Mădălina Ţoca

THE VOICES OF NARRATORS IN EARLY RELIGIOUS DRAMA:

OFFICIUM STELLAE, SPONSUS AND *LUDUS DE ANTICHRISTO*

MA Thesis in Comparative History
with the specialization in Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies

Central European University
Budapest
May 2011

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by
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(Romania)

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Chair, Examination Committee

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Thesis Supervisor

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I, the undersigned, Mădălina Țoca, candidate for the MA degree in Medieval Studies, declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on the copyright of any person or institution. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Budapest, 25 May 2011

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Signature

To the one who taught me well,

with love and gratitude.

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For his tireless attention to detail, I express all my thankfulness to Prof. Gerhard Jaritz, for assisting me up to the final stage of this preparation. For his insightful comments and suggestions, for providing me the necessary materials from the Austrian Libraries and, moreover, for his astonishing patience I am grateful beyond measure. He took the time to comment with care and scrupulousness on earlier drafts and considerably helped the improvement of my work. I feel also a need to render my sincere thanks to Prof. György Geréby for his valuable suggestions and support at an earlier stage and to Prof. István Perczel, whose lectures I will always remember with great consideration. I am also thankful to Judith Rasson, for taking the time and proofreading this work.

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Contents

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ABBREVIATIONS

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CompD	Comparative Drama
EDAM	Early Drama, Art and Music
EETS	Early English Text Society
EarT	Early Theatre
KJV	The Holy Bible, King James Version. New York, American Bible Society, 1999.
PG	*Patrologia Graeca*
PL	*Patrologia Latina*
PMLA	Publications of the Modern Language Association of America
SITM	Société internationale pour l'étude du théâtre médiéval
VUL	Latin Vulgate Bible

ILLUSTRATIONS

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SETTING THE STAGE

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εἰ δέ λίην πολέες σε περιτροχόωσιν ἀοιδαί,
ποίῃ ἐνιπλὲξω σε; τί τοι θυμῆρες ἀκοῦσαι;
ἢ ὡς τὰ πρώτιστα μέγας θεὸς οὔρεα θείνων...
νήσους εἰναλίας εἰργάζετο...;

If many songs run round you,/ with what shall I entwine you? What is that one which is pleasing for you to hear?/ Is it how right at the first the great god striking the mountains... / made the islands in the sea...? (Callimachus, *Hymn to Delos*)[1]

Thus runs a fragment from a Callimachean hymn, portraying a relatively autonomous narrator under the mask of a bard, dramatizing a "process of poetic decision-making:"[2] "With what shall I envelop you?" and "what would it please you to hear?"[3] are his primary concerns. Yet, the narrative goes on with the selected topic, stepping aside from the dubitative statement, in a natural flow. The question addressed to the god sheds light in part on the narratorial omniscience, and in part on the personal rendering of the "story" which is going to be unveiled. In other terms, the bard enters this ambiguity in order to get himself noticed by the audience, and if the gods are pleased by the story, why would the audience not be so?

One can probably reconcile this example with other samples of epic or dramatic pieces, with an increased focus on: "Who is speaking?", "How is speaking?" and "What message is transmitted?" The present research is intended as a contribution to the study of

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* Parts of this work have been proofread at an earlier stage by Courtney Krolikoski and Kelly Hydrick, who attentively made several corrections concerning the English of this study. I much appreciate their input.

[1] Callimachus, *Hymn to Delos*, lines 28-32, in *Hymns and Epigrams. Lycophron. Aratus,* tr. A.W & G.R. Mair, Loeb Classical Library 129 (London: William Heinemann, 1921).

[2] A. D. Morrison, *The Narrator in Archaic Greek and Hellenistic Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 151-152.

[3] Ibid., 152.

early medieval drama. More precisely, it is an attempt to discuss and interpret the "role" of the narrators which is indicated directly in the rubrics (*Who* is speaking?), or indirectly, by the functions and the roles these figures are involved in and evolve from while performing (*How* is speaking?) the religious play. The other purpose of this study is to concentrate on the perceived intentions behind the texts and performances themselves (*What* is the message?). In this second aim, I will leave the texts and their performances as secondary and move on to the messages the *diegesis* reveals with the help of the narrator in the more grounded plan of *realia*.

A common mistake by scholars has been their attempt to equate the medieval dramatic modes with contemporary staging conditions, and thus the debate whether there were theatres in the eleventh and twelfth centuries or not came to the fore.[4] The inadequacies I encountered while preparing this study ask for a brief clarification: the modern understanding of the concept of "theater" differs radically from what "theater" meant to symbolize in the early medieval period. In my opinion, what Sticca[5] suggested for Hrotswitha's plays in the tenth century is equally applicable for the following two centuries and for the plays under the lens of this study: "There is no clear dramatic concept or idea of representation associated with these plays, for, during this period, the notion of *scaena* is one of a little shelter or booth."[6] Was it then a common understanding of the concept of "*narrator*"?

1. Eleventh- and twelfth–century religious drama and the place of the narrator

Growing out of and to some extent remaining within the service of the church, liturgical drama had probably originated by the beginning of the tenth century, with the sacrificial Mass and with the office of readings and prayer, more elaborated on feast-days. Since these

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[4] Roger S. Loomis, "Where there Theatres in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries?," *Speculum* 20 (1945): 92-95.

[5] Sandro Sticca, "Sacred Drama and Tragic Realism in Hrotswitha's *Paphnutius*," in *The Theatre in the Middle Ages,* ed. Herman Braet, Johan Nowé and Gilbert Tournoy (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1985), 12-44.

[6] Ibid., 19.

pieces are exponents of a widely "open canon," the formats of the plays were as flexible as those of other texts.[7] They are neither leftovers from two divergent traditions – the sacred and the secular – nor the manifestation of a pagan mimetic instinct surviving and exceeding the oppression of the church – as it was long considered.[8] They were the continuation of the very ritual of the church itself. By the end of the eleventh century, Christmas performances were at their peak. They all share the same origin: the account from the gospels, but their inventiveness took elements from the apocrypha, too.[9] As for the eschatological plays, they seem to have been grounded partly in the gospels and partly in contemporary history. These general considerations should be kept in mind when I discuss why these particular dramas are the object of this study.

The narrator's voice is a central aspect of medieval dramatic production, and has been more and more touched upon in recent decades, especially with an emphasis on the plays of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Any discussion of *narratorial* and *expository voices* in medieval drama is indebted to work such as Ph. Butterworth's and J. O. Fichte's, but much work still remains to be done, especially on the incipient forms of drama.[10] I became interested in the anonymity of these figures in the narratives, and linked it also to

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[7] For an insightful overview on the appearance of early plays, with a specific focus on the vernacular ones, see Carol Symes, "The Appearance of Early Vernacular Plays: Forms, Functions, and the Future of Medieval Theater," *Speculum* 77 (2002): 778-831.

[8] O. B. Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), 15-16.

[9] See John Wesley Harris, *Medieval Theatre in Context: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1992), 33.

[10] A pioneering project in this respect is the volume dedicated to the study of the narrator in late medieval drama across Europe, see Philip Butterworth, ed., *The Narrator, the Expositor, and the Prompter in European Medieval Theatre* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007) and Jorge O. Fichte, *Expository Voices in Medieval Drama: Essays on the Mode and Function of Dramatic Exposition* (Nürnberg: H. Carl, 1975). I am especially thankful to Prof. Ph. Butterwoth for taking the time to comment on an earlier draft on this study and kindly giving me some insightful suggestions.

the anonymity of the biblical accounts. What is the impact of these characters on the ways in which the audience construct their image?[11]

In medieval drama there is no dependence of the narrator's *persona* to the biographical facts about the author. On the one hand, the authors of the plays are anonymous, and, on the other hand, the subjects of the plays are mainly tributary to the parables or the religious accounts that generated them. This, however, does not undermine the role the narrator has, but gives him freer expression of movement and action. This study is explicitly about the occurrences and the voices of the narrator, their intermingling or assisting in the transmission of meaning, leading towards further interpretative possibilities. More explicitly, my research will concern narrators of various kinds in early medieval drama, either embedded as characters in their narratives or standing outside of it.

2. Sources, questions and methods

Since a detailed analysis of the developments of religious drama and the occurrences or interpretations of the narrators is beyond the scope and the possibilities of the present study, I shall limit myself to discussing three examples coming from the German and French area dating back to the eleventh and twelfth century: the Freising *Officium Stellae* (The Play of the Star, The Play of the Magi), *Sponsus* (The Bridegroom) from Limoges and the Tegernsee *Ludus de Antichristo.* In a few words, the first one portrays the journey of the Magi from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, the *Sponsus* unfolds the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, and the Tegernsee play depicts Antichrist challenging God and proclaiming himself God's equal. Why did I restrict my analysis to these three plays? It is partly due to the few occurrences of narratorial voices in the incipient forms of drama, and partly because of their relative closeness in space and time.

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[11] See also Bruce Moore, "The Narrator within the Performance: Problems with Two Medieval 'Plays,' " *CompD*, 22 (1988), 21-36. Reprinted in *Drama in the Middle Ages: Comparative and Critical Essays*, ed. Clifford Davidson and John H. Stroupe, 152-67 (New York: AMS Press, 1991).

In order to draw the theoretical framework near the material subjected to discussion, a clarification is needed. It seems at first sight that the problem is twofold; on the one hand, it is the very nature of the biblical drama, and on the other hand, the scarcity of immediate evidence that have hindered studies in this field. As for the first statement, one has to keep in mind that speaking about nascent forms of drama the boundary between religious ritual and drama did not exist. "Religious ritual *was* the drama of the early Middle Ages,"[12] as Hardison clearly demonstrates. Thus, it is only in the eleventh and twelfth centuries that a shift can be discerned from ritual to "representational modes."[13] Moreover, as these cases show, the "development of each type of church play is closely dependent upon the specific nature of the liturgy within which it is presented."[14]

The **first part** of this thesis will be an attempt to contextualize these three plays within the "canon" of medieval drama. The chapter will cover information concerning their compositions and intended audiences, together with several details regarding staging conventions. I will proceed in the **second part** of my analysis with a closer examination of the narrators and the narratorial instances within the chosen plays, tracing considerations of their perceived intentions and functions in the economy of the play. At this point, the analysis will be focused on the overlapping of the plans, secondary to both, of the play script and the performance. I consider this the turning point of my analysis because by means of these narratorial agencies acting simultaneously in two dimensions (at the level of the play script and at the level of the performance), the study will be moved forward towards a hermeneutical approach. **The last part** will discuss the undertones of these religious plays as revealed by the narratorial instances. Therefore, I will try to answer the question: To what extent can religious, eschatological, and political meanings or aspects of didactics and parody be found in them and with what scope? The aim of this study is not

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[12] Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama,* viii, ix.

[13] Ibid*.,* ix.

[14] Thomas P. Campbell, "Liturgy and Drama: Recent Approaches to Medieval Theatre," *Theatre Journal* 33 (1981): 289-301.

completeness, and it is not exempt of methodological pitfalls. It is to discuss aspects of the concerns which are of interest today, being also aware of its challenges, possibilities and limitations.

<p align="center">***</p>

In order to ensure the accessibility of the contents, attention has been given to the introductions to subjects that specialists might consider superfluous, trying to keep a balance between explaining concepts and assuming them familiar. Thus, the schemes, the maps and the glossary of terms will provide a better contextualization in the framework and a key for understanding. Accordingly, I shall make occasional use of terminology and definitions, while attempting to avoid an obscure overview and portray a comprehensive tableau.

Concerning the Latin texts, I will mainly use Peter Dronke's edition of the *Officium Stellae*[15] and *Sponsus,*[16] and Karl Young's of the *Ludus de Antichristo.*[17] When the argumentation expressly requires excerpts from the plays, I will give the English and Latin variants side by side. Where the discussion does not need a detailed reference, only the English is incorporated in the main body of the text, while the Latin appears in a footnote. In what follows, all translations of the sources[18] are mine, unless specified otherwise.

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[15] "*Officium Stellae,*" in *Nine Medieval Latin Plays,* ed. Peter Dronke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 34-49. In Karl Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church,* vol. 2 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1933), 93-97.

[16] "*Sponsus,*" in *Nine Plays*, 3-23. For further comparisons, see Young, *Drama*, 361-369, and Silvio d'Arco Avalle, ed., *Sponsus: dramma delle vergini prudenti e delle vergini stolte;* Testo musicale ed. Raffaello Monterosso (Milan: R. Ricciardi, 1965).

[17] *Ludus de Antichristo,* in Young, *Drama*, 371-387. For the translation, see John Wright, *The Play of Antichrist* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1967).

[18] Besides the three sources which represent the concern of this study, I make occasional use of other references. For this I use mainly W. Tydeman, *The Medieval European Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) and Young, *Drama.*
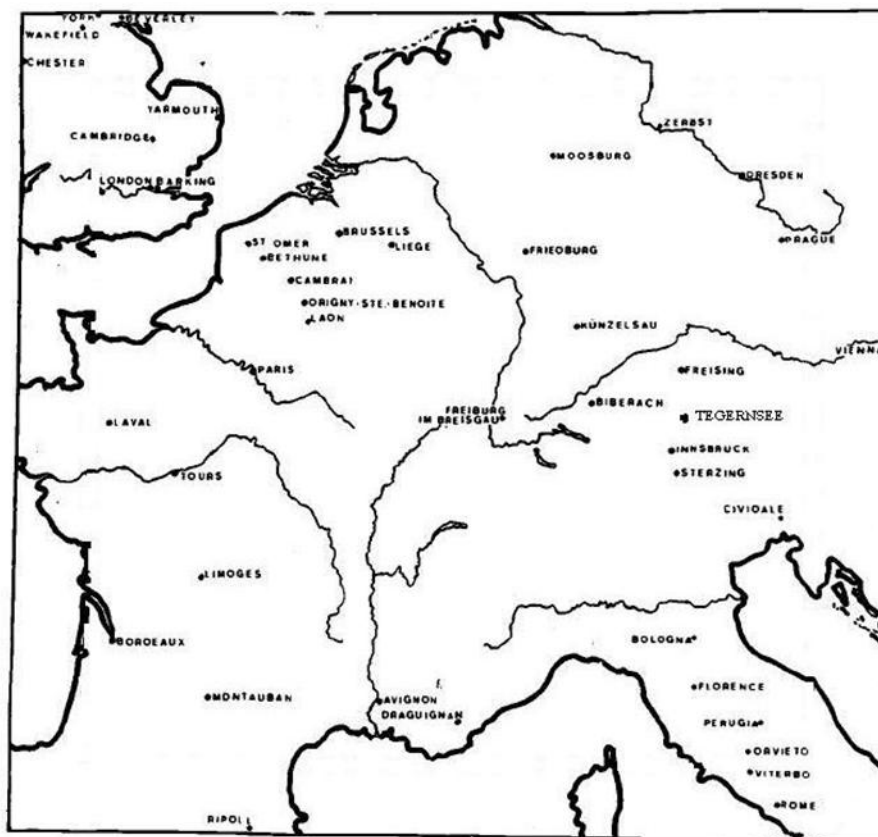
Fig. 1. Map of Central Medieval Europe showing the principal locations of liturgical and religious plays. [Maps adapted from Lynette Muir, *The Biblical Drama of Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)].
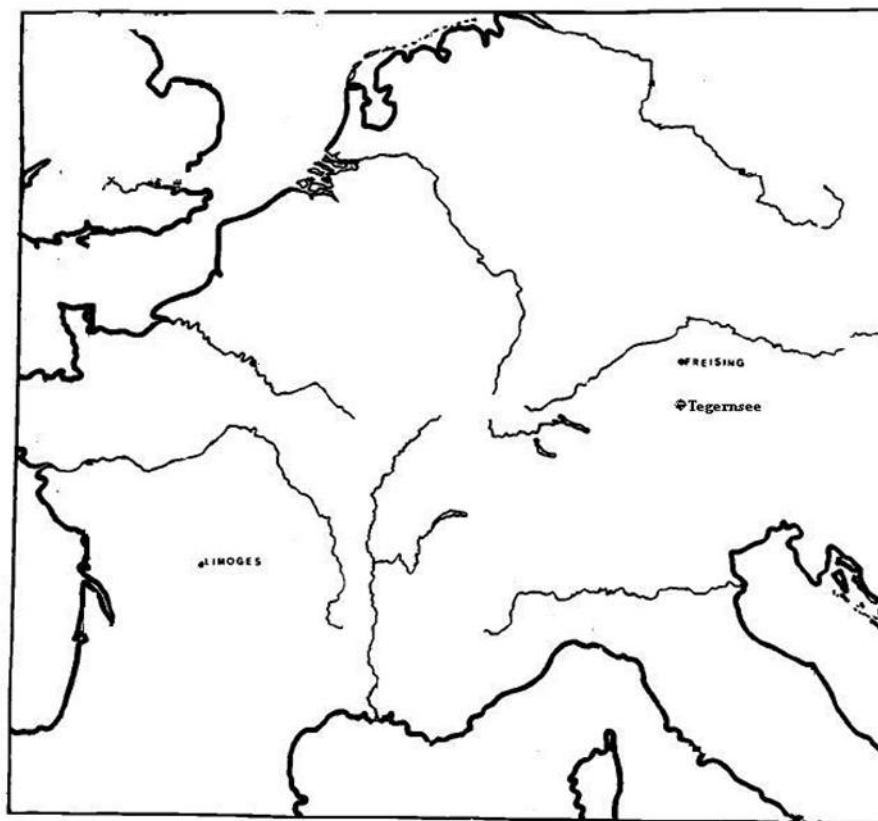
Fig. 2. Map focused on locations of the three plays discussed in this study (Limoges, Freising, Tegernsee).

PART ONE:

THE TEXTS AND THEIR PERFORMANCES

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Certainly, part of the clergy was not at all delighted by the "lustful" practices and performances which were integrated into the Church and reacted vehemently. For instance, in the early twelfth century the Cistercian abbot of Rievaulx condemned histrionic singing in the church. The fragment from the *Speculum charitatis* goes as follows:

> Meanwhile all the body is driven by these actorly movements: the lips are twisted, the shoulders turn and play; and the fingers move in response to certain individual notes. ... The crowd stands looking on ... not without laughter and derision, so that you would think they gathered not at the place of praying but at a theatre, not to pray but to watch [a spectacle] ...[19]

I considered this particular example to show that it should be understood neither as an exceptional one,[20] nor as a commonality. It rather witnesses a vivid society, which shows altogether a "histrionic sensibility"[21] and a sense of religiosity intrinsically conceived in an ecclesiastical milieu, but not strictly dependent on it. The trap of considering one hindering the other or their possibilities being limited by an oppressive environment has to be let aside. There were certainly animosities, but one should keep an eye on the quasi-secular character of these liturgical/religious "dramas," too. These statements should be looked upon with precaution.

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[19] Aelred of Rievaulx, *Speculum charitatis*, II, 23: *PL*, vol. 195, col. 571 C, D: *Interim histrionicis quibusdam gestibus totum corpus agitatur, torquentur labia, rotant, ludunt humeri; et ad singulas quasque notas digitorum flexus respondet. Stans interea vulgus... non sine cachinno risuque intuetur, ut eos non ad oratorium, sed ad theatrum, nec ad orandum, sed ad spectandum aestimes convenisse.*

[20] See the account of Gerhoh of Reichersberg (c. 1093-1169), Pope Innocent III's condemnation in Poland (1207), Bishop Grandisson's suppression of ludic celebrations in Exeter Cathedral (1333), or the censure of the Council of Basel, 1435. Cf. Tydeman, *Medieval Stage*, 113-117.

[21] Francis Fergusson, *The Idea of a Theater, a Study of Ten Plays; the Art of Drama in Changing Perspective* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1953), 251.

1. The Magi, the Bridegroom and the Antichrist

We learnt he was born, in the East, when a star revealed it./ ... we, with symbolic gifts,/ From a far-off region are coming to adore him – /As a King, with gold;/ As a priest, with frankincense;/ As a mortal, with myrrh.
(*Officium Stellae*)[22]

Ah what are we doing here, in our pitiful state?/ Could we not, after all, have stayed awake?
(*Sponsus*)[23]

When all the world gladly worships me,/ Who dares deny to me my godhead's right?
(*Ludus de Antichristo*)[24]

These are excerpts from the three religious plays I will concentrate on: the Freising *Officium Stellae,* the *Sponsus* from Limoges, and the Tegernsee *Ludus de Antichristo,* sources which will be discussed in the spirit of their affiliation to a set of medieval plays. Although separated in space, these plays show that differences in composition and style are not barriers between their circulating, adapting, and borrowing from one another, but rather emphasize that they are part of a world, where literacy, religion and politics are not necessary seen as separated. They are implied into to serve each others' purposes. For instance, the German prelates (because this study is particularly dealing with this area) like to see themselves as God's representatives on earth and the rhetoric the narrators involved in these plays adopt have a great deal with it. This comparative approach is meant to highlight the role and functions of the narrators in the incipient forms of religious drama, with regard to different audiences they address and messages they bear. Why do I consider this approach legitimate? Because, after closely analyzing these plays it came out that the different versions of the same play or the similarities between dramas with different

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[22] Lines 52, 54-54: *<Illu>m natum esse didicimus in oriente, stella monstrante./ ... cum mysticis muneribus/ de terra longinqua adorare ven<imus>:/ Auro regem;/ Thure sacer<do>te<m>;/ Mirra mortalem.*

[23] Lines 54-55: *A misere, nos hic quid facimus?/ vigilare numquid po/tuimus?*

[24] Lines 375-376: *Cum me totus orbis studeat adorare,/ Ius mei nominis quis audeat negare?*

subjects reveal that they could be altered and annotated to suit changing conditions of performance, or the needs of different audiences.[25] Consequently, rather than being perceived as unusual examples, or as leftovers of two divergent traditions – the sacred and the secular – the similarities and the disparities among these plays reveal the protean quality of medieval plays.

1.1. The Freising *Officium Stellae*[26] (c. 1070)

> Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem… and, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.
>
> (Matthew 2:1, 9)

Given the stress on the manifestation (ἐπιφάνεια) of Christ to the world,[27] the narrative recounted in the Gospel of Matthew (2:1-16) gave way to elaborate plays.[28] The tradition of the Magi had a long way in the East before entering into the "social consciousness of Europe," as Trexler mentions.[29] Moreover, as Syriac hymnody was already sophisticatedly elaborated in the fourth and fifth centuries,[30] it is highly probable that some centuries later

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[25] One cannot speak yet about the reader's expectancies, since they were most probably meant for staging, and immediate instruction, or entertainment. I would presume that at that time the readers were out of the author's minds. They appeared probably only some centuries later.

[26] The plays portraying the journey of the Magi are known under various names, *The Play of the Star (Ordo stell<a>e, Officium stell<a>e), The Play of the Three Kings (Officium regum trium),* or *The Play Showing Herod (Ordo ad representandum Herodem).* Cf. Young, *Drama,* 29-101; Dronke, *Nine Plays,* 24.

[27] For an account of the structure of the liturgical calendar and the principal feast days of the year, see the appendix provided by Lynette R. Muir, *The Biblical Drama of Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 171-3.

[28] Plays of the Kings and the Star are seemingly numerous, appearing as early as the tenth century, with a particular culmination in the eleventh century, but continuing as a genre even five hundred years later. See Muir, *Biblical Drama,* 104-107, and footnote 30.

[29] Richard C. Trexler, *The Journey of the Magi: Meanings in History of a Christian Story* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 58.

[30] Ibid., 49.

one can speak about Byzantine "Nativity plays,"[31] sufficiently elaborated as to retain a role for a narrator, too. Yet, they are not *dramatis personae* as they will be in the Western *Officia stellae.*[32] Turning to the West, which is the concern of this study, it is quite noticeable that Johann Drumbl refers to eleven Magi plays[33] preserved in eleventh-century manuscripts. His account indicates clearly that the genre had developed in the previous century, as supposed before.

At the culmination of the genre, the Freising play was preserved in a collection of homilies of the Fathers (Bede, Gregory, Augustine and others), designated to be read on the feasts of saints during the Church year. Nowadays, the homiliary from the Freising cathedral is preserved in Munich, in the Bavarian State Library.[34] Dated back to the end of the eleventh century (c. 1070),[35] the ambitiously conceived play from Freising was striking but ambiguous for previous scholars. In Chambers' attempt to arrange "the dozen or so complete Epiphany plays in at least a logical order of their development,"[36] the Freising *Officium Stellae* seems to have been difficult to classify. This goes for Young, too. Drawing on Chambers, Young published the Freising play after five twelfth- and thirteenth-century

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[31] Trexler mentions that already in the seventh century, the patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem (634-638) is considered the author of a number of hymns which were "performed." For a better insight, see E. Wellesz, "The Nativity Drama of the Byzantine Church," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 37 (1947): 145-151. The play presents even a narrator. Trexler mentions its political dimension, considering it performed before the Emperor and additionally, refer to it as part of the "fascination of the Christian mind," struggling "with the unnaturalness of Jesus' virgin birth" (Trexler, *Magi,* 50). I would presume here, that the hymns account actually knowledge of the apocryphal gospel of James, and mind the platonic tradition (see the symbol of the cave where Mary was hiding until giving birth).

[32] Trexler, *Magi,* 50.

[33] They stem from France (the earliest extant, from Metz, was copied soon after the year 1000), Germany (Lorsch, Regensburg, Freising, Münsterschwarzach), Malmédy, and Hungary (Györ). See Johann Drumbl, *Quem queritis? Teatro sacro dell'alto medioevo* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1981), 306, cited in Dronke, *Nine Plays,* 24.

[34] Munich, Bayer. Staatsbibl., Clm 6264ᵃ, Miscellanea Frisingensia, fol. 1ʳ. The title is missing from the manuscript, *Officium Stellae* being apt here because of *Expleto officio* (see line 136-137). For a more detailed survey on the existing editions, see Young, *Drama,* 92, footnote 5.

[35] Cf. Drumbl, *Quem queritis,* 306.

[36] E. K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, 2 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1903 [1967]), vol. 2, 50.

plays on the same theme,[37] rather neglecting the artistry of the Freising playwright. However, the debate continued, and an objection to these approaches arose among later scholars.[38] The chronological development is in this case, but a construct. In spite of an evolutionary model, witnessing the progress of a skilful dramatic trajectory, it was noted that the basic form of the *Officium Stellae* was among the most valuable. Complete with multiple scenes and a relative freedom from the liturgy itself, the Freising *Play of the Magi* shows a surprising complexity.[39] Unlike Young who considers it "defective,"[40] Dronke brings to light both an entirely recoverable play and the poetic individuality of its anonymous author.

Compositionally, the Freising *Officium Stellae* includes scenes of the Magi, the Shepherds and the Angel, as well as the biblical dialogue with Herod (considerably expanded and giving birth to the *Herodes iratus*[41] motif) together with a visit to the stable and gift-giving. This is by far the most elaborate play surviving from the eleventh century. The opening instructions are sung by a solo expositor or by a choir that enters again later in the play, while the hortative subjunctives may have called for the accompaniment of a mime.[42] What is significant for the present purpose of the thesis is that it bears also witness to the role of the narrator in its economy, as I will show in a closer analysis in the following

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[37] Young mentions several plays which stem from Limoges, Besançon, Rouen (fourteenth century), Strasbourg (about the year 1200), Bilsen, Fleury and only afterwards he turns to the Freising play.

[38] Perhaps the best-known are the arguments of Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama* (see footnote 8) and Dronke, *Nine Plays.* See also the survey offered by Campbell, "Liturgy and Drama," 289-301.

[39] One might find it even more intriguing that a similar complexity was not achieved in the Easter drama until two centuries later. See Campbell, "Liturgy and Drama," 295.

[40] Young pronounces the text "defectively preserved" and uses "dots, representing passages for which no restorations are offered" or "pointed brackets, enclosing passages that may be restored with certainty or reasonable probability" (Young, *Drama*, 92, footnote 5).

[41] Theresa Tinkle, "Jews in the Fleury Playbook," *CompD* 38 (2004): 1-39.

[42] There is no question about the survival of mimes; the frequent anathemas produced against their use are the most affirmative answer in themselves. These *mimi* are referred to under various denominations, as *sc(a)enici, mimi, histriones, lusores, scurrae, thymelici, comici, ioculatores,* and the most referential definition is the one provided by Isidore of Seville in his *Etymologiae,* which is, of course, nowadays questionable. What is also questionable is the position of the mime towards the ancient Roman theater or/and the medieval religious drama.

chapter. For a better articulation, the editor divided the play into twelve scenes, which, however, do not appear in the manuscript itself:

1. the appearance of Herod and the prospect of his tyranny;
2. the Angel and the Shepherds;
3. the Magi arriving at Jerusalem;
4. Herod's court and the depiction of the profane realm;
5. the Magi summoned to the King;
6. the appearance of the Shield-bearer and his greetings;
7. Herod questioning the Magi and the presentation of the symbolic gifts[43] (*mystica munera*);
8. the King summons the scribes, who point to Micah's prophecy and then calls the Magi back;
9. the Magi are impelled to find out more about the newborn;
10.–11. the first meeting attested between the Shepherds and the Magi and then the offering of the gifts;
12. *Herodes iratus*, the Slaughter of the Innocents and *Letabundus*.[44]

The alternation of a hieratic language and another freely formed, the use of a sung prelude, and the attempt to characterize the protagonists by the way they speak stay among the most remarkable novelties of this play. Besides, the use of Classical allusions and citations[45] stand as testimony to the literary and cultural "renaissance" which was skillfully accomplished during the next century.[46] Adapting three lines from the *Aeneid*,[47] Herod's messenger is addressing the Kings in a Virgilian tone: "What news or what cause has impelled you/ to try unknown routes?/ Who are you, and where from is your house?

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[43] For further insights into potential research on *mystica munera* see Irenaeus' interpretation on the symbolic gifts in the second century. Cf. Young, *Drama*, 32. For further research, see Trexler, *Magi,* esp. 53-69.

[44] For further research, see *The Penguin Book of Latin Verse; with Plain Prose Translations of Each Poem*, ed. F. Brittain (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1962), esp. 183-185.

[45] Fabio Stok, "Virgil between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 1 (1994): 15-22. Edward Kennard Rand, "The Classics in the Thirteenth Century," *Speculum* 4 (1929): 249-269.

[46] On the topic of the novelties in the Freising *Officium Stellae*, see Dronke, *Nine Plays,* xxii, 30.

[47] *Iuvenes, quae causa subegit/ ignotas temptare vias, quo tenditis? inquit./ Qui genus? Unde domo? Pacemne huc fertis an arma?* (Virgil, *Aeneid*, VIII, 112-114). "Hail, warriors! What cause/ drives you to lands unknown, and whither bound?/ Your kin, your country?/ Bring ye peace or war?" (Virgil, *Aeneid.* Theodore C. Williams, trans. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1910).

Do you bring peace or war?"[48] In the same vein, the Freising dramatist employs a Sallustian line, borrowing Catiline's words ("Since I am hounded by enemies on every side, I'll quench my blaze of rage by a cataclysm!")[49] and creating a similar image for Herod, when the Magi conceal from him their plans ("I shall quench my rage with a cataclysm!").[50] It is precisely on the basis of these novelties that the play was ascribed to a highly cultivated milieu. As Drumbl notes:

> The Composition ... shows itself as the product of the *schola,* and we do not know whether it was originally destined for liturgical use. Unexpectedly the study of the diffusion of the *Play of the Star* has taught us that what we can study of medieval theatre is not its origin, but only the moment at which it enters and becomes a part of 'culture'.[51]

Subsequently, it may also be emphasized that the towns where the "Play of the Star" is attested (Metz, Regensburg, Freising) had cathedral schools – and thus, possibly, individual productions.[52] The close relations of these "schools" with the politic *realia*[53] suggest the possibility of grasping at an intended audience – representatives of the Ottonian court, other than those expected for a "mere" liturgical play – and different conditions of performance. Moreover, as Trexler accurately notices, one should resist "the temptation to

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[48] *Que rerum novitas aut que vos causa subegit/ ignotas temptare vias?/ Qui genus, unde domo? pa<cemne huc> fertis <an arma>?* (v. 30-32).

[49] *Tum ille furibundus : "Quoniam quidem circumventus", inquit, "ab inimicis praeceps agor, incendium meum ruina restinguam."* (Sallustius, *Bellum Catilinae*, 31).

[50] *Rex prosiliens: Incendium meum ruina extinguam!* (line 119).

[51] Drumbl, *Quem queritis,* 326 (cf. Dronke, *Nine Plays,* xxii).

[52] Dronke, *Nine Plays,* xxiii. See for comparison, John R. Williams, "The Cathedral School of Rheims in the Eleventh Century," *Speculum* 29 (1954): 661-677.

[53] For instance, at the same time when the Metz Magi was copied, the inhabitants of Metz composed verses for Henry II (973 – 1024), who succeeded Otto III in 1002. Even more interesting is the fact that Henry II was educated by the bishop of Freising, Abraham, which shows close connections between these schools. See James H. Forse, "Religious Drama and Ecclesiastical Reform in the Tenth Century," *EarT* 5, No. 2 (2002): 47-70, and Dronke, *Nine Plays,* xxiii.

assume that magi theater was a clerical creation that spread from churches to the laity outside."[54] This will be mainly investigated in the third part of the thesis.

1.2. The *Sponsus* from Limoges (c. 1050-1060)

The bilingual *Sponsus* (The Bridegroom), considered to have been composed c. 1050/60, was found in a manuscript of the Benedictine monastery St. Martial of Limoges. The famous BN MS lat. 1139[55] is particularly noteworthy for its liturgical dramatic celebrations, containing an *Ordo Rachelis*, a *De mulieribus*, an *Ordo prophetarum,*[56] and, what especially concerns this slot of the thesis, a *Sponsus.*[57] According to Landes, the intention of the compiler was to augment liturgical materials "by bringing together liturgical dramatic celebrations with a reiterated thematic focus: that of the Eschaton."[58] *Sponsus* is an allegory based on the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13), usually characterized among the eschatological plays, with no specific performance slot within the liturgy.[59] It has been argued that it pertained to the Easter cycle, partly because of the recurrent motifs they share[60] (the lament of the maidens recall the sorrowing of the Marys, the *mercatores* are paralleled to the *unguentarii*), and partly because of the trope used in the manuscript in the

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[54] Trexler, *Magi,* 63.

[55] Today Paris, Bibl. Nat., MS lat. 1139, Trop. Martialense saec. xi-xii, fol. 53ʳ-55ᵛ. The manuscript consists of several originally separate collections of liturgical and paraliturgical compositions: together with the *Sponsus,* there is a "six-line vernacular verse introduction to the chant *Tu autem Dominus,*" a Nativity Latin and Occitan hymn, *In hoc anni circulo*, and finally an entirely vernacular hymn, *O Maria Deu maire.* Moreover, apart from containing the *Sponsus*, the manuscript is also remarkable for comprising the "oldest polyphonic sequences," so-called "hidden polyphony." For a more detailed account on *Sponsus* and its manuscript settings, see D'A. S. Avalle, *Sponsus.* See also Carol Symes, "Early Vernacular Plays," 791-792.

[56] The order is actually this one: *Ordo Rachelis*, fols. 32v–33r; *De mulieribus*, fol. 53r; *Sponsus,* fols. 53r–55v; *Ordo prophetarum*, fols. 55v–58r. See Richard Landes, Andrew Gow, David C. Van Meter, ed. *The Apocalyptic Year 1000: Religious Expectation and Social Change, 950-1050* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 217, 228.

[57] For a codicological analysis, see Guy De Poerck, "Le ms. Paris, B.N., lat. 1139. Étude codicologique d'un recueil factice de pièces paraliturgiques (XIe-XIIIe siècles)," *Scriptorium: revue internationale des études relatives aux manuscrits* 23 (1969): 298-312.

[58] Ibid., 217.

[59] Muir, *Biblical Drama,* 149. Young, *Drama*, 368.

[60] Young, *Drama,* 366.

preceding[61] plays. Others suggest[62] the play to have been more appropriate for the Christmas season, since the allusions of the Coming of the Bridegroom and the presence of the *Ordo Prophetarum* in the manuscript, immediately following *Sponsus* In terms of composition, the *Sponsus* goes like this:

1. the prologue of *Ecclesia*[63] (1-10);
2. the vernacular strophes of Gabriel (11-27);
3. the sorrow of the Foolish Virgins in dialogue with the irate answer of the *prudentes sorores* (28-65);
4. the solicitude of the Merchants (67-74);
5. the final words of Christ, cursing the Foolish Virgins (85-87).

Employing both Latin and Provençal for its dramatic purpose, *Sponsus* is one of the first extant plays circulating partly in the vernacular and partly in Latin. The prevailing scholarly opinion[64] is that the vernacular parts were added later as "glosses" for the benefit of an unlearned audience. Unlike this interpretation, the verses composed in vernacular show even greater poetic power than the Latin ones. According to Dronke,[65] where Latin seems pretentious and sophisticated for the flow of emotions, the Limousin dramatist envisages the vernacular. Additionally, this gave way to further interpretations that the anonymous author must have been a Limousin and so also the scribe. I assume that the preference of one – the Latin or the vernacular – over the other is but a misconception by modern scholars who have failed in their desire to ascribe this drama to one particular mould. Moreover, this linguistic issue should not be taken as a proof of transition from a

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[61] *Ordo Rachelis* and *De mulieribus.*

[62] Chambers, *Medieval Stage,* vol. 2, 62. See also Grace Frank, *The Medieval French Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), 61.

[63] There is a matter of debate if the incipit belonged to an allegorical character – *i.e. Ecclesia* – or to the choir. Young prefers the Choir (Young, *Drama,* 362).

[64] See Young's discussion on this in *Drama,* 367. For further insights into potential research, see C. Symes, "Early Vernacular Plays," 778-831.

[65] Dronke, *Nine Plays,* 11-12.

complex to a simple structure, but should rather suggest once more that "any attempt to fix the parameters of the medieval dramatic canon should give one pause."[66]

When compared to the narrative which inspired it, the striking feature of this play is the focus upon the Foolish Virgins, and the emphasis placed upon their sleeping too long. In the parable, the Wise Virgins are unable to share their oil ("merits"), for it is clearly stated in the gospel that at the Last Judgment it will be too late to ask for help. In the play the answer of the *Prudentes* is rather different: *De nostr'oli queret nos a doner?/ no·n auret pont.* (You're asking us to give from our oil?/ You shall have none).[67]

It is "a human and dramatic *aporia*," Dronke clearly observes.[68] At most, one can relate this scene to Christ's predictions: "A brother will deliver his brother to be killed, and a father his son, and children will rise up against their parents and afflict them with death... but whoever endures to the end will be saved" (Mark 13:12-13). Yet, contrariwise in the play, the closing words of Christ with his curse against the foolish virgins once more go far beyond the gospel. As such, the human and symbolic vision of the *Sponsus* emerges from the free reshaping of the narrative and leads to a piece of unusual dramatic force:

Alet, chaitivas, alet, malaüreas:/ a tot iors mai vos so penas liureas!/ en efern ora seret meneias ! [69]	Away with you, wretches, away with you, luckless ones: for ever more suffering shall be your lot! / Into hell you shall now be led!

Despite the humorous tone of the later extant plays on the same topic (the German and Dutch[70] plays),[71] the Limousin author seems to truly empathize with the victimized characters. Whether the end of the play was perceived as comic or not might be the subject

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[66] Carol Symes, "Early Vernacular Plays," 782.

[67] *Sponsus,* lines 63-64.

[68] Dronke, *Nine Plays*, 5.

[69] *Sponsus,* lines 85-87.

[70] Being the most elaborate among the plays of the Ten Virgins, in the Dutch *Sponsus* the virgins are given allegorical names according to their sins or their virtues: Fear of God, Hope, Faith, Charity, Humility and Recklessness, Pride, Time-Wasting, Vainglory, Tittle-Tattle. See Dronke, *Nine Plays,* 8 and Muir, *Biblical Drama,* 149.

[71] Dronke, *Nine Plays,* 5.

of further discussion.[72] Still, there is another event, closely connected to the touching portrayal by the *Sponsus'* author. According to the chronicles, in 1321 a play of the Ten Virgins was performed at Eisenach, comprising a scene in which the Virgin Mary herself is unable to save the *Fatuae.* This event had such an impact on Landgrave Frederick of Thuringia (1349-1381) that:

> When he saw and heard that the five Foolish Virgins were barred from eternal life, and that Mary and all the saints interceded for them and this was of no avail... then he was beset by doubt and moved to great anger, and said: 'What then is Christian faith, if God will not have mercy on us at the prayers of Mary and of all the saints?'... And he was so shattered by his long anger, that for three years he took to his bed.[73]

1.3. *Ludus de Antichristo* from Tegernsee (c. 1160-1180)

The parable of the Ten Virgins discussed above was not the only story prophesying and warning about the Second Coming. However, transition from the world of *officium* to that of *ludus*[74] is, at its most obvious on the subject of the False Messiah, elaborately emphasized in the *Play of Antichrist.*[75] This remarkable 417-line play from Tegernsee monastery dates from sometime between 1160s and 1180s. Considered the first extant Antichrist play, it seems to

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[72] See Muir, *Biblical Drama,* 148-149, and Dronke, *Nine Plays,* 6-7.

[73] B. Neumann, *Geistliches Schauspiel im Zeugnis der Zeit: zur Aufführung mittelalterlicher religiöser Dramen im deutschen Sprachgebiet* (Munich: Artemis, 1987), 306, cited in Muir, *Biblical Drama*, 261, footnote 21.

[74] *Officium*: a ceremony, rite, attendance (on a festive or solemn occasion); *ordo*: the sequence (order) in which a ceremony is conducted; *ludus*: a play, game. Cf. Glynne Wickham, *The Medieval Theatre* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977), 37, 41-43.

[75] Considered the most ambitious political-religious drama of its period, the anonymous *Play of the Antichrist* is preserved in what is now Munich, Staatsbibl., MS lat. 19411, *Miscellanea Tegirinsensia saec xii-xiii*, p. 6-15 (old pagination), most authoritatively edited by Young, *Drama*, 371-387. More controversially though, Dronke points out in his preface the existence of another "fragmentary manuscript" in the Austrian Benedictine Abbey of Fiecht, cf. Josef Riedmann, "Ein neuaufgefundenes Bruchstück des 'Ludus de Antichristo'," *Zeitschrift für Bayerische Landesgeschichte* 36 (1973), 16-38. Therefore, a new edition referring to both manuscripts is greatly desirable. For a description of the MS lat. 19411, see Helmut Plechl, "Die Tegernseer Handschrift Clm 19411. Beschreibung und Inhalt," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 18 (1962): 418-491.

have originated during the reign of the Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa (c. 1155-1189).[76] Emphasized by Christian commentators,[77] the name *Antichristus*,[78] pointing toward the conception of a conflict between God and an adversary – an actual person embodying evil – goes far back. In the second century BC, the Book of Daniel prophesied that a great enemy would come as a King, rise to power and dominate the world:

> And the King shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done (Daniel 11:36).

The same motif of unnamed seducers who will pervert the world and proclaim themselves God's equals is also recurrent in the epistles of John. The evangelist considers them as the Antichrist: "...it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time" (1 John 2:18). Of all the writings concerning the Antichrist,[79] the most significant source for the Tegernsee play is the *Essay on the Antichrist* (*Libellus de Antichristo*). It was written by the monk Adso in the

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[76] There have been long debates about the occasion with which the play should be associated. See Wright, *Antichrist,* 24-40.

[77] Antichrist's image as God's adversary, willing to rule the world: Tertullian, De *praescriptione haereticorum* 4, Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 20, *Tractatus in epistolam Joannis ad Parthos* 3.3, Pseudo-Cyprian, *De pascha computus* 15, Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 11. There are also other occurrences of the Antichrist: Antichrist as God's adversary, in a more general sense: Cyprian, *Sententiae episcoporum* 1; Antichrist as a heretic: Augustine, *Tractatus in epistolam Joannis ad Parthos* 3. 4 (*se ostendere antichristum*), Augustine, *Contra Iulianum (opus imperfectum)* 3. 38 (*tot enim Antichristi sunt quot dogmata falsa*), Cyprian, *Epistulae* 74. 2 (*omnes haeretici, omnes schismatici ... antichristi sunt*), Jerome, *Commentary on Nahum* 2. 11 (*Antichristi magis synagoga quam Christi ecclesia debeat nuncupari*), Jerome, *Liber Contra Luciferianos* 2. Cf. Blaise Patristic (Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs chrétiens).

[78] According to Wright, the name "Antichrist" is a late addition to the eschatology. The Greek construction [ἀντί - "opposite, against, instead of" + χριστός (from χρίω) – "the anointed", (cf. LSJ)] has a twofold meaning: the one against the anointed (an adversary), or the one instead of the anointed (a surrogate). A Greek construction appears only in the Epistles of John (1 John 2:22, 1 John 4:3, 2 John 7); elsewhere in the New Testament, the adversary is referred as "the son of perdition" or "(he who is) destined to inherit perdition" (2 Thess. 2:3). Cf. Wright, *Antichrist*, 19.

[79] For a parallel with Hildegard of Bingen's play *Scivias*, written almost in the same time as the Tegernsee *Play of the Antichrist*, see Richard K. Emmerson, "The Representation of Antichrist in Hildegard of Bingen's *Scivias*: Image, Word, Commentary, and Visionary Experience," *Gesta* 41, No.2 (2002): 95-110. See also Wright, *Antichrist*, 20, footnote 16.

tenth century in the form of a letter to Queen Gerberga of France (c. 913-984), the spouse of Louis IV of France.[80] Although in the main action the anonymous *Ludus de Antichristo* follows the tradition expounded by Adso, the play's political and theological implications are highly original.

Spanning a great cast and a lengthy script, the play is symmetrically composed: while the first part in dominated by the image of the Roman Emperor, the second sequence falls under the image of the Antichrist. Compositionally, its plot goes as follows: the Emperor of the Romans[81] brings all human power under his rule. After accomplishing this, he gives God all his royal *insignia* as a gift, proclaiming Him, the true ruler:

Suscipe quod offero, nam corde beningno/ *Tibi Regi regum imperium resigno,/ Per* *quem reges regnant, qui solus Imperator/* *Dici potes et es cunctorum gubernator.*[82]	Receive, O lord, my grateful gift, for I resign my rule to Thee, the King of Kings, through whom kings reign, and Whom alone we call the Emperor and Ruler of us all.

This is the point which marks the beginning of the second sequence: the advent of Antichrist, who suddenly enters the stage. By subduing all humanity using its weaknesses, he collapses the Emperor's achievements. With the help of his servants, Hypocrisy and Heresy, Antichrist announces the coming of a new power. As for the composition of the dialogue, Antichrist conquers the world using almost the same words as those which the Emperor used. In both cases, *Gentilitas* is the last to fall and through the agency of the hypocrites, *Synagoga* submits to Antichrist. After falling to him, the Jews are rescued by the message of the prophets, Enoch and Elijah, who show them the truth of Christianity. Their acceptance of the true message leads to their martyrdom. Finally, summoning the world to worship him,

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[80] For a translation and a brief interpretation of the text of Adso, see Wright, *Antichrist,* 100-110. See also, R. K. Emmerson, "Antichrist as Anti-Saint: The Significance of Abbot Adso's *Libellus de Antichristo,*" *American Benedictine Review* 30 (1979): 175-190.

[81] Since these are the names of the characters within the play (*Gentilitas*, Hypocrisy, Heresy, Roman Emperor, Antichrist, etc.), I preserved the capital spelling, as suggested by the editors.

[82] *Ludus de Antichristo,* lines 148-150.

Hec mea gloria, quam diu predixere,/ Qua fruentur mecum, quicunque meruere./ Post eorum casum, quos vanitas illusit,/ Pax et securitas uniuersa conclusit.[83]

This is my glory, long since prophecied,/ Which all deserving men shall share with me./After the victims of deception fall,/ My peace and safety will encompass all.

Antichrist is destroyed by a thunderbolt from heaven, and through divine intervention mankind is forgiven and returns to God.

2. Staging prerequisites and aspects of performance

Since further attempts are done in order to reconstruct parts of medieval performative acts,[84] a closer look to the staging prerequisites is of special interest. It was Amalarius of Metz who brought closer theatrical devices to the Mass.

> The sacraments ought to have some likeness to those actualities of which they are sacraments. Therefore the priest should be like Christ as the bread and wine are like the body of Christ. Thus, the sacrifice of the priest at the altar is up to a point like the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross,[85]

believed the bishop of Metz.[86] Albeit the oppositions faced up, he showed how the theatrical representation of the Mass is beneficial for enhancing the faith of the illiterate, when the Latin seems difficult to be understood.[87] Despite those who were still to deplore the theatrical representation of the Mass, Amalarius did cross the "conceptual line between

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[83] Ibid., lines 411-414.

[84] See for example the on-going project of SITM, which has encouraged the revival medieval plays' production. See also Muir, *Biblical Drama,* 168-170, and on the question of scenes and preparing a play for the performance see Mark Damen, "French Scenes in Greek Tragedy: The Scenic Structure of Classical Drama," *Theatre Journal* 55 (2003): 113-134.

[85] Amalarius of Metz, *Liber officialis*, *PL* 105, cols. 815-1360.

[86] His two works – *Eclogae de Ordine Romano* (814) and *Liber officialis* (821-835) – contain two interpretations of the service of the Mass, emphasizing the benefits of the theatrical exposition. See Harris, *Medieval Theater,* 23-24.

[87] Harris, *Medieval Theatre*, 23.

allegorical interpretation and dramatic mimesis."[88] As D. Dox affirms "the theater became a metaphor for the fundamental struggle of Christian experience."[89]

Analyzing the performative prerequisites, Ogden speaks about different "centers of action,"[90] determined by the location of major scenes. Thus, as in the *Visitatio*, the sepulcher is the meeting point of the Marys, in the Magi, the most significant "gathering place" is the manger. One additional specification is needed. In the Magi plays there are actually three focuses: Herod's court, the manger, and the lands of the Magi. Probably performed in the Cathedral of Freising, *Officium Stellae* recounts the following "stage" reconstruction: the manger with the child is placed on the east, surrounded by the midwives, while the north (symbolically evil's region) is Herod's space. His throne (*solium*) stands separately raised on a higher platform approachable by "steps" (*ascendat rex*). As for the Magi, the Freising dramatist portrays them as *reges ex Arabitis* (Kings from Arabian lands) and avoids any other particularity concerning the location on the stage according to their provenience.[91] It is from the choir, towards the north transept that the Magi start their "journey,"[92] passing through the nave where the audience was placed. As such, at times, the audience becomes part of the plot: the citizens of Jerusalem whom the Magi address during their journey are

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[88] Donnalee Dox, *The Idea of the Theater in Latin Christian Thought* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004), 49-66, esp. 52-53. Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Dramaa,* 54-55: "The remainder of the Mass is focused on the sacrifice, but the sacrifice is firmly held *sub specie aeternitatis* by the symbolic drama extending from Introit to Gloria. Christ emerges from the timeless, dies, and ascends in the figure of the bishop. He re-emerges in the figure of the celebrant. At the end of the Mass, ... the celebrant is... enfolded in the world beyond time."

[89] Dox, *Idea of Theater*, 45.

[90] On centers of action and the playing area within the church space, see Dunbar H. Ogden, *The Staging of Drama in the Medieval Church* (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London, Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 2002), 96-99.

[91] Albeit this lack of precision concerning the stage directions, there are still two specifications for their proveniences in the script: *Nos sumus, quos cernitis, reges/ Tharsis et Arabum et Saba* (lines 100-101) and *Impero Chaldeis, dominans rex omnibus illis./ Tharsensis region me rege nitet Zoroastro./ Me metuunt Arabes, mihi parent, usque fideles* (lines 83, 85, 87). What the stage arrangements retain is that they are coming *ab Oriente.*

[92] For instance in the Rouen play the magi come from different directions (east, north, south) and they meet before the altar. Moreover, each of them comes with his own servant bearing his particular gift. (Ogden, *The Staging of Drama*, 73).

the spectators themselves. The involvement of the audience[93] in the plot is a sign of dramatic inventiveness, since the story is not focused entirely on the discourses of the characters or on the fluidity of their dialogues, but also envelops an external factor (e.g. the audience) within a segment of the plot. One may presume another platform for the shepherds, close to the south transept, from where they approach the manger (cf. scene 2[94]). The "angel from afar" (*angelus a long<in>quo*) approaching the Magi probably had his place in an upper gallery above the choir.[95]

What can one grasp in the last scene from the *Officium Stellae?* The final segment from the *Officium Stellae* introduces a noticeable performative novelty and an issue of debate. The employment of prayers, followed by singing, feasting and dancing (*oda, festa, chorea*) would have been at least regarded as a curious mixture by several clerics.[96]

> Let's sing/ 'hurrah!' – this yearly feast brings with it royal praises!/ This day has given us what the mind could not hope:/ it's truly brought a thousand joys in answer to our prayers,/ ... / to us it's brought wealth, beauty, singing, feasting, dancing.[97]// *The play now being over, let the boys sing:* Full of joy, the loyal choir of angels exults.[98]

In 1298, the Würzburg Synod decided upon the prohibition of dancing and singing in sacred places,[99] but a long tradition against[100] these devices had already been established in the

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[93] For various discussions concerning the integration of the audience into the plot and the response of the audience to the story, I am thankful to Professor Gerhard Jaritz for pointing out some important details.

[94] For the division of scenes, see the segment of the composition above (Section One).

[95] Dronke, *Nine Plays,* 27.

[96] Cora Dietl, "Dancing Devils and Singing Angels. Dance Scenes in German Religious Plays," 12th SITM Colloquium, Lille, France, 2-7 July, 2007: http://sitm2007.vjf.cnrs.fr/pdf/s2-dietl.pdf (Last Accessed: May 2011).

[97] The emphasis is mine.

[98] *Officium Stellae,* lines 129-132, 134, 137.

[99] *Prohibeant sacerdotes sub poena excommunications choreas maxime in coemeterio vel in ecclesiis duci.* In Theresa Berger, *Liturgie und Tanz. Anthropologische Aspekte, historische Daten, theologische Perspektiven* (St. Ottilien: EOS-Verlag, 1985), 29. See also Constant J. Mews, "Liturgists and Dance in the Twelfth Century: The Witness of John Beleth and Sicard of Cremona," *Church History* 78 (2009): 512-548. He argues that Sicard implies that the festivities of the pagan Saturnalia with their freedom of expression "can legitimately be used to explain the festivities that take place at Easter" (p. 512).

fourth century.[101] Thus, John Chrysostom in *In Matthaeum homilia*[102] states: *Chorea est circulus rotundus, cuius centrum est diabolus* ("the dance is a round circle, whose center is the devil"),[103] and God has not given us legs *ut iis turpiter utamur* (to use them stupidly)*, non ut perinde atque cameli saltemus* (neither to jump around like camels), but rather *ut recte gradiamur* (to walk upright) and *ut cum angelis choreas agamus* (to join the dance of angels). As such, when spirits and souls join the dance of angels, there is no sign of enmity towards God. Moreover, the dance around the manger symbolizing the Savior is but a manifestation of joy, which brings people close to the divine.[104] In Dronke's interpretation, the *Letabundus* is both a celebration of the birth of the true King – the *Angel of council* (*Angelus cons<ilii natus est>*) and *the sun from the star* (*sol de stella*), brought forth by the maiden "in form like hers" (*sicut sidus <rad>ium, pro<fert> virgo <filium, pari forma>.*) – and a challenge to Synagoga[105] to recognize the King, announced not only by the pagan Sibyls, but by the Synagoga's

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[100] There are, however, two mentions of positive dances: the dance of angels around God and the dance of David around the Ark of Covenant in 2 Sam 6, 14-22. See Geraldus van der Leeuw, *Phänomenologie der Religion,* 2nd ed. (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1956), 423.

[101] The same applies to later plays, in which, however, the experience of the dance becomes even more emphasized. Compare with the report of a 1523 performance of a Christmas play at Stralsund, in which: *Dar gedantzet, gesprungen, ned so geschickt, effte se mit Legion der Düfel beseten wären. Das was de Anfang. Dit muste so geschehen, im schyne, alß de Engel den Hirten die Gebort Christi verkündigenden, und dat men dat Volck wackende heldt, dat se lachen musten.* In Bernd Neumann, *Geistliches Schauspiel im Zeugnis der Zeit. Zur Aufführung mittelalterlicher religiöser Dramen im deutschen Sprachgebiet,* 2 vols. (Munich: Artemis, 1987)*,* vol. 1, no. 2648.

[102] *In Matthaeum homilia* 48:3, in *PG* 58, 491.

[103] There is, for instance, a fourteenth-century work with the same name: *Chorea est circulus rotundus cuius centrum est diabolus,* kept in the Episcopal Library St. Peter, Cod. b X 8/6. Cf. Cora Dietl, "Dancing Devils and Singing Angels," 4, footnote 7.

[104] There are negative connotations, too: the dance seen as a means by which the dancer forces the holy object to share its power; the dance as a sign of *superbia;* the jumps of the dancer representing the satyr, and thus, the devil; dancing around God without seeing God as a sign of alienation, of madness. See Constant J. Mews, "Liturgists and Dance in the Twelfth Century: The Witness of John Beleth and Sicard of Cremona," *Church History* 78 (2009): 512-548.

[105] For a very insightful comparison on the depiction of Jews-Christ relationship in the early forms of drama, see the example of the *Alsfred Passion*: when Christ is hanged on the cross, the Jews start dancing, when Synagoga says: *Ir herren mer machen eyn lobedancz/ dem, der uffhoit den koniglichen krancz!* (Sirs, we shall perform a dance of honor for him who wears a royal crown). *Et sic Judai corizando per crucem cantant:* the Jews follow Synagoga and perform a ring dance round the cross. For this last example, see Cora Dietl, "Dancing Devils and Singing Angels," 7-9.

prophets themselves.[106] In the same vein, Dronke correctly sees the parallelism between the *Officium Stellae* and the *festum stultorum* (the Feast of Fools), celebrated on 28 December. As such, the ludic tone of the end of the play, when Herod thinks he has killed all the little boys and in a subsequent scene his own page-boys proclaim the true *rex Iudeorum,* bespeaks the Feast of Fools influence.[107]

Little is known about the stage arrangements in the case of *Sponsus,* but this should not undermine the possibility of performability the play was conceived with: the virgins are five on each side, and they fall asleep.[108] The *Prudentes* awake after the first speech of Gabriel, and the *Fatuae* rise only after the second. I assume that Gabriel, as in the case of the angelic figure used in *Officium Stellae,* comes from above. Moreover, Dronke suggests that if the performance took place in a church the *aula* might have been the image for heaven, while the steps that led to the crypt could have represented the hell.[109] Young presumes supplementary equipment for the characters, such as vessels for the maidens, wings for Gabriel, and a booth for the merchants.[110]

While the opening stage directions[111] in the Tegernsee play offer no evidence of the production and the staging place, this leads at least to two interpretations: firstly, critics[112] have suggested performance out of church (in a public square, or in the emperor's court)[113] mainly due to the huge cast[114] and the lack of liturgical links; secondly, Ogden pleads for it

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[106] Dronke, *Nine Plays,* 29.

[107] Dronke, *Nine Plays,* 29.

[108] Frank, *Medieval French Drama,* esp. 58-60.

[109] Dronke, *Nine Plays,* 7.

[110] Young, *Drama,* 368.

[111] The first rubric indicates that eight platforms will be needed for the play: one for the Temple of the Lord (*Templum Domini*), and "seven royal seats" (*vii sedes regales*). For the arrangement of the stage, see Ogden, *The Staging of Drama,* 87-89.

[112] Young, *Drama,* 393-394.

[113] Young, *Drama,* 394.

[114] According to Wright, *Antichrist,* 52, the play contains seventeen speaking roles and eleven mute roles.

being performed within the Church, but still with a skeptical voice.[115] However, I have retained Ogden's presumption and there is one supporting source, which presumably may substantiate this supposition. It is the declaration of Gerhoh of Reichersberg in *De investigatione Antichristi*[116] in which he condemns the clergy for promoting plays in the churches, making precise references to the play of Antichrist and to Herod's plays:

> And priests, ... now, do not dedicate themselves to the ministry of church or the altar but to the exercises of avarice, vanity and of shows, so that they turn the churches themselves, namely, the houses of prayers, into theatres and fill them with feigned spectacles of play... Thus, what wonder if these simulating now Antichrist or Herod in their plays do not pretend in plays as in their intention, but show in reality, seeing that their behavior is not far from the disordered behavior of Antichrist?[117]

Despite the lack of precision concerning the staging place, the arrangement may give a sense of orientation (see Fig. 3):[118] the Temple is to the east side, and next to it are the *sedes* for the King of Jerusalem and Synagoga; in the west, there are the three *sedes* for the Roman Emperor, the German King and the French King; on the south side there are two *sedes:* one for the King of Babylon and Gentilitas, and the other for the Greek King. This arrangement witnesses real geographical locations: since the north side stays free, this was the place of

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[115] He points toward specific features of a church and brings as arguments the dimensions of the Tegernsee Church ("a very large Romanesque basilica with a total length of sixty-nine meters), sufficiently large to accommodate the play, and the use of a chorus – mentioned in the play-script. See Ogden, *The Staging of Drama*, 87.

[116] *De investigatione Antichristi* was written during the years 1161 and 1162, approximately at the same time with *Ludus de Antichristo.* See William Tydeman, *The Theatre in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 60-61, Young, *Drama,* 392.

[117] *Et sacerdotes,... iam non ecclesiae vel altaris ministerio dediti sunt sed exercitiis avaritiae, vanitatum et spectaculorum, adeo ut ecclesias ipsas, videlicet orationum domum, in theatra commutent ac mimicis ludorum spectaculis impleant... Quid ergo mirum, si et isti nunc antichristum vel Herodem in suis ludis simulantes eosdem non, ut eis intentioni est, ludicro mentiuntur sed in veritate exhibent, utpote quorum vita ab antichristi laxa conversatione non longe abest?* (Young, *Drama,* 392).

[118] In the figure, the *sedes* are represented by bullets. The numbering (1 - Gentilitas, 2 - Synagoga, 3 - Ecclesia) represents the first three entries in the play. The emphasis is the "center of action," and the arrows indicate movement toward the "center-side." The square brackets indicate the later appearance in the plot.

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the spectators.[119] W.T.H. Jackson[120] speaks about the space of performance as the metaphor of Christendom itself, and notes the plot concentrated on two "centers of action:" the secular one (the West) and the sacred (East). One more specification is needed here: I retain in my analysis the bivalent structure proposed, but ultimately, the message of the narrative determines me to make a reduction, and stick with one single focus, thus, the place of *Templum Domini* (Eastern one).
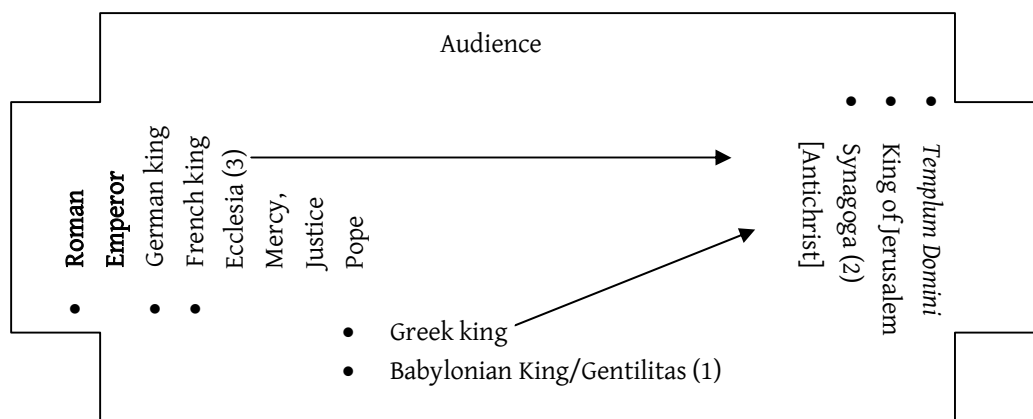

Fig. 3. Schematic plan of *Ludus de Antichristo*'s initial arrangement

Giving a short account of these performative particularities, what one should notice at first sight is that the religious medieval drama showed no great distance from the liturgy. In general terms, almost all sacred and royal figures wore priestly vestments.[121] The female figures were played by males,[122] and the costumes were mainly taken from the

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[119] Note that the spectators are somehow separated from the playing area, unlike in *Officium Stellae,* where they are in the middle of the nave.

[120] W. T. H. Jackson, "Time and Space in the *Ludus de Antichristo,*" in *The Challenge of the Medieval Text: Studies in Genre and Interpretation*, ed. Joan M. Ferrante, Robert W. Hanning, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 125-143, esp. 128.

[121] Ogden, "Costumes and Vestments for the Medieval Music Drama," in *Material Culture & Medieval Drama*, ed. Clifford Davidson, EDAM 25 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999), 17-57. See also Wickham, *The Medieval Theatre,* 29.

[122] For discussions of the impersonation of masculine and feminine roles by men only (since the space of "performances" was mainly monastic), I am grateful to Professor Gerhard Jaritz.

sacristy.[123] To paraphrase Ogden, "there was no major barrier between choir and congregation,"[124] and "the members of the monastic community were not cut off from the reminder of the sanctuary."[125] With this in mind, I will proceed to analyze the narratorial instances according to their occurrences and to the roles taken up.

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[123] Ogden, "Costumes," 38.

[124] Ogden, *The Staging of Drama*, 99.

[125] Ibid., 99.

PART TWO:

THE NARRATOR AND HIS "MASKS"

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> I see them... Many of them are given only a few lines, and yet their presence can be as solid as that of the principals. They are like great actors with short roles; they are there for a few moments, but they are mightily there...[126]

This is what Maurice Samuel says, showing the importance of the "supporting cast" in biblical narratives. Though difficult to articulate it with precision, this goes for dramatic encounters, too. The fact that there was an audience is certainly seen in the textual architecture of the plays, but how something was to be communicated is a matter for discussion.[127] In her study – *The Semiotics of Theater and Drama* – Keir Elam claims the "absence of narratorial guides" in drama and considers this genre "without narratorial mediation."[128] But these are precisely the statements one has to take a position on and refute. Or at least, when discussing medieval dramatic texts. Thus, it will be argued that in the incipient forms of biblical drama the role of the "narrator" was not absent, but rather encapsulated within an overlapping duality of roles and functions.[129]

Moreover, as C. Symes clearly states,

> Scholars scouring manuscripts for texts labeled *ludus, ordo, Spiel, jeu, play* will go away unsatisfied; readers trained to look for rubrics, stage directions or

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[126] Maurice Samuel, *Certain People of the Book* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1955), 94.

[127] For an interesting digression into potential research, see the study of Corneliu Dragomirescu, "Un guide dans le livre: *Prescheur*/meneur du jeu/auteur dans les manuscripts enluminés des mystères," paper delivered at the SITM, 12th Congress, Lille (France), 2-7 July 2007 (http://sitm2007.vjf.cnrs.fr/pdf/s14-dragomirescu.pdf, last accessed: May, 2011), in which he discusses the visual representation of these narratorial guides in illuminated manuscripts.

[128] Keir Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (London: Routledge, 2002), 98-99.

[129] See Butterworth, *Narrator, Introduction.*

didascalia, character designations, and other signs of dramatic apparatus will find only a few scripts to meet their expectations.[130]

Although they cannot provide the evidence one is used to look for, these narratorial figures appear in the most unexpected guises. Their nature is protean and evidently lies in the variety of tones they adopt, not in their mere impersonation. Furthermore, there is no reason for prioritizing the dramatic text over the performance or the performance over the text. The reason for implying them both is not fashionable, but instrumental, since neither one dimension nor the other is fully sustained by extant evidence. Therefore, the "integralist view" is but an effort to reconstruct the vivid sense of "drama," as it should have been understood in the past. This chapter contains a brief introduction to the research framework, after which I will proceed with(in) a theoretical framework[131] and move on to an account of the narratorial instances in the chosen material.[132]

One might not find difficulties in subscribing to the point that in drama "showing" is not a metaphor but evidence, because "the characters do appear before our eyes."[133] The issue at this point is not the distinction between "showing" (in the sense of "enacting") and "telling," but the distinction between *personal* and *impersonal narration*: "Personal narration implies that the narrator is a person – a "speaker" or "teller." ... Impersonal narration implies that there is no such a person."[134] Since they both narrate and accomplish the transmission of meaning, the difference between them can be perceived at a functional

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[130] Carol Symes, "Toward a New History of Medieval Theatre: Assessing the Written and Unwritten Evidence for Indigenous Performance Practices," paper delivered at the SITM, 12th Congress, Lille (France), 2-7 July 2007, 14 (http://sitm2007.vjf.cnrs.fr/pdf/s10-symes.pdf, last accessed: April 2011).

[131] Among the most relevant studies on the issue of narration and narrators in drama are: Brian Richardson, "Point of View in Drama: Diegetic Monologue, Unreliable Narrators, and the Author's Voice on Stage," *CompD* 22 (1988): 193–214; Stanton B. Garner, Jr., *The Absent Voice: Narrative Comprehension in the Theater* (Urbana: Illinois, 1989), Fichte, *Expository Voices*.

[132] See the collection of essays dedicated to the representation of the narrator, Butterworth, ed., *The Narrator,* although it is focused mainly on late medieval plays.

[133] For insight into potential research with regard to the distinction "showing" and "telling" see S. B. Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978).

[134] Ibid., 43.

level. The impersonated narrator tells, while the impersonal narrator shows by other devices.[135] At a fundamental level, they both achieve their goal: the transmission of meaning. Accordingly, the difference between the "told story" (*diegesis*) and the "shown story" (*mimesis*) might seem to have additional importance. Why is it not applicable here? Because it is precisely by means of these inconspicuous nuances, that the "polymorphous" narrator adjusts the undertones.

One clear distinctive feature of the beginnings of drama is that the narrator is a difficult "instance" to corner and describe,[136] since he is the inside instance who gets a grip on the narrative and, in parallel, the exterior voice who mediates between the "audience" and the "dramatist." The narrator in early biblical drama[137] is far from being a neglected voice, yet also far from having a definitive role (within the performance and the cast) as in the later cyclical plays.[138] As the textual evidence shows, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries the roles attributed to a *dramatis persona* under the name of "narrator" or "expositor," are rather scant and problematic, these "characters" being perceived as

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[135] See Manfred Jahn, "Narrative Voice and Agency in Drama: Aspects of a Narratology of Drama," *New Literary History* 32 (2001): 659-679, see esp. 669.

[136] In his collective volume Ph. Butterworth asserts the difficulty of instantiating the narrator, and brings to light evidences related to later medieval drama (whole passages narrated in the first person singular, charters or other documents stating the payment of such an expositor, pictorial evidence). See also Gustave Cohen, *Histoire de la Mise en Scène dans le Théatre Religieux français du Moyen-Âge* (Paris: Champion, 1926), 173-174. According to him, this "*meneur du jeu*" is charged with the rehearsals of the characters, their entries, and their exits. This opens the possibility of grasping at the existence of two persons in charge of "setting the stage," but there is no precise extant evidence to sustain this hypothesis. Similarly, Ph. Butterworth discusses Richard Carew's account who describes a *mise-en-scène* in Cornwall with the help of a prompter called the "Ordinary." Butterworth pinpoints that such a character has a double function, as "director in performance," and/or "director of performance," being both inside and outside the action. See Ph. Butterworth, "Prompting in Full View of the Audience: A Medieval Theatre Convention", in *Drama and Community: People and Plays in Medieval Europe,* ed. Alan Hindley (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 231-247.

[137] Parallels with the biblical accounts function on this level. See Uriel Simon, "Minor Characters in Biblical Narrative," *JSOT* 46 (1990): 11-19.

[138] Apparently, as M. Butler claims in his study on the Chester cycle, figures like *Expositor, Doctor, Preco* or *Nuntius* are absent from the English cycle drama, too, until their appearance in the Chester cycle in the early sixteenth century. See Michelle M. Butler, "The Borrowed Expositor," *EarT* 9 (2006): 71-90.

"impersonal" speakers relating the scenes and enacting the message.[139] The recurrent figures such as *Nuntius, Internuntius, Legatus,* although not as frequent and as enhanced in early examples of medieval drama, claim for further clarification. Often obscure, and seemingly incidental, they are defined by general terms: messenger (*nuntius, internuntius*), boy (*puer*), interpreter (*scriba*), legate/ambassador (*legatus*). Minor as they seem, these characters are chiefly of importance within the economy of the play and their function and meaning remain a source of debate.

The point of departure is that there was more meaning in the text than one can currently see. My intention is not to procrusteanize the texts in any of the literary theories, but rather to apply them as far as the sources allow. Thus, it will be under the umbrella of the narrator that the dichotomy *dramatic text – performance*, or *play-script – performed play* will be kept together. As emphasized in recent scholarship, "differences must be recognized in order to address a genre's specificity, but differences should not keep one from recognizing relevant commonalities."[140]

1. The narrator and his facets in *Officium Stellae*

> *What new event or what cause has impelled you/ to*
> *venture on strange routes?/ Who are you, and where*
> *from? Do you bring peace or war?[141]*

The narratorial voice as perceived throughout the play is omniscient, sometimes intervening, or, on other occasions adopting an ironical or empathetic tone. One of the first

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[139] More specifically, *Ovidius puellarum* (c. 1080), an anonymous south-western Germany play, and the Anglo-Norman *La Seinte Resureccion* (c. 1150) are among the earliest examples manifest for including in their spectrum the narratorial voice. See Dronke, *Nine Plays,* 25. The anonymous prologue of *La Sainte Resureccion* calls for the impersonation of a narrator clearly inscribed within the play, with an expository function: *En ceste manère recitom/La seinte resureccion./ Primèrement apareillons/ Tus les lius et les mansions,/ Le crucifix primerement,/ Et puis après le monument./ Une jaiole i deit aver/ Por les prisons enprisoner./ Enfer seit mis de cele part... // Et cum la gent est tute asise/ Et la pes de tutez parz mise,/ Dan Joseph cil d'Arunachie/ Venge à Pilate, si lui die.* Unfortunately, this vernacular drama is only partially preserved.

[140] Jahn, "Narrative Voice," 674.

[141] *Officium Stellae,* lines 30-32.

issues to be inquired into is the status of the opening instructions of the *Play of the Magi.* The opening lines of the *Officium Stellae* provide not only the image of background – Herod's court and a perspective on his tyranny – but also an example of the pivotal role of the expositor, presumably in full command of the scene. Under this "mask" (a), as **expositor**, he displays greater knowledge than in the other hypostases, and takes up the likeness of a bard (ἀοιδός) from a Homeric epic, unfixed yet in space and time.

Ascendat rex, et sedeat in solio./ Audiat senten<tia>m./ Ex se ipso querit consilium./ Exeat edictum/ Ut pereat c<on>tinuo/ Qui detrahunt eius imperio.[142]	Let the King mount and sit upon the throne./ Let him listen to opinion./ From himself he takes counsel./ Let an edict go forth/ That those who detract from his sovereignty/ Shall perish instantly.

As shown before, the first scenes portray the Angel, the Shepherds and the Magi. The status one has to give to the fourth scene in this shape, back at Herod's court, is more intricate. Pointing briefly at these narrative *anachronies*, the hortative subjunctives display the "directorial" function of the narrator. Moving between Herod's court and the realm of the three Magi, the narratorial voice does not play a role merely as a messenger, but it pinpoints a possible parallelism as well. If the relationship between the two scenes was indeed as important as it seems, then it gives one better insight into the reason for the choice of a mediator. This brings Herod's figure, in visual terms, to the same level as the Magi and defines them as an antagonistic pair. In an analogous way, the paired figures are present in *Ludus de Antichristo,* as will be seen in the following section.

Furthermore, much of the performability one can identify in biblical plays is driven by the narrator through the use of characters; therefore, the audience will see the event enacted before its eyes by characters, beside whom the role of the narrator is pivotal. One expects the audience to accept this without analyzing it deeply, but it is precisely by means of these secondary characters that the meaning is preserved and enriched throughout the play. This is probably illustrated better by the entrances of the *Messenger.* He does not play

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[142] Ibid., lines 1-6.

any particular part in the plot, but carries the significance further. Under the mask of this second role (b), as a **character** – *Internuntius, <Inter>nuntius* – the narrator embodies a role (most frequently the role of a messenger) and abandons omniscience. Thus, after being in charge of an omniscient view at the beginning of the play, in the following sections the narratorial voice brings the characters into the light, and colors the narrative.

To give one further example, there is always a secondary character – *Internuntius* or *Armiger*, depending on the scene – who introduces Herod and the embodiment of his tyranny. When Herod enters the scene, he dominates the action and, as Ogden mentions, "even the liturgy."[143] As masks of the narrator these characters are employed in the economy of the play to do basically one thing: to move the thread of the story further. It makes no difference for the transmission of the message and meaning if there is a distinction between the *Internuntius* and *Armiger.* The contexts may be slightly different, but the speech-acts carrying the message and enabling the meaning are identical. *Internuntius* and *Armiger* are both mediator instances that introduce characters and intercede among them or correct the interpretation. In this hypostasis, as a character, the narrator handles content matters – *how* the message is transmitted and how the audience is supposed to understand it.[144]

Another issue to be emphasized is the alternation between the addressees which the narrator comes to. In the sixth and the seventh passages of the *Officium Stellae,* the *Internuntius* doubles his primary role (that of a messenger in charge of carrying up information from one performer to another) and becomes an expositor, too. In the first hypostasis – as a character within the time of the narrative, *Internuntius* addresses the other personages. He reports news to Herod about the three Magi (lines 39-40) and persuades them to confess the reason for their visit to the tyrant (line 41). In the second hypostasis – as an expositor – the narrator moves out of character in discursive time and takes

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[143] Ogden, "Costumes," 41.

[144] On this matter see part three: "Messages of the Narrative."

command of directing the witnesses (line 42-43). In this second role, his function is rather expository than dialogical, embedding the audience within the narrative frame.

Internuntius: Rex, miranda fero: tres reges, ecce, matu<rant> / Rex: Ad nos vocemus, ut eorum sermones audiamus. (lines 39-40)	The Messenger: King, I bring amazing news: look, three Kings hasten/ The King: Let us call them to us, to hear their speeches.
<Inter>nunti<us>: Regia vos man<data> vocant: <non> segniter ite! (line 41)	The Messenger: You are summoned by royal command: do not delay, go!
<Internuntius preced>ens: En magi veniunt,/ <et> regem regum natum stella duce requirunt. (line 42-43)	The Messenger preceding: the Magi are coming,/ and they are seeking a newborn King of Kings, while the star is guiding.

What I found of tremendous skillfulness is that at times even the primary characters take up the narratorial shroud, and engage in a sort of pseudo-spontaneity, as if they are still composing while the plot is under way – *Dicite nobis, o Hierosolimitani cives, ubi est expectatio gentium, ... quem ... venimus adorare?*[145] (Tell us, citizens of Jerusalem, where is the awaiting of nations [he] whom we are coming to adore?). This conventional stop in performance explores the relationship between the narrator and the audience and makes the latter active part in the plot.[146]

    As for the **choric figures** (c), there is "unequivocal evidence that the actors spoke and sang their parts."[147] From the very beginning, the narrator, as full governor of the play, takes advantage of the choric figure, preferring it to a soloist. The choral function allows a certain intimacy with the audience, constituting itself in a sort of *captatio benevolentiae* and setting the stage for what follows.[148] One can subscribe to this statement in examining the

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[145] *Officium Stellae,* lines 19-20, 22.

[146] It pretty much resembles the Pindar's apparent digressions in *Pythian Ode* 2, 38: ἦρ', ὦ φίλοι, κατ' ἀμευσίπορον τρίοδον ἐδινάθην; (Is it, friends, that at the crossroads where paths meet I got confused?)

[147] Nerida Newbigin, "Directing the Gaze: Expository Modes in Late Medieval Italian Plays," in *The Narrator, the Expositor, and the Prompter in European Medieval Theatre,* ed. Ph. Butterworth (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 69-89, 79.

[148] As Harris notes when commenting upon the *Ordo prophetarum:* "in the eleventh century it occurred to somebody that it would be more interesting to have **a presenter** (my emphasis) introducing each prophet and then have his prophecy delivered "in character" by a deacon" (Harris, *Medieval Theater,* 33).

end of the Freising play, where we are told that these same boys as in the beginning of the play shall sing "*Letabundus:*"

Hos versus cantent pueri in <pro>cessione regis:

Eia!/ Dicamus: regias <hic f>ert dies annua laudes!/ Hoc lux ista dedit quod <men>s sperare nequivit,/ A<ttulit et> vere votorum gaudia mille,/ Hoc regnum re<gi>, pacem quoque reddidit orbi,/ N<obis di>vicias, decus, odas, festa, choreas./ Hunc regna<re decet>, et reg<ni> sceptra tenere:/ Regis <nomen> amat, nomen quia moribus or<nat>.

Expleto off<icio, pueri cant>ent:

Letabundus exu<lt>a<t fid>elis chorus angel<orum>./ Angelus cons<ilii natus est> de virgine, sol de stella./ Sicut sidus <rad>ium, pro<fert> virgo <filium, pari forma>.[149]

Let the boys in the King's *procession sing these verses:*

Let's sing/ 'hurrah!' – this yearly feast brings with it royal praises!/ This day has given us what the mind could not hope:/ it's truly brought a thousand joys in answer to our prayers,/ restored this kingdom to its King, and peace too to the world/ to us it's brought wealth, beauty, singing, feasting, dancing./ It's good for him to reign and hold the kingdom's scepter:/ he loves the name of King, for he adorns that name with virtues.

The play now being over, let the boys sing:

Full of joy, the loyal choir of angels exults./ The Angel of counsel has been born of the maiden, the sun of the star./ As the star brings forth its ray, so does the maiden her son, in form like hers.

As the words *Expleto officio* indicate, the sequence falls outside the play as such, but still inside the dramatic sequence. The authorial voice is clearly distributing the roles – "*Expleto officio, pueri cantent,*" through the utterance of the narrator.

2. The narrator and his facets in *Sponsus*

While in the *Play of the Magi*, the narratorial voices are quite prolifically designed and also impersonated, in *Sponsus,* one faces exactly the opposite impression. Concrete literary devices are entirely missing. Where the narrator is to be found? Despite the fragmentary state of the rubrics and the lack of directions, one can still reconstruct the identity of the characters through the support of the biblical *diegesis.* Yet, for the opening of the stage, the

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[149] *Officium Stellae,* lines 129-139.

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anonymous author has chosen a different voice. The narrator takes the guise of a personified character – *Ecclesia*,[150] and beholds the theological content: the announcement of the advent of the bridegroom, who is coming as Christ and as a second Adam.

Adest sponsus, qui est Christus – vigilate, virgins! – / pro adventu cuius gaudent et gaudebunt homines./ Venit enim liberare gentium origines, / quas per primam sibi matrem subiugarunt demones./ Hic est Adam qui secundus per propheta dicitur,/ per quem scelus primi Ade a nobis diluitur.[151]

Here is the bridegroom, who is Christ – keep watch, maidens!-/ through whom advent mankind rejoice and will rejoice. / For he is coming to liberate the origins of the ancestors/ whom, through the first mother, the demons subdued./ This is Adam who is considered the second by the prophets,/ Through whom the guilt of the first Adam is washed away from us.

I would not interpret the choice as being done out of randomness, but rather as intentional, since the message bears highly theological meaning. One should not undermine the impact of the imaginary propulsion of *Sponsus* and *Sponsa*[152] (The Bridegroom and the Bride, *i.e.* *Ecclesia*) had on the dramatic scaffolds, too. As has been argued, the prologues and epilogues[153] are revelatory, not only for the meaning they bear but also for what they unshroud about the status of the play and its presentation to the public.[154] As shown by Willem Noomen, they are situated "aux frontières de l'oeuvre, [ils] ont pour fonction d'opérer le passage de la réalité extérieure dans l'univers fictionnel et vice versa."[155] Besides, they assure the preparation for entering the *play* and optimize the circumstances for the audience, but, at the same time, they constitute the slipperiest parts of the text,

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[150] Similarly, the personification of the same character in *Ludus de Antichristo* calls for the same meaning.

[151] *Sponsus,* lines 1-6.

[152] See Part Three, 2.

[153] For an insightful study on the figure of the narrator in prologues and epilogues, with an emphasis on French illuminated manuscripts, see Dragomirescu, "Un guide dans le livre," 4-5.

[154] Cf. Willem Noomen, "Auteur, narrateur, récitant de fabliaux: le témoignage des prologues et des épilogues," *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 35 (1992): 313-350, 349. The prologues and epilogues have a double function: "celle d'établir le contact entre le récitant et son auditoire et d'optimaliser les conditions de l'audition, ainsi que celle de présenter et d'introduire l'oeuvre qu'on va entendre." (Ibid., 315). See also Sophie Marnette, *Narrateur et points de vue dans la littérature française médiévale: Une approche linguistique* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1998).

[155] Noomen, "Auteur, narrateur, récitant," 349.

being the object of continuous exploitations.[156] Depicted in parallel with this first sequence, the last scene enacts Christ himself, the character called out from the very beginning. However, his unexpected response leads to a remote realm – the mouth of Hell.

Between these two significant passages in the narratorial discourse, a small number of rubrics are inserted, but they merely mark the succession of roles, completely lacking any signs of staging. Short repetitive verses which constitute a sort of refrain mark the division between Gabriel's speech and the dialogue of the Virgins, keeping the rhythm alive. After Gabriel's advice[157] (*Gaire <no·i dormet!>,* "Don't fall asleep!"[158]) and the disobedience of the *Fatuae,* the refrain takes the tone of a continuous lamentation: *Dolentas, chaitivas, trop i avem dormit!* (We, wretched in our grief, have slept too long!).[159]

The grief comes to an end when the narrator calls for the coming of Christ, totally identified with the *Sponsus* as in the incipient lines: *Modo veniat sponsus* (Now let the bridegroom arrive).[160] At this point, the narrator, in full command of his omniscience, doubles his role and borrows the voice of the *Fatuae*, defending their cause. In doing so, he addresses first the audience, informing them of the coming of Christ, and second, he empathizes with the wretched ones, engaging in a final supplication. The first line below constitutes itself into a narratorial voice, while in the following two lines the narratorial voice captures both the narrator and the *Fatuae* (see the personal pronoun "*nobis*"):

Audi, sponse, voces plangentium,/ Aperire fac nobis ostium/ Cum sotiis: prebe remedium![161]	Oh, bridegroom, hear the voices of the ones who are weeping,[162]/ Let the gate be open for us/ With our companions: grant us this remedy!

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[156] Ibid., 315.

[157] Fichte interprets this as a more powerful voice given to Gabriel to basically repeat what the chorus already pointed. On the one hand, it is more powerful because of the consideration Gabriel rejoices and on the other hand, because the verses he recites are in vernacular, and thus, directly addressed to the illiterate (Fichte, *Expository Voices,* 42).

[158] *Sponsus,* refrain, lines: 14, 19, 23, 27.

[159] Ibid., refrain after lines 32, 36, 46, 51, 61, 65, 78 (It does not have a numbering on its own).

[160] Ibid., line 79.

[161] Ibid., lines 80-82.

After the first entrance, the narrator reappears only at the end of the play. Being charged with a short role, he yet makes the most important *liaisons* between the two significant parts of the story – the announcement of the coming of the Bridegroom and his ultimate advent. In this sense, the *Sponsus*' narratorial voice draws nearer the Homeric gods: he moralizes, but only on special occasions intervenes in human deeds. At the end, although empathizing with the *Fatuae,* the Judge makes his decision. Not even Zeus can go beyond the *Moirai.*

3. The narrator and his facets in *Ludus de Antichristo*

> Then the ambassadors coming to the King of Franks sing before him:/ The Emperor of the Romans sends you greetings./We know you are famous through your discretion/ you have to bow to Roman law.../ We invite you to the service [of the Emperor]/ and we ask you to come quickly under his command. (*Ludus de Antichristo*) [163]

The status one has to give the narrator in the Tegernsee *Ludus de Antichristo* is by far the most demanding. As noted above, the stage directions present a number of difficulties, both in the arrangement of the scene and in the place of production. At first view, the play is impressive for its literary accomplishment and use of rubrics, the omniscient narratorial voice being perceived throughout these indications. They provide not only an image of background, but design the transition of scenes, their literary skillfulness varying from the simplest exposition (a list of roles) to a more complex one offering descriptive or staging details.

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[162] As for the translation of this line, Dronke suggests a freer caption: "Oh, bridegroom, hear our voices filled with weeping," which does not give information about the binary function of the narratorial voice, and loses part of the sympathetic vibration.

[163] Lines 61-64, 67-68: *Tunc legati uenientes ad Regem Francorum coram eo cantent:/ Salutem mandat Imperator Romanorum/... Tue discretioni notum scimus esse,/Quod Romano iuri tu debeas subesse. .../ Cuius as seruitium nos te inuitamus/ Et cito uenire sub precepto mandamus.*

In the analysis of the narrator, I will follow the already established structure: (a) the impersonal narrator as **expositor,** (b) the impersonated narrator as **characters,** and (c) **choric figures**. Instead of using prologues or epilogues, as was the case with the previous plays analyzed, the Tegernsee playwright establishes a new canon: the evident omniscient voice of the prologues and epilogues is replaced by elaborate stage directions, mostly referring to the setting:

> The Temple of the Lord and seven royal seats arranged in the following manner: to the east the Temple of the Lord; around it are arranged the seat of the King of Jerusalem and the seat of Synagoga. To the west the seat of the Emperor of the Romans...[164]

In terms of space and temporality or the movement of the actors in the performance not much is changed. Differently, what remains to be addressed is the effect these complex rubrics had on the audience. If they were helpful for the actors themselves, it is doubtful whether they were as clear for the audience. It is by means of costumes and putting a cast on-stage, and only later stage directions (*Tunc omnibus redeuntibus ad fidem, Ecclesia ipsos suscipiens incipit*)[165], that the symbolic meaning is perceived.

What is intriguing, however, is the decision to allocate the first roles to allegorical characters – Gentilitas, Synagoga, and Ecclesia[166] – having the task to intone their parts. According to Wright, the initial roles of these allegorical figures representing the two major non-Christian religions, Heathendom and Judaism, "are stanzaic songs with a form reminiscent of Christian hymns."[167] Gentilitas praises in her hymn the "immortality of gods" and their multitude, deploring the ignorance of those who claim God is one. Following her, Synagoga, accompanied by the Jews, firmly denounces Christ – "who could

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[164] The first rubric of the play.

[165] *Ludus de Antichristo,* line 416.

[166] Since these are the names of the characters in the play (*Gentilitas, Synagoga,* Hypocrisy, Heresy, Roman Emperor, Antichrist, etc.) I have preserved the capitalization, as suggested by the editors.

[167] Wright, *Antichrist,* 41.

not save himself,/ what from is he able to rescue [me]?/ I command you to despise Jesus/ as Ishmael despised the gods."[168] After the credos of these two characters are expressed, Ecclesia enters the stage singing *Alto consilio:*[169] "This is the faith, from which life exists, and in which the law of death is bound[170]/ Whoever is to believe differently,/ We damn him eternally."[171] Introduced by an explicit rubric, Ecclesia is much more emphasized than the previous characters, despite her brief entry. This original taste for sung roles rather than spoken verses is preserved throughout the play, since wherever these three characters appear their roles constitute themselves in an appropriate hymn. Moreover, the majority of stage directions include the verb *cantare*, rather than *dicere* or at least they are used as synonymous; one notes that reminiscences of the Christian hymn and the liturgical practices are still present. Thus,

> Gentilitas enters first with the King of Babylon, singing/... it follows Synagoga with the Jews, singing/ Then Ecclesia will sing the processional chant *Alto Consilio.*[172]

After these chants, the Kings and the Emperor take up their parts, also singing. The major difference of the Antichrist play is that a considerable number of the entries are to be intoned rather than recited. Or, at least this is what the rubrics mark.

Much of the performability of this play is driven by apparently secondary characters – *Nuntii, Legati, Ministri* – who appear throughout the play. The Messengers seem employed by other characters (the messengers of the King of the Franks, the messengers of the Roman Emperor, the messengers of Antichrist, etc.), perceived rather as distanced from

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[168] *Qui se saluare non potuit,/ ab hoc quis potest saluari?/ ... Ihesum sicut deos Ismahel/ te iubeo detestari* (lines 39-40, 43-44).

[169] Young, *Drama,* 372.

[170] *KJV*: Romans 8:2: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." Cf. Wright, *Antichrist,* 70, footnote 8.

[171] *Hec est fides, ex qua uita/ in qua mortis lex sopita./ Quisquis est, qui credit aliter,/ hunc dampnamus eternaliter* (lines 45-48).

[172] *... primo procedat Gentilitas cum Rege Babiloni<e > cantans/ ...sequitur Sinagoga cum Iudeis cantans/ ...cantabit autem Ecclesia conductum Alto Consilio* (after line 32, after line 44).

the fiction and having organizing functions. Most of the time they repeat their discourse, interceding between the Emperor and the Kings of Nations until their submission to the Emperor's rule. When the Emperor directs his messengers to the Kings of Nations, the discourse employed is almost the same, with slight differences – "As the writings of historians tell us,/ All the world was the purse of the Romans."[173] More than in the other two plays, the scene seems tightly packed, since almost all the characters have their own *legati* or *nuntii*. The principal characters do not enter treaties or negotiate one with the others, but preserve their apparent inviolability and high status by sending out their pages. On the other hand, the *liaisons* carried by these apparently insignificant characters, increase the tension of the plot and put questions and expectations in the mind of the audience. Thus, as odd as it may seem, there is no open dialogue between the main characters themselves, but only through mediation. As Wright points out,

> There is little individualization through action: in general, characters march through their roles like the majestic but indistinguishable figures on a Byzantine mosaic.[174]

In spite of their plentiful occurrences, their individualization is completely missing. Or, if one considers their appurtenance a sign of individualization, I would argue that it is actually an attribute which pertains to the main character itself. There is no difference if they are the *nuntii* of the King of France or Greece. Their movement is pretty much standardized (*Tunc ille, suscepto regno, reuertitur cantans*),[175] and their verses as well (*Cuius ad seruitium <nos> te inuitamus/ et tributum dare sub precepto mandamusi*).[176]

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[173] *Sicut scripta tradunt hystoriographorum,/ Totus mundus fuerat fiscus Romanorum* (line 150).

[174] Wright, *Antichrist,* 41.

[175] *Ludus de Antichristo,* line 114.

[176] Ibid., lines 110-112.

At the end of the first part there is a lengthy rubric which may call for the recitation of an expositor,[177] for I doubt that passing from the first part to the second one was to be done without mediation at all. Thus, I believe that a narrator (with an expository role), while the characters were changing places and the new characters (Antichrist, Hypocrisy, Heresy, etc.) enter, makes the first step forward and exposes what will come next as an arcade for the next colonnade. While making the transition smoother, the performance's devices are changed in his back to suit to necessities of the next scene. What makes difficult to affirm with certainty is the lack of any sign of individualization or impersonation, but it seems the only way to preserve the fluidity of the play.

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Talking about narratives which were meant to be put on a stage, the ability of such a figure as the "narrator" or expositor" to move in and out of the action, to give the key to the following scene or to reveal some trick from previous parts characterizes the dialogue with the audience. Performing for a commoner audience, the role of the narrator seems to be unequivocal for revealing the meaning and for the coherence of the plans. From the point of view of an elevated audience with more cultural insight, the narrator was probably an issue of mutual understanding or sometimes an eyewitness – together with the audience – to the interpretation and the play of the characters.

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[177] The segment between the two parts runs as follows: *Et eis depositis super altare, ipse reuertitur in sedem antiqui regni sui, Ecclesia, que secum descenderat Ierosolimam, in templo remanente… Ad ultimum omnes conueniunt ante Ecclesiam et sedem Regis Ierosolime, qui eos honeste suscipiens ex toto se subdet eorum consilio. Statim ingreditur Antichristus cum aliis indutus loricam comitantibus eum Ypocrisi a dexteris et Heresi a sinistris, ad quas ipse cantat* (after line 150).

MESSAGES OF THE NARRATIVE

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> We do not ask a play communicate for ever; we do ask that a play communicate in its own time, through its own medium, for its own community (J.L. Styan, *Drama, Stage and Audience*).

While from the perspective of a modern researcher the implication of the narrator is much more noticeable in/from the textual dimension – or, at least, through the textual references one can get a handle on him – his role is also crucial for leading the message of the narrative, and unveiling further hermeneutical possibilities. Accordingly, one should not, I think, restrict the interpretation of these plays at this point. A closer look at the historical and political *realia* opens new ways to the perceived intentions behind these plays.

Insofar as one can see from the works of Otto of Freising, the anonymous author of *Ludus de Antichristo,* Gerhoh of Reichersberg, and Hildegard of Bingen, there are certain affinities that linked the intellectuals from these climates.[178] The dramatic works of that time were not divorced from the early uses of performative ritual; rather, they were implementing it and then expressing it.[179]

1. The political undertone and the symbols in *Officium Stellae*

I wish to argue that the Magi's depiction in this narrative is more than a mere description of Matthew's account and that the charge assigned to the narrator has a great deal to do with it. As art mirrored the revival of the tenth century after the collapse of the Carolingian

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[178] See the study of Dox, *Idea of Theater*.

[179] See also Forse, "Religious Drama and Ecclesiastical Reform," 60.

Empire and the rise of monarchies, so did the dramatic tradition.[180] Moreover, if images had a limited circulation, since breviaries and prayer books were not at everybody's hand, the dramatic performances were open to the masses. Thus, the parade of triumphalism[181] and the use of a narrator for infiltrating the human minds are indispensable from the agenda. The only problem is that in early drama not plentiful references mind this narratorial voice, or not directly. Subsequently, I consider issues of political theology highly expressed the play of the Magi and this can be seen in the Freising *Officium Stellae,* too.

Taking the model from Psalm 71:10 ("The Kings of Tharsis and the islands shall offer presents: the Kings of the Arabians and of Saba shall bring gifts"),[182] the *Officium Stellae*'s narrator portrays their kingly status and their different proveniences. There is, however, a sort of inadvertence concerning their identification: when the Magi refer to themselves (in the parts they impersonate) they use the concept of "*reges;*" when they are referred to, the concept used is "*magi.*" What can the symbolism be for this choice, if any, and how does the narrator provide the guidance? How is he witnessing or directing the play? I believe that the difference in the three Magi's denomination has roots in the predications used for expressing rulership and power.[183]

The issue is twofold: on the one hand, what has to be understood is the concern of representation of rulership, and, on the other hand, the problem its denomination. Firstly, as the iconographical accounts reveal, it was already in the tenth century that the Magi were depicted with royal insignia[184] – *corona*, scepter and royal clothes – and thus, legitimately called *reges* (kings). In the Freising *Officium,* the Magi are looking for the new-

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[180] For instance the Ottonian rulers' portraits began to appear, and soon parallels between politics and theology arose. See Leonard Goldstein, *The Origin of Medieval Drama* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2004), 127.

[181] Trexler refers to a "medieval imagery of triumph in western Europe" (Trexler, *Magi,* 54).

[182] *VUL*, Psalm 71:10, *reges Tharsis et insulae munera offerent reges Arabum et Saba dona adducent.*

[183] As Trexler discusses, Christians "have historically built into the nativity scene, as they have into other powerful sacred images, their own social and political experiences." (Trexler, *Magi,* 3).

[184] Robert, Deshman, "Christus rex et magi reges: Kingship and Christology in Ottonian and Anglo-Saxon Art Taf. XII-XIII," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 10 (1976): 367-405, 380.

born to offer him the *mystica munera:*[185] *aurum, thus et mirra* (gold, frankincense and myrrh), symbolizing Christ's kingship, priesthood and humanity.[186] Secondly, when the Magi's and Herod's denominations of *reges/rex* are to be confused with Christ's appellation of *rex*, there are other concepts, which make this query unequivocal:[187] only Christ is *princeps seculorum, vere deus, rex celi* and *Angelus consilii*[188] and the narrator is aware of this rhetoric. In addition, at the end of the play the narratorial voice given to the choir of boys (*pueri*) clarifies this issue: "Hereupon it is suitable to reign, and hold the scepter of royalty:/ he loves the name of King, name which he adorns with virtues."[189] As such, the narratorial figure is never mixing the roles. The Herod and the Magi are most often *rex/ dux/ reges* (secular denominations of rulership) while Christ is *deus, rex caeli* or *Angelus consilii* (denominations from the sacred sphere).

Thus, if the self-representation of an image is rather inaccessible to a wider public, the dramatization is not; through the *rhetoric devices* the narrator uses for transmitting its message to the audience, the play becomes revelatory for the understanding of kingship ideology and representations of power: kings, magi, *munera, aurum, solium, imperium* are all emphasizing a social reality which announce the direction in which realities incline for the next centuries. As analyzed in the previous part of this study, the narrator reveals the meaning by doubling-up his role. On the one hand, in an omniscient guise, the narrator sets the scene, calling up for the *rex* (Herod), and then singing glory to God (*Gloria in excelsis deo*); on the other hand, in a subsequent scene, the narratorial voice impersonates several characters (*Internuntius, Armiger* – who are running from one king to another, interceding

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[185] Note that the primary sense of the word *munus* was that of "duty, service, tribute" (from an administrative spectrum) and only at a later time, in combination with the adjective *mysticum* it means "gift," "present," thus "symbolic, mystical gift." Cf. T. Ch. Lewis, Ch. Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879).

[186] *Suscipe, rex, aurum/ Tolle thus, tu vere deus/ Mirram, signum sepulture* (lines 108-110).

[187] For a discussion on signs of power and political expressions in the Magi Play, I am thankful to Professor György Geréby, for pointing out the difference in their denomination.

[188] Prince of times, true God, King of heaven (lines 107, 109, 114).

[189] *Hunc regnare decet, et regni sceptra tenere:/ Regis nomen amat, nomen quia moribus ornate... / Angelus consilii natus est de virgine...* (lines 135-136).

between them) and enters the plot. Either way, he articulates the narrative and gives to the audience a better sense of understanding.

Peculiarly, the story of Herod initially designated as an episode within the nativity and the Magi scene, becomes an exponent of the concept of *tyranny.*[190] The language itself is shaped on the classical models of depicting tyrants and tyranny, and Herod *iratus* is borrowing a Sallustian line.[191] Moreover, since the Magi are the expressions of "total political order,"[192] Herod is the antithetical figure. At one point, the tyrant himself refers to the Magi with this appellative – *Adduc externos citius, vassalle, tyrannos!* (Bring the foreign tyrants quickly, vassal!)[193] since "he cannot imagine kings which are not tyrants."[194] As Young have noticed, the "herodian insanity"[195] and his sense of controlling is first expanded to his vassals, shield bearers, and other functionaries, and later, it encompasses the entire world [*regia vos mandata vocant,* the royal commands summon you (meaning, the Magi)].[196] In these fragments, where actually non-biblical action is enacted, the directors of scene were probably competing in inventiveness and were rendering at their will Matthew's account. Messengers, soldiers of Herod, Interpreters, and boys representing the choir involve into the cast and take up narratorial guises. How do they improve the message? It is through the guises and only after, through the tones they adopt: the legates

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[190] One century later, John of Salisbury develops an entire doctrine on tyranny. In his *Policraticus,* he sees the tyrant as the incarnate evil, an *imago pravitatis* (*Policraticus* 3), and thus, he does not deserve any consideration at all. Drawing later the moral will and potentiality of the tyrant, Salisbury sees these characters vicious and misusing power, since for them "all authority is from God, and therefore good." See *Policraticus* 778d, in Cary J. Nederman, "A Duty to Kill: John of Salisbury's Theory of Tyrannicide," *The Review of Politics* 50 (1988): 365-389, 368. Later, in the sixth and the eighth books of *Policraticus,* Salisbury develops the concept of *body politic,* speaking about the prince, who "holds the place of the head," and continuing with an organic description of the entire community encapsulated in this "body." Parallels with this structure, can be also noticed in the dramatic tradition, at the beginning rather vaguely, but continuing more and more explicitly. See the next section, on *Ludus de Antichristo.*

[191] *Incendium Meum ruina extinguam*, line 119. See also notes 49 and 50 of this study.

[192] Trexler, *Magi,* 58.

[193] *Officium Stellae,* line 80.

[194] Dronke, *Nine Plays,* 51.

[195] Gerhoh of Reichersberg accuses *herodianam insanitam* in his church. Cf. Trexler, *Magi,* 224, note 78.

[196] *Officium Stellae,* line 81.

are happily saluting Herod's plans (The shield bearer: Determine, Lord, to avenge your anger),[197] and the interpreters are coming to reveal for him what they saw (We saw, Lord, in the books of prophets that Christ is born in Bethlehem).[198] In the same likeness the Magi realizing Herod's intention, take another path, "betraying" the "King," and at the end Herod's pages join Christ's procession. The *Officium* turns into a parody, and the ironical tone is preserved all throughout the play, up to the point when Herod, the "King without a kingdom," looses the recognition of his power.

2. The moral/eschatological tone of *Sponsus*

The relationship between theatrical and allegorical in *Sponsus* is chiefly of substance, despite the apparent simplicity of the play. The dramatized parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins invoices a prefiguration of the Last Judgment. *Vigilate itaque, quia nescitis diem, neque horam* reads the refrain of *Sponsus*, constituting itself as a sort of leitmotif. Feeling an urge to inscribe the play in a timeline, the Limousin dramatist opens it with a narratorial voice and a reminiscence of the creation, mentioning Adam at the beginning of times as an archetypal man in the likeness of God. The parallel between Adam and Christ encountered in the *Prologue* is a well-established Christian *topos.* With a Pauline sensibility,[199] the dramatist portrays the theme of *Sponsus,* the awaiting for the coming of the Bridegroom, the resurrected Christ *qui nostrorum scelerum piacula morte lavit atque crucis sustulit patibula* (lines 9-10). Moreover, the narrator of the prologue, in charge of a mythical omniscience, takes a theological perspective and includes himself in the line of those waiting for liberation (see the high number of pronouns used to emphasize this: *a nobis diluitur, nos redderet, nos traheret, nostrorum scelerum*). Mythic as it is, the prologue spoken by the narrator enhances the dogmatic affirmations of Christianity. Through the act of washing

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[197] *Decerne, domine, vindicare iram tuam* (line 120).

[198] *Vidimus, domine, in prophetarum libris/ nasci Christum in Bethlehem* (lines 67-68).

[199] Paul, 1 Corinthians 15, 45-47.

our guilt away by his death, Christ is coming to liberate as a second Adam: "This is the Adam, who is called "the second" – *secundus* - by the prophets, through whom the guilt of the first Adam – *primus Adam* – is washed away from us,"[200] reads the prologue. Not only does the narrator suggest the theological content to the spectators (possibly though the impersonation of *Ecclesia*[201]), but he even turns the speech into an advertisement for the moralizing final. Since first person singular pronouns are missing, the narrator is still an unobtrusive figure.

Moreover, the interpretation of the prologue also presents another problem. Many scholars take it to be impersonated by a character, *Ecclesia* – as the *sponsa* of Christ.[202] The indications of the bride and the bridegroom that point towards an equilibrated bivalent structure are strengthened by the pictorial imaginary,[203] the elaboration of the recurrent motif from the *Song of Songs*[204] and by the flourishing exegetical wave going back to Origen's interpretation of the *Song of Songs*.[205] Whether *Ecclesia* was a character in itself or an editorial construct, the message of the play in a modern reader's eye does not present particular changes. Contrariwise, for a vivid audience, present at the performance of such a play, the use of allegory seems to have been of impetuous need. One more element relevant for my acceptance of the impersonation hypothesis is the description of the costumes. The

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[200] *Hic est Adam qui secundus per propheta dicitur,/ per quem scelus primi Ade a nobis diluitur* (lines 5-6).

[201] Dronke points out that the slightly later fresco from Pedret (now in the Museum of Catalan Art, Barcelona) which depicts Ecclesia and the five Prudentes, may be a hint that she is the narrator of the prologue. On the other hand, he does not exclude the possibility of the narrator in the guise of a "choir of redeemed souls." Cf. Dronke, *Nine Plays,* 22, note 1.

[202] For an argument in favor of this opinion, see the drawing depicting the *Sponsus* and *Sponsa* as king and queen (see the crowns and the scepter) in *On the Song of Songs and Other Writings* by Honorius Augustodunensis (probably Tegernsee; c. 1200), Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Clm. 18125. The image cannot be reproduced here for copyright reasons.

[203] Clifford Davidson, "The Uses of Iconographic Study: The Example of the Sponsus from St. Martial of Limoges," *CompD* 13 (1979-80): 308. See also the previous footnote.

[204] *VUL, Song of Solomon* (5:6): *pessulum ostii aperui dilecto meo at ille declinaverat atque transierat anima mea liquefacta est ut locutus est quaesivi et non inveni illum vocavi et non respondit mihi.*

[205] *Origenis in Canticum Canticorum, PG,* 13. See also, Jeremy Cohen, "'*Synagoga conversa*:' Honorius Augustodunensis, the Song of Songs, and Christianity's 'Eschatological Jew,'" *Speculum* 79 (2004): 309-340, esp. 317-325.

role of the Church – *Ecclesia* – is to be given to a handsome beardless young man[206] of about twenty (*pulcerrimus iuuenis circa xx annos sine barba*), who would wear a deacon's clothes of gold and have long hair (*capillis extensis super humeros*),[207] imitating a woman.[208] Besides, elements of political theology, material attributes, and signs of power can be easily divulged to the audience in this way: *Ecclesia* was to wear as ornaments a gold crown (*corona aurea*), with lilies and precious jewels, and hold at her breast a silvery chalice (*calix argenteus*). She was to carry a long gilt cross (*crux longa*) and a round "fruit"[209] (*pomum rotundum*) signifying the universal power of the Church (*significans universalem dominationem ecclesie*). *De facto,* either options – whether a character, or a choir – will reach the same conclusion: the **narratorial voice** used a more plastic appearance, and the impact is direct.[210]

Especially in what follows, the spiritual dimension of the play depends on the correct understanding of the language and, consequently, on the way the hidden **narrator** holds the reins. The particular features of Latin and the vernacular distinctively color the narrative and guide the audience.[211] The interplay between Latin and the vernacular is introduced in part to guide the understanding, and in part to make the transition to the moral judgment smoother in the minds of the audience.[212] This diglottic distribution of roles – as one to one systematic play-role – ends with a Latin line spoken by the narrator: *Modo veniat sponsus* (Now let the bridegroom come). He reappears, marking the climax of the narrative, and introducing one of the most discussed sections of the play: the account

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[206] The following descriptions are taken from Phillipe de Mézières's *Festum Praesentationis Beatae Mariae Virginis* (Avignon, c. 1372)*,* a text designed as a set of directions for a representation, in Young, *Drama,* 230.

[207] See the depiction of *Sponsus* and *Sponsa* (with long hair)*,* from the c.1200 Tegernsee manuscript, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Clm. 18125.

[208] Young, *Drama,* 230, and Ogden, "Costumes," 47.

[209] A round sphere symbolizing the world, the *oikoumenē.*

[210] In his analysis on the voices of the choir in *Sponsus,* Fichte names three final purposes that the implication of the choir has: didactic, emotional, and "structural" (Fichte, *Expository Voices,* 41-43). He never mentions *Ecclesia* as a possibility for the beginning of the play.

[211] Michel Zink, "Les deux sens du Sponsus: la leçon de la glose et le langage du drame," *Revue de Musicologie* 86 (2000): 29-35.

[212] Marie-Noël Colette, "Les jeux liturgiques: Sens et representations," *Revue de Musicologie* 86 (2000), 5-8.

of the judgment of Christ. As Sticca also remarks in the case of Hrotswitha's *Paphnutius,* "the language... rich in biblical, liturgical and patristic allusions provides a constant commentary on their spiritual ascent;"[213] or descent, as the evidence shows in *Sponsus.* Already St Jerome had indicated an interpretation of the parable in Matthew, seeing the ten virgins as representing "solicitous and sluggish examples: some are always watching for the Lord's coming, others, giving themselves to sleep and to inertia, do not think the judgment will come,"[214] commented Avalle. But what only a few of the commentators have noticed is that unlike the parable, in the dramatization the *Prudentes* also fall asleep.

The difference in tone at the end of the play, when Christ did not grant their remedy, underlines a free rendering of the biblical account and of the exegetical works. As such, the Limousin play is not the product of the *Song of Songs* exegesis: it only takes account of it. This last segment grants the **return of the narrator**, who hardly leaves the omniscience,[215] and has to mark the end of the play: *Modo accipiant eas demons/et precipitentur in infernum* (Now let the demons take them/ and let them be hurled into hell).[216] Christ's anger seems rather closer to the tempers of the Homeric gods[217] than to the Christian model. Yet, it looks like experimentation with ways of nuancing the divine and moralizing by punishment. Ultimately, it turns the gospel account into an impressive canvas.

3. *Antichristus* as both an eschatological play and a parody of the *Officium Stellae*

Another excerpt from Christian eschatology is the Tegernsee dramatization of *Ludus de Antichristo,* although a parody of *Officium Stellae* and also a play with highly political

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[213] S. Sticca, "Hrotswitha's *Paphnutius,*" 31.

[214] Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum* II, *PL* 23, 322: *[Sicut et decem virgines], ... sed sollicitorum et pigrorum exempla sunt: quorum alteri semper Domini praestolantur adventum, alteri somno et inertiae se dantes, futurum judicium non putant.*

[215] He is backed down (lines 11-85), but reappears at the end.

[216] Young remarks this is the only explicit evidence for the mise en scène (Young, *Drama,* 368).

[217] For comparison, see Iliad, 2. 196: θυμὸς μέγασ ἐστὶ... βασιλήων.

connotations. What the Tegernsee anonymous authors intends to express is not only the well-organization of Christendom (because it was already known and accepted), but

> the way in which God proposes the ultimate merging of all peoples into a unified *Christianitas* and the conversions of those parts of the world which are not Christian.[218]

Thus, although never mentioned by his name, the play recalls the Emperor Friedrich Barbarossa through the image of the Holy Roman Emperor and has a great propagandistic mission in a time when *alea,* yet, *non iacta est.* A great many symbols and undertones in *Ludus de Antichristo* are driven by the narratorial instances. Since links between these intellectual centers have been established, it is highly probable that the similarities between the Emperor, offering the *insignia* and the crown at the altar of God in *Ludus de Antichristo* and the offerings of the Magi were not at all aleatory.[219] In a larger scheme, the Emperor's devotion establishes a typological connection with the devotion of the Magi, and in the same vein (but with a parodic connotation) the Antichrist's aspiration to be praised is typified upon the *Maiestas Domini.*[220] Then again, these subtle messages need exterior "masks" to be invoiced: the **narrators** are making the audience attentive to this typological act within the performance. In the *Magi* play, these small figures (*Internuntius* and *Armiger*) are threads between Herod and the Magi, hinder the climax of the play, and increase the tension. Similarly, the *Antichrist* play retains the same chaotic movement, but the scene is much more populated by royal *insignia*, processional offerings, treaties and all sort of political discursive devices.

One should bear in mind that these plays were part of a larger social and historical network. As such, they were not enclosed within the community that generated them, but

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[218] W.T.H. Jackson, "Time and Space in the *Ludus de Antichristo,*" in *The Challenge of the Medieval Text: Studies in Genre and Interpretation*, ed. Joan M. Ferrante and Robert W. Hanning (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 125.

[219] Klaus Aichele, "The Glorification of Antichrist in the Concluding Scenes of the Medieval *Ludus de Antichristo,*" MNL 91 (1976): 424-436.

[220] Ibid., 435.

rather spread out of it, borrowing motifs and expressions from other dramaturgical offsprings. The *realia* testify to the followings: contemporaries of Otto of Freising (c. 1111-1158) used *Ludus de Antichristo* as a means to reject and attack reformers and to support the imperial power. Not surprisingly, Otto of Freising was the uncle of Frederick Barbarossa, the one for whom – presumably – *Ludus de Antichristo* was put on stage. Having pointed this out, the awareness of the Tegernsee dramatist of the production from the Freising *schola* now seems more grounded.[221]

Moreover, there is a meaningful interplay between the concepts used to express rulership. If, in the Magi Play, Christ the newborn is the *rex regum* and the *sol de stella,* and Herod is addressed either with the word *princeps Iudeorum* (head, prince) or with *dominus* (Lord), not with *Deus* (God), in *Ludus de Antichristo,* the concept of rulership is more extrapolated, probably partly because of the apparently non-religious subject. Not only did Antichrist subdue the world under his power, but he also proclaimed himself Christ, and the *tempora* his own – "the time of my reign came" (*Mei regni uenit hora).*[222] What is sure is that the Ottonians adopted a Christocentric concept of rulership and fully sustained it in dramatic productions. Inseparable from the issue of narrating matters of royal signs, is the inescapable concept of "tyranny," which is definitely justifiable considering the plot of *Ludus de Antichristo.* If the Ottonian rulers were pleased for being represented with their military triumph (*e.g.* the scene of the Kings of nations submitting their provinces to the Holy Emperor),[223] signs of tyranny were equally inferred in the play. The depiction of

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[221] On the other hand, there are critics (Karl Hauck, "Zur Genealogie und Gestalt des staufischen *Ludus de Antichristo,*" *Germanisch-romanische Monatsschrift* 33 (1951/2): 11-26), who considers the play not suitable for a pro imperialistic discourse. Since the main focus is on the play of *Antichrist,* why would an emperor adhere for such a negative typology? notes Hauck. See also Aichele, "Glorification of Antichrist," 13.

[222] *Ludus de Antichristo,* line 151.

[223] Trexler, *Magi,* 58.

Antichrist and the attitude of the narrator towards him, calls for special attention.[224] Imitating the divine will, Antichrist is deposed at the end, as actually all temporal justice.[225]

Moreover, one should see the contrast between the Magi's offerings in the Freising *Officium* and the royal insignia preserved one century later in the Tegernsee *Antichrist.* This inclusion and the mythic parallel with the Biblical account, along with the interpretation given by Gerhoh of Reichersberg, echo events of that time. A different image from the one expected in a religious drama is reached: the Emperor in the first part of the play alongside his counter-part, Antichrist, which dominates the second sequence of the play, engage indirectly in a contemporary debate about the values and the meaning of Christianity. Can anyone deny that the author was aware of this? Definitely not. And more, being aware of this issue, he gave voice to it in the play and on the stage. His narrators witness the typological connection between the Emperor's devotion to the altar and the devotion of the Magi to Christ, and between the fall of Herod and the deposition and destruction of Antichrist. In both cases these figures are responsible for the tones the narrative imply, guide the audience towards a moralizing final and makes also the audience aware of the *realia.*

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[224] The kings, the Pope, the Roman Emperor (imitating the divine until a point, and then recognizing God's supremacy) together with their functionaries are part of what Salisbury calls "political body." Present also in the *Officium Stellae,* the tyranny doctrine is even more explicitly here, with the appearance of Antichrist, the evil and the tyrant, rendering the *oikoumenē* upside down.

[225] For an insightful parallel, see John of Salisbury, *Policraticus,* 3.

CLOSING THE CURTAIN

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εἰ δὲ λόγων συνέμεν κορυφάν, Ἱέρων, ὀρθὰν ἐπίστα, μανθάνων οἶσθα προτέρων / ἓν παρ᾽ ἐσλὸν πήματα σύνδυο δαίμονται βροτοῖς / ἀθάνατοι (Pindar, Pythian Ode 3, 80-82).

"But, Hieron, if you know how to understand the correct meaning of sayings, you have learnt from poets of old that the gods bestow on mortals two evils for every good,"[226] states the narrator of this Pindaric work, and by extrapolation, Hieron – although out of his context – can also be the reader of medieval religious drama. In the same likeness, this study is aware of its challenges and limitations. Over all, it has charted the changing role of the narrator within the incipient forms of religious drama and the expansion of his role to matters of meaning. As such, I have examined three medieval dramas, long neglected texts, which have recently undergone scholarly re-evaluation. Most importantly, this study has shown that dramas manipulate narrative more than any other kind of literature, since the audience is not at all prepared or selected, but spontaneous and alive.

My view of the consistency of religious drama's narratorial persona committed me to argue that in spite of the relatively scant evidence for an "I" voice narrator, the role of this figure stays pivotal. Statements such as "there is no narrator in drama," "drama is without exposition" are rigid, but challenging, and this study has proposed to demonstrate the opposite. It is true, however, that the vast majority of samples show a lack of "personified" narrators. There are but few instances of narrators clearly named, and even these occurrences do not show them operating as separate characters as in the later cyclical plays. The trap of the stated or not-stated roles for these figures was considered, therefore, as a formalist step, ultimately, contradicting the consistency of the narratives.

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[226] Cf. Morrison, *The Narrator,* 65.

This analysis of these "hermetic" figures is much more revelatory, when looking at the plays from both sides, from the performative corner (easily apprehensible for the spectators) and from the "back-side" perspective, where not only the roles and functions are overlapping, but the drama itself engages in a specific discourse (theological, political, moralizing, eschatological, etc.).

The above survey has shown that the different generic functions and contexts of these plays make explaining the differences between the role of the narrators and their functions difficult as well. Thus, on the one hand, a broader analysis would be required, but on the other hand, it should be done with the utmost caution, since the ground is relatively insecure. The lack of evidence and probably a shift in style and in influence may be graspable, but never self-revelatory. However, the differences in the attitude to the narrator, whether directly involved and impersonated in the narrative or not, were, as I have shown, important to the spectators of those times, and later, for other "stage directors," who found models in them to imitate and adapt. They are equally important as exploitation for present-day readers.

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Anachrony: a discrepancy between the order in which events of the story occur and the order in which they are presented to us in the plot.

Character: a personage in a narrative or dramatic work, an actor.

Chorus: (1) choric figure, choir; (2) part of the chancel, beyond the nave.

Diegesis: fiction, invented world.

Drama: the general term for performances in which actors impersonate the actions; play, *ludus.*

Dramatis personae: see **character.**

Expositor: a prologue/epilogue speaker, or a character who explains the audience an event.

Function: an action contributing towards the development of a narrative (action performed by a character that is significant in the unfolding of the story).

Impersonation: assuming the appearance of a person/character (within the play); embodying a character. Opposed to impersonal narrator/narration.

Incipit: (Lat. "it begins") the opening words of a dramatic (or other, *e.g.* liturgical) composition.

Introit: liturgical piece sung during the entry into the church. They are specific on every Sunday and thus, useful in identifying the precise day.

Liturgical play: plays which may be assigned to feast days in the Church year.

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[227] The material I used in doing this glossary counts: William Tydeman, *The Theatre in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), Tydeman, *Medieval Stage,* and Ogden, *The Staging of Drama.* Note that the definitions given here highlight the meaning I emphasized in the study, not necessarily their primary meaning.

Ludus: game or play.

Mass: principal service of the church in which the consecration of the bread and wine as the Body and Blood of Christ commemorates Christ's actions at the Last Supper on Maundy Thursday.

Matins: First of the daily Hours (see *office/officium*).

Narration: the process of relating a sequence of events. Often distinguished from other kinds of writing (dialogue, description, commentary). A discourse.

Narrative: a telling of some true or fictitious event, a story.
It consists of a set of events (the story) recounted in a process of narration (or discourse), in which the events are selected and arranged in a particular order (the plot).

Narrator: one who tells the story in a narrative; the "voice" transmitting the story. They differ in the degree of participation in the story: (1) in 1st person narratives they are involved either as witnesses or as participants *in* the events of the story; (2) in 3rd person narratives they stand *outside* those events. (3) An *omniscient* narrator stands outside the events but has access to characters' unspoken thoughts, and knowledge of events happening simultaneously in different places.

They differ in the degree of their impersonation: (1) some are given characteristics and *personalities* (a performer/ expositor / prompter who recounts directly to the audience); (2) "covert" narrators are identified by no more than a "*voice.*"

Nave: main body of a church/cathedral.

***Officium*/Office:**   a drama subscribed to the liturgy (cf. *ordo*);
the Church's prescribed series of short daily services (Hours: Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, Nones, Vespers and Compline), found with the Psalter in the breviary.

Omniscience: capacity of knowing everything, of seeing from above (referring to narrators).

Ordo: Form of religious observance. A play included as part of the liturgy (cf. *officium*).

Personification: A figure of speech in which something nonhuman is given human characteristics.

Performance: representation of the play on stage.

Platea: central/main playing-space.

Play: (here) piece of drama.

Plot: the selected version of events as presented to the reader or audience in a certain order and duration; (The story is the boundage of events which we reconstruct from the finished product of the plot).

Prompter: someone who assists a performer (usually by providing the words of a forgotten speech).

Role: Spoken speech by an actor.

Rubric: stage direction in a book of services. It was usually written in red ink, to be distinguished by the other parts.

Scaena: (here) little shelter, booth.

Scene: a subdivision of an act or of a play not divided into acts. A scene normally represents actions happening in one place at one time.

Sedes: places, structures, "raised platforms" (in *Ludus de Antichristo*).

Setting: the time and place in which a story unfolds. A drama may contain a single setting, or they may change from scene to scene.

Speech-acts: (here) roles.

Stage Direction: see rubric.

Story: the full sequence of events as we assume them to have occurred in their likely order, duration, and frequency (the plot is a particular selection and ordering of them).

Tone: vague critical term usually designating the mood or atmosphere of a work (*e.g.* formal, ironic, satiric, moralizing, etc.).

Voice: "who speaks?" (it can be either a *person* as such, or an impersonal voice).

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