



The Staging of Drama in the Medieval Church

By Dunbar H. Ogden

University of Delaware Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, The Staging of Drama in the Medieval Church, Dunbar H. Ogden, Using original rubrics from some 1,200 manuscripts, this book documents performance of the liturgical drama from the tenth through the sixteenth centuries. It lays out the staging space and traces the movements of the performers on architectural ground plans. The rubrics reveal a wealth of information about the creating of character through ecclesiastical vestments and other costumes. It also includes a surprising range of directives for voice, gesture, and dumb show. The book provides a major theatrical source book for students and scholars in the field of drama.



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The problems facing scholars of medieval drama are manifold. First and foremost, as for any medievalist, is the relative paucity of primary sources, compounded by the often ambiguous nature of those sources. Second, with regard to drama in [End Page 331] particular, the material available for study is by definition always indirect. And around church spaces. Ogden's goal is to penetrate the texts to convey, as much as is possible, the actual settings and staging—the mise-en-scène—of medieval religious drama. While the book's chapter headings indicate the principal types of evidence under consideration (texts, set pieces and special effects, costumes, acting, and music), what animates Ogden's book is the idea set forth in the acknowledgments: "One must play it to know it." Church fathers such as Tatian, Tertullian and Augustine characterized the stage as an instrument of corruption, while acting was considered sinful because its imitation of life was considered a mockery of God's creation.[3] Roman actors were forbidden to have contact with Christian women, own slaves, or wear gold. "Some Configurations of Staging in Medieval English Drama" *Medieval English Drama: Essays Critical and Contextual* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 116–147. Styan, J.L. 1996. *The English Stage: A History of Drama and Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-55636-8. A second stage in the development of the medieval drama resulted in morality plays. These belong mainly to the 15th and 16th centuries and are distinguishable from the miracle plays by their extensive use of allegory and by the shift in subject matter, as the period advances, from religious truths to secular, and even political, indoctrination. Finally, with the rise of the interludes as almost an inevitable corollary of the moralities, the medieval drama lost its original religious inspiration and concern. Quasi-dramatic ceremonies within the Church, such as Holy Week observances at Jerusalem or the celebration of Mass itself, have often tempted historians to interpret it as drama, but the liturgical drama of the 10th century was a wholly new phenomenon. "Liturgical drama" — within the church liturgy, the service Other religious dramas extended outside the church, in the vernacular [native language]. {Top of Page}. Earliest extant drama from the middle ages Two major kinds of stages in the medieval theatre: Fixed and Moveable. These technical tricks would be more extensive on fixed stages. The mansion and platea were borrowed from the church services. Simultaneous display of several locations also borrowed from liturgical drama-. Simultaneous staging was a distinctive characteristic of medieval theatre. Fixed Staging: on the Continent (except Spain and parts of Italy) (W&G call them "platform stages). Sacred Staging. *Yorkshire Parish Churches*™, explores how the interior church space was exploited to provide the most dramatic setting for the Mass, focusing on how space, light, and sound were used to direct the congregation's attention. This essay follows on from Masinton's work, but with a narrower temporal focus of between c.1400 and 1500 and extending into a consideration of the performative elements of the Mass itself. The Mass as Drama The medieval Mass was a prayer, a catechism, an act of offering, thanksgiving, and adoration, but first and foremost it was understood to be a re-enacted sacrifice. Duffy explains how, from a medieval perspective