

## THEATRE AS SUBJECT AND OBJECT in Fouquet's 'Martyrdom of St Apollonia'

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In striving to understand the material conditions of the medieval stage, we return again and again to one particularly vivid image: Jean Fouquet's manuscript painting of 'The Martyrdom of St Apollonia' (see PLATE 1).<sup>1</sup> So convincing is this remarkable image that most observers have instinctively felt that we have unquestionably in this image an accurate visual record of the medieval stage. It encourages us to do so because — like all of Fouquet's paintings — its apparent realism is so persuasive that few seriously doubt its representational accuracy.<sup>2</sup> Some, indeed, have enthusiastically embraced the illustration as *une vraie photographie, un véritable instantané de reportage*.<sup>3</sup> Others insist that Fouquet's image is no mere theatre of the mind, a work of imaginative art, but rather a 'pictorial document', one that 'depicts a scene from what surely is an actual production'.<sup>4</sup> 'In this picture', one writer typically declares, 'the artist gave permanence to what he obviously had seen in the theater: six mansions on pilings one story high, arranged in a half-circle or half-oval around a central acting area (*platea*)'.<sup>5</sup> So credible is this image as a visual record of an actual performance that scholars have not hesitated to measure the theatre depicted in it, examine its construction, and analyse the nature of the performance. How can we doubt, as we gaze into this image, that Fouquet's association with the stage was intimate, extensive, and knowledgeable, that he was a disciple of Thespis as well as Apelles, that he was, in Henri Rey-Flaud's phrase, *un homme de théâtre*?<sup>6</sup>

Remarkably, however, the value of Fouquet's 'realistic' miniature has often depended more on what does not appear in the famous image than upon what does. We not only shape our ideas about medieval theatre in the forms made so potently visible in Fouquet's miniature, but we also try to shape Fouquet's image in forms we would impose upon it. A large body of modern commentary has thus taught us to view Fouquet's image not as the rough semicircle of scaffolds that it seems to be, but rather as a completely circular theatre 'cut in half like an apple' so that the viewer, positioned in the cutaway half of the circular *platea*, looks across the opposing half of the circle towards the actors in the centre, to his fellow spectators facing him, and finally to the scaffolds at the outermost edge of

FOUQUET'S 'MARTYRDOM OF ST APOLLONIA'

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PLATE 1: Jean Fouquet 'The Martyrdom of St Apollonia'  
from *The Hours of Etienne Chevallier* (c 1452–1460), Musée Condé, Chantilly:  
Photographie Giraudon/Art Resource NY

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PLATE 2: *The Castle of Perseverance* stage diagram, c. 1440.  
Photo © Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC.

the circle.<sup>7</sup> This view, which has so far remained unchallenged, began with Gustave Cohen (in the 1920s) and was successively elaborated in the work of Richard Southern (in the 1950s), Richard Hosley and Henri Rey-Flaud (in the 1970s), and Elie Konigson (in the 1980s).<sup>8</sup> So prevalent has this view become, indeed, that many writers now find it hard to conceive of Fouquet's image as representing anything else but a circular amphitheatre. Richard Southern, for instance, would find it a 'difficult task' to offer 'an acceptable theory of what else — if Fouquet did not intend to represent a circle — he could possibly have meant by his drawing'.<sup>9</sup>

Together, this interpretative consensus has successively elaborated this view of Fouquet's miniature as a reliable contemporary visual record of an entire class of theatrical structures that Richard Southern calls 'the Medieval Theatre in the Round' and Henri Rey-Flaud calls *le cercle magique*. If the stage diagrams found in the Cornish *Ordinalia* and English *Castle of Perseverance* manuscripts provide schematic blueprints for constructing circular theatres, then Fouquet's image provides an accurate architectural view of just such a finished structure — presumably one 'constructed in Seurre' in the mid-fifteenth century.<sup>10</sup> In this way, Fouquet's theatre has been imaginatively replicated throughout France and the British Isles as a wide variety of place-and-scaffold plays — from the N.Town, Valenciennes, or Mons Passion Plays, to the Digby *Mary Magdalene*.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, this interpretative consensus has proven so successful that it is now presented to introductory students as established fact: Fouquet's picture, we are told, 'embraces a semicircle of scaffolds, which is usually held to represent half a circular performing area "cut open" by the artist to show the interior. They appear to enclose a space about 65 or 66 feet in diameter, at the centre of which St Apollonia is being mocked and tortured and adjured by the Emperor to give up her wicked Christian ways'.<sup>12</sup>

So much scholarly energy has been devoted to filling in the portions of the circular theatre which Fouquet has supposedly left out that we encounter a persistent and plaintive lament throughout the large body of exegesis devoted to Fouquet's image: *if only we had the text*. 'Had we the script of the play', one scholar thus laments, 'from which this miniature is said to depict the torture scene, much, of course, might be answered.'<sup>13</sup> Another mourns in a similar key: 'Unhappily, the play has not survived upon which the miniature was based. In short, we have a pictorial document, but no text. Can we reconstruct the performance? By no means'.<sup>14</sup> Such laments underscore the impression of realism which we all

instinctively feel when gazing into the picture. Indeed, a recent discovery by Graham Runnalls has only heightened the poignancy of this lament. In the catalogue of a late-fifteenth-century Tours bookseller he has found a 'Mystere de Sainte Apolline' listed amidst the titles of a number of other dramatic texts. If only we had *this* text, the lament can now be phrased, for surely *this* text must be *the* text: 'the performance which inspired [Fouquet's] miniature ... was based on a text which, though now lost, was still in existence at the end of the fifteenth century when it passed through the hands of the Tours book-seller'.<sup>15</sup> Without a text to fill in the picture, 'we do not know how much time the dramatist spent with the events leading up to the martyrdom, and so we do not know at what juncture in the play the torture, depicted here, took place, nor do we know what followed it ... Without a text, we grope in the dark. The text alone could tell us whether ... Fouquet portrayed only half the ring of mansions'.<sup>16</sup> *If only we had the text.*

Very well, let us take up that challenge. I believe that Fouquet's text — or rather texts, for there are two of them — probably do exist. Moreover, they are both relatively familiar texts: Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae* and an anonymous fifteenth-century *Acta Sanctae Apolloniae*. We have overlooked them, I think, because we have assumed too easily that Fouquet painted his 'Martyrdom of St Apollonia' to record an actual theatrical object: a 'real' scene being performed in a 'real' theatre. He apparently did so, we have assumed, because, as a 'man of the theatre' himself, he responded sympathetically to a particularly vivid performance he had witnessed. But once we have freed ourselves from such preconceptions, we can view Fouquet's theatrical painting as a pictorial invention in which he draws his primary inspiration from texts, not direct observation.

The two texts do indeed tell us a great deal about the theatre depicted in Fouquet's image and the play being performed in it. Isidore's *Etymologiae*, for instance, tells us the sort of theatre that Fouquet is attempting to depict, defines the general nature of the play that is being performed in it, and describes the (to us) peculiar style which the actors are using to perform the play. The anonymous *Acta*, I think, may well represent the actual script which the players are performing. With its help, we can indeed 'reconstruct the entire performance', even if that performance is an imaginary one. It accounts in full for the cast of characters seen in the play and provides a convincing script both for the scene we are witnessing and for the performance as a whole, but it is not in any sense a *dramatic* script of the conventional type. Together, these texts

suggest strongly that the theatre represented in the image is neither real, nor round, nor medieval. Only a theatre of the mind after all, Fouquet's theatre is more a text to be illustrated than an object to be recorded.

### Fouquet's Roman Theatre

Those who would extend the rough semicircle of scaffolds we actually see in Fouquet's painting into a fully circular enclosure of scaffolds often cite the stage plan of the English *Castle of Perseverance* as a compelling analogue. If we look from Fouquet's painting to the *Castle* diagram (see PLATE 2), we presumably can see not just a stage setting, but a type of theatre only half-depicted in the former but fully schematised in the latter. But such a view considerably mistakes the aims and methodology of medieval theatrical spectacle. The differences between these two designs, I would argue, speak more eloquently in some respects than do their supposed similarities. A comparison of these two stage designs tells us quite graphically that the size and shape of a medieval theatre is often a matter of custom-fitting rather than convention; the theatre is built to suit the play rather than the play designed to fit into the theatre. Different theatrical designers may use similar scenic materials, but they arrange them in distinctively different patterns that can only suit their individual plays.

From this point of view, scaffolds extend fully around the *Castle of Perseverance* stage plan not because medieval place-and-scaffold theatres were predominantly circular, but rather because the dramatic concept which governs their placement is circular. The *Castle* stage plan is a topological *mappa mundi* which tells a would-be producer how to construct a theatrical model of the spiritual world. Instead of grouping the scaffolds in a line across the back of the theatre, it locates single acting scaffolds at compass points around the circular stage area. The designer then places another scaffold, shaped like a castle, at the very centre of the circle, and the circle itself is further defined by a ditch or wattled fence to suggest the limits of the world. This stage design places Mankind in the castle at the centre of the circle and surrounds him, in the main, with an overwhelming host of foes against whom he must defend himself. True, he can look to the East for help in the scaffold of God, but at the same time he must be surrounded and beset by tempters and enemies on all sides. To the North, South, and West lie the familiar medieval anti-Trinity, the World (Mundus), the Flesh (Caro), and the Devil (Belial). Meanwhile, to the North East lies the scaffold of yet another foe, that most redoubtable of medieval sins, Covetousness.

The placement of this last scaffold at first seems distinctly odd: why a north-east scaffold when all of the others are located at the cardinal compass points? But in fact the playwright's dramatic concept requires a second 'East' scaffold. In other words, because the medieval designer conceives of human life as constantly beset by sin and evil, he represents this vision by creating a model theatrical world in which Mankind must be surrounded by his antagonists on all sides; hence he places Mankind in a fortified castle of virtue surrounded by vicious enemies at each of the compass points. At the same time, because Salvation must always be possible, and because God logically and symbolically belongs to the East, he in effect superimposes God and Covetousness at the Eastern compass point. In this way, the Castle of Perseverance might be assaulted from all sides, but God might still be accessible. The *Castle of Perseverance* thus prescribes a round stage plan because it represents a spiritual world centered upon a besieged Humanity.

Fouquet, by contrast, depicts a conceptually linear theatre. The closest medieval analogue to the arrangement of the scaffolds seen in the picture, indeed, lies in the Valenciennes platform stage, which is also strongly linear<sup>17</sup> (PLATE 3). Both Fouquet and the Valenciennes dramatist thus arrange their scaffolds from left to right, beginning with a heavenly mansion to the left, proceeding through a series of worldly scaffolds, to a Hellmouth at the extreme right. This arrangement works so well for the Valenciennes play because the scaffolds represent another tropological model of the world, not as a *mappa mundi* this time, but rather as a diagram of the relationship between this world, Heaven, and Hell. In this case, the model is a linear one, because 'our world' exists *between* Heaven and Hell; it both separates Heaven from Hell, and serves as the middle ground where God and the Devil contend for mastery. The arrangement of mansions both in Fouquet's painting and in the Valenciennes grouping are thus meant to be conceptually complete. There is nothing either further leftwards (or stage right) of Heaven or further rightwards (or stage left) of Hell. It will not do conceptually, then, to extend the Fouquet arrangement into a complete circle of scaffolds. What other scaffolds are necessary to an already closed system?

If Fouquet's arrangement of scaffolds is conceptually linear instead of circular, why does he bend a line into a half-circle? The solution to this problem presents itself, I think, when we realize that Fouquet is attempting

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PLATE 3: Hubert Cailleau: Valenciennes stage plan, 1547.  
Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale MS fr. 12536, fol. 2<sup>v</sup>  
Photo: Giraudon/Art Resource, NY.



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PLATE 4: Late fourteenth-century illustration of an imagined performance of  
Seneca's *Hercules Furens*.  
Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana MS Urb. lat. 355 fol. 1<sup>v</sup>.  
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to illustrate an ancient Roman theatre instead of a contemporary medieval one, albeit his representation attempts to create the Roman past out of the more familiar materials of the medieval present. Traveling through Italy between 1445-8, the painter may well have investigated a Roman theatre at first hand, of course, but for Fouquet, the most authoritative source of information on the way plays were performed in ancient Rome could be found in Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, especially Books 8 (on tragedy) and 18 (on the theatre, mimes, and acting). Isidore, for instance, reports that Roman theatres were semicircular structures containing a scene (*scena*) and providing standing room for the spectators (18.42.1).<sup>18</sup> The *scena*, he observes, was 'built like a house with a platform (*in modum domus instructa cum pulpito*)', and here in this *pulpitus*, 'which *pulpitus* was called the *orchestra*', the tragic singers performed and the *histriones* and *mimi* danced (18.43).<sup>19</sup> In a separate definition of the *orchestra*, Isidore provides additional information which complements these not entirely lucid passages. The *orchestra*, he says, was the platform (*pulpitum*) of the scene (*scenae*) in which the poets and mimes performed the play (18.44).

A great many medieval writers and artists had difficulty with these somewhat confusing passages. Many, for example, had considerable difficulty construing what Isidore meant by *scena* (which he supposed to be in the *orchestra*) and the *pulpitum* (which Isidore seems to think of as a synonym for *orchestra*). Many later writers decided that Isidore must have meant that the *scena* was identical with the *pulpitum*, and that the *pulpitum* was rather like a church pulpit. They concluded, in other words, that the *pulpitum* essentially functioned as a vantage point for declamation, not as a scenic structure.<sup>20</sup> Nicholas Trevet, perhaps Isidore's most important follower, incorporated this interpretation into his influential *Expositio Hericulis furentis*.<sup>21</sup> In commenting on Seneca's tragedies, Trevet thus conceives of Isidore's *scena* to be a 'little house' situated in a semicircular theatre, and he likewise imagines Isidore's *pulpitum* to be a sort of church-pulpit located 'in' or 'on' the *scena*. The fourteenth-century artist who illustrated Trevet's *Expositio* incorporates this idea into an imagined scene from Seneca's *Hercules Furens* (PLATE 4).<sup>22</sup> Here, the poet declaims his play from within a *scena*, which consists of a small booth-like *pulpitum*, not unlike a church pulpit, set atop a semicircular *orchestra*. Later artists and writers seized upon Trevet's interpretation as a general model for Roman theatrical practice. In PLATE 5, for instance, an early fifteenth-century artist imagines 'Calliopius', a supposed friend of Terence, reading that dramatist's work too from within

another version of a pulpit-like *scena* set at the centre of a circular *orchestra*.<sup>23</sup> At about the same time, Lydgate was borrowing Trevet's ideas not just as a pattern for Roman drama, but as a generic pattern for ancient theatre. He thus imagines that even in ancient Troy, the *scena* was a small 'auter' set 'amyddes' a 'half circular' theatre (or is it perhaps the altar that is half-circular?). Atop the altar 'a pulpet was erecte' whereon stood an 'awncien poete' to 'reherse by rethorikes swete' his works.<sup>24</sup> In conceiving of the *pulpitum* as a kind of church-pulpit rather than as a stage surface, Trevet turns the poet into a kind of orator or even preacher who declaims his text as a medieval preacher declaims a sermon. He may have misinterpreted Isidore, but he succeeded memorably in making sense of a very difficult passage, so much so that many artists and writers of the late-fourteenth and fifteenth centuries turned to Trevet for what seemed authoritative interpretations of these passages.

Many of these same artists and writers found additional difficulties in understanding how the Roman theatre accommodated its audience. What did Isidore mean, after all, when he said that the theatre both contained a *scena* and provided standing room for the spectators? Here Trevet was of no help because he did not choose to clarify Isidore on this important point. Accordingly, we find illustrators adopting different solutions to this problem. The *Hercules Furens* painter, for one, places the audience (*populus expectans*) just outside the curved side of the semicircular orchestra. The Terence artist, by contrast, thinks that Isidore meant that the actors and audience both occupied the *orchestra*, so he crowds both groups into the same circular space around the *scena*. In numerous illustrations of Roman theatrical performances during the fifteenth century, both of these configurations reappear again and again as one illustrator opts to solve the problem in the first way while another chooses to solve it in the second.

Like these other medieval illustrators, Fouquet aims both to understand and represent Isidore's difficult text. But unlike the Lydgate and the *Hercules Furens* painter, he is probably working directly with Isidore's original text rather than Isidore's ideas as mediated by Trevet. To begin with, he does not confuse the *scena* with the *pulpitum*. He instead imagines the *scena* not as a little house located in the centre of the stage, but as a series of booth-like scaffolds located at the back of a semicircular orchestra. Like the Terence illuminator, Fouquet apparently interpreted Isidore to mean that the audience shared the *orchestra* or *pulpitum* with the actors, so he also mingles both on the semicircular stage in front of the

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PLATE 5: Early-fifteenth-century illustration of an imagined performance of a play by Terence: Paris: Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal MS lat. 664-025 B.L. fol. 1<sup>v</sup>.  
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PLATE 6: Late-fifteenth-century Italian woodcut illustration of St Apollonia's martyrdom: British Library 11426 f 11, sig Bii.  
© The British Library

*scena*. True, from the point of view of the 'real' Roman theatre, he has put the *scena* on the wrong side of the *orchestra*; the *scena*, as we know, should be arranged in a straight line across the back of the theatre with the semicircular *orchestra* bowing out toward us. But if Fouquet's knowledge of the Roman theatre's shape depends almost entirely on Isidore, his picture does indeed make sense of a very difficult passage. Isidore, after all, does not say which way the semicircle should face or whether the *scena* should be attached to the straight or curved side of the *pulpitum*.

The structure, as well as the placement, of the scaffolds at the back of this imagined theatre also deserves comment. Except for the Hellmouth at stage left, all of Fouquet's scaffolds consist of booths constructed of poles and drapes, and the artist places all these booth-like scaffolds cheek-by-jowl so that they form a kind of arcade structure. It is difficult to say whether such a configuration of scaffolds would strike a medieval observer as unusual. Long strings of booth-like scaffolds can sometimes be inferred from the records of medieval French dramatic performances. The scaffolds constructed for the *Mystère de la Passion* at Châteaudun (1510), for instance, were arranged in two facing lines. They consisted of a series of differently-sized scaffolds topped by *chambres*, which were occupied by both actors and audience.<sup>25</sup> So, too, the scaffolds erected for the play at Seurre in 1496 seem to have been divided into *loges*, although their precise structure and their disposition relative to one another remain unclear.<sup>26</sup> All of the stage plans, moreover, distribute scenic *loci* geometrically in three-dimensional space (as in the *Castle of Perseverance* and the Cornish *Ordinalia*), or geographically in three-dimensional space (as in the Lucerne, Alsfeld, Villingen, and Bozen stage plans), but even when they seem to be arranged two dimensionally along a line (as in the Valenciennes stage diagram), the individual *loci* are separated from one another in space and even distinguished architecturally from one another. As far as I am aware, no record or stage plan offers an analogue for Fouquet's series of booth-shaped scaffolds, abutted to one another and arranged in a semicircle at the back of the playing area.

This configuration makes a great deal of sense, however, if we assume that Fouquet is not recording a real theatre but attempting to make sense of Isidore's somewhat difficult description of the Roman *scena*. The *scena*, he says, was a place 'built in the form of a house' (*in modum domus instructa*). Indeed, as if to stress this point, Isidore adds that it was called by the Greek name *scena* because it was originally built by the Greeks in the form of a house. But if it was in fact 'built in the form of a house', the

*scena* must presumably be a constructed place of some size. If so, what does one make of Isidore's further observation that 'hence the Hebrews' Feast of Tabernacles was called *skenopegia* because of the resemblance of the booths to dwellings'? Does Isidore mean that the *scena* was both built in the form of a house and was also somehow booth-like? Certainly that is the way that the thirteenth-century writer, Hugutius of Pisa interpreted Isidore. In wrestling with this passage for 'the most authoritative dictionary of the High Middle Ages', the *Magnae Derivationes*, Hugutius repeats Isidore's information that the *scena* was constructed in the form of a house, but he also insists that its structure must also have 'resembled the booths of merchants, which are covered by posts and curtains'. From this booth-like structure constructed in the form of a house, Hugutius observes, the actors emerged at the voice of the reciter to make gestures or perform acts.<sup>27</sup>

Whether or not Fouquet also consulted Hugutius' dictionary on this point, he provides an especially elegant resolution to the confusions of Isidore's difficult passage that are very similar to the Pisan's interpretation of Isidore. He devises for his imagined theatre a *scena* that is both substantial enough to be house-like in proportions, yet consisting of six structures which clearly resemble the booths of merchants covered by posts and curtains. And from these booths the actors have clearly descend into the *orchestra*, as Hugutius imagined, to perform their parts in the *passio* of St Apollonia. The actors performing the play in Fouquet's theatre are also doing so in a recognisably Roman, as opposed to medieval, style. Isidore, for instance, thought that Roman 'plays' were performed by poets who either read or sang their stories while *histriones* and *mimi* silently acted.<sup>28</sup> The poets, Isidore says in one place, ascended the *orchestra* to sing while others made gestures (18.44). In still another place, he tells us that *mimi* were 'imitators of human things. For they had their author who would speak the story before they performed their imitation. For the stories were composed by the poets in such a way that they would correspond closely to bodily movement' (18.49).

Both the fourteenth-century Seneca illuminator and the fifteenth-century Terence painter thus represent a Roman performance in this way. In both cases the poet enters his pulpit-like *scena* to read the text from an open book while the *mimi* perform the gestures and action suitable to the poet's narration. So too in his account of plays performed at Troy, Lydgate imagines the poet standing in a pulpit and reading 'with dedly face al devoide of blood'. While he declaims the text, performers enter the

orchestra and play 'by signes in þe peples siȝt' that which 'þe poete songon hath on hiȝt':

So þat þer was no maner discordaunce  
 Atwen his dities and her contenaunce:  
 For lik as he alofte dide expresse  
 Wordes of loye or of heuynes,  
 Meving & cher, bynethe of hem pleying,  
 From point to point was alwey answering —  
 Now trist, now glad, now hevy, & now liȝt,  
 And face chaunged with a sodeyn siȝt,  
 So craftily þei koude hem transfigure,  
 Conformyng hem to the chaunteplure,  
 Now to synge & sodeinly to wepe,  
 So wel þei koude her observaunces kepe.<sup>29</sup>

This conception of Roman drama as a 'dubbed dumbshow' (to borrow H.A. Kelly's characterisation), I would propose, best explains the man in Fouquet's image who is holding an open book and pointing with a staff just to stage left of the group of actors who are actually performing the play. Modern commentary, for the most part, identifies this figure as a *meneur de jeu*, a sort of director-cum-master of ceremonies, whom Fouquet is supposed to show standing 'in the very middle of the action, holding the playbook in one hand and a baton in the other, conducting the game'.<sup>30</sup> Though such a figure undoubtedly existed in fifteenth-century France, there is no documentary evidence that he ever served as an onstage prompter. He may perhaps on occasion have been found delivering a prologue, but otherwise he serves generally as a behind-the-scenes figure, something like a modern director or stage manager.<sup>31</sup> If we realize that Fouquet is depicting a Roman theatre, however, we will have no trouble in recognising Isidore's poet reciting (or perhaps singing?) his text while the actors mime their parts. Fouquet paints the Roman poet in the act of pointing with his baton at the actor — perhaps the king — whose lines he is declaiming. The player-king responds with mimed gestures suitable to the poet's declamation.

Fouquet almost certainly meant the play depicted in his painting to be understood as a Roman 'tragedy'. Isidore defined *tragedians* as 'those who sang in poetry of the ancient deeds and sorrowful crimes of wicked kings' (18.45). By 'wicked kings', moreover, Isidore clearly meant historical monarchs, not imaginary ones. To this extent, tragedy was a species of



history for Isidore, who set great store by tragedies as stories ‘composed in accord with fact’ (*ficta argumenta*) (8.7.5). Elsewhere he observes that tragic poets speak out ‘on public affairs and the histories of kings ... the arguments of tragic poets come from sorrowful things’ (8.7.6). In depicting a play about St Apollonia’s martyrdom, therefore, Fouquet represents the performance of a high Christian tragedy, an ‘argument’ drawn from history focussed upon the evil deeds of an evil king. As we look into Fouquet’s Roman theatre, we thus look upon the very moment when the evil king is in the act of performing his most despicable act as he directs the executioners in torturing a Christian saint.<sup>32</sup> An evil deed, certainly, and insofar as one conceives of a martyrdom as tragic, a Christian tragedy. But which evil king does Fouquet mean to depict? And as long as we are asking questions about Fouquet’s representation of historical figures, perhaps we should also ask which St Apollonia he means to represent.

### Fouquet’s Roman Drama

Fouquet’s depiction of the Martyrdom of St Apollonia as if it were a Roman tragedy performed in the Roman manner in a Roman theatre tells us the general form of the performance we witness as we gaze into the painting. But what we really want is a particular text that accounts for the particular details we see on Fouquet’s stage. Who is the king directing Apollonia’s torture? Both God and the Devil are presently confined to their respective scaffolds at the margins of the performance. Have they played — or will they play — some important rôle in the drama? Can we account in any way for the other mansions visible at the back of the ‘orchestra’. Here again, perhaps, we hear the strains of the scholarly lament breaking forth: *If only we had the text*.

As it happens, I believe we do have the text. We have not heretofore recognised it for two reasons. First of all, we have identified the wrong St Apollonia as the subject of Fouquet’s painting. Secondly, we have perhaps limited our search too much by assuming that the text we are looking for must necessarily take the form of a conventional, vernacular, dramatic text. As we shall see, both of these assumptions are quite mistaken.

In the absence of a script, most commentators have attempted to understand the performance depicted in Fouquet’s painting by briefly considering the account of St Apollonia’s martyrdom made familiar by Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History* and Jacobus de Voragine’s *Golden Legend*. Both versions derive from a letter written by Dionysius, Bishop of

Alexandria, to Fabius, Bishop of Antioch, in which Dionysius describes the martyrdom of Apollonia, 'an admirable virgin' of Alexandria, who died in a persecution 'during the reign of the emperor Decius'.<sup>33</sup> Because of the widespread availability of this version, it has become commonplace to refer to the virgin martyr of Fouquet's painting as St Apollonia of Alexandria and to identify the regal figure in the centre of the picture as the Emperor Decius.

Unhappily, Fouquet's image will simply not admit of such an identification. For one thing, both Eusebius and the *Golden Legend* describe this Egyptian saint as an old woman 'well along in years' whereas Fouquet depicts Apollonia as a relatively young woman. For another, the Emperor Decius plays no rôle at all in the saint's martyrdom. He remains in Rome while she suffers her martyrdom in Alexandria. As far as one can judge from the tale, Decius in fact remains completely unaware of Apollonia's existence. Instead, St Apollonia suffers her martyrdom in Alexandria at the hands of a mob urged on by 'a man named Divinus'. Fouquet, by contrast, depicts an emperor who personally oversees the saint's torture. Nor does Fouquet attempt to reproduce the central act of Apollonia's passion as reported in these familiar sources. Where the miniature conceives of the saint's suffering as an episode of deliberate judicial torture — executioners are shown extracting Apollonia's teeth upon the command of the emperor — the texts report her loss of teeth merely as a result of mob action: the Egyptian rabble either 'kicks' her teeth out (Eusebius) or the Alexandrian executioners 'beat' them out (*Golden Legend*). Moreover, this version of the tale regards the removal of the saint's teeth, by whatever means, as a relatively minor torment. The most dramatic moment of the tale occurs when St Apollonia, threatened with being burned alive unless she abjures her faith, leaps into the pyre of her own free will, thus proving herself 'even more eager to undergo death than they to inflict it'.<sup>34</sup> Whatever drama Fouquet imagines being played in his Roman theatre, then, it is certainly not made of these materials.

Fouquet, it is true, would have found other versions of St Apollonia of Alexandria's legend more amenable to the purposes of this illustration. The standard iconology of St Apollonia of Alexandria, indeed, shows her as a young virgin bearing the identifying instrument of her martyrdom in the form of a forceps almost as large as the one depicted in Fouquet's painting. The young woman of the standard iconography represents medieval reworkings of the Apollonia story. A young, romanticised Apollonia appears towards the beginning of the thirteenth century in a

number of martyrdom narratives. In each of these, she is a young virgin, apparently of Greek extraction. In each, she is the daughter of the king of Alexandria who becomes her chief tormentor and executioner. Perhaps the oldest of these, an early-fourteenth-century *passio*, describes Apollonia as the daughter of King Alexander of Alexandria.<sup>35</sup> In a later fourteenth-century *passio* she is the daughter of King Ysopus (Aesop?) of Alexandria.<sup>36</sup> In a widespread fifteenth-century *passio*, she becomes the daughter of Eusebius, who opportunistically arranges to marry the daughter of a Jerusalemite king, then became Emperor of the Greeks, and now rules 'the imperial seat in the city of Alexandria'.<sup>37</sup> All of these versions tell a story that seems somewhat reminiscent of the tale of St Catherine of Alexandria.<sup>38</sup> Apollonia is brought up and clandestinely converted to the Christian faith by a nurse or teacher. Her Christian faith comes to the notice of her father once she begins to convert other Alexandrians. Her father demands that she renounce Christ and worship the pagan gods. She repeatedly refuses. Her father enforces his demand with a series of punishments, whippings, and tortures. She remains steadfast. As part of a climactic, particularly grisly act of violence, the father orders the executioners to rip out her teeth: 'he ordered her tongue sliced from her mouth, boiling lead to fill her ears, her eyes extracted, her teeth to be plucked out of her head with forceps, and for her to be struck with mallets'. When this frenzy of violence also fails in its purpose, Apollonia is finally martyred, and her pious death converts many more souls to Christ.

Most of these romantic Alexandrian Apollonias suffer their martyrdom while tied to a column. King Eusebius, for instance, has Apollonia 'tied to a column in the middle of the city' and orders the executioners to scourge her with rods and whips so that her flesh will be 'mangled most gravely with iron talons'. In this way, Apollonia performs an *imitatio Christi* based upon images of the scourging of Christ, who is often depicted as suffering while tied to a column. In the even more widespread version of the *passio*, King Alexander orders his daughter to be tied to a column at the climactic scene of her suffering. Because she is tied firmly to the column, the executioners have the requisite leverage they need to rip all of her teeth from her mouth. In illustrations of Apollonia's martyrdom, these column scenes thus become distinctive allusions to the romantic Alexandrian version of St Apollonia's passion. Because these versions were so widespread and popular — indeed one or another of them often served as the prescribed readings for the Feast of St Apollonia each year on

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PLATE 7: Fifteenth-century manuscript illustration of St Apollonia's martyrdom.  
BL MS Egerton 2019 fol. 217<sup>r</sup> © The British Library Board

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PLATE 8: Early-sixteenth-century woodcut illustration of  
St Apollonia's martyrdom: BL 487 k 19.  
© The British Library Board

9 February — we encounter a number of such illustrations in church paintings and Books of Hours.

This version in particular informs the only extant medieval drama of St Apollonia that we have, a late-fifteenth-century Florentine *sacra rappresentazione* (see PLATE 6). Printed in the 1490s but performed perhaps some decades earlier, the text of this remarkable *Rappresentazione di Santa Apollonia Vergine e Martire* was illustrated with woodcut illustrations. In a woodcut of the play's climactic scene, Apollonia is tied so firmly to a column or pole that the rope bites deeply into her midsection. One executioner tugs at her teeth with a huge pair of forceps while another beats her with a club. An enthroned king, Apollonia's father, oversees the execution, his raised hand signifying that he is ordering the executioners to perform these acts of torture.<sup>40</sup>

As this illustration makes clear, we will have to look elsewhere for the narrative source that Fouquet uses to depict the martyrdom of his Apollonia. Had he drawn from the romantic Alexandrian version we have just examined, his saintly maiden would probably have been tied to a column.<sup>39</sup> Other artists, much influenced by these romantic versions, imagined the mechanics of her torture differently, it is true. She sometimes is shown standing, or sitting upon a chair or stool while a tormenter wrenches her teeth from her head (see PLATES 7 and 8),<sup>41</sup> or perhaps she is tied to a stake, as in the Playfair Hours, while two torturers, armed with enormous pincers, tug her teeth out from different directions.<sup>42</sup> Only Fouquet shows her tied to an *eculeus*, a sort of rack which is elevated at one end.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, it is hard to imagine that Fouquet would regard the wicked deeds of an obviously fictionalised King of Alexandria as *ficta argumenta*, which Isidore regards as the necessary historical basis of tragedy. Nor does the *Passio* account adequately for some of the prominent actors visible in Fouquet's painting: in particular, the devils waiting at the Hellmouth scaffold would thus have nothing to do in a play based strictly on the *Passio* of St Apollonia of Alexandria because they do not appear in any of these romanticised narratives.

Fouquet, however, would have known of yet another saintly virgin named Apollonia. A very lively account of the Roman maiden's martyrdom — the *Acta Sanctae Apolloniae virginis et martyris Romanae* — circulated in the fifteenth century.<sup>44</sup> This Apollonia, a senator's daughter of Rome (hence *Apollonia of Rome*), bore up under torments similar to those the Alexandrian maiden suffered, including the extraction of her teeth with forceps (*cum forcipe*). Moreover, the vicious king who demands

Apollonia's recantation and orders her execution is historical rather than fictional. Devils and angels both populate the *dramatis personae* of this narrative, and an *eculeus* figures especially prominently in her torture. By the seventeenth century, it is true, this other Apollonia of Rome was considered merely an apocryphal reflection of the Alexandrian virgin, but in Fouquet's century, a number of martyrologies celebrated the feast of the Roman Apollonia rather than the Alexandrian one on 9 February.

In this distinctive version of the legend, Apollonia is the daughter of a Roman senator named Apollonius, and she suffers martyrdom for her Christian faith under the personal supervision of the Emperor Julian the Apostate. This narrative account, I would suggest, provides the script which the poet declaims and the actors mime in Fouquet's painting. Since Fouquet depicts a company of Roman actors performing a Roman play to a Roman audience in a distinctively Roman manner, we should not wonder that our script is a Latin rather than a vernacular one. A modern reader, to be sure, would regard the *Acta* as a narrative rather than a drama, but the sort of recited and mimed drama which Isidore describes does not actually require a conventional dramatic text. When Isidore says that tragedies were performed in Roman theatres, he does not seem to mean that only tragic texts composed completely in dialogue were acted there. Rather, he defines tragedies by their matter, not their mode. Roman tragic poets wrote sorrowful poems drawn from history about the wicked deeds of kings. Conceivably, tragic poets might compose their works in a variety of rhetorical forms ranging from dialogue to narrative. For Isidore, tragedies thus become theatrical texts not by virtue of their rhetorical form but rather because a poet chooses to declaim his text in a theatre while actors mime their rôles to accompany his recitation. Obviously, of course, some tragedies would be more amenable to theatrical representation than others, but given Isidore's notion of Roman theatrical performance, a narrative text would provide just as acceptable a theatrical script as a conventional dramatic text.

Viewed in Isidorean terms, then, the *Acta* can be seen as a tragedy especially suitable for theatrical performance. As the tragedy of a specifically Roman saint, it appropriately takes place in a specifically Roman theatrical structure. Moreover, it is tragic in form because it deals with the crimes of a 'real' Roman emperor, Julian the Apostate, whose historical reign is memorable for the harsh and virulent persecution he launched against the early Church. Further, the Emperor Julian's own exceptionally well-developed legend depicts him as a practitioner of black

magic and a demon worshipper. The *Golden Legend*, for instance, says that Julian, upon becoming emperor, decided to renounce Christianity, to destroy the cross wherever he found it, and to persecute Christians specifically in order to gain the allegiance of the demons.<sup>45</sup> The *Acta* thus tells its tale of St Apollonia's martyrdom within the larger context of this general persecution sprung from the Emperor Julian's hatred for Christians. In the *Acta*, Julian himself thus takes the lead in devising, ordering, and presiding over Apollonia's torture and martyrdom. The narrative, indeed, is structured very much as a contest between Julian and Apollonia; he demands she abjure her faith in Christ and worship the 'god Jove'. She replies that his 'god Jove' is in fact a demon and refuses. He attempts to break her will by torture; she prays, and angels descend from Heaven in answer to her prayers to confound the torturers. It seems far more likely, then, that Fouquet means to depict Julian the Apostate, rather than some fictional King Alexander or colorless Decius, as Apollonia's chief tormentor, and it is that necromantic Roman emperor whom we see presiding over Apollonia's dental torture in Fouquet's image.

Although a narrative, the *Acta* is a text especially suitable for the sort of Roman performance that Fouquet depicts in his miniature. It is full of strong characters, vivid action, and quotes dialogue extensively. On the whole, it is organized as a series of very theatrical scenes between Apollonia and Julian. In one such scene, for instance, the Emperor attempts to force Apollonia's recantation by ordering executioners to bind her to an *eculeus* and to flay her.<sup>46</sup> She responds by praying to God:

'Pity me Lord, and comfort me, that I might be strong and fight against evil.' This said, at once an Angel of the Lord came with great fury and freed her, and broke to pieces the board on which she was strapped, and many pagans were killed; but many also came to believe in Christ. Then Caesar ordered her to be put in prison until the next day.<sup>47</sup>

Some of these scenes, indeed, involve passages of 'staged' dialogue so that the poet would indeed be able to declaim the words that the actors were miming. In one such scene, the Emperor Julian thus orders Apollonia to be brought into his presence.

He said to her, 'Believe, Apollonia, in the God Jove, and make sacrifice'. To which she responded: 'O wretched one, you ought not to say "God" but demon, whose minister you are and with whom you will suffer eternal punishment'. Hearing this, the



Emperor, full of fury, ordered her to be thrown into a garden full of wild animals, that beasts might cruelly devour her. And seeing the frightening shapes of lions and the rest of the beasts, she feared, and signing herself with the sign of the holy Cross she prayed to God, saying 'Lord God, who freed Daniel from the den of lions, free me; do not deliver me to be the prey of these beasts'. And immediately the beasts, putting aside their severity and cruelty, approached her like tame young animals, putting themselves around her.<sup>48</sup>

The *Acta*, in short, an eminently 'performable' text, at least by the standards of the Isidorean theatre.

The script also accounts, in great measure for the actors that we see on stage in Fouquet's painting. By consulting the *Acta*, we can now, as A.M. Nagler hoped one day we might, dispel some of the darkness surrounding the particular performance Fouquet illuminates. We can tell at what juncture in the play the events, depicted here, take place, and we can tell with some certainty what precedes and follows this scene. To begin with, the *Acta* tells us why Fouquet places the Heaven and Hell scaffolds at opposite ends of his *scena*. These represent the two poles of the theological world which the play invokes. At the climactic moment of the play, Apollonia lies tied to an *eculeus*. The *Acta*, it is true, does not actually tell us the manner in which Apollonia was confined for her final torture, but the *eculeus* figures vividly as the instrument of torture in the preceding scene, and it is reasonable to suppose that Fouquet may have borrowed it from there for the maid's final series of torments. She has to be confined somehow, after all. As the executioners set to work, she looks up to see the heavens open — is the curtain covering the heavenly scaffold suddenly pushed aside? In any case, the *Acta* reports that she sees exactly the sight that appears within the heavenly booth which Fouquet paints at the left side of his illumination: 'the Son of God, sitting in a throne with a multitude of Angels'. She repeatedly prays to Christ throughout her torture, and angels descend from that booth to free her from the *eculeus* on which she is stretched or to calm the wild beasts into whose lair she has been thrown. The Apostate Emperor, meanwhile, worships the demons who inhabit Hell to the right of the picture; perhaps the one standing in his scaffold just above Hellmouth is the 'god Jove' whom Apollonia correctly recognizes as a demon. They, too, make important appearances as actors in the play. One of them, a demon in the shape of a dog, the *Acta* tells us, strangles Apollonia's mother, who had wickedly betrayed her daughter to the Emperor Julian. Later, the devil-worshipping Emperor Julian

menacingly warns Apollonia that she, too, may suffer a similar fate if she refuses to recant her Christian faith. Interestingly enough, one of the demons Fouquet places within the Hellmouth is a dog-faced one. Is he, perhaps, the very demon who strangled Apollonia's wicked mother. Did he drag her offstage through that Hellmouth?

In the scene we are witnessing, the Angels finally allow Julian to succeed in inflicting a futile and impotent torment upon Apollonia. He calls upon her once again to 'Abjure, Christian, and adore my God, otherwise I will have you put cruelly to death'. She replies that, 'so long as she has life, my tongue and my mouth will not cease to pronounce praise and honour to omnipotent God'. Hearing that, Julian orders her teeth to be ripped from her mouth by means of forceps. Again, Apollonia responds by praying to God to ease her suffering. Julian, seeing that she would not cease praising God, then ordered her tongue to be ripped out that she might not continue to speak. The virgin, however, continues to pray in her heart to her God. Angels appear amidst a great light to tell their 'sister Apollonia' that her silent prayers have been heard, and bring her letters written in gold script on which her prayers have been inscribed. Many pagans are converted to God by this apparition; seeing this, Julian seizes a sword with great anger and cruelly stabs Apollonia, who bearing her palm of martyrdom goes to Heaven.

The text thus makes it clear that Cohen may not be entirely mistaken, after all, in thinking that Apollonia's executioners might be tearing out her tongue rather than her teeth.<sup>49</sup> The *Acta*, as we have seen, stipulates that the executioners use the same forceps to rip both tongue and teeth from the saint's mouth. As a Christian tragedy, the *Acta* celebrates the power of prayer and the impotence of violence. In a last, desperate act, Julian has Apollonia's tongue ripped out to stop her voice, but he fails to understand that prayer proceeds from the heart, not the tongue. Instead of silencing Apollonia, he ensures the efficacy of her prayer made holy through suffering. Instead of forcing her to worship the Demon whom he calls the god Jove, Apollonia's prayers convert others to the worship of Christ.

### **Fouquet's Theatre as Devotional Image**

Those who take Fouquet's image as an attempt to record the theatre as an object usually imagine that the artist must have felt great sympathy for the theatre, that he probably thought of the art of the theatre as somehow kindred to his own painter's art, that he may even have been himself a 'man of the theatre'. Such views perhaps come naturally to theatre

historians, who themselves feel great sympathy for the medieval theatre and who see Fouquet's painting primarily as a record of an object about which they care very much. But it is not, after all, Fouquet's primary purpose to represent the theatre as an object, whether a medieval or a Roman one. Fouquet was not primarily interested in creating a realistic theatrical illustration; rather, he painted a devotional image to play its part in a Book of Hours for Master Etienne Chevalier.

This image belongs to the 'Suffrages' section of the Book of Hours where it serves above all to introduce a prayer of intercession to St Apollonia. The initial letter 'B' on the placard held up by the two woodwoses in the foreground is the first letter of a familiar prayer to *Beata Apollonia* who 'sustained grave torments for the sake of the Lord'.<sup>5</sup> As its foremost purpose, Fouquet's illustration must assist Etienne Chevalier in his private devotion to St Apollonia; presumably, indeed, it would be designed not just to assist the reader in his private devotion, but to move him to those devotions.

From this point of view, Fouquet's theatrical image represents less an object to be recorded than a subject to be explored for its religious significance and affective powers. If we are to understand the nature of the theatre as object, we must first understand the meaning of the theatrical image as subject matter designed to move the viewer to an act of religious devotion. What is the point, after all, of depicting St Apollonia's martyrdom taking place in a theatrical structure at all? Why does Fouquet not depict her as so many other artists do, tied to a chair, or to a column, or even standing up while her tormentors tear the teeth from her head with forceps? However popular the actual theatre might have been as a place for entertainment during Fouquet's time, it still remained a negative image when placed in a religious or moral context. In turning to Isidore for information about the construction of Roman theatres, Fouquet would thus also have found this passage to help him interpret the theatre's moral and spiritual significance:

These spectacles of cruelty and displays of vanity were created not only by the vices of men but also by the commands of devils. Hence the Christian should have nothing to do with the foolishness of the Circus, the immorality of the theatre, the cruelty of the amphitheatre, the atrocity of the arena, the lust of the show. He who attends such things is denying God, and he becomes a traitor to the Christian faith who again longs for what he has already

renounced at his baptism, namely, the devil, his pomps, and his works.<sup>51</sup>

Certainly Fouquet's painting seems to be responding vividly to Isidore's dark characterisation of the theatre as a spectacle of cruelty and a place of vanity.<sup>52</sup> The painting explicitly demonstrates that both the vices of men and the commands of devils were responsible for the torture of the Christian saint. Perhaps Isidore's moralisation of the theatre as an image suggested to Fouquet the central position of the Emperor Julian, who is clearly commanding the torturers to do their work, and of the numerous devils, who are presumably urging Julian to order the torture and are obviously reacting to it in triumph by brandishing their clubs and staffs of authority.

Moreover, Fouquet includes one distinctively 'medieval' figure in his painting that seems clearly intended to define the theatre as just such a moral image. Consider the Fool at stage right who audaciously bares his backside at both the tortured saint and the viewer. Why, after all, should a Fool be present at an execution? To the best of my knowledge, such performers were not part of the usual entertainment at medieval public executions. Rather, his presence here serves to interpret the theatrical performance as a moral image of faithlessness. As V.A. Kolve has shown, he is one of those 'God-denying fools' of Vulgate Psalm 52 who say in their hearts 'there is no God'.<sup>53</sup> He is thus an extension of — indeed a further expression of — the Emperor Julian's apostasy. In making a game of Apollonia's suffering, he makes manifest the spiritual folly not only of the Emperor and of the executioners, but also of all those who, as Isidore remarks, deny God by attending such spectacles, who long for the devil, his pomps, and his works, and who thereby become traitors to the Christian faith.

Not all beholders of Apollonia's torture, however, must be sorted among the God-denying fools. Take the Christian poet who has written Apollonia's tragedy and who, in Isidorean style, narrates it while other performers act it out. Fouquet does not even trouble to dress him in antique garb, for he is not, after all, a classical dramatist. The clerical writer of a martyr's *passio*, he wears the robe and *pileus* of a cleric, not a toga.<sup>54</sup> Certainly he does not mean to deny God by performing his rôle in this theatre. For him, the spectacle being performed is a Christian *ficta argumenta*, a pious tragedy meant to enhance faith, not to encourage a longing for the devil, his pomps, and his works. Nor are the viewers who look upon this painting necessarily God-denying fools. This spectacle, after

all, is meant to move them to an act of religious devotion. For them, the theatre still serves as a moral and spiritual image. Indeed, the theatre in itself remains an emblem of apostasy and faithlessness, but it powerfully raises the question of how one should respond to such an emblem.

In compiling his *De universo*, an encyclopedia which borrows extensively from Isidore, Hrabanus Maurus addresses this very question. In describing the Roman theatre, he begins by repeating verbatim most of the relevant passages from Isidore's *Etymologiae*. But unlike other medieval commentators, who attempt to reconcile the contradictions of *pulpitum* and *orchestra* and *scena* in Isidore's descriptions, Hrabanus is not much interested in the theatre as an object. Rather, he tries to understand the spiritual meaning of Isidore's description of the theatre. After repeating verbatim Isidore's description of the theatre as 'a semicircular structure containing the scene and providing standing room for the spectators', for instance, he does not bother to wonder whether the spectators stood inside or outside the orchestra, as Nicholas Trevet does. Rather, he turns this description into an anagogical or mystical figure for 'the present world, in which those of this generation who pursue luxury mock the servants of God and rejoice in witnessing their pains. Whence the Apostle says, "we are made a spectacle in this world to both angels and men for the sake of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 4: 9)'.<sup>55</sup> Hrabanus naturally evokes the same biblical quotation in constructing a mystical figure out of Isidore's comments on Roman 'spectacles'. The apostles, he observes, are made into one sort of spectacle to evil men, because they are ridiculed by the unfaithful, and put to injury, death, and suffering. They are made quite another spectacle to angels and the Lord, who reward them for their sufferings. The apostles are therefore actually delighted by such injuries, but worldly men, who believe in only visible things, do not understand.<sup>56</sup> In these comments, both Hrabanus and Isidore borrow from Augustinian ideas about *spectacula christiana* which Nicholas Davis has described. Carnal men, St Augustine writes, watch such shows as these 'in the belief that miseries are suffered by those martyrs who are thrown to the animals, who have their heads cut off, who are consumed in fires, detesting them and feeling horror'. Spiritual men, by contrast, 'watch like the holy angels, giving no heed to tearing of the body, but marvelling at the integrity of the faith. A whole spirit in a dismembered body offers a great *spectaculum* to the eyes of the mind'.<sup>57</sup>

Fouquet places St Apollonia's martyrdom in a theatre, I would suggest, because he wants us to view it as just such a *spectaculum christianum*.<sup>58</sup> To

'carnal men', represented in the picture by the Emperor, the torturers, and perhaps even the audience, Apollonia provides a spectacle of the first kind. She is mocked, most notably by the Fool, while the Emperor, the torturers, the demons, and the people thrill to, or even rejoice in, in her suffering. Indeed, Fouquet takes pains to show that all these figures are sharing essentially the same essentially worldly view of the saint's suffering. The actors and audience alike either stand in the *orchestra* or sit in the booths of the *scena*, and together they all view Apollonia's martyrdom from the same direction. They view the action 'from behind', so to speak. To some extent, the views of individual actors or viewers must necessarily be obstructed.<sup>59</sup> The Emperor and the executioners must partially block the views of many; others cannot see the scaffolds because they are under them or because they are staring away from them.

But to the contemplative viewer of Fouquet's devotional image, Apollonia's suffering ought to be a spectacle of the second, more spiritual, kind. Fouquet intends them to watch like the holy angels, for whom the mutilation of St Apollonia's body is less important than the marvellous strength of her faith. To establish this alternative, more spiritual, view of the saint's suffering, Fouquet actually establishes a second, and superior, viewpoint for his image. 'We' spiritual witnesses see the play 'straight on,' and our view of the saint's suffering, unlike that of the carnal spectators, is both comprehensive and utterly unobstructed. To some extent, indeed, our vantage point seems even slightly elevated, so that we also view the action 'from above'. We not only view the extraordinary composure of the saint whose teeth are being ripped out, but we also view her suffering in the context of the scaffolds which define her spiritual universe. For us, the *spectaculum* includes both the saint enduring her agony and those who mock the saint and rejoice in her pain. Because of our privileged perspective, in short, we see this spectacle as the Lord might see it.

This Olympian orientation is neither a mistake nor a feat of artistic licence. Rather, in the manner of the early theatre, this imagined performance is directed not toward all members of the audience equally, but is actually focused upon a chair set for some great prince or other nobleman. He is certainly a man of substance; the actors perform their play primarily for him despite the crowd of more common spectators who will not be able to view the performance very well at all. The low wattle fence in the foreground of the picture separates this single, privileged viewer from the rest of the audience. We do not actually see this chair, because we ourselves are sitting in it. In the first instance, of course, Fouquet orients his

imagined performance towards Master Etienne Chevalier, for whom this devotional book was painted. In the second instance, however, he directs it towards 'us' — towards all who look upon this scene and hence sit in Etienne Chevalier's chair. The Fool thus gestures obscenely particularly for us; the saint accordingly suffers for our — pleasure — is it? How do we regard the saint's suffering? Do we revel with the other observers in a good execution? Do we regard the saint's sufferings merely as an action in a play? Or are we genuinely moved by her suffering? The picture — the medieval scenecraft — powerfully asks that question of us, and how we answer it will determine our place in the medieval world, among the clear-sighted saints or the God-denying fools.

### Fouquet's Other Medieval Theatre Painting?

'The Martyrdom of St Apollonia' is not the only painting by Fouquet to attract the enthusiastic attention of theatre historians. Richard Hosley 'discovered' what he took to be a second illustration by Fouquet of a medieval theatre in a miniature depicting 'The Rape of the Sabine Women'.<sup>60</sup> On the face of it, however, the picture (PLATE 9)<sup>61</sup> does not look very relevant to the iconography of the medieval theatre at all, much less a 'representation of a real theatre' as has been claimed.<sup>62</sup> Rather, at first glance it seems to be a straightforward 'historical' illustration of an episode in Bersuire's translation of Livy's *Roman History*.<sup>63</sup> The miniature thus introduces the portion of Livy's text which describes 'how the Romans ravished the Sabine virgins'. In order to provide his subjects with sufficient wives, Romulus conceived of a plot to seize women from the Sabines. He thus instituted the *Consualia* games as a device to lure the Sabine people into Rome: 'When the time came for the show, and people's thoughts and eyes were busy with it, the preconcerted attack began. At a given signal the young Romans darted this way and that to seize and carry off the maidens'.<sup>64</sup> The text thus specifically dates this episode to the occasion of the first of the famous *ludis consualibus*.<sup>65</sup>

Accordingly, the artist depicts Roman citizens carrying away Sabine women specifically in the midst of a Roman circus, not a theatre. The structure we find ourselves looking into, as a consequence, is neither round (as in the amphitheatre) or semicircular (as in the theatre) but distinctly oval in shape to accommodate horse-racing, because the *Consualia*, as the artist knew, always featured horse-racing and hence necessarily took place in the circus. The pillar with the statue of the god upon it (Consus?) probably serves as one of the two turning posts fixed at either end of the

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PLATE 9: School of Jean Fouquet, 'The Rape of the Sabine Women', c 1477.  
Paris, B N fonds français. 20071, fol. 9<sup>r</sup>.  
© Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris



GORDON KIPLING

circus. Because he is attempting to depict the first of the Consualian games, moreover, the artist has taken care to depict the circus as a fairly rudimentary structure, built of scaffolding rather than (as in the later Circus Maximus) of stone. As one commentator points out, the boxes from which the spectators view the games look something like 'the scaffolds of a medieval tournament arena'.<sup>66</sup> Romulus himself, identified by his crown and sceptre, watches the events from the royal loge, which is scarcely distinguished from the other scaffolding boxes except, perhaps, by colour and the golden lettering woven into its cloth hangings. On the whole, this miniature thus seems like many another among the 'historical' programmes of miniatures produced by Fouquet and his studio, such as those in the *Grandes Chroniques de France*<sup>67</sup> and the *Antiquitates Judaearum* of Josephus.<sup>68</sup>

Despite the miniature's clear historical pretensions, two decidedly non-historical figures continue to invite the speculations of theatre historians. First of all, the artist has inserted a copy of the blue-coated orator from 'the Martyrdom of St Apollonia' into his painting. Still holding his book and staff, still wearing his red *pileus*, and still standing in very nearly the same pose, he is clearly modeled upon that earlier figure. This time, however, instead of pointing his staff dramatically, he holds it upright, and he now gazes upward towards the statue of the god on the pillar. Secondly, a Fool dances just behind him. He is not so clearly a copy of that earlier, buttocks-baring Fool from the St Apollonia miniature; his fool's-cap and leggings are no longer blue, but he still carries a very similar fool's bauble. Neither of these figures derive from the text. What, then, are they doing in the picture?

For some commentators, these figures seem to establish clearly that the artist meant to depict the historical scene as if it were being performed by contemporary actors in a contemporary theatre. Richard Hosley, for instance, thinks that the miniature depicts 'a theatrical version of the rape of the Sabine Women' showing 'contiguous scaffolds extending apparently around the whole circumference of a circular Place set up in a city'. At the centre of enthusiasm, although in the background of the picture, stands the blue-coated figure, holding his book and flourishing his staff of authority. He can be nothing else, thinks Henri Rey-Flaud, but the *meneur de jeu*. His presence tells us that the circle of scaffolds must represent a theatre, not a tournament arena. Detecting thus another '*cercle magique*', he calculates that this newly-discovered theatre must have been an enormous structure containing 20 scaffolds and measuring 100 metres in circumference and 40

metres in diameter!<sup>69</sup> For Philip Butterworth, the presence of the blue-coated *meneur de jeu* and the Fool in this picture are 'the principal means of determining that an act of theatre is taking place', and they further provide welcome iconographical evidence of the existence of onstage prompting: 'the staging arrangements, the existence of the organizer/monitoring figure, the central scenic device of the statue on the pedestal and the three-dimensional disposition of the performers combine to reinforce this interpretation'.<sup>70</sup> As we have seen, however, this identification of the book-holding man in the St Apollonia illustration as a *meneur de jeu* is not very tenable. *Meneurs de jeu* undoubtedly existed in fifteenth-century France, but as the name implies they generally performed what we would think of as directorial, production, and managerial rôles (for which reason modern commentators sometimes describe them as *régisseurs*). Their onstage functions, if any, have not been well documented; certainly there is no documentary evidence that they moved about on stage in full view of the audience feeding lines to actors. Rather, in the absence of convincing documentary evidence, historians have always appealed to Fouquet for proof that this figure did in fact appear on stage. It is 'from the Fouquet miniature', A.M. Nagler tells us, that 'it becomes clear that the medieval *régisseur*-prompter moved about the stage in full view of the audience'.<sup>71</sup> Revealingly, when we do encounter authentic depictions of the *meneur de jeu*, he is never shown on stage. He appears, for instance, among the illustrations of the Valenciennes Passion Play. The artist, Hubert Cailleau, does not place him amongst the many illustrations of actors and scenery, however, but instead gives him his own separate illustration at the end of the text, set quite apart from the 'onstage' scenes.<sup>72</sup>

Those most concerned to find 'theatrical activity' taking place in 'The Rape of the Sabine Women' are understandably anxious to establish the miniature as Fouquet's authentic work. The manuscript was commissioned from Fouquet's studio at the very end of the artist's life (c. 1478–80), and seems to have been completed, perhaps after his death, by other hands. Of the art historians who have commented on the miniature in question, only one thinks that Fouquet himself painted it. A rather formidable consensus otherwise views the miniature as the product of Fouquet's 'school'.<sup>73</sup> Because the book-holding figure we are examining has obviously been copied from the similar figure in 'The Martyrdom of St Apollonia',<sup>74</sup> this difference of opinion is potentially important. If, on the one hand, 'The Rape of the Sabine Women' is Fouquet's work, then this visual 'quotation' from his earlier work is potentially deliberate and meaningful. Such self-

quotations of visual elements are not entirely unprecedented in Fouquet's uncontested work, but they are highly unusual.<sup>75</sup> If on the other hand, the quotation derives from a student or follower, the quotation will at best represent the student's interpretation of Fouquet's image, not Fouquet's own ideas. At the very least, therefore, the authorship of this miniature remains extremely problematical. We cannot merely assume that the figure is meant to represent exactly the same ideas in both miniatures.

Bamber Gascoigne makes some interesting suggestions about the identity of the bookholder and the Fool which would return us to those Isidorean conceptions of Roman theatre that we examined above. The Fool, he thinks, 'though entirely medieval in spirit, was the concept in Fouquet's time of the famous Roman mimes. Similar figures can be seen dancing in a Roman theatre in the frontispieces, almost exactly contemporary with this miniature by Fouquet, to the two manuscript volumes of Terence in Paris'. By the same token, he thinks, 'Fouquet's *presenter* is intended to be Calliopius', Terence's friend, who was famed for reading the playwright's works in the theatre while the actors mimed their rôles corresponding to his recitation. But if this theory is true, why has the artist placed his characters in a Roman circus (Gascoigne himself calls it a 'tournament arena') rather than in a Roman theatre?<sup>76</sup> The architectural context depicted in the miniature will simply not support such a hypothesis.

If we are to understand the rôles of the bookholder and the Fool in this miniature, perhaps we might profitably explore influential medieval attitudes towards the circus in general and the Consualia in particular. Both Augustine and Isidore of Seville, for example, insist that such shows were morally impure and spiritually contaminating to Christians. In part, they found the nature of the *spectacula* to be inherently corrupting because of their vanity, immorality, and even savagery. More importantly, however, these writers considered that the shows' essential peril lay in their pagan origins and their idolatrous purposes. Isidore, for instance, discusses the Roman circus in the same sections of the *Etymologiae* in which he discusses the Roman theatre (Book 18). According to Isidore, attending the *ludi circenses* constituted an act of idolatrous worship. Since the circus games were established so that the people might assemble to worship the gods, and since the pagan gods, according to Christian understanding, were in fact demons, it necessarily followed that the circuses themselves were little more than places where the people might gather to view demonic spectacles and worship demons reverently.<sup>77</sup> For Augustine, as Nicholas Davis

demonstrates, such shows were not only a kind of 'diabolic conspiracy', but they also serve as an apt symbol for the Earthly City, from which the Christian must turn away if he is to reach the City of God.<sup>78</sup>

Both Augustine and Isidore derive their strong views, of course, from Tertullian, whose *De Spectaculis* made special reference to the Consualia in demonstrating 'the guilty origin of the circus games in idolatry':

Then came the games originally held in honour of Neptune and called Consualia. For he is also styled Consus. After that Romulus named the Ecurria, from hourses, in honour of Mars — though they claim the Consualia as well for Romulus, arguing that he instituted them for Consus, the god (they say) of counsel — meaning the particular counsel which he thought out of capturing the Sabine girls to be wives for his soldiers. An honourable counsel, indeed, to this very day just and lawful among the Romans, not to say in God's eyes! It also contributes to the taint of their origin — lest you think that good which began with evil — that the games began with shamelessness, violence and hate, and a founder who slew his brother and was the son of Mars. There is still (I might add) an underground altar, dedicated to that Consus, in the Circus, at the first turning-point, with this inscription: 'Consus in counsel, Mars in war, Lares Coillo mighty.' Sacrifice is offered on it on the seventh day of July by the state priests, on the twentieth of August by the Flamen of Quirinus and the Vestal Virgins ... But so much will suffice on the guilty origin of the games in idolatry.<sup>79</sup>

As Tertullian's comments make clear, however refreshing and innocent such games may seem, nevertheless, 'the pomp of the circus, whatever its character, offends God' because 'the real issue is idolatry'.<sup>80</sup> Because the games were founded in order to worship the pagan gods, they cannot escape the 'common guilt of the idolatry which founded them'. Attending the Consualia necessarily means that one worships the god Consus, in whose honour the games were founded and before whose altar sacrifices are made during the games. Moreover, as Tertullian delights in pointing out, worship of Consus defiles the worshiper by making him Consus-like. As the god of 'counsel', Consus inspired the particular counsel which produced the Rape of the Sabine women. In this way, as Nicholas Davis points out, Tertullian regards such *spectacula* as 'an important way in which real, evil beings bent on destruction set about ensnaring human victims'.<sup>81</sup>

In characterising circus games as places where the people might gather to view demonic spectacles and worship demons reverently, Isidore merely reflects the teachings of Tertullian, whose *De Spectacula* he knew well. Following his master, Tertullian, Isidore also emphasizes that 'these spectacles of cruelty and this gazing upon vain things were established not only by the vices of men but also by the commands of devils'. By taking pleasure in such idolatrous shows, the Christian 'denies God' and 'seeks again what he already renounced long before in baptism — that is, the devil, his pomps, and his works.' Indeed, the popularity of Isidore's *Etymologiae* helped keep these 'Tertullianite' ideas alive in the later Middle Ages.<sup>82</sup>

Moreover, if we look again at 'The Rape of the Sabine Women' in the light of these comments, we can now see that the illustration cannot claim to be another 'pictorial document', meant to record 'a scene from what surely is an actual production'. The bookholder and the Fool appear not as actors in a theatre, but as emblematic commentators in a Roman circus. No theatrical scene — whether real or imagined — is being performed. Rather, this school-of-Fouquet illustration merely inserts the bookholder and Fool into an otherwise straightforwardly 'historical' illustration of the Rape of the Sabine Women in order to provide it with a Christian homiletic framework. In other words, the homiletic subject matter of the picture makes their presence necessary. The 'historical' figures in the scene attempt to visualise Livy's narrative account of the first *Consualia* games. The homiletic characters provide a Christian *significatio*; they attempt to determine how we, as Christian readers and viewers, should regard the 'historical' events being depicted.

The artist achieves his homiletic framework by dividing his picture into three planes: foreground, middle ground, and background. In the front two planes, he depicts the 'historical' events that are being described in the text. The first of the *Consualia* games are under way, and Romulus — wearing a golden crown, holding his sceptre, and seated in the royal box — commands the picture's middle ground. Romulus has apparently just set his plan in motion. The trumpeters standing just beneath the royal box (and with somewhat anachronistic 'SPQR' banners attached to their horns) have just blared out the agreed signal. In the foreground plane, the Romans have responded by bursting through the crowd, and they are depicted in the act of seizing and carrying off the Sabine women. All of these figures respond directly to the passage from Livy. They vividly illustrate the text, sometimes supplying details not specified in the passage. Livy, for instance,

does not tell us what the 'given signal' was that precipitated the action, so the painter provides one in the form of the trumpeters. By the same token, the painter probably makes the structure of the structure that houses the games look somewhat primitive. He may well have known that the Romans later constructed elaborate arenas of stone for such *ludi*, but he imagines that Romulus would have constructed a much less sophisticated arena of scaffolding for the very first of the *Consualia* games.

The background plane, meanwhile, is dominated by a golden statue set atop a pillar. Some have imagined this to be a 'property pillar, like the castle of the *Castle* plan and the chapel of the *Meriasek* plan ... located in mid-Place', but there is no reason to think this a particularly theatrical object.<sup>83</sup> Rather, the painter is primarily interested in the statue's 'historical' and 'literal' significance: it is neither more nor less than a gilded idol. In placing this idol on a pillar located towards the far end of an oval-shaped circus, the painter may want to suggest that the Romans had placed it atop one of the arena's turning posts. Tertullian, after all, had located the subterranean altar of Consus 'in the Circus, at the first turning-point'.<sup>84</sup> Perhaps the painter means the idol to represent Consus-Neptune, since the passage from Livy which he is illustrating says that 'Romulus ... made ready solemn games in honour of the equestrian Neptune, which he called *Consualia*'.<sup>85</sup> Whatever its precise identity, the statue is primarily important as a gilded idol, and it derives from the Roman, pagan world being evoked in the miniature.

The artist associates several prominent figures with the idol in the background plane in order to provide an alternative focal point for the illustration. None of these figures derive from the text. The most important of these comprise a dancing Fool, a somewhat nondescript man gesturing with one arm upraised, and a medieval cleric holding a book and staff. For the most part, these figures seem static when compared to the frantically active figures in the foreground plane. Both the nondescript man and the medieval cleric are attentively regarding the idol rather than the action in the foreground plane. The nondescript man gestures toward the idol from the left, and the medieval cleric lifts his eyes from his book and gazes upwards toward it from the right. Insofar as we can tell, neither seems to be adoring the statue; they merely orient themselves histrionically toward the idol, and in so doing they direct our gaze towards it as well. Together, however, the statue and the gesturing figures necessarily establish a rival focal point for the picture, one which encourages the viewer's gaze to travel from all the activity taking place in the foreground plane to the more contemplative

and static background plane. One thus looks first at the Rape of the Sabine Women taking place in the foreground, but then one's eye necessarily travels to the idol which lies 'behind' the action.

The relationship between these two focal points, together with the emblematic nature of the characters in the background, I suggest, provides a Christian homiletic viewpoint for this 'historical' scene. As our eye travels from one to the other of the miniature's focal points, we move from the historical event to its spiritual cause.<sup>86</sup> The artist thus inserts the figures in the background plane to demonstrate 'the guilty origin of the games in idolatry', as Tertullian puts it. The gesturing man fulfills his function merely by pointing to the idol who is the unhappy cause of the events taking place in the foreground. The Fool makes the same point by fulfilling his medieval emblematic function. As he did in 'The Martyrdom of St Apollonia', so he serves this miniature too as an emblem of God-denying, spiritual folly. His association with the gilded idol makes clear that the particular species of spiritual folly that he embodies in this picture is idolatry. Finally, the bookholder fulfills his rôle not as some theatrical *meneur de jeu*, but merely as the medieval cleric he is, identified by his robe and *pileus*. As in most medieval depictions of men holding books, he is a figure of *auctoritas*; that he wears clerical costume identifies him specifically as a figure of Christian authority. In these respects he is not unlike the Christian martyrologist whom Fouquet imagines to be the author of the Roman play of St Apollonia. Because both are literary figures, both carry their emblematic books. Because both are Christian teachers, both wear clothes that symbolise Christian authority. The visual quotation, therefore, is an apt one. But there are important differences as well. Unlike the original clerical author depicted in 'The Martyrdom of St Apollonia', the copy does not frame his work to suit the conventions of the Isidorean stage. The original is more active; he seems to be pointing with his staff, thus directing the action in the Roman manner. The copy, by contrast, is entirely static; he merely contemplates. As his contemplative pose suggests, he fulfills his function merely as a commentator. Lifting his eyes from his book to the idol, he glances from precept to example to make clear the spiritual cause of Rape and to point out that 'the real issue is idolatry'.

Because both of these miniatures attempt to visualise different species of Roman *spectacula* primarily from Isidore of Seville, Tertullian, and other literary sources, their use as 'records' of fifteenth-century theatrical practice is severely compromised. In 'The Martyrdom of St Apollonia', as we have



seen, Fouquet constructs a Roman theatre primarily from Isidore's *Etymologiae*. In 'The Rape of the Sabine Women', the painter (whether Fouquet himself or one of his 'school') turns again to Isidore, and perhaps to Tertullian for help in envisioning the first *Consualia* games as described in Livy's *Roman History*. Despite his 'realistic' technique, neither picture can be a trustworthy guide to actual medieval theatrical practice. In neither case does he attempt to represent a 'real' object. In both cases, he paints from texts rather than from direct observation. Some of the individual details — the Hellmouth, in 'The Martyrdom of St Apollonia', for instance — may indeed be reminiscent in some way of authentic theatrical practice, but other details — the 'dubbed dumbshow' method of performance, for instance — clearly do not reflect fifteenth-century performance practices. Worse still, what do we make of those details that *look* medieval, but clearly derive from the painter's literary sources — the semicircular arrangement of scaffolds to form a *scena* as described in Isidore, for instance? Certainly, it will be unwise to continue regarding the St Apollonia miniature as if it were an unproblematic painting of the medieval theatre, and it would be even a greater pity if we were to continue turning to the Sabine Women miniature as a source of information about the medieval theatre since that structure is demonstrably not a theatre nor are there 'acts of theatre' taking place within it.

Both images are demonstrably more interested in the theatre (and the *Consualia*) as homiletic subject matter rather than as contemporary objects. That they turn primarily to Christian homiletic sources for their information does, I think, tell us a great deal about how Fouquet regards — and how he hopes to persuade his viewers to regard — such spectacular shows. Far from being a 'man of the theatre', he approaches both illustrations from a traditionally Christian, anti-theatrical point of view. In the first, a careful evocation of Isidore's Roman theatre serves as an apt *spectaculum christianum* which demonstrates the diverse ways that carnal and spiritual men diversely regard the sufferings of the saints. In the second, the spectacle of the *Consualia* demonstrates the inherent idolatry that lies at the heart of all such spectacular shows. Whatever details the painter chooses to include in his painting are there primarily because they serve these homiletic ends. The same details, moreover, respond to the authority of his respected Christian sources. Probably only after these two purposes have been served will some of the visual details of 'The Martyrdom of St Apollonia' respond to fifteenth-century theatrical

practices. Therein lies the challenge for those who would use these wonderful images as documentary evidence for the medieval theatre.

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## NOTES

1. A coloured reproduction of the original painting may conveniently be found in *The Hours of Etienne Chevalier: Jean Fouquet* preface by Charles Sterling, introduction and legends by Claude Schaefer (George Braziller, New York, 1971) Plate 45.
2. Janet Backhouse recapitulates the conventional view of Fouquet's artistry: 'He produces an apparently effortless realism, whether in the portrayal of figures, of landscape, or of architecture': *Renaissance Painting in Manuscripts: Treasures from the British Library* edited Thomas Kren (Hudson Hills Press, New York, 1983) 152.
3. Henri Rey-Flaud *Pour une dramaturgie du Moyen Age* (Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 1980) 24.
4. Clifford Davidson *Drama and Art: An Introduction to the Use of Evidence from the Visual Arts for the Study of Early Drama* (Early Drama, Art, and Music Monograph Series 1: The Medieval Institute, Kalamazoo, 1977) 5.
5. A.M. Nagler *The Medieval Religious Stage: Shapes and Phantoms* (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1976) 103.
6. Henri Rey-Flaud *Le Cercle magique: essai sur le théâtre en rond à la fin du Moyen Age* (Gallimard, Paris, 1973), 113.
7. Rey-Flaud *Cercle magique* 91.

Les miniaturistes et graveurs médiévaux ont éprouvé des difficultés certaines à représenter l'intérieur d'édifices circulaires. Le génie d'un Jean Fouquet fut de recourir à la solution la plus simple, celle qui semble s'imposer d'elle-même: il avait tout simplement coupé en deux, comme une pomme, le théâtre de Martyre de sainte Apolline et représenté une moitié de circonférence. La miniature nous place ainsi dans la situation d'un spectateur du 'parterre' qui verrait le spectacle et, par delà les spectateurs de l'hémicycle opposé.
8. Gustave Cohen first proposed that Fouquet meant to illustrate a circular theatre which *a été ouvert par l'artiste, pour nous en montrer l'intérieur*. To achieve this effect, he thought, the artist had 'removed' another semicircle of scaffolds so as to allow the viewer to see into the theatre from outside: *Livre de*

*conduite du régisseur et Compte des dépenses pour le Mystère de la Passion joué à Mons en 1501* (Honoré Champion, Paris, 1925) xlviii. In the following year he had decided that Fouquet's amphitheatre was in fact representative of a type of circular theatre: *La forme de l'amphithéâtre a été celle du théâtre au moyen-âge beaucoup plus souvent que nous le croyons généralement: Histoire de la Mise en scène dans le Théâtre religieux français du Moyen-Age* (Honoré Champion, Paris, 1926). Richard Southern found this view of Fouquet's miniature particularly apt when investigating the staging plan of *The Castle of Perseverance*. In particular, the wattle fence in the foreground seemed to him to offer visual proof of a theatre 'strongly-barred-about' as described on the *Castle* plan. Hence, he proposed that, while cutting away a half-circle of scaffolds to make the interior of the theatre more visible, Fouquet nevertheless preserved the 'circular barrier-fence, designed to prevent outsiders getting into, or seeing, the show': *The Medieval Theatre in the Round* (Faber, London, 1957; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1975) 94. Furthermore, noting that the posts of the two scaffolds on the right-hand side of the picture are not butted together, he detected a 'gap' between these two scaffolds. Such a gap, he thought, represents 'a passage through between the scaffolds from the outer world into the Place, by which spectators entered the theatre' (102-3). It was left, then, for Henri Rey-Flaud and Elie Konigson to measure the size of the amphitheatre that Fouquet was presumably illustrating. In *Le cercle magique*, Rey-Flaud initially calculated a twenty-sided circular amphitheatre measuring 50 metres in circumference and with a diameter of 21 metres. Such a structure, he thought, would hold about 1500 spectators: 1200 standing in the place and another 250 seated in the scaffolds (130-1). However, after Konigson published his own, more modest, calculations based upon a twelve-sided amphitheatre, Rey-Flaud silently revised his own calculations downwards. He now confidently calculated Fouquet's theatre as a twelve-sided circle (eleven scaffolds and a scaffold-sized 'gap') measuring a mere 30 metres in circumference, 8 metres in diameter, and holding only 750 spectators: 600 standing in the place and 130 seated in the scaffolds: Elie Konigson *L'Espace théâtral médiéval* (CNRS, Paris, 1975) 178-87; Rey-Flaud *Pour une dramaturgie du Moyen Age* 29-30.

9. *Medieval Theatre in the Round* 92-3.
10. Alan Knight *Aspects of Genre in Late Medieval French Drama* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1983) 136.
11. In David Bevington's anthology, the Digby *Mary Magdalene* text is introduced with a circular staging diagram showing the Castle of Magdala in the centre and eleven scaffolds placed around the circumference. The text then concludes

with a reproduction of Fouquet's painting: *Medieval Drama* (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1975) 688, 753.

12. John Wesley Harris *Medieval Theatre in Context: An Introduction* (Routledge, London and New York, 1992) 117. Some few dissenting voices, it is true, have been raised against this impressive consensus. A.M. Nagler thus broods over a variety of 'fantasies' and 'far-fetched ideas' which various scholars have imposed upon the picture: *The Medieval Religious Stage: Shapes and Phantoms* (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1976) 102–5. Leslie Abend Callahan 'The Torture of Saint Apollonia: Deconstructing Fouquet's Martyrdom Stage' *Studies in Iconography* 16 (1994) 133, similarly concludes that 'it is impossible to determine to what extent Fouquet was influenced by the theatre, was representing the theatre, or was creating the theatre'. For the most spirited assault upon the 'realism' of Fouquet's miniature, see Jonathan Beck 'Sainte-Apolline: L'image d'un spectacle, le spectacle d'une image' *Spectacle & Image in Renaissance Europe* edited André Lascombes (E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1993) 232–44, who concludes that *il est abusif de parler de l'image de sainte Apolline comme étant "fidèle à la réalité" à moins de comprendre cette proposition dans ce sens qu'elle reflète, non comme un miroir mais comme un miroitement, la réalité multiple et contradictoire de son époque* (242).
13. William L. Tribby 'The Medieval Prompter: A Reinterpretation' *Theatre Survey* 5 (1964) 75.
14. Nagler *Medieval Religious Stage* 102.
15. Graham A. Runnalls has published two articles on this important manuscript. The quotation is taken from 'The Catalogue of the Tours Book-Seller and Late Medieval French Drama' *Le Moyen Français* 11 (1982) 127; see also 'The Catalogue of the Tours Bookseller and Antoine Vêrard' *Pluteus* 2 (1984) 163–74.
16. Nagler *Medieval Religious Stage* 102–4.
17. Allardyce Nicoll points out that both the Valenciennes set and the Fouquet miniature share the same orientation, 'where the house of God is shown to the [stage] right and a huge Hell to the [stage] left'. He also cites the twelfth-century St Vincent play, which he thinks indicates 'Paradise *en droit*, and la ("there") Hell — presumably on the left, as far from Heaven as possible. Between them are the other *lieux* or mansions — the seats of Diocletian, Maximian, and Dacian, of the Roman senators *dedan le capitale*, in addition to *Valince la cité*, the temple, and a "vessel" with mariners. The impression one gets from the description suggests that these were set in a line facing the

audience, as in the Valenciennes play, although it is just possible that a series of two groups of mansions facing one another is indicated': *Masks, Mimes and Miracles: Studies in the Popular Theatre* (George Harrap, London, 1931) 196.

18. *Theatrum est quo scaena includitur, semicirculi figuram habens, in quo stantes omnes inspiciunt*. What follows largely follows Henry Ansgar Kelly's discussion of Isidore in *Ideas and Forms of Tragedy from Aristotle to the Middle Ages* (Cambridge University Press, 1993) 41–9.
19. *Scena autem erat locus infra theatrum in modum domus instructa cum pulpito, qui pulpitus orchestra vocabatur, ubi cantabant comici, tragici, atque saltabant histriones et mimi*.
20. As Joseph R. Jones points out, Isidore himself contributed to his readers' confusion about the meaning of *pulpitum* because he elsewhere uses that word to refer to 'the platform from which lectors and psalmists read to a Christian congregation': 'Isidore and the Theater' *Drama in the Middle Ages: Comparative and Critical Essays, Second Series* edited Clifford Davidson and John H. Stroupe (AMS Press, New York, 1990) 9–10. See Isidore *Etymologiae* 15.4.15: *Pulpitum, quod in eo lector vel psalmista positus in publico conspici a populo possit, quo liberior audiat*.
21. *Et nota quod tragedie et comedie solebant in theatro hoc modo recitari: theatrum erat area semicirculis, in cujus medio erat parva domuncula, que 'scenas' dicebatur, in qua erat pulpitum super quod poeta carmina pronuntiabat*: Nicholas Trevet, quoted in Kelly *Ideas and Forms* 133, from *Exposition Herculis furentis* edited Vincenzo Ussani (Rome, 1959) 5–6. See on this point generally Kelly *Ideas and Forms* 126–34.
22. Vatican MS Urbino lat. 355, fol iv.
23. *Térence des Ducs*: Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Cod. Lat. Ars. 664.
24. Wickham *Early English Stages 1* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1959) 193.
25. *Compte du Mystère de la Passion, Châteaudun 1510* edited Marcel Couturier and Graham A. Runnalls (Société Archéologique d'Eure-et-Loir, [Chartres, 1991]).
26. Rey-Flaud *Le cercle magique* 65. As Rey-Flaud points out,  
les textes que nous possédons, relatifs aux représentations de mystères, font mention à chaque instant des 'échafauds' qui devront être dressés à cette occasion. Malheureusement, ces mêmes textes restent muets sur des points sans doute si bien connus des contemporains qu'il était inutile de les préciser: la disposition et la destination de ces 'échafauds'.

27. *Locus adumbratus in theatro et cortinis coopertus similis tabernis mercennariorum que sunt asseribus vel cortinis operte, et secundum hoc posset dici a scenos quot est domus, quia in modum domus erat constructa.* Quoted in Mary H. Marshall 'Theatre in the Middle Ages: Evidence from Dictionaries and Glosses' *Symposium 4* (1950) 25.
28. Mary H. Marshall thinks that Isidore defines distinct rôles for *mimi* and *histriones*. Mimes merely expressed 'the fables ("plays", *fabulas*) of poets with physical gestures' while the poet 'spoke the fable before they acted it'; she thinks that *histriones*, however, 'used gestures and dancing but might also speak' ('Theatre in the Middle Ages' 10–11). H.A. Kelly, however, demonstrates that this view is in error: 'in his listing of the offices, or rather officers, Isidore would seem to imply that the *histrion*, *mimus*, and *saltator* have separate functions, and they do have different etymologies, but in effect he identifies them all with the *pantomimus*, a nonspeaking actor-dancer. We have already seen that the *histrion* and *mimus* dance, and that the *saltator* acts': *Ideas and Forms of Tragedy from Aristotle to the Middle Ages* (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 18: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 43, 47.
29. Wickham *Early English Stages 1* 194.
30. V.A. Kolve *The Play Called Corpus Christi* (Stanford University Press, Stanford and London, 1966) 27.
31. Tribby 'Medieval Prompter' 74–5. The evidence for the French *meneur de jeu* performing such onstage functions as delivering prologues (cf. Cohen *Livre de Conduit* cv) is largely inferential and depends to a great extent on circular reasoning: we know the *meneur de jeu* moved about the stage in full view of the audience because we have identified the man holding the book in Fouquet's miniature as such a figure; we know the man holding the book is a *meneur de jeu* because such figures moved about the stage in full view of the audience. For a further discussion of this point, see 'Fouquet's Other Medieval Theatre Painting?' below.
32. Fouquet also incorporates other, more minor, details of Isidore's text into his image of a Roman theatre. He probably thinks of the musicians performing in the second scaffold from the left in terms of Isidore's *thymelici*. These were the theatre musicians on the Roman stage who sang along with organs, lyres, and cithers. They were called *thymelici*, Isidore tells us, because they 'originally stood on the orchestra and sang above the stage, which was called the *thymele*' (18.47). Fouquet resolves this somewhat confused passage simply by placing them in a raised scaffold so that they might both stand on the orchestra and also make music above the stage.

33. Eusebius *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6.41; Jacobus de Voragine *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints* translated William Granger Ryan, 2 vols (Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1993), 1 268–69. For de Voragine's Latin text, see *Legenda Aurea* edited T. Graesse, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1846), 1 66.
34. In the letter 'B' of the placard held by the two wildmen, Claude Schaefer professes to see a direct allusion to the *Golden Legend* version of St Apollonia's torture. There he finds an image of 'St. Apollonia "giving herself up to the flames in order not to burn, consuming herself so as not to be consumed": *Hours of Etienne Chevalier* 112. The figure, however, is only another wildman, albeit perhaps a female one.
35. Bibl. Capitolare di Novara, MS XXVI, pages i–ii edited Gian Battista Poletti *Il Martirio di Santa Apollonia* (L. Cappelli, Rocca S. Casciano, 1934) 9–16. For other texts of this version, see Maurice Coens 'Une "Passio S. Apolloniae" inédite suivie d'un Miracle en Bourgogne' *Analecta Bollandiana* 70 (1952) 143.
36. Coens 'Une "Passio S. Apolloniae" inédite' 154–9.
37. For a number of the Eusebius versions, see Coens 'Une "Passio S. Apolloniae" inédite' 144–5.
38. Callahan 'The Torture of Saint Apollonia' 120.
39. There are examples in The Bedford Hours, and The Hours of Mary of Burgundy, for instance, and there are versions of female saints also being whipped while tied to a column in Books of Hours (e.g., St Catherine tied to a column and being scourged in the Belles Heures of Jean, duc du Berri, fol. 17).
40. *Rappresentazione di Santa Apollonia Vergine e Martire* (Francescho di Giovanni Benevenuto, Florence, 1516) Bii<sup>r</sup>.
41. PLATE 6: British Library, MS Egerton 2019, fol. 217. PLATE 7: Petrus de Natalibus *Catalogus sanctorum & gestorum ex diuersis voluminibus collectus* (Lyons, 1519) fol. xlix<sup>v</sup>.
42. Rowan Watson *The Playfair Hours: A Late Fifteenth-Century Illuminated Manuscript from Rouen* (Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1984) 111.
43. The *eculeus* is a fairly common form of torture consisting of a rack with one end raised higher than the other. Often it was associated with a St Andrew's cross (as in the crucifixion of St Vincent), but most were only platforms raised at one end as depicted in Fouquet's painting. Compare Caxton's *Golden Legend*: 'an instrument named eculee of which two ends stonde on the grounde and ii upward like Saynt Androws crosse' (quoted in *OED*, s.v. *eculee*).
44. *Acta Sanctorum*, Volume 2 (Antwerp, 1658) 280–1.

45. Jan. 27, legend of St Julian.
46. For a similar example of an *eculeus* raised upon sawhorses as the instrument of a saint's martyrdom, see the 'Martyrdom of St. Bartholomew' in the Belles Heures of Jean, Duc du Berry, fol. 161.
47. *Acta Sanctorum*, 2 281.

Videns autem Caesar, quod animum suum mutare non posset, *jussit eam in eculeo suspendi*, et vivam decorari, et de carne ejus particulas scindi. Ipsa vero *in eculeo suspensa*, clamavit a Dominum dicens: Misere mei Domine et conforta me, ut fortiter certare valeam contra inimicum. Hiis dictis, statim Angelus Domini venit cum impetu magno et liberavit eam, et fregit lignum in quo pendeat, et multi pagani ceciderunt in terram, et mortui sunt; sed et multi crediderunt in Christum. Tunc jussit Caesar in carcerem poni usque in crastinum.

48. *Acta Sanctorum* 2 281.

Et dixit ei: Crede, Apollonia, in deum Joven, et sacrifica. Quae respondit: O miser, non debes dicere Deum, sed daemonem, cujus minister es, et cum eo aeterna supplicia possidebis. Audiens, haec Imperator, furore repletus, eam duci jussit in hortum ferarum, ut eam bestiae morsu crudeli devorarent. Vidensque horribiles facies leonum ceterarumque bestiarum, timuit, signansque se signo sanctae Crucis orabat at Dominum, dicens: Domine Deus, qui liberasti Danielem de lacu leonum, libera me, ne tradar his bestiis in rapinam. Et mox bestiae, severitate et crudelitate postposita, accesserunt ad eam, tamquam catuli mansueti, ponentes se circa eam.

49. *Études d'histoire du théâtre* 52. Nagler *Medieval Religious Stage* 103 thinks that Cohen has confused Apollonia's fate with the martyrdom of St Livinus: 'But since faithful folk suffering from toothache turned to Saint Apollonia for succor, we may assume that the author and Fouquet clung to this tradition'.
50. Henry Martin *Les Fouquet de Chantilly: Livre d'Heures d'Étienne Chevalier* (Henri Laurens, Paris, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1924) 62 notes that the illumination includes the letter 'B', which is the 'première lettre de l'Antienne de Sainte Apolline: *Beata Apollonia ...*' The entire prayer reads as follows:

Beata apollonia graue tormentum pro domino sustinuit: primo tyranni extraverunt dentes eius cum maleis ferreis & cum esset in illo tormento orauit ad dominum iesu christum: vt quicumque nomen suum deuote inuocaret malum in dentibus non sentiret. versus. Ora pro nobis beata apollonia. Responsum. Vt digni efficiamur promissionibus christi. Oremus.



Omnipotens sempiterne deus qui beatam apoloniam virginem et martyrem tuam de manibus inimicorum liberasti & eius orationem exaudisti: te queso per intercessionem eius et beati laueentii [sic for laurentii?] martyris tui simulque omnium sanctorum et sanctarum vt dolorem a dentibus meis expellas sanum & incolumnem meipsum efficias: vt tibi gratiarum actiones referre valeam in eternum. Per dominum nostrum iesum christum filium tuum. Qui tecum vivit.'

*Heures a l'usage de Rome tout au longss sans riens requérir. Avec les figures de lapocalypse et plusieurs autres hystoires: tand de lancien que du nouveau testament* (Gillet Hardouyn, Paris, 1510) fols li<sup>r</sup>-lii<sup>r</sup>. See also the same prayer in: *Heures a l'Usage D'angiers* (Philippe Pigouchet pour Simon Vostre, Paris, 1502), BL C.29.g.4, and in BL MS Egerton 2019, fol. 217. This text does not occur in the Simon Varie hours on which Fouquet worked later, however. That prayer begins with an initial V as the first letter of the following text: *Virgo martir egregia pro nobis appolonia funde preces ad dominum vt tollat omne ...* James H. Marrow *The Hours of Simon de Varie* (The J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, 1994) 207.

51. *Etymologiae* XVIII lix.

De horum execratione ludorum. Haec quippe spectacula crudelitatis, et inspectio vanitatum, non solum hominum vitiis, sed et daemonum jussis instituta sunt. Proinde nihil esse debet Christiano cum circensi insania, cum impudicitia theatri, cum amphitheatri crudelitate, cum atrocitate arenae, cum luxuria ludi. Deum enim negat, qui talia praesumit, fidei Christianae praevaricator effectus: qui id denuo appetit, quod in lavacro jam pridem renuntiavit, id est, diabolo, pompis et operibus ejus.

52. Schaefer thinks that, far from casting an approving and sympathetic eye on the medieval theatre, Fouquet meant to attack the 'crude nature of the Mystery Plays with their portrayals of collective sadism, sanctioned here by the presence of the Emperor Decius': *The Hours of Etienne Chevalier* 112.

53. V.A. Kolve *The God-Denying Fool in Medieval Art and Thought* (forthcoming), based on his Alexander lectures (1993) and Clark Lectures (1994). For a general introduction to this topic, see V.A. Kolve 'God-Denying Fools and the Medieval "Religion of Love"' *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 19 (1997) 3-59, especially 3-33. The latter source, however, does not mention the Fouquet painting.

54. Tribby 'Medieval Prompter' 75, points out that the poet in Fouquet's miniature (whom he mistakenly identifies as a *meneur de jeu*) wears 'the pilos' [the word should be *pileus*] 'which was still used by various churchmen in the fifteenth

century, although it had been replaced in many communities by the skull-cap and hood'.

55. *PL* 111 col. 553.

Mystice autem theatrum praesentem mundum significare potest: in quo hi, qui luxum hujus saeculi sequuntur, ludibrio habent servos Dei, et eorum poenas spectando laetantur. Unde Apostolus dicit: Spectaculum sumus facti in hoc mundo angelis et hominibus propter Deum (I Cor. IV).

56. *PL* 111 col. 548.

De spectaculo autem in Apostolo ita legimus: Spectaculum facti sumus huic mundo, et angelis et hominibus (I Cor. IV). Quia erunt spectaculum Enoch et Elias usque adeo, ut corpora eorum in platea projiciantur in conspectu totius populi infidelis: ita et apostoli spectaculum facti sunt: quia publice irridebantur positi ad injuriam et mortem, quam passi sunt. Mundum autem angelos et homines dixit, quia et angeli mali sunt, dicente David in psalmo LXXIV [sic for Ps 77: 49]: Vexabant illos per angelos malos. Et homines mali atque increduli: his apostolorum injuriae oblectamenta sunt: mundus autem idcirco infidelitas dicitur, quia visibilia sequitur.

57. '*Spectacula Christiana*: A Roman Christian Template for Medieval Drama' *Medieval English Theatre* 9 (1987) 136–7. Davis quotes and translates here from Augustine 'Sermones' 51:2 (*PL* 38 col. 333).

58. According to Davis, 'Fouquet's miniature ... depicts the Augustinian principle of diverse watching with extraordinary thoroughness. We are shown an act of Roman justice, the power of the state visited on a refractory individual. We are shown, most outstandingly in the book and the authority of its bearer, the bases for a control of proceedings utterly different from those envisaged by the emperor who seems, not unreasonably, to be quite unaware of the explanatory frame that has been placed around him. The whole is laid on as a *spectaculum* to angels and men, and some appreciative devils too, who define the nature of the proceedings ultimately by the manner in which they look on' ('*Spectacula Christiana*' 143).

59. As Natalie Crohn Schmitt remarks, Fouquet orients the scene in such a 'strongly frontal' manner that the audience, which stands behind the actors, can see 'nothing whatever of what seems to be the play's most dramatic moment': 'Was There a Medieval Theatre in the Round?' *Medieval English Drama: Essays Critical and Contextual* edited Jerome Taylor and Alan H. Nelson (University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1972) 312.

- Fouquet's manipulation of point of view in this picture may well reflect his experiments with perspective and the representation of spatial depth that followed his visit to Italy, c. 1443–7. On this point see Callahan 'The Torture of Saint Apollonia' 125; Sterling *The Hours of Etienne Chevalier*, Preface 8–10, and Otto Pächt 'Jean Fouquet, A Study of His Style' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 3 (1939–40) 91.
60. 'Three Kinds of Outdoor Theatre Before Shakespeare' *Theatre Survey* 12 (1971) 3–4: 'Another significant pictorial source, now for the first time noticed in this respect, is Fouquet's miniature depicting a theatrical version of the rape of the Sabine Women'.
  61. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS Fr. 20071, fol 9<sup>r</sup>. This manuscript contains Pierre Bersuire's French translation of Livy's text, which also frequently appeared in printed editions throughout the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. I cite Bersuire's translation from *Le premier volume des grans decades de Tytus Livius* (Philippe le noir, Paris, 1530).
  62. Philip Butterworth 'Jean Fouquet's "The Martyrdom of St Apollonia" and "The Rape of the Sabine Women" as Iconographical Evidence of Medieval Theatre Practice' *Leeds Studies in English* NS 29 (1998) 53. See also Rey-Flaud *Le cercle magique* 131–6.
  63. As is customary with manuscripts painted in Fouquet's studio, the artist characteristically depicts his 'historical' characters in contemporary medieval costume.
  64. Livy *Roman History* translated B.O. Foster (Loeb Classical Library: Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, 1976; reissue of 1919 edition) 1 37.
  65. The episode is set off in Bersuire's translation with the rubric *de ludis consualibus* (*Tytus Livius* iv<sup>v</sup>).
  66. Bamber Gascoigne 'Fouquet's "Rape of the Sabine Women"' *Theatre Survey* 12 (1971) 155.
  67. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS fr. 6465. It was probably commissioned for Guillaume Jouvenal des Ursins about 1460.
  68. Like the Livy under consideration, the *Antiquitates Judaearum* was very much a 'studio' project completed at the very end of Fouquet's life. Fouquet himself only completed 12 of the miniatures in this MS, which was commissioned by Jacques d'Armagnac, c. 1470. The others were produced by assistants.
  69. Hosley 'Three Kinds of Outdoor Theatre' 4–5; Gascoigne immediately replied (in the same volume of *Theatre Notebook*, that 'the miniature is robbed of all

theatrical significance by the fact that the rape of the Sabine women was supposed to have occurred at a tournament or games' and that the picture was simply 'Fouquet's attempt at depicting a Roman tournament'. Few, however, have heeded his advice ('Fouquet's "Rape of the Sabine Women"' 155); Rey-Flaud *Cercle magique* 133–6.

70. 'Iconographical Evidence' 57–8, 60–1.
71. *A Source Book in Theatrical History* (Dover, New York, 1959) 51.
72. Tribby 'Medieval Prompter' 76; Nagler *Source Book* 52. Given the lack of French documentary evidence that might convincingly identify Fouquet's book-holding man as such a *régisseur-prompter*, contemporary theatre historians often appeal to a surprising source elsewhere for possible documentary evidence: a passage from Richard Carew's *Survey of Cornwall* (1602) in which the antiquary describes how the Cornish performed 'the Guary miracle, in English, a miracle-play ... a kinde of Enterlude, compiled in *Cornish*'. According to Carew, 'the players conne not their parts without booke, but are prompted by one called the Ordinary, who followeth at their back with the booke in his hand, and telleth them softly what they must pronounce aloud' (quoted in Philip Butterworth 'Book-Carriers: Medieval and Tudor Staging Conventions' *Theatre Notebook* 46 (1992) 15). To some theatre historians, Carew's description of the 'ordinary' so convincingly explains the book-holder painted by Fouquet that it has seemed possible to talk about a widespread 'convention' of medieval theatre practice in which a commanding figure — whether he be named an 'ordinary', a *meneur de jeu*, *régisseur*, or a *maestro* — commonly strolled about on stage reading a book and prompting actors in full view of the audience (Cohen *Livre de conduite* xlvii–xlviii Butterworth 'Book-Carriers' 15–27; Butterworth 'Iconographical Evidence' 56–7).

Unfortunately, however, Carew's evidence, such as it is, is deeply problematical and will not easily serve to establish the existence of such a widespread 'convention'. First of all, Carew himself plainly regards the Cornish 'ordinary' and the prompting practices he describes as foreign and even eccentric ones. He means to describe how *they* in Cornwall produce *their* 'Guary'. Because he expects his Anglophone readers to be unfamiliar with the 'ordinary' and his peculiar method of prompting in full view of the audience, he must explain it to them. Otherwise, his readers will not understand the joke that follows. If any English play has ever employed a similar 'convention', he has not heard about it, and he clearly expects that none of his readers will have heard of such a 'convention' either.

Secondly, both the source and extent of Carew's knowledge of medieval Cornish drama remains difficult to judge. Carew wrote his *Survey*, after all, at the beginning of the seventeenth century when the number of native Cornish speakers was entering a terminal decline. Carew's *Survey*, indeed, in some ways symbolizes the linguistic climate in Cornwall at the time. It thus purports to describe 'the state of our Countrie' [Cornwall], but is written in English and addressed to an Anglophone audience. As a consequence, in describing medieval Cornish theatre, Carew correctly emphasizes that the 'Guary' was 'compiled in *Cornish*', but he nevertheless reports the 'mery pranke' in English dialogue. In doing so, perhaps he merely offers a necessary linguistic condescension to his Anglophone readers, but his linguistic choice here nevertheless prompts a number of relevant questions. To what extent did an Anglophone writer like Carew understand the Cornish language? What was the source of Carew's information? Did Carew's informant understand Cornish? When did the event happen? Was Carew conjuring up an old tale that originated many years before, or was he reporting a relatively recent incident? Did the actors who performed the 'Guary' on the occasion of the 'mery pranke' fully understand Cornish, or were many of them Anglophones as well? If so, did they perhaps require an 'ordinary' to follow at their back prompting them with the unfamiliar Cornish text?

Finally, Philip Butterworth ('Iconographical Evidence' 62–4) would buttress the case for a medieval 'convention' of onstage prompting by appealing to the modern (nineteenth/twentieth-century) production of the Trevelez (Spain) *Representación de Moros y Cristianos*. During performance, 'the "maestro" provides the performers with all their lines — not just forgotten ones ... The 'maestro' says the lines quietly in advance of the performer, line by line or statement by statement which is then repeated' (62). It is hard to see how such a modern production can possibly establish whether a similar medieval production 'convention' in fact ever existed.

73. Theatre historians commonly rely upon the opinion of Klaus G. Perls as to Fouquet's authorship of this picture: *Fouquet* (Hyperion, Paris, 1940) 27–8. See, for example, Rey-Flaud *Cercle magique* 133, and Butterworth 'Iconographical Evidence' 53 and 65 n. 4. The art-historical consensus, however, more commonly accepts Paul Durrieu's sceptical opinion: *Le Tite-Live de la Sorbonne et le Forum romain* (Leroux, Paris, 1915) 32. See, for example, Nicole Reynaud *Jean Fouquet* (Éditions de la réunion des musées nationaux, Paris, 1981) 75–7.

74. Rey-Flaud (*Cercle magique* 133) admirably points out the dependence of the 'Sabine Women' bookholder on the 'Apollonia' bookholder, thus demonstrating that the latter is a copy of the former:

Nous retrouvons en effet le meneur de jeu avec le même aspect exactement qu'il avait dans la miniature du *Martyre de sainte Apolline*, même attitude (livre dans la main gauche, baguette dans la main droite) même longue robe bleue, même grand revers rouge sur les épaules, même petite toque rouge.

75. Fouquet, for instance, depicts Maistre Etienne Chevalier in nearly identical poses and wearing nearly identical clothing (Melun diptych and the Hours of Etienne Chevalier). Similarly, Fouquet will often use the same pattern to represent the same historical figures in the *Grandes Chroniques de France* and the *Antiquitates Iudaeorum* of Josephus.

76. 'Fouquet's "Rape of the Sabine Women"' 155.

77. *Ludi circenses sacrorum causa, ac deorum gentilium celebrationibus instituti sunt. Unde et qui eos spectant daemonum cultibus inservire videntur.* PL 82 col. 653.

78. '*Spectacula Christiana*' 132–7. Davis does not distinguish between the theatre and the *ludi circensibus*, as I am doing here. Augustine particularly has the latter in mind when discussing those *spectacula* which led to the martyrdom of such Christians as Perpetua and Felicitas (for which, see the passage from one of Augustine's sermons cited by Davis, 136).

79. Tertullian *De Spectaculis* translated T. R. Glover (Loeb Classical Library, Harvard UP, Cambridge, Mass, 1984) 244–247.

Exinde ludi Consualia dicti, qui initio Neptunum honorabant. Eundem enim et Consum vocant. Dehinc Ecurria ab equis Marti Romulus dixit; quamquam et Consualia Romulo defendunt, quod ea Conso dicaverit deo, ut volunt, consilii, eius scilicet, quo tunc Sabinarum virginum rapinam militibus suis in matrimonia excogitavit. Probum plane consilium et nunc quoque inter ipsos Romanos iustum et licitum, ne dixerim penes deum. Facit enim et hoc ad originis maculam, ne bonum existimes quod initium a malo accepit, ab impudentia a volentia ab odio, a fratricida institutore, a filio Martis. Et nunc ara Conso illi in circo demersa est ad primas metas sub terra cum inscriptione eiusmodi: Consus Consilio Mars Duello Lares Coillo Potentes. Sacrificant apud eam nonis Iuliis sacerdotes publici, XII. Kalend. Septembres flamen Quirinalis et virgines... Sed haec satis erunt ad originis de idololatria reatum.

80. *De Spectaculis* : *Nihil iam de caussa vocabuli, rei caussa idololatria sit* (244–5); *Deum offendit qualiscumque pompa circi* (250–51).

81. '*Spectacula Christiana*' 128.

82. *Etymologiae*, 18.59:

Haec quippe spectacula crudelitatis et inspectio vanitatum non solum hominum vitiis sed et daemonum iussis instituta sunt. Proinde nihil esse debet Christiano cum Circensi insania, cum impudicitia theatri, cum amphitheatri crudelitate, cum atrocitate arenae, cum luxuria ludi. Deum enim negat qui talia praesumit, fidei Christianae praevaricator effectus, qui id denuo appetit quos in lavacro iam pridem renuntiavit; id est diabolo, pompis et operibus eius.

For the importance of this passage, see both Davis '*Spectacula Christiana*' 138 and Jones 'Isidore and the Theatre' 13–4. Both also point out Isidore's rôle in transmitting Tertullian's ideas to the later Middle Ages. Sometimes, as Jones shows, Isidore cites Tertullian almost verbatim. The passage quoted above thus depends upon a very similar passage in Tertullian's *Apologeticus*, chapter 38.

83. Hosley 'Three Kinds of Outdoor Theatre' 5. Butterworth, echoing this interpretation, refers to 'the central scenic device of the statue on the pedestal' ('Iconographical Evidence' 60).

84. *De Spectaculis* 247.

85. Livy *Roman History* 1 35. For attempts to identify the idol as Consus, Neptune, or even Minerva, see Gascoigne 'Fouquet's "Rape of the Sabine Women"' 155 and Butterworth 'Iconographical Evidence' 59. Bersuire's French translation overlooks Livy's conflation of Consus and Neptune. He thus construes the passage in question as *Romulus ... ordonna vngs ieux solennelz a neptune le cheuaucheur*, and then follows with the rubric: '¶ *De ludis consualibus*' (Tytus Livius iv).

86. Perhaps, in this respect, one should also mention the picture's 'middle plane', which is dominated by King Romulus seated in his royal box. In commanding the space between the gilded idol in the background and the abduction of the Sabine Women in the foreground, Romulus provides a vital link between the two foci. He has established the games in honour of the idol in the background, and his plan is being acted out in the foreground. In this way, Romulus' idolatry visibly finds fulfillment in the Rape of the Sabine Women.