THE YORK MERCERS' *LEWENT BREDE* and the Hanseatic Trade

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Among the many items listed in the York Mercers' 1433 Indenture of stage properties and costumes for their play of *Doomsday* are a variety of hangings for the pageant waggon. These include

> A grete coster of rede damaske payntid for the bakke syde of þe pagent ij other lesse costers for ij sydes of þe Pagent iij other costers of lewent brede for þe sides of þe Pagent ... [1]

In their article on 'The Doomsday Pageant of the York Mercers, 1433',[2] Alexandra F. Johnston and Margaret Dorrell guessed, following the *OED*,[3] that *lewent brede* was a measurement involving an 'eleventh' of something (i.e. 'of an eleventh breadth'?). This has always sounded slightly implausible: an eleventh is not a common fraction in the terminology of cloth, and the citations of *lewent* 'eleventh' in the *OED* are all of ordinal numbers, not fractions.

The *L4* volume of the *Middle English Dictionary*, which appeared in 1972, the following year, presents the word under the head-spelling *leuwin*,[4] though in fact none of its examples are spelt quite in that way. Alternative spellings are given as *lewin* and *lewent*, and it is defined as 'A kind of cloth made in, or associated with, Louvain; ?also, linen waste for the wick of a candle or torch'; this latter because of a citation from the household accounts of Henry Earl of Derby in 1381, of which more later. The link with Louvain, the Flemish version of which is *Leuven*, which is phonetically closer to the word in question, appears to be a guess, on analogy with other materials called after their place of origin, such as *arras*, *musterdevilers* (from Montivilliers), and possibly *lawn* (from Laon?), though there is nothing in the citations which might suggest this. The latest edition of the *OED* (1989) picks up this information, citing the word as *lewyn*, with alternatives *leuwyn*, *levyne*, and *lewan*(*e*). It also gives the etymology 'from Flemish *Leuven*, Louvain', and defines it as 'A kind of linen cloth'. Both give several examples of its use, though since they are all from inventories or lists, they present the usual disadvantage, also seen in early theatrical records, that the persons who made the lists knew what they were listing, and so usually do not bother to define items further. However, the

OED quotes a 1485 inventory from Ripon[5] which at least confirms that it was a linen material: *De panno lineo vocato lewan j par linthiaminum de lewan* ('Of linen cloth called *lewan*: one pair of sheets of *lewan*').

As part of the York *Doomsday* Project, we have been looking at the late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century York Mercers and Merchant Adventurers in their wider context. This includes a foray into their trading relations with the continent of Europe, which was conducted largely through the port of Kingston upon Hull. They imported wine, wax, salt, soap, bowstaves, painted trenchers, bitumen, clavicymbals, peppermills and sturgeons, *felthattes*, *strawhattes* ... and thousands of ells of *lewent*.

Economic historians working on trade and customs accounts have known about *lewent* from at least as far back as N.S.B. Gras's still valuable *The Early English Customs System* (1918).[6] He however provides a different etymology: his index defines it as from '*Leinwand*, linen cloth'. Wendy Childs' glossary of Imports in her enthralling edition of the *Customs Accounts of Hull 1453–1490*, also defines *lewent* as 'linen cloth', adding 'probably from the medieval German *Linwaat* but possibly from the town of Louvain'.[7] And Henry S. Cobb in his article in the 1995 issue of the journal *Costume*, which refers to the Hull Customs accounts, says that it 'has been interpreted as linen cloth of Louvain but often seems to mean linen generally'.[8]

All of which is an interesting insight into the way in which dictionaries and glossaries are compiled, and how etymologies can be taken for granted, if they have a sufficiently authoritative presentation. It seems unlikely to me that the etymology could be simultaneously both from *linwaat/wand* and from *Leuven*, and I think that we shall have regretfully to discard Leuven as a possibility. The cargoes in which *lewent* appears listed in Wendy Childs' edition almost all seem to have originated in the Baltic. For example, on 15 May 1453, the Baltic merchant fleet arrived at Hull.[9] The *Jacob* of Dansk (Danzig, Gdansk), master, Henry Cambowe, Hansard, freighted almost entirely by Hansard merchants, carried over 1210 ells of *lewent* (the part of the Customs roll which lists one of the shipments is illegible) together with the lasts of bitumen and the amber rosaries, the dozens of *Pruce skynnes* and timbers (bundles of 40) of marten skins, barrels of *selsmolt* (seal blubber) and stacks of wainscot. On the same day, the cargoes of the *George* of Dansk (master, Hans Droye, Hansard) and of the *Jurian* of Dansk included 354 ells and 540 ells of *lewent* respectively. A trawl through the Customs accounts here, in Gras, and in Smit's magisterial collection of sources for the history of trade between the

Netherlands and England, Scotland, and Ireland[10] suggests that it was almost always an import into England, usually carried by Hansard merchants, though in the earlier period not always in Hansard bottoms.[11] This seems to confirm a Low German origin for its name, an anglicised version of a variant form of *Leinwand*.

The Modern German *Leinwand* ('linen cloth') is a late medieval adaptation of the original Old and Middle High German *lin-wat*, in which the first element is *lin*, 'linen', from **lino*, 'flax', and the second cognate with our archaic *weed*, 'clothing', from OE *wæd*. The version ending in *-wand/want* (called by the *OED* a 'perverted' form) [12] first appeared in the fourteenth century, according to Grimm, still the standard historical dictionary of German, in Low (i.e. Northern) German. The second element seems to have been affected by the use of the verb *wind* in the sense 'plait, weave'.[13] The brothers Grimm quote the forms *lynenwant*, *lennewend*, *linewant*, and *linwant*. They do not give forms with the elided middle *n*: however, the *Middelnederlansch Woordenboek* quotes *lu-*, *lou-*, *lo-*, *le-*, *liwant*, *liwent*, and even *luwet* as variations on the more standard Middle Dutch *linwaet* and *lijnwant*, 'linen cloth', and suggests an East Dutch origin for the forms in *-want*, quoting the German *leinewand* as a parallel.[14] I am not sufficient of a Germanic philologist to pursue this further, but it looks as if existing evidence would at least not contradict a North German origin for the word. So we are left to wonder why and for what kind of commodity Northern English customs accounts and inventories use this particular Low German/East Dutch loan-word. Was it just a German word for 'linen generally', as Cobb suggests, or was it a word for a particular kind of German linen?

Linen cloth — and yarn — was produced and imported into England from several areas of continental Europe, though as far as economic historians are concerned, as a subject it has always been a poor relation when compared with the attention paid to the medieval wool trade.[15] One of these areas was North Germany. According to Philippe Dollinger's *The German Hansa*,[16]

> The only textile industry of any importance in the Hanseatic zone was the linen weaving of Westphalia. This gave rise to a considerable volume of trade, especially with the west ... The production of flax seems to have increased remarkably in the fifteenth century in North Germany, Prussia, and especially Livonia, where it gradually became the principal article of export.

Their woollen industry did not, apparently, ever become significant, as the market was swamped first with Flemish and later with English cloth.

> Linen was a different matter. It was much in demand in Europe because of its cheapness and usefulness for clothes, sails, and as a packaging material. The manufacturing centres were in Frisia and Westphalia, in the neighbourhood of Osnabrück and Münster, and later on in Saxony, as well as around Lake Constance in South Germany. Westphalian linen, woven in both villages and towns, was exported in many directions, but especially to Hamburg, from where it was re-exported to the Low Countries and England, and also to Lübeck, which dispatched it to all the Baltic countries. Production and trade appear to have increased considerably in the fifteenth century.[17]

According to Vanessa Harding[18] and Henry S. Cobb,[19] the highest proportion of linen imports into London both in 1384 and in 1480–1 was from Westphalia. In the 1480–1 accounts, Cobb cites Brunswick, Hamburg, Hannover, *hastrey*, Herford, *minsters* (from Münster), 'Niperfeld', Osnabruck, *soultwich* (from Salzwedel), and *spruce* (Prussia) linens from the Hansard areas, while the Low Countries supply the Brabant, Brussels, diaper, Dornik, Flemish, Gelder, Ghentish, Hainault, Holland, lawn, and Zeeland varieties.

How can one pursue the search for *lewent*, its origins and nature, further? The existing written records are largely fairly reticent Customs accounts and household inventories. There are however various ways in which one can try to narrow it down. First, we can see whether it is defined in any way: did it come in different qualities, and is there any clue as to what these might be? Then we can see what other kinds of linen product appear in the same lists: if in the Customs accounts, then the occurrences should, for purposes of comparison, be listed in the same cargoes, and thus recorded by the same customar. Different customs officials might possibly use a different vocabulary, although one would expect a certain standardisation. Thus one might be able to define by elimination what *lewent* is not. Next, how was it priced, especially in comparison with other linens? Finally, is there any evidence about what it was used for?

It has to be said from the start that to answer these questions properly calls for more time and more technical skills than I possess. Besides this, I have only been able to look at printed sources. However, one has to start

somewhere: I can sketch in a few lines of enquiry, and someone else may be able to finish what I have begun.

The *lewent* in the Hull Customs Accounts *is* sometimes further defined by adjectives, which suggests that though it might be a generic name for linen cloth from a particular locality, it could come in different qualities. For example, the *Mary* ('Mare') of Dansk, when she docked in Hull on 22 August 1463, declared:

3 M ulnis groflewant (imported by Rainaldus Kirkholde, Hansard)
5 C ulnis hynderlantes lewant (imported by Hans Broun, Hansard)
2 M 8 C grofflewant (imported by Henricus Keyspenny, Hansard)
3 C ulnis smalle lewant (imported by Hans Broun, Hansard)[20]

Grof(f)lewant is a descriptive, possibly technical, compound word. *Groff* is from a Low German or Dutch adjective meaning 'coarse'. It appears in the printed Hull Customs accounts for 1453, describing yarn:[21] this predates the *OED*'s earliest citation for *gruff*, from 1533, by 80 years. The *OED* suggests, correctly, that 'possibly the Du. or LG word was introduced in commercial use'. (Alison Hanham's edition of the *Cely Letters* has an example in a letter written, from Calais, on 12 September 1487, which she claims for the earliest instance, but the Hull Accounts are 34 years earlier.)[22] *Hynderlantes*, sometimes anglicised as *hyndorlawnce*, is also a German loan-word, 'from the hinterland', and can be used as a noun, defined by Wendy Childs as 'a linen cloth, probably from inland Germany (*inderlans* was a coarse hemp cloth from Hamburg in the eighteenth century)'.[23] *Small* could mean either 'fine' (thus opposed to *groff*) or 'narrow' (thus opposed to *broad*): in the latter case, it would be the equivalent of the lower-grade Scottish linen 'straits'.[24]

It also seems as if it is tacitly distinguished from some other linens. The 1463 Hull Customs accounts, rendered by the controllers John Fereby and John Grene, list in the cargo of the *Mare* of Dansk, beside the *groff*, *hynderlantes* and *smalle* lewant, 60 and 28 ells *panni linei*. On the same day, the *Mareknyght* of Dansk declared, together with 7300 ells of *hynderlantes lewant* and 60 ells of (?ordinary) *lewant*, 60 ells of *lyncloth* and 50 ells *panni linei*.[25] It would seem therefore that *lewent* was a different kind of linen than straightforward *lyncloth*, and possibly from *pannus lineus* (if this were not just a spontaneous slide into Latin). Extending the range of comparison further, on the same day the *Marie* of Hull[26] brought in 2M *ulnis canvas* : canvas could be made of linen, though as its name suggests it was usually of hemp (*cannabis*): however, on this evidence *lewent* and canvas

seem to be different. Nor is it fustian (a mixed fabric of linen and cotton): the accounts of John Dey and John Brydde for 1465, which also record *lewan(d)*, implicitly distinguish it from *canvas*, *pannus lineus*, and *fustyane*, not to mention *tapestrewerk* and *quysshynclothes*.[27] Again in 1463, but in the previous accounting year, John Dey records ships from Flanders and Hull importing *brabandcloth* and *holandcloth*,[28] both fine linen weaves. Back in 1383/4,[29] the Hull customars distinguish it from fustian, canvas, and *bocaram* (buckram, a fine linen weave before it became the loose-woven glue-stiffened lining fabric we know today), besides *pannus lineus*. It is also apparently distinguished from *westfale*, which may suggest either that it comes from somewhere else, or that it was a different grade of cloth, or both.[30]

By great good luck, there survives the inventory of the stock in trade of a York chapman and member of the Mercers' Guild, Thomas Gryssop, made on 20 October 1446 immediately after his death.[31] It lists a wide range of linens and other haberdashery, including Braban cloth, Chaumpan cloth, *laune* (lawn, a very fine linen), *umpill* (another fine linen weave, of which kerchiefs were made), *bokasyn* (*bocasin*, a fine linen cloth, originally cotton, 'a form of buckram resembling taffeta'), *fustyan*, and *lewent*. All of them are priced, though the prices vary with, presumably, the quality, width, and age of the stock. Lawn heads the linens price list, at up to 3s a plyte; umple is next at from 8d to 20d an ell; Champaun cloth is from 6 2/3d to 10d an ell; fustian, and Brabant cloth are 5d to 4½d an ell; buckram 4d an ell; and the better grades of lewent are around 3d an ell: the lower grades, however, at 1½d an ell, seem the same as canvas, at about 1½d to 2½d an ell. However, there is also some *lewent store* ('coarse' lewent? the same as *groff* lewent?)[32] at 1·4d the ell, and down among the canvas and *pakclath* some more lewent at 1d an ell.

On the whole, attempts to distinguish lewent by price through the shipping accounts are inconclusive, mostly for lack of evidence. The later Hull Customs accounts only record the subsidy on goods, and then usually on a whole merchant's shipment. However, earlier Hull accounts, in the late fourteenth century, do give gross values as well as subsidy, and the later Lynn Customs accounts (as recorded by Gras) also conveniently give the value of the goods.[33] Occasionally we can tease out comparative prices,[34] but they are very random, and unfortunately so far apart in time as to make larger comparisons suspect. The task is made more difficult for a non-specialist by the fact that most of the quantities are cited as pieces or bundles rather than by yardage. And the valuations given by customars on

wholesale goods might differ significantly from those given by *post mortem* auditors on retail stock.

What was lewent used for? The 1485 entry from Ripon quoted above says that it was made up into a pair of sheets. Another *MED* entry from the accounts of Finchale Abbey, County Durham, in 1360, also cited in the second edition of the *OED*, reads *Et xij ulnæ de leuwyn pro mappis* ('And 12 ells of leuwyn for' — I shall go by Elyot's 1538 *Dictionary* and call them 'table clothes').[35] Another inventory, possibly from the 1440s, of the goods of a mason living at Beverley, lists two lewent curtains, worth 16d the pair.[36] In the Lynn Customs Accounts of 1466–67 it appears to have been used as packing material, as in Thomas Gryssop's stock above, covering for a bale of pieces of 'Pruse canvas':

> De Johanne Gaunse indigena ... pro I. pakke lewent continet xiiii^{c} pruse canvas' val. £viii [37]

And a previously unnoticed entry in the Ordinances of the York Saddlers recorded on 20 October 1470 in the York A/Y Memorandum Book talks about the seat portion of a saddle being made from canvas (*canues*, mistranscribed by Maud Sellers or miswritten by the clerk as *cannes*) or *lewent*.[38] This suggests it was a tough and hardwearing weave (at least when compared with lawn or the finer weaves used for personal garments), suitable for heavy-duty household use, and also for the wear and tear of dramatic performance: possibly where we nowadays would use heavy-duty calico.[39]

What about the second half of the phrase, *brede*? In Middle English, the word is usually the abstract noun from *broad*, meaning 'breadth'.[40] On the face of it, the whole phrase would then mean 'three other hangings of the breadth of lewent'. The only other idioms like this that I have found are in Dutch, for example, the phrase *scarlakens lingde* 'scarlet's length';[41] but here they are talking about *other* cloths which are the same length as scarlet, not scarlet itself. In this context, it would only make sense if lewent were woven to a single very distinctive width. As we shall see in a minute, this was not the case. There was a type of woollen(?) cloth called *stock brede*, from the Dutch meaning 'yard-stick wide', which entered the English cloth-traders' vocabulary,[42] but again, the defining element of the compound implies a standard measurement.

There is a more specialised meaning of *brede*: 'a piece of stuff of the full breadth'. This is used in phrases like 'Oon paire of fyne sheetis of ij bredes and a half, and oon paier of two bredes',[43] i.e. made out of two and a half

widths of material joined side by side. It is possible that the clerk was implying that the three costers were made of the full uncut width of a piece of lewent, however wide that might be.

Or we might push it even further and suggest, by analogy with *strait*, 'a narrow cloth', that *brede* here is 'a broad-cloth', i.e. the widest possible weave. The obvious comparison here is with the distinction between the standard widths of woollen cloth: the Statutes of Assize of 1483–4 give the standard for broadcloth as 24 yards long by 2 yards wide, and 'streytes' as 12 yards long by 1 yard wide.[44] This does not of course mean that the standards for linen cloths were the same,[45] but the principle might be the same. It would obviously be useful to know exactly how wide, as it might give us some idea of the size of the lewent costers, and this possibly of the dimensions of the waggon.

I have not found any reference to 'broad' lewent. However, there is one to *double* lewent in the 1446 inventory of Thomas Gryssop's stock:[46]

> De vj^{xx} lewent xv s. De vj^{xx} de duplici lewent xxx s. De iij^{xx} lewent xv s. De j dos. single lewent xv d.
> 'For 6 score lewent, 15 s. For 6 score of double lewent, 30 s. For 3 score lewent 15 s. For 1 dozen single lewent, 15 d.'

The prices here are ambiguous. Ordinary(?) lewent is 120 units/ells @ 15s = 1s for 8 units = 1½d a unit. Double is 120 units @ 30s = 1s for 4 units = 3d a unit. Single lewent is 12 units @ 15d = 1¼d per unit. The double lewent seems to be worth twice the price of the ordinary (i.e. unqualified) lewent, but the single lewent is much cheaper.

There are two possible interpretations for *single* and *double*.[47] As a weaving term, *double* refers to what in knitting we would call two-ply: two threads are twisted round each other to produce a doubled thread which is then used to form both warp and weft threads. The resulting fabric is more springy, warmer, and generally of better quality than one which is woven with a single thread of the same thickness. *Single* fabric is not necessarily less heavy, but of a lower quality. In this case, double lewent would not necessarily be wider than single, simply a better quality material.

It can also refer to the way the cloth is packaged. Here *double* means 'folded': broadcloths were doubled lengthwise, selvedge to selvedge. It thus also implies that the doubled cloths were wider than the single ones; if we go by the assize of woollen cloths, twice as wide. In this case, *double lewent* and *brede* would be synonymous.

It is of course possible that we are just not paying proper attention to the particular syntax of lists:

> A grete coster of rede damaske payntid for the bakke syde of þe pagent.
> iij other costers of lewent brede for þe sides of þe Pagent

Compare it with these items from Thomas Gryssop's inventory:

> De j reme white pauper, spendable ...
> De j reme spendable pauper, blak [48]
> De x pare women gloves, furred, ij s. vj d.
> De ij pare men glovez, penulatis cum gray, iij s. [49]

Punctuate the Indenture according to the manner of inventories, and you get:

> A large hanging of red damask, painted, for the back side of the pageant ...
> 3 other hangings of lewent, *brede*, for the sides of the pageant ...

in which case *brede* seems to be an adjective; or a substantive that can be used adjectivally.

It is even remotely possible that the list writer is thinking in Dutch. Modern Dutch *breed*, Middle Dutch *bre[e]de* is the adjective 'broad'.[50] York mercers must have been used to dealing with goods in at least three languages, Latin, English, and Flemish, at least in a sort of travellers' pidgin. (The Cely Letters give us enough evidence of the way in which wool- and cloth-merchants unconsciously picked up Flemish trading terms.)[51] There were also enough Fleming and Hansard aliens among their own number to keep this flexibility alive. One of the four pageant masters cited on the Indenture is himself a German from Cologne.

It is interesting, also, that the word *lewent* only, on current evidence, appears in definitely northern and eastern texts: the Hull Shipping Accounts, the Lynn accounts, inventories in York, Beverley, Ripon and Finchale, and the Scottish Exchequer records.[52] The one apparent exception is from the 1381 household accounts, quoted by *OED* and *MED*, of the Earl of Derby (later Henry IV). His chamberlain bought *lewent* for making torches — possibly shredded as a wick, or perhaps wrapped round a staff and dipped in flammable liquid? However, when one traces the quotation back to its source, in 1380–81 the Earl was on an expedition to the Hanseatic regions, and at the date when that particular section of the accounts was drawn up, he was lodging in Danzig.[53] What have we here, a

commodity confined to one part of the country, or a dialect difference? It seems unlikely that the Hansards did not import lewent the fabric into London, their headquarters. Was there something about either the north-eastern Danelaw dialects or the linguistic context of the speakers which made the adoption of a German/Flemish word more natural?

Lewent is not mentioned in any of the later pageant accounts. However, the Mercers' accounts of 1449/50 record[54]

> Item for ij ȝerdes & dimidium (2½ yards) of lynen cloth to hevyn of oure pageant xv.d Item paide for sewynge of þe same clothe ij.d **...** Item payde to Thomas Steynour for stenyng (painting) of ye clothes of oure pageand xiij.s iiij.d

Was this linen cloth the same as the lewent? The cloths of the pageant do not turn up in any later accounts. Either they proved remarkably durable and needed no further repairs or replacement, or they were transferred to some other accounting head, the documents for which have not survived.

All this would merely be an interesting if somewhat prolix footnote to the vocabulary of medieval drama records, except that it opens a window on a wider issue. To come up with a possible meaning for *lewent* I have had to range far outside the standard records of early English drama. And I only started on this investigation because my eye was caught by the word in the Hull Customs Accounts, which we were investigating for the York Doomsday Project, not because we were at that time looking for commodities, but because we were interested in the overseas trade of the Mercers and Merchant Adventurers as an aspect of their larger material culture, and as a possible lead to their knowledge of the pageantry and piety of the Low Countries.

So, was this trail started by accident? What is relevant to the study of medieval theatre? We can sometimes feel a sense of unease when we find ourselves, as here, apparently ranging far outside the direct boundaries of our 'subject area'. Are we merely being self-indulgent? This has recently been the subject of an e-mail discussion, inaugurated by James Cummings, a postgraduate just beginning to research his field, about where one should draw a line in collecting records. The discussion not unnaturally reflected on the greatest record-collecting enterprise of our generation, REED, and its rules of selection. One of the (unnecessarily defensive — REED is the giant on whose shoulders we all climb) practical arguments was that we are limited by the economic dictates of our patrons and publishers. But what if we were not?

The York *Doomsday* Project is founded on several premises. One of them is that the play is anchored in the life of its community. This 'life' ranges from their spiritual aspirations and their practical piety, the books that urged them to it and the action they took on it — the central message of the Judgement in the play — to their material culture.

Theatre is a very material art: hence we are as much concerned with lewent and brandreths of iron as we are with sources and analogues, and no literary theory will stand up that does not take this materiality into account. If we want to study the material culture, we shall not only have to look at its physical remains, in so far as they exist, but also the documents — wills, inventories, customs accounts — which record its vanished substance. We look at them partly for the material itself. This involves examining the language with which the objects are described, as I have been partly doing in this paper. We are also interested in the nature of the documents.

The York Mercers and Merchant Adventurers were an association of shippers. They were used to drawing up bills of lading: the 1433 Indenture would have been no new departure for them. Some of them even acted as customars for Hull.[55] One can presumably also count on an ingrained measure of accuracy in their listings. There is actually a relationship between the Indenture and their other professional activities; just as there is also a relationship in form between the Indenture and the various post-mortem inventories of household goods of which some are printed in the *Testamenta Eboracensia*, and which incidentally contain so many brandreths. The Project is interested in these formal correspondences because they should tell us what type of document our records come from, and therefore what kind of information they are designed to enshrine — or withhold. Raw information, like raw material, is a very necessary thing, but it must be interpreted in context.

But there are so many contexts, or perhaps, since we define them, we should say points of view. (Some of them are more evanescent than others, and we tend to describe them in terms of a 'feel' or a hunch, while being subconsciously aware that there is a pattern there, if only we could identify it. Sometimes further research reveals what this pattern is.) We hope that the potential methods of organisation which seem to be adumbrated by hypermedia will enable more of these frames to co-exist, that we shall no longer have to be exclusive, to say 'This is the only way to look at this', though we may say 'This way seems more immediate, or more illuminating, than that way'.

One approach reads rather like this. We are used to the (rather old-fashioned) idea that some plays were allocated to, or chosen by, guilds with a measure of appropriateness to their everyday work. So in 1415 the Bakers have the Last Supper and the Waterleders the Washing of Feet.[56] Equally, these original correspondences may have disappeared, as did this particular one, under financial or organisational pressures. It may not always be a straightforward connection between craft and subject matter: the Barber-Surgeons seem to have the Baptism because their patron saints were St John the Baptist and St John the Evangelist, who nicely combine both subject matter and the Gospel which opens with the witness of the *vox clamantis in deserto*,[57] though further research may show why these saints were particularly appropriate to the craft which combined shaving, dentistry, and surgery. Or perhaps it was vice versa: they took on these saints because they were given the play. Why did the Mercers get the Last Judgement? We know the standard answer: they were the richest and most important guild who could provide the best production values and would demand the place of honour at the grand finale. This may be one of the reasons, though it loses some of its force if we accept Louise Wheatley's contention[58] that at the time of the assignation of the plays, the Mercers were an association of middle-income traders, and did not include the big commercial names which we are used to citing, like Blackburn and Bolton, at all. But so much of a sense of appropriateness may arise through hindsight: once something is there, we can always find reasons for it to be so: or it may have made itself so after the event. Richard Beadle has shown how the Shipwrights' Play of the Building of the Ark was written as a showcase for their professional knowledge.[59] If the Shipwrights' play both advertised the building of ships and showed that this could be done to the glory of God and indeed the salvation of the human race, what can we make of the Mercers'?

The York Mercers, and later the Merchant Adventurers, were not craftsmen. They dealt in commodities: specifically with the import/export trade. They are the ones whose names appear in the Customs accounts of Hull: Thomas Wrangwish, Thomas Scauceby, Thomas Beverley, Richard York, John Gilliot, John Kent (and his wife Marion), Robert Taylor, Nicholas Holgate, William Scauceby, John Middleton, to take one shipping list at random from 1463.[60] The materials which the 1433 Indenture lists so carefully, and the materials which later documents account for, include commodities which were probably unloaded on the wharf at Hull and/or weighed on the Crane at York.

Lewent is only one of them. The great coster of red damask was, if silk, probably Italian- or Spanish-made, and so probably at this period imported via London.[61] The *v ȝerddes of now canvays to I now pagand yat was mayd for ye sallys to ryse owtof* in 1463, however, almost certainly came from the Baltic.[62] So did the *sparres of fyre* (fir) which braced it: though the 200 *fyrsparres* which came in on the *Mareknyght* of Zierickzee on 21 August that year arrived too late to have been the very ones used on Corpus Christi Day.[63] *Wanskot* like that sawed for the repairs on the pageant in 1461 came in from the Baltic in vast quantities, together with *clapholt* (split oak for barrel staves and panelling), *rygholt* (roofing timbers?), *tunholt* (barrel staves), *scofhowlt* (scaffolding timber), and all manner of other timber from the forests of North and Eastern Europe.[64] Even the iron from which heaven and the *brandreth* were made probably came from the Baltic in osmunds, or from Hungary.[65] The *chauelers of ȝalow* for the Apostles, if not from local horsehair, may have been made from Baltic hemp or linen yarn. The four ropes that pulled the brandreth up were almost certainly imported: the Baltic supplied most of the rigging and cordage, as well as the sailcloth, for the ships in which these imports and exports sailed:[66] indeed, the entire rigging of the lift for God may have owed something to the nautical expertise of the York shipmen, or the mechanical *nous* of the keepers of the Crane on the Ouse-side quay.

We must avoid the naive view that the guild gave goods and services free: nothing in any accounts from any guilds suggest that this was anything except a commercial proposition. Guild members might be able to provide materials for the waggon, but that does not necessarily mean they did so at a discount. They might however be willing to wait a little for payment. For example, in 1461 Thomas Beverley provided 3¼ yards of *redbokuram to iiij baners* for 2s 2d: a note adds that the pageant masters have paid a deposit of 8d.[67] It would be pleasant to be able to match this with his record of imports: unfortunately there are gaps in the records at the crucial point. But he certainly knew a source: in 1463 he imported *20 pece bukerames* on the *Mary* of Hull, one of the vessels largely freighted by the Company.[68] He also in 1461 provided wax for the Corpus Christi torches.[69] Wax (together with rosin[70] and candlewick[71]: the basic ingredients for these processional lights)[72] was one of the major Baltic imports: unfortunately again we cannot match this particular consignment to the cargo of the *Jacob* of Dansk, which arrived too late, on 6 August, for either Hans Gronhowe, or George Skeke, or Hans Aldbryght (Albrecht) to be the supplier this year.[73]

One could say that the production-values of the play of *Doomsday* were a testimony to the commodities in which the Mercers traded. (The Chester Banns are a rather more overt statement of this facet of the enterprise.)[74] One could see their pageant waggon as a great vessel, pennants flying, displaying their stock in trade. Perhaps. Who knows, without contemporary reports, how many (conflicting? subversive? complementary?) messages the production gave off?

The action and the words of the play, of course, discuss the proper use of material goods and the wealth arising from commodities. It also presents the final accounting: 'Þat we did ofte full pryuely Appertly may we se þem wreten' (131–2). The original Elkerlijk was a merchant. In the Groeningemuseum in Bruges there is a painting by Jan Provoost (1465–1529) of a merchant or moneychanger being presented with a bill of account by Death which vividly sums up that message.[75] Though there is no mention of the scales wielded at the psychostasis in the script, the overall spatial semantics of the play suggest a weighing, as imported goods were weighed in the balance at the Cranegarth.[76] Perhaps this is becoming fantastical, but there does seem to be more than one possible network of connections between overseas commerce and the Day of Judgement: we hope to tease some of these out. Even the most famous painting of the subject, Memling's *Last Judgement*, is entangled in it in a not entirely random way. Painted for an Italian bank manager and his wife in Bruges, and destined for Florence, it set out from Zeeland for London on 25 April 1473, during the Anglo-Hanseatic wars, in the galley *San Matteo*, under the Burgundian flag. The pirate Paul Benecke, working for the Hansa, swooped as it left the mouth of the Zwin, and bore it off triumphantly — to Gdansk, where it has remained ever since.[77]

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NOTES

I would like to thank the other members of the York *Doomsday* Project for their help and discussion during the writing of this piece, and especially Olga Horner, Project Associate, for her labours among *The Statutes of the Realm*, the Patent, Close, and Fine Rolls, and in the Hull Customs Account Rolls in the Public Record Office, the fruits of which will also appear in our later work on aliens in York in the period of the play. We are also very grateful to Louise Wheatley, Assistant Archivist to the Worshipful Company of Merchant Adventurers, York, for

allowing us to consult (and discuss with her) her unpublished MA thesis and the Company's manuscript documents.

1. *Records of Early English Drama: York* edited Alexandra F. Johnston and Margaret Rogerson, 2 vols (University of Toronto Press, 1979) *1* 55–6.
2. 'The Doomsday Pageant of the York Mercers, 1433' *Leeds Studies in English NS* 5 (1971) 29-34, especially 31: 'Three other curtains which measured "lewent brede" were also provided "for þe sides of þe Pagent". These may have been pageant cloths to conceal the wheels', and note 3: '"Lewent" here does not mean "of the Levant" but "eleventh", a term of measurement'.
3. *OED* s.v. *lewent*.
4. Basing himself on this, Peter Meredith suggested 'broadcloth of Louvain' as a meaning in '"Item for a grone — iij d" — records and performance' in *Records of Early English Drama: Proceedings of the First Colloquium ... 1978* edited JoAnna Dutka (REED, Toronto, 1979) 49. Johnston and Rogerson do not actually gloss *lewent* in the *REED: York* volume.

   The Cely Letters use *Loven* as an adjective meaning 'from Leuven': 'I require you bespeke me xij dosin payre of Loven glovis' (Letter 161, page 147), which fits better with the old spelling *Loeven*, and the Latin adjective *Lovanensis*.
5. *Acts of the Chapter of Ripon* edited J.T. Fowler (Surtees Society 64: 1875) 366.
6. Norman Scott Brien Gras *The Early English Customs System* (Harvard Economic Studies 18: Harvard UP, Cambridge Mass, 1918).
7. *The Customs Accounts of Hull 1453-1490* edited Wendy R. Childs (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series 144: Leeds, 1986 for 1984) 241.
8. Henry S. Cobb 'Textile Imports in the Fifteenth Century: The Evidence of the Customs' Accounts' *Costume 29* (1995) 1–11: see 7.
9. Childs *Customs Accounts of Hull* 3–7. The four ships mentioned, the *Jacob*, the *Catyntroghe*, the *George*, and the *Jurian*, had probably been sailing in convoy to avoid pirates in the Sound between Denmark and Sweden: see P. Dollinger *The German Hansa* translated and edited D.S. Ault and S.H. Steinberg (Stanford UP, 1970) 147. Though they may have stopped off at a Dutch port on the way, their cargoes are typically Baltic. For other Hanseatic cargoes (all from Dansk) containing *lewent*, see Childs *Customs Accounts* 31–32 (1461); 58–60 (1463); 80, 85 (1465); 106 (1467); 122–3 (1468). After this the Anglo-Hanseatic War diverts the Baltic cargoes by other routes (see note 11). When trade resumes, the word *lewent* mysteriously no longer appears.

   For the Hanseatic trade in general, see also M.M. Postan 'The Economic and Political Relations of England and the Hanse (1400 to 1475) in *Studies in*

English Trade in the Fifteenth Century edited Eileen Power and M.M. Postan (Routledge, London, 1933) 91–153.

10. H. Smit *Bronnen tot de Geschiedenis van den Handel met Engeland, Schotland en Ierland* 2 vols (Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatie 65: Martinus Nijhoff, 's-Gravenhage, 1928).

11. The only drawback, as far as this investigation is concerned, to Smit's otherwise magisterial work, which summarises English customs accounts from the earliest records, is that he is only interested in the traffic between the (modern) Netherlands and Britain: he merely notes the number of ships arriving from other countries. Likewise he translates the names of commodities into Dutch, which hampers etymological work. It seems to be a convention with some historical series that original documents should be translated: the conveniences seem to me to be outweighed by the difficulties this creates.

    However, the earlier Customs accounts in Smit show what we would think of as particularly Baltic goods — bitumen, wainscot, wax, hemp — arriving in Dutch and Flemish vessels: see e.g. the Hull accounts for 1383/4 (351–66), where *lewent* comes in with bitumen, wax, bowstaves, ash, wainscot, eels, and roskyn (squirrel skins) on the *Godberade* of Zutphen (master Polonisius Yser); and with similar cargoes on the *Godberade* of 'Campe' (Veere: 355), and the *Haligost* of Campe (357); two of the importers are Pers Duche and Johannes de Dansk. (Incidentally, when the two former ships set out again, Henry Wyman was among the freighters: 366–7.) This is the earliest mention of *lewent* I have found in the printed customs accounts. In Childs' edition, which covers 1453–1490, the exceptions are a Scottish vessel, the *Michael* of Dysart, which in 1453 carried a small amount of *lewent* (7); in 1467 the *Cumweltohous* 'de Anstirdam', with a conspicuously Baltic cargo including bitumen, glass, clapholt, ash, and *bever womes*, imports *20 virgis lewant* (109). The import trade was affected by the state of Anglo-Hanseatic relations, during which shippers found other routes: see Postan 'Economic and Political Relations' 135–6. During the Anglo-Hanseatic war of 1468–74, Baltic cargoes either cease or come in via other vessels: in 1469, the *George* of Hull seems to have a mixed Flemish/Hanseatic cargo including *2 C ulnis lewent* (127–8); and in 1471, with the war continuing, the *Anna* of 'Selyksee' (Zieriksee) imports 6 pieces of *groff leuent* belonging to the master Johannes Person (147). The war did not end till the treaty of 1474. Twice lewent is *exported*: in 1465 in the *Trinity* of Hull, on which the Mayor and burgesses of Hull exported 300 yards of *lewan* (89); and in 1490, when an unnamed Hull vessel freighted by English merchants exported 60 yards of *lewantt*.

12. See *OED* s.v. *weed* sb[2].

13. *Deutsches Wörterbuch* von Jacob & Wilhelm Grimm (Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, Munchen, 1984 reprint of 1885 edition) s.v. *leinwand*.

14. E. Verwijs and J. Verdam *Middelnederlansch Woordenboek* (Nijhoff, 's-Gravenhage, 1899) s.v. *lijnwaet*. The Modern Dutch word is *lijnwaad*: J. Heinsius *Woordenboek der Nederlansche Taal* (Nijhoff, Den Haag, 1924) s.v. *lijnwaad* says that in Middle Dutch it was *lijnwaet*, or 'met syncope van de *n* ook *lijwaad* ...'

    Low German and Middle Dutch in fact shaded into each other, and it is sometimes difficult to tell which a loan word comes from.

    In *The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland Volume 2 1359–79* edited George Burnett (HMSO, Edinburgh, 1878), from which the *OED* took another of its citations, the Queen's 1373 Wardrobe accounts sort different types of material into groups. *Levyne* is distinguished by its position from *tela lata* (broadcloth) and *canubium* (canvas) (443). In an earlier listing, it is not mentioned, but its place in the order is taken by *mappe* (household linen), between *tela lata*, *tela stricta*, and *canubium* (440).

15. According to Postan, '... canvas, linen, and linen yarn ("Cologne thread") were probably the most important [of the Hanseatic exports] ...' These originated in South Germany, Northern France, and the Low Countries, and were then imported into Britain: 'England and the Hanse' 139.

    Henry S. Cobb in 'Textile Imports in the Fifteenth Century' stresses the need for a reconsideration of 'the large-scale importation of linen and canvas' in the fifteenth century: see note 19 below.

    For other useful information on linen production and trade, see: N.J.G. Pounds *An Economic History of Medieval Europe* (Longman, Harlow, 2nd edition 1994) 316–319; Elizabeth Crowfoot, Frances Pritchard and Kay Staniland *Textiles and Clothing c. 1150–c. 1450* (Museum of London, *Medieval Finds from Excavations in London 4*: HMSO, London, 1992) 18, 80–81; Marie-Rose Thielmans *Bourgogne et Angleterre: Relations politiques et économiques entre les Pays-Bas Bourguignons et l'Angleterre 1435–1467* (Presses Universitaires de Bruxelles, 1966); Nelly Johanna Martina Kerling *Commercial relations of Holland and Zeeland with England from the Late 13th Century to the Close of the Middle Ages* (E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1954); Norman Lowe *The Lancashire Textile Industry in the Sixteenth Century* (Chetham Society, Manchester, 1972) — the linen yarn woven in Lancashire was either home-grown or imported from Ireland, but his chapter 4 gives a very good conspectus of the processes involved; Anne F. Sutton 'The early linen and worsted industry of Norfolk ...' *Norfolk Archaeology 40* (1989) 201–25

    For the trade into and out of Gdansk, see Jerzy Wyrozumski 'The Textile Trade of Poland in the Middle Ages' in *Cloth and Clothing in Medieval Europe: Essays in Memory of Professor E.M. Carus-Wilson* edited N.B. Harte and K.G. Ponting (Heinemann, London, 1983) 248–258, especially 252. This mentions the home-based linen trade of Poland, though he is more interested in the more prestigious woollen trade, and suggests that it went mainly eastward to Russia.

He mentions imports of *woollen* cloth from Leuven (257) but says it was not of any importance: presumably not enough to be exported again.

Linen was also imported as raw yarn for further processing and weaving: Thielmans *Bourgogne et Angleterre* says (231), 'La matière première, le lin à l'état brut, était introduite par les ports de la côte est de l'Angleterre et à Londres: il était presque toujours d'origine hanséatique'. In the 1453 cargoes, yarn is imported in bundles in different qualities, *grofgarne* (coarse yarn**:** see note 22 below) and *smale garne* (fine yarn). Unprocessed flax (*linum*) is also imported in bundles.

16. Dollinger *German Hansa* 223.
17. Dollinger *German Hansa* 228.
18. Vanessa A. Harding 'Some Documentary Sources for the Import and Distribution of Foreign Textiles in Later Medieval England' *Textile History 18:2* (1987) 205–18.
19. Cobb 'Textile Imports' and *The Overseas Trade of London: Exchequer Customs Accounts 1480–81* edited Henry S. Cobb (London Record Society 27, 1990). He has translated the documents into modern English, but interestingly, if *lewent* was imported into London in the period, the customars appear to have registered it under another name. The temptation is to identify it with some of the brands not mentioned by the Hull and King's Lynn customs officials: *hastrey*? Hamburg? Hannover? *minsters*? *soultwich*? even *spruce*? He estimates this one year's linen imports by alien merchants into London as 'at least 420,000 ells (about half a million yards)', with a value of £5,000–£10,000 (xxxv-xxxvi).
20. Childs *Hull Customs Accounts* 59.
21. Childs *Hull Customs Accounts* 4.
22. *The Cely Letters 1472–1488* edited Alison Hanham *EETS 273* (1975): Letter 234 line 53; page 233; note page 293. Smit lists *grof linnen* (449), *grof* russet, and *grof* salt (458) in the 1393/4 Hull Customs accounts, but this is his translation into Dutch: I have not yet seen the original lists to check if the word actually appears.
23. Childs *Hull Customs Accounts* 241.
24. Childs *Hull Customs Accounts* 88: *3 dos' panni linei vocati Scottes streytes*: on the Michael of Dysart.
25. Childs *Hull Customs Accounts* 59-60.
26. Childs *Hull Customs Accounts* 63.
27. Childs *Hull Customs Accounts* 80, 82.
28. Childs *Hull Customs Accounts* 47.
29. Smit *Bronnen* 352, 355, 357 etc.

30. Fustian (363), canvas (354, 359 etc.), *bocaram* (362, 363), *pannus lineus* (362), *westfale* (357).

31. *Testamenta Eboracensia 3* edited James Raine (Surtees Society 45: 1865 for 1864) 101–105. Gryssop joined the Corpus Christi Guild with his wife in 1441/2, and he and his wife Margaret occur in the Mercers' Account Rolls: see Louise Wheatley *The York Mercers' Guild, 1420–1502: Origins, Organisation and Ordinances* (unpublished MA thesis, University of York, 1993) 258.
    The pricing of his stock presents some problems, since it is done in a shorthand involving dozens and scores of some unit, as well as *plytes* of lawn. Some rough and ready calculations suggest that the unit involved is the ell: I assume the English ell of 45 inches. Plytes (see MED s.v. *pleit*), according to a document from c. 1500, appear to have been folded square with the width of the material, which is a yard and an $^{1}/_{8}{}^{th}$ (40½ inches): see Hubert Hall and Frieda J. Nicholas in *Select Tracts and Table Books Relating to English Weights and Measures (1100–1742)* (Camden Miscellany 15: Camden Society 3rd Series, 41: 1929) 18. The pricing is obviously also affected by other considerations, as it can vary widely.
    For the definitions of the different types of material, see the *OED* and *MED* under the various words.

32. *Store* is probably a conflation of two words, LOE *stor*, related to ON *storr* (*stor* is the Danish for 'great'), and ME *stur*, from MLG *stûr*, MDutch *stuur* 'rough, violent, harsh': see *OED* s.v. *stour, stoor*. Here it is clearly a technical term. *OED* s.v. *stoure*, *stoor* 7 quotes Palsgrave (1530) '*stoure*, rude, as course cloth is, *gros*'.

33. Gras *Early English Customs System* 614.

34. For what it is worth: on 28.7.1383/4, the *Godberade de Sutfene* (Zutphen) shipped into Hull an unspecified number of packs of lewent, *continentibus 400 ulnas, precii 46s. 8d, subsidium: 14d.*: an average of 1·4d an ell (Smit *Bronnen* no. 603, pages 351–352): on the 18.11.1383/4 the *Godberade de Camfere* (Veere) declared *60 ulnis westfale precii 10s*. Westphalian linen at 2d an ell. The *lewent* is cheaper than the *westfale*. On the 20.5.1384, the *Saint Marischip* of Middelburgh carried 60 ells of canvas value 11s = 2·2d per ell, so the canvas was marginally more expensive again. Leaping forward in time to the Lynn accounts for 12.5.1466–67, on a Hanseatic ship (master Brant Otto), the Hansard Hennyng Buryng imports *i pakke lewent continent' cc ulnas val. £iiii.* This works out at 50 ells to the £ sterling, or 2s for 5 ells, an average of 4·8d an ell. (Gras *Early English Customs System* 614] We can compare this with an unspecified quality of *teli linii* valued at 26s. 8d. (4 marks) for 72 ells, an average of 4·4d. per ell (Gras 615). Lewent is thus marginally *more* expensive. However, none of this mentions widths, and one would need to do a great deal more comparative work in order to come up with anything positive.

35. *The Priory of Finchale: The Charters of Endowment, Inventories and Account Rolls of the Priory of Finchale in the County of Durham* edited James Raine (Surtees Society 6:2: J.B. Nicholls, London, 1837) lii: *v mappæ et xij ulnæ de leuwyn pro mappis Monachorum ordinatis*. The date is 1360. Thomas Elyot *Dictionary 1538* (Scolar Press facsimile, Menston, 1970) s.v. *Mappa*.
36. *Testamenta Eboracensia 3* 98.
37. Gras *Early English Customs System* 612.
38. *York Memorandum Book* edited Maud Sellers, 2 vols (Surtees Society 120 and 125: 1912 and 1914) *1* 92. Though it is transcribed as *cannes* in the text, Miss Sellers gives *canvas* in the Index.
39. Verwijs and Verdam *Middelnederlansch Woordenboek* s.v. *lijnwaet* give quotations showing linen being used for banners etc. in processions.
40. *MED* s.v. *brede*. It can also mean 'braid', but this, though also a textile term, seems excluded by the context.
41. John H. Munro 'The Medieval Scarlet and the Economics of Sartorial Splendour' in *Cloth and Clothing in Medieval Europe* edited N.B. Harte and K.G. Ponting (Pasold Studies in Textile History 2: Heinemann, London, 1983) 13–70, on 31.
42. John Coke (1549), *The Debate between the Heralds of England and France* by in *Le Debat des herauts de'Armes de France et d'Angleterre* edited L. Pannier and P. Meyer (SATF 1877): 'fyne scarletts, clothes, corseis [kerseys], *stock bredes*, fryses, cottons, worsteds, sayes and coverlettes'. Quoted by Raymond van Uytven 'Cloth in Medieval Literature of Western Europe' in *Cloth and Clothing in Medieval Europe* 174. The *OED* gives '*stocbred* ... a. MFlem *stocbreet* (MLG *stockbret*, MHG *stockbreit*) lit. "yard wide" (*stock* yard measure, *breet* broad). Some kind of cloth' and quotes from 1526 'The bourgeysys of the sayd town [Bruges] causyd to bryng fro Andwerp and fro the Sclus manny kerseys and stocbreds' (J. Hacket To Wolsey 4 July; in MS Cotton Galba B 9 22).
43. *OED* s.v. *brede*, sb [2], 2. Quoted from 1554 (Bury Wills).
44. 1 Richard III c. 8; *Statutes of the Realm Volume 2* (London, 1816; reprinted Dawsons, London, 1963) 485–6. Broadcloths are to be 24 yards long by 2 yards wide; *straytes* 12 yards by 1 yard; kerseys 18 yards by 1 yard plus 1 nail.
45. Anne F. Sutton 'The early linen and worsted industry of Norfolk ...' *Norfolk Archaeology 40* (1989) 208 quotes the 1327 Ulnage of hemp and linen cloth, which 'time out of mind' was said to be made to 50, 40, 30, and 24 ells, but no width is given except for coverlet weaving. The same applies to the York records: only the ulnages of coverlets are recorded: Sellers *York Memorandum Book Vol. 2* 195–6. The Act of 21 Henry VIII c. 14, 'An Acte for the Lynnen Drapers in London gives the ideal dimensions of imported Breton *Dowlas* and lokeram, which are both 1 yard wide: *The Statutes of the Realm: Volume 3* (1817:

reprinted Dawsons, London, 1963) 296. The various notebooks containing weights and measures edited by Hubert Hall and Frieda J. Nicholas in *Select Tracts and Table Books Relating to English Weights and Measures (1100–1742)* (Camden Miscellany 15: Camden Society 3rd Series, 41: 1929) only deal with lengths: see especially 18 for articles of mercery.

46. *Testamenta Eboracensia 3* 102. The third item in the list appears, from its pricing, also to be double lewent.

    Similarly, on 17 June 1467, the *George* of Dansk declared not only '1 M ulnis hynderlandes lewant', and '2 C groff lewant', but also '6 C syngle lewant', all the property of the ship's master, Theodoricus Schach (Childs *Hull Customs Accounts* 106).

47. *OED* s.v. *double*. Thanks also to Bryan Sadler for consulting a practising tailor for information about weaves and twists.

48. *Testamenta Eboracensia 3* 102.

49. *Testamenta Eboracensia 3* 103.

50. John H. Munro in his article on 'The Medieval Scarlet' (46–48) quotes the prices of woollen broadcloths purchased by the Franc de Bruges in the early fifteenth century: *breede sanguine scaerlaken ... breede vulle ghegreinde scaerlaken* ('broad sanguine scarlets ... broad fully engrained scarlets', and so forth.

51. See Hanham *Cely Letters* xxii–xxiii and the vocabulary used by the Celys *passim*. For some examples: *ambaght* for 'embassy' (MDu. *ambacht*, more familiar as meaning 'craft guild', Letter 242); *forehousing* 'moving stock from one store to another' (MDu. *verhuizen*, Letter 105); *gyldern* (MDu. *gulden*, 'gold coin, guilder', *passim*, together with most other terms for foreign coinage, as one might expect); *ynshyppyng* 'embarkation' (MDu. *inscepen*, Letter 212); *whysteler* and *wystyll* 'money changer' and 'exchange' (Du. *wisselaar* and *wissel*, Letters 133, 165); *Sinksen* 'Whitsun' (MDu. *Sinksen*, *Sinxon*, *passim*). See also Laura Wright 'Trade between England and the Low Countries: Evidence from Historical Linguistics' in *England and the Low Countries in the Late Middle Ages* edited Caroline Barron and Nigel Saul (Alan Sutton, Gloucester, 1995) 169–180, though she has a rather restricted range of evidence.

    Was the Indenture even drawn up by Henry Market, one of the four named pageant masters? He originally came from Cologne.

52. See the entries in *OED*, *MED*. I have found nothing in any of the printed Customs accounts south of King's Lynn.

53. *Expeditions to Prussia and the Holy Land made by Henry Earl of Derby (afterwards King Henry IV) in the years 1390–1 and 1392–3, being the Accounts kept by his Treasurer during two years* edited Lucy Toulmin Smith (Camden Society, 2nd Series 52: 1894) 80: *Expense Hospicii Domini apud Dansk* 17 February to 19 March 1391.

54. *REED: York* 78. 2½ yards for 15d = 6d a yard. This implies 7½d an English ell of 45 inches: considerably more than any of the lewent in Thomas Gryssop's stock. But we are probably talking retail here, not wholesale.

55. Henry Wyman Collector 1403/4 (*Calendar of Patent Rolls* 251: 13.8.1403) and Nicholas Blackburn Collector 1404/5, 1407/8 (Customs Documents: PRO 177/34, 61/21, 60/15) are not strictly connected with the Mercers' Guild in their time. Robert Middleton, mercer; Collector 1413–1416, is described in the York A/Y Memorandum Book fol. 196^{v} as *nuper custumarium in portu de Kyngeston super Hull*: *York Memorandum Book Vol. 2* edited Sellers (Surtees Society 125: 1914) 75; Richard Lematon was Collector 1449–50: he is not recorded in the Mercers' records, but is described as 'citizen and Alderman' in the B/Y Memorandum Book in 1458 (*York Memorandum Book BY* edited Joyce W. Percy (Surtees Society 186, 1973) 205). John Tong was Collector 1470–1 (Childs *Hull Customs Accounts* 233). The John Fereby who was Controller 1454–6 and Collector 1461–3 appears to be the Beverley-based namesake of the Mayor of York and Master of the Guild (*Testamenta Eboracensia 3* 179–80: Will 43).

56. *Ordo Paginarum*: *REED: York* 25–6. See Richard Beadle's edition of *The York Plays* (Edward Arnold, London, 1982) 29–30 for an assessment of this subject.

57. BL MS Egerton 2572 (The Barber Surgeons' Book) fol. 51r. The other two saints are the more expected Cosmas and Damian. The opening speech of the play, by John the Baptist, paraphrases John 1: 6–9 and 15–28.

58. Wheatley ' York Mercers' Guild' 101 and 126–48.

59. Richard Beadle 'The Shipwrights' Craft' in *Aspects of Early English Drama* edited Paula Neuss (Brewer, Cambridge, 1983) 50–61.

60. The *Mare* of Hull, arrived 24 August 1463: Childs *Hull Customs Accounts* 63.

61. *Textiles and Clothing* 82–89, and 124–126 for satin damasks. These were produced in Italy and Spain. Because the widths were often quite narrow (less than 2 feet) and the weaving techniques easier, they became very popular in England, and Edward IV issued a Statute of Apparel limiting to those of the degree of knight and above: 3 Ed. IV c. 5, *Statutes of the Realm Volume 2* (1816: reprinted Dawsons, London, 1963) 399. A statute of 12 Edward IV c. 3 gives a mouthwatering list of imported silk textiles, including *Draps de or Draps dargent Bawedekyns Velueuettis Damaskez Satens Sarcenetz & Tarterons Chamlettis & autres draps de soie & dor & soie esteauntz de graund value per voie de marchaundise*: *Statutes of the Realm 2* 433. Very little silk appears in the Hull Customs Accounts: for a reference, see Smit *Bronnen* 455 (1393/4). For London imports of silk on the Venetian galleys in 1420–21, see Gras *Early Customs Accounts* 511–514, especially 512 for damask. The word *damask* does not seem to have been used of a patterned linen weave until the sixteenth century,

judging from the citations in the *OED* s.v. *damask* 3b, though according to Walter Prevenier and Wim Blockmans *The Burgundian Netherlands* translated Peter King and Yvette Mead (Cambridge UP, 1986) 88 the material itself was produced in Flanders, Holland, and Brabant in the fifteenth century. They also say (88) that silk production began in Bruges and Antwerp about 1500.

62. *REED: York* 95.

63. *REED: York* 96: Childs *Hull Customs Accounts* 58.

64. Wainscot *REED: York* 91; Childs *Hull Customs Accounts* 31 (1461) and *passim*; Smit *Bronnen* e.g. 351–66 (imports Hull 1383–4); *rygholt* Smit *Bronnen* 351–2, 357; *tunholt* Smit 357; *scofhowlt* Childs *Hull Customs Accounts* 59. See Dollinger *German Hansa* 221:

> 'The Hanseatic east was also the west's great source of timber ... the vast forest areas in the basin of the Vistula and in Lithuania which made Danzig the leading exporter of timber, as well as of such highly valued by — products as ash, pitch and resin. The principal customers were England and Flanders, who needed timber for their ships. In the fifteenth century Prussia was exporting oak beams and planks (*Wagenschoss* [wainscot]) in thousands, and boards of varying thickness (*Klappholz*, *Dielen*) in hundreds of thousands ...'

65. Iron 'came mainly from Sweden and Hungary, but also from the Rhenish slate mountains, the Siegerland, from where it was shipped to western Europe': Dollinger *German Hansa* 222. See also Pounds *Economic History* 402. *Osmunds* were originally high-quality Swedish iron (see *OED* s.v. *osmund*[1]). The other source of iron was Northern Spain.

66. See note 59.

67. *REED: York* 91–2.

68. Childs *Hull Customs Accounts* 47.

69. *REED: York* 91.

70. For rosin, see e.g. Childs *Hull Customs Accounts* 69–71, 74: here however it is shipped from Zeeland. It is easy however to confuse the spelling with *raisin*.

71. Childs *Hull Customs Accounts* 4, 6 etc.

72. *REED: York* 63 (1444).

73. Childs *Hull Customs Accounts* 31–2 and *passim*; Smit *Bronnen* 329 (Hull 1378/9: by Henry Wyman, apparently still as an alien), 351–66 (Hull 1383/4). See Dollinger *German Hansa* 219 and table on 436: it came from Russia, Livonia and Prussia, and the Hansa had a monopoly on its import.

74. Chester Early Banns, especially

> The gouldsmyths then full soone will hye
> & massons theyre craft to magnyfye ...

and

> The mercers worshipffull of degree
> The presentation that haue yee
> hit falleth best for your see ...

and it goes on to list the materials which the Mercers will be able to display on their carriage:

> with sondry Cullors it shal shine
> of veluit satten & damaske fyne
> Taffyta Sersnett of poppyngee grene ...

REED: Chester edited Lawrence M. Clopper (Toronto UP, 1979) 35–6. In the Late Banns there is a certain caution about the appropriateness of such display for the subject, since Christ was born 'poorelye in a stable' (243); but the 'welthie' Drapers are told 'The creation of the worlde. Adam & Eue. / Acordinge to your welthe sett out wealthelye' (242), and the Bakers at the last Supper are to 'caste god*es* loues abroade with accustomed cherefull harte' (245).

75. See, for a reproduction, Dirk de Vos *Groeningemuseum, Bruges* (Musea Nostra series: Ludion, Brussels, 1987) 49.

76. The City Crane and the Cranegarth where imported goods of foreign merchants were stored was at the lower end of Skeldergate, by Hingbridge: Angelo Raine *Medieval York* (John Murray, London, 1955) 240–1. In 1417 it was agreed that *quedam trabes magna, que quondam fuit stapula lanarum cum grossis scalis eidem pertinentibus Johanni Northeby, mercatori, custodi crane predicte, ad ponderandum omnimodas mercandisas per pondus vendendas, cuiuscumque fuerint generis et speciei* 'a certain great beam which was formerly the wool Staple with heavy scales [presumably not 'steps'] belonging to it [should be brought there and handed over to] John Northeby, merchant, the Custodian of the aforesaid crane, to weigh all manner of merchandises which are to be sold by the weight, of whatever kind or type they may be': *York Memorandum Book Vol. 2* edited Maud Sellers (Surtees Society 125: 1915 for 1914) 82.

77. Dirk de Vos *Hans Memling* (Exhibition Catalogue: Ludion for the Groeningemuseum, Bruges, 1994) 36 and note 25. Despite representations from the Pope and legal proceedings instituted by the Duke of Burgundy, the painting was not returned, and the city of Bruges eventually indemnified the Medici bank for it. See also Dollinger *German Hansa* 393.