

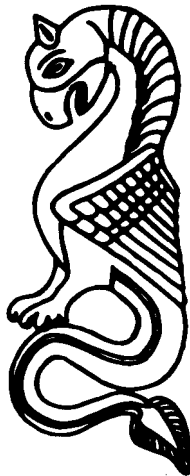
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JOHN CLERKE'S HAND IN THE YORK REGISTER

By PETER MEREDITH

Item payd to John Clerke for keypyng of the Register
of Corpuscristy play at the furst place accustomed xx^d

The name of John Clerke is little known even to students of the York play, but he will almost certainly prove to be our most important single witness to the state of the play in the last forty years or so of its existence. This article is intended as a preliminary examination of the sources of information about John Clerke, and of his relationship with the Register. In her edition of the play,¹ Lucy Toulmin Smith recognised Clerke's main contributions to the Register but she refers to him by name once only, in a note to the Fullers' pageant:

This piece is written in a hand of the end of the 16th century, the same which wrote the addition to the play of Cain and Abell; see after, p.37. The reason for this is found in a Chamberlain's Book of the City of York (vol. 4) under date of 1 Eliz., 1558;² 'Item. payd to John Clerke for entryng in the Regyster the Regynall of the paygant pertenyng to Craft of Fullars, which was never before registred, 12d'. (p.18)

Apart from describing a hand of 1558 as "of the end of the 16th century", this is an accurate statement of the case. Later in referring to the *Cain and Abel* addition she says more appropriately that it was written "towards the middle of the sixteenth century" (p.37), but there is no further mention of John Clerke. The only other large-scale addition to the Register by Clerke is the *Purification* pageant, entered out of place towards the end of the manuscript. Once again Miss Toulmin Smith makes no mention of John Clerke by name, and he is simply "the same hand of the middle of the 16th century which wrote the Fullers' play" (p.433). These three additions are referred to in the Introduction to her edition: "Three pieces were inserted by a hand which we are able to date at 1558 from the municipal books", (pp.xiv-xv), but once again there is no mention of Clerke by name. She points out also that the note on f.68 (her foliation) referring to the misplacing of the *Purification* is "in the same hand" (p.433), and that the opening of the Vintners' pageant (all that there is) is "in the hand of the sixteenth century" (p.xv).

Apart from these references, which can with a little difficulty

The reynall of the Fullers paygant
deno

Adam and Eve this is the place
that I have graunte you of my grace
To have your womyn in a
Fetters & yee fente on tree
Ye after fente all that ye see
that come to you more and nygh
This place hight paradys
here shall your joye begynne
and of that ye to nygh
frome us wavy ye never broode
All your wyll here shall ye have
wyllyng for to eate or dryff
ffor the ffewle or see
and for to take at your own wyll
all othe creatur also chace will
your Snygette shall they be
Adam of more and less
wyllyng in the hee graunte I the
Thys place that worthy is
kysse to in honoure
loke that ye zeynall wyllyng
All othe creatur shall multiply
ylle one in tenne yowes
loke that ye beke for and pte
felle and trewe for wyllyng
So that ye may endure
To suffer in best and man
and ferve of ylle nature
In will God of that ye amde
This shall be your endure

Adam

O loke howd be thy name
for now is that a fyll hunc
that wyllyng be wyllyng
In all of my wyllyng and Solyg
Felle & trewe fente on a
wyllyng fforye many one

be drawn together around John Clerke, there are a number scattered through the Toulmin Smith edition which are only possibly to be linked with him. Most specific are references to "the late/later hand" (26 instances), "the Elizabethan hand" (2 instances), "the 16th century hand" (5 instances), "the late annotator" (once), and "the late corrector" (4 instances). When these minor alterations, corrections and additions are mentioned in the Introduction, the phrase which is used is, "in a hand of the second half of the sixteenth century" (p.xv). Besides these there are numerous vaguer references to "a late hand", "by late hand", "an Elizabethan hand", "an old corrector", and so forth. The question which naturally arises is what Miss Toulmin Smith meant by the preciser references. Were they intended to point to John Clerke; and was she making a careful distinction between Clerke, whose hand she recognised, and a number of unidentified hands that also worked on the play? The answer to the first of these questions must be a hesitant "yes", in that she appears to have intended to draw attention to the appearance in a number of places of this "hand of the sixteenth century"; and to the second question a qualified "no". In most cases it is true that the preciser references are to Clerke's hand, though there are a few that are not and some that are doubtful, but at the same time there are many imprecise references to additions and notes which are certainly by Clerke.³ If she intended a precise distinction between Clerke and other annotators, then the method was a vague and rather inaccurate one.

Miss Toulmin Smith's failure clearly to identify Clerke's hand, however, is easily understandable considering that hers was the pioneer text of the York Play; what is remarkable is that she was able to give the space and time that she did to trimmings of this sort. Unfortunately the apparent excellence of her text has led later scholars to give equal trust to matters that were central and those that were peripheral in her edition, and her comments on the later additions have given rise to two conflicting notions: on the one hand to a vague impression of an insignificant band of casual annotators, and on the other to the idea of a single hand linked with the supposed censoring activities of the ecclesiastical authorities in York towards the end of the sixteenth century.⁴ Neither is anywhere near the truth. Of the one hundred and seventy-five or so marginal additions, about a hundred are certainly by Clerke, and a further twenty or so possibly by him. In other words there are additions by other hands, but they are not numerous. Moreover his additions include almost all the longer and more important ones. As far as ecclesiastical censorship is concerned, the entry that seems more than any other to have given rise to the idea is, "Doctor, this matter is newly mayde, wherof we haue no copy" (f.42). Miss Toulmin Smith in commenting on this (and other entries) claims that "The 'Doctor' whom the city officers were eager to assure that so many portions of their favorite plays were 'mayd of newe', was none other than [Matthew] Hutton [dean of York] himself." (p.xvi). She earlier claims that these marginal entries "are evidence that the plays underwent careful revision in 1568, when the city council agreed 'that the booke therof shuld be perused and otherwise amended before it were playd,' in obvious

anticipation of the correction or censure of the reforming Archbishop Grindal". The "Doctor" who appears in this addition, however, is the name of the first speaker in the Annunciation pageant, accidentally omitted by the original scribe and supplied by Clerke, and has nothing whatsoever to do with Hutton or the reforms of the church.

Before looking further at John Clerke's annotation of the Register it is worth asking who he was and what official position (if any) he held in York in the mid-sixteenth century. His family did not belie its name. He was the son of Thomas Clerke and the grandson of John Clerke, each in his time sheriffs' clerk in the city. When Thomas Clerke, his father, was made a freeman in 1506-7 he was described in the Freeman's Rolls as "litteratus, filius Johannis Clerke nuper clerici vice-comitis".⁵ In the 1540's Thomas was being paid 20s a year under the heading "fees of lernyd men", and was clearly being retained by the city as an adviser on legal and other matters.⁶ He was no longer in office in 1556 since a certain John Grene was said to have the post of Clerk to the Sheriffs' Court "as Thomas Clerke layt Clerke of the sayd Courtes hadd occupied".⁷ John Clerke had a brother, Michael (presumably elder since he was made a freeman in 1533-4), whose occupation is not described in the Freeman's Rolls (I, p.252), but who in view of his family may well have been the "mychaell clarke" paid 16d for making a supplication to the Lord Mayor on behalf of the Bakers' Company in 1544.⁸ He was described as "gentleman" when his son, Robert, was made free in 1560-1 (II, p.2). Robert was, like John Clerke, a scrivener. When John was himself made free in 1538-9 he was referred to as "Johannes Clerck, scryvener, filius Thomæ Clerk, generosi" - son of Thomas Clerk gentleman (I, p.258). None of the family is ever described as Bachelor of Law, attorney or even notary public, and they seem always to have been on the edge of the legal profession, clerks and gentlemen rather than professional lawyers.

John Clerke was born in 1510, according to the evidence given in a legal case in which he was involved as a witness (see below, pp.252-3). Before he was admitted to the freedom of the city in 1538-9, he was already officially employed since in the Bridgemasters' accounts (which he was keeping at the time) he is described as "vnder clerk to Miles Newton the common Clerk of this city".⁹ It was a position of this sort which he was to occupy for the rest of his life. In 1550, after Miles Newton's death, when the new Common Clerk took up office, John Clerke's services were retained:

Also it is agreyd [as well¹] by the said presens as by the assent of the said Thomas ffaill, That John Clerke lait seruaunt and deputy to the said Myles Newton Lait Common Clerke of this Citie for suche diligent paynes as he the same John haith heretofore takyn in the said office of a Long tyme shall fromhensefurth be admittyd as deputy in the same office for the said Thomas ffaill according to his honeste demeanour in the same.¹⁰

The obscurity of this position has no doubt contributed to his later

neglect but he was in his time a man whose services were much in demand. For the city, not only did he act as clerk to the Bridge-masters but his hand is to be found in all the other major city records: in the Freeman's Rolls, entering new freemen and chamberlains; in the Chamberlains' Rolls and Books, recording the day-to-day expenses of the city; and, most commonly of all in the House Books minuting the regular meetings of the Council.¹¹

Besides his work for the city, he was employed as a "free-lance" clerk by both the guilds whose records have survived in any quantity, the Bakers' and the Mercers'. The Bakers employed him to keep their accounts over a number of years, beginning in 1567, and there are also many occasional payments for specific work.¹² In 1553, for example, the first year in which his name appears, he is paid 14d for "wryten", 6d for registering a "new market" at Ouse Bridge, and 6d for "makyng a Coppy of our presentmentes" (f.15). Compared with this in the same year Mr Fail, the Common Clerk, was paid 2s for making a supplication to the mayor, and 8d for "the copie of the laste decre" (ff.14v-15). The sums are not markedly different but there is a certain superiority about the work which the Common Clerk is being asked to do. Some idea of the quality of John Clerke's work and of the kind of thing he was doing in keeping the accounts can be gathered from the 1569 ones which have survived in two forms, the rough draft (not by Clerke) and the final copy (ff.65-6 and 33v-4). In the main the rough draft is legible and uncomplicated and John Clerke's was very much the scrivener's task of presenting a neat appearance, but there were spellings to regularise and some adjustments to make besides the actual job of adding up, which had not been done in rough. "hearye kelland" and "harie ketland" become "Henry ketland", for example, and "willn Lamtonge" (is there more than wayward spelling involved here, in reference to the son of Mr Langton, gentleman?) becomes "William Langton". The neatness of the final version is partly at least a result of the conventional frame of the headings, "Receptes as followeth" and "Paymentes as followeth", and the two *Summae totalis*, but there is also considerable calligraphic skill shown in the initials and the hierarchy of scripts. One alteration seems worth noting, though whether the result of John Clerke's advice or not it is impossible to tell, namely that "Item paid for the occupaicion for mr mayson when we went ageyntes hym" is first altered to "Item paid for the occupaicion whan we mett the others consernyng mr mayson" (f.66) and finally appears as "Item paid for thoccupacion at our metyng a nother tyme consernyng mr Mayson" (f.34). The first alteration is in Clerke's hand though what the precise reason for it was, who suggested it, or what the situation was that produced the original entry, is not clear. The main impression left from a comparison of the two drafts is above all of careful and skilfull presentation.

What is particularly interesting about the run of Clerke accounts (1567-70 and 1572-4) is the changing pattern of the relationship between Clerke and the Bakers that they show. In 1567 the Bakers gave him only 12d for "wrytynge of the audit" and disallowed payment for his dinner, 6d; though it is true that in that year the searchers overspent by 2/6d (ff.27-28v). In the

following year, 1568, not only are they apparently giving him an extra 8d for last year's accounts but they are allowing him his dinner, 4d, paying him a "goodes penyē" (ie earnest money to seal a bargain) of 4d, and paying him "wages" of 5s (f.32v). The bargain struck in 1568 created a new relationship with the Bakers for the next two years; he was paid a regular 5s a year, for "his fee accustomed", and 4d for his dinner. Then for some reason, perhaps that one of the searchers was literate, or perhaps that the Bakers hand does the accounts (1571), and when John Clerke reappears in the next year (1572) his fee accustomed has disappeared and he is charging for "wrytyng of my byll - iijjd" and "for wrytyng this accompte in dewe order and forme - xijd" (f.37v). In 1573 he is again paid a fee, but a reduced one of 3/4d (f.39). After 1576 he disappears altogether.

As an employee of the Mercers' company he appears first, as far as the printed records show,¹³ in 1560 when he is paid 13s 4d as his "hole yere fee" (p.160). As Thomas Clerk (presumably his father) was paid 13s 4d in 1529 as "clerk to this gilde" (p.132), it seems likely that John also was their clerk. He may have taken over from his father, since besides the family connection he would be well known to the Mercers through his work for a city which was frequently under their governance.¹⁴ The last mention in the printed records of his employment by them is in 1578 when he was paid 2s "for makinge of a letter and a certefecate for apprentices to beyond the seas" (p.195). There is no doubt much more to be uncovered about him in the unpublished Mercers' documents.

It is chiefly as a scrivener that he is being employed by the city and the guilds, not as a learned man. In a law-suit of 1556 he is described, presumably on his own evidence, as "a man partelie lerned and somthyng vnderstonde the Latten tonge".¹⁵ The law suit was against the vicar of St Martin, Coney Street, Robert Fox, for drunkenness, being unlearned and a sower of discord, and it is interesting to see how Clerke stands amongst his fellow parishioners. Of the six witnesses only one other gives detailed evidence of Fox's errors in the Latin services he performed at St Martin's. That is John Langton, a member of the Bakers' Company, and a gentleman - he is so described in the Freeman's Rolls (I, p.248). Interestingly enough he was not only a neighbour of Clerke's but also a searcher of the Bakers' Company in the year that Clerke was first employed by them. He gives several examples of Fox's mistakes in the Latin service, for example that in christening children "'super hanc fauilla' he hathe pronounced and caulled it 'super hanc familia'". John Clerke is the only other of the witnesses to have observed and remembered this kind of error. The other witnesses were William Nicolsonne, aged 60, who could not read or write, understands no Latin, and therefore cannot say "whether the said Sir Robert foxe be lerned or not"; Robert Hewet, an armourer, not learned; Mr Adam Bynkes, sheriff, aged 45, who understood no Latin; and John Foxgale, the parish clerk, also not learned though he is able to offer two comments on Fox's conduct of services. In the first place he failed to administer extreme unction as he should, and secondly, a few years before, in christening a child "when he shoold have said

'Ego baptiso te in nomine patris etc.', he said nothing but 'Ego baptiso te'. Clerke not only gives evidence of a learned kind but also remembers the events mentioned by the other witnesses of Fox's drunkenness in church on "Schier thursdaye" and at Adam Bynkes' house, and the Ibson episode when for "cominge in to churche and not spekinge out the said vicar caulled him and said 'good even, tomme foole', the said Ibson beinge knelinge of his knees before the sacrament". This law suit is not only useful for giving Clerke's age but also for setting him in a social context, producing a background to the pure facts of scrivening, and also perhaps revealing one of the routes by which employment came to him.

Another view of him comes through his will, made in March 1580 when he was aged seventy or so.¹⁶ It shows that he was still living in St Martin's parish, and in it he asks to be buried in the porch of his parish church. He died in July 1580 and was buried on the twenty-ninth of that month, and his wife Margaret on 5 August, a week later. He bequeathed to his wife (fruitlessly as it was to turn out) "the lease of my tenement wher I now dwell in Connystrett in yorke", "my standinge bed in the parlour wher we lye with all furniture to the same belonginge, my counter in the greate parlour and my Flanders chiste in the Chamber". Besides this she was allowed the "vse and occupacion" of the orchard and property in North Street,¹⁷ over the River Ouse, and half the residue of his goods and chattels when his debts were paid. To his daughter Jane, he left the orchard in North Street after her mother's death and the other half of the residue of his goods and chattels. The tenement in North Street he gave to his granddaughter "yonge Jane Pullen my daughters daughter" after his wife's death. Finally to Henry Pullaine, his son-in-law and one of the executors of his will, he left "all my Bookes of lawe and presidente" and the property in Coney Street after his wife's death. It would be interesting to know whether the stations of the play were ever visible from Clerke's house.¹⁸ Compared with people like John North who made "specific bequests of nineteen houses, nine closes, two gardens, two orchards, a bowling alley, and a dovecote in the city", Clerke was not a wealthy man, but he did live in one of the streets described in 1622 as "the fairest and cheifest streetes in this Citty", and one "wherein men of the best sorte and ranck do frequent and dwell",¹⁹ and if he never attained high office in the city he was nevertheless a much trusted servant of those who did. "Iohn Clerke" was the obvious choice of the city council in 1567 when they "Aggreed that the Pageantes of Corpus christi suche as be not allready Registred shalbe with all convenyent spede be fayre wrytten by Iohn Clerke in the old Registre yerof".²⁰

Some knowledge of who John Clerke was seems essential for a true understanding of what he was doing in the Register of the Corpus Christi play, and I have tried to give information of that sort in the first half of this article. I should now like to turn to look more particularly at his work on the Register. It is first important to establish as far as that is possible over what period of time he was working on it. The earliest possible reference to his involvement is that contained in the 1542 Chamberlains' Book:

Item paid to the seruant of the common Clerke for keypyng
of the Register at the furst place where as the play of
Corpus Christi was playd of Corpus Christi day this yere Accustomed²¹ xx^d

As I have already said, Clerke was referred to as "seruauant and deputy" to Miles Newton who was Common Clerk from 1519 until 1550; was he therefore the "seruant" referred to here? Unfortunately though there is no doubt that Clerke was servant to Miles Newton in 1542 it is not possible to say for certain that it does refer to Clerke because there was at the time another man, William Thomlyngson, also described as a servant to the Common Clerk and (if one payment is sufficient evidence) apparently on a par with Clerke. The payment that suggests their parity is 3/4d for "Clensyng the Chamber and making the ffyres accustomyd" in the 1542 Chamberlains' Book (f.88v for Thomlyngson and f.89v for Clerke). I have so far been able to find out nothing more about Thomlyngson. He does not appear to have gained the freedom of the city if his occupation was of a clerkly kind, and the only place where I have found the name in the right kind of context is at the end of the Freemen's Rolls where it is written three times on two separate pages in the same hand amongst other apparent "signatures".²² His very shadowiness makes it difficult to dismiss him entirely, but certainly if later evidence is anything to go by it is John Clerke that is the more likely servant to sit at the first station of the play. 1542, then, is a possible first date for Clerke's official involvement with the play in performance; the first certain date for his involvement is 1554:

Item payd to Iohn Clerke for keypyng of the Register
of Corpuscrysty play at the furst place accustomyd xx^d 23

Then in 1559 comes the reference noticed by Lucy Toulmin Smith to the entering of the Fullers' pageant, and in 1567 the request that the unregistered pageants should be brought in and entered by Clerke.²⁴ His connection with the play, both as a text and in performance, possibly stretches over twenty-five years.

One other reference needs to be noted which has some rather more general repercussions. In 1527 instead of the Common Clerk being at the first station his place was taken by Thomas Clerke.²⁵ The first suggestion, fanciful but not at all unlikely, that might be made is that his seventeen year old son might well have been with him. The second more general suggestion is that Miles Newton might have made a habit of absenting himself from this duty. He was possibly absent in 1524 and 1525 because he rented a station himself in Coney Street, he was absent in 1527 when Thomas Clerke took his place, and in 1542 when his servant did. At none of these times, however, is it officially stated that he was absent; the information always comes obliquely from another source. It is therefore quite possible that the regular references in the station lists to the Common Clerk should not be taken at face value, especially when, as is the case with a number of years, the records that might provide the necessary information of who was actually there are missing.²⁶

John Clerke's work on the Register is of such a varied kind

that it seems to me most useful to deal with it under a number of different headings. I cannot here consider all his additions and alterations in detail but I will attempt to indicate the kind of change and to discuss some of the more complicated examples.

Omissions from the Register

By far the commonest type of annotation in the manuscript refers to omission and most commonly it takes the form of *hic caret*. These brief (usually abbreviated) entries pose a special problem since it is very difficult to identify a hand on such small evidence. More important, however, than to identify the hands in these cases is to ask how the entries arose; how did the scribe, whether it was John Clerke or another, know that something was missing? If he discovered it by comparing the Register with the guild original, then why did he not enter the missing portions, since that was in general the clear intention of the city authorities. The answer is, I think, very much more likely to be that he noticed the omissions in the Register while he was following the pageant text at the first station and was usually only in a position to make quick indications of the position (and sometimes the extent) of missing portions. One of Clerke's rather longer annotations throws some light on this process. The Cardmakers' pageant (III, *God creates Adam and Eve*) is entered twice in the manuscript. On f.8(7)²⁷ in the right margin against the end of God's speech which ends, "Adam and Eue 3our names sall be" is entered:

caret And leyd your lyves in good degree &c.
 Adam here name I the &c. and Eve &c.
 her name shall be / and be
 thy Subgett right

On f.10v(9v) at the same point in the second copy of the pageant is written in the left margin:

And leyd your lyves in good degree
 Adam here make I the / a man
 of mykyll myght
 This same shall thy subget be
 and eve her name shall hight

The first of these additions has clearly been written at a number of different times; first probably *caret*; then "And . . . degree &c."; then "Adam . . . be"; and finally "and . . . right", but all by Clerke. And they do not make sense as verse. The inference is surely that he scribbled down, perhaps over a number of years, what he could catch and record from the actors of the pageant, each time, thinking that he had finished, he added "&c." (in the case of the third entry having second thoughts in the middle) until he had most of the verse. How he produced the second version it is difficult to be sure. It is possible that he got hold of the guild original and copied it out from there; but it is equally possible (I would say, more likely) that he finally worked out something that made sense

And I have the gift of thyse
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The additions to the Cardmakers' pageant (BL MS Additional 35290, f. 8[7] and f. 10v[9v]). The first line of each addition replaces the final line of the previous stanza.

from his own memory of the lines, and rather than erase his earlier attempts entered it in the second copy of the pageant. A similar situation exists on f.34(35) where *caret hic*, written first, is later followed by part of the missing text, and later again by the rest. The same changes of angle, size and ink are apparent here, and once again the second addition is followed by "&c."²⁸ These attempts by John Clerke to fill in the missing sections are however the exception; what we are left with as a rule is a bare *hic caret* or *hic deficit* and no way of knowing how extensive or significant the additional passages were. In most cases the missing passages seem to be the result of revisions made by the guilds in their pageants rather than omissions of original material by the main scribe of the Register. He was by no means faultless but the indications of omission do not as a rule correspond with those places where he is clearly at fault.²⁹ We are therefore in most cases being given a tantalising glimpse of the prevalence of revision with no indication of its extent or significance.

Another area of omission is the absence of complete pageants, something which one would expect Clerke to be much concerned with. In the case of the Fullers' pageant the guild brought in its copy and the text was entered by Clerke in 1559. No other omitted pageant was brought in until after the final demand of the city council in 1567, and even that produced only the Masons' and Labourers' *Purification*. What did Clerke do in the case of those which never appeared? In one case, the Vintners', he did what he had done with some of the omitted speeches and entered what he no doubt felt was an appropriate *incipit*. We are therefore in the curious position of having just one line and a bit to represent the whole pageant:

Loo this is A yoyfull day o———Archedeclyne
for me and (f.92v [97v])

Given that the subject is unique in English plays, the Marriage at Cana, it is especially to be regretted that Clerke left us with such an unhelpful snippet. His other approach to omitted pageants was quite different and had nothing to do with performance. Looking at the leaves on which the Ironmongers' pageant should appear it seems at first that he did nothing (f.98[107]). In fact he had erased what he had written perhaps in the expectation of receiving the original after the Council ordered in June 1567 the registering of the missing pageants.³⁰ What he had written was a copy of the entry for the pageant taken from the *Ordo Paginarum* in the city's A/Y Memorandum Book. It was presumably another way of indicating what should be there, but does it also suggest that the pageant was not in production and that therefore John Clerke could not give an *incipit*? The same may have been true of the Masons' and Labourers' *Purification*, since Clerke first entered a description of it (interestingly enough not taken from the *Ordo Paginarum*)³¹ and then an *incipit* (f.68 [74]). It is difficult to say whether there is a gap in time between the one and the other and therefore a possibility that at first the pageant was not in production, but was later. When Clerke received the original from the guilds he erased the earlier entry and put the present note drawing attention to the

Endes to boime hithe me in ceere
Sende donne a chorde fadir for thy
Come to ye my fadir deere
Ye fadir blisshing moste myghty
Liffe / you all pay lesse here

after do as pattern in
I have staid a yeare from me
I have staid a yeare from me

Addition in what is almost certainly Miles Newton's hand, emended by Clerke
(BL MS Additional 35290, f.221[239]).

that have thym in bandome in base or in biter
Wherfore take to my take and lowne into me
And ther fore for fynysh / I have drent / I have
I charge you charyte your right
To waite how be day and by myght
Of ye company of a boy in to bayle

The "interpolated cry" (BL MS Additional 35290, f.129[144]).

complete pageant towards the end of the manuscript.

Between the few lines and the complete pageants there exist a large number of omissions which Clerke has annotated somewhat more fully than with a simple *hic caret*. Most extensive of these omissions, in fact amounting apparently to a complete pageant, is the Girdlers', of which Clerke says, "This matter of the gyrdlers agreyth not with the Coucher in no poynt / it begynnyth Lysten Lordes vnto my Lawe /" (f.73v[79v]); in other words the Girdlers were playing a pageant which had been so extensively revised as to be unrecognisable from the copy in the Register. Elsewhere there are the familiar, "this matter is newly mayde / wherof we haue no Coppy /" (f.42[44]); "This matter is mayd of newe after anoþer forme" (f.69[75]) about which he apparently changed his mind since the annotation is deleted; "her wantes A pece newly mayd for saynt John Baptiste" (f.84v[92v]) and "This matter is newly mayd & devysed wherof we haue no coppy Regystred" (f.86[94]). Altogether about eight separate pageants are annotated in this way, which means that in the mid-sixteenth century at least eight pageants were being played in a substantially different form from the one they had had when they were registered somewhere between 1463 and 1477.³²

Clerke also notes matters of staging, especially music. Most of these added stage "directions" record singing: "tunc cantat Angelus", sometimes with an *incipit*, "tunc cantat angelus ne timeas Maria" (f.44[46]); "tunc Cantant Angeli venicreator /" (f.88[96]), at an unexpected moment in the *Temptation* as Christ is placed on the pinnacle of the temple; and "tunc Angelus Cantat Resurgens" (f.199[217]) as Christ rises from the tomb. On f.224(239) is a music note interesting from two points of view; first because it is almost certainly in the hand of Miles Newton, and secondly because Clerke has altered the note "Tunc cantant Angeli gloria in excelsys deo" by the deletion of the *incipit* and the entering of a new one, "Ascendo ad patrem meum", suggesting that the guild had decided on a new piece of music for Christ's ascension. Clerke's most extensive noting of stage movement is in *Herod and the Magi*, "Nota the harrode passeth & the iij kynges commyth agayn to make there offerynges" (f.65v[71v]); but most of his notes refer to smaller movements such as drinking (f.149v[164v]), or washing (ff.119v[132v], 171[187]). He also notes an interpolated cry of "lorde" by the knights at Cayphas' court, when Cayphas at the end of a ranting speech suddenly turns and directly addresses them:

Cayphas

. . .
 And therefore, sir knyghtis, /tunc dicunt lorde
 I charge you chalange youre rightis
 . . . (f.129[144])

The interpolation is brief, but the theatrical possibilities, especially for comedy, are considerable. Perhaps it was the development of these that forced the interpolation on Clerke's notice.

I have included here omissions of original material as well as what might be thought of as additions because it seems to me that to Clerke they were all part of the attempt to record more

precisely what the play actually was in the sixteenth century.

Matters of organisation

John Clerke as an agent of the city was to some extent concerned with changes in guild responsibility, and there are a few annotations of this kind. The fullest is that which records the taking over by the Weavers of the Sledmen's pageant:

Wevers assygynd in
A^odni M^l D liij^{ti} William
Cowplande then maior

This has been added over the erased guild heading at the beginning of the pageant (f.203v[221v]). To the left of this and a little bit lower is "Sledmen", and to the right is "Palmers". The problem here is, however, that all other evidence suggests that this was not the Sledmen's pageant but the Winedrawers', and that the next pageant was the one he should have marked. Lucy Toulmin Smith comments on it thus:

'The Wynedrawers' runs along the top of every page of this piece except the first, where it has been scratched out and the following written, [as above]. . . Along the top of every page of the next piece XL the original copyist also wrote 'The wynedraweres,' but it has been crossed through and 'Sledmen' written instead, on the first page (fo.206), in the same hand that wrote 'Sledmen' on fo.203v^o. It seems therefore that the original copyist made the mistake of writing 'The Wynedrawers' over the two plays, that a contemporary in correcting it himself wrote 'Sledmen' to Play XXXIX in error for XL (there is a faint line across the word which may mean a stroke of his pen), but then went on to correct the first page of XL (the rest are done in a different hand). And Play XXXIX, originally performed by the Winedrawers, was assigned to the Weavers in 1553, and at some other time, perhaps late in their history, it was assigned to the Palmers. (p.421)

I would tentatively suggest a different series of changes. In the first place I do not think that we should automatically dismiss the evidence of the main scribe of the Register. He may have been right in suggesting that by the late fifteenth century the two pageants were both the responsibility of the Winedrawers; certainly there is no evidence from that period to contradict this. In this case it may be that the Sledmen took over both pageants (again there is no contrary evidence) and that Clerke's note on the assigning of the pageant to the Weavers was accurate. The curious, apparent ascription of the first pageant to the "Palmers" (not in Clerke's hand but apparently earlier) may then be no more than a brief way of saying that this pageant was part of that dealing with the episode of the pilgrims to Emmaus. There is no sign elsewhere in the records at York of a Palmers' guild being involved in the play.

The cluster of *hic de novo facto*'s written by Clerke at the beginning of the second pageant may reflect later attempts (perhaps when the Sledmen took over) to make a smooth transition from one pageant to the next.

Clerke was not only responsible for the note assigning the pageant to the Weavers, he also added "Sledmen" at the head of the pages of the second of these pageants and presumably deleted "Wynedrawers" at the same time. If what I have suggested above is right, why did he not also correct "Wynedrawers" to "Sledmen" in the first pageant? I cannot as yet find a satisfactory explanation, but it should be noticed that the correction of headings is not as consistent as Miss Toulmin Smith suggests; five are corrected to "Sledmen", two are merely deleted, and the last one is left untouched. It is therefore possible that Clerke changed his mind about the alteration in working through the second pageant and decided merely to leave the indication of guild responsibility to the name "Sledmen" on the first page. The control by the Weavers only lasted one year. In 1554 they were once more bringing forth their own pageant of Mary's appearance to Thomas, and of what happened to these two pageants Clerke gives no hint, apart perhaps from crossing out his own new heading.³³

One other concern of Clerke's, and one which may prove ultimately of considerable importance, is his organisation of the Register itself. Entries like "this is entryd afterwardes" (f.5v [6v]) at the beginning of the Cardmakers' pageant, or the note referring the reader to Clerke's own entry of the *Purification* towards the end of the manuscript, are straightforward enough, but there are others with rather more complex implications. Below the last line of the Cardmakers' pageant (second version, f.11 [10]) are the words:

The ffullers payyant
Adam and eve this is the place ●——Deus/

Since the Fullers' pageant was missing when Clerke first certainly took charge of the Register (see above pp.245 and 257), it could be said that this is merely an *incipit* for a missing pageant. But as in the other cases of this sort (eg the Ironmongers' and the Vintners') Clerke has written the craft name and *incipit* on the first blank page after the previous pageant, it seems here as though he intended something slightly different. What he perhaps intended to show is revealed in the House Book for 1529, where the joining together of the Cardmakers' and Fullers' crafts is ordered:

Item the said presens haith ordred that the Walkers
[ie Fullers] & Cardemakers of this City fromehensfurth
shall ioyne bothe thayre paiauntes in oone . . .³⁴

In other words it is likely that by putting the *incipit* of the Fullers' on the same page as the end of the Cardmakers' pageant Clerke was indicating the physical joining together of the two. That this is what Clerke was doing is made even more probable when one looks at the end of the first version of the Cardmakers'

pageant. There to the right and below the last line of text is the entry:

nota caret Adam & Eve this is the place
that I haue grant you of my grace
to haue your wonnyng in &c. f.9 (8)

It is by Clerke and has been partially erased. In the light of the use he made of the first version for scribbling in snatches of missing text (see above pp.255-7), it is likely that he was here recording his first impression that the text was continuous and that there was something missing, and that later (as with the missing lines) he was setting out in the second version a considered statement of the situation. It is worth observing that in his first note there is no mention of the fact that it is the Fullers' pageant that is missing, merely that it is a section of the text, which fits with the idea that the notes were made from seeing the play in performance.³⁵

An even more complex problem arises from Clerke's notes to the Masons' and the Goldsmiths' pageants. These pageants are in themselves odd since though the Goldsmiths handed over one of their "pageants" to the Masons in 1432 (it is called in the agreement, "pagina herodis"³⁶), their text, registered in 1463-77, still includes both the *Herod* and the *Offering of the Three Kings*. Much of the Masons' text consequently overlaps with the Goldsmiths' (ll.58 to the end, Masons', with ll.73-216, Goldsmiths'³⁷). The main scribe of the Register was clearly given the revised *Herod* (then in the hands of the Masons) and the unrevised *Offering of the Three Kings* (the text as performed by the Goldsmiths before 1432). Anyone using the text in the Register would therefore have considerable difficulty in following a performance, and to make following the text even more confusing the Masons had apparently given up their playing of *Herod* by 1477 when they took over the *Purification*.³⁸ In the text, therefore, there would be an unplayed pageant before the Goldsmiths'. There are, however, no signs given by Clerke that the Masons' pageant was not played; in fact there are indications to the contrary. On f.58v(63v) there is a catch-phrase, "his wille", inadvertently left in by the main scribe, which ties the first part of the Masons' in with the old Goldsmiths' *Herod*. At this point there are erased notes in the right margin, and, just below, an erased "sequitur postea" in the left margin. On f.61(66) there is a further erased note:

Hic caret I^{us} Rex
Alake forsoth what
shall I say
sequitur postea We lake þat syne þat we haue soght

in other words an *incipit* (in a slightly different form) for the rest of the Goldsmiths' pageant (ll.217 to the end). In the text there are minimal alterations: "herodes" has been supplied where the first speaker's name was missing, and "is" inserted in l.19 (f.57v[62v]); and "contrees" has been replaced by "the world"

(f.60[65]). In the Goldsmiths' pageant there are no alterations to the text until f.64(70), when "jude" is altered to "all Jury" (l.120), and "filius" added as a speaker's name (l.125) thereby bringing it into line with the Masons'. The Kings are numbered on f.64v(70v), and re-numbered on f.65(71) probably not by Clerke, and "herodes" provided as the speaker's name on f.65v(71v). Apart from these alterations there is only the marginal note by Clerke on f.65v(71v): "Nota the harrode passeth & the iij kynges commyth agayn to make there offerynges".

There is not much to go on, but it is important for an understanding of the performance of these two pageants in the sixteenth century to attempt to explain how Clerke's annotations arose. I will offer what seems to me the most likely explanation. When Clerke sat at the first station in 1554 the Masons were presumably not playing *Herod*, since they had already taken over the *Purification*, and the Minstrels were not playing it since they did not take it over until 1561.³⁹ Why then are there annotations to the Masons' pageant? They cannot be explained in terms of the later taking over by the Minstrels, because they relate the Masons' pageant to the Goldsmiths'. Is it possible that when the Masons gave up the *Herod*, the Goldsmiths absorbed it into their pageant? Certainly the Goldsmiths' *Offering* would make an oddly truncated version of the episode on its own. The alternative is that the Goldsmiths simply reverted to their original text; but if that is so, why do Clerke's notes seem to attempt to integrate the Masons' *Herod* with the Goldsmiths' *Offering*? If Clerke had been following from the two texts in the Register a version integrating them both in performance, what might he have found? It would have run smoothly enough through Herod's opening rants until line 57 where he might have been momentarily thrown by the extraneous catch-phrase "his wille"; but surely not enough to have produced such a spate of annotation. Is it possible that at this point the Goldsmiths returned to their own text for the first appearance of the Kings (ll.1-72)? It is crucial that we should be able to read Clerke's first note, but so far I have been able only to make out a possible "caret" and a few isolated letters. If he did write "caret", then it might suggest that the Kings' first appearance was played, that it was lacking in the text he was following, and that he found it afterwards later in the manuscript ("sequitur postea").

From there the text again would run smoothly until the end of the Masons' pageant, after which the *Offering* would presumably follow from the Goldsmiths'. At this point, the end of the Masons', there is therefore a "Hic caret" and an *incipit* for the missing section. Clerke later found the section in the Goldsmiths' pageant and added "sequitur postea". It is interesting that the wording of the *incipit* is different from the text, as it suggests once again that Clerke was writing down what he heard.⁴⁰ In confirmation of this explanation there is the "filius" added to the Goldsmiths' pageant thereby bringing it into line with the Masons' which gives this speech to Herod's son, a character who does not exist in the Goldsmiths' version. The notes in the Masons' pageant could have been erased when the Minstrels took over in 1561 and the previous arrangement no longer held. It is Clerke who indicates the change

by adding "Mynstrells/" at the head of the first page of the pageant (f.57v[62v]).

The actual evidence is admittedly somewhat slender for this reconstruction of Clerke's actions but it is by and large consistent, both with itself and with what we know of his work elsewhere. Those inconsistencies that do exist, and they are few and small, could be the result of Clerke's attendance with the Register at the first station on more than one occasion. Having discovered that the Goldsmiths' text mainly duplicated the Masons' he may have followed the Goldsmiths' on a later occasion and made the minor alterations ("jude" to "all Jury"; "the thar" to "of this", l.157) which appear there and not in the Masons'. If this explanation is right, it throws interesting light on the process of adaptation and change taking place in the pageants in the sixteenth century, helps to establish the nature of the performance of the Goldsmiths' pageant at this time, and offers an answer to one part of the thorny question of which pageants were being played and which were not.

Understanding the nature of the additions to the Register is not a straightforward business and the explanation of their meaning almost always involves some leaps into speculation. It is, however, essential that we should see them as clearly as possible in their context if only for the negative reason that seeing clearly what something is enables us to reject what it is not. Part of the context is John Clerke himself, his relation to the City he served and to the play. It is possible to get a clear idea of his public face as a diligent servant of many masters, and even a glimpse of his private one, what is difficult to see is what his attitudes were, especially to the play that was to some extent in his care. He was an official employee and he seems to have been a careful scribe, and to this extent his additions to the text have a value far beyond that of a casual scribbler. Whether they record guild revisions that had already been made or actors' mistakes of the moment, they provide useful insights into the nature of the text and its performance. His attempts to indicate the ordering of the pageants too, considering that they were presumably in the nature of notes to himself, are by and large consistent and even if requiring speculation, not impossible of solution. Even his (and others') simple *hic* carets and *hic deficits* have an important place in indicating the areas in which revision had been carried out. The notes on the music used, given the reticence of the York text in stage directions, and the comments on stage business, few though they are, help to fill out our understanding of the resources of a York performance. Nothing in the additions and alterations by John Clerke or anyone else gives any sign of being censorship or official revision for the ecclesiastical authorities. Indeed the very wording of the notes, "*hic caret*", "*here wants the conclusion*", "*this matter lacks*" emphasises that this is an observer noting omissions in the text from watching the pageants in performance.

Much more will be discovered about John Clerke⁴¹ but the essential facts seem to me to be clear. He was a respected scribe, if not a wealthy man then certainly a man of substance, officially employed by the city, and, as far as the play was concerned, given

the task of checking the City's text. York's mayor and council had always exercised a careful overall control over the Corpus Christi play, though leaving the guilds to organise their individual pageants, and one thing besides the quality of the performance which they had always kept an eye on was the content of the play. The billets and the *Ordo Paginarum* were the early method of control; by the latter part of the fifteenth century the registering of all the pageants was undertaken to replace the *Ordo*, and that of itself necessitated the last stage the supervision of the text by the mayor and council through the Common Clerk. John Clerke's work is therefore part of a continuing process of city control and not the result of a sudden ecclesiastical interest. His own work on the play either began before the Reformation was under way⁴² or when Catholicism was again the state religion - neither of them times likely to produce Protestant censorship. In the course of his supervision he made a wide variety of observations about the sixteenth-century performances which are an invaluable source of information for our understanding of the play at this period. I hope I have given some idea of the value of these observations despite the difficulty of interpretation. The study of medieval English drama cannot just be a study of texts in isolation but of texts in a chronological context. The old philosophical truism that you can't jump into the same river twice is almost as true of something like the York play - you can't chronologically speaking study the same text twice. What John Clerke can do is to give an insight into that final period before the river dried up.

NOTES

- 1 York Plays, ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith (Oxford, 1885).
- 2 The date of this entry in the Chamberlains' Book is given in York, REED as 1559, not 1558 as in Toulmin Smith; York, Records of Early English Drama, ed. Alexandra F. Johnston and Margaret Rogerson (University of Toronto Press, 1979) p.330. "1 Eliz." runs from 17 November 1558 to 16 November 1559.
- 3 Of the additions by Clerke to the Cardmarkers' pageant, for example, she says, "These lines are written in the margin in an Elizabethan hand" (p.15), and of that at the beginning of the Spicers' pageant, "A marginal note here in 16th cent. hand" (p.93). Later, in the Bowyers' and Fletchers' pageant, she notes, "MS. here has 'hic caret' in the 16th cent. hand", which is not by Clerke (p.265).
- 4 Hardin Craig, for example, talks of these entries as "a series of light revisions [which] appear in the manuscript of the York plays and apparently date from the revision called for [ie in 1568]". He goes on, "There are about fifty of these amendations recorded by Lucy Toulmin Smith, who regarded the handwriting as of the late sixteenth century. The revisions are, for the most part, mild and doctrinal and seem to be corrections made at this time, possible at the direction of Dean Hutton"; *English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages*, (Oxford, 1955) p.359. See also H.C. Gardiner, *Mysteries' End* (New Haven, 1946) p.74, fn.49.
- 5 *Register of the Freemen of the City of York*, ed. F. Collins, 2 vols., Surtees Society 96 and 102 (1897 and 1900) I, p.230. Page references in the text are to these two volumes.
- 6 For an example of his fee-ed position, see York City Archives, Chamberlains' Book 4, f.81, where two payments of ten shillings each are made to him during the year (1542) and are entered under the heading, "Learned mens fees". For an example of one type of advice he was called upon to give, see York City Archives, House Book 13, f.59 (11 August 1536): "Item Mr Thomas Clerk the Shiryffes Clerk of this Citty vppon the syght of the seid dett book & sclauderous byll is of the same oppinyon of the writyng of them lyke as the forseid Robert Shellay & Mr William ffauz is". The case appears fully in *York Civic Records* 4, ed. Angelo Raine, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record Series 108 (1945 for 1943) pp.7-13.
- 7 York City Archives, House Book 22, f.1v. John Grene must have been the Sheriffs' clerk for some time as he is named as such and paid learned mens' fees in 1554; YCA, Chamberlains' Book 4, f.118. The entry in House Book 22 is written by John Clerke.
- 8 Bakers' Account Book, I, British Library MS Additional 33852, f.5v.
- 9 10 January 1535: "Item it ys Agreyd by the seid presens yat bothe the brigmaisters of ousebryg & fossebryg shall content & pay vnto John Clerk nowe beyng vnder Clerk to myles Newton the Common Clerk of this City for the makyng of theyre Accomptauntes of this yere Accordyng to the Auncyent custome of 'ye seid' City yat is to say the seid brigmaisters of Ousebryge — viij^s And the seid brigmaisters of fossebryg — iiij^s And frome nowfurth the brigmaisters of this City for the tyme beyng to obserue & kepe the seid custome for makyng of theyre Accomptes yerely for euezmore"; YCA, House Book 13, f.14v. In 1564, when he was still doing the Bridgemasters' accounts, he received 28s; Bridgemasters' Account Rolls, C91:1 (dorse).

- ¹⁰ 8 December 1550, YCA, House Book 20, f.34. Thomas Fale died in 1571 and was succeeded by Leonard Belt, gentleman. I have not so far found it recorded that John Clerke continued as his deputy, but he was certainly still in the City's employment in 1573 since when a city charter of Richard I was returned (it had been lent to William Cook, a citizen, to clear himself of tolls charged at Grimsby), it is said to have been "layde up by John Clerk in the little chyst in the Chambre"; *York Civic Records* 7, YAS, Record Series 115 (1950) p.74.
- ¹¹ See, for example, the Freemens' Rolls, YCA, C/Y, ff.199-219v; Chamberlains' Books 4 and 5; Bridgemasters' Rolls C91:1, 2, 3; and also a number of the category E documents, for example E 41, the 1542 Muster Roll. His main contribution, however, is to the House Books where he appears as early as 1533 (House Book 11, ff.117-8v, 121v, et al), even before being made a freeman of the City.
- ¹² References to him and work by him are wholly contained in the Bakers' Account Book, I, BL MS Addit. 33852. The years in which Clerke kept the Bakers' accounts appear on ff.27-8v (1567), 31-2v (1568), 33v-4 (1569), 34v-5v (1570); 36v-7v (1572), 38-9 (1573), 39v-41 (1574).
- ¹³ *The York Mercers and Merchant Adventurers*, 1356-1917, ed. Maud Sellers, Surtees Society 129 (1918 for 1917). The records printed there are only a tiny proportion of the documents of the guild that survive.
- ¹⁴ "Of the one hundred and six aldermen during the sixteenth century, sixty were merchants proper"; of the thirty-nine mayors, nineteen or twenty were merchants; D.M. Palliser, *Tudor York* (OUP, 1979) p.106.
- ¹⁵ The records of the case are in the Dean and Chapter Court Cause Papers in the Borthwick Institute, University of York (D/C CP 1556/1). John Clerke's evidence is on f.6v. I am grateful to Eileen White for drawing my attention to the case.
- ¹⁶ The will is contained in Probate Register 22B, f.495r+v, Borthwick Institute, and is dated March 20 1580 (1579 o.s.). Probate was granted on 7 February 1584 ('83 o.s.). His death and that of his wife are recorded in *The Parish Registers of St Martin, Coney Street, York*, ed. R.B. Cook, Yorkshire Parish Register Society 36 (1909) p.76.
- ¹⁷ Property in North Street is the subject of two feoffments between Thomas Clerke on the one hand and William Pullay and Thomas Williams on the other, dated 1544. The property is described (in Joyce Percy's translation) as lying "in width between the land of the Mayor and Commonalty of York on the south and the land of Christopher Neleson, gentleman, on the north, and in length from Northestrete on the east as far as the land of John Bachelor, cordwainer, on the west". If the city property is the same as that viewed in 1572 and described as "at the west end of Alhallos Church Yerde", then it may be possible to fix the position of Clerke's property fairly precisely as lying to the north of All Saints Church and fronting on North Street. John Clerke was one of those who viewed the city property in 1572, perhaps because, as his land was adjacent, he was an interested party in establishing the bounds. He is apparently not one of those named as an officer of the City. See *York Memorandum Book*, ed. Joyce W. Percy, Surtees Society 186 (1973) pp.260-1 (feoffments), 295 (city property).
- The Clerke family may have been associated with North Street very much earlier. Thomas Clerke, Common Clerk, who died in 1482 and was buried in All Saints Church (his monumental brass still partially survives), owned land "lying between the messuage of the Mayor and Commonalty in which Thomas Newton, shearman, lately dwelt, on the one side, and the messuage of William Kendale, late citizen and merchant of York on the other, and

extending in length from Northstrete in front to the messuage of William Holbek, citizen and merchant, occupied by William Warde, behind" (Y.M.B., pp.204-5). "Thomas Clerke" has been written in the margin against this entry in a hand that appears to be John Clerke's, and this Thomas Clerke may have been John's great grandfather, but if so his son John was registered as a freeman twice, first as his son and secondly as "clerk vicecomitis" (Sheriff's clerk), *Freemens' Rolls*, I, pp.202 and 204.

- 18 Though he lived in Coney Street Clerke seems never to have rented a station to hear the play. It is possible that his house was on the wrong side of the road (see Meg Twycross, "'Places to hear the play:' pageant stations at York, 1398-1572", *REED Newsletter* (1978:2) 18-20), or that being never in on the day he had no reason to. Henry Pullaine, who also lived in Coney Street, rented a station in front of his house in 1572 for the Pater Noster play.
- Henry Pullaine, who married Jane Clerke in 1563, was a scrivener who became a notary public and later an attorney. He and his wife both died in 1605. Besides being John Clerke's son-in-law, he clearly worked with him since when in 1567 the City Council decided to order its books and documents it suggested John Clerke, Ed. Fale and Henry Pullen by name as appropriate people to help the Common Clerk; *York Civic Records* 6, YAS, Record Series 112 (1948) p.126. It is probable that Henry was the grandson of John Pullaine, Common Clerk in the early years of the sixteenth century.
- Jane, John Clerke's granddaughter, married William Scrafton in 1586 and bore him fifteen children. It is odd that she is the only grandchild that Clerke names in his will since he had nine altogether, several of whom survived. For information about the family see the St Martin, Coney Street, Parish Registers (note 16, above).
- 19 Palliser, *Tudor York* p.105 (John North's bequests) and pp.138-9 (description of the streets from House Book 34).
- 20 York, REED, p.351, from House Book 24, f.82.
- 21 York, REED, p.280, from Chamberlains' Book 4(1), f.88 (the entry is in Miles Newton's hand).
- 22 YCA, C/Y f.355r&v. Of the other names only "Ricardus Ripplynham" was a scrivener, made free in 1484-5 (I, p.207). Thomlyngson's name appears in the Muster Roll of 1539 (YCA, E64 f.84) as "seruant of the said Myles Newton", Newton himself appears a few names further up the list. They are both in the section labelled "Archers - Able persons for the warre/ horsyde and harnest", and both have been deleted. John Clerke appears later under "Archers - Able persons for the warre hauyng neither hors nor harnes" (f.84v). This would suggest that Thomlyngson was Newton's personal servant, and perhaps make it more likely that it was Clerke who was employed to keep the Register at the first station in 1542. I am grateful to Eileen White for noticing Thomlyngson's name in the Muster Roll.
- 23 York, REED, p.317, from Chamberlains' Book 4(2), p.142.
- 24 York, REED, p.351.
- 25 York, REED, p.244, from Chamberlains' Book 3(1), p.159. See also Twycross, "'Places to hear the play'", 32.
- 26 Meg Twycross slightly obscures this in her otherwise most useful lists ("'Places to hear the play'", 28-33) by not including the appearances of Miles Newton's servant (1542) and John Clerke (1554) at the Trinity Gate's

station. Though the statement in the station lists "where the Common Clerk keeps the Register" is common form and the allotting of a place to the Common Clerk does not necessarily imply his personal presence, nevertheless Miles Newton's hand does appear in the Register, and he seems to have been making notes of a kind similar to John Clerke's (see p.259 below).

The information of who was at the first station will normally appear only if (a) someone deputises for the Common Clerk, needs paying and therefore appears in the Chamberlains' Books or Rolls, and then (b) only if the relevant book has survived.

- 27 The double foliation is given in order to link references both to the Toulmin Smith edition and to the forthcoming facsimile of the York Register in *Leeds Texts and Monographs, Medieval Drama Facsimile series*. The first number is that of the edition, the second, which takes into account all blank leaves, is that of the facsimile. A full list of marginal additions and alterations will appear in the Introduction to the facsimile.

- 28 There are a number of alterations and notes of omission in this pageant, the Parchmenters' and Bookbinders' *Abraham and Isaac*, X. The one described here is in some ways straightforward, the others are more complicated. On f.32v (33v), for example, Clerke has indicated the omission of Isaac's words:

father wold god
I shuld be slayne.

He has later deleted them. A guide mark x indicates that he understood them to belong between ll.164 and 165. The marginal lines are so like l.89, "Why! fadir, will god þat I be slayne", that it seems almost certain that they are a misplaced variant of it. The most obvious reason why Clerke should have entered them here is that the actor playing Isaac came in with his lines too early. The pattern of error is only too familiar. The mistaken placing is preceded by two lines of Isaac's, the second being:

Bot wher-of sall oure offerand be? (l.162)

and two lines by Abraham (actually the beginning of a long speech). The correct placing is preceded by two lines of Isaac's, the second being:

Whar-of oure offerand shulde be grathid? (l.186)

and two lines by Abraham. It looks like a classic case of an actor's lack of concentration. Understandably Clerke, or someone else, later deleted the added line. The Toulmin Smith edition gives no indication of this marginal entry.

- 29 The main scribe seems to have had particular difficulty with the central Passion pageants, XXIX-XXXIV, perhaps because of the heavy revision of the copy he was provided with. For a typical example, see f.165v (181v), where he misses a speaker's name, lets the lay-out of the verse become somewhat confused, and seems finally (but rather unnecessarily) to despair of rhyme-links.

- 30 York, REED, p.351. The Vintners' pageant, if it had been brought in, would simply have been copied in following on from the first lines, but by copying in the *Ordo Paginarum* description of the Ironmongers' pageant Clerke had taken up some of the space needed for the text. The *Purification* was the only pageant to be brought in and copied up. Why the Cappers' pageant needed to be seen and compared with the Register version is not clear. One might have expected the Girdlers' to be required in view of Clerke's comments (see below p.259).

- 31 The *Ordo Paginarum* description is the unaltered 1415 one and runs: "Maria cum puero Josep Anna obstetrix cum pullis columbarum Syme[on recipiens] puerum in vlnas suas et duo filii [Symeonis]" (parts in square brackets

are under a paper patch). The erased description on f.68(74) of the Register runs, as far as it can be made out: "Maria et Joseph offerentes . . . Symeon . . . in vinas suas Anna prophetissa et angelus/". Richard Beadle was, as far as I know, the first to notice the erased inscription.

The Ironmongers' description in the *Ordo* is now almost totally covered by the paper patch, but Clerke's copy agrees almost word for word with that given in the Toulmin Smith transcription (*York Plays*, p.xxii).

- ³² For this dating of the Register see Richard Beadle and Peter Meredith, "Further external evidence for dating the York Register (BL Additional MS 35290)", *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s. 11 (1980 for 1979) 51-8.
- ³³ This change was a result of the removal of the Marian pageants from the play in 1548, one of which, the *Appearance of our Lady to Thomas*, was brought forth by the Weavers. The play was performed without the Marian pageants in 1548, 1549, 1551 and 1553. Only in 1553 did the Weavers take over another pageant, the Sledmen's, and in 1554 with the return of Catholicism under Mary they took up their own Marian pageant again, and the Sledmen apparently reverted to theirs. For the records on which the foregoing is based see *York*, REED, pp.291-2, 293, 297, 307, 310 and 321.
- ³⁴ *York*, REED, pp.249-50, from House Book 11, f.55. There is no doubt here of the joining together of pageants and not just crafts, though the wording of official decrees is not always as clear as one might expect. It would sound from the wording of the Locksmiths' and Blacksmiths' agreement of 1530, for instance, as though each craft owned a pageant, though there is no evidence that there was ever more than one. See *York*, REED, p.252, from House Book 11, f.89.
- ³⁵ The case of the Tilers and the Chandlers, discussed by Richard Beadle at the first *Medieval English Theatre* meeting in 1979 at Lancaster, is somewhat similar though more complex. Here there is also the erased *incipit* and the caret note. There is no sign in the records of a joining together of the crafts, but there is the linking of the pageants implied in the revised wording of the *Ordo* description of the Tilers' pageant, ". . . angelus loquens pastoribus et ludentibus in pagina sequente".
I am most grateful to Richard Beadle for various discussions of the Register that have arisen out of our work on the facsimile edition. For a number of marginal notes, especially those requiring ultra-violet light, he was the first to offer a reading.
- ³⁶ *York*, REED, pp.47-8, from A/Y Memorandum Book, ff.257-7v.
- ³⁷ The line numberings given are those of Lucy Toulmin Smith's edition, although in this instance she does not print that part of the Masons' which overlaps with the Goldsmiths' pageant.
- ³⁸ *York*, REED, pp.112-13, from A/Y Memorandum Book, f.291v, and p.115, from Chamberlains' Book 1A, f.114v.
- ³⁹ *York*, REED, pp.337-8, from B/Y Memorandum Book, ff.222-3v.
- ⁴⁰ The text of the Goldsmiths' pageant reads:
A! sirs, for sight what shall I say?
Whare is oure syne? I se it not. (11.217-18)
- ⁴¹ For example, Eileen White has drawn my attention to E48/49, the Royal Subsidies, where John Clerke is listed as a constable of St Martin's parish (with Gregory Metcalf) and where Miles Newton and John Langton are among

the four men sworn to give assistance to the constables (1540). The assessment in the same volume gives an idea of Clerke's wealth; he is assessed at £4. Much also remains to be discovered about his father and the rest of his family before a complete picture will emerge; but this is clearly beyond the scope of this article.

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"There was as yet little evidence of Protestant thinking in the Minster. Perhaps the injunctions which Lee [archbishop until 1544] gave to the dean and chapter concerning the parish churches in their care reflect his theological caution. He required the dean and chapter to see that in the parish churches appropriated to the Minster the priests taught their people the Pater Noster, the Salutation of our Lady, and the Creed in English, and to repeat prayers in English after the curate; and he expected the curates themselves to buy a bible in English, and to read and compare it with the Latin Vulgate. The only one of Lee's injunctions which could not have been devised by a reforming Catholic was that ordering ministers publicly to deny the authority of the bishop of Rome, and to proclaim the king the supreme head of the Church under God. Not until Lee died in 1544, and Robert Holgate replaced him, did an active Protestant archbishop appear in the church of York."; Claire Cross, "From the Reformation to the Restoration", in *A History of York Minster*, ed. G.E. Aylmer and Reginald Cant (Oxford, 1977) p.198.

I should like to thank Mrs Rita Freedman and Mrs Mary Thallon for their unfailing helpfulness and for making the York City Archives one of the pleasantest and easiest places to work, and also Eileen White, who in her search for the remains of other York worthies has observed and passed on so much of interest relating to John Clerke. Pages from British Library MSS Additional 35290 and 33852 are reproduced by permission of the British Library.