christi play. This sum represents an amount equal

to sixty days' labour by a wright. When the Mercers, as mayors, aldermen or councillors, sat with the distinguished visitors at the Common Hall station to watch the performance, they could be sure that their pageant, the finale of the long day of playmaking, would be both lavish and impressive.

NOTES

- ¹ This article is based on documents in the archives of the Company of Merchant Adventurers of York, the lineal descendant of the medieval Mercers' Guild. Both mercers (local shopkeepers) and merchants (overseas traders) were members of the guild. We are grateful to Mr Bernard Johnson, the archivist of the Company, for his kind co-operation in allowing us access to the documents.
- ² York City Archives, *A/Y Memorandum Book*, f. 153v. See Maud Sellers, *York Memorandum Book*, II, Surtees Soc., CXXV (1915), p. 9.
- ³ *A/Y*, f. 253v. See Lucy Toulmin Smith, *York Plays* (Oxford, 1885), p. xxxvii.
- ⁴ Many medieval commercial guilds had religious guilds or fraternities associated with them which included the wives, sisters and daughters of the men. The Fraternity of the Holy Trinity was associated with the Mercers' Guild. See Maud Sellers, *The York Mercers and Merchant Adventurers 1356-1917*, Surtees Soc., CXXIX (1918), p. x.
- ⁵ R. B. Pugh, *A History of Yorkshire: City of York* (The Victoria History of the Counties of England, University of London Institute of Historical Research, 1961), p. 71.
- ⁶ Pugh, pp. 78-9.
- ⁷ Pugh, p. 160.
- ⁸ In 1443, 1451, 1452, 1458, 1462, 1464 and 1465; Sellers, *Mercers*, p. 322.
- ⁹ In 1456, 1460, 1476, 1485, and 1486; *Mercers*, p. 322.
- ¹⁰ In 1471 and 1472; *Mercers*, p. 322. He was pageant master in 1464 (see Appendix II).
- ¹¹ A list of the masters of the company is printed in *Mercers*, pp. 322-25. Francis Collins in *The Register of the Freemen of the City of York*, I, Surtees Soc., XCVI (1897) records the mayor and chamberlains for each year. These figures were reached by comparing Sellers' list with Collins'.
- ¹² The documents referred to in the body of the text are printed in chronological order in Appendix I. The special problems of this document are discussed in Appendices II and III.
- ¹³ Merchant Adventurers of York, Box D63. For a discussion of this document see Alexandra F. Johnston and Margaret Dorrell, "The Doomsday Pageant of the York Mercers, 1433," *Leeds Studies in English*, New Series, V (1971), 29-34.
- ¹⁴ In the same year, 1443, the Marshalls and Smiths passed a similar ordinance: "þe pageant maisters . . . shal make þair rakenyng and gife accompt euere yere fro nowe furth vpon Sonunday next before Missomerday"; *A/Y Memorandum Book*, f. 288r. See Sellers, *York Memorandum Book*, II, p. 181.
- ¹⁵ The Mercers rented land on Toft Green on which their pageant house was built from the Bridgemasters of Ousebridge. Records of payment appear both in the Bridgemasters' accounts in the York City Archives and in the Mercers' accounts.
- ¹⁶ The feast of Corpus Christi is the Thursday after Trinity Sunday (May 21-June 24). The feast fell on Midsummer Day (June 24) only twice (in 1451 and 1546) during the years that the cycle was performed.
- ¹⁷ February 9-March 27.
- ¹⁸ The billets or "sedule paginarum" were to be sent out "prima vel ij^a septimana quadragesime annuatim" [the first or second week of Lent annually]. Written in the left-hand margin beside the heading of the *ordo paginarum*, *A/Y*, f. 243v. See Smith, *York Plays*, p. xix, note.

- ¹⁹ William Wrangle, clerk, was made a freeman of the city in 1428–29; Collins, *Freemen*, p. 142.
- ²⁰ The first record of this practice is in the Chamberlains' Rolls for 1433 (York City Archives C 1:2). In 1463 the following record appears:
- Et in expensis maioris Aldermannorum et aliorum concilium Civitatis in festo corporis cristi una cum diversis presentacionibus ut in pane dominico fructiis et vinis datis et presentatis diversis dominis et dominabus militibus prelatiis et aliis generosis tunc in civitate presentibus ut comitisse Warwick et aliis
- Summa xlv s v d ob
- (And in the expenses of the mayor, the aldermen, and other councillors of the city on the feast of Corpus Christi, along with various presentations as the best bread (pane dominico: Sunday bread), fruit and wines given and presented to various lords and ladies, soldiers, prelates and other gentlemen then present in the city, as the Countess of Warwick and others.
- Total 45s. 5¹/₂d.)
- ²¹ It is clear that by 1476 many of the performers in the pageants were professionals since an ordinance was made to prevent actors being hired to play more than two parts; York City Archives, HB 1, f. 14v. See Angelo Raine, *York Civic Records*, I, Yorkshire Archaeological Soc., Record Series XCVIII (1939), p. 5. See also Margaret Dorrell, "Two Studies of the York Corpus Christi Play," p. 101 below.
- ²² In 1464 amounts contributed by individual members of the guild varied from 4d. to 6d.; Sellers, *Mercers*, p. 71. For the dating of this document see Appendix II.
- ²³ It appears that the sergeants were civic officers who assisted in the collection of pageant money. In 1545 the Bakers' pageant masters were accompanied by a civic officer: "Item pay þat day þat we went abowt ffor to geder pagand mony and to the offesor ffor his lawbor"; *BM Add. MS*, 33852, f. 6v.
- ²⁴ This was less than half the normal amount collected. In 1464 31s. 9d. was collected and in 1467 31s. 4d. The normal expenses were approximately thirty shillings.
- ²⁵ The early months of 1461 were difficult ones for the city of York. On December 30, 1460, the Duke of York was killed in battle at Wakefield and his head brought to York and displayed over Micklegate Bar. After another Lancastrian victory at the second battle of St Albans, Queen Margaret retreated to the city with Henry VI. They were defeated by the Yorkists at Towton on Palm Sunday, March 29, and the young Edward IV entered York in triumph. He stayed there until May when he went south for his coronation; see Pugh, *op. cit.*, pp. 59–60; V. H. H. Green, *The Later Plantagenets* (London, 1955), p. 335. It may be that the meagre amount collected in pageant silver is related to the civil war. Many of the members of the guild may have been away from York when the collection was made. In 1482 individual mercers as members of the city council helped to raise an army against the Scots for Richard Duke of Gloucester (York City Archives HB 2–4, f. 58).
- ²⁶ *A/Y*, f. 254v. See Smith, *York Plays*, p. xxxiv.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*
- ²⁸ York City Archives HB 23, f. 19v. See Raine, *York Civic Records*, VI, YAS, CXII (1948), p. 17.
- ²⁹ Some time after 1426 the play and the procession took place on consecutive days. From 1476 the procession was regularly on the day after Corpus Christi Day. It was agreed on May 31, 1476, that each alderman and councillor should have a torch carried by his servant "annuatim in processione die veneris in Crastino Corporis cristi ad dei laudem et honorem huius Ciuitatis" (annually in the procession on Friday the day after Corpus Christi to the praise of God and the honour of this city); York City Archives HB 1, f. 19v. See Raine, *Civic Records*, I, pp. 5–6.
- ³⁰ Dorrell, "Two Studies," 99.
- ³¹ At the time the Mercers regularly paid 4d. to each man who carried one of their torches in the procession of Corpus Christi: "Et sol' pro portacione vj torchiarum dicti fraternitatis in processione in festo corporis cristi hoc anno ut in annis preccedentibus ij s" (And paid for the bearing of the six torches of the said fraternity in the procession on the feast of

- Corpus Christi this year as in years preceding 2s.); Merchant Adventurers of York Box D53, 1460.
- ³² Dorrell, "Two Studies," 98.
- ³³ Dorrell, "Two Studies," 88; see Map, p. 64.
- ³⁴ The curtains specified are "A grete coster of rede damaske paynted for the bakke syde of þe pageant ij other lesse costers for ij sydes of þe Pageant iij other costers of lewent brede for þe sides of þe Pageant" (Johnston and Dorrell, "Doomsday, 1433," 29). We conjectured that the three curtains "lewent brede" were pageant cloths to conceal the wheels (*op. cit.*, 31). The "grete coster" was probably long enough to cover the wheels on the fourth side.
- ³⁵ s.v. Stang, *sb.* 1.
- ³⁶ Johnston and Dorrell, "Doomsday, 1433," 29-34. Sketches of a wagon and properties based on the information provided by the indenture accompany this article. We are grateful to Mrs Elizabeth Chalmers of Hurst, Berkshire, for drawing them for us.
- ³⁷ In our preliminary discussion of the 1433 indenture (*op. cit.*, 31) we suggested that this small curtain was a backrest for the "brandreth." It seems more likely that this was a backdrop and hung in front of the painted back curtain behind the "brandreth."
- ³⁸ "An upright bar, stay or support"; *OED*, s.v. Stanchion, *sb.* 1.
- ³⁹ "A superior quality of foreign oak imported from Russia, Germany and Holland chiefly used for fine panel work; logs or planks of this oak; oak boarding for panel-work. A piece or a board of wainscot oak"; *OED*, s.v. Wainscot, *sb.* 1a and 1b.
- ⁴⁰ "One who works in wood; a carpenter, a joiner"; *OED*, s.v. Wright, *sb.*¹ 1. and 3.
- ⁴¹ He was paid 2s. 6d. for five days' work.
- ⁴² In 1552, the Bakers paid only 7s. for a pair of wheels; see Anna J. Mill, "The York Bakers' Play of the Last Supper," *MLR*, XXX (1935), 156.
- ⁴³ *OED*, s.v. Stain, *v.* 6.
- ⁴⁴ Johnston and Dorrell, "Doomsday, 1433," 34. We suggested that the banners were not peculiar to the pageant but were carried on other public occasions. However, it appears from this evidence from the 1461 accounts that the banners were considered part of the property of the pageant itself.
- ⁴⁵ "Doomsday, 1433," 31.
- ⁴⁶ This was the year that the Countess of Warwick was in York for the play. Perhaps a special effort was made to honour the important visitor (see above, note 20).
- ⁴⁷ Smith, *York Plays*, p. 499, l. 65.
- ⁴⁸ Among the more famous medieval representations of souls rising from coffins are the great carvings over the west door of Bourges Cathedral; see Joan Evans, *The Flowering of the Middle Ages* (New York, 1966), p. 94 and the Last Judgment tympanum at Rheims (Evans, p. 224).
- ⁴⁹ "A stake, pole or post; each of the upright staves in the side of a wagon, 1641"; *OED*, s.v. Stower, *sb.* 1 and 2.
- ⁵⁰ Thomas Drawswerd, "carvour," was made free in 1496, city chamberlain in 1501, and mayor in 1515 and 1523; see Collins, *Freemen*, pp. 220, 225, 237, 244. He died in 1529; see Collins, *Index of Wills in the York Registry 1514-1553*, Yorkshire Archaeological and Topographical Assoc., Record Series XI (1891), p. 55.
- ⁵¹ 1502, 1503, 1504 and 1506. In 1505 the Creed Play was played instead of the Corpus Christi Play; see Raine, *York Civic Records*, III, YAS, CVI (1942) p. 12.
- ⁵² *OED*, s.v. Chart, *sb.* 2; *MED*, 1a.
- ⁵³ See Figure 1.
- ⁵⁴ York City Archives HB 15, f. 36r; see Raine, *Civic Records*, IV, YAS, CVIII (1945), p. 60.
- ⁵⁵ Johnston and Dorrell, "Doomsday, 1433," 29.
- ⁵⁶ These would all be finished playing long before the Mercers began the Doomsday pageant; see Dorrell, "Two Studies," 99.
- ⁵⁷ Smith, *York Plays*, p. 505, ll. 217-28.
- ⁵⁸ Johnston and Dorrell, "Doomsday, 1433," 32-3.
- ⁵⁹ *OED*, s.v. Chief, *sb.* 2; *MED*, 5a.

APPENDIX I

The Documents: Merchant Adventurers of York

1.

March 26, 1443. Chartulary and Minute Book D19 f.gr. For a detailed discussion of this document see Appendix III.

Item ordaind and acordid by þe who assent of þe hele ffelshipp in þe Trinte hall on þe election daye Thomas Scausby being mister William Bluefront William Gaing Constables þat pay with þe assent of þe ffelshipp sall chuse iiij pagent masters on þe ffriday next after Missondday of the merceres and mechants of þe Citte and þay iiij shall bring forth þair* play and recyue all þe ornements thatt belanges þto: by Indentour and so deliuer ouer to paym þat shall com after and þy sall be countable to þe maister constables and ffellowship of all þair receytes and expenses resonable and þe iiij pagant maisters being [blank] shall bring furth þe pagants and haue them in againe within iiij days next after corpus cristi day which of them þat doth contrary shall pay vj s viij d to þe ffelowschip without any fforgiuness

*Sellers, *Mercers*, p. 82, has "the paternoster"; see further discussion in Appendix III.

2.

1443 Compotus Roll. Box D53.

Item of v s vij d ressayued of pagyanmaisters þis yere ouer all expencs be þaim made for bryngyng furth of þe pagyant

3.

1448 Compotus Roll. Box D53.

Item paid to John Catryk for a newe whele to our pageand xij s ij d

4.

1449-50 Compotus Roll. Box D53.

Item payde for þe aungels of oure pageand xx s

Item for ij 3erds and dimidium of lynen cloth to hevyn of our pageant xv d

Item paide for sewyng of þe same clothe ij d

Item payde to Thomas Steynour for steynyng of þe clothes of oure pageand xij s iiij d

5.

1451-52 Compotus Roll. Box D53.
(Pageant Repairs)

Item for makyng of ij serks		ij d
Item for makyng of iiij staffs to þe pagant		iiij d
Item for wesschyng of ij payr hosse and helpyng		ij d
Item payd to þe klarke for playeng	xviiij s	
Item for drynke to þe players		v d
Summa totalis of our payment xlv s viij d ob qwer of res. in pagand sylver all it a pers be for xv s iiij d		
Item res. of þe master of þe felchype xxx s iiij d ob [Cancelled]		
Wylliam Goddyrswyke		
Herry Wylliamson		
Thomas Skotton		
John Bosswell		

7.

1461 Compotus Roll. Box D53.

Et sol' Thome Nandyke et sociis suis magistris pagine dicte fraternitatis tam pro reparacione eiusdem pagine quia pro conductione lusor' in ludo Corporis Cristi ultra omne id quod collect' fuit inter artifices soluunt ad dictem ludum xxx s iiij d ob

(And paid to Thomas Nandyke and his fellow pageant masters of the said fraternity for the repair of the same pageant so that it could be brought forth in the Corpus Christi play, more than the total collected among the artificers paid for the said play, 30s. 4¹/₂d.)

8.

1462. Box D63. Paper account, single sheet (repaired) 16¹/₅" by (approx.) 5". Four names erased and names of pageant masters written in a contemporary hand.

Thise be þe parcelles of expenses made aboute þe pageant of
þe mercers

Item primis paide to þe players for playenge	xviiij s	ij d
Item paide for þe cloth of god sarke and þe hose makyng and payntyng	ij s	iiij d
Item paide for a pare of newe wheles	iiij s	viiij d
Item paide for þe puttyng forth of þe pageant		ij d
Item paide for mendyng of þe pageant		x d
Item paide to a wright		ij d
Item paide for a new rope		ij d
Item paide for mendyng of þe aungells		ij d
Item paide for mendyng of þe tromppez		j d
Item paide for iiij aungelles weynges hyre		iiij d
Item paide for puttyng hom of þe pageant		v d
Item paide for þe pageant gere beryng to and fro		iiij d
Item paide for costes when we went about pageant silver		vj d
Item in expenses for drynk vpon corpus cristi day be þe way		vj d
Item for players sopper and oures	ij s	
Item paide to a sergeant þat went with vs at dyuers tymes		iiij d

- Item paide for ynke paupir and for writyng ij d
 Summa xxx s ij d
- Richard York
 William Tele
 John Lythtlope
 Richard Sawer
9.
 1463. Box D63. Paper account, single sheet 5" by 8". Sellers, *Mercers*, pp. 70-71.
- Thys is þe expens mayde be John Leghtlop William Thelle and
 Richard Sawar in þer 3er beyng pagand massters
- Ferst qwene we went Ibotte for pagand syluere iiij d
 Item at þe ferst rehers in kakkys and alle iiij d ob
 Item in v 3erddes of now canuays to j now pagand þat was
 mayd for þe sallys to ryse owt of xv d
 Item in naylles boght to þe same xij d
 Item in viij sparres of fyre ij s
 Item for lattes iiij d
 Item to j wreght so for makkyng þerof vj d
 Item for ij roppys j d ob
 Item for pakthrede j d
 Item for j pottyng stang j d
 Item in hayng home of þe paganddes iiij d
 Item in resches j d
 Item payd to Garnett Smeght for yrne warke þat he mayd xij d
 Item payd on corpus cresty dall in all to þe playars
 thorow þe tone iiij d
 Item to þe playris super xx d
 Item for owre denere on corpus cresty day x d
 Item for ij sarkkes mendeng ij d
 Item for angell wengys iiij d
 Item for tow chapletts iiij d
 Item for þe farme of þe pagand hus xij d
 Item payd for playng xvij s ij d
 Item for pantyng of þe dellwys gere to master pantur xij d
 [This last item in a different hand]
10.
 1464. Document now lost. Reproduced as published by Sellers, *Mercers*, p. 72.
- Memorandum that this is the costes made of our paygant. In primis,
 paid to our playars, xvij s. jd. Item to the said playars and his felows
 for the super, xd. Item, to the said playars for a pair glovys and
 payntyng of serkes, and half a yerd cloth, vjd. Item, for byndyng
 of a paire whelys, js. Item, for sope to the whelys, ijd. Item for a wod
 axiltre, xd. Item, for nayls to both pagyants, and for a sparr and
 burdes, viijd. Item, for borowyng out of 6 ilyn pyns, ijd. Item, for
 v yerdes and dimidium of spannall to ij serkes, and makyng of the sam,

xxd. Item, for a rope to the angels, ijd. Item, for bryngyng forth of the paygantes into the strette, ijd. Item, for our dynner and drynke to the players on Corpus Christi day, xvjd. Item for havng of both paygantes agayn to the paygant hows, vijd. Summa xxxs. jd. Rest in our hands xxjd.

11.

1467. Box D63. Paper account, single sheet 8" by 11", folded lengthwise. Pageant expenses on front, inside a list of names and amounts (probably the pageant money list). Document at one time folded crosswise and bottom right-hand corner chewed by a rodent, resulting in irregular holes at right- and left-hand edges of sheet. Holes roughly semi-circular, 2" deep and 4" long at edges of sheet. Sellers, *Mercers*, p. 63.

Thes are þe costes payd aboute þe pajand	
In primis payde to Wylliam Clark and his players for	
rehersyng	x d
Item to John Lytster for goyng with vs	ij d
Item payd for iren pykes and gret nales for þe axeltre and	
burdes and nales and warkmanship to þe grete pajand	xxj d
Item payd for stowres and ij Inglyshe burdes and dubyll	
spykynges and warmanship whare þe saulys lyes	xiiij d
Item for mendyng of an angell cote	...
Item payd to Wylliam Clark for . . . gloues and half a yerd lynen . . .	
Item payd for sope and gr . . . þe pajand wheles . . .	
Item for weshyng of . . .	
Item payd to Wylliam . . . felowse on Co . . .	
Item payd to Wylliam . . . playng of þe play . . .	
Item payd to Wylliam C . . . Lytster for setting vp . . . and takyng downe	
þat langes . . .	
Item puttynghome of þe pajand . . .	
Item puttyng þe pajand aboute on þe morn	vj d
Item spend at ale and dyuers tymes on Wylliam Clark and John	
Lytster and Malum	vj d
Item þat we hafe spend at dyuers tymes aboute þe towne and our	
drynkyng and oure soper on Corpus cristi day at evyn	iiij s vj d
Summa of þe costes xxx s iiij d ob and in þe master handes	xiiij d

12.

1501-02. Chartulary and Minute Book D19 f.157v.

Memorandum that Thomas Drawswerd this present yere abouesaid is admit into the broderheid of the fraternite of the holy trinite in ffosse-gate by the said maister by thassant and consent of Richerd Thornton maior of the Cite of Yorke George Kirke John Elwald William Neleson John Stokdale aldermen Thomas ffynch John Shawe Thomas ffolneby and many other merchauntes brethern of the said ffraternite vnder condicion felowing þat is to say that the said Thomas shal mak the pagiant of the dome belonging to the merchauntes newe substancialie

in euery thing pervnto belonging havynge for the warkemanship and stuff of the same vij marcs in money and his entrie fre with also the old pagiaunt.

13.

1504. Compotus Roll. Box D55.

Et sol' Henrico Marsshall for diverse stuff for payntyng of þe
pagiant xij s vij d

14.

1507. Compotus Roll. Box D56.

Et eciam petunt allocari de xl s solut' Thome Drawswerd kerver pro
pagina de Domesdaye

Summa xl s

(And also they [the master and constables of the company] make allowance for forty shillings paid to Thomas Drawswerd, carver, for the pageant of Doomsday)

15.

1514. Compotus Roll. Box D56.

Et pro le pageant dore vnum stancheon et nalez j d ob
(And for the pageant door one stanchion and nails 1½d)

16.

1521. Compotus Roll. Box D56.

Et pro emendacione hostium ludunlo vocati pagant doore ij d
Et pro emendacione duorum organes vocat. pyps ij d
(And for the mending of the door of the pageant called "pagant doore"
2 d.)

And for the mending of two instruments called "pyps" 2 d.)

17.

1526. Box D63. Paper account, single sheet 8¹/₁₀" by 11¹/₄". Stitching marks ³/₅" apart along left-hand edge. Sheet marked with several diagonal creases, list of names on dorse. Sellers, *Mercers*, 128.

Ihesu

Reces' off pagand maisteres de maister Wyld frest 3erre

Jorg Norman

Here Woid pagand maisteres

Bartell Yorke

[possible break here—line left]

Necolles cure þes perselles

ij dewell cottes

ij dewelles heddes

j wessen

j chartt

the clowd

ij grett angells—wants j weng [crossed through]

ij trompys

hell dure

iiij angelli

Wants j chartt

pagand dure	iiij wesserons
iiij wendows	j Rope
þe yren sett with iiij rappes	ij Angell
þe wendes with j reþe	wants j lyttell Angell
þe ternette hus	and ij Nalles
iiij lyttell angelles	
þe viij chyffes	
ix nalles	
þe ternette	

APPENDIX II

The Dating of the Documents

1. *Document 1* Dr Sellers (*Mercers*, p. 82) implies that this document is dated 1488. But she makes no clear distinction between this entry on f.9r of the Chartulary and the note of the election of John Shawe as master in 1488 on f.9v which is in a different and later hand. The will of one of the constables named, William Bluefront, was probated 26 June 1447.¹ Thomas Scauceby, who is named master of the company in the document, held that office only once before 1447 in 1443. This document must therefore be dated 1443.
2. *Documents 2-5, 7, 13-16* These are all from compotus rolls and internally dated.
3. *Document 6* The financial crisis recorded in this document allows us to date it 1461. In that year (see Document 7, Appendix I) there is an entry in the compotus roll of the company making up the exact sum needed by the pageant masters in excess of the pageant money collected (30s. 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.). The only problem here is that the roll speaks of "Thome Nandyke et sociis suis magistris pagine." Thomas Nandyke is not one of the names that appears on Document 6 as pageant master. Three of the four named pageant masters were Henry Williamson, John Bosswell and Thomas Skotton. Nandyke was made free in the same year as Williamson (34 Henry VI, 1455-56), one year before Bosswell and two before Skotton.² They were all young men in 1461 and possibly the pageant masters, finding themselves in financial difficulties, prevailed upon their friend Thomas Nandyke to present their case to the company. Corroborative evidence that this document belongs to 1461 is found in the appearance of the name of John Gudale in the list of names and amounts on the front of the document. It was the custom for such lists to be written before the collection was made and the amounts entered as they were received. No amount appears against Gudale's name. His will was probated 21 April, 1461.³ He apparently died between the time the list of members was drawn up and the pageant money collected.
4. *Documents 8 and 9* These two documents must be considered together. They share the same pageant masters John Leghtlop, William Thelle, and Richard Sawer. Leghtlop became a member of the Mercers' Guild in

1459 and Sawyer in 1462.⁴ Richard Sawyer was a clerk and would have been admitted to the guild as a special member. His admission in 1462 gives us the earliest possible date for these documents. They clearly refer to two different years and, since they name the same men as masters, it is likely that they refer to two consecutive years. One of the documents refers to the making of the second pageant. Document 6, dated 1461 (see above), makes no mention of it; but Document 10, dated 1464 (see below), speaks of "nayls to both pagyants." These documents must come after 1461 and before 1464. Since one mentions the second pageant and the other does not, Document 8 must belong to 1462 and Document 9 to 1463.

5. *Document 10* Dr Sellers mistakenly dates this 1472.⁵ She prints, together with the pageant masters' account reproduced in Appendix I, the list of the pageant silver collected which is headed "this is the rakynyng of our pagyant silver reseved be the handes of Thomas Wrangwyshe, Thomas Maryott and John Lokwod in the yere Thomas Neylson beyng mayor." Dr Sellers assumed that the three men named in the heading were the master and constables of the company. Wrangwyshe was master of the company in 1472, but neither Maryott nor Lokwood were constables. On all other accounts the men named are the pageant masters. Thomas Neylson was twice mayor but his years of office were 32 Henry VI (1453) and 4 Edward IV (1464). The final evidence refuting the date of 1472 is found in the pageant silver list. Thomas Scauceby, the first member of the company listed, died in 1471.⁶ He appears in the list as having contributed 6d. to the expense of the pageant. Once the date 1472 is discarded we are left with 1453 and 1464. Richard Sawyer, clerk, who joined the company in 1462 (see above), appears in the list. This document must be dated 1464.
6. *Document 11* The list on the inner leaves (see description in Appendix I) is dated 1467.
7. *Document 12* This entry appears on a folio in the Chartulary bearing the date of the meeting at which the decision was made to engage Drawswerd to make a new pageant. The entire folio is in one hand. The words "this present yere abousesaid" therefore refer to the years 1501-02.
8. *Document 17* The document specifies that this list was made in the "frest 3erre" of "maister Wyld." Wilde was master of the company in 1526 and 1527.⁷ This document can therefore be dated 1526.

APPENDIX III

Pageant Masters' Ordinance, 1443

Transcription of the 1443 ordinance in the Chartulary and Minute Book is complicated by the fact that it has been overwritten in a late nineteenth-century hand. The first published version of this entry was by Rev C. Kerry, "Discovery of the Register and Chartulary of the Mercers' Company, York,"

The Antiquary, XXII (1890), 269, and wrongly indicates that the pageant masters of the Mercers were in charge of the "Pater Noster" play.¹ Dr Maud Sellers did not have the MS in her possession when she prepared her edition of the Mercers' documents and at first relied on a transcription provided by Sir Henry Bemrose of Derby.² The MS was recovered shortly before publication and Dr Sellers corrected the earlier work; she, too, transcribed "paternoster play."³ But consideration of the MS under ultra-violet light has shown that the original entry (see above, p. 25, lines 8-9) was not "þe paternoster play" but "þair play."

The overwriter does not appear to have been familiar with fifteenth-century script and made several errors when retracing the words of the entry. He used punctuation not in use in 1443: hyphens in "pater noster-play" (lines 8-9) and "be-langes" (lines 9-10), and a colon after "þto" (line 10). He also dotted the letter "i" and was apparently unable to distinguish between the letters "i" and "r" in some cases as "r" is dotted in "Bluefront," (line 4), "forth" (line 8), "receyue" (line 9) and "Cristi" (line 17). In line 1 he wrote "who" for what must have been originally "whol," in line 4, "Gaing" for original "Gaunt" (William Gaunt is named as a constable in the 1443 Compotus Roll, Box D53), and "þto" for original "þto" in line 10. Under ultra-violet light what appears to be "þe pat' noster-play" in the over-written version can be seen to have been originally "þair play." The overwriter traced "þe" over the "þa" of "þair" and "pat' noster-" over the "ir" (the "r" in "þair" is a long "r"). The words "pat' noster-" extend into the right-hand margin and the line is $\frac{1}{2}$ " longer than any other in the entry.

The 1443 ordinance is therefore not concerned with the Pater Noster play but with "their play," that is the Doomsday pageant which was the Mercers' contribution to the Corpus Christi play.

APPENDIX IV

There is one further document (dated 27 February, 1453-4) among the records of the Mercers that mentions the pageant. A transcription of it has been made by Dr Maud Sellers¹ and a translation by Canon J. S. Purvis.² The document is parchment $11\frac{8}{10}$ " by $4\frac{6}{10}$ " and bears the personal seals of the three men named in the document. It reads as follows:

Nouerint vniuersi per presentes nos Robertum Hewyk de Ledes in comitatu Ebor' parisshe clerke Thomam Fitt de Ebor' Tapiter et Henricum Clayton de Ebor' Textorem teneri et firmiter obligari Gubernatori et Custodibus Communitatis Mercatorem Ciuitatis Ebor' in decem libris sterlingorum Soluendis eisdem Gubernatori et Custodibus vel successoribus suis seu suorum [MS sorum] certo attorno ad festum Corporis cristi proxime futurum post datam presencium sine dilacione longiori ad quam quidem solucionem dicte pecunie vt permittitur faciendam obligamus nos heredes et executores nostros ac omnia bona nostra et quemlibet nostrum per se pro toto et insolido per presentes Sigillis nostris signatis Datum vicesimo septimo die ffebruarij Anno regni Regis Henrici sexti post conquestum Anglie tricesino secundo

Condicio istius obligacionis talis est quod si prescripti Robertus Thomas et Henricus teneant perimpleant ex parte sua omnes et singulas conuenciones et condiciones contentas in quibusdam indenturis inter supradictum Gubernatorem et custodes ex vna parte et prefatos Robertum Thomam et Henricum ex parte altera confectis de et super eductione ludi Corporis cristi videlicet pagine vocate domysday secundum vim formam et effectum indenturarum predictarum quod extunc ista obligacio pro nullo habeatur Alioquin in suis robore permaneat et virtute.

Shirwood

(By the present document let it be generally understood that we, Robert Hewyk, parish clerk of Leeds in the county of York, Thomas Fitt, tapiter, of York and Henry Clayton, weaver, of York, are firmly bound and held to the Governor and Wardens of the Guild of Merchants in the city of York, in the amount of ten pounds sterling to be paid to the said Governor and Wardens, or their successors, or their accredited attorney, on the feast of Corpus Christi immediately after the date of the present document, without any further delay. To the necessity of paying this said sum we bind ourselves, our heirs, and our executors, and all our goods, and each one of us in himself for the whole amount in its entirety, by the present document. Witness our seals, 27 February, 23 Henry VI (1453-4).

The terms of this obligation are that if the aforesaid Robert, Thomas, and Henry keep and fulfil on their part each and every agreement and condition contained in certain indentures made between the aforesaid Governor and Wardens on the one hand and the aforesaid Robert, Thomas and Henry on the other, about and concerning the production of a Corpus Christi play, to wit, the pageant called Doomsday, according to the meaning, form and effect of the aforementioned indentures, then from that point this obligation is to be annulled. Otherwise it is to stand with strength and power in its [?terms].)³

In her introduction to *The York Mercers and Merchant Adventurers*, Dr Sellers comments:

But in 1453 the mercers concluded local talent was not sufficient to bring out the play. An agreement was made with Robert Hewyk parish clerk of Leeds, Thomas Fitt tapiter and Henry Clayton weaver to bring out the pageant of "Domsday," for which they were to receive a payment of ten pounds. Doubtless this covered all the expenses such as fees to players, expenses of representation, repairs and renewals of properties, otherwise the payment would seem excessive.⁴

She clearly misunderstood the force of the document. It is a formal agreement confirming a forfeit. If the three men named failed to fulfil the terms laid down in "certain indentures" concerning the production of the Doomsday pageant they would forfeit ten pounds to the Mercers. The Mercers were not, as Sellers suggested, paying Clayton, Fitt and Hewyk ten pounds to produce the pageant. Canon Purvis, although he recognized that it was a forfeit, also

assumed that this document was related to the Mercers' own production of the Doomsday pageant in the Corpus Christi Play.

When this document is considered with all the other documents concerning the Mercers' pageant discussed in the body of this article its strangeness becomes apparent. Firstly, if these men were pageant masters they appear to have been elected in February, not in June as specified in the 1443 ordinance; and secondly, none of the men named was a Mercer as specified in that ordinance. Further, the sum named (ten pounds), is completely inconsistent with the sum (6s. 8d.) named for the defaulting pageant masters in the 1443 ordinance. Therefore the document does not seem to refer to a regular performance of the pageant on Corpus Christi Day at York.

NOTES TO APPENDIX II

- ¹ Collins, *Index of the Wills in the York Registry 1389-1514*, Yorkshire Archaeological and Topographical Assoc., Record Series VI (1888), p. 19.
- ² Collins, pp. 175-6, 178.
- ³ Collins, p. 71.
- ⁴ Sellers, *Mercers*, p. 70.
- ⁵ *Mercers*, p. 71.
- ⁶ Collins, p. 146.
- ⁷ *Mercers*, p. 323.

NOTES TO APPENDIX III

- ¹ The Pater Noster Play existed in 1378 (see E. K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage* (Oxford, 1903), II, p. 403) and was last played in York in 1572 (Chambers, p. 404). Chambers was under the impression that the Mercers were responsible for the Pater Noster Play from reading the Kerry version of this document in *The Antiquary*.
- ² Sellers, *Mercers*, p. 81, note i.
- ³ *Mercers*, p. 82.

NOTES TO APPENDIX IV

- ¹ Sellers, *Mercers*, pp. 58-9.
- ² J. S. Purvis, *From Minster to Market Place*, (York, 1969), pp. 42-3.
- ³ Translation by Professor A. G. Rigg of the Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto.
- ⁴ *Mercers*, xxiv.