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Résurrection des Mystères: Medieval Drama in Modern France

Lynette Muir

Medieval drama, like the Middle Ages, has a thousand faces. For six hundred years groups of people all over Europe were producing plays, sung or spoken, Latin or vernacular, indoor and outdoor, religious and secular. There were also numerous examples of rituals, ceremonies or celebrations which involved non-textual theatrical events – tableaux, mimes, processions, dance and singing. Which of these disappeared and which re-emerged from the sixteenth-century melting pot of humanism, religious reform and the growth of nationalism, out of which the dismembered Middle Ages, like old Aeson from Medea's cauldron, was magically reborn as the modern world?

In the present paper two elements of medieval drama will be distinguished: medieval play texts on the one hand and on the other, performances that may be seen to follow what we know of medieval theatrical traditions. Certain elements which typify medieval performances – civic and religious patronage and organization, performance by amateur groups, the use of pageant-waggon staging – have sometimes survived in popular or traditional theatre: Spanish Holy Week tableaux and the Assumption play from Elche; the Bruges Holy Blood procession with its floats and walking groups; the nativities and saints' plays still performed by towns and villages in parts of central Europe. But in the sixteenth century most of the mainsprings of medieval staging and performance were removed: liturgical drama was banned by the Council of Trent and generally condemned by the reformers, while civic autonomy was rendered subject to state control and lost its place as patron. Theatre became entertainment, not celebration; the amateur guildsmen and community groups gave way to professional troupes of actors; and the proscenium arch and box sets gradually ousted not only the pageant waggon but the multiple set.

In the late eighteenth century, the Romantic interest in medieval culture reintroduced the medieval romances and epics to new audiences, but with a few exceptions medieval drama did not use the Arthurian and Carolingian tales and to the

enlightened, aristocratic, playgoing society of pre-Revolutionary Europe, the absence of romance and idealized settings and the strong religious bias of many of the plays mitigated against the revival of what was essentially a bourgeois and urban drama.

During the nineteenth century, however, scholars in many different countries were disinterring the ancient drama manuscripts and editing them. The same *goût du gothique* or, in England, the pallid neogothic of the Pre-Raphaelites, inspired people to seek out the survivals of medieval performance modes and especially that most important example of this neo-medieval theatre: the Oberammergau Passion play.

Although the actual performances there did not begin till 1634 and the medieval text was completely rewritten by 1670, Oberammergau is in many ways typical of medieval theatre – it is a passion play staged in thanksgiving for a miraculous deliverance from plague, it is amateur, and it involved a whole actively Christian community. By 1900 the play was attracting to the small Bavarian village with its population of woodcarvers and potters, audiences drawn from the highest ranks of European society while thousands of visitors from England and North America swelled the ranks.

The play was praised by laity and clergy, Protestant and Catholic alike, for its devotional nature and simplicity of staging and acting, but the performances were also becoming a commercial success and it is not surprising that some at least of the twentieth-century imitations were dictated by hopes of a similar financial gain, as in the case of the priest from the church of St Nicholas, in Nancy, Lorraine, who attended the 1900 performance and decided to try to imitate the play in his own parish to raise funds for the church – a very medieval reason for doing plays.

The Nancy play was first presented in 1904 and has been performed at more or less regular four to five year intervals since. Although Nancy is now in France, it is situated in the south of Lorraine which in 1904 was, like neighbouring Alsace, part of Germany and therefore German-speaking.¹ This helps to explain how the priest came to choose the Oberammergau play for his purpose and it is interesting that there is never any mention in the writings on the Nancy play of the early performances being in German or the presumed fact that the play must have been translated into French after the treaty of Versailles brought Alsace and Lorraine back within the borders of France.²

The structure of the Nancy *Jeux de la Passion* and its stage are very similar to those of Oberammergau, though Nancy makes greater use of the broad (but not very deep) side forestages for processional entries, e.g. of Pilate. The overall effect of the two performances is quite different, however, because they are staged by different types of people. The Oberammergau Passion is a community play involving all the

members of the village. In contrast, Nancy is a large industrial, provincial capital, where many of the original performers worked on the railway and only a proportion of the population is directly involved. The rest of the inhabitants come to watch their families and friends and the audience is completed by visitors from the neighbouring areas.³ The difference between the two Passions was well summed up in a letter to Anton Lang of Oberammergau by a Canadian clergyman who, in 1922, saw both of them (as well as one at Erl in Tyrol): 'He called Erl a "religious spectacle for the people", Nancy a "display of theatrical effects", and Oberammergau "divine service"'.⁴ The emphasis at Nancy, as at medieval Mons or Bourges or Châteaudun, is indeed on the visual, with rich decors and costumes which are carefully planned to be as biblically authentic as possible; the publicity leaflets describe the *Jeux de la Passion* as 'la plus grande fresque biblique jouée en France' [the biggest biblical fresco performed in France]. Nancy also has the medieval approach of using contemporary music – Herod's dancing girls performed to Bizet's *L'Arlésienne* – rather than the specially composed music of Oberammergau.⁵

More popular forms of the passion play were also found in France at the beginning of this century, such as that described in her diary by Daisy, Princess of Pless, in April 1904:

In Bayonne [. . .] we saw a Passion Play. I had never seen one before and certainly never expected to do so for a penny at a fair in France. It was sincerely and beautifully done in a series of tableaux; a woman sang, and a man played the piano. The curtain went up on the Christ on the Mount of Olives; then followed Christ before Pontius Pilate; Christ in the Wilderness; Christ carrying the Cross; the Crucifixion; the Descent from the Cross; the Resurrection. And between each tableau, when the curtain went down, the piano began to play *Sourire d'Avril*, Tararaboomdeay, any tune; but the whole thing gradually grew on one.⁶

In addition to these medieval and popular *performance traditions*, we find in the early part of this century revivals and survivals which present a specifically medieval *text*. In France, where there was no law against presenting religious subjects on the stage, such performances were encouraged by the publication in the latter years of the nineteenth century of a number of medieval play texts, most importantly the Passion by Arnoul Gréban, edited by Gaston Paris and Gaston Raynaud in 1878.⁷ In 1901 an

adaptation by Gailly de Taurines et de la Tourrasse was published, intended for performance and described in the preface as a *réduction* of Gréban's work which would include the essential scenes and episodes in order to create a truly readable,actable, sacred drama of real interest but which would also have that 'concentration que nous demandons aujourd'hui aux choses dramatiques' [disciplined structure which we ask of dramatic pieces today].⁸ This insistence on the need to cut down the medieval play will be echoed constantly throughout the first fifty years of the century. The play was performed at the Odéon theatre regularly between 1906-10 with a simplified multiple set whose different sections were presented as in the nave of a Gothic cathedral.⁹

It was not only Gréban's *Passion* that was revived in France before the First World War, for many medieval plays were becoming available in texts designed for university students and it was presumably some of these that were used in an interesting experiment in medieval theatre in Russia in 1911.¹⁰ A group having been formed in Moscow called the Théâtre d'autrefois, one of the organizers, Evreinov, 'eut l'idée de monter des oeuvres médiévales, [. . .] du point de vue de la théâtralité pure, en s'efforçant de dégager [. . .] les procédés de mise en scène et de jeu', [had the idea of staging medieval plays from a purely theatrical point of view, making a point of emphasizing [. . .] matters of staging and performance] (p. 271). These *résurrections*, as they were called, consisted of two programmes of short medieval plays in modernized French texts provided by Paris scholars. Meanwhile the Russian directors had travelled all over France and Germany to acquire documents on the history of medieval staging.¹¹ The first programme was to have included *Le Jeu d'Adam* but it was rejected by the censor because Adam is a canonized saint of the Orthodox church. Similarly, when the *Miracle de Théophile* was staged, the role of the Virgin Mary had to be replaced by an abstract *esprit de lumière* [spirit of light]. Eventually the setting for *Théophile* included a Hell's Mouth, a sort of temple and, in Heaven, a statue of the Virgin Mary. After months of work on the music and staging (one of the designers was the great Alexandre Benois who worked with Diaghilev) the first performance took place in St Petersburg. *Théophile* was preceded by a version of the *Ordo Stellae* shown as a play being performed on the steps of a church to the passing crowd, who finally attack Herod: 'Une voix hurle "Malédiction! Il ordonne le massacre des Innocents". L'émeute éclate' [A voice shrieks 'Curse him. He has ordered the massacre of the Innocents'. A riot breaks out] (p. 273). As the riot develops the lights go out.

The performance was hugely successful and was followed a few days later by a triple bill of *Robin et Marion*, a thirteenth-century pastoral by Adam de la Halle, and two farces. After a month of performances in St Petersburg the company moved to Moscow where the plays were equally well received.

Three years after these plays had filled the theatres in Moscow, the revival of medieval drama in late-nineteenth-century Brittany was described in the *Mercure de France* of déc. 1911-jan. 1912, by the man who would later become the best known figure in the world of French medieval theatre – Gustave Cohen.¹² Six months earlier, Cohen had worked with Gabriele d'Annunzio on his *Martyre de Saint Sébastien*, providing the author with information on a recently published medieval play on the subject.¹³ According to a contemporary specialist in late-medieval and sixteenth-century theatre, Raymond Lebègue, D'Annunzio also used Petit de Julleville's *Les mystères* and Cohen's own volume on medieval staging.¹⁴ However, despite d'Annunzio's use of the word *Mystère* and medieval costume rather than costumes of the correct period, Lebègue sees no alternative to rejecting the play as a genuine medieval revival:

Surtout ce qui distingue son *Sébastien* de nos mystères c'est l'esprit. Les fatistes eussent jugé sacrilège de confier à une femme le rôle d'un homme, et qui plus est, d'un saint martyr [Sebastian was played by the dancer Ida Rubinsteain]¹⁵ [. . .] l'empereur vante la beauté et le 'corps ambigu' de son favori et lui déclare son amour. Beaucoup plus qu'à un mystère le lecteur pense au *Saül* de Gide et à Oscar Wilde.

[What distinguishes his *Sébastien* from our *mystères* is above all the spirit. Medieval authors would have thought it sacrilege for a woman to play the part of a man, especially a holy martyr [. . .] the emperor boasts of the beauty of his favourite's androgynous body and declares his love to him. Rather than a *mystère* the reader is reminded of Gide's *Saul* or Oscar Wilde.] (II, 219)

In the period between the two World Wars, medieval plays, alternating with other classical or modern plays, were being regularly performed in Paris by a variety of amateur groups including the *Comédiens des Routiers*, founded in 1929 by Léon Chancerel as an opportunity for 'un art dramatique scout' adapted to the law, aims and possibilities of the [Boy Scout] Movement.¹⁶ The *Routiers* for whom Chancerel worked were the Protestant scouts and the repertoire prepared for them by Chancerel over the years included adaptations from pieces by Rabelais, Molière and La Fontaine, as well as medieval farces and a version of the morality of the *Condamnation de Banquet* by Nicole de la Chesnaye on the dangers of over-eating.

A parallel dramatic development of the period was the spread of amateur

performances of religious plays by Catholic communities and church groups, a tradition dominated by the work of Henri Ghéon whose own plays, written for the *Compagnons de Jeux* (a Catholic adult group), included not only *Le Noël au marché* [Christmas in the market place] and *Le Chemin de la croix* [The way of the cross] which are still very popular with English church drama groups, but also *Les Saintes Femmes au tombeau*, an adaptation of the *Visitatio sepulchri* scene from Gréban's *Passion*.¹⁷ His biggest production was a Pentecost play, *Le Mystère du feu vivant sur les apôtres*, performed by the *Compagnons de Jeux* in 1935 in the Arènes de Lutèce, a Gallo-Roman amphitheatre located near the Jardin des Plantes. A sketch included in the published text shows a multiple set very similar to Oberammergau with a central area that can be curtained off and several other areas of stage. On stage right (where Heaven would have been in the Middle Ages) is a separate scaffold for the *meneur du jeu*. Unlike Oberammergau, however, the play also made use of the centre of the circus for the choruses of boys and girls and crowds from all the *patronages* (Catholic youth organizations) of Paris. Despite the medieval flavour of the title, the multiple set, and the sheer scale of the production, it is not really in the medieval performance tradition, for the play does not introduce the person of Jesus, merely his voice off, and it includes separate devotional musical items for the choruses urging them to spread the faith themselves.¹⁸

It is in the context of this thriving community drama therefore, that Gustave Cohen, in 1933, as a professor of medieval literature at the Sorbonne, had the idea of getting his students to perform a medieval play to help them understand a difficult course book. Thus Cohen set in motion the development of the Théophiliens stage group who were to become world famous and, incidentally, mark the beginning of the university involvement in the revival of medieval theatre of which this volume of *Leeds Studies in English* is ultimately one of the by-products.

The set text in question was the same *Miracle de Théophile* that had been performed in Russia. Composed towards the end of the thirteenth century by the *trouvère*, Rutebeuf, it is the earliest and probably the best of all the many medieval Marian miracle plays. In his memories of the early days of the Théophiliens¹⁹ Cohen describes how he mentioned to his students the idea of acting the play in order to understand it and how at the beginning of February 1933 two of them came to him and said: "'Maître, nous sommes prêts, écrivez-nous une adaptation assez modernisée pour être compréhensible et nous la jouerons" [. . .] En huit jours, j'eus mis sur pied l'adaptation demandée, respectueuse des rythmes de l'original et en conservant parfois même les rimes'. ['Maître, we are ready. Compose an adaptation for us that is sufficiently modernized to be understood and we will act it' [. . .] In a week I had

completed the adaptation demanded, which respected the rhythms of the original and even kept some of the rhymes] (p. 426).²⁰

One medieval feature of the productions came about almost by accident, according to Cohen's description of the first performance:

Le public se presse aux portes trop lentes à s'ouvrir. Goetze bondit sur la scène et dit: 'On ne joue point, nous ne sommes pas prêts. Il n'y a pas de coulisses', à quoi je répons: 'On s'en passera. Reprenons la tradition scénique médiévale. Vous resterez debout ou assis devant vos mansions. Dieu et ses anges en son Paradis, Notre Dame à côté de sa Chapelle à la tenture bleue, l'évêque et ses clercs devant le Palais Episcopal à la tenture rouge, Théophile devant sa maison à la tenture verte, couleur d'espérance, Salatin, devant sa mosquée arabe au rideau jaune et sommée d'un croissant. Seuls les diables seront cachés dans la gueule d'Enfer.' . . . L'effet fut tel – effet de vitrail, dont les personnages soudain s'animaient – que depuis, nous ne fîmes plus jamais de coulisses et que Gaston Baty pouvait m'écrire: 'Quelle leçon vous nous donnez à tous sur la possibilité de recourir encore aux conventions scéniques d'autrefois et de les faire réadmettre du premier coup.'

[The crowd is pushing at the doors because they are late opening. Goetze leaped onto the stage and said 'We can't do it, we're not ready. There are no wings'. I replied: 'We'll manage without. We'll go back to the medieval staging tradition. You will all remain standing or sitting in front of your mansions. God and his angels in Paradise, Our Lady beside her chapel with its blue hangings, the bishop and his clerks in front of the bishop's palace with its red hangings, Théophile in front of his house hung with green, the colour of hope, Salatin in front of his Saracen mosque with its yellow curtain and the crescent on top. Only the devils will be hidden inside Hell's mouth'. It was so effective – like a stained-glass window whose figures suddenly came to life – that thereafter we never used wings and Gaston Baty could write to me: 'What a lesson you have given us all on the possibility of going back to old style theatrical conventions and making them work the very first time.'](p. 428)

To have won the approval of the leading theatre director of the time was a considerable feather in Cohen's medieval cap. Within three years the Théophiliens had presented *Théophile* more than sixty times. Other plays followed: *Robin et Marion* (1935) and the *Jeu d'Adam et Eve* (1936) and soon their tours covered large areas of France, including a notable performance of *Robin et Marion* in its native town of Arras and the *Jeu d'Adam* presented outside Chartres cathedral. By 1937 it became clear to Cohen that his next stage must be to 'ressusciter les grandes Passions' [revive the great passion plays].

Compared to Ghéon's *Mystère* and a huge presentation of Gréban's *Passion* in front of Notre Dame cathedral by Aldebert in 1936,²¹ it is not surprising that, partly because of financial limitations, Cohen had to make substantial cuts for the *Passion*, when he first staged it in 1937-38, as he explains:

Avec notre petit nombre d'acteurs-amateurs et les faibles ressources, tirées de nos maigres recettes, nous ne pouvons rivaliser avec Aldebert et son *Mystère de Gréban* devant Notre-Dame. Nous ne voudrions jamais faire entrer la Garde Républicaine à cheval et en costume du temps, dans la Cour de la Sorbonne.

[With our small number of amateur actors and poor resources taken from our scanty receipts, we cannot compete with Aldebert and his *Mystère de Gréban* outside Notre Dame. We would never want to bring the Garde Républicaine, on horseback and in period costume, into the courtyard of the Sorbonne.] (p. 435)

Instead, Cohen decided to take from the big passions a number of scenes 'groupées autour d'un personnage principal, qui en est l'âme' [grouped round a central character who is the heart of it] (p. 435). Three episodes were thus created: the Worldliness and Conversion of Marie-Madeleine, from Jean Michel's *Passion* (Winter 1936), Judas, performed at the beginning of March 1937, and the third panel of the triptych, Our Lady, created in 1938. In the programme to this third part of the *Passion*, Cohen refers to the 'fameux dialogue de Notre Dame et de Jésus qui n'est pas inférieur en grandeur aux stychomythies de la tragédie grecque' [the celebrated dialogue between Our Lady and Jesus which is not inferior to the great stychomythic scenes of Greek tragedy].²² Even for Cohen, medieval drama is still judged by its likeness to the classical theatre.

These early performances of the *Passion* are not recorded in any detail and in any case were cut short by the war. Too old to fight (he was born in 1879) Cohen was

suspended from the university in 1940 by the *Statut des Juifs*, left France and spent the war years in the USA. But in 1940 there was staged a very unexpected *mystère*: *Bariona ou le fils du tonnerre*, a Nativity play by Jean-Paul Sartre, was performed at Christmas, by and for French prisoners-of-war. Sartre explains his unexpected choice of subject by the need 'de trouver un sujet qui pût réaliser, ce soir de Noël, l'union la plus large des chrétiens et des incroyants' [to find a subject which could bring about, this Christmas night, the closest union between Christians and non-believers]. Sartre himself later described the play as a *mystère* and as a community celebration it is certainly close to a medieval performance mode.²³

In November 1944 Cohen returned to Paris and the direction of the Théophiliens and in March 1950 the first performance of the complete *Passion des Théophiliens* took place in Rouen, followed by performances in Brussels and Paris. The text was published later that year with photos of the sets designed by René Clermont (see Plates 7 and 8) who had helped to hold the group together during Cohen's absence.²⁴ In his introduction, Cohen spoke of the culmination of the *vaste entreprise de résurrection* undertaken not only in France but in many other countries. The three *volets du triptyque* of which he spoke in 1938 were now arranged in two *journées*, highlighting the three main characters selected, Marie-Madeleine, Judas and the Virgin Mary, 'mais baignant dans la sereine lumière de Jésus qui les domine de sa grandeur et de sa Passion. C'était une entreprise hardie que de figurer sur la scène moderne une Crucifixion en nature . . . le public a frissonné sans pouvoir retenir ses larmes' [but bathed in the serene light of Jesus who dominates them by his greatness and his passion. It was a risky undertaking staging a realistic crucifixion on the modern stage . . . the public shuddered and could not restrain their tears] (p. 13).

The Théophiliens did not survive the death of their leader in 1958, and French medieval drama fell into the doldrums apart from a few performances in England.²⁵ However, since the founding of the Société Internationale pour l'Étude du Théâtre Médiévale – SITM, several French plays have been performed at conferences, including a memorable, brilliantly modernised, version of the *sottie*, *Le Vieux Monde et l'Abus* presented in Alençon in 1977 by students from Liège, under the direction of Jeanne Wathelet-Willem.²⁶ Forty years earlier, after the Théophiliens' first visit to Belgium in 1935, Rita Lejeune had founded the Néothéophiliens liégeois to perform Cohen's adaptation of the *Nativités Liégeoises*. Liège, therefore, can provide a precious link between SITM and the early recreations by Cohen.²⁷

Nine years later, in 1986, Jacques Ribard's translation of the earliest (and shortest) of the French passion plays, the *Passion du Palatinus*, was staged by a group, including many students, in a multiple set, in Amiens cathedral and

subsequently at the SITM meeting in Perpignan. In the introduction to his edition of the Palatinus text with facing translation, Ribard says: 'et pour le cas où de nouveaux 'Théophiliens' souhaiteraient la porter à la scène, il nous a paru indispensable de préciser [. . .] certains mouvements scéniques' [and in case any new 'Théophiliens' should wish to stage the play, it seemed essential to indicate some of the movements on the stage].²⁸

The influence of Gustave Cohen still dominates, then, the revival of medieval drama in France. It is appropriate, therefore, to let him have the final word. In 1933, he summed up the philosophy of the Théophiliens and provided a motto for us, his successors in the resurrection of medieval plays: 'Nous sommes les donneurs de sang, nous ne sommes ni des enfouisseurs ni des embaumeurs' [We are neither grave-diggers nor embalmers – we are blood donors].²⁹

No one has given more of his blood to this cause than Peter Meredith.

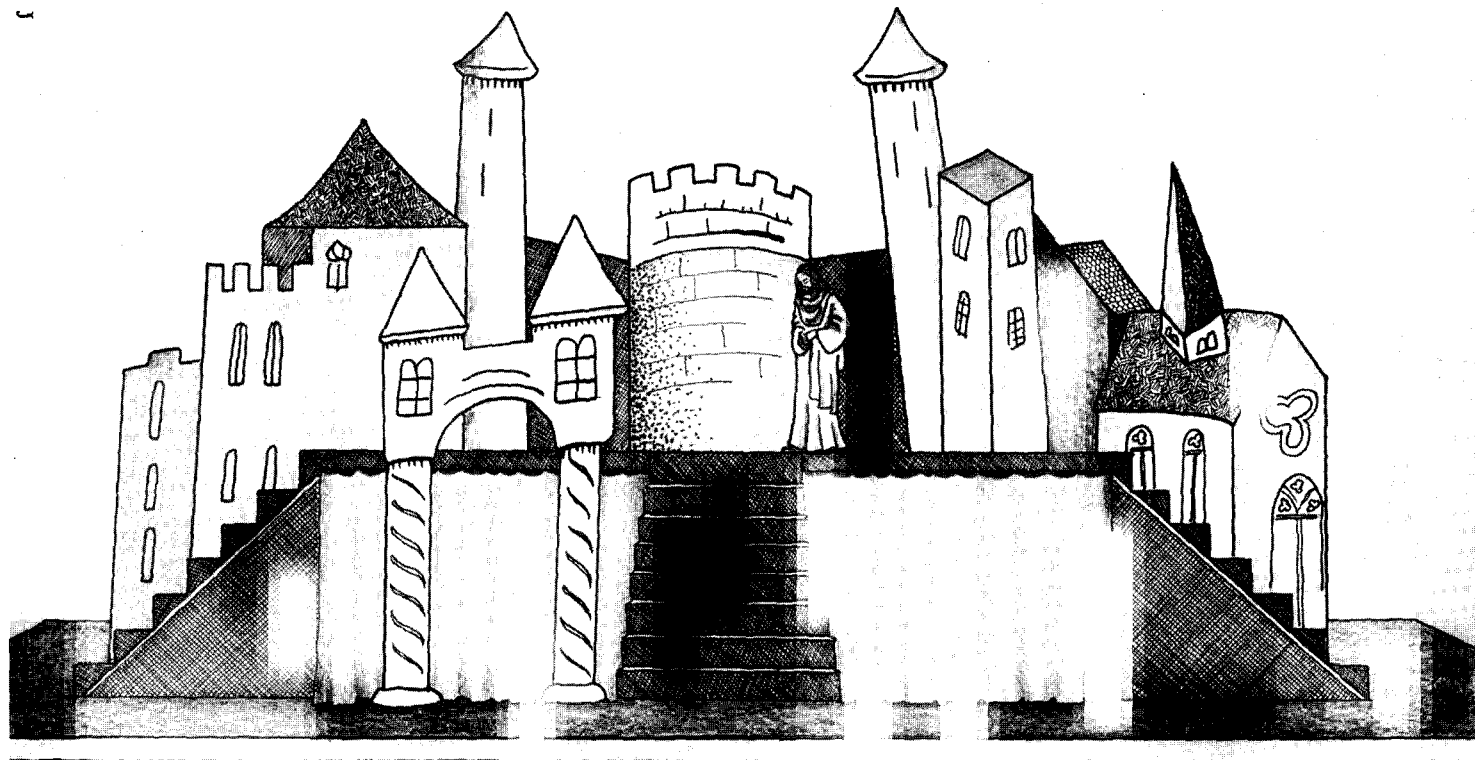


Plate 7: Set for the *Première journée* of the *Passion des Théophiliens*, 1950
(Drawing by Helen Taylor from a photograph)

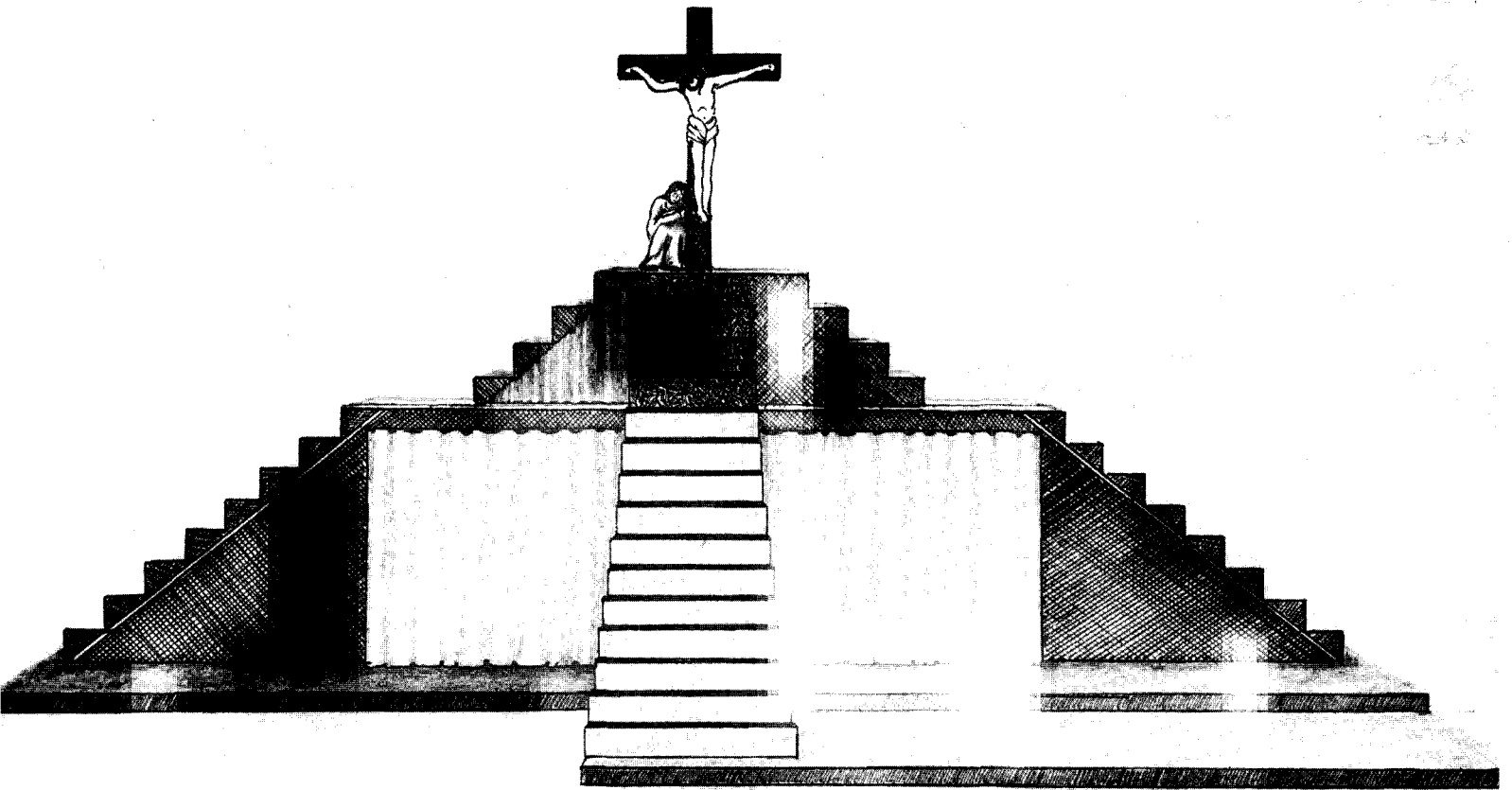


Plate 8: Set for the *Deuxième journée* of the *Passion des Théophiliens*, 1950
(Drawing by Helen Taylor from a photograph)

NOTES

¹ Lorraine has always been a bilingual area. During the Second World War, Alsace and Lorraine were reunited with Germany rather than being occupied and the inhabitants were forced to speak only the local German patois, not the French one.

² The earliest (and only) text of the Nancy Passion in the British Library is from 1920 and is in French. It is annotated and was obviously a spectator's own copy. The enclosed ticket cost 23 francs.

³ The friend with whom I stayed to go to the Passion in 1984 lived only an hour's drive from Nancy but had never even heard of the play!

⁴ A. Lang, *Reminiscences* (Munich: Carl Aug. Seyfried, 1930) p. 114. The Erl play was first performed in the sixteenth century. The modern text dates from 1859, and is noted for its emphasis on the devil. I am grateful to Dr Anita Bednarz for this information from her unpublished thesis: 'Les Mystères de la Passion en Europe au 20e siècle', 4 vols (doctorat, Sorbonne, 1992). See also notes 9, 20.

⁵ Another play in a large industrial city which may well have derived from Oberammergau is *Veronica's Veil*, a Lenten Passion play, annually performed in Pittsburg and, according to a local paper: 'first written and produced in 1913, then performed virtually every year since 1919 by members of St Michael's Church on the South Side slopes [. . .] Another long out-of-fashion theater convention in *Veronica's Veil* is the use of tableaux [. . .] interspersed between scenes of live action'. In *Pittsburgh*, (18-24 March, 1993), p. 31. The reference to tableaux makes the association with Oberammergau very probable especially as St Michael's is described as a 'German tradition church'.

⁶ Daisy, Princess of Pless. *From My Private Diary* (London: publisher un-named, 1931), p. 142.

⁷ This text remained the standard one for Gréban's *Passion* until E. Jodogne's critical editions of both Gréban and Michel's Passions: E. Jodogne, *Le 'Mystère de la Passion' d'Arnoul Gréban* (Brussels: Académie Royale de Belgique, I: 1965, II: 1983). E. Jodogne: *Le Mystère de la Passion de Jean Michel* (Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1959).

⁸ *Le Vray Mistere de la Passion composé par Arnoul Gréban l'an 1452*, lequel a été nouvellement adapté par MM Gailly de Taurines et de la Tourrasse (Paris: Belin Frères, 1901). The editors refer to a *Nativité*, also based on Gréban, but give no details.

⁹ Anita Bednarz, 'Les Mystères', I, 179 (see note 4).

¹⁰ Nicholas Weisbein, 'Une résurrection du théâtre médiéval à Saint-Pétersbourg en 1907-8', in *Mélanges d'histoire du théâtre du moyen-âge et de la renaissance, offerts à Gustave Cohen* par ses collègues, ses élèves et ses amis (Paris: Nizet, 1950), pp. 271-76. Hereafter referred to as *Mélanges*.

¹¹ It would be interesting to know if the 'documents' included L. Petit de Julleville's seminal *Les Mystères*, first printed in Paris in 1880 (repr. Geneva: Slatkine, 1968) and, like Johnny Walker, still going strong today.

¹² G. Cohen, 'La Renaissance du théâtre Breton et l'oeuvre de l'abbé La Bayon', in *Études d'histoire du théâtre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1956), pp. 385-424. This collection of Cohen's articles and short pieces will be referred to hereafter as *Études*.

¹³ See Cohen, 'Gabriele d'Annunzio et le martyr de Saint Sébastien', (June 1911) in *Études*, pp. 363-69.

¹⁴ R. Lebègue, 'Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien et les mystères', in *Études sur le théâtre français*, 2 vols (Paris: Nizet, 1971), II, 217-21. G. Cohen, *Histoire de la mise en scène dans le théâtre religieux français du Moyen-Age* (Paris: Champion, 1906; 2nd edn 1926).

¹⁵ The critics were outraged by this and when Cohen commented on it to d'Annunzio, the author replied: 'Où aurais-je pu trouver un acteur dont le corps soit aussi immatériel?' [where would I have found an actor with such an incorporeal body?]. *Études*, p. 369.

¹⁶ See the introduction [p. 4] to Léon Chancerel, *Pervenche ou le jeu de saint Cogolin* (Paris: La Hutte, 1942). The inner back cover of the little playbook lists a number of works for the *Répertoire Scout*, as well as a *Manuel dramatique Scout à l'usage des armées*. I am grateful to my colleague, Marie-Louise Thyss for passing on to me her fascinating collection of theatrical booklets and for information on the scouts in France at this period.

¹⁷ The text was printed in *Jeux, Tréteaux et Personnages*, 67 (1937) 52-56. This drama monthly, edited by Henri Brochet, began in 1930. The epigraph on the first page of each number is a quotation from Ghéon: 'Pour la Foi par l'Art dramatique, Pour l'Art dramatique en esprit de Foi'. It includes texts and reviews of the Catholic amateur theatre of the period and on the back cover of this 1937 number is an advertisement for *Disques Lumen No. 35011/35012*: recordings of parts of Gréban's *Passion* (adapted by H. Brochet) by the *Compagnons de Jeux*. The records cost 30 francs each or 50 francs the pair.

¹⁸ For the text and stage plans see *Jeux, Tréteaux et Personnages*, 50 (1935) 154-92. The total cast for the performance of the *mystère*, according to the editor, was more than *twelve thousand* (p. 153).

¹⁹ 'Expériences Théophiliennes'. In *Études*, pp. 425-47. The account was originally written in 1937 and republished in the *Études* in 1950 with additional material in the footnotes and several photographs of productions.

²⁰ The adaptation, published in 1934, was described as a 'transposition par Gustave Cohen'. Details of all Cohen's adaptations are included in the bibliography at the beginning of the *Mélanges*.

²¹ Pierre Aldebert mounted Gréban's *Passion* (cut) on a stage 36m x 25m with medieval 'mansions', in front of Notre Dame in 1935, 1936, and 1937. There was another production in 1951. I am grateful to Dr Anita Bednarz for this information. See also note 4.

²² I am indebted to my colleague Gwillim Rees for copies of this and other Théophilien programmes from performances he had the good fortune to see in Paris in the late 1930s.

²³ *Bariona* was first published commercially in M. Contat & M. Rybalka, *Les Ecrits de Sartre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), pp. 565-633. The same volume contains many of Sartre's

other comments: the *mystère* is referred to on p. 373. For a detailed discussion on the play see my article 'Bariona and *le bon Dieu*', forthcoming in *Making Connections: Essays in Honour of Professor Philip Thody* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998).

²⁴ *Mystère de la Passion des Théophiliens*. Adaptation littéraire de Gustave Cohen d'après Arnoul Gréban et Jean Michel (Paris: Richard-Masse, 1950). The edition included Clermont's *Note sur la mise en scène*.

²⁵ James Kirkup's *The True Mystery of the Passion*. Adapted and translated from the French medieval mystery Cycle of Arnoul and Simon Gréban (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), was broadcast on the radio and then televised from Bristol cathedral. The ever-present problem in England of presenting God on the stage was solved by making it a play within a play, with a 'man who plays Jesus'. In the circumstances this version can hardly be considered medieval either in performance tradition or in text. In the 1970s, authentic productions in French of the *Farce du Cuvier* and the *Farce de Maître Pathelin* were staged and later videoed by the French department of the University of Hull.

²⁶ Three years later they staged a morality play in Dublin. A drawing by Helen Taylor, based on photos of the *sottie* kindly sent me by Mme Wathelet-Willem – together with a photo of Pathelin performed by the much regretted Medieval Players – was published in my *Literature and Society in Medieval France* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985), p. 135.

²⁷ Cohen talks of the work of the different groups of Belgian Néothéophiliens in *Le Théâtre français en Belgique au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Renaissance du livre, 1953), p. 106. Belgian on his mother's side, Cohen thought of it as *ma petite patrie* and was responsible for publishing all the drama that survives from medieval Liège and Hainault.

²⁸ *La Passion du Palatinus: Mystère du XIVe siècle*. Édité par Grace Frank. Présenté et traduit par Jacques Ribard (Paris: Champion, 1986), p. 71.

²⁹ *Études*, p. 496.