

LE RÉGISSEUR TOUJOURS SUR LES PLANCHES:
Gustave Cohen's Construction of the Medieval '*Meneur de jeu*'

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At the very beginning of the twentieth century, a young student of French literature named Gustave Cohen was writing a book that would become one of our most influential studies of the medieval theatre: *Histoire de la mise en scène dans le théâtre religieux du moyen âge* (1906). As part of his research, he naturally consulted Hubert Cailleau's somewhat enigmatic image of a man wearing a violet doublet with red sleeves, yellow stockings, a fashionably prominent codpiece, and holding a staff in one hand and a roll of paper in the other (PLATE 1). The great Petit de Julleville had examined the same image a quarter of a century earlier, and he offered the suggestion, with some hesitation, that 'perhaps' the elegant young man might be *le maître du jeu* or one of the *origineurs* of the Valenciennes Passion Play.¹ Cohen, however, believed he knew exactly who this dapper young man was, and he felt no hesitation at all in describing him as the play's *meneur de jeu*, even though, as we shall see, there was little evidence in the records and texts of the medieval theatre for such an office. He had no doubt that Cailleau's miniature had captured not just an individual, but that it also portrayed a type of theatrical professional that he called *le régisseur toujours sur les planches*, 'the always on-stage director'. Cohen felt so confident of this identification, indeed, that he published Cailleau's miniature in his *Théâtre en France au moyen âge* and entitled it *Le Meneur de jeu*.²

Cohen's description of the duties and powers of the *meneur de jeu*'s office portrays him as a man of immense power and authority, and the incumbents of that office must have pursued their duties with almost Herculean energy:

in the wings he supervises those who are in charge of the *secrets*; he entrusts to certain men, in whom he has confidence, the duty of collecting the money at the entrance to the play; on stage, he is here, there, and everywhere: book in hand, baton raised, he serves as prompter and as stage manager; he is truly the 'master of the play'.

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PLATE 1: Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, ms fonds français 12536 fol. 293^f
Hubert Cailleau *A Superintendent of the Valenciennes Passion* (performed 1547);
often erroneously identified as the '*meneur de jeu*'

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He readies the boys to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem. He signals the actors to go from one part of the stage to another and keeps careful control of their moves. He holds the book. As conductor of the orchestra, he both commands the musicians in Paradise to play a hearty *silete* and the devils to sound their formidable thunderings. As *protocole* he calms and silences the audience with soothing and prudent words, reassures them of the orthodoxy of what they are about to see, advertises the marvels that are to come, and pops pre-masticated morsels of theology into their mouths. He speaks the play's prologues and epilogues, bids the audience to rest and eat between morning and afternoon *journées*, sends them home at night, and at last, at the end of the performance, he leads them in intoning a *Pater noster* or *Te Deum*.³ One wonders whether the young man of Cailleau's miniature could possibly muster the authority, charisma, intellect, gravitas, and energy to perform all these functions.

Cohen's immense reputation has made the *meneur de jeu* familiar to subsequent generations, and we find this very passage echoed again and again in more recent works that describe the *meneur de jeu* as an on-stage director. One modern commentator thus imagines him 'standing boldly forth among his actors, vigorously gesturing with his baton, and with the prompt-copy open in his other hand' while another envisions him waving his staff about to direct his actors 'rather in the way a present-day conductor controls an orchestra'.⁴ But just how well-founded is this now widely-popular view? Upon what authority did Cohen draw to document the existence of his all-powerful director? How did the idea of the medieval *meneur de jeu* develop? From what materials did Cohen construct this figure? How do we know that a single figure performed all the functions that Cohen ascribes to him? And how do we know that he directed his play while standing boldly forth among his actors, waving his arms about like an orchestra conductor? Why then did Cohen settle on this term?

To answer these questions, I propose to undertake here a study of the growth and development of the idea of the *meneur de jeu* as it developed in nineteenth-century French scholarship and as it culminated and flowered in the work of Cohen, where it achieved its final and most influential form.

The *Meneur de jeu* as Expositor: Louis Paris and Mercadé's *La Vengeance nostreseigneur*

What is a '*meneur de jeu*' anyway? Cohen uses the name as if it had undoubted historical and lexical validity. The term *meneur du jeu*,

however, occurs only rarely in the records and texts of the early French theatre. (The variants in this syntax are not accidental: their significance will become apparent in due course.) Those who exercised what we might call 'directorial' office in early plays are most often called *origineurs* and *superintendants* in the records, as they are in the Valenciennes contract.⁵

La Curne de Sainte-Palaye's *Dictionnaire historique* (1875–1882) was probably the first to define the *meneur du jeu* as a theatrical term for a fifteenth-century 'directeur de théâtre' and 'entrepreneur de spectacles'.⁶ All other more recent dictionaries follow La Curne de Sainte-Palaye's lead. More importantly, all dictionaries cite exactly the same source to justify this definition: Antoine Vérard's edition of *La Vengeance nostreseigneur* (1491).⁷ What strikes one most about consulting these dictionaries, indeed, is not only the absence of citation to any other occurrence of *meneur du jeu* beyond the Vérard text, but also the curious absence of any theatrical meanings of the noun *meneur* before the nineteenth century. Godefroy, for instance, records the dominant meanings of the noun *meneur* during the fifteenth century as 'tutor' and 'procurer', and he does not record any specific theatrical senses at all.⁸ Louis Dochez's mid-century *Nouveau Dictionnaire de la langue française* only recognizes a *meneur* as someone who leads or conducts, and likewise omits any specifically theatrical usage.⁹ Nor is there any evidence that the verb *mener* was ever used to refer specifically to play-directing in the fifteenth century, or that either the verb or the noun had any specific theatrical meaning whatsoever. Other dictionaries find references to a *meneur de ours* (a bearward) who *les fait voir et danser en public* — certainly a reference to performing if not a theatrical reference *per se*.¹⁰ Though no dictionary lists a specific theatrical meaning for the verb *mener* in the fifteenth century, some hypothesise that it may originally have referred only to the conducting of animals, and then little by little extended its usage to its many other meanings which refer to all sorts of conducting, governing, and leading activities in a variety of senses.¹¹ As for the use of *meneur* specifically as a definitive term meaning 'theatre director', however, all *lexical* roads lead directly to Vérard's edition of the *La Vengeance nostreseigneur* and to nowhere else.

A handful of genuine references to a *meneur du jeu* (or variants) do appear in theatrical texts and records during the fifteenth century. But it remains a rare term, and in this sense the dictionaries reflect accurately enough its relative uncommonness and even unimportance. Petit de Julleville, for instance, merely cites a reference to a priest of Dijon, Jehan Montbeliard, who is described as *meneur et conduiseur* of a 1447

performance of the *mystère* of *Saint Éloy* at Dijon, although it is unclear whether the term in this case merely identifies the most important actor or 'leader' of the troupe, or the overall organizer of the performance.¹² A *Meneur du ieu* delivers prologues and epilogues in Mercadé's *La Vengeance Jhesucrist* (c. 1415), and again at the end of the century, as we have seen, he reappears in the much expanded version of this play first printed by Vêrard (1491).¹³ A *Meneur du jeu* also serves as *Prologueur* in the fifteenth-century saint's play, *Saint Bernard de Menthon*.¹⁴ In addition to these appearances — which may have been the only ones known to Petit de Julleville and Cohen — a *Meneur du jeu* delivers prologues and epilogues in Nicolas Loupvent's *Mystère de St Étienne* (1548), and his presence is also evoked in a handful of stage directions.¹⁵ Finally, fleeting references to a *mestre du jeu* appear three times in the stage directions to the *Mystère de la Conception* (c. 1490).¹⁶ There may well be more out there; the *mestre du jeu*'s appearance in the *Conception* has only recently turned up. Taken together, however, these references probably provide a fair representation not only of the number of the *meneur*'s appearances, but also of the range of tasks he apparently performed on stage.

Our investigation properly begins with Eustache Mercadé's manuscript version of *La Vengeance Jhesucrist* (c. 1415). In this as yet unpublished *mystère* a speaker described as *Le meneur du ieu* appears for the very first time in the history of the drama.¹⁷ In it, he delivers a prologue to each of the play's three *journées*. In Vêrard's printed text, an expanded and revised version of Mercadé's manuscript play,¹⁸ a speaker named *Le meneur du ieu* once again serves as an expositor. Although he is closely modelled on Mercadé's original, he serves a somewhat different purpose than he does in the original manuscript version. Nevertheless, in these two plays we have at least found undoubted references to a *meneur du jeu* who performs some sort of role on stage. And here the story begins, because it is in these plays that Cohen's all-powerful director was born.

We may even have visual evidence of this prodigious birth. In the 1830s, Louis Paris, a French librarian and scholar, discovered some intriguing tapestry sketches that he connected with a performance of the longer, revised text that he thinks was staged at Reims in 1531.¹⁹ The first of these sketches (PLATE 2) is entitled '*La Vengeance Nostre Seigneur*' — which is the title of the Vêrard version — and an inscription further informs us that it represents *le mistere de la vengeance de la mort ... Jesuchrist*. The sketches are very vigorous and convincing as representations of the play *text*. The connection between printed text and tapestry sketch, indeed,

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PLATE 2: *De la mondanité du peuple de Syon*, engraving by Casimir Leberthais
from Louis Paris *Toiles peintes et tapisseries de la ville de Reims* (1843)
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is clearly demonstrated by a glance at Vérard's page-headers that define for the reader the segments of action. Four of these headers dominate Vérard's presentation of the first *ournée*: *De la mondanité du peuple de Syon* (A2^v–A4^r), *Comme les sages reprenoyent les enfans de Syon* (A4^v–A5^v), *Le proces de paradis* (A6^r–B4^r), and *Des signes qui apparuerent en hierusalem* (B4^v–C2^v, D1^r–F6^v). Although the sketch omits the little heavenly drama of the Four Daughters of God, the other three headers define precisely the

subject matter that the artist chooses to depict:²⁰ on the square before the Temple of Jerusalem, the Children of Zion dance away the holy day; the Rabbi Moyses and Joseph the sage reprehend them for their *mondanité* while the prophetic fool, Jesus Anay, utters his warnings unheeded. Terrible signs appear in heaven; a fiery chariot and a sword. As an artist's textual illustration, this lively sketch tells us a great deal about how a sixteenth-century reader may have visualized Vérard's printed text. Its value as an attempted representation of a *performance* of that text, however, is quite another matter. Modern scholarship has simply not been able to endorse Louis Paris' enthusiastic views and has generally found these sketches so impractical as to be worthless for this latter purpose, except possibly for the study of costume.²¹

One of the figures who crowd the stage in this scene (PLATE 2A) has been identified as Cohen's *meneur de jeu*:

In the center of the commotion stands an isolated figure carrying a short staff and wearing a flat cap instead of the turbans and conical headdresses of the Jews. He is surely meant to be the *meneur de jeu*.²²

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PLATE 2A: Man with a staff (and another behind him); detail from PLATE 2

Might not this enigmatic figure be a *meneur de jeu* standing on stage and plying his trade in full view of the audience?

Significantly, Louis Paris did not himself make this suggestion. Rather, such an identification of this stick-wielding figure at the centre of the tapestry sketch occurs entirely post-Cohen. Moreover, those who make

this identification never explain the grounds for it. Superficially at least, the stick-wielding man from Reims does resemble the Valenciennes supervisor a good deal, and I expect that this supposed resemblance has a good deal to do with identifying him as a *meneur de jeu*. Both, for instance, wear similar flat caps and short coats, and both even wield their sticks in the same hand. But there are crucial differences as well. The man from Reims, for instance, holds neither book nor *rollet*. If he were indeed the play's *meneur de jeu* — particularly the sort of *meneur* that Cohen imagines — wouldn't he have to carry some text in order to do all — or even some — of the tasks that Cohen has assigned to his 'always on-stage director'? Isn't the *meneur du jeu* supposed to have *porté le livre à tous les jours q'on a joué ledit Mistère?*²³ Certainly the stick-wielding man from Reims seems to be someone of authority, but exactly what authority does he wield? He is, after all, not the only such figure depicted in the sketch; just behind him another man, stick laid over his shoulder, seems to be walking off stage (see PLATE 2A), and the Jewish authority presiding over *le conseil des Juifs* in the upper right also holds a similar wand.

We have so far, of course, been discussing the *Meneur du jeu* of Mercadé's play as if he were the sort of on-stage director that Cohen describes. Does the play itself, however, support such a construction? To answer this question, we must examine the role of the *Meneur du jeu* in both the manuscript and print versions of Mercadé's play. As for the manuscript *Vengeance Jhesucrist*, Stephen K. Wright points out that Mercadé innovatively divides the 'traditional role of the *expositor ludi*' between 'two separate speakers, the *Prescheur* and the *Meneur de jeu*', whose speeches reflect 'two mutually incompatible value systems'. Let us consider how these two 'value systems' characterize the roles of these two expositors.

On the one hand, the *Prescheur* is exactly the same expositor who appears in Mercadé's other *mystère*, the so-called *Passion d'Arras*. To judge from his character and function, he might as well have stepped directly from the one play to the other. In both plays, he delivers prologues as well as epilogues, and these are invariably presented as sermons. He invariably begins with a line or two of biblical text that he calls his *theume*, and then preaches on that theme, applying it to both the action of the *ournée* that he is introducing and to the lives of the members of the audience. He ranges widely through the Psalms and Gospels for these themes. He thus chooses Luke's announcement that 'the Lord is risen indeed' as his sermon for the prologue to the fourth *ournée*, which stages the Resurrection, and

he wittily selects this verse from Psalm 18 as his sermon theme for both the first prologue and final epilogue: 'His going out is from the end of heaven, And his circuit even to the end thereof'.²⁴

In the manuscript *Vengeance*, the *Prescheur* presents himself as a bookish man deeply learned in *les escrips / Et les livres de saincte Eglise / Ou nostre matere est comprinse* (lines 4288–90). His prologues and epilogues also take the form of homilies based on scriptural *theumes*. Where the *Prescheur* of Mercadé's *Passion* selects these *theumes* from a variety of biblical texts, however, the *Prescheur* of the *Vengeance* selects his exclusively from the opening six lines of Psalm 2, *Quare fremuerunt gentes, et populi meditati sunt inania?* ('Why have the Gentiles raged, and the people devised vain things?'), an appropriately vengeful passage that envisions the princes of the earth rising up against the Lord and his Christ, and the Lord responding with derisive laughter, anger, and rage.²⁵ The *Prescheur* asks the audience to understand the Psalm as a *prophesie de David* about the Jews' conspiring to crucify Christ and — when they do not repent — the Lord's angry revenge upon them through the destruction of Jerusalem. He constructs moral and theological lessons from the play's action, exhorts his listeners to apply these lessons to their own lives, and 'admonishes' them 'to practice the virtues of prayer, penance, and righteousness'.²⁶ He begins the first *journée*, for instance, by citing Psalm 2: 2, '... the princes met together against the Lord, and against his Christ'. In preacherly fashion, he then draws out the spiritual meaning of this *theume* as a warning against the *envie* and *folle erreur* of those who would deny their Saviour, and then introduces the play itself as a fulfilment of David's prophecy.²⁷

The *Meneur du jeu*, on the other hand finds no corresponding expositor in Mercadé's earlier *Passion*. He makes his first appearance as an expositor in Mercadé's *Vengeance Jhesucrist*. As the play's second expositor, he instructs the audience from an intellectual viewpoint distinct from, but complementary to, the *Prescheur*. Where the *Prescheur* 'advocates the path of Christian renunciation and the *gloria passionis*', as Wright puts it, the *Meneur* by contrast 'celebrates the achievements of individual heroism in the realm of secular politics'.²⁸ A historian rather than a preacher, he speaks only once in each *journée*, just before the play starts and immediately after his clerical colleague has delivered his moral homily; he never appears at the end of a *journée* to deliver an epilogue. To distinguish their roles the more sharply, Mercadé even gives him a little joke to make at the expense of the longwinded *Prescheur* who has just left the stage:

Messeigneurs, pour nous abregier
 Sans vous trop longuement preschier,
 Et pourtant que ceste matere
 Est a ung chascun assés clere,
 Nous passerons legierement
 Au regard de ce preschement ... ²⁹ 4529–34

Taking a didactic, even academic approach, the *Meneur du jeu* avoids scriptural exegesis and embraces a more academic discourse. Instead of preaching homilies on biblical *theumes*, he delivers his prologues as if he were addressing a classroom of students, by lecturing to the audience on the chronology, history, and politics of each day's action. He thus grounds his lectures on *pluseurs escripts / Et pluseurs notables histoires*, specifically mentioning Paulus Orosius' *Historiarum adversus paganos libri VII* (177–8, 224, 9372–7).³⁰ 'Even when the *meneur de jeu* finally arrives at the description of the siege of Jerusalem', as Steven Wright has demonstrated,

he makes no attempt to portray it either as a moral exemplum or as a preordained link in the vast pattern of salvation history. On the contrary, it is characteristic of the *meneur de jeu* that he discusses the central event of *La Vengeance Jhesucrist* solely in terms of historical chronology and political cause and effect.³¹

In so doing, he provides the essential historical context that the audience needs to know if it is to understand the play's action.³²

The point of adding a historian-expositor should now be clear. Mercadé expects his audience to be familiar with the basic religious narrative, but expecting them to be familiar with Roman history involving the campaign of Titus and Vespasian against Jerusalem is another matter. As a consequence, he calls upon a figure of scholarly authority who can instruct the largely unschooled audience in the relevant historical narrative and who can also integrate the familiar biblical narrative within this larger, and less familiar, historical context.

Cohen, however, did not know of the manuscript version of Mercadé's play with its sharply delineated expositors. For him — as for his predecessors Valet de Viriville and Petit de Julleville — only the expanded, printed text was readily available in the Bibliothèque nationale, and it was from this version alone that they may have encountered the *meneur de jeu* (as Cohen calls him) at first hand.³³ But many scholars of Cohen's era did not bother to wade through Vérard's text at all. Instead, they eased their research burden a good deal by consulting the comprehensive prose précis

of the Vérard text that Louis Paris had published in his two-volume study of the Reims tapestry sketches (1841).³⁴ La Curne de Sainte Palaye undoubtedly consulted a copy of the Vérard text, but it may well have been Paris' book that called the attention of the lexicographers to our *Meneur* in the first place. For the most part, Paris' two-volume monograph provides a very able, 300-page summary of what is, after all, an exhausting text, and he supplies lengthy and abundant quotations as well.³⁵ In doing so, however, he made a fundamental error that continues to mislead scholars of the early drama: he represented the *Meneur du jeu* as the play's sole expositor. In so doing, he made him seem a far more powerful and important in the play than he actually is.

No one has yet noticed that the expanded Vérard version of Mercadé's play employs the same two sharply-distinguished expositors that distinguish the earlier manuscript version. Both the *Prescheur* and the *Meneur du jeu* thus once again provide complementary interpretative frames for the play, but their appearances are orchestrated somewhat differently in this longer version. In general, the *Prescheur* now introduces each of the play's four *journées* while the *Meneur du jeu* provides the epilogue. In this respect, the play both simplifies and alters the roles of the two expositors by assigning each a specific expository function and eliminating the double prologues that characterized the earlier version. There are, however, two exceptions to this rule. First of all, the *Meneur* makes a single appearance in a prologue, just after the *Prescheur's* sermon at the opening of the second *journée*. In this case alone, however, the reviser has simply imported the original speeches into his expanded text, and in doing so he apparently found it necessary to include not just the *Prescheur's* contribution to the prologue, but the *Meneur's* as well. In every other case, he has entirely rewritten the *Prescheur's* sermons and the *Meneur's* lectures so that he could maintain the new pattern of their appearances.³⁶ Secondly, the fourth *journée* begins without any prologue at all. The abruptness of this opening, however, may merely suggest that the *Prescheur's* usual prologue has been lost. And finally, the printed text identifies the speaker of the play's final epilogue as *Le meneur du ieu ou vng predicateur lequel que on veult*, although, as we shall see, the reviser has clearly written it to be spoken by the *Meneur*, not the *Prescheur*.

In expanding and simplifying the roles of these two expositors, Vérard's reviser has carefully preserved their original intellectual differences. Once again, the *Prescheur* provides the audience with a homiletic and religious context for understanding the play. Like his predecessor, he preaches

throughout on the first four lines of Psalm 2: he thus opens the first *ournée* with a sermon on Psalm 2: 1 (Aii^r), the second from Psalm 2: 4–5 (ai^r), and the third from Psalm 2: 2–3 (aai^r). He once again refers in self-consciously preacherly fashion to his *theumes*, and indeed V  rard emphasizes the homiletic nature of these sermons for his reader. The second *ournée* thus begins with this typographical point of reference: *Prologus. Theuma. Qui habitat in celis. &c.* In much the same fashion, the reviser constructs the *Meneur* even more elaborately as the voice of historical *auctoritas*. Where his predecessor makes do with a single reference to ‘Orosious’, the revised *Meneur* thus bristles with historical citations from a variety of *livres en substance*: Josephus, Hegesippus, Peter Comestor, Eusebius, Jerome.³⁷ In this new and expanded version of the *Vengeance*, each *ournée* begins with one voice of medieval *auctoritas*, a preacher who places the action of the play in a religious context, and it ends with another, distinctly different, voice of medieval *auctoritas*, an academic lecturer who summarizes and frames the action of the play in a historical context.

Although the text clearly divides the two expositors’ roles in this way, the presentation of the text in V  rard’s edition has confusingly obscured this pattern. On the one hand, the printer always identifies our historian — both in speech-prefixes and in page-headers — as *Le meneur du ieu/geu*.³⁸ On the other, however, the printer’s speech-prefixes and page-headers identify our clerical expositor not as *Predicateur* (as he is referred to in this play) but rather as *Prologus* or *Prologue*. To make matters worse, the printer also uses page-headers to characterize segments of the play’s action: *Comme galbe sceut que neron estoit mort* (hh1^r), *Comme galbe alla a romme pour estre empereur*, (hh2^r), *Comme vitelle sceut que neron estait mort* (hh2^v), *Comme vitelle propose en soy davoit l’empire* (hh3^r), and *Comme galbe demande ayde aux germains*, for example. The page-headers for the prologues and epilogues are also treated in this fashion, with the added complication that the printer sometimes (but not always) uses the word *jeu* or *geu* to mean *ournée*. For the first *ournée*, the printer’s page-header reads *Le prologue*, thus referring ambiguously either to the speaker (the *Predicateur*) or to his speech.³⁹ Because the second *ournée* uniquely begins with appearances of both expositors, the speech-prefixes clearly identify the speakers — first *Le prologue* (a1^r), then *Le meneur du ieu* (a1^v–a2^r) — as these two expositors make their appearances and speak their lines. But when the *Meneur* appears at the end of the second *ournée*, the page-header reads *Lepillogue du geu*, by which the printer apparently means ‘the epilogue to the second *ournée*’, and the *Meneur* himself is identified as *Le*

meneur du ieu in his speech-prefix on the same page (g4^v). When the *Predicateur* makes his appearance to open the third *ournée*, the speech-headers read *Le prologue du ieu*, and the printer confirms this by identifying the *Predicateur*'s speech itself as *Le prologue la tierce ournée de la vengeance de nostreseigneur* (aa1^{r-v}). The printer next identifies the close of the third *ournée* as *lepylogue du gieu* in the page-header, while identifying the speaker as *lepylogue*. *Le meneur du gieu* (gg4^{r-v}) in the speech-prefix. Finally, the printer's page-header at the end of the fourth *ournée* is perhaps only marginally less confusing by announcing *lepylogue du ieu*. Presumably this means the 'epilogue of the *jeu*' (meaning either the play or only the fourth *ournée*), because the prefix to the final speech of the play tells us that it can be spoken by either *Le meneur du ieu ou vng predicateur lequel que on veult* (rr3^v).⁴⁰ No wonder Louis Paris, and Petit de Julleville after him, found these speeches so confusing.⁴¹

However, as noted above, the sermons of the preacher and the lectures of the historian are revised and elaborated versions of those to be found in Mercadé's original. The text assigns the final speech of the play, it is true, to either [*le meneur du ieu* or *vng predicateur*, but this expression of ambivalence at least makes clear that there are two expositors in the play and gives us the identity of the *Prologue*. If one judges the speeches by their contrasting intellectual viewpoints rather than by these somewhat confusing page-headers and speech-prefixes, furthermore, then their identities are clearly and consistently differentiated.

We may well wonder, however, why Vêrard's text makes it possible for *ung predicateur* to deliver an epilogue that is so obviously a product of historical rather than preacherly authority. Certainly this last epilogue was written to suit the *Meneur*, not the *Predicateur*. Does this deliberately ambiguous speech-prefix respond to the absence of a prologue that should have been spoken by the *Predicateur* at the opening of the fourth *ournée*? One of the two expositors, after all, will not appear at all on the fourth day, and the *Meneur* has enjoyed an 'extra' prologue in the second *ournée*. This ambivalence, thus, seems an expression of a practical matter: the fourth *ournée* as written might seem to value the *Meneur*'s expository talents more than the *Predicateur*'s. By offering this option, the text thus leaves it possible for the *Predicateur* to make a final appearance on the last day, take the final bow, and restore the balance between the expositors.

If we now examine once again the man with the stick from the Reims tapestry, it seems extremely unlikely that the artist means him to represent the play's *meneur du jeu*. The *Meneur* of the play only appears to speak a

brief epilogue at the end of the play's first *ournée*. The tapestry sketch, however, conflates the two major scenes of dancing that take place earlier in the play. In both scenes, the Children of Israel dance at the behest of *Pillate le preuost* (represented in the centre foreground), to celebrate a *solennite grande*.⁴² *Raby Moyses* and *Joseph le Sage* (depicted in the lower right of the sketch) inveigh against the frivolity and dissolution of the Children who dance on a holy day. The prophet-fool, *Jesus Anay*, cries his warning, 'Vox, vox, vox', unheeded. Prodiges appear in the heavens, but are ignored by the dancing Children. If anything, the drawing represents the earlier of these two scenes because *Jesus Anay* has been imprisoned by the second dancing scene and he has to shout his warnings from his prison cell.⁴³ Our man with his stick stands apart from, but is oriented toward, the dancers. Who might he be?

Sabin, varlet de pillate (i.e. *Pilate's valet de chambre*), is the most likely candidate. *Pilate* charges him with the responsibility of proclaiming the *solennite grande* to the *enfants* of Jerusalem, and *Sabin* does so with a formal cry:

Or ouez iuifz et entendez
de par pillate le preuost
dedens quatre iours ou plus tost
la feste annuelle sera
celebree/ et comencera
chascun a la solenniser
pillate vous faict auiser
que sil ya nul tant soit hault
qui a ce iour face deffault
et ny soit personnellement
pugny sera tresrudement
pourtant seigneurs pensez a vous
et y venez toutes et tous
affin que nen ayes reproche.

A3v

A man of importance, a trusted intimate of *Pilate*, he carries out many of his master's orders throughout the first *ournée*. He takes *Jesus Anay* to prison, for example, and he convenes meetings with *Annas* and *Caiaphas*. But the tapestry sketch here represents him in most important role as *Pilate's 'crier'* who formally sets in motion the dance that represents *la bobance et dissolution des juifs et habitans de Jherusalem*, as the legend above the scene puts it. For such a role, a staff would properly symbolize his

authority as a representative of the Pilate the Grand Provost.⁴⁴ In the end, therefore, he is only one of many actors who crowd this scene. Like the other characters that surround him on stage, he has a role to play, not a play to direct.

As for Mercadé's *Meneur du jeu*, the title certainly *sounds* as if should identify its speaker as the play's organizer, its overall *superintendant*. But the text itself treats the *Meneur's* role in the play as a relatively minor one, so much so that his last appearance is deemed expendable: historian or preacher, *lequel que on veult*. If anything, the revised Vérard version actually diminishes the *Meneur's* on-stage role in that, with one exception, it limits his appearances to epilogues only. His title may perhaps identify him as the play's overall *superintendant*, but alternately it may refer as well to a subordinate of some kind, something like a stage manager. Neither text, however, gives much support for the notion that the *meneur du jeu* delivered these speeches either as a matter of theatrical convention or as a customary privilege enabling the play's powerful *superintendant* to present the production to the audience and take a proprietary bow at its conclusion. Both texts represent him merely as one of two almost interchangeable expositors, either of whom might equally well bring the production to a gracious close.

If Mercadé has designed his *Meneur du jeu* specifically as a vehicle for the play's powerful producer-director-stage manager, he has chosen a remarkably modest one. Of the two *Prologueurs*, he is by far the less dominant figure. In the original version, he neither opens nor concludes any *journée*, and he gives only one performance for each *journée* while the *Prescheur* gives two. The *Prescheur* greets and quiets the audience at the beginning of each *journée* and he sends them off at the end. The *Prescheur*, not the *Meneur du jeu*, opens the play each day, and he alone gives the final speech in the play and takes the final bow. Neither the manuscript nor the printed text provides any evidence whatsoever that the *Meneur* performs any other on-stage function than as Second *Prologueur* or that this role is treated any differently from the *Prescheur's* similar role.

If Mercadé has written a role so that the *meneur* can appear in his own person as a leader of the company, he curiously makes very little of his status. True, he sometimes bids the audience to be quiet so that the play might begin:

Faictes paix, Seigneur et ami.
Pilate, parlés après my.

Journée 1, 354-5

But the *Prescheur* performs the same sorts of audience direction and often at a much greater length.⁴⁵ The speeches written for him simply do not characterize him as the avuncular leader of the troupe come to mediate between audience and players rather like a medieval version of Thornton Wilder's Stage Manager. Why would the playwright, one wonders, bend his efforts to characterize the *Meneur* as an academic, but then expect the audience to see him not in that carefully-constructed role but in quite another one, as the leader of the company? If he wanted the *Meneur du jeu* to be recognized as the 'leader' of the company, why does he not design his speeches accordingly? No other actor in the play, after all, is identified in the play by his personal identity. The role of First *Prologueur* may thus have been performed by an actual cleric, but he is identified in the text as *Le prescheur*, not as, as he might perhaps have been, as the Prior of St John's. One might thus argue that Mercadé may have meant something different by calling his Second *Prologueur* '*Le meneur du jeu*'.

On balance, I hasten to add, the playwright probably does mean to designate the play's *superintendant* as the actor of that role; that he means to have us see the *meneur* as well as the historian. *Superintendants*, after all, often play roles as well as producing their plays, and we shall see that, by the mid-sixteenth century at the latest, *meneur du jeu* was one of the titles that might designate such a *superintendant*. But at the very least, Mercadé's use of that title for the first time in this play is hardly straightforward.

Nevertheless, the title, *Meneur du jeu* can also be satisfactorily explained as a description of the particular role that the playwright constructs for his Second *Prologueur*. As we have seen, Mercadé carefully distinguishes between the *Prescheur*, who delivers homilies to the audience, and the *Meneur*, who lectures the audience on the historical topics. The *Meneur*, in short, serves the audience as its lecturer or tutor; he is the *meneur* or 'instructor' of the play. Moreover, as Mercadé originally envisions him, he introduces the play. His is the last expository voice before the play begins. As such, he may be said to conduct or lead the audience into the action of the *mystère*. Thus his functions as a history tutor and (in the original version of the play) as an introducer play upon the dominant fifteenth-century meanings of the verb *mener* and of the noun *meneur*. In short, if we invoke the primary meanings of the noun *meneur* in the fifteenth century, we will find that they describe very well the role played by the Second *Prologueur*.

Had Mercadé named his second *Prologueur* more simply, *le Meneur* or even *le Tutor*, we might thus have little hesitation in declaring him to be

not a supervisor at all but merely the play's resident historian. Such a title might even have sharpened more neatly the intellectual distinction between the religious evangelist, the *Prescheur*, and the pedagogue, the *Meneur*. Mercadé, however, calls him *Le meneur du ieu*, a title that seems to resolve the ambiguity more convincingly on the side of the play supervisor. This designation, to be sure, may to some extent be a conventional one for identifying speakers of prologues. The playwright of the *Mystère de la Conception*, for instance, styles his *Prologueur* not merely as *Le Messenger*, but as *Le Messenger du jeu* at his first appearance.⁴⁶ If so, however, Mercadé doesn't follow this convention when he names his other *Prologueur* merely *Le prescheur*.

So far, however, we have been assuming that there can only be one relevant meaning of the phrase, *du jeu*. Such an assumption is particularly unsound when we are considering a term that is amenable to such a wide range of various meanings. As in the Latin *ludus* and the English *game*, the word *jeu* can mean anything from game, sport, musical performance, pretence, dissimulation, spectacle, ceremonial, and (of course) theatrical performance. This range of meaning is further extended when we consider that in the Latin culture of the Middle Ages, Latin meanings are constantly bubbling over into the vernacular.

In this context, one possible source for Mercadé's coinage, *meneur du jeu*, may well lie the Latin term *ludimagister* (*ludi magister*, *magister ludi*) as 'schoolmaster'. As used by Cicero, Martial, Justin, and others, that term may originally have meant an elementary schoolmaster, but in the Middle Ages it has become a common Latin term for schoolmasters at all levels.⁴⁷ *Meneur du jeu* thus looks very much like a literal translation of the Latin *ludimagister*, one rooted in the most common meaning of *meneur* in the fifteenth century: 'teacher'. The *jeu* reflects the Latin word for 'school', *ludus*. The more common, though less literal, French translation for the Latin term is *maistre d'escole*, but Mercadé is perhaps being appropriately pedantic in his literalism.⁴⁸ His *Meneur du jeu* is clearly a teacher, a master of students, a figure of medieval *auctoritas* rooted in classical learning. Mercadé might have simply called him a *meneur*, of course, but because his schoolmaster's authority is based upon his command of classical learning in particular, he has carefully chosen an identity that suggests his particular competence. Even if his title reflects his position as the leader of his company, nevertheless it also neatly reflects his academic character. As such, the title *le Meneur du jeu* deftly counterpoises him to the play's other

figure of medieval *auctoritas*, *le Prescheur*, the one a master of secular learning, the other a master of Christian teaching.

One other fifteenth-century play contributed to the developing nineteenth-century consensus that *meneur de jeu* was the standard title by which all producer-directors of fifteenth-century *mystères* were widely known. Like Mercadé's *Vengeance*, the anonymous *Saint Bernard de Menthon* also styles its *Prologueur* as *Le meneur du jeu*.⁴⁹ Although of uncertain date, *Bernard* probably postdates Mercadé's play. Its *Prologueur*, as a consequence, may well have been inspired by the Second *Prologueur* in the *Vengeance*, which was, after all, a popular *mystère*.⁵⁰ He opens and closes both of the play's two *journées*, and he makes an additional appearance as well in the middle of the second *journée* to effect a transition in the narrative. Like Mercadé's *Prologueur*, the *Meneur* of *St Bernard* presents himself as an *auctor*, a figure of medieval authority. He repeatedly refers to the source from which the play is drawn as *notre hystoire*.⁵¹ By *histoire*, moreover, he clearly refers to a specific historical text, an account of the saint's life by Richard de la Val-d'Isère, Bernard's successor as Archdeacon of Aoste. He repeatedly reminds the audience that the play they are seeing is only part of a longer narrative. At the end of the play, the *Meneur* declares that the audience has only seen an abridged version of part of the story and that it would take eight days at least to represent the entire text. His valedictory epilogue somewhat breathlessly summarizes all the things that the *mystère* necessarily omits from that text. His own authority, as represented in the play, thus depends entirely upon his mastery of that crucial text.

Ostensibly, at least, he addresses the audience because he knows a text that they do not; he can therefore tell them what is coming next, what has been omitted in making transitions from one episode to another, what has been left out entirely because of the necessity of abridgment, assure them of the truthfulness and significance of what they are seeing.⁵² Mastery of that text authorizes his appearance before the audience and provides him with the essential authority to mediate St Bernard's *histoire* to them. By contrast, the play makes no claim whatsoever that the *Meneur's* authority derives in any way from his supposed position as director or producer of the play, nor does the script provide any evidence that he ever directs anything.

On the whole, then, the role of *Meneur du jeu* in both Mercadé's *Vengeance* and the anonymous *Saint Bernard* provide only tantalizingly ambiguous evidence of the *Prologueurs'* identities. In both plays, the

Prologueurs clearly adopt characters, play roles. They both alike present themselves as masters of historical texts, and they address the audience because of that mastery. It is highly suggestive that the *Meneurs du jeu* in these texts all base their authority upon bookish learning and that they all present themselves to the audience as ‘historians’. Perhaps the *Meneur’s* title must be regarded as analogous to the *Auctor* (i.e. ‘author’) who serves as the *Prologueur* in the late-fifteenth-century *Saint Laurent*?⁵³ He, too, derives his authority from the text he has written and which he introduces and mediates to the audience.

Because modern scholarship has always assumed that these two expositors were to be understood *only* as *meneurs* in the sense of ‘directors’ of the plays in which they appeared, this assumption has generated another, even larger one: that the *meneur de jeu*, as the play’s director, invariably spoke the prologues and epilogues of medieval *mystères*, apparently as a kind of *droit du régisseur*. On this basis, for instance, we are sometimes told that the *meneur de jeu* delivers the prologue to the *Jeu d’Adam*, although there is no evidence whatsoever as to the identity of that expositor — or even that the prologue in question is actually meant to be spoken to an audience.⁵⁴ For Cohen, it was axiomatic that his ‘always on-stage director’ — precisely *because* he was always on stage — would declaim the play’s prologues and epilogues, bid the audience to rest and eat between morning and afternoon *journées*, send them home at night, and at the end of the performance, lead them in intoning a *Pater noster* or *Te Deum*.⁵⁵ Even in more recent studies, scholars thus refer to the delivery of prologues and epilogues as a standard ‘function of the *meneur de jeu*’.⁵⁶

The assumption that a *meneur de jeu* habitually delivered prologues and epilogues was never a well-founded one. Only three examples of a *meneur du jeu* named as the *Prologueur* in a French *mystère* have so far been identified. A *Meneur du jeu* of some sort, as we have seen, delivers prologues in the two versions of Mercadé’s *Vengeance* plays, even if we have difficulty in understanding what the author means by that term; and another is named as *Prologueur* in *St Bernard de Menthon*. Nicolas Loupvent’s *Mystère de St Étienne* (1548), which assigns the *Prologueur’s* duties with some hesitation to *le meneur du jeu ou quelque aultre personnage*, provides the remaining example.⁵⁷ Most prologues fail to characterize their speakers in any way and simply present themselves as *Prologue*. When they do designate specific speakers, these present themselves to the audience in a variety of identities: *Prologueurs*, *Messagiers*, *Acteurs* (i.e. authors), *Predicateurs* (including *Prescheurs*, *Precos*, and *Precieres*), and a scattering of

other names, including *Nuncius*, *Fleur-de-lis* (herald), *Le Sermon*, and more enigmatically, *Sensuit la seccion et la division du jeu*. Only three represent themselves as *Meneurs du jeu*.⁵⁸ Few if any of the rest can be masks for a *meneur du jeu*. The *mestre du jeu* who appears in three stage directions in the *Mistere de la Conception* apparently does not serve as the *Prologueur*, who is instead named *Le messangier du jeu*. Indeed, the presumption must be that when we have a character named *Prescheur* or Messenger, the audience is *not* expected to recognize him as a *meneur de jeu*.

Similarly, the *Acteur* in such plays as *Saint Laurent* and *Notre-Dame du Puy* must surely represent the authors of those plays and not a *meneur de jeu*. In *Saint Didier*, the *Prologue* conventionally begins and ends each *ournée*, but there is no indication that his function extends beyond these rather conventional speeches. Why, one wonders, would one want to insist that such a bland performance must have been delivered by the play's supposed *meneur*? Meanwhile, a Fool seems to be on stage nearly all the time, and he carries on trenchant dialogue with almost all the characters. Indeed, he often speaks after the *Prologueur* and takes the air out of his rather slight balloon. He, too, is unlikely to be a mask for the *meneur*; his acting role, for one thing is too demanding to allow him to perform the oversight and prompting functions that Cohen imagines.⁵⁹ Many plays, indeed, do not have prologues at all and merely begin with the first speech by one of the actors in the play.

Often, play texts and records provide positive evidence that the *Prologueur* cannot be a *meneur de jeu*. The Mons records, for instance, provide compelling evidence to the contrary, although Cohen seems to have overlooked the obvious contradiction in his edition of the records. Cohen thought he could identify at least eight men who performed supervisory roles in the Mons *Passion*, but none of them actually declaimed the prologues and epilogues, nor were any of them singled out as a *meneur de jeu*. Instead, Sire Gille le Naing, *prestre*, delivered prologues and epilogues, bade the audience to rest and eat, sent them home after the performance, and led them in the communal *Te Deum* at the end. He was, however, merely an actor, not a supervisor, and he was specifically cast to play that role, much as his colleague, the priest, Sire Jehan Lefranque, was cast specifically to play God.⁶⁰ Sire Gille's status as an actor hired to play the expositor's role neatly illustrates the point made by David Hobart Carnahan, that 'whenever a sermon was a part of the prologue, it was given by a priest, and a real priest. This priest might be the author, manager or a member of the company, but he must be a churchman'.⁶¹

Georges Clévay, a self-important bookseller and would-be actor, certainly did not think that the role of *Prologueur* was reserved for *meneurs de jeu*. When asked to take a part in a *mystère*, he replied that he would only agree to play a king, an emperor — or a prologue.⁶² Although in a few cases a *meneur* has apparently made himself available for duty as *Prologueur*, there is simply no evidence whatsoever that he conventionally did so as a kind of proprietary honour. That only three of the extant *mystères* employ the *meneur du jeu* as *Prologueur* would seem to suggest that the leader of the company, if any, rarely performed this task.

At this stage, therefore, all that one can say is that *meneur du jeu* was not a very common title in the fifteenth-century. His appearances as a *Prologueur* in two fifteenth-century *mystères* tell us absolutely nothing about his responsibilities for producing the play or whether he directed the play by standing in full view of the audience. Particularly in the earliest version of Mercadé's *Vengeance*, he may have been merely an actor employed to perform the role, perhaps even an actual academic *meneur* or teacher, perhaps one known to the audience and employed for that reason to serve as *Prologueur*. The best evidence for his supposed directorial responsibilities is merely the name itself: *meneur du jeu* sounds as if he ought to be a leader of the actors, and one mid-sixteenth-century *mystère* does in fact use that term to refer to a producer of sorts. Could the popularity of Mercadé's *Vengeance* have led, perhaps, to the adoption of *meneur du jeu* and *mestre du jeu* as names for play supervisors by, say, the 1490s? In Vêrard's printed edition, after all, the status of the *Meneur* as an academic has been somewhat obscured in the typographical presentation of the text, and sixteenth-century readers may well have concluded that the play's 'leader', rather than a mere academic, was called upon to perform *Prologueur* duties in that play.

However we resolve this ambiguity, we can at least say that Louis Paris' little error had perhaps unintentionally weighted the scale on the side of the *superintendant* as paterfamilias of the company. In doing so, it began the transformation of a historian-expositor of Mercadé's play into a very grand and powerful theatrical figure. Paris himself does not actually examine the possible meanings of *meneur du jeu*. For him the *Meneur* is simply the name of the play's expositor. In Paris' exhaustive summary, however, the fact that there is only a single *meneur du jeu*, coupled with his evocative name, suggested a central authority in control of the play's production. But the difficulty with all the well-documented names for authority figures on the medieval state — *superintendants*, *originateurs*,

organisateurs, and *conducteurs* among them — is that they all come in multiples. The Valenciennes contract thus names no less than thirteen *superintendants* (who are also called *organisateurs* and *conducteurs*) as well as three *originateurs*. The term *meneur du jeu*, by contrast, suggested a single authority, a presiding directorial figure who imposed his stamp on the play and who routinely stepped on stage to deliver prologues and epilogues. For these reasons, *meneur du jeu* became the name not just of a character in one obscure text that almost nobody read (except in Louis Paris' prose summary); it became the single most often used term to refer to a medieval play director.⁶³

The *Meneur du jeu* as Producer-Director: Marius Sepet and the Valenciennes *Superintendant*

About the same time as the *Meneur du jeu* was escaping his limited origins in the revised text of *La Vengeance nostre seigneur*, the portrait of the fashionable young man from Valenciennes took on added significance. Marius Sepet was probably not the first to declare Hubert Cailleau's miniature to be an actual portrait of a *meneur du jeu*, but he certainly was responsible for popularizing the idea, and he did it in a form that demonstrably influenced Cohen. Though he never quite achieved the status of Petit de Julleville as an authority of the early French theatre, Sepet was a protégé and disciple of Gaston Paris, one of the most important literary scholars of the generation before Cohen. He did his most important work on the earlier drama; his *Les Prophètes du Christ* (1878) is still regarded as one of the seminal studies of the origins of the medieval theatre in France.⁶⁴ In 1868, however, he wrote a popular account for the *Revue du monde catholique* of how he thought *mystères* were conceived, produced, and performed. His 'Sketch of a Dramatic Performance at the End of the Fifteenth Century' defined the late-nineteenth-century view of the *meneur du jeu*.⁶⁵ Sepet then republished his 'Sketch' in his collection of essays, *Le Drame chrétien au moyen âge* (1878), where it became an important reference for scholars of the early theatre.⁶⁶ In this form, it strongly influenced Cohen's own view of the 'always on-stage director'.

Sepet's 'Sketch' follows the activities of an apparently typical *meneur du jeu* from the time he is commissioned to write and produce the play, to the moment when he gives the epilogue to the performance and takes his final bow. A group of local *entrepreneurs*, drawn from the ranks of the rich bourgeoisie, decide that since it has been ten years since the performance

of the last *mystère*, the time is now ripe for producing a new one. They first commission a script from a *religieux et scientifique docteur*, who modifies and alters some older plays and offers the manuscript to the *entrepreneurs*. Although Sepet never names the French town in question or the *meneur du jeu* who writes and produces the play, he clearly models these respectively upon the performance in Angers in 1486 of a *Passion* composed by Jean Michel, who is described on the title page of the printed version as a *très éloquent et scientifique docteur*.⁶⁷ Sepet follows his *scientifique docteur* as he casts the principal roles and hires a master carpenter to construct the scenic scaffolds and invent the play's *secrets* (special effects). The *entrepreneurs*, meanwhile, now take on themselves the roles of *superintendants* and proceed to act as producers of the play. He imagines the *meneur* organizing a grand procession of *entrepreneurs*, actors, supervisors, and town officials to advertise the play, and he envisions the *meneur* himself riding prominently among them, 'attracting all eyes',

alone, on a horse adorned with a caparison, holding a scroll in his hand, bearing on his countenance that air of proud modesty that characterized, from the fifteenth century on, an author both jubilant and full of a good opinion of himself, the learned doctor, creator of the *mystère* and *meneur du jeu*.⁶⁸

As the preparations proceed apace, the *meneur* presides over meetings of the *entrepreneur*-supervisors. He negotiates with a troublesome actor who is perfect for the role of Judas but wishes to resign. When a fire burns down the almost-completed scenic scaffolds, he begins construction anew. On the day before the performance of the *mystère*, he leads the actors in formal procession into the theatre where they perform a farce designed to whet the interest of the audience. The next day, as the players take their places on scaffolds between 7 and 8 a.m., our *meneur* appears as '*Protocole*, that is to say as director, but as director playing in the drama, and he begins the prologue of the first *journée* in verse'.⁶⁹ He steps out onto the *parloir*, the platform that runs in front of the scenery scaffolds and that permits the actors to circulate rapidly between one and the other. Here

the *meneur du jeu* dressed as *Protocole*, wearing a violet doublet, red sleeves, yellow codpiece, trunk-hose, and stockings, black shoes, on his head a small, flat, black hat, and a sword at his belt, holding in his right hand a baton of the length of a small cane, and in the left a roll of paper, he walks up and down during the performance, encouraging, guiding, reprimanding the actors, addressing necessary

explanations to the spectators, demanding their silence, and ceaselessly repeating to them in a piercing voice:

*Silete! Silete! Silentium habeatis
Et per Dei Filium pacem faciatis!* 70

He then inaugurates the performance with a long sermon in verse, and after having very devoutly recited an *Ave Maria*, he turns to the actor who represents God the Father, and signals him to begin. He next delivers the prologue to the second and final *journée*; then at the end of the production, he delivers a final sermon and leads the audience in intoning a *Te Deum* to bring the performance to a close. Finally, Sepet imagines his *meneur du jeu* so impressing the citizens, that they commission him the following year to give a three-hour address to the King who is paying a visit to the city.

This imaginative account of the *meneur du jeu* in action is cobbled together from a variety of sources and a good deal of imagination. He takes his name, of course, from Vérard's edition of *Le Vengeance nostreseigneur*, and he delivers the prologues and epilogues of the *mystère* because Sepet concludes from Louis Paris' little error that delivering such speeches was one of the *meneur's* ordinary functions. The bourgeois *entrepreneurs* and the poet-director that they hire he takes from a published description of a procession organized by the Confrères de la Passion in Paris to advertise their performance of the *Actes des Apôtres* in 1541. A group of four *entrepreneurs* leads the procession: François Hamelin, *praticien* (lawyer, possibly physician?); François Poutrain, *tapissier*; Léonard Chobelet, butcher; and Jean Louvet, grain-merchant and florist. These are clearly the inspirations for Sepet's bourgeois *entrepreneurs* who determine to stage a *mystère* in his unnamed French town. The procession also includes a number of *poetes, orateurs, / Vrays precepteurs d'eloquence amateurs*, who ride in the procession, and who are described as *directeurs de si sainte entreprise*. Although this passage only seems to mean that the poets, orators, teachers, and lovers of eloquence were 'directors' in the sense that they collaborated on writing the text of the play, Sepet turns this crowd of rhetoricians into a *meneur du jeu* who both writes the text singlehandedly and directs the performance of the text he has written.⁷¹

These Sepet transforms into his *scientifique docteur* who rides in proud, self-satisfied, modesty on his caparisoned horse. He also knew the Valenciennes contract, from which source he took the *superintendants*. Cleverly, he organizes all these into a hierarchy: *entrepreneurs* hire a *scientifique docteur* as their *meneur du jeu* in whom they invest the power

and responsibility to write, produce, and direct the *mystère*; in turn, the *entrepreneurs* become *superintendants* performing subordinate production tasks under the direction of the *meneur*.

Finally, at the climax of his 'Sketch', the *meneur* at last steps on stage to deliver the prologue, and we recognize that Sepet is describing Hubert Cailleau's painting of our man from the Valenciennes Passion Play, red tunic, yellow hose, codpiece, black cap, scroll, staff, and all (PLATE 1). Perhaps we also realize that this portrait of a man in decidedly secular attire has determined Sepet's decision to characterize his *meneur du jeu* as a *scientifique docteur* rather than a cleric. Petit de Julleville, as we have seen, may well have hedged his bets a little and declared that the painting might 'perhaps' be meant to depict the play's *maître du jeu* or one of its *originateurs*,⁷² but to Sepet he had to be the *scientifique docteur*, the play's *meneur du jeu*.

But what does Cailleau's painting itself tell us in its manuscript context? Is this man in fact a *meneur du jeu*? And does the painter mean to show him on stage, either delivering a prologue as Sepet imagines him, or even directing the play during the performance? On the one hand, we can probably respond to the first of these questions with a qualified 'yes'. Probably this man does indeed represent one of the play's *superintendants*, although none of the Valenciennes documents uses the term *meneur du jeu*.

Although the portrait has no explanatory caption and thus does not specifically identify him as a *superintendant*, the textual context in which he appears does provide considerable support for this guess. The miniature is framed by the contract entered into by the thirteen *superintendants* who had been elected by the actors (*lesdicts compaignons joueurs*) to be their *maistres* and *conducteurs*. Just above the image stands a passage of text that details the powers of the thirteen *superintendants*, including quasi-judicial powers to inflict punishments upon the actors if need be. Beneath the miniature, there then follows a list of the names of the thirteen *superintendants*.⁷³ The placement of the miniature in this contextual frame thus strongly suggests that it must be identified as a representation of a *superintendant*. But if so, which one of the thirteen is he? Why has Cailleau chosen to represent a group of thirteen with a single figure?

On the other hand, the miniature's depiction of this probable *superintendant* has absolutely nothing to tell us about whether he may have exercised his office on stage. Cailleau only shows him alone, not associated with the stage or actors. In addition to this small miniature, Cailleau painted no less than twenty-six illustrations of the Valenciennes stage.

Although twenty-five of these (one for each of the play's *journées*) are populated with characters to represent various moments in the performance, none of the thirteen *superintendants* ever appears on stage among the actors so represented.⁷⁴

The implements he carries — a short staff and a small roll of paper — may perhaps tell us something about his office, but they do not tell us where or how he performed his role. As far as I can tell, there is no iconography specific to a play *superintendant* in the way that, for instance, a halo is specific to a saint. Rather the staff and the roll define the nature and source of his supervisory authority. Cailleau thus provides him with a staff for the same reasons that a king is conventionally depicted with a sceptre, a bishop with a crozier, a bailiff with a tipstaff, and a schoolmaster with a ferule. The staff he wields symbolizes his authority over those subject to his rule and the power to punish transgressions against the authority vested in him. The contract that the actors sign, after all, creates the thirteen *superintendants* as 'masters and conductors' of the company, and gives them the quasi-legal power to 'punish and fine the said actor-companions for any misdemeanour without recourse to the magistrates'.⁷⁵

Cohen, even more insistently than Sepet, identifies the roll that our *superintendant* carries with the script that Cohen imagines the *meneur de jeu* reading from on stage, either prompting the actors or directing the performance 'rather in the way a present-day conductor controls an orchestra'. Cohen, for instance, describes it as a *rollet*, although he nevertheless thinks it contains the play's 'libretto'.⁷⁶ Certainly such a small roll cannot contain the play's whole text (although presumably it might be large enough to contain an actor's part, something like the *Mons Book of Prologues*, perhaps).⁷⁷

I think this is a mistaken and impractical view, however. For one thing, the roll that Cailleau's *superintendant* carries seems too brief to contain enough text to either prompt or direct a play — could it possibly contain enough text for even one of the Valenciennes *journées*? For another thing, such a *rollet* strikes me as impractical if used on stage in the way usually imagined. One might just manage a book in one hand while waving a staff with the other — though this would involve considerable juggling — but how can our supervisor convincingly hold a scroll open with one hand and brandish his stick with the other? Wouldn't the *superintendant's rollet* require two hands to manage? If so, how would the putative *meneur de jeu* manage to both unroll the scroll and point with his staff at the same time? A far better interpretative context for the roll that

our *superintendant* carries, I would argue, lies in the Valenciennes manuscript itself. Our *superintendant* brandishes his roll and stick at us from the textual frame supplied by the contract. I would suggest that the best interpretation for the roll carried by our figure is that it represents the contract itself. The roll and staff together thus define the nature of the *superintendant's* power. The staff represents him as a man of authority, and the roll represents the contractual source of that authority. But this portrait certainly does not represent our *superintendant* as an on-stage director.

Our fashionable young man from Valenciennes is thus almost certainly meant to be a *superintendant*, a symbolic representative of the body of thirteen (or sixteen, if one counts the *originateurs* as well) who are responsible for the production. Sepet, as we have seen, imaginatively places this body of *superintendants* under the overall command of a *meneur du jeu*, even though there is no warrant in the Valenciennes documents for the existence of such a directorial CEO, so to speak. Cohen, for reasons we shall shortly examine, accepts this organizational model as normal — indeed he elaborates and strengthens his imagined role still further. This personage becomes so well established in the historical imagination that by the time Konigson publishes his admirable study of the Valenciennes play manuscripts, his presence had become undeniable. Konigson identifies the entire supervisory staff of the 1547 production, and he gives us considerable biographical information on each of the thirteen supervisors and three *originateurs*. Nevertheless when it comes to explaining Cailleau's miniature of our fashionable young man, he describes him as a '*petit personnage* dressed in a violet tunic, yellow hose and a black hat that holds a roll and a staff and would seem to recall the *meneur de jeu*'⁷⁸ — this despite the fact that such a personage does not appear at all in the Valenciennes records he has examined.

In the end, Sepet's 'sketch' has created a *meneur du jeu* that is almost a mirror image of a nineteenth-century director-manager who was just coming into prominence. Arthur Pougin, who compiled what was perhaps the best and most authoritative general commentary on the nineteenth-century theatre (1885), remarks that 'the public is completely ignorant of the importance of the *régisseur général* (theatre manager) in a theatrical enterprise'.⁷⁹ He then outlines a three-level directorial hierarchy consisting of a theatre manager/'general director' (*régisseur général*), a stage director (whom he alternatively calls *directeur*, *régisseur chargé de la mise en scène*, or *metteur en scène*) and his assistant (*sous-régisseur*), and actors. This three-

level hierarchy corresponds closely to the one described by Sepet as embodied in the *meneur du jeu*, supervisors (to whom he seems to assign responsibility for rehearsals and direct management of actors), and actors.

Pougin's description of the *régisseur général*'s duties, powers, and responsibilities thus corresponds very closely to those production responsibilities that Sepet (and after him Cohen) invest in the *meneur du jeu*:

Alter ego of the *directeur*, his area of responsibility is at once both artistic and administrative, and his authority over all personnel is absolute. He may be considered to be like the prime minister of the sovereign, and his mandate is sometimes more powerful than that of the latter, because his responsibility is so wide-ranging, as he is involved in every detail of the theatrical machine, and the *directeur* can do nothing without consulting him and taking his advice.⁸⁰

He supervises everything in the theatre, commissions new plays, draws up the repertoire, and in the case of indispositions, unavoidable difficulties, and accidents, he makes the appropriate modifications in actors, staff, part-assignments, repertoire, and so forth. He takes care of all complaints, busies himself with preparations for débuts and auditions, liaises with the Censor's Office, and, like Sepet's *meneur* who encourages, guides, and reprimands the actors, he follows the work of rehearsals closely, and presides over the performance to see that everything is working well. Finally, in case of unexpected illnesses or other contingencies on the night of performance, he must go on stage before the performance, speak to the audience, and make whatever announcements may be necessary — just as his fifteenth-century predecessor, according to Sepet, was supposed to do.⁸¹

In performing this last duty, indeed, the theatre manager takes upon himself the one task most visible to the audience that Sepet assigns to the *meneur du jeu*: the on-stage delivery of a theatrical 'prologue':

This last part of his duty is by no means the least delicate, especially in the provinces, where, before an audience which is almost always hypercritical and peevish, it calls for a great deal of tact and finesse, of self-control and skill. It is particularly in the provinces that this theatrical executive often receives the special designation of *régisseur parlant au public*.⁸²

One can almost imagine this nineteenth-century theatre manager, as Sepet does his fifteenth-century *meneur du jeu*, raising a piercing voice to demand

silence from these hypercritical and peevish provincials, ceaselessly repeating:

*Silete! Silete! Silentium habeatis
Et per Dei Filium pacem faciatis!*

There were, of course, a number of powerful supervisors who were chiefly responsible for the performance of a *mystère* in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Jean Bouchet, for one, was much in demand as *superintendant*, and he was often asked to organize productions. When he could not free himself from his work as a lawyer, he might send learned advice about how to cast and costume actors.⁸³ A cleric named Forcelle served as *maître* and carried the *original* for performances of the *Apocalypse* (1409) and the *Vengeance de Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ* (1437) at Metz.⁸⁴ Likewise, we hear of successful producers being brought in from other towns to oversee productions. To oversee a production of the *Passion* at Saumur in 1534, for instance, the local citizens hired a producer from Normandy. Similarly, the *meneur et conduiseur*, Jehan Montbeliard, as we have seen, may have organized the production of *Saint Éloy* at Dijon in 1447.⁸⁵ Certainly, in some towns, production of plays might be organized under the overall control of a single figure. There is not much evidence to suggest, however, that such men actually oversaw the entire production in the way that Sepet and Cohen imagine.

In many places, responsibility for the production is clearly being shared among a group of *superintendants*, and central control is more diffuse. This is clearly the situation at Valenciennes, for instance, where the contract binds the actors to obey the instructions not of a single *maître* but of a group of supervisors. There are even smaller, more intimate examples of this sort of production structure. For a production of a *moralité* at Draguignan in 1462, for instance, the players elected one of their number, a chaplain, *dominus Jacobus de Barbona*, to take overall responsibility for the production, and went off to a notary to bind themselves legally to his authority, which included the right to impose fines for infractions in performing their duties.⁸⁶ *Dominus Jacobus* seems to have been elected because of social status rather than any theatrical expertise, and the object of the contract seems to be entirely practical. Somebody needed to be responsible for arranging the rehearsals, seeing that the actors learned their lines, and (in this case) ensuring that they showed up for a work-party to help construct the scaffolding. Indeed, we should expect the details of production organization to vary considerably from place to place. There is

no reason why we should expect that the citizens of Mons or Amiens would necessarily produce their plays in the very same way as did the citizens of Dijon, Seurre, or Romans, for instance.

Even when we can detect the presence of a single producer exercising powerful central control over the organization of a *mystère*, however, it is doubtful that they performed in the way that Sepet and others imagine they did: hiring the actors, rehearsing them, supervising construction of the theatre, hiring a director of *secrets*, leading the *monstre*, prompting the performance, and then serving as *Prologueur* for the play and taking a proprietary bow at the end. Rather, the organization and production of a *mystère*, even under these circumstances, seems to have been more complex and varied, often more a shared function than an absolutely hierarchal one. In reading through Petit de Julleville's (pre-Cohen) accounts of the French medieval theatre, indeed, one is struck by how few mentions there are of *meneurs du jeu* and how little such figures seem to matter in medieval French productions.

The well-documented production of the *Mystère de saint Martin* at Seurre (1496) provides a good example of the complexities of the production. The poet, Andrieu de la Vigne, exercised considerable authority over the production, and he left a detailed account of his participation. It would be a considerable stretch, however, to suggest that he performed as the sort of *meneur du jeu* imagined by nineteenth-century scholarship.⁸⁷ A delegation consisting of the vicar of the Church of St Martin, the rector of schools, and a number of civic worthies approached de la Vigne and asked him to write a *mystère* on the life of St Martin 'so that on seeing it acted the common people would easily be able to see and understand how the noble patron of the said Seurre lived a holy and devout life'. Five weeks later, de la Vigne delivered the completed script and also 'made and set out the roles'. Apparently, then, the poet provided his patrons not only with a complete script but also a complete set of actors' parts. We then hear nothing more of de la Vigne's own participation until the day of the performance itself. Meanwhile a committee consisting of the mayor and three other citizens superintended the casting of the roles and administered the required oath to the players that bound them to learn and perform their assigned parts. This committee of four, who apparently served as the *superintendants*, seems to have overseen the rehearsals and the provision of suitable costumes. To the mayor fell the task of seeing that the scaffolds and stage platform were erected. One of the citizens, Pierre Goillot, served as treasurer, and in this

capacity he saw to it that all materials necessary were provided for the master of the *secrets*, who was sent for from Autun. On the day of performance, the actors took their places for their ceremonial procession on stage, and 'they were put in order by the said Maistre Andrieu who had the book (*registre*)'. After circling round in 'magnificent and sumptuous array', the actors 'each retired to his marked place (*enseigne*) and the two messengers opened the play as is written above in this present book (*registre*)'.

Much depends, of course, on what de la Vigne did with that *registre* and where he did it. The only thing we can say for certain is that the poet used it to make sure that everyone was in his proper order for their processional entrance into the theatre. Clearly de la Vigne did not himself take the stage to deliver a prologue because we are told that two 'messengers' performed that function. De la Vigne neither claims to have directed the play, nor does he report having been on stage at any point. He is either exceptionally modest about recording his own duties during the play, or he had only limited duties to perform. It is not unlikely, thus, that his holding the register at the beginning of the performance arose out of his role as the play's author. His one reported action of setting the players in order before the actors' processional entrance may have been nothing more than a ceremonial acknowledgment of his authorship. For the most part, indeed, his account documents production and directorial tasks as being performed by others, mostly by that committee of four supervisors that included the mayor. His description reads very much like a performance organized along the lines of the Valenciennes contract where the production and directorial tasks are shared among a body of *originateurs* (de la Vigne for one?) and *superintendants* (the mayor's committee of four). It would be misleading, therefore, to attempt to identify any of these as the play's *meneur du jeu*, if by that title one means the medieval version of the nineteenth-century actor-manager that Sepet and other nineteenth-century scholars imagine him to be.

Many nineteenth-century scholars, however, persistently sought to do just that, to identify one overall producer-director in almost every play. The editors of the *Mystère des Trois Doms*, for instance, identify a certain Sanche Dijon as the production's *meneur du jeu*. The rather voluminous records of the production, however, employ no such term, nor do they plausibly suggest that Dijon is any more important than several other persons who seem to be organizing the play. There are in fact only a relative handful of references to his activities as he receives reimbursements

for candles for the *feints*, boards for the platform, colours for the painters, for digging beneath the platform, and so on. The records, in short, depict him more obviously as a theatrical Caliban than a directorial Ariel. In many of these payment records, other men are mentioned as performing the same tasks and even more prominently than he. That he drew a salary suggests that he may have been one of the organizers of the production, but others drew such salaries as well. There is no mention of a figure in overall control of the production, nor is there one who 'carries a book' of some sort during the performance.

Why then do the editors seek to single out one of these organizers as the play's *meneur du jeu*? Because, they tell us,

in all the *mystères* there was a person whose functions corresponded to those of the manager (*régisseur*) of our modern theatres, and that one was called *meneur* or *maître du jeu*. This office was, we believe, undertaken by Sanche Dijon, an eminent citizen who had twice been consul (1504–5), and whom the account books present to us as a kind of director of works. He presides at the excavation under the stage at the location for Hell; he has the Temple furnished with lighting; he oversees the costumes, the decorations, and he receives a salary of 18 florins for four months at the rate of 4½ florins per month.⁸⁸

The editors' comparison of Sanche Dijon's functions as corresponding to those of a '*régisseur* of our modern theatres' is a very telling one. It shows how very much Sepet's sketch of the medieval *meneur du jeu* reflects the activities of a nineteenth-century actor-manager.⁸⁹

By the end of the nineteenth century, our *meneur* has thus transformed himself into a very powerful theatre manager at the head of a hierarchal organization. Hubert Cailleau, it was thought, had caught him at work, apparently showing him to be more of a secular than a religious figure, a *scientifique docteur* rather than a priest. In particular, Sepet interprets the Cailleau miniature as representing the *meneur du jeu*'s only on-stage appearance, *vêtu en Protocole*, by which he apparently means 'dressed in the costume of a *Prologueur*'. Although one does not actually find him mentioned in the records, a place is nevertheless made for him, even among the well-documented records of *Trois Doms* (1509) and amidst the supervisors and *origineurs* of the Valenciennes *Passion* (1547). The supervisors and *origineurs* defer to him, as do the actors, and as Pugin might say, they can do nothing without consulting his advice. He chooses

the play — indeed Sepet would have him write the play to begin with. His authority is absolute over all the personnel. Building upon the mistaken evidence of the *Vengeance nostreseigneur*, he enjoys a kind of theatrical *droit de seigneur* by which he may take the stage at the beginning of the play to quiet the crowd and introduce the performance, and he reappears to take the final bow on behalf of the company and dismisses the audience at the end of the performance. He may be responsible for the direction after the fashion of a nineteenth-century *régisseur général*, but so far as one can tell from Sepet's wonderfully imaginative account, he does not yet stand on stage, waving his wand and consulting his text like an orchestra conductor. He has not yet become Cohen's 'always on-stage director', but he is well-prepared for that final step, which depended upon the discovery of a visual icon that Sepet had not seen.

Cohen, Fouquet's *Martyrdom of St Apollonia*, and the Mons *Abregiet*

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, Jean Fouquet's *Martyrdom of St Apollonia* lay unremarked in the private collection of the Brentano-Laroche family of Frankfurt, who possessed 40 of the painter's miniatures, the so-called *Quarante Fouquet*. In 1855, the banker Louis Brentano privately published a descriptive catalogue of his collection that contained the first published reference to the St Apollonia miniature.⁹⁰ Intended as a handlist and guide for this privately-collected hoard of Fouquet miniatures,⁹¹ it contributes the first, somewhat enigmatic, guess at the identity of our baton-gesturing figure. A brief reference identifies him not as the director of the play but a character in it, a 'tribune'. While this little catalogue enjoyed only a very limited circulation among the visitors to the Brentano-Laroche collection, Fouquet's image at last made its début to a wider, more popular public in 1867. In that year, the enterprising publisher Henri Curmer published one of the great coffee-table books of the nineteenth century, a collection of chromo-lithographic reproductions of the complete *Oeuvre de Jehan Fouquet* (as then known) with a brief commentary by the Abbé Delauney, who accepted and repeated the 'tribune' identification.

While Curmer's edition at last made Fouquet's miniature widely available, theatre historians seem to have taken little immediate notice of it. Petit de Julleville, Cohen's predecessor at the Sorbonne, certainly did not; one reads in vain through his seminal *Histoire du théâtre en France* (1880) for any reference to the artist or to his now ubiquitous miniature. A quarter-century was to pass before anyone else connected the St Apollonia

image with the history of the theatre. In 1893, Germain Bapst at last happened upon the Abbé Delaunay's publication, and congratulated himself on being the first theatre historian to recognize the importance of an image hitherto 'unknown to the different authors who have written on the *mise en scène* of the *Mystères*'. He even published an engraving of it (PLATE 3) in his *Essai sur l'histoire du théâtre* that is now endlessly reproduced and still celebrated as 'the clearest available reproduction' of the Fouquet miniature.⁹²

In an attempt to demonstrate its importance to the history of the theatre, Bapst undertook the first substantial interpretation of the image. He was also the first to draw upon the *Legenda Aurea* version of St Apollonia's martyrdom to help him identify the characters in the play. He did not, of course, find therein a literary source for our figure, but Bapst saw no reason to dispute the 'tribune' characterization he found in the Curmer-Delauney publication, although he preferred to regard him as a medieval rather than Roman figure. He thus characterized him as a *sergent à verge* in the courtly entourage of the Emperor Decius.⁹³ The baton he wields, Bapst thought, convincingly identified him as a court tipstaff — a bailiff or constable appointed to wait upon a court in session and who carried a staff as his badge of office. The sentence passed by the Emperor's court, he thought, was enrolled in the book he holds, and as he reads out the Saint's sentence from that book, he gestures formally towards her with his staff of office.⁹⁴ For Bapst, our baton-wielding figure thus plays an essential part in this little drama that distinguishes the corrupt and fallen law of man from the law of God, 'the supreme judge', who sits watching the miscarriage of earthly justice from 'on high'.⁹⁵

As far as I can tell, the first person to identify Fouquet's baton-wielding figure as a theatrical director rather than as a character in a play was the connoisseur and museum curator, François-Anatole Gruyer, who published an elegant new photogravure edition of the *Quarante Fouquet* in 1897.⁹⁶ In the explanatory notes accompanying the St Apollonia miniature, Gruyer accommodates the Fouquet miniature squarely within the interpretative tradition popularized by Sepet — the fifteenth-century *meneur du jeu* as nineteenth-century manager-director. He abandons any attempt, indeed, to find a 'medieval' name for our baton-wielding figure and settles instead for a tellingly nineteenth-century construction: he was, he thought, the acting troupe's *impresario*. Gruyer was no Petit de Julleville, Sepet, or Bapst; he made no attempt to find an historically accurate identity for our figure. Instead, he drew an apt parallel directly

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PLATE 3: *The Martyrdom of St Apollonia*: engraving after Fouquet by F. Courboin
from Germain Bapst *Essai sur l'histoire du théâtre* (1893) 33

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from the contemporary French theatre for the puzzling figure in Fouquet's painting. Since the man in the painting seemed to be dominating the production, Gruyer thought that he must be something like the actor-managers, *régisseurs*, and *impresarios* who then controlled nearly all details of play production at the end of the nineteenth century. He thus regarded Fouquet's miniature as a kind of family portrait 'painted from life' of a theatrical *paterfamilias* and his family: 'the *impresario*, his troupe and his machinery in the presence of the crowd that throngs attentively around this spectacle'.

As for the theatrical function of Fouquet's baton-wielding figure, Gruyer gives us our first glimpse of the on-stage director. To begin with, Gruyer describes his *impresario* pretty much as Pougin's *régisseur parlant au public* whose job it is to explain the play and its setting to the crowd: 'As for the *impresario*, it is he who explains everything. Turning toward the audience, he reads the acts of the saint, and indicates with his white staff the six complementary tableaux, disposed like the leaves of a folding screen, in the setting that forms the background of the theatre'. But then realizing, perhaps, that in Fouquet's miniature the *impresario* seems to be standing on stage in the midst of its climactic scene rather than at the beginning of the play, he suggests that he must also be cueing the musicians: 'The *impresario* points with his staff: the heralds of arms blow their loud trumpets, with the accompaniment of a portative organ, to proclaim the triumph of the heroic virgin'.⁹⁷ For the next several decades, Henry Martin's popular guidebook, *Les Fouquet de Chantilly*, continued to popularize Gruyer's characterization of 'the *impresario*, his booklet in one hand and his staff in the other', who 'directs the stage-action and conducts the music'.⁹⁸

Both of these identifications are equally well-founded, or perhaps it is truer to say equally ill-founded. They both depend upon a flash of inspiration; neither troubles to offer much in the way of supporting proof. Each assumes that Fouquet means to render a 'realistic' visual record of an actual fifteenth-century *mystère* in the act of performance — an assumption that ought itself to be questioned.⁹⁹ They then differ in their further assumptions, which are also unsupported. Bapst assumes that our character is playing a role within the play while Gruyer assumes that he stands outside the drama itself and directs those within it. It is difficult for an unbiased observer to decide between these alternatives. Both seem equally plausible. We might well like to ask Bapst, for instance, whether in fact court bailiffs in the fifteenth century carried tipstaves as badges of

office and whether they read out sentences during executions. We might wish to ask Gruyer what evidence he has to offer that fifteenth-century directors did in fact stand boldly forth among the actors holding a prompt book in one hand while vigorously gesturing with a baton in the other.

When the young Gustave Cohen studied the Fouquet miniature, he was thus the inheritor of a formidable interpretative consensus handed down to him by Louis Paris, Marius Sepet, and Petit de Julleville. As a consequence, he found the choice between these alternatives an easy one. Though grateful to Bapst for bringing Fouquet's miniature to the attention of theatre historians, he thought the elder scholar had missed the point by not recognizing the *meneur de jeu*. In particular, he thought that the resemblance between Cailleau's Valenciennes 'portrait' and Fouquet's baton-wielding man put the latter's identity beyond dispute:

The painter Cailleau has left us the portrait of a *meneur de jeu*. Short leggings, violet tunic, small flat cap on the head, his *bâton de commandement* in the left hand, the *rollet* in the right hand ... The one who figures in the *Mystère of St Apollonia*, according to the Fouquet miniature ... seems to take his role less cavalierly than does his sixteenth-century colleague; he is draped in a long, hooded cape, on his head a doctor's cap in the shape of a tiara. He holds the play-book in his left hand, and his right, raised, almost menacing, seems with his baton to command from the minstrels in paradise a loud *silete* on all the instruments of the play.¹⁰⁰

For Cohen, the chief importance of Fouquet's miniature was that it actually showed the *meneur de jeu* performing his duties in hitherto unexpected ways.

Cohen regards his view of the Fouquet image as so self-evident, indeed, that he makes no attempt to support it with documentary evidence. Assuming that his identification is obviously beyond question, he uses the illustration itself as the sole evidence for the *meneur de jeu*'s presumed on-stage duties. This method produces a remarkable circularity of argument that continues to characterize discussions of the medieval director: we 'know' that the man in Fouquet's miniature must be a *meneur de jeu* because, thanks to Fouquet's miniature, we 'know' that the *meneur de jeu* moved about the stage in full view of the audience.

The miniature thus became a theatrical Rosetta Stone for Cohen, one that enabled him to interpret the records of the stage in new ways. Above all, the new image, which portrays the *meneur de jeu* mingling with the

actors in the midst of a performance, convincingly ‘proved’ to Cohen that he exercised his authority on stage. He was not merely the theatre manager/general director of Sepet’s ‘Sketch’ who performs primarily administrative and production tasks — selecting the repertoire, hiring the actors, imposing his artistic vision upon the directors, disciplining actors and staff with the quasi-judicial powers accorded him by contract, looking after the ticket receipts, organizing the rehearsal, handling complaints, looking after the construction of the stage, and at last stepping on stage to quiet the crowd, cow the hecklers, explain the play, and deliver a prologue. Rather, Fouquet’s image proved to Cohen that the *meneur* not only declaimed a prologue or two — as the evidence of the *Vengeance nostreseigneur* ‘proves’ — but that he also performed his directorial duties on stage in full view of the audience. If the records describe a ‘book holder’, then Fouquet’s image not only identifies the *meneur* as the play’s book-holder, but it shows him holding it open on stage and consulting it in front of the audience. If the records refer to prompters in the *mystères*, then Fouquet must be depicting the *meneur* consulting what must be the play-script amongst the actors; he must be the one who prompts them, and he does so on stage. He organizes the children who greet Jesus’s Entry into Jerusalem. He cues the actors to go from one scenic scaffold to another and carefully regulates their moves. He acts as conductor of the orchestra commanding *silettes* and thunderclaps. ‘Finally and above all, he is *le régisseur toujours sur les planches* [the always on-stage director] ... On stage, he is here, there, and everywhere: book in hand, baton raised, he serves as prompter and stage manager; he is truly the ‘master of the play’.¹⁰¹ And so the *meneur du jeu* was born as on-stage director, prologue-speaker, prompter, and stage manager.

Or rather, the *meneur de jeu* was born. It is unclear why Cohen chose this slight but significant alternation in the name of his *régisseur toujours sur les planches*, but it is the name that stuck. It certainly has somewhat grander implications than the form of words that comes to us from Mercadé’s *Vengeance*. As the *meneur du jeu*, he was merely ‘the leader of the play’, hence the director of only a particular play. The slightly altered title, by contrast, seems to suggest a recognized, professional title, the indispensable organizer, supervisor, and — above all — on-stage director. *Meneur de jeu* thus became the generic name of the office of director/manager, the medieval name for *régisseur général*.

It may seem natural for us to assume that Cohen’s ‘reading’ of the Fouquet illustration and his construction of the *meneur de jeu* must have

been informed by the great scholarly discovery of his life. In 1913, Cohen turned up a spectacular cache of three different types of manuscript surviving from the Mons *Passion* of 1501. (Or rather one should say that these three types survive as relics of *both* the Amiens *Passion* of 1500 *and* the Mons *Passion* of 1501. The extant Mons documents were all copied from originals borrowed from Amiens, but the Amiens originals have been destroyed.)¹⁰² A remarkable series of manuscripts, they include the play's *abregiet*, the only example in French of what has been called a 'producer's copy', a text, according to Runnalls, 'designed to make the work of the *meneur de jeu* as easy as possible'.¹⁰³ Would not Cohen's monumental study of the manuscripts which he was to call *Le Livre de conduite du régisseur* have taught him how to re-evaluate the Fouquet illustration and to construct more accurately the work of supervisors on the medieval stage?

In fact, however, the reverse is the case. The Fouquet illustration, Cohen's Rosetta Stone, taught him to interpret the Mons *abregiet* in the way that he did. We must remember that he published his *Histoire de la mise en scène* in which he describes the *meneur de jeu* as the 'always on-stage director' in 1906, that he did not discover the Mons *abregiet* until 1913, and that he did not publish his magisterial edition of that text (along with records of the expenses of the Mons *Passion* of 1501) until 1925. By the time he discovered the Mons *abregiet*, in other words, he had already committed himself to his construction of the *meneur de jeu* based upon his study of the Fouquet illustration, and he therefore interpreted his discovery of the Mons *abregiet* according to his already well-formed interpretation of the man in the Fouquet St Apollonia miniature.

For Cohen, the Mons *abregiet* had to be the very book carried on stage in the hand of Fouquet's *meneur de jeu*. He never considered any other possibility. In 1926, fresh from publishing his *Livre de conduite*, he thus returned once again to his now 20-year-old description of the 'always on-stage director' and insisted that he had discovered in the Mons *abregiet* the very book that Fouquet's *meneur de jeu* carries about on stage: 'This book is the *Livre de Conduite* of which I have had the good luck to recover an example'.¹⁰⁴ Conceived in this way, the Mons *abregiet* must needs serve all the various on-stage purposes that he had assigned to the Fouquet figure in 1906: strolling about the stage, cueing the movements of characters, prompting, cueing the orchestra to produce *silettes* at crucial moments, cueing the thunderbolts which impress the triumphs of the Faith upon the devils, speaking soothingly and prudently to the crowd to crave their

indulgence, explaining theological points to them, and begging silence to honour God and the saints — among other on-stage tasks.¹⁰⁵ This view of a text prepared to be carried and used by an on-stage director during performance, which derives from Cohen's flash of inspiration in interpreting the Fouquet illustration, thus thoroughly colours his interpretation of the *Mons abregiet*. And it continues to dominate our own interpretations of the staging of *mystères*. Since Cohen's time, it has become conventional to think of the *Livre de conduite du régisseur* as a 'prompt copy' of the 1501 *Mons Mystère de la Passion* — a text designed primarily to be used by a *meneur de jeu* on stage, 'rather in the way a present-day conductor controls an orchestra'.¹⁰⁶

To some extent, the *Mons abregiet* seems to confirm some of these preconceptions. Or perhaps one should say the *Mons abregiés*, for there were originally two duplicate copies of the entire *abregiet*. Each of these two *abregiés* is divided into eight *cahiers*, so that there are in total two copies of the relevant *cahier* available for each of the play's eight *journées*.¹⁰⁷ Twelve of the sixteen original *cahiers* are still extant, and these form the basis of Cohen's edition of what he calls *Le Livre de conduite du régisseur*. Cohen hypothesises that the *meneur de jeu* held one of the two *abregiés*, while the conductor of the *secrets* (special effects) held the other. Presumably, the *meneur de jeu* and the conductor of *secrets* each carried the appropriate *cahier* about during the performance of each *journée* as they performed their supervisory functions.

The *Mons abregiet*, however, is manifestly unsuitable for all the imagined on-stage functions of the *meneur de jeu*, at least as Cohen had constructed those activities on the basis of the Fouquet image. To begin with, the *abregiet* shows only minimal interest in the text of the play. It records only the first and last line of each speech along with a numeral to specify the number of lines in each speech. 'Only the *mise en scène* counts here', Elizabeth Lalou and Darwin Smith observe, 'the text disappears almost completely'.¹⁰⁸ The *abregiet* thus records in detail the actions that must be performed, often describes how they are to be performed, and indicates the places in which the action should take place. Plainly, because the various *cahiers* of the *Mons abregiet* do not actually contain the text of the play, they cannot have been designed to serve as a prompt text (if by prompt text one means, as I do here, the prompting of speech), a fact which indicates strongly that the holder of this manuscript did not prompt the performance. Prompters undoubtedly functioned on the medieval stage — two seem to have been required for the Châteaudun *Mystère de la*

Passion in 1510, for instance; François Souef and his assistant, Pierre Jahan, were both paid ‘for attending all the rehearsals as well as serving as prompter (*protocolle*), and carrying the book during each performance’.¹⁰⁹

To perform their function as prompters, however, they would naturally require full texts of the plays. The Mons *abregiet* thus makes clear that if the actors were prompted — either from on stage or off — someone else must have performed this task from a full script.

But Cohen also discovered other theatrical manuscripts relating to the performance of the Mons *Passion* of 1501. One *cahier* of the *livre original* (‘complete text’) of one *journee* survives, as does a *Livre des prologues*, essentially a specialized actor’s part, but in book rather than roll form. Cohen published an edition of both these texts, which he called the *Livre des prologues*, in 1957. The actual book of prologues contains all the *Prologueur*’s speeches for the entire eight *journees* as well as relevant stage directions. Its codex format suggests that Sire Gille le Naing, who served as *Prologueur*, may have carried this text on stage and read his speeches instead of delivering them from memory.¹¹⁰

In addition to these, other texts were also used in the Mons performance, though apparently none have survived. Scribes were thus paid for copying individual actors’ parts out of the Amiens *livre original*, and these typically take the form of rolls that might be used either in rehearsal or (since they might be rolled up and concealed) on stage during performance.¹¹¹ The Mons *abregiet* also refers to *billets de advertence* used by the conductors of *secrets* and perhaps also the musicians to cue their interventions.¹¹²

The format of the sole remaining *cahier* of the full play text tells us that it is almost certainly a production text rather than a merely literary or ‘register’ copy. Like the *cahiers* of the two *abregiés*, it was meant to serve its holder as a working reference during a single *journee*. Originally, the complete text, like the *abregiés*, must have been divided into eight *cahiers*, one for each of the play’s eight *journees*, presumably so that the prompter need only have the relevant portion of the play before him during the performance.¹¹³ In comparing the stage directions of these two Mons manuscripts, moreover, one will note that the stage directions in the *livre original* are far fewer and almost always briefer, almost perfunctory, while the *abregiet* stage directions, as we might expect, are much more numerous, longer, and generally much more detailed than those to be found in the full play text. As we have seen, moreover, the *livre original* includes the full text of the *journee*, while the *abregiet* contains only the first and last line of

each speech. These two main production texts are thus necessarily designed for complementary but incompatible uses. On the one hand, the *abregiet* cannot prompt speech. The few lines of text it contains serve only as a theatrical road map to orient one to the stage directions, which are its primary interest. On the other hand, the *livre original* cannot be used to cue action effectively because its primary interest lies in the text, and the complete set of stage directions therefore need not be inscribed in it.

Since the scribes have provided two sets of *cahiers* of the *abregiet* as well as at least one set of *cahiers* of the *livre original*, we should consider that at any given moment during a performance, at least three theatrical texts are in service. Indeed, if we take Châteaudun's mention of two prompters to be typical, then there may be four. A stage-manager of some sort is consulting one of the *abregiés*, the conductor of *secrets* the other *abregiet*, and a prompter (or two) are following the complete text in a third (and possibly fourth) book. Where, we might well ask, are all these people while they are performing their functions during the performance? If Cohen is correct about the 'always on-stage director', should we not at least consider which of these — indeed how many of them — may be on stage at the same time, consulting their books and brandishing their batons in full view of the audience?¹¹⁴

To Cohen, the detailed stage directions the Mons *abregiet* demonstrate that the *meneur de jeu* customarily used the text while on stage to cue action. But what do the stage directions in the *abregiet* actually tell us about the nature and purpose of this interesting text? Can it indeed confirm Cohen's view of the 'always on-stage director'? Has it been designed expressly to aid the *meneur de jeu* to 'conduct' the play on the day of the performance? Or is it designed for other purposes? What does the text itself tell us about its theatrical uses?

We have to remember from the very beginning, however, that these Mons *abregiés* have been copied from originals borrowed from the Amiens *Passion* of 1500. They came to Mons, in other words, as ready-made production texts, even if the Mons *superintendants* altered them (as they certainly did) in preparing their own play.¹¹⁵ What this means, however, is that every entry in the *abregiés* requires an act of interpretation on the part of the Mons producers. How shall we design and construct 'Jerusalem'? How shall we construct Heaven? How does Raphael manage to travel from Heaven 'up there' to Bethlehem 'down here' for the Annunciation?

As we might expect from such a complex genesis, the *Mons abregiés* provide evidence for a variety of theatrical purposes. At one extreme, for instance, they contain a number of ‘writerly’ and descriptive ‘stage directions’ that are aimed more at defining technical effects to be achieved in advance of the performance than in aiding the business of prompting action on the day of performance. Consider, for instance, the *abregiet*’s account of the descent of Jesus into Limbo:

Nota que en ce pas icy il doit avoir, au Limbe des Peres, grande clarté et melodie, et doibvent les portes d’Enffer trebuchier et la Divinité, qui est comme une ame en ung pavillon de vollette, doit là apparoir, et deux Angles encenssans devant elle. 383

‘N.b. that at this moment there ought to be, in the Limbo of the Fathers, great brightness and melody, and the gates of Hell ought to be cast down, and the Divinity, who is like a soul covered in a tent of gauze, ought to appear there, and two angels censensing before Him.’

Presumably, our supposed *meneur de jeu* might wave his wand somewhere to cue this action, but the main thrust of this stage direction is to define the costuming and special effects that will have to be prepared beforehand. From the point of view of our hypothetical *meneur de jeu*, indeed, the description of the gauze tent is rather pointless. What does ‘a soul covered in a tent of gauze’ look like anyway? That description poses an interesting challenge to the costume designer, perhaps, but what might its significance be to the prompter on the day of performance? Either the actor is in his costume when the doors of hell begin to shake or he is not. The prompter cannot be expected to tell him which costume to select.

Perhaps the *abregiet*’s account of the Transfiguration provides one of the most detailed examples of this sort of ‘writerly’ and narrative description:

Nota que icy Jhesus entre dedens la montaigne pour soy vestir d’une robe blanche et la plus blanche que trouver se p[ro]juelt, et une face et les mains d’or bruni et de vera eslever ses mains; et soit deriere lui ung grant soleil, puis doit estre levé[s] en hault par l’eng[h]ien a[d] ce ordonné[t] et tantost apres doivent aparoir Helie à dextre en habit de Carme et une torque de prophete sur sa teste et Moÿse à senestre tenant les tables; et tanedis que ces choses se preparont la Magdelaine doit parler et Jhesus ne se doit point monstrer jusques à ce qu’elle a(u)ra tout dict. 177¹¹⁶

'N.b. that here Jesus enters within the mountain to dress himself in a white robe, the whitest that can be found, and a face and hands [mask and gloves] of burnished gold. And he should raise his hands, and there should be a great sun behind him; then he ought to be raised on high by the machine ordained for this purpose, and then afterward Elijah ought to appear to the right in the habit of a Carmelite and a prophet's turban on his head, and Moses to the left, holding the Tables [of the Law], and while these things are being prepared, the Magdalene should speak, and Jesus should not show himself until she has said all [her speech].'

Nothing in this long description is specifically marked for prompting. When Jesus goes into the mountain to see about his costuming, Mary Magdalene's conversation with her friends takes place, ostensibly to demonstrate her *mondanité* before her conversion, but also to give Jesus time to prepare for his Transfiguration. As a consequence, the real anxiety on stage during this period is not that Jesus might appear too soon (as the stage direction seems to suggest), but that he will not be sufficiently transformed by the time that Mary and her friends finish their chat. Indeed, the *abregiet* marks a place, a page or so later, where Jesus must appear transfigured: *Cy doit Jhesus apparoir transfiguré* (178), a stage direction that is in itself remarkably unhelpful: is this latter moment where Jesus is supposed to raise his hands with a sun behind him? If Jesus has to be prompted to 'appear transfigured', shouldn't somebody prompt the conductor of *secrets* to fire up the 'great sun' that is to illuminate Jesus at this moment? Presumably if the supposed prompter is going to prompt Jesus to put on his costume — is such a prompt necessary? — the prompter wouldn't need to be told about dressing him in a white robe 'the whitest that can be found'. Wouldn't that detail have been sorted out long before performance? In fact, the description is out of order from the point of view of a prompter: first Jesus appears with a sun behind him, but then he doesn't appear until the Magdalene finishes speaking. Finally, what exactly is our supposed always on-stage director meant to do with all this detail? Does he require it all just to prompt Jesus to enter the mountain and change his costume?¹¹⁷

Tellingly, this text has been copied directly from the *livre original* into the *abregiet*. It is by far the longest and one of the very few detailed stage directions to be found in the extant textual *cahier*.¹¹⁸ That it has been transcribed into the *abregiet* testifies to its importance as a technical effect *to be achieved*. As such, it is primarily addressed to the producer or scene

designer, perhaps specifically to the designer of the *secrets*. It defines the desired stagecraft effect, but it leaves the practical details of how to achieve this effect to the designer. When the *abregiet* later identifies the moment when this transfiguration effect is to take place, it does so with a remarkable vagueness — ‘Here Jesus ought to appear transfigured’ — presumably because the technical details of this special effect have not yet been worked out. Furthermore, the *abregiet* envisions a striking response to the Transfiguration:

Lors ilz cheent eneoeres [sic] une fois sur leur fac[h]e et Helye et Moÿse prendent congîé[t] reveranment sans parler et s'esvanissent; et Jhesus retourne en sa fo[u]rme humaine. 181

‘Then they fall once again on their faces, and Elijah and Moses take leave reverently without speaking, and vanish; and Jesus returns into his human form.’

How does Jesus ‘return to his human form’, one wonders? This is primarily a prospective and literary stage direction meant to set the agenda for the scene designer. Once again, the special effects necessary to pull it off have yet to be devised.

If ‘writerly’ directions like these describe effects that are yet to be worked out in detail, still others record theatrical effects that have already been translated into practical stagecraft. Consider, for instance, the following four representative directions:

Cy doivent estre advertis ceulx qui chantent les motex en Paradis, de descendre de Paradis et eulx en aller au Limbe, pour chanter ung motet, quand on leur dira. 340

‘Here those who sing the motets in Paradise ought to be directed to come down from Paradise and take themselves off to Limbo, so as to sing a motet, when they are told to.’

Lors s'en va Lucifer en Paradis terrestre en fourme de serpent. Et est à noter que le personnage de Lucifer ne se bouge d'Enfer, jasoit qu'il ait dit cy dessus; mais est ung aultre personnage qui fait le serpent et doit aller à Eve; pour ce que Lucifer ne seroit point assez à temps mis en fourme de serpent. 10

‘Then Lucifer goes off into the Earthly Paradise in the form of a serpent. And it is to be noted that the actor playing Lucifer does not stir from Hell until he has said this above; but it is another

actor who performs the serpent and must go to Eve, because Lucifer will not have enough time to change into a serpent.'

Avoir regard que l'asne sur quoy Marie yra en Bethleem soit prest, quant tempz sera, et ossi le beuf.

Et doit avoir Eliachim une femme (lez) lui, qui se femme representera sans mot dire. 62

'Take care that the ass upon which Mary is to go to Bethlehem is ready at the right time, and also the ox.

And Eliachim ought to have a woman beside him, who will represent his wife in dumb-show.'

Nota d'ycy advertir ung paintre de aller en Paradis pour poindre rouge la face de Raphaël. 410

'N.b. here to direct a painter to go to Paradise in order to paint the face of Raphael red.'

There is certainly evidence here for prompting of some sort. The singers of motets are to come down from Paradise and sing, not upon their own volition, but when directed to do so. Because Lucifer cannot leave Hell, get into his snake costume, and enter Paradise in time, a second actor will have to put on the snake costume and corrupt Eve. We need to have an ass and an ox ready when it is time for the journey to Bethlehem, and we also need a wife for Eliachim, who will accompany the Holy Family. The painter is directed to go to Paradise and rouge Raphael's face, considerably before Raphael needs to appear on stage.

But who is giving these warnings and on what occasions? A stage direction makes clear that singers moving between Paradise and Limbo should sing 'when they are told to', for instance, but it does not say who is appointed to tell them to sing. Whoever it is, however, seems to be someone else than the person who is in possession of the *abregiet*. Moreover, the vague reference to *on* (unspecified) who will prompt them to sing suggests that his identity had not yet been decided at the time that the stage direction was written. So too the stage direction about providing a duplicate Satan in a snake costume is directed toward solving a practical problem of stagecraft; its solution is a casting problem, not really a prompting problem. Perhaps somebody needs to be cued to make the ass and the ox ready, but wouldn't this take place off stage? So too, the provision of Eliachim, *parent de Joseph* (61), represents a solution to another knotty stage problem: Joseph needs help in lifting the pregnant Mary onto

the back of the donkey. When the time comes, Joseph indeed asks Eliachim for help with this task, a request that eliminates the need for a prompt, and in reply to Joseph's spoken request, *Lors ilz methent Marie sus l'asne et partent de Nazareth et s'en vont en Bethleem* ('Then they put Mary on the ass and leave Nazareth and go away to Bethlehem': 62). At the same time, a female companion for Eliachim is provided, perhaps for propriety's sake, to accompany Mary and Joseph. The writer of this direction needed to record this requirement here because the actor, a mere supernumerary, speaks no lines and will not be visible in the *livre original* when the time comes to cast the play. This direction thus responds to a perceived casting necessity, not to a stage-management problem. On the day of performance, it would be irrelevant to tell the stage manager that another actor is needed. By the same token, the provision of a painter to go to Paradise to paint Raphael's face red may be useful as a prompting aid (although surely the prompt would take place off stage), but the direction most obviously provides a solution to a stagecraft problem: how do we provide a quick change of face colour for Raphael?

A great number of stage directions require such specific actions that they cannot be meant as prompting aids. Consider, for instance, the following sequence of stage directions that seems to micromanage Joseph's doubting encounter with his surprisingly pregnant spouse:

Ici soit advertie Marie de faire eslever son ventre pour demonstrer qu'elle soit enchainte. Silete. 59¹¹⁹

'Here Mary must be directed to raise her belly to demonstrate that she is pregnant. *Silete.*'

Ramentevoir Marie de s'en aller vers Joseph ayant son ventre gros, comme dit est. 59

'Remind Mary to go towards Joseph with her belly pregnant, as has been said.'

Maria doit aprochier Joseph, puis dit ... 59

'Mary must go up to Joseph, then she says ...'

Non leissier oublier Joseph à faire ses admirations en regardant Marie enchainte. 60

'Do not let Joseph forget to show his amazement on seeing Mary pregnant.'

As Mary prepares to pray,

Joseph s'en va ariere. 60
 'Joseph retires.'

Then after Mary's long prayer and Joseph's speech expressing doubt:

En la fin de ceste clause se doit couchier. 60
 'At the end of this speech, he ought to go to bed.'

Such stage directions are valuable precisely because they involve interpretations of actions that would be hard to prompt. How would an on-stage director, for instance, prompt Mary to 'raise her belly', or prompt Joseph to show amazement upon beholding that Mary is pregnant? The *abregiet* wants him to turn away from Mary after her explanation, thus acting out his difficulty in believing her, but would he require prompting to do so? And does he require the wafting of an on-stage wand to know he must go to bed after his last speech, particularly since he must be in that bed when Gabriel arrives to explain matters to him?

It is hard to imagine that an actor would have to be prompted on the day of performance for any of these actions. Once he has read and rehearsed his role, any conceivable actor of any ability would understand that he is supposed to show surprise when an obviously pregnant Virgin displays her belly to him. By the same token, the direction (see below) to say 'O glorious Trinity' in a marvelling tone of voice is a point to be imparted during rehearsal, not performance, as is the direction that he must kneel reverentially before the new-born Christ child. Such directions as these are most probably designed as directions to the actor for use in rehearsal.

The *abregiet* is full of what we might call 'rehearsal advice' like this. After Elizabeth's *Chambriere* speaks, the stage direction points out that *Lors elle doit apointier l'enfant* ('Then she must swaddle the child': 57). At the same time, Zachary performs a number of actions in pantomime that cannot be easily prompted in performance: *Ramentevoir à Zacharie de faire signe en hochant la teste, comme s'il fuist muet acertes* ('Remind Zachary to make a sign by shaking his head, as if he were genuinely dumb': 52). To give him a voice, if only a silent one, the *abregiet* prescribes, *Zacharie doit icy faire signe de demander une greffe et des tables pour escripre* ('Here Zachary must mime asking for a stylus and a tablet to write with': 58), and next '*Lors Zacharie prent les tables et escript dedens le nom Jan; puis il rebaille les tablettes (au premier parent)*' ('Next, Zachary takes the tablets and writes the name John on them; then he hands back the tablets (to the first kinsman)': 58). Similarly, this advice to Pilate offers directions as to how the actor should interpret his assigned action: *Soit cy adverti Pilate de soy appuier sur*

le coing d'un banc, comme penssif ('Let Pilate here be instructed to lean on the end of a bench, as if in thought': 394). One might, I suppose, prompt Pilate to go to that bench, but would one prompt him to lean only on a corner of it and then prompt him to look thoughtful? This episode from the 'Marriage of the Virgin' sequence records the expectation that such acting advice will indeed have been given in rehearsal, and then details how this scene must be staged:

Ossi advertir Abiud, Eliachin, Joram, Salem, et aucuns autres, se bon semble, de aller à l'offrande, sans parler, ayant leur verghes en main, comme instruit leur a esté; semblablement prendre garde que Joseph, devant ceste offertoire, die assez ariere ce qui s'enssieuult et la verghes ne florira point lors.

Silete.

54

'Also direct Abiud, Eliachin, Joram, Salem, and the rest, if it seems right, to go to the offering, without speaking, having their branches in their hands, as they have been instructed to do; similarly take care that Joseph, before this offering, say what follows from fairly well back, and that his branch does not yet flower.

Silete.'

Many of the *abregiet's* directions are cued to particular lines in such a way as to make prompting very difficult if not impossible. Joseph's first approach to the newly born Christ child, for instance, is carefully cued to particular lines of his speech:

Joseph doit, à la IIIe ligne de [sa] clause, aprochier et, en soy esbahissant, dire: «O glorieuse Trinité» etc. [Et], en la fin d'icelle clause, où il dit: «Mon hault createur, mon seul juge», il doit lors estre à genoulx devant l'enfant.

70

'Joseph must, at the third line of his speech, approach and, in a transport of admiration, say "O glorious Trinity", etc. And at the end of the same speech, where he says: "My high Creator, my only Judge", he ought then to be kneeling before the child.'

Presumably our hypothetical *meneur de jeu* might simply count two lines, then wave his stick to prompt Joseph to begin his approach; but how could he use the following prompts to cue Abraham and Pilate?

Quant il a dit «Qui sans droit les avoit porté», lors il presente le disme à Melc(h)isedech

30

‘When he has said “Who had carried them off unlawfully”, then he presents the tithe to Melchizedek.’

Quant Pilate dit: «Se le voeul examiner sus», il doit rentrer dedens le Pretore et se assire sur le moyene Cayere et Jhesus devant luy 338

‘When Pilate says: “So I want to examine him on this matter”, he must go back into the Praetorium, and seat himself in the central chair, with Jesus before him.’

All our supposed *meneur de jeu* sees when he looks into the *abregiet*, after all, is the first and last line of these speeches and a Roman numeral representing the total number of lines in each speech. The holder of the *abregiet* only knows that the cue line comes at some undefined place within those limits.

Because the holder of the *abregiet* knows the cue line but not when exactly that line will be spoken, the relationship between actor and prompter would be reversed: the actor can cue the prompter, but the supposed prompter cannot cue the actor. The Pilate direction especially seems to refer to how an actor learns a part, not to how a *meneur de jeu* prompts a performance. How would a supposed *meneur* prompt Pilate both to respond to a line that will happen at some time in the near future and then afterward prompt him to go sit in a particular chair? Or how is he to prompt Veronica not once but twice as this direction seems to require?

Quant Veronne dit ceste ligne: «Si volray de ce coeuvre-chief», elle le desploye, et, quant elle dit: «Et de present est difformée», lors elle essue la face de Jhesus et le Veronnicque y appert; et le doit monstrier au peuple.
359

‘When Veronica says this line: “So I would like with this kerchief”, she unfolds it, and, when she says, “And now it is disfigured”, then she wipes the face of Jesus, and the Vernicle [i.e. the image of Jesus’ face] appears on it; and she must show it to the people.’

In this case, our supposed prompter would know from the *abregiet* that Veronica’s speech is 34 lines long, but he would have no practical way of anticipating that the Saint must unfold her veil after precisely fourteen lines, and that she must then wipe Jesus’ face three lines after that.

Such directions — and the *abregiet* contains very many of this sort — strongly imply the presence of another text — either the full *livre original* or an actor’s part — that must be used in connection with the *abregiet*. The lines of the speech must be consulted in the full ‘literary’ text, while the

stage action must be connected to that text in the *abregiet*. In turn, these two texts strongly imply the cooperation of two people — but in rehearsal, not on stage during performance. From one book, the actor is learning to speak the lines of text; from the other, the holder of the *abregiet* tells him how to perform his role. ‘Now, somewhere during your next speech, you will say, “And I would like with this kerchief”. When you do that, you should unfold your veil. Then later in the same speech, you will say, “And now it is disfigured”. At that point, you must wipe Jesus’ face and display the Vernicle to the audience.’ To my mind, it is this sort of rehearsal activity — attending the rehearsals, serving as *portheccolle*, and having *guydé les joueurs depuys le commencements jusques à la fin* (‘guided the players from the beginning until the end’) — among other services, that the tireless Pierre Jahan was most likely rewarded for in the Châteaudun records.¹²⁰

Many of the *abregiet* directions begin with the formula, *nota de advertir* or *estre adverti*. Because Cohen imagined that the *abregiet* was designed specifically for on-stage prompting according to his interpretation of the Fouquet illustration, he set great store on this verb, which he construed as a directorial order delivered on-stage by the *meneur de jeu* to his actors, who were expected to execute them. Often, he noticed, the *abregiet* issued first a preliminary warning ‘designed to arouse the attention of the director’: *Nota de advertir Simon de passer aupres de Jhesus* (‘N.b. to remind Simon to pass near Jesus’: 360). Then somewhat later, the *abregiet* would mark ‘the execution of the order in the most precise fashion’: *Il va vers Simon* (‘He goes towards Simon’: 360).¹²¹ The verb *advertir*, however, is amenable to a range of meanings, among them *tourner vers*, *faire attention*, *penser*, *réfléchir*, *aviser*, *apercevoir*.¹²² In some cases, as we shall see, the *abregiet* probably does indicate prompting.

In many cases, however, when an actor is told to *advertir*, he is merely being told to understand, consider, pay attention to a point important for the performance of the play, before as well as during production. Consider, for instance, this fairly typical example:

L'on doit advertir Abiut en Jherusalem de parler ap̄res Lucifer, lors qu'il ora sa replicque: «comme feu de fournaise». 50

‘Abiut in Jerusalem should be warned to speak after Lucifer, when he hears his line, “like the fire of a furnace”.’

This direction prepares for a change of location as the action moves from Hell to Jerusalem. Eleven lines later, Satan will speak the last line of his speech in Hell, and that line will be Abiut’s cue to begin a new scene in

Jerusalem. Since the actor playing Abiut will have Satan's cue line written into his actor's part; he already knows what his cue line is to be,¹²³ and he has practiced it in rehearsal. The cue in the *abregiet* thus primarily refers to making the actor aware of this important line, and the creation of this awareness will take place first of all in rehearsal. True, the actor may still require prompting during performance to be ready for this transition, but in that case, the phrasing of the *abregiet's* cue — *l'on doit advertir* — suggests that the holder of the *abregiet* is not necessarily the 'someone' entrusted with prompting.

Much the same can be said about the following, which seems to be directed more at solving a staging problem than actual prompting during performance:

Nota de, en ce pas, advertir Dieu, qui est desoubz la salle de Paradis, de faire a[p]porter apres luy par deux anges, quand il retournera en Paradis terrestre, deux plichons que on ara preparé, pour les donner à Adam et Eve 12

'N.b. at this point, to alert God, who is beneath the hall of Paradise, when he returns to the Earthly Paradise, to have two ready-prepared *plichons* [fur pelts] carried behind him by two angels, to be given to Adam and Eve.'

I do not mean to suggest that this direction has no significance for the management of the stage during performance, only that it has been written in the *abregiet* in the first instance to address a practical problem that needs to be solved *in advance* of the staging of the play. Here, God, who will be in a lower room hidden from the audience's sight (hence off stage) is asked to have two fur garments carried with him when he enters Paradise to confront Adam and Eve after the Fall. In this way, Adam and Eve can then cover themselves with suitable garments when they are expelled from the Garden. But who will be responsible for preparing the garments and getting them to the room where God will be awaiting his cue to enter Paradise? His identity has yet to be decided at the time that the stage direction was written into the *abregiet*. Perhaps the holder of the *abregiet* will be in a position to prompt God to have the fur pelts taken with him when he enters Paradise, but for the most part, this direction is about solving a technical problem and calling the attention of the actor playing God to the fact that the props he will need to perform the next scene will be waiting for him in that off-stage chamber beneath Paradise.

So too a place is marked in the *abregiet* where the ‘deputies of the *secrets*’ must make the Bethlehem star appear:

Soient ci advertis ceulx qui sont ou secret de l'estoille aux trois Roix de commenchie de le faire monstrer. 74

‘Let those who are responsible for the *secret* of the star for the three Kings be instructed here to begin to make it appear.’

Then a little later:

Avoir regard que l'estoille soit absconsée quand les III Roix seront pres de Jherusalem et lors que Joseph parlera ainsi. 76

‘Be careful that the star is hidden when the 3 Kings are near Jerusalem, and when Joseph speaks thus.’

And then later still:

Entendre que ceulx du secret de l'estoi[l]le fachent icelle estoille aparoir, quand Melchior prenra congiet d'Herode. 79

‘See that those of the *secret* of the star make that star appear when Melchior takes leave of Herod.’

These actions, of course, may be prompted during performance, but primarily they are directed towards making the deputies be vigilant in responding to what is happening on stage. Each of these directions aims to focus the deputies’ attention (hence the verbs, *soient ci advertis*, *avoir regard*, and *entendre*) on the actors, not on a prompter: ‘when you see this happening, then you should respond in this way’. It also requires the deputies to find a way to make this effect happen in the first place. We even have evidence that the deputies, in this instance, understood the text primarily in this way. In the margin of the ‘*secrets*’ *abregiet*, someone has thus sketched a small image of a hand moving a curtain to display the star. Problem solved.

As we might expect, stage-managerial prompting does indeed occur during performance, and the *abregiet* fully reflects this important function. The clearest indications of such prompting occur when explicit signals are given to instigate action. As Noah closes the window of his ark, the *abregiet* directs:

Lors soit fait (le) signe aux deputéz aux secrez du deluge de laisser venir les eaues. 27

‘Then let the signal be made to the deputies of the *secrets* of the Deluge to let the waters come.’

Alternatively, the *abregiet* sometimes directs actors to be ‘summoned’ at particular moments in the text:

Estre cy adverti de semondre Adam au Limbe 339

‘Be ready here to summon Adam to Limbo.’

Estre adverti de semondre Dieu le Pere 339

‘Be ready to summon God the Father.’

Estre adverti de aller semondre Progilla, femme Pilate 340

‘Be ready to go summon Progilla, Pilate’s wife.’

Such directions as these convincingly demonstrate that the *abregiet* was indeed used on the day of the performance.

What is not clear from even these directions, however, is who is doing such prompting or from where. The summoning in general seems more convincingly done ‘back stage’ than on stage. Actors are being summoned from the off-stage equivalent of the modern greenroom to prepare for their entrances. Similarly, the deputies of the *secrets* who are to produce a deluge on Noah’s Ark must be concealed where the audience cannot see them, so they too are probably prompted from backstage. Often, such prompting as may be necessary is put into the hands of the actors themselves:

Nota que l’Humain Lignaige doit dire ce couplet assez pres de Paradis; et se, d’aventure, il estoit loing quant il (le) co(m)menchera, il doit, toujours en parlant, approchier.

Il se meth à genoulx lors qu’il dira: «O haulte et divine essence» etc. 39

‘N.b. that The Human Race ought to say this couplet when fairly near Paradise; and if, by chance, he is far away when he begins, he should approach while speaking.

‘He kneels as he says, “O high and divine essence”.’

Here The Human Race is given leave to regulate his own approach to Paradise. If he finds it necessary, he should speak his lines while walking, but in any case, he should kneel as soon as he speaks the line, *O haulte et divine essence* — a line that cannot be prompted in any case because it is not in the *abregiet*.

Often, however, such signalling and summoning seems to happen from off stage rather than on. Consider how the *abregiet* arranges for Joseph to be off stage during the Nativity, for instance:

Lors Joseph fait semblant de leur donner à mengier, et puis s'en va ariere de Nostre Dame; et ne revient point devers elle tant que on lui fera signe, et n'est point a le Nativité. 65

'Then Joseph mimes giving them something to eat, and then he goes away behind Our Lady; and he does not return towards her until he is given a signal; and he is not at the Nativity.'

Since Joseph is not directed to go to a particular on-stage place (such as, for instance, the 'stall' or 'place' of Joseph), the direction 'he goes away' apparently means he leaves the stage entirely. The signal for his return, therefore, probably happens off stage. With Joseph off-stage, Jesus is born, Mary kneels, and then, the signal having been given off stage, *Soit adverti Joseph de retourner devers Maria* ('Let Joseph be instructed to set off back towards Mary': 69). Similarly, thanks to some theatrical sleight-of-hand, a child actor, cued from off stage, is substituted for a doll between the birth of Mary and the Presentation of Mary in the Temple:

Ici soit Marie nouvellement née ostée de la maison de Joachim et Anne; et ci se doit monstrer avec eulx Marie que on presente au temple 47

'Here the new-born Mary should be removed from the house of Joachim and Anne; and here the Mary who is presented at the Temple should be shown with them.'

There is not a single prompting direction in the entire Mons *abregiet* that clearly must be delivered from on stage. On the other hand, the *abregiet* includes many, such as these, that more convincingly refer to off-stage prompts.

Perhaps the most informative record of how the *abregiet* was intended to be used during performance in prompting the play can be found in the *Livre des prologues*. This text, as mentioned above, is similar to an actor's part, but it is in codex form, whereas actors' parts are formatted as scrolls. For this reason, Sire Gille le Naing, the priest who was cast in the role of *Prologueur*, probably carried this book on stage with him, and he may therefore have read his part openly from the book rather than reciting his speeches from memory. He presents himself to the audience dressed in the costume of a doctor, perhaps deliberately reminiscent of the *scientifique doctor*, Jean Michel,¹²⁴ and he holds a *Regle de predication* ('preacher's

staff'). He delivers his prologues, moreover, from *quelque montignete* ('some hillock') or *en kayere de verité* (apparently an allegorical Pulpit of Truth). Throughout the first *ournée*, Sir Gille le Naing returns repeatedly to his Pulpit of Truth, from where he serves as an expositor. He thus speaks a total of eight times in this *ournée* to form transitions between episodes and to ensure that he will *mieux apareiller les coraiges des auditeurs à oyr devotement ce qui par après sera dit de icelle Passion* ('better prepare the hearts of the audience to listen devoutly to what is afterwards to be said about the Passion'). The play thus constructs Sir Gille le Naing as a powerful figure of clerical authority.

But theatrically, he is not powerful at all. A stage direction written into the *Livre des prologues* reveals that he acts closely under control of someone more powerful than he. At the end of the opening episode of the first *ournée*, Satan makes a very noisy exit as *Lors soit fait grant tempeste en Enfer* ('Then there shall be made a great turbulence in Hell': 13). Before Sire Gille can go to his Pulpit of Truth and speak, he has to wait for the noise to die down. At this point, the *Livre des prologues* directs him as follows:

*Nota. — Pour mieux le Prologheur entendre à son Ile prologue encommenchier il doit avoir regard à l'Homme commis à faire les scemonces ensuivant l'Abregiet de la Journée, lequel le debvera segniffier pour proferer lesdict prologue.*¹²⁵

'N.b. In order for the *Prologheur* the better to understand when to begin his second prologue, he ought to keep his eye on the man appointed to give the reminders according to the *Abregiet* of the *Journée*, who ought to give him the sign to deliver the said prologue.'

Cohen seized on this passage, believing that it entirely vindicated his theory of the 'always on-stage director': 'This is to say, that the *PROLOGUEUR* will await the signal of the Director who holds the *Abregiet* in his hand and makes [him] observe its reminders or directions'.¹²⁶

But let us consider this very interesting and significant passage more closely. Cohen's gloss on this passage is after all not well supported by the text itself. Rather, it depends squarely upon his preoccupation with the 'always on-stage director'. One can only get it to mean what he says it does if you are trying to visualize this description as reflecting his interpretation of the Fouquet image: the Man with the Book directing on stage. The language of the passage, however, suggests a disconcertingly less imposing figure than the 'always on-stage director' who issues orders to

actors. The text itself merely describes him as ‘the man appointed to give the reminders according to the *Abregiet* of the *Journée*’. Rather than an immensely powerful Director, the passage refers to him as a subordinate figure, an assistant of some sort, one of the army of anonymous stage crew entrusted with the details of the performance. That he is described as the man appointed specifically to hold *l’Abregiet de la Journée* strongly indicates that the task may well be committed to other men during other *journées*. He has merely been appointed to perform a task in the production, not to direct the whole performance. His description in this passage further begs the question of who appointed him. As far as one can tell, he is more of an assistant stage manager than a director. Nor does this passage establish that the ‘man appointed’ must be standing on stage when he is communicating with the *Prologueur*. He needs only be in Sir Gille’s line of sight; he need not be visible to the audience. Moreover, Sir Gille, commanding his Pulpit of Truth set atop some high place, is particularly well-suited to look down for his cue into the backstage area that the audience cannot see. That there are such backstage, beneath-stage, and below-stage areas is perfectly clear from the *abregiet* itself. We recall the chamber underneath Paradise, discussed above, where God has his angels pick up two fur pelts for Adam and Eve and awaits his entrance. So, too, we have seen Joseph retiring off stage, where he is invisible to the audience, and awaiting his re-entrance once the Nativity has occurred. Cain disappears backstage where he is invisible to the audience, but where he can receive signals to re-enter:

Et quant Cayn a conclut, il s’en va muchier en quelque lieu et ne se fait plus voir jusques atant que on luy fera signe. 16

‘And when Cain has finished [speaking], he goes and hides himself in some place and does not allow himself to be seen any more until the moment when he is given a signal.’

So too, when Noah and his family enter into the Ark, the actors are told to disappear beneath the stage:

... et s’en doivent aller par les secrez de terre ceulx qui ne doivent plus parler pour ce jour. 26

‘... and those who ought not to speak any more during this *journée* ought to go out by means of the *secrez de terre* [hidden exit beneath the stage].’

Finally, there is the matter of the *abregiet* itself. Presumably the man who is appointed to give the reminders must be consulting that document. But if one looks into that text, one finds that the scribe has not troubled to enter the prompt into the *abregiet*.¹²⁷ The book actually held by the 'Man Appointed' makes no reference whatsoever to the prompt to which the *Livre des prologues* refers. From the point of view of the *abregiet* (and hence from the point of view of the Man Appointed), the prompt — and hence the prompter — seems not to have been very significant after all. In the end, Sir Gille himself was trusted to pick his moment to begin speaking.

To my mind, the *abregiet* is better understood as the chief means for controlling the production instead of a book to be used in prompting the performance. To understand what I mean by 'controlling the production', perhaps we need to consider what it would mean to be responsible for supervising a medieval *mystère*. The production of the Amiens-Mons *Passion*, after all, involved complicated and difficult problems of organization. Imagine, if you will, what it takes to perform a play that took either four long days to perform and was divided into eight *journées* (as at Amiens) or eight days of performance, one *journée* per day (as at Mons). Containing something of the scope of an English mystery cycle, it focused on the Birth, Life, Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ, but it began with Adam and Eve and concluded with Pentecost. Since roles continuing from *journée* to *journée* were often divided between different actors, hundreds of actors may have been involved. Cohen estimates at least 150 actors were necessary to perform the roughly 350 roles. There were at least 48 rehearsals in the Town Hall, and since the space in that location must necessarily have been smaller than the outdoor stage, these rehearsals must have involved 'platoons' of actors performing individual scenes. How does one organize rehearsals for all these groups of actors and in doing so, keep the performance coordinated effectively?

Because of these problems, plays of this scope often employed multiple *superintendants* to organize the rehearsals and performances. The Valenciennes *Passion Play* thus required no less than thirteen *superintendants* to recruit, rehearse, and stage the show. The Mons *Passion*, which was much shorter than the Valenciennes one, had at least four actor-*superintendants*, two conductors of *secrets*, as well as the redoubtable Jehan Billet, who presided over all those rehearsals, and there may well have been more still (since we only know the names of those who were specifically paid in the Mons accounts).¹²⁸ In addition, four assistants were appointed to double and assist the four actor-*superintendants* in organizing,

rehearsing, and running the performances. The use of multiple *superintendants* thus divided an impossibly complex job of organization into manageable portions.

The Mons *abregiet* is best understood, I would judge, as a way of bringing coherence to all this activity. What happens, for instance, when one *superintendant*, who has been rehearsing one group of actors, has to turn his attention to another group of actors or to a problem with the constructions of the elaborate stage set? How is his assistant, or an alternate *superintendant*, to proceed? What happens when one *superintendant* stands in for another during rehearsals? What must he emphasize in rehearsing the actors? How does he know what has been decided about cues, entrances, points of acting interpretation? Will he know to make sure that Pilate has to sit down on that bench and look sad at that particular point in the play? Will he know that when Veronica says one particular line, she must unfold her veil, and when she then says another particular line, she must wipe Jesus' face? He will, if he is monitoring the rehearsal with *abregiet* in hand.

The composition of the Mons *abregiet* thus strikes me as more obviously intended as a way of ensuring consistency and of controlling the production of the play in rehearsal. You need to tell Joseph during rehearsal that he is to interpret his role by looking surprised when he sees the pregnant Virgin; it is rather too late to do so during performance. Wait a minute! How do we get those fur cloaks to Adam and Eve before they leave Paradise? Ah, this is what we'll do: two of God's attendant angels will bring them along when God goes back to Paradise to ask a few questions about that apple. We'll make somebody responsible for preparing the cloaks to give to the angel. Oops. What are we going to do about Satan? There's no time to get him out of Hell and into his snake costume before he has to appear in Paradise to tempt Eve. OK, how about this: we'll let Satan stay in Hell, and we'll get another actor to put on the snake costume. That should solve the problem. How do we get Raphael's face painted red before his appearance? We'll need to let the painter know in rehearsal when he is expected to rouge the face of the angel so that he will know during performance when to perform that task. Put that down in the book. The *abregiet*, read in this way, tells more eloquently how the *superintendants* were preparing the play than it tells us who prompted the production on the day of performance or how he did it.

I have no doubt that the Mons *abregiet* would be useful during performance, as a means of monitoring whether the actors, painters,

singers, and conductors were performing their roles as they had been instructed to do. Indeed, it was consulted throughout: when rehearsing actors, constructing the special effects, building the sets, and in prompting, when necessary, the actors during performance. For all these off-stage and pre-production purposes, it is admirably suited.

But it is not *primarily* a prompt script. The man — or rather men — who held the *abregiet* were not necessarily *régisseurs*, directors, *meneurs-de-jeu*. The one clear reference so far found that gives us a glimpse of the holder of that book in the act of performing his duties describes him merely as a subordinate, *l'Homme commis à faire les scemonces ensuivant l'Abregiet de la Journée*. There is no evidence that the holder of the *abregiet* habitually stood on stage 'conducting' the play in the manner of an orchestra conductor. By inserting a wholly mythical 'always on-stage director' into the process, we have not yet rightly understood the nature of this important text nor understood very well how it was used.

We began this study by invoking Cohen's *idée fixe*, the *meneur de jeu* as it was constructed by him and others. He was not a wholly mythical character, for we occasionally get glimpses of named *meneurs du jeu* and *mestres du jeu* in the texts and records. The authentic appearances of this figure are much fewer and much less dominating than our histories of the stage have constructed him. Louis Paris, Sepet, Cohen, and others successively made him into an immensely powerful person who was at last deemed to be 'here, there, and everywhere', always on stage, directing, prompting, delivering prologues and epilogues, the supervisor of supervisors, his uniform defined by the book and staff he carries — the one identified by Cohen as the Mons *abregiet* and the other as a baton wielded like that of an orchestra conductor. This all-powerful directorial construction derives ultimately from nineteenth-century understandings of the *meneur du jeu*, a *Prologueur* in Eustache Mercadé's *Vengeance* (who may or may not have been a director), whose portrait was allegedly painted by Hubert Cailleau (even though no overall *meneur du jeu* is to be found in the Valenciennes records), and as finally interpreted by Cohen in the light of a miniature by Jean Fouquet. He it was, Cohen thought, who directed the Mons *Passion* from on stage while consulting the Mons *abregiet*. In the end, however, when we come across glimpses of the holder of that *abregiet* actually performing his tasks, he turns out to be a rather modest figure — the Man Appointed — and he is performing a function at the behest of somebody else.

If we look for it, however, there is always an immensely important figure in charge of the entire production, from beginning to end, whatever model of directorial leadership may have been adopted for a particular production. It is not a person, however, but a text. Or rather one should say *texts*. Texts are truly 'here, there, and everywhere' controlling every aspect of the production. Examples of most of these survive from the *Mons Passion*. There is, of course, the *original*, the full text of the play itself. From this text, separate texts for each *journée* could be copied, thus providing a text that can be consulted backstage during performance for prompting and other purposes. Actors' parts could also be copied from the *original*, and these may well be carried on stage in rolls, even perhaps stuffed up sleeves or wound about fingers, to be consulted by each actor when necessary. Then there is the *Livre des prologues*, a very specialized actor's part, but copied into a codex and perhaps carried ostentatiously on stage by a priest costumed as a *scientifique docteur*; in this case, the codex serves both as a working text (the actor-expositor reads to the audience from it) and as an emblematic prop that further defines his character as a man of clerical authority. Then there are *billets de advertence* — cue sheets used by the musicians and by those responsible for sound effects.

But central to all of these texts are the two series of *abregiets* that record stage effects to be constructed, points of interpretation thought to be important to the performance of each role, and so on. The same text, of course, will be useful for monitoring the actual performance. Is that supernumerary ready off stage to make her entry with Eliachim and the donkey for the journey to Bethlehem scene? Is the deputy of *secrets* ready to pull aside the curtain to make the Bethlehem star appear? Can somebody please see if the angels are ready in the room beneath Paradise? Has the white costume been placed inside the mountain for Jesus's quick change at the Transfiguration?

In order to understand fully the significance of the *abregiet*, in short, you have to imagine it in operation alongside the other texts. The *abregiés* may be key texts in controlling all these operations, but they are not committed to the hands of a single man. Many consult it and are thus governed by it throughout the production. It will be consulted by one supervisor in this rehearsal, and then perhaps by another supervisor in the next rehearsal. The directors of *secrets* consult its advice in devising stage effects. Musicians draw up their *billets de advertence* from it. During the performance of one *journée* the *abregiet* can be committed to the care of one

man; for the next *ournée*, it can be given to another. In the end, the men are in the service of the text, not the other way around.

After Cohen: Loupvent's *St Étienne* and the *Mistère de la Conception*

Cohen apparently overlooked some of the most significant testimony as to the existence and functions of the *meneur du jeu* in two very interesting texts. During his research for the *Histoire de la mise en scène*, Cohen did encounter the manuscript of the *Mistère de la Conception* (1481–1503) in Chantilly, and he even congratulated himself that he had found a play not discussed by Petit de Julleville. However, he declared it ‘deprived of all literary or historical interest’, and seems to have given it only a cursory glance. He cited a few lines from the play’s opening to demonstrate that the *Prologueur* addresses ‘all classes of society’, but he apparently did not spot the manuscript’s three brief mentions in the second *ournée* of a *mestre du jeu* — references that, one would think, would have proven exceptionally pertinent grist for his mill.¹²⁹ At the same time, he overlooked the manuscript of Loupvent’s *St Étienne* (1548), which then remained in James Rothschild’s private library, so once again he missed several important and explicit references to the activities of a *meneur du jeu* that might have provided additional support for his ‘always on-stage director’.¹³⁰ These references are thus virtually new ones, and they have hitherto played no part whatsoever in constructing the ‘always on-stage director’. They therefore deserve to be examined for what, if anything, they can tell us about the validity of Cohen’s *idée fixe*.

Of the two texts, Loupvent’s *St Étienne* contains the most numerous and most explicit descriptions of the *meneur du jeu* and his supervisory functions, so our investigation properly begins with that text. Loupvent’s *mystère* establishes beyond doubt that *meneur du jeu* was a recognized title for the overall supervisor of a *mystère* in the mid-sixteenth century. We not only catch glimpses of his activities recorded amongst the stage directions in his text, but for the first time, the text records his name: *maistre Jacques Buffelot, meneur dudict present jeux et mistere* (674).¹³¹ The organization of this saint’s *mystère* of 1548 thus forms an interesting contrast with the Valenciennes play, which was performed the previous year. Where Valenciennes placed the production of its *Passion* in the hands of a collaborative phalanx of *superintendants* and *origineurs*, the comparatively more modest *St Étienne*, performed at the Abbey of Saint Mihiel on the Meuse, entrusted its performance to the oversight of a single individual.¹³²

The nature of the surviving manuscript is crucial to understanding the references to the *meneur's* activities. As Graham Runnalls points out, the *St Étienne* manuscript is essentially a fair copy or *livre original* ('Type B').¹³³ In particular, it is a pre-production manuscript, written before the details of performance have been completely determined. At one point, for instance, Loupvent is trying to arrange for a group of Christians to descend beneath the stage into the catacombs, but because the stage hasn't been built yet, he has to allow for alternatives. The stage direction tells us that

s'en vont absconser et cachier en la cripte nepotiane qui serat quelque concavité et creux dessoulz les escharfaulx; ou aultrement sy le jeux et mystere se faisoit bas sur terre, on les pouroit mestre derriere quelque tapisserie. 664

'they go away to conceal and hide themselves in the *cripte nepotiane* [i.e. catacombs] that will be some concavity and hollow place beneath the scaffolds; or otherwise, if the play and *mystère* is made flush to the ground, they can be put behind some tapestry.'

This choice, thus, seems to depend upon decisions yet to be made, not by the *meneur du jeu* but by the carpenter, who has yet to construct the stage at the time that the manuscript was written. Either there will be a pit beneath the stage into which the Christians can descend, or some sort of curtain will have to be hung behind which they can retire at ground level. Indeed, at the time of writing, Loupvent does not seem to know the identity of the carpenter who will build the stage.

Loupvent, however, does know the *meneur du jeu* who will superintend the production of *St Étienne*, and his comments show both a close working relationship with him and a great respect for him. In writing the script, he seems to be in relatively the same position as Andrieu de la Vigne was composing *St Martin*. Because de la Vigne was commissioned by a committee of Seurre townsmen to write the play in 1496 (a task he tells us he completed in only five weeks), he knew who would be producing his play. So Loupvent knows his production team as well, and as he writes his play, he leaves certain practical decisions to the redoubtable *meneur du jeu*, Jacques Buffelot, to the as yet unknown stage carpenter, and even, as we shall see, to a certain *maistre Ligier*.

To begin with, Loupvent expects that *maistre Buffelot* will probably deliver the prologues and epilogues. These speeches, however, seem quite different from those written by Mercadé and the anonymous author of *Bernard du Menthon*. Those plays, as we have seen, strive to represent their

speakers as bookish, even academic, historians. Loupvent, however, constructs his speeches specifically for a *meneur* who is in command of a company of actors, whom he refers to as *nos joueurs*. The theological orientation he leaves to God, who begins the play by delivering a *très théologique* speech to his angels (661). However, even at this stage, Loupvent cannot be sure that he can count on Buffelot to perform this function, at least not every time. In introducing the epilogue at the end of the first *ournée*, he thus allows for an alternative possibility:

Puis après viendra le meneur du jeu ou quelque aultre personnaige à[] ce commis pour lire publiquement la conclusion et brandre congié du peuple.

666–7

‘Then afterwards the *meneur du jeu* or some other person commissioned to do this will come to read the conclusion publicly and to take leave of the people.’

Just as Sir Gille le Naing apparently reads his prologues to the audience out of a book, Loupvent also seems to expect his *Prologueur* to read rather than memorize his part. But unlike Sir Gille, Buffelot (or his assistant) does not return repeatedly on stage during the performance. Loupvent apparently strives to make the *Prologueur*’s duties as simple as possible.¹³⁴

Again and again, Loupvent defers matters of staging and set decoration to Buffelot. Early in the second *ournée*, for instance, he arranges for the Christians to descend once again into the catacombs beneath the stage, but then, instead of leaving them there, he allows them *remettre secretement sur les escharfaulx pour veoir le jeu derrier quelque clere rideau de soie comme maistre Jacques Buffelot le scaura bien ordonner* (‘secretly to be returned to the scaffolds in order to see the play behind some clear curtain of silk as maistre Jacques Buffelot will well know how to arrange’: 669). During the third *ournée*, Loupvent directs *Exuperia la femme* to lead her *petit filz Theodolus par la main* to be presented to the Emperor, but then he defers to Buffelot once more, giving him another staging option: *Mais sy le meneur de jeu veut, Broyart pora mener le petit Theodolus* (‘But if the *meneur de jeu* wishes, Broyart may lead little Theodolus’: 672.) Several folios later, he offers Buffelot another option, this time his choice of an anthem to be sung by the angels: *Les anges commanceront joyeusement à chanter en paradis cette antienne: Dico vobis ou une aultre selon la volonté du meneur de jeu* (‘The angels in Paradise will begin joyously to sing this anthem: *Dico vobis* or another according to the wishes of the *meneur de jeu*’: 672). Finally, in middle of the first *ournée*, Loupvent cedes to Buffelot a vital point of

costuming. As Nemesius kneels before St Étienne to be baptized, a sacristan gives the saint *une ayguyeir pleine d'eau ... pour luy en getter sur la teste* ('a tankard full of water ... to pour over his head'). How should Nemesius be costumed at this point, Loupvent wonders? *Sy semble bon à maistre Jacques Buffelot ou à maistre Ligier que le dict Nemesius douyve estre nudz, ilz le poront ordonner* ('If it seems good to maistre Jacques Buffelot or to maistre Ligier that the said Nemesius ought to be naked, they can so order it': 666). In this case, Loupvent not only defers to Buffelot on a tricky point of morality, but he expects the *meneur* to take advice as well from an advisor, perhaps a cleric whose judgment may be relied upon.

These directions thus give a pretty clear picture of Loupvent's expectations of the *meneur du jeu*'s functions in producing the text that he has written. For the most part, he is expected to make choices about points of acting, costuming, set decoration, and the like. He is expected, moreover, to make these choices, to some extent at least, in concert with other members of what we might call the production staff. The decision as to whether a subterranean space can be constructed to represent the catacombs properly belongs to the stage carpenter, and if not, a curtained area at ground level will have to be constructed instead. Once the basic elements of the stage have been constructed, however, he is expected to decide whether to arrange for an area of the stage to be curtained off behind which the Christians, supposedly safe in the catacombs, can retire to watch and wait for their next entrance. He will best know which actor should be given the job of leading a small child about on stage. He can choose the anthem that the angels sing if he does not like the one that Loupvent himself suggests. He should decide whether or not an actor should appear naked on stage, but he ought to ask maistre Ligier's opinion first. All these production matters, moreover — and presumably they are merely a representative sample of many more like them — are matters that have to be addressed and decided *before* the performance.

It is equally important to notice that Loupvent does not imagine Buffelot performing any function whatsoever on stage during performance apart from delivering prologues and epilogues. He is not expected, for instance, to walk on stage to direct the angels to sing an anthem, and then decide at that moment, while they wait expectantly, which anthem they are to sing. Loupvent clearly expects the choice of anthem to be addressed before performance. Even his expectations as to Buffelot's duties as *Prologueur*, as we have seen, are rather tentative at best in that he allows that his *meneur du jeu* might well appoint *quelque aultre personnage* to

perform this duty for him. Indeed, in preparing for this contingency, Loupvent seems to have written the *meneur's* prologues and epilogues so that they might be read from a script rather than memorized and declaimed. Presumably, the decision as to who might walk on stage to deliver these speeches might even be deferred almost until the last moment. Whatever activities he performs on the day of performance, in short, seem to be performed backstage, from whence he (or his deputy) is expected to emerge to deliver those prologues and epilogues. Apart from the matter of Buffelot's title, *meneur du jeu*, the evidence from this very informative text thus gives absolutely no support whatsoever for Cohen's theory of the 'always on-stage director'. To the contrary, Loupvent's evidence suggests that his appearances on stage were limited to the reading of prologues and epilogues.

The *mestre du jeu's* presence among the stage directions of the anonymous *Mistere de la Conception* have only recently been noticed for the first time in Xavier Leroux's welcome new edition of that play.¹³⁵ References to the *mestre du jeu* occur three times in the manuscript — all three in stage directions that, on the face of it, seem to describe what might be called 'supervisory' functions. The first of these, for instance, records the *mestre's* presence during the splendid ceremony that accompanies the Virgin's Presentation in the Temple. To one side of *lordennance* of a religious procession composed of the Virgin, her parents, her neighbours, their servants, and others, appears the somewhat enigmatic annotation, *le mestre du Jeu dauant tous* (lines 5247–9 sd). A second direction, which occurs considerably later, directs the *mestre* to instruct the Virgin how to show proper respect to her neighbours: *Lors fet reuerence aulx voysins et voysinez tenant l'ordre de religion, coment le mestre du jeu doit moustrer* ('Then [she] makes reverence to the neighbours, male and female, according to religious practice, as the *mestre du jeu* ought to demonstrate': lines 7874–7 sd). The third refers to the removal of the ceremonial vessels at the conclusion the Temple's celebration of the Feast of the Tabernacles. This task, we read, *soit fet a la disposition du mestre du jeu* ('should be done as the *mestre du jeu* assigns': lines 7962–3 sd). We thus have comparatively little evidence from which to understand the role that the *mestre* plays in this production, but these three references are certainly provocative ones.

To understand them properly, however, we need to consider the nature of the manuscript in which they are found. One needs only look at the first folio to see at once that it has been used as a formal presentation-manuscript, perhaps a gift to the Count and Countess of Montpensier.¹³⁶

The three outside margins of folio 1^r have thus been filled with floral decoration, a coat of arms, and two large, decorated initials. Although the first folio is the one that has attracted the most extensive decoration, occasional decorated initials and decorative pen-work are scattered throughout the manuscript. The painted decoration has been added after the text, but because the scribe has deliberately left spaces for decorated initials, the possibility that such decoration might be later applied must have been contemplated from the first. However, as Xavier Leroux points out, the execution of the decoration remains imperfect, it was applied according to no preconceived plan, and the execution of the capital letters leaves much to be desired. The decoration has thus been somewhat hastily and inexpertly applied. Although the manuscript cannot simply have been an ordinary production manuscript tatted up for presentation, its design as a presentational object cannot have been its only *raison d'être* either.¹³⁷

The manuscript was clearly also designed for some sort of service as a production manuscript. For one thing, it employs *crochets*, or small marks apparently referring to unwritten stage directions.¹³⁸ Their inclusion would be useful in a production manuscript, but pointless in a reading text. For another, its format is very unusual. Play manuscripts of the period commonly measure approximately 30cm x 20cm, although some presentation manuscripts are even larger, up to 35cm x 27cm.¹³⁹ The much narrower and thinner format of the *Conception* manuscript, by contrast, measures about 27cm by 15cm. This narrow format does not seem well designed for a reader's convenience. It has been carefully ruled throughout to provide very generous margins (c. 5.5cm) at the outside edge and bottom of each page and a narrower margin (c. 2cm) at the top and at the inside (gutter) margin. The actual text of the play is accordingly confined into a narrow box measuring only c. 20cm x 7.5cm.

This unusual format has surely been adopted for theatrical purposes. In particular, the wide margins at the outside of each page have been designed specifically for the accommodation of stage directions.¹⁴⁰ This margin contains hundreds of stage directions, and some also spill over from the outer margin into the other margins as well. Indeed, many of the directions have clearly been added *after* the text itself has been written, suggesting that the manuscript may have been continuously updated in the period leading up to performance. The important stage directions inserted in the bottom margin of fol. 110^r have, as we shall see, been added at some time after the original manuscript was created, to clarify a bit of stage business. The number and deployment of stage directions is a highly

unusual feature to be found in a presentation manuscript. Such directions as appear commonly in presentation manuscripts are usually few in number, and when they do occur, they typically appear in the centre of the page, not the margin, and as a consequence, the outer margins are much narrower.¹⁴¹

Not only is the layout better designed for theatrical purposes than for a reader's convenience, but it often privileges practical theatrical considerations over literary ones. From a reader's point of view, the text is somewhat unwieldy to hold, and its crowded text, that runs into and out of the gutter of the manuscript, can make for unpleasant, even difficult, reading. Its format and layout makes better sense as an *original* designed so that its holder can monitor the performance of the play while moving about backstage. The wide outer margin makes it easy to spot an upcoming stage decoration, and its narrow size, which enables it to be held in the palm of one hand, makes it portable and well-suited to backstage consultation. Thus, even if its ultimate purpose were to be a presentation text to the Countess of Montpensier, it has carefully preserved both the textual features and format of its copy text, and these are characteristic of a playhouse manuscript, probably an *original*. The Countess' text may even have been itself an *original*, created at the same time as one or other copies of the whole text, and it may even have seen limited service as a 'backstage' original which had then been set aside for later use as a presentation copy. As Graham Runnalls points out, some manuscripts, particularly Type B (*original*) manuscripts, contain features of another type as well and must be considered 'cross types'. This may well be one of those manuscripts.¹⁴²

The stage directions are conventionally written in the outside margins. Under certain circumstances, however, stage directions will stray into the bottom margin, or even find themselves crammed into the gutter-side of the folio. This typically occurs when two stage directions are meant to occur simultaneously. On fol. 28^v, for instance, the scribe squeezes the direction, *Poze assez longue*, to the right of a speech-header because there is already a stage direction in the left (outer) margin at this point, and the scribe wants to make clear that the two actions indicated have to occur simultaneously rather than sequentially. Similarly, in the left margin of fol. 44^v, the scribe writes *Lez voysins tous vont offrir / et Joachin le darnir* ('All the neighbours go to make their offering, and Joachin the last of all'), but he then also jams into the gutter side of the text another stage direction that he wants to happen concurrently, not sequentially: *Quant Joac<hin> vient / dist le / prestre* ('When Joachin comes, the priest

says ...'). Bottom margins are usually left free of stage directions, although exceptionally long ones will run into the bottom margin if they are cued to begin towards the bottom of the text box. These features are particularly important for understanding the nature of the directions that mention the *mestre du jeu*.

Unlike Loupvent's *St Étienne*, the *Conception* contains only three references to the *mestre du jeu*, and these are all grouped in the play's second *journée*. Given that the manuscript has been specifically designed to include stage directions, and given the large number of stage directions that it contains, one cannot convincingly argue that there must originally have been many more and that they have been omitted by the scribe for some reason. Rather, these three may well be all there ever were; at least they must represent accurately the importance of such annotations to the play.

Let us examine the latter two first, because these are both more straightforward and they tell us a great deal about our *mestre*. Consider, for instance, the Virgin's instruction to 'make reverence' to her neighbours. This comes at the end of a sequence of three such directions (lines 7869–75). First, the Virgin welcomes her father (*Mon reverand pere et seigneur, / vous soiéz le tresbien venu*), and as she says these lines, a stage direction instructs her: *Lors elle beze son pere fesant reverence jusques a terre* ('Then she kisses her father, bowing down to the ground'). Next, she welcomes her mother, and the stage direction instructs her to perform the same act of reverence: *Lors beze sa mere semblablement*. Finally, she welcomes her *voysins et voysinez*, and the accompanying stage direction instructs her to make an act of reverence to them also, *tenant l'ordre de religion, coment le mestre du jeu doit moustrer* ('according to religious practice, as the *mestre du jeu* ought to demonstrate').

The stage direction we are examining thus instructs the Virgin — not the *mestre* — to perform an action. It is extremely unlikely that it serves to cue the 'always on-stage' director to wave his wand and mime a direction that the Virgin must in turn imitate. This detail must be worked out beforehand in rehearsal. The *mestre* comes into it because he ought to know the *ordre de religion* proper to this situation. Does the Virgin kiss the neighbours as she did her parents? Does she bow down to the ground to her neighbours, or is some lesser greeting appropriate? What is the proper religious form of greeting that a maiden brought up in the Temple would show in such a situation? This direction thus clearly resembles those we noticed in Loupvent's *St Étienne*: shall Exuperia or Broyart lead *le petit*

Theodolus by the hand? What anthem shall the angels sing? Let Master Buffelot decide.

Much the same can be said about the direction a few folios later that instructs the Archdeacon, Subdeacon, and other clergy to clear away the Temple ornaments that have just been on display during the Feast of the Tabernacle (lines 7956–63 and sd). The Archdeacon himself prompts this action, ordering the minor clergy to put *lez reliqueres et saintex choses* in *coffre* and *casse*. As the Subdeacon responds to this request, a stage direction in the margin mandates that the removal of these coffers and chests containing these reliquaries and holy things must be done *a la disposition du mestre du jeu* ('as the *mestre du jeu* assigns'). Once again, this stage direction does not instruct the *mestre* to perform any action whatsoever at this point. He does not wave his baton and waft away the clerics with their coffers and boxes towards some off-stage destination.

The direction does pose an important question, however: what do we do with these reliquaries and holy things once we've finished with them on stage? This is one of those decisions that must be made by the *mestre du jeu*. The significance of this direction, indeed, probably reflects the importance of the objects being disposed of. Presumably, like the vessels borne processionally in the *Play of Daniel*, they are actual items borrowed from a local church. They therefore require special care and thoughtful consideration, and someone must be charged with the responsibility for seeing that they are properly looked after. The stage direction only evokes the *mestre du jeu* primarily because he will be held accountable for the *disposition* of the *reliqueres et saintex choses* that the church has loaned for the production.

Although these two stage directions provide no evidence whatsoever that our *mestre du jeu* directs the play from on stage, as Cohen would have him do, they do provide some very suggestive evidence as to his off-stage identity. Both of these mentions of the *mestre du jeu* share the same concern for proper church ceremonial. On the one hand, he determines for Mary the proper *ordre de religion* in greeting her neighbours; on the other, he takes responsibility for the *disposition* of the reliquaries and holy things. This interest in the good order and correct performance of religious ceremony in the Temple, I would suggest, also probably reflects his 'off-stage' identity. Maistre Jacques Buffelot, *meneur du jeu* of Loupvent's *St Étienne*, was clearly a layman. The anonymous *mestre du jeu* of the *Conception*, by contrast, is almost certainly a cleric.

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PLATE 4: Chantilly: Musée Condé ms 616 fol. 110^F detail (*Mistere de la Conception*)

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The complex stage direction at the bottom of fol. 110^F, by contrast, shows the *mestre* wielding a somewhat different sort of authority (PLATE 4, lines 5247–9 sd). This direction makes elaborate provision for a formal procession of the Virgin, her parents, her neighbours, their servants, and others, as they travel from the central scaffold where the Virgin's party has gathered, to the Temple scaffold, where the High Priest anxiously awaits her arrival for her formal Presentation. It is a reverent, but certainly not a liturgical, procession in that it only conveys the Virgin to the Temple. Because it is not actually staged within the Temple, it does not involve any nicety of the *ordre de religion*.

An especially unusual direction, it not only strays into the bottom margin, but it also largely fills that margin. It records two things that must happen simultaneously. Just after Joachin's speech that ends at the bottom of the page, the text calls for a *silete*. The scribe inserts this direction at the centre of the page in the bottom margin: *Cilete des / haulx menestriez / assez long*. The minstrels are to play *assez long* in order to accompany the

Virgin's formal procession from Joachin's house to the Temple. The detailed *ordenance* for this procession is crammed into the lower right corner block where the outer margin and the bottom margin intersect. The scribe occasionally allows stage directions to spill into the lower margin, but when they do, they usually number only a line or two, and are almost always confined to that corner box. That the scribe has not only entirely filled that box with an extensive stage direction but also spread other directions across the bottom margin is nearly unprecedented.¹⁴³ Its awkward placement in the manuscript suggests that the scribe added it belatedly, after the text had already been written, as a necessary clarification: *Lors soit acoutree l'ordenan<ce> / selon que sen suit premierement / lez seruiteurs de Joachin & lez voysins & leurs seruiteurs . & pui<s> / Joachin. ¶ apres . Les / chanberrieres et lez fame<s> / & puis noster dame & son / lyure en la main . & pu<is> / la darniere sainte anne / & sen vont au temple tres<..> .* At this point, because the book has been trimmed, the *ordenance* runs off the bottom.¹⁴⁴ Because the scribe has reached the bottom of the folio, he could only finish the *ordenance* by placing any remaining stage direction to the left of the bottom margin, towards the gutter. It was there — below and overlapping the cue for the musicians to perform — that he inserted the stage direction that we are chiefly pondering: *le mestre du Jeu dauant tous* ('the *mestre du Jeu* before all').¹⁴⁵

This last direction has seemed particularly telling; does it not confirm convincingly that the *mestre* not only directs the actors, but that he also does so while standing on stage in full view of the audience? This brief direction, indeed, has tempted one recent commentator to claim that the always on-stage director continually stands 'before all', where he defines the action clearly and openly throughout the play, and from that on-stage position he directs the actors and coordinates the successive and simultaneous action of the play. In this fashion, he participates in the construction of the spectacle and continually 'presents' the play to the audience.¹⁴⁶

There is no evidence whatsoever, however, to suggest that the *mestre* — whoever he is — stands somehow 'before all the players', directing their movements and mediating between actor and audience. Rather, the phrase *dauant tous* most simply, clearly, and obviously refers to his place 'before all' the other marchers in the procession. Such positional wording in the stage direction, indeed, appears frequently in the stage directions, as in the one cited above that directs *lez voysins* to make their offerings, followed

by *Joachin le darnire*. The play frequently offers parallel examples of *davant* being used in this way to indicate the foremost position in a procession: *Lors Joachin va au davant* (lines 4458–9 sd) for instance. Our *mestre* is thus more clearly performing a role in this episode than operating as a director standing outside of it.

Superintendants expected to perform roles in French *mystères*. The documentation for the Valenciennes *Passion*, for instance, shows that nine of the thirteen *superintendants* also took parts in that play, and not just minor roles either. Jehan Sterlin played such *grandes parchons* as Herod Antipas, Jayrus, and Antipater, among others.¹⁴⁷ Some evidence suggests, indeed, that masters and supervisors were essentially performers who were elected from among their fellow actors.¹⁴⁸ Performing in the play would thus severely complicate, if not make impossible, the supervisor's ability to direct the play from on stage in the manner that Cohen imagines. The three references in the *Conception* manuscript, I would suggest, most clearly show the *mestre du jeu* operating both as actor and supervisor.

At this point, we might well ask ourselves whether we can identify the role that our *mestre* may be performing in the *Mistere de la Conception*. Is there, for instance, a character in the play who mainly concerns himself with leading groups of the *voycins* and *voycinez* in procession from place to place?

Just such a character is to be found in Helin, who is described at his first entrance as a *heraud* (line 1794 speech-header) and later as a *serviteur* (line 4922 sd); he performs precisely this function in the second *journée*. This may seem a disconcertingly modest role for the *mestre* to have undertaken, but like Jehan Sterlin at Valenciennes, he may have played other parts as well. Helin is no mere servant but a man of considerable status. Both the *voysins* and the *voycinez* refer to him, for instance, as *Helin amy* (line 4436), and *chere amie honeste et belle* (line 4450), and he is entrusted with selecting the gift that the *voycins* will offer to the Temple. In the section of the play that we are examining, Helin is much concerned with assembling and organizing processions of the *voycins* and *voycinez*. He thus repeatedly brings them together. He carefully organizes these processions with an eye to proper *ordenance*, himself in front, then the men, then the women (see, for instance, lines 4439–59). The *voysins* ask Helin to prepare a suitable offering to carry to the *sant Temple*. Having selected an offering, Helin organizes the procession: *Monseigneur, premier vous yrez / et tous vous suyrons bellemant / Nous allons en Jeruzalem* ('Sir, you will go first, and the rest of us will follow you in good order. We are going

to Jerusalem': lines 4958–60). A note in the margin at this point emphasizes his careful organization of the procession: *Lors s'en vont par ordenance devotement* ('Then they go in due order devoutly'). After their return, Helin finds the *voysinez* again, leads them to the house of Joachim (*après moy*, 'after me', he commands, and the women respond, *allez davant*, 'you go first': lines 5176–82). At this point, when Helin has brought all the *voysins* and *voysinez* together with Joachim, Anne, Mary, and all their servants, we encounter the *ordenance* for the grand procession that is the subject of the stage direction we have been meditating: *le mestre du Jeu dauant tous* ('the *mestre du Jeu* before all', lines 5247–9 sd).

Helin's activities as herald and organizer of processions thus finds its completion with the *ordenance* of the procession that will at last bring the Virgin to the Temple. The almost invariable pattern of his activities convincingly connects Helin and the *mestre*. In almost everything he does, he is specifically concerned with organizing the *voysins* and *voysinez* to move from one place to another. At each of these junctures, the stage directions represent Helin as taking particular interest in the *ordenance* of the procession, and he carefully organizes these hierarchically, men before women. When he leads a procession of the *voysins* to make their offering in the Temple, he specifically does so *per ordenance devotement*, much as the *mestre* will do in leading the culminating procession to the same destination. In each case, he leads the procession from one place to another, which is exactly what his position as a herald requires him to do. The only real difference between the first processions led by Helin and the last one led by the *mestre* is that the latter is more complex, and so requires a longer stage direction to make clear its organization. It is hard to resist the conclusion, therefore, that Helin is merely a role performed by the *mestre*, and that in this instance, the scribe, knowing who would play the role, has called him by his supervisor's title instead of his actor's name.¹⁴⁹ It would be remarkable indeed if the *mestre du jeu* were to step into the action this time and perform exactly the same action that Helin has been consistently performing up to this point. The stage direction in question thus almost certainly records the conclusion of the *mestre du jeu*'s performance as Helin, who leads a final procession of the *voysins* and *voicinez* to the Temple and then exits permanently from the play.¹⁵⁰

These three directions thus tell us a great deal about the identity and functions of the *mestre du jeu* in the *Mistere de la Conception*, but they provide no support whatsoever for Cohen's *idée fixe*. There is simply no credible evidence in the play that the *mestre* directs anything from on stage.

We catch a glimpse of him performing a minor role, it is true, and as in Loupvent's *St Étienne*, the script defers certain decisions to his decidedly off-stage authority. All three, moreover, record rather ordinary, even unimpressive acts. One would think that there must certainly have been more impressive moments in the play, particularly in the third *ournée*, where feats of on-stage directorial exploits might have been recorded for the remembrance of the Countess of Montpensier — if there were any such to record. One thinks, for instance, of the splendid procession of the Old Testament prophets emerging from Hell in the third *ournée*. The only three references to his activities that we do have, moreover, occur in the second of the three *ournées*, the one which we can establish that the *mestre* performed a minor role in the play and where questions arose that called for his particular authority as a cleric. But that is all. One cannot, for instance, argue that the scribe must have been selective, and that many more references to the *mestre* must have existed in the scribe's copy-text. The large number of directions that do survive simply cannot support that idea. Nor can one argue that the presence of an on-stage director is somehow 'absolutely necessary for the coordination of the movements of over a hundred persons'.¹⁵¹ There are never that many actors on stage at any one time, and for the most part, action takes place in successive scenes at different scaffolds, each of which hold many fewer actors than that.

Plenty of movement occurs on stage, but none is obviously prompted by the wave of a wand by a book-toting 'always on-stage director'. As with Loupvent's *St Étienne*, the anonymous *Mistere de la Conception* fails to provide any credible evidence whatsoever that the *mestre* directs the play from on stage. Indeed, both plays provide considerable evidence of off-stage than on-stage functions, and such on-stage appearances as can be documented turn out to be modest ones, confined to the playing of specific roles. Most stage business seems prompted by the dialogue itself. The Archdeacon of the *Conception*, for instance, prompts a *silete*: *Sonez l'entrage pour advertir / que la fecte comance antrer* ('Sound the entry fanfare in order to announce that the feast should begin to be brought in'). The stage direction in the margin seems almost redundant: *Lors on some sus le temple come dessus est dist. Cilete d'orgues* ('Then they play up in the Temple as is said above. *Silete* of organs': lines 7533–5 and sd). More often than not, the actors are simply trusted to know their own movements. Again and again, the stage directions merely report what the actors learn to do in rehearsal: Saint Michael, for instance, climbs upon the altar in the Temple's *sanct des sancts* as the stage direction instructs him: *Lors monte sus*

le coin de l'autier tenant l'espee en la mein et ung escu a l'autre ('Then he climbs upon the corner of the altar, holding a sword in one hand and a shield in the other': lines 7576–7 sd). Not a single stage direction anywhere in the text mandates the *mestre* to direct any action whatsoever. Indeed, the text even bears positive evidence that the actors go about their business unprompted by any on-stage director: *chesqum s'an va la ou doit* ('each goes off where he ought': line 2963 sd).¹⁵²

Conclusion

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the *meneur de jeu* emerged as one of several competing identities for Fouquet's baton-gesturing man, and he became the most successful, not because his identity was better attested than any of these other identities, but because of the immense authority of Gustave Cohen, the great French scholar of the medieval theatre, who first proposed this identity and assigned him his on-stage duties. In a way, however, he did exist, and to see why, we must briefly look at the last of the building blocks from which Cohen constructed his immensely dominating and energetic *meneur*. When Cohen published his edition of the Mons *abregiet*, he gave it the title, *Le Livre de conduite du régisseur*. He did not himself invent that title, however. Shortly after discovering the Mons *abregiés*, he showed them to the great French *régisseur*, Firmin Gémier. As Cohen vividly remembered the moment, 'my Gémier, deeply moved at the sight of the manuscript of his ancient predecessor', immediately baptized it with its present title.¹⁵³ Whether or not Gémier felt deeply moved at this moment, Cohen certainly did. He never tired of re-telling the story of the great man deeply moved at the sight of the manuscript and then baptizing Cohen's edition.¹⁵⁴

Gémier, of course, was one of the larger-than-life figures of the French stage, a Titan of the theatre. At first a collaborator, he became a rival of Antoine, the other giant of the turn-of-the-century theatre. Actor, director, producer, theatre manager, iconoclast, Gémier was a great populist. At nearly the same time that he was baptizing Cohen's edition of the Mons records, he was forming the *Théâtre national ambulante*, in which he packed not only actors, but the entire theatre itself aboard a train and went on tour throughout France. His populist approach drew him to French medieval drama, which he saw as the true source of the French theatrical tradition. He thus thought of medieval drama as 'people's theatre', and he produced several notable productions from the medieval repertoire. In short, Gémier was precisely the sort of 'always on-stage

director' that Cohen imagined the *meneur de jeu* to have been: a man of immense authority, whose flamboyant directing was as much a part of the performance as the acting itself.¹⁵⁵ You didn't go to the *Théâtre national ambulante* to see a production of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, you went there to see Gémier producing and directing *The Merchant of Venice*.

Perhaps we might best understand Cohen's *meneur de jeu* as a 'modern' rather than a 'medieval' man of the theatre. Cohen thought he had discovered, in the *Mons abregiet*, 'a unique document of incomparable value for dramatic history in general and for the history of our theatre in particular'.¹⁵⁶ Cohen seems to have meant that observation in a very particular way. Like Gémier, he thought of the medieval theatre as the true source of the modern tradition, and he himself formed his own company, albeit an academic one, to explore that tradition: *Les Theophiliens*. To a great extent, Cohen thus constructed the *meneur de jeu* in the image of Firmin Gémier, who defined for him the two poles — medieval and modern — of the French theatrical tradition. If one looks for evidence of traces of the *meneur* in the texts and records of his own time, one finds occasional references to supervisors who may or may not bear such titles as *meneurs du jeu* or even *maîtres du jeu*, but they are not the invariable directors and *régisseurs* that Cohen imagined. Above all, there is no real evidence that such supervisors ever directed from on stage, holding a book in one hand while waving a baton in the other like an orchestra conductor. In the end, then, Cohen's *meneur de jeu* is very much a man of his time, but his time primarily lay in the early twentieth century, not the late fifteenth.

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NOTES

Many thanks to Dr Zara Zaddy for helping with the translations, and Professor Malcolm Quainton for advice on French conventions of capitalization.

All English translations of the Bible are from the Douai version.

1. Louis Petit de Julleville *Histoire du théâtre en France: les mystères* 2 vols (Paris: Hachette, 1880) 2 145. Petit de Julleville identified Cailleau's miniature of a man with a roll of paper and a baton as *peut-être le maître du jeu ou l'un des «originateurs»*.
2. Gustave Cohen *Le Théâtre en France au moyen âge* 2 vols (Paris: Éditions Rieder, 1928) plate 58.

3. Gustave Cohen *Histoire de la mise en scène dans le théâtre religieux français du moyen âge* (Académie royale des sciences, des lettres, et des beaux-arts en Belgique NS 1; Brussels: [Hayek], Paris: Champion, 1906) 173–4:

Enfin et surtout, il est le régisseur toujours sur les planches; dans les coulisses il surveille ceux qui sont préposés aux secrets; il confie à certains hommes, dont il est sûr, le soin de recueillir l'argent à l'entrée du jeu; sur la scène, il se multiplie: livre en main, bâton levé, il sert de souffler et de metteur en scène; il est vraiment le «mestre du jeu». Il met en ordre les enfants qui doivent saluer Jésus à son entrée à Jérusalem; il indique aux acteurs le moment où ils doivent passer d'un lieu de la scène à l'autre et il règle soigneusement leur marche. Il est celui qui porte le livre. Chef d'orchestre, il commande aux musiciens qui sont en paradis les beaux «silete» et aux diables les formidables tonnerres, par lesquels ils accueillent tous les triomphes de la foi. Il est aussi le «protocole», celui qui, par d'onctueuses et prudentes paroles, apaise la voix du public qui se place et se presse pour mieux voir et mieux entendre. Il appelle l'attention sur les grandes merveilles qui lui seront présentées, sur la portée religieuse et la parfaite orthodoxie des paroles qu'il va entendre; il lui interprète à l'avance toutes les hautes vérités qui ne tarderont pas à se déployer là par personnages et il lui met de petits morceaux de théologie tout mâchés dans la bouche. Enfin, il adjure le populaire de faire «bonne silence» pour honorer Dieu et ses saints.

Il reprend souvent la parole à la fin de la matinée pour inviter assistants et acteurs à prendre un peu de relâche et à se restaurer. Au commencement de l'après-midi, il résume ce qui a été joué dans la matinée, et il fait de même le lendemain. Quand le crépuscule tombe, il reprend encore une fois la parole, mais c'est pour remercier le public et promettre pour le lendemain des merveilles plus grandes encore que celles qui ont été vues et ouïes, et enfin, il invite chacun à entonner avec lui un formidable «Pater Noster» ou un retentissant «Te Deum».

4. William Tydeman *The Theatre in the Middle Ages: Western European Stage Conditions, c. 800–1576* (Cambridge UP, 1978) 214–15. This view of the *meneur de jeu* 'with a text in one hand and a baton in the other', who 'acted as a kind of director-cum-stage-manager' and who 'would often conduct the performance from on stage' has become conventional, as in David Whitton *Stage Directors in Modern France* (Manchester UP, 1987) 1–2. Compare with this Graham A. Runnalls *Études sur les mystères* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1998) 379: 'It is obvious that these features [of an *abregiet*, a producer's manuscript] were designed to make the work of the *meneur du jeu* as easy as possible. It is assumed that the producer used the *abregiet*, both during rehearsals and perhaps during the performance itself, rather in the way a present-day conductor controls an orchestra. An example of such a producer at work,

using his *abregiet* (and a baton) may be seen in Jehan Fouquet's miniature of the *Martyre de Sainte Apolline*. See also, for further representative references to the *meneur de jeu*, Grace Frank *The Medieval French Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954) 170; V. A. Kolve *The Play Called Corpus Christi* (Stanford UP, 1966) 27; Glynne Wickham *The Medieval Theatre* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974) 84; and Henri Rey-Flaud *Le Cercle magique: Essai sur le théâtre en rond à la fin du moyen âge* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973) 287–8. Even A. M. Nagler, who wisely dismisses so many of the shapes and phantoms that continue to bedevil our conceptions of the medieval theatre, finds himself trying to decide whether the bits of verse which connect the scenes of the twelfth-century *Seinte Resurreccion* 'are to be regarded as stage directions, or were spoken by the *meneur de jeu*'. 'If we lean toward the notion of a "demonstrative" director', Nagler continues, 'then this "epic" technique can appear to us to be a prefiguration of what Thornton Wilder so successfully undertook in *Our Town*, where he had his stage manager not only introduce the public to the *loca* (indicated only in a symbolic way) of a small town in New Hampshire, but also gave him the task of establishing the connections between the various scenes': A. M. Nagler *The Medieval Religious Stage: Shapes and Phantoms* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1976) 5. The 'more recent commentators' would include Philip Butterworth 'Prompting in full view of the audience: a medieval staging convention' *Drama and Community: People and Plays in Medieval Europe* edited Alan Hindley (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999) 231–247; and Runnalls *Études sur les mystères* 379.

5. The Valenciennes contract names thirteen *superintendants* and three *originateurs*: Petit de Julleville *Les Mystères* 2 145–6. Cohen identifies two *superintendants du jeu* in the Mons *abregiet* and thinks that four actors may also have served as *superintendants*: Gustave Cohen *Le Livre de conduite du régisseur et le compte des dépenses pour le mystère de la Passion joué à Mons en 1501* (Strasbourg: Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg, 1924) lxxiii and 583–4. Since these men are never referred to as such in the records, however, Cohen's identifications remain highly speculative. His major reason for thinking that they must have served as *acteurs-régisseurs* (as he calls them) is that they drew salaries instead of being paid upon the presentation of specific bills. Nothing in the records documents that any of them performed directorial functions as such.
6. Jean-Baptiste de La Curne de Sainte-Palaye *Dictionnaire historique de l'ancien langage françois* 10 vols (Paris: Favre, 1875–82) 7 330:

Directeur de théâtre, entrepreneur de spectacles, comme les anciennes comédies de la Passion. Ce mot est souvent répété dans l'imprimé de la «Vengeance de Jésus-Christ par Vespasien, à personnages», en vers, édition de Vêrard, 1493.

The *Dictionnaire historique* was not published in the lifetime of La Curne de Sainte-Palaye (d. 1781). Louis Favre published it between 1875–1882 with a

good deal of editorial intervention. Most — but not all — of Favre's nineteenth-century additions and corrections are marked by square brackets.

7. See, for instance, *Trésor de la langue français* s.v. *meneur*.
8. Frédéric Godefroy *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française et de tous ses dialectes du IXe au XVe siècle* 10 vols (Paris: Vieweg and Bouillon, 1881–1902) s.v. *meneur*.
9. Louis Dochez *Nouveau dictionnaire de la langue française* (Paris: Librairie Ecclésiastique et Classique de Ch. Fouraut, 1860) s.v. *meneur*.
10. *Dictionnaire de la langue française* s.v. *meneur*; *Trésor de la langue française* s.v. *meneur*. The first of these does not give a reference or date; the second supports this reading with a citation from Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1898), which may suggest a rather late occurrence of this meaning.
11. *Encyclopédie du bon français* edited P. Dupré, 3 vols (Paris: Éditions de Trévise, 1972) 2 1585; *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française* edited Alain Rey, 2 vols (Paris: Dictionnaires Robert, 1993) s.v. *mener*.
12. Petit de Julleville *Les Mystères* 1 348. He provides no reference for this citation, however.
13. Mercadé's manuscript, Arras: Bibliothèque municipale MS 697, has been edited in two doctoral dissertations: Andrée Marcelle 'La Vengeance Jesucrist, Ière, IIIème journées' (unpublished dissertation, Department of French, Tulane University, 1955); and Adèle Cornay 'Eustache Mercadé: La Vengeance Jesucrist, IIème journée' (unpublished dissertation, Tulane University, 1957). These will hereafter be cited as Mercadé *Vengeance* J.1, 2, or 3 as appropriate. These dissertations are available in the form of microfiche included in Stephen K. Wright *The Vengeance of Our Lord: Medieval Dramatizations of the Destruction of Jerusalem* (Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Studies and Texts 89; Toronto: Pontifical Institute, 1989).
14. The manuscript is in private hands but is available in a nineteenth-century edition: *Le Mystère de S. Bernard de Menton* edited Richard-Albert Lecoy de la Marche (Société des anciens textes français 20; Paris: Firmin Didot, 1888). As for dating, its editor accepts Petit de Julleville's opinion that the play is a typical example of the fifteenth-century *mystère* (Petit de Julleville *Les Mystères* 2 488), without attempting to place it at any particular portion of the century. The author is unknown.
15. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, MS Rothschild 1–7–22A. I take my references to this text from Yvette Le Hir 'Les Indications scéniques dans le *Mystère de St Etienne* de Nicolas Loupvent' *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et Renaissance* 42 (1980) 661–76; which cites all the references to the *meneur* in this text.
16. Chantilly: Musée Condé, MS 616. It has recently been edited as a doctoral dissertation: Xavier Leroux 'Edition critique et commentaire du *Mistère de la*

- Conception* (Chantilly, ms. Condé 616)' (unpublished dissertation, Université de Paris IV–Sorbonne, 2003).
17. Mercadé consistently styles this speaker '*meneur du jeu*'. Nevertheless, despite Mercadé's consistent preference, Wright's excellent discussion of Mercadé consistently refers to this speaker as the play's *meneur de jeu*. As we shall see below, this distinction may be more than a trivial one.
 18. According to Stephen Wright, 'every surviving example of the *Vengeance of Our Lord* in France is based directly on Mercadé's text'. The expanded, printed version, *La Vengeance nostreseigneur*, as printed by Vérard in 1491, 'calls for 177 speaking parts in the course of a four-day performance' and 'represents an expansion of Mercadé's text by nearly half its original length'. Seven editions published by five different printers (Jehan Petit, Jehan Trepperel, Alain Lotrian, Jehan Hehannot, and Vérard himself) appeared between 1491 and 1539: Wright *Vengeance of Our Lord* 112–13. In discussing these versions of the 'Vengeance of Our Lord', Petit de Julleville mistakenly opines that these texts are entirely independent of one another: *on ne le confondra pas davantage avec un autre Vengeance, également dramatique, mais qui est l'œuvre toute différente d'un auteur connu, Eustache Mercadé*: Petit de Julleville *Les Mystères* 2 460.
 19. Louis Paris *Toiles peintes et tapisseries de la ville de Reims ou la mise en scène du théâtre des Confrères de la Passion* 2 vols (Paris: de Bruslart, 1843), with atlas of 32 plates designed and engraved by Casimir Leberthais. Paris' discovery includes not only the sketches illustrating *La Vengeance nostreseigneur* but also others that he connects with performances of a *Passion* staged at Reims between 1450 and 1490.
 20. Except for the scene of *le conseil des Juifs* in the upper right corner of the sketch. As Louis Paris points out, this council scene, in which the Jews discuss their guilt for the death of Jesus Christ, takes place in a later *ournée*: Paris *Toiles peintes* 656.
 21. Nagler *Medieval Religious Stage* 78–82 concludes that 'they have no value' as an actual pictorial record and that Louis Paris, motivated by 'enthusiasm ... no doubt fired by local patriotism ... went too far, no question about it' (82). Wright concludes that 'the apocalyptic power of the Reims tapestry designs is undeniable, but they shed little light on problems of practical stagecraft': *Vengeance of Our Lord* 146.
 22. Wright *Vengeance of Our Lord* 144.
 23. Marcel Couturier and Graham A. Runnalls *Compte du mystère de la Passion, Châteaudun 1510* ([Chartres]: Société Archéologique d'Eure-et-Loir, [1991]) 162.
 24. [Eustache] Mercadé *Le Mystère de la Passion, texte du manuscrit 697 de la Bibliothèque d'Arras* edited Jules-Marie Richard (Arras: Société du Pas-de-Calais, 1891). *Le Prescheur's* sermon theme for both the opening and closing of the

mystère is Psalm 18: 7: *A summo caelo egressio eius; et occursus eius usque ad summum eius* ('His going out is from the end of heaven, and his circuit even to the end thereof'). In the prologue to the third *ournée*, his theme is Psalm 17: 5-6: *circumdederunt me dolores mortis ... conturbaverunt me dolores inferni circumdederunt* ('The sorrows of death surrounded me ... The sorrows of hell encompassed me'). In the Prologue to the fourth, he selects Luke 24: 34 as his *theme*: *Surrexit Dominus vere* ('The Lord is risen indeed'), although Mercadé incorrectly cites *Mc ulltimo* as the source of this verse. To open the second *ournée*, the author substitutes John the Baptist *vestu de la peau d'un camel* for *le Prescheur*, and the Baptist himself delivers the prologue sermon, appropriately citing Matthew 3: 2 (and 4: 17) as his theme: *Penitentiam agite, appropinquabit enim regnum celorum* ('Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'). *Le Prescheur* delivers only brief, formal epilogues for the first and third *ournées*, but as mentioned above, he closes the play with a full sermon. The second *ournée* has no epilogue.

25. 'Why have the gentiles raged and the people devised vain things?' The opening lines of *le Prescheur's* prologue to the first *ournée* (36-42) announce Psalm 2: 2 as his theme: *Principes convenerunt in unum adversus Dominum et adversus Christum ejus* ('The princes met together against the Lord and against his Christ'). He then closes the first *ournée* with a sermon that reprises Psalm 2: 2 (see lines 4305-18). He 'proposes' Psalm 2: 4 as his *theme* for his prologue to the second *ournée* (lines 4423-30): *Qui habitat in celis / Irridebit eos et dominus / subsanabit eos et cetera* ('He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh at them and the Lord shall deride them, et cetera'). In opening the third *ournée*, he offers Psalm 2: 5 as his *theme* (lines 9277-90): *Tunc loquetur ad eos in ira sua et in furore suo conturbabit eos* ('Then shall he speak to them in his anger, and trouble them in his rage'), and in his epilogue he reasserts the same theme (lines 14430-40).
26. Wright *Vengeance of Our Lord* 171-4 was the first to make a distinction between the *Prescheur* and the *Meneur de jeu* as theologian and historian respectively.
27. Marcelle 'La Vengeance Jesucrist, Ière, IIIème *ournées*'.
28. Wright *Vengeance of Our Lord* 161.
29. 'Messeigneurs, in order to hurry ourselves along without preaching too long to you, and because this matter is clear enough to each and every one, we will pass lightly on as far as this preaching is concerned ... '
30. However, *le Prescheur* points out in the epilogue to the third *ournée* that he, too, is familiar with the report of *Paul Orose* that *xi fois .C. mille* Jews were killed in the destruction of Jerusalem (lines 14387-95). From his point of view, however, this fact merely offers 'historical' confirmation of his *theme* of the extent of God's anger and vengeance.
31. Wright *Vengeance of Our Lord* 173.

32. As for the *meneur du jeu*'s specific reference to Orosius, Wright correctly observes that 'Orosius' brief account of the destruction of Jerusalem had no discernible influence on the dramatic tradition in general or on Mercadé's *Vengeance* in particular. Mercadé apparently names the famous historian more for the sake of his prestige than because of any specific contributions to the play'. However, the *meneur du jeu* does not draw upon Orosius for any of the events of the play, but instead cites him for general historical context: Wright *Vengeance of Our Lord* 171–2.
33. Auguste Vallet de Viriville first brought the Arras MS to the attention of scholars of the early drama in 'Notice d'un mystère par personnages, inédit, du xv^e siècle, tiré de la Bibliothèque d'Arras' *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 5 (1843–4) 37–58. Curiously, although he surveys the contents of Mercadé's *Passion* at some length, he spends only one short paragraph on the *Vengeance*, in which he says nothing substantial about the play at all, because he thought that the latter *ne le cède en rien pour l'intérêt à celle qui précède ... Je reviens donc à notre Passion* (47). Although Petit de Julleville (*Les Mystères* 2 415–18) describes the manuscript, he probably did not actually consult the MS itself. Instead he seems to have taken his information entirely from Vallet de Viriville's essay, cited above, with a few extra details gleaned from the published MS catalogue of the Bibliothèque d'Arras. He repeats only those facts about the MS that Vallet de Viriville had mentioned; in describing Mercadé's *Passion*, he gives only those details and cites only those speeches that Vallet de Viriville had published. Tellingly, he omits all discussion whatsoever of Mercadé's *Vengeance*, just as his predecessor had done.
34. *Paris Toiles peintes*. Cohen *Histoire de la mise en scène* lists Paris's *Toiles peintes* in his bibliography, although he also consulted the Jehan Trepperel-Jehannot edition of *La vengeance et la destruction de Hiérusalem, par personnages, exécutée par Vaspasien et son filz Titus* (1510) that he consulted in the Musée Condé, Bibliothèque de Chantilly. He does not quote any lines from the text, however, that do not also appear in Louis Paris.
35. In examining the *Vengeance*, Paris found the text of the original Vérard editions preferable, but *très-rare*s, so he based his description on an edition more available to him, that of Jean Petit (c. 1499–1500). The text, however, is substantially identical to the original Vérard prints. For the dates of these editions, see Mary Beth Winn *Anthoine Vérard, Parisian Publisher 1485–1512: Prologues, Poems, and Presentations* (Geneva: Droz, 1997) 440–41.
36. For the most part, the speeches of the *Prescheur* and the *Meneur* are merely textual variants of one another except for the last few lines of the *Prescheur*'s sermon. Compare *Vengeance Jesucrist* 4523–4665 and *Vengeance nostresaigneur* a1^r–a2^v.

37. He mentions *la vengeance comme iosephus la escript* (Flavius Josephus' *Jewish War* and *Jewish Antiquities*), *Egesippus* (Joseph ben Gorion, the 'lesser Josephus', author of the *Yosippon*), *lystore ecclesiastique* (Eusebius' *Historia ecclesiastica*), *et aussi de la scolastique* (Petrus Comestor's *Historia scolastica*), and *hieremye* (probably St Jerome's translation and extension of *Chronicon Eusebii Caesariensis*): Eustache Mercadé *La Vengeance nostreseigneur* (Paris: Anthoine Vêrard, 1491) r5^v.
38. Alternatively he is styled *Le meneur du jeu* (F6^v, g4^v) or *Le meneur du gieu* (gg4^{r-v}).
39. Because the *Meneur du jeu*'s first epilogue is so brief, occupying only part of one column of text, neither he nor his speech figures in the page-header (F6^v).
40. The speech-header clearly identifies him as *Lepylogue*. *Le meneur du gieu*.
41. Louis Paris obviously struggled with these confusing page-headers and speech-prefixes. Concluding that the *Meneur* must be the play's only expositor, he thus twice mis-assigns the *Predicateur*'s speeches to him (pages 617 and 769), and he plainly does not know what to do about the opening of the second *journée*, where both the *Predicateur* and the *Meneur* appear one after the other, so he fudges. In discussing the *Predicateur*'s prologue, he avoids hazarding a guess as to the identity of the speaker, merely telling us that *Le sujet de ce prologue est tiré d'un des psaumes du Roi-Prophète*. He then more confidently moves on to a discussion of the *Meneur*'s prologue: *Le meneur du jeu se présente ensuite aux spectateurs ...* (682). Petit de Julleville either silently endorsed Paris' misconception or made the same error. He thus tells us that *La troisième journée s'ouvre par un prologue où le meneur du jeu annonce et admire la vengeance que Dieu va tirer des Juifs*: Petit de Julleville *Les Mystères* 2 457. In fact, it is the Preacher who speaks this prologue.
42. Mercadé *La Vengeance nostreseigneur* a3^v.
43. Louis Paris believes, however, that the sketch represents the second of the two scenes of dancing and aerial prodigies: Paris *Toiles peintes* 653–6.
44. The staff is a general sign of authority. Play supervisors and organizers, like the one pictured in the Valenciennes contract, might well carry them, but then so would all who wield authority. Even Cysat's page carried a 'sceptre' at Lucerne: *The Staging of Religious Drama in Europe in the Later Middle Ages: Texts and Documents in English Translation* edited Peter Meredith and John E. Tailby (Early Drama, Art, and Music Monograph Series 4; Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1983) 198.
45. Compare, for instance, the beginning of *le Prescheur*'s epilogue to the first *journée*:

Messeigneurs, ycy finerons,
Et demain, au plaisir de Dieu,

Revenrons en ce propre lieu
 Continuer nostre pourpos.
 Il fault prendre ung peu de repos.
 Trop longue chose n'est pas bonne.
 Elle ennoie a mainte personne,
 Mais nulz ne se doit anoier
 D'oïer reciter et traictier,
 En temps et heure convenable,
 Chose qui lui est pourfitable
 Pour son ame et pour son salu.

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46. Chantilly: MS Condé 616 fol. 1^r; Leroux 'Mistere de la Conception' 279. After his initial appearance, however, the speech headers invariably style him *le messagier*: MS 616 fols 82^v, 85^v, 86^r, 192^r, 193^r, 240^r; Leroux 415, 418, 395, 398, 673.
47. E.g. Justinus *Epitome Historiarum Philippicarum* 21, 5; Cicero *Divinatio in Q. Caecilium* 14.47 and *De Natura Deorum* 1.72; Martial *Epigrammata* 10.1xii.1; Saint Isidore of Seville *Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX* edited W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911) 1 1. iv. 11; Valerius Maximus *Facta et dicta memorabilium* 6. ix. ext. 6.
48. See, for instance, Simon de Hesdin's French rendition of *ludi magister* as 'maistre d'escole' in his translation of Valerius Maximus, VI. ix. ext. 6, where he finds it also necessary to explain the meaning of *ludi*: *Maistre descolle est celui qui aprent en ieunesse les enfans pour faire les ieux des leurs dieux / lessquelz on faisoit a romme souuent / si comme a iupiter / et a iuno et aux aultres*. In this he seems to have taken account of Tertullian's strictures against *ludimagistri*.
49. *Saint Bernard de Menthon* edited Lecoy de la Marche. Unfortunately, the first few folios of the manuscript have disappeared, taking with them the *Meneur's* first prologue and the information they may have provided about their speaker.
50. Petit de Julleville *Les Mystères* 2 185 lists 6 performances of the *Vengeance* between 1437 and 1531. This is almost certainly not a comprehensive record of performances, nor is it certain that all the listed performances were necessarily based upon one of the two versions of Mercadé's play. The Lille performance of 1484, however, was almost certainly based on the manuscript version, while the Reims performance of 1531 was almost certainly based on the Vêrard text.
51. E.g. lines 1845, 1880, 4202, among other similar references such as *En sa legende est recité*, line 3740.
52. His last epilogue, for instance, begins:
 Mes seigneur, atendés un po:
 Se vous dirons de la legende
 Le surplus. Ung n'a peu comprendre

En cestuy jeu toute l'ystoyre.
 Pour la briesveté de la memoire,
 Avons ceste ystoire abergiez,
 Et semblément avons queulé
 La partie plus evidente;
 Car je cuyde, selonc m'entente,
 Que de .viii. jour ung n'eut concléu
 Entièrement trestout le jeu.

Saint Bernard de Menthon edited Lecoy de la Marche 184

53. *Le Mystère de saint Laurent* edited W. Söderhjelm and A. Wallensköld (Societas Scientiarum Fennica Acta 18; Helsinki: 1891); Petit de Julleville *Les Mystères* 2 524.
54. See, for example, Marius Sepet *Le Drame chrétien au moyen âge* (Paris: Didier, 1878) 43; who thinks that the 'prologue' to the *Jeu d'Adam* is *récité par le lecteur ou meneur du jeu*; or Gustave Cohen *Le Jeu d'Adam et Eve, mystère du XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Delagrave, 1936) 7: *l'ingénieux système de la mise en scène simultanée des mystères telle qu'elle nous est exposée par le meneur de jeu*.
55. Cohen *Histoire de la mise en scène* 173–4; for text, see note 3 above.
56. E.g. Jelle Koopmans *Le Théâtre des exclus au moyen âge: hérétiques, sorcières et marginaux* (Paris: Imago, 1997) 99; who remarks that in the *Passion de Troyes* the fool *a souvent la fonction du meneur de jeu* because he *annonce le dîner avec des didascalies*.
57. Le Hir 'Indications scéniques' 666–7 (see note 15). For a discussion of the role of the *meneur* in this text, see section below, 'After Cohen: Loupvent's *St Étienne* and the *Mystère de la Conception*'.
58. See David Hobart Carnahan *The Prologue in the Old French and Provençal Mystery* (New Haven: Tuttle, Morehouse, and Taylor, 1905) 89–90 for an account of the identities of speakers of Prologues written just before Cohen published his doctrine of the 'always on-stage director'. Carnahan knew of 72 plays with prologues, of which 21 had unnamed speakers. His figures must be readjusted for those of which he was unaware (he confines himself to published plays) or those that have come to the attention of scholars since 1905.
59. Guillaume Flamang *La Vie et Passion de Monseigneur Saint Didier, martyr et évêque de Lengres, jouée en ladite cité l'an mil CCCCLXXXIX et deux* edited J.-B. Carnandet (Paris: Téchener, 1855).
60. For the supervisors, see Cohen *Livre de conduite* lxxiii and 583: Sire Jehan Bouchart, Maître Étienne du Ponceau, Jehan Lamit, Collart Olivier, Gilles de Bievenue, Jaquemin Bozet, Jehan de Rocquegnies, and Godeffroy, curé de Bertaymont — some of whom also played a role in the play: see note 5 above. However, other entries in the Mons records may identify alternatives with even

stronger claims to supervisory authority. Jehan Billet, for instance, must have exercised a supervisory role because the Mons expense book records a large payment to him for *48 journées de semonce à toutes assembles de recourse fais depuis l'encommenchement dudit Mistere en la Maison de la Ville* ('48 days of convening all the rehearsals held since the beginning of [preparations for] the said *mystère* in the said Town Hall': 557–8). As Cohen himself points out, Billet may well have convened *more* than 48 days' rehearsals in the Town Hall. This expense record cannot refer to general rehearsals of the entire cast (the chamber in the Town Hall was not large enough for that), but probably involved platoons of actors who were performing on relatively defined portions of the entire *mise en scène* — Jerusalem, Heaven, Bethlehem, Paradise, and so forth. There must certainly also have been 'final' rehearsals on the stage itself, after it was constructed and before the performance. Surely Gabriel, for instance, could not have been introduced for the first time on the day of performance to the lifting mechanism that takes him up and down from heaven to earth.

61. Carnahan *Prologue* 90.
62. Louis Petit de Julleville *Histoire du théâtre en France: les comédiens en France au moyen âge* (Paris: Léopold Cerf, 1885) 279.
63. I will discuss two other plays that mention a *maître du jeu* and a *meneur du jeu* below; neither of these was known to nineteenth-century scholars of the theatre, and they played no role in the development of the idea of the *meneur du jeu* leading up to Cohen's construction of the 'always on-stage director'.
64. It was published first as a series of essays in the *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* in 1867–77.
65. It was subsequently republished in the form of a pamphlet — essentially an offprint — by the founder and editor of *La Revue du monde catholique*, Victor Palmé: Marius Sepet *Esquisse d'une représentation dramatique à la fin du quinzième siècle* (Paris: Victor Palmé, 1868).
66. Sepet *Drame chrétien* 227–82. So popular did Sepet's 'sketch' become that it was closely imitated, almost to the point of plagiarism, by Theodore Child 'A Christmas Mystery in the 15th Century' *Harpers New Monthly Magazine* (December 1888) 59–77.
67. Like Michel, whose text is based on Gréban's *Passion*, Sepet's *meneur* doesn't compose the play freshly, but merely revises older texts. Petit de Julleville *Les Mystères I* 324–7, sums up what was known about Michel in the late nineteenth century, and identifies him as a medical doctor who prepared royal entry pageants in Angers for Charles VIII (1488). The published play, Petit de Julleville thinks, may well represent a performance of Michel's *Passion* in that city in 1486.
68. Sepet *Drame chrétien* 238:

Seul, sur un cheval garni de housses, tenant un rouleau à la main, portant sur son visage cet air d'orgueilleuse modestie qui caractérisait, dès le quinzième siècle, un auteur triomphant et plein de la bonne opinion de soi-même, le scientifique docteur, facteur du mystère et meneur du jeu, attirait tous les regards.

69. *The scientifique docteur*, Sepet imagines, *remplissait lui-même le rôle de Protocole, c'est-à-dire de régisseur, mais de régisseur jouant dans le drama, et il commença le prologue en vers de la première journée: Sepet Drame chrétien 249*. Sepet here apparently thinks that *protocole* means 'the prologue of the play'. The Greek roots of the word apparently mislead him: *πρωτος* ('first') and *καλον* ('skin, hide'), designating 'page of a book', so that the person who delivers the prologue or 'first page' of the text would also be called a *protocole*. In fact, *protocole* seems to be the name for a prompter, for which see Randle Cotgrave *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (London: Adam Islip, 1611) s.v. *Protecole*. Couturier and Runnalls *Châteaudun 1510 42*, correctly point out that the terms *porthecalle*, *protocolle*, *portitor libri*, and *celuy qui porte le livre* are very common in the records, but it is not quite correct, I think, to imply that these are all entirely synonymous terms. A prompter presumably must carry a book, as does the holder of the *Mons abregiet*, but these are quite different books and their holders are performing quite distinct tasks. There is some evidence (discussed below) that someone carried a copy of the *original* to monitor the performance in some plays, but none of these figures, as I hope to demonstrate, behaved like the man depicted in Fouquet's miniature.

70. *Sepet Drame chrétien 257*:

Cest sur cette plate-forme, appelée proprement *parloir*, que le meneur du jeu vêtu en Protocole, portant le pourpoint à jaquette violet, les manches rouges, la braguette, les bouffants et les chausses jaunes, les souliers noirs, sur la tête la petite toquette noire et plate, et l'épée à la ceinture, tenant de la main droite un bâton de la longueur d'une petite canne; et de la gauche un rouleau de papier, se promenait pendant la représentation, encourageant, guidant, gourmandant les acteurs, adressant aux spectateurs les explications nécessaires, leur demandant le silence, et sans cesse leur répétant d'une voix perçante: *Silet! Silet! silentium habeatis / Et per Dei Filium pacem faciatis!*

71. *Le Cry & proclamation publique: pour jouer le mistere des Actes des Apostres, en la ville de Paris: fait le ieu dy seiziesme iour de decembre lan mil cinq sens quarante, par le commandement du Roy nostre sire, françoys premier de ce nom et Monsieur le Prevost de Paris, affin de venir prendre les roolles pour jouer ledict mistere* (Paris: Denys Janot, 1541; Paris: Guiraudet, 1830):

L'on y semond poetes, orateurs,
Vrays precepteurs d'éloquence amateurs,

Pour directeurs de si sainte entreprise;
Mercuriens, et aussi cronicqueurs,
Riches rimeurs des barbares vaincqueurs,
Et des erreurs de langue mal apprise.

This text was twice reprinted in the nineteenth century (1529, 1530); it is discussed in Petit de Julleville *Les Mystères 1* 364–7.

72. Petit de Julleville *Les Mystères 2* 145:

Au-dessous une miniature représente un personnage jeune, blond, vêtu d'un pourpoint violet à manches rouges, avec bas et haut-de-chausses jaunes, souliers noirs, tenant de la main gauche une baguette et de la droite un rouleau de papier. C'est peut-être le maître du jeu ou l'un des «originateurs».

73. After the *superintendants* there follow the names of three *originateurs* (these seem to have been responsible for the text, while the *superintendants* were responsible for the actual play production). There then follow the names of the actors, then the contract binding the actors, *superintendants*, and *originateurs* to perform their respective duties. For the original text, see Petit de Julleville *Les Mystères 2* 145–52; for a summary of the document, see Elie Konigson *La Représentation d'un mystère de la Passion à Valenciennes en 1547* (Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1969) 17–21; for a convenient English translation of its essential portions, see *The Medieval European Stage, 500–1550*, edited William Tydeman (Theatre in Europe: A Documentary History; Cambridge UP, 2001) 547–50.

74. For Cailleau's twenty-six paintings (one of the *hourdement* alone, then one for each of the play's twenty-five *journées* with actors), see Konigson *Valenciennes* plates I–IX.

75. Petit de Julleville *Les Mystères 2* 145:

... les dicts compaignons [treize] superintendants eslurent en Valenchiennes que pour estre leurs maistres et conducteurs, et pour les tenir en paix et unyon, se il y avoit aulcun divis ou desbat entre eulx, et meisme pouvoient lesdicts superintendens corriger et mettre a l'amende lesdicts compaignons jieurs, se aulcune defaillance estoit trouvée en eulx, sans en inventer messegneurs de la justice.

Translation quoted from *Medieval European Stage* edited Tydeman 547.

76. *Nous mettrons dans les mains des acteurs le libretto, le «rollet» ...* Gustave Cohen, *Histoire de la mise en scène dans le théâtre religieux français du moyen âge* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1926) 9; see also 174.
77. *Le Mystère de la Passion joué à Mons en juillet 1501. Livre des prologues. Matinée IIIe*, edited Gustave Cohen (Société des Bibliophiles Belges séant à Mons,

Publications 44; Mons: J. Duculot, 1957). The manuscript that Cohen edits here, however, is a codex, not a scroll.

78. *A la fin du livre est représenté un petit personnage vêtu d'une cotte violette, de chaussures jaunes et d'une toque noire qui tient un rouleau et une baguette et pourrait rappeler le meneur de jeu* (Konigson Valenciennes 27). Tydeman *Medieval European Stage 548-9* reproduces Cailleau's image, but explains it with some degree of uncertainty. The image itself is correctly described as a 'coloured painting of one of the Valenciennes *superintendants*', and supports this inference by remarking that 'the position of this picture in the midst of the document about the organisation makes the identity of this figure almost a certainty'. But the discussion of this image also describes him as 'the director', which may be intended as a synonym for the sort of directorial CEO described by the term, *meneur du jeu*. This is doubtful at best.
79. *Le public est complètement ignorant de l'importance du régisseur général dans une entreprise théâtrale*: Arthur Pougin *Dictionnaire historique et pittoresque du théâtre et des arts qui s'y rattachent* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1885) 642.
80. Pougin *Dictionnaire historique* 642:
Alter ego du directeur, celui-ci est chargé d'une besogne à la fois artistique et administrative, et son autorité est absolue sur tout le personnel. On peut le considérer comme le premier ministre du souverain, et sa volonté est parfois plus puissante que celle de ce dernier, parce que sa responsabilité est énorme, qu'il est mêlé à tous les détails de la machine théâtrale, et que le directeur ne saurait rien faire sans le consulter et prendre son avis.
81. Pougin *Dictionnaire historique* 642:
C'est le régisseur général qui organise et surveille tout le travail intérieur, qui, avec le directeur et les auteurs, établit la distribution des pièces nouvelles, arrête le répertoire et, lorsque survient une indisposition, un empêchement, un accident quelconque, modifie le spectacle annoncé; c'est lui qui reçoit toutes les réclamations relatives au service, qui s'occupe de la préparation des débuts et des auditions, surveille la marche de toutes choses, entretient les relations avec la commission de censure; enfin c'est lui qui suit le travail des répétitions, qui préside à la représentation pour s'assurer que tout fonctionne bien, et qui, le soir, en cas d'accident matériel, d'absence ou d'indisposition d'un artiste, est chargé de parler au public et de faire les annonces.
82. Pougin *Dictionnaire historique* 642:
Cette dernière partie de sa tâche n'est pas la moins délicate, en province surtout, où, devant un public presque toujours hargneux et de fâcheuse humeur, elle exige beaucoup de tact et de finesse, de sang-froid et

d'habileté. C'est précisément en province que ce fonctionnaire théâtral reçoit souvent la qualification spéciale de *régisseur parlant au public*.

83. Jean Bouchet *Epistres morales et familières du traverseur* introduction by Jennifer Beard (Wakefield: S. R. Publishers, 1969; reprint of edition Poitiers: I. Bouchet & E. de Marnef, 1545) xcii; Jennifer Britnell *Jean Bouchet* (University of Durham Series 1; Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP for University of Durham, 1986).
84. Petit de Julleville *Les Mystères 2* 12–13. *Dicelluy jeu estoit maistre et portoit l'original ung clerc ... appelé Forcelle*.
85. Petit de Julleville *Les Mystères 1* 369 and 2 125–6: Bouchet addresses a verse epistle to maistre Thomas le Prévost of Rouen, whom he describes as a *facteur*; 1 348 and 2 19: *duquelle mistere estoit meneur et conduiseur messire Jehan Montbeliard, prebstre*.
86. J.-H. Albanès 'Deux moralités représentées en Provence, au XVe siècle, l'une à Draguignan, en 1462, l'autre à Toulon, en 1494' *Revue des sociétés savantes, Series 5: 7* (1874) 508–9; translation of selected portions in *Medieval European Stage* edited Tydeman, E93. For discussion, see Petit de Julleville *Les Comédiens* 267–9. The *moralité* in question was called *La Terre et la Fortune, et l'un et l'autre, le Monde et l'Espérance*.
87. For de la Vigne's account of the production, see Andrieu de La Vigne *Le Mystère de Saint Martin* edited André Duplat (Geneva: Droz; 1979) 117–21; translation in *Staging of Religious Drama* edited Meredith and Tailby 259–62.
88. *Le Mystère des Trois Doms joué à Romans en 1509. Publié d'après le manuscrit original avec le compte de sa composition. et des documents relatifs aux représentations théâtrales en Dauphiné du 14e au 16e siècle* edited Ulysse Chevalier and Paul Émile Giraud (Lyon: Librairie ancienne d'Auguste Brun, 1887) 1–li:

Dans tous les Mystères, il y avait un personnage dont les fonctions correspondaient à celles de régisseur de nos théâtres modernes, et qu'on appelait *meneur* ou *maître du jeu*. Cet emploi a été, croyons-nous, rempli à Romans par Sanche Dijon, citoyen notable qui avait été deux fois consul (1504–5), et que le mémoire nous représente comme une espèce de directeur des travaux. Il préside aux fouilles sous la scène pour l'emplacement de l'Enfer; il fait garnir le temple de luminaire; il surveille les habillements, les décorations, et il reçoit un salaire de 18 florins pour quatre mois, à raison de 4 flor. 1/2 par mois.

For the references to Sanche Dijon among the accounting records, see 78–9, 615, 616–18, 621–2, 625–6.

89. Giraud and Chevalier's edition of *Trois Doms* appeared in 1887, about a decade after Sepet's *Drame chrétien au moyen âge* had popularized the nineteenth-century conception of the *meneur du jeu* as actor-manager. I do not mean to

suggest that the editors could only have found this view in Sepet; rather, I regard Sepet as defining the orthodox nineteenth-century view.

90. *Die Miniaturen des Jehan Foucquet im Besitze des Herrn Louis Brentano* (Frankfurt: privately printed, 1855). According to the great nineteenth-century French art historian, Auguste Vallet de Viriville, who reports visiting the Brentano collection, this pamphlet was composed by a protégé of the painter Eduard von Steinle, who was then Professor of History Painting at the Städtisches Kunstinstitut in Frankfurt: Henri Delaunay *Oeuvre de Jehan Foucquet. Heures de maistre Estienne Chevalier, Trésorier des Rois Charles VIII et Louis XI, Miniatures appartenant à MM. L. Brentano, Feuillet de Conches, Lady Pringle et A.-F. Didot* 2 vols (Paris: Henri Curmer, 1866–1867) 2 84.
91. Delaunay *Jehan Foucquet* 2 84:

Cette description du livre d'Heures de Chevalier qu'en traduisant la notice détaillée des miniatures publiée sous les auspices de M. Louis Brentano, pour renseigner les personnes qui son admises chez lui à visiter les miniatures de J. Foucquet.

Steinle had become Professor of History Painting at the Städtisches Kunstinstitut in Frankfurt in 1850: see *The Dictionary of Art* edited Jane Turner, 34 vols (Grove, 1996) 29 611.
92. Germain Bapst *Essai sur l'histoire du théâtre* (Paris: Hachette, 1893) 30:

Quelque importante et intéressante que soit cette figuration, elle paraît avoir été, jusqu'à présent, inconnue des différents auteurs qui ont écrit sur la mise en scène des Mystères.

Nagler *Medieval Religious Stage* ii comments upon the clarity of the illustration.
93. This identification was not entirely original, for the catalogue privately printed by Louis Brentano (see note 90 above) to guide visitors around his collection had previously identified our figure as a 'tribune', and that description had found its way as well into Curmer's book. Bapst found it a satisfying explanation, however, and he improved upon it considerably. I have not seen the original publication; I take my information from the French translation reprinted in Delaunay *Jehan Foucquet*.
94. With some exceptions; Karl Mantzius, whose work preceded that of Cohen by three years, agreed with Bapst's identification of our figure as a medieval bailiff: 'Behind the stretcher on which St Apollonia is tortured, we see the emperor Decius and his suite; he seems to be dictating the torments, while an officer of justice, with a staff in his hand, reads out the sentence to the assembled people which crowds in the background': *A History of Theatrical Art in Ancient and Modern Times* translated Louise von Cossell, 6 vols (London: Duckworth, 1903–1921) 2 65. Thomas A. Pallen 'Caveat Emptor: A Reinvestigation of Jean Fouquet's "The Martyrdom of Saint Apollonia"' in *European Theatre*

Iconography edited Christopher Balme and others (Rome: Bulzoni, 2002) 147 continues to share this opinion.

95. Bapst *Essai* 30–31:

Elle représente le martyr de sainte Apolline; la sainte est étendue liée sur une planche; le bourreau lui arrache la langue avec des tenailles, deux de ses aides la ligotent, tandis qu'un autre, qui vient de se livrer à des actes d'une inconvenance grossière sur la martyre, remet ses braies; un sergent à verge lit la sentence, et un magistrat, en robe rouge, assiste à l'exécution. L'empereur Decius est près de la patiente; des diables se tiennent derrière chacun des bourreaux, les excitant 'à la méchanceté'.

He further describes God the Father,

puisque'il n'était pas acteur du drame, mais seulement le juge suprême, qui, de haut, assiste aux événements et dont rien ne peut troubler la sérénité.

96. In 1891, the Brentano collection passed into the collections of the duc d'Aumale, where Gruyer (whom the Duke refers to as *mon excellent confrère et ami*) served as one of the Keepers of the collection. The Duke died in 1897, but his own manuscript catalogue was published by the new Musée Condé (which was established at his death in his will) in 1900. His tribute to Gruyer's *beau volume* must have been written shortly before his death. See Henri d'Orléans, duc d'Aumale *Chantilly. Le Cabinet des livres. Manuscrits* 2 vols (Paris: Plon, 1900) I 76.

97. François-Anatole Gruyer *Chantilly. Notices des Peintures. Les Quarante Fouquet* 2 vols (Paris: Plon, 1900) 147–9:

Il a peint sur le vif l'*impresario*, sa troupe et sa machinerie, en présence de la foule qui se presse attentive à ce spectacle ... Quant à l'*impresario*, il est là qui explique toutes ces choses. Tourné vers l'assistance, il lit les actes de la sainte, et désigne de sa baguette blanche les six tableaux complémentaires, disposés, comme les feuilles d'un paravent, dans le décor qui forme le fond du théâtre ... l'*impresario* désigne de sa baguette: les hérauts d'armes embouchant leurs trompettes sonores, avec accompagnement d'orgue portatif, pour proclamer le triomphe de l'héroïque vierge.

I cite the second edition of Gruyer's study, which was originally published in 1897, as noted above, in an edition of 150 copies. Although dated 1900 on the title page, the new edition's dedication to the memory of the duc d'Aumale reads *Avril 1901*.

98. *L'impresario, son livret d'une main et sa baguette d l'autre, règle la scène et gouverne la musique*: Henri Martin *Les Fouquet de Chantilly: Livre d'heures d'Étienne Chevalier* (Paris: Henri Laurens, [1920]) 62.

99. I have myself questioned the ‘reality’ of the *meneur de jeu* in Fouquet’s miniature. Briefly, I demonstrate that Fouquet is illustrating not a contemporary medieval theatre, but a ‘historical’ Roman one from the time of the persecutions of Julian the Apostate under whom the saint in the miniature — St Apollonia of Rome — suffered her martyrdom. As such, Fouquet depicts the sort of Roman theatre as described by Isidore of Seville, although the structures he depicts, though not their arrangement, are convincingly ‘medieval’ in the same way that Fouquet usually depicts Romans in modified medieval costume. For the original statement of this thesis and the controversy that ensued, see Gordon Kipling ‘Theatre as Subject and Object in Fouquet’s *Martyrdom of St Apollonia*’ *Medieval English Theatre 19* (1997) 26–80; Graham A. Runnalls ‘Jean Fouquet’s *Martyrdom of St Apollonia* and the Medieval French Stage’ *Medieval English Theatre 19* (1997) 81–100; and Gordon Kipling ‘Fouquet, St Apollonia, and the Motives of the Miniaturist’s Art: A Reply to Graham Runnalls’ *Medieval English Theatre 19* (1997) 101–20.
100. Cohen *Histoire de la mise en scène* 174:
Le peintre Cailleau nous a laissé le portrait d’un meneur de jeu. Courts houx, tunique violette, petite calotte plate sur la tête, son bâton de commandement dans la main gauche, le «rollet» dans la main droite ... Celui qui figure dans le Mystère de sainte Apolline, d’après la miniature de Fouquet ... semble prendre son rôle moins cavalièrement que son confrère du XVI^e siècle; il est drapé dans une longue chape à capuchon, sur la tête un bonnet de docteur ayant la forme d’une tiare. Il tient le livre de scène dans la main gauche, et sa droite, levée, presque menaçante, semble commander du bâton aux ménestrels du paradis un sonore «silete» de tous les instruments du jeu.
101. Cohen *Histoire de la mise en scène* 173:
Enfin et surtout, il est le régisseur toujours sur les planches ... sur la scène, il se multiplie: livre en main, bâton levé, il sert de souffleur et de metteur en scène; il est vraiment le «mestre du jeu».
102. Graham A. Runnalls ‘La Passion de Mons (1501): étude sur le texte et sur ses rapports avec la Passion d’Amiens (1500)’ *Revue belge de philologie et d’histoire* 80 (2002) 1143–88 is essential reading on this point. The Amiens *Passion* was staged in four *journées*, each *journée* being divided into a *matinee* and an *après-disner*. At Mons, the play was staged instead as eight *journées*, each of Amiens’ ‘half-*journées*’ becoming the full performance for one day at Mons. Hence, the extant *cahier* of the full text served as the *matinee* of the third day at Amiens, while at Mons it became the full *journée* for the fifth day.
103. Runnalls *Études sur les mystères* 379.
104. *Ce livre, c’est le Livre de Conduite dont j’ai eu la chance de retrouver un exemplaire*: Gustave Cohen *Histoire de la mise en scène dans le théâtre religieux*

français du moyen-âge (Paris: Honoré Champion, revised edition 1951) xxxviii, as note to *Il est celui qui porte le livre* on page 173. Although Cohen reprinted the main text of his *Histoire de la mise en scène* without alteration in two later editions, he added a series of prefatory notes to the *nouvelle édition, revue et augmentée* of 1926 in which he offered corrections and additions to the original text, and this latter text was in turn reprinted in 1951 with the addition of a bibliographical appendix.

105. Cohen *Histoire de la mise en scène* (1951) 173.
106. Lee Simonson *The Stage is Set* (New York: Harcourt, Brace; 1932) 173 provides a good summary of Cohen's position as it is widely understood: 'in 1913 Professor Gustave Cohen, of the University of Strasbourg and the Sorbonne, discovered in the archives of Mons a unique document, the prompt-copy of a manuscript, *The Mystery of the Passion*, performed there in 1501, completely annotated by the stage-manager'. For Cohen's approval of Simonson, see Cohen *Livre des prologues* xi note 2; and Gustave Cohen 'The Influence of the Mysteries on Art in the Middle Ages' *Gazette des Beaux-Arts Series* 6: 24 (1943): 340. Similarly Runnalls *Études sur les mystères* 379 echoes Cohen's image of the *meneur de jeu* as 'chef d'orchestre' (see Cohen *Histoire de la mise en scène* 173).
107. Cohen *Livre de conduite* xxv–xxix.
108. Elizabeth Lalou and Darwin Smith 'Pour une typologie des manuscrits de théâtre medieval' *Fifteenth Century Studies* 13 (1988) 570.
109. Pierre Jahan ... *avoir assisté à chacun des jours que on a joué lesdits Mistères comme porthecolle et guydé les joueurs depuis le commencement jusques à la fin ... François Souef . . avoir assisté à tous et chascuns des recors, servy de protocole et porté le livre à tous les jours qu'on a joué ledit Mistère de la Passion*: Couturier and Runnalls *Châteaudun 1510 162*. By referring to these two men as having *servy de protocole*, I assume that the record refers to their services specifically as *verbal* prompters, which they would exercise both in rehearsals, as the actors mastered their lines, and in performances. Such verbal prompting would seem to be the primary meaning of *protocolle* in early texts. See for instance Cotgrave *Dictionnaire* s.v. *Protecole*: 'a prompter of one that makes an Oration, or also a Part, in publike'; Pierre Richelet *Dictionnaire de la langue française, ancienne et moderne, nouvelle édition* 2 vols (Amsterdam, 1732) s.v. *Protocole*: '[Susurrator.] S'est dit autrefois de celui qui est derrière une personne que parle en public, pour lui suggérer au défaut de sa mémoire; or Christofle de Bordeaux (floruit c. 1550): Point ne me faut de protocole, / Car je scay mon rôle par coeur' quoted in Richard Holbrook 'A Fifteenth-Century Satirical Dialogue, Seemingly akin to the Species Known as *fatras* or *fatrasie*, and Dealing with Fools Called *coquars*' *Modern Language Notes* 20.3 (1905) 70–77, at 74 note 5. However, even should I be mistaken in this conclusion, and even if the Châteaudun records mean to refer to Souef and Jahan as prompters of action exclusively, the performance

would still require a verbal prompter so that my point would remain essentially unchanged.

110. For the 'Book of Prologues', see Cohen *Livre des prologues*. The Mons *abregiet* provides the names of the actors who play each role. For Sir Gille le Naing, *prestre*, who was one of several clerics who took on roles in the play, see Cohen *Livre de conduite*. Runnalls 'Passion de Mons (1501)', especially 1157–8 and 1171–2, is essential reading for understanding the *Livre des Prologues*.
111. For actors' roles, see Runnalls *Études sur les mystères* 375–7; and for the Mons references in particular, see Runnalls 'Passion de Mons (1501)' 1151–4 and Cohen *Livre de conduite* 474.
112. *Ramentevoir à ceux des secretz des tonnoires de faire leur devoir, en ensievant le contenu de leur billet de advertence, et que ilz ne oubliet de faire cesser quand Dieu ara dit: «Cesse et face tranquillité»* ('Remind those performing the thunder effects to do their duty by following the contents of their cue sheet, and that they do not forget to stop when God has said, 'Cease, and be still'). As Cohen points out, *cette curieuse didascalie ... nous révèle incidemment l'existence de programmes ou «rollets» spéciaux entre les mains des machinistes affectés au truc du «tonnerre»*: Cohen *Livre de conduite* 169.
113. For types of play manuscripts, see Runnalls *Études sur les mystères* 367–89. In his invaluable 'Typology of Play Manuscripts', Runnalls distinguishes between the *livre original*, a fair copy of the entire play manuscript (Type B), and what he calls the 'producer's copy' (Type E).
114. Runnalls *Études sur les mystères* 395 raises precisely this startling possibility. Having discovered two *protocoles* amongst the Châteaudun records, he attempts to reconcile them with Fouquet's miniature that he thinks, after Cohen, must be a portrait of a *meneur de jeu* directing the performance on stage:

Nous avons affaire ici aux deux meneurs du jeu, qui ont non seulement organisé les répétitions, mais aussi 'porté le livre', lors des représentations même. Les termes *portecolle*, *portitor libri* et *celuy qui porte le livre* figurent dans les indications scéniques de plusieurs mystères. On peut voir un *portecolle* au travail dans la miniature du *Martyre de Sainte Apolline* de Jean Fouquet. Ce qui est curieux dans le *Compte de Jehan Brehier*, c'est qu'à Châteaudun, il y en avait deux, *et nous ne savons pas s'ils travaillaient simultanément ou non* [my italics]. Mais ceci explique pourquoi il fallait des doubles des livres de chaque journée.

See also the similar passage in Couturier and Runnalls *Châteaudun 1510* 42–3. The Châteaudun records, however, do not actually say that these two men direct the play from among the actors upon the stage; it merely says that they were present on each of the days that 'one has played the said *mystères*' as *portecolle*, that one of them (François Souef) has also *porté le livre*, and the

other (Pierre Jahan) ‘guided’ the players from the beginning to the end. It is likely that rehearsal activity is being described in the passage in question as well as attendance at actual performances, and it is important not to confuse ‘carrying the book’ (which one? where?) and prompting. There is no reason why these activities cannot have been ‘backstage’ ones, similar to those performed by modern stage managers.

115. Graham Runnalls has recently demonstrated that not only the *livre original*, the actors’ roles, and the *Livre des prologues*, but also the *abregiés* themselves, were transcribed from the texts used in performing the same play in the town of Amiens a year earlier: Runnalls ‘Passion de Mons (1501)’. The Amiens originals, however, no longer exist, a circumstance that makes it difficult to comment on what features of the Mons texts might be modified from the Amiens originals. His discovery is a crucial one, because, as he points out, *la possibilité que les manuscrits conservés à Mons soient en réalité amiénois n’a pas été envisagée par Cohen* (1148). Since staging requirements would not have been identical, however, this must have had some effect upon these texts (1157–8). One should therefore expect that some modifications may have been made in the *abregiet* to suit the specific requirements of the Montoise performance. One such obvious modification is that the Mons *abregiet* lists the names of the actors who performed the roles.
116. Cohen *Livre de conduite*. Page references to this edition will hereafter appear parenthetically.
117. As Cohen *Livre de conduite* 177 note 3 points out, this stage direction derives from a version of Jean Michel’s *Passion*, from which source it has been copied first into the Amiens *livre original*, and from there into the extant Mons copy:
- Icy entre Jhesus dedens la montaigne pour soy vestir d’une robe la plus blanche que faire se pourra et une face et les mains toutes d’or bruny, et ung grand soleil à rays brunys par derriere. Puis sera levé hault en l’air par ung subtil contrepoys et tantost apres sortiront de ladicte montaigne Helye en habit de carme et ung chapeau de prophete à la teste, et Moysse d’autre costé qui tiendra les tables en sa main. Et cependant parlera la Magdaleine.
118. Cohen *Livre des prologues* 48–9.
119. Compare Elizabeth inviting similar attention to her own pregnancy: *Soit advertie Elizabeth de faire aparoir son ventre gros, se demonstrant enchainte* (‘Let Elizabeth be directed to make her great belly appear, to show that she is pregnant’: 53). Zara Zaddy suggests in a private communication that the actors may simply reach though the pockets of their dresses into a sort of muff attached to the inside of their costumes, so that when they lift their joined hands upwards, they suddenly appear pregnant. There is no proof of this, but it is an idea worth floating.

120. Couturier and Runnalls *Châteaudun 1510* 162.

121. Cohen *Livre de conduite* xciv:

En feuilletant les *Abregiés*, on y observera presque toujours une double didascalie, la première destinée à éveiller l'attention du régisseur, comme: *Nota de avertir Simon de passer auprès de Jhesus* (p. 360), la deuxième marquant de la façon la plus précise l'exécution de l'ordre; *Il va vers Simon*.

These curious citations seem rather ill-chosen to illustrate Cohen's point. Surely the first example is directed toward Simon. If the direction is used for on-stage prompting, the hypothetical *meneur de jeu* must at this point tell Simon to pass near Jesus. The second example, however, records not Simon's movement but Jesus'.

122. See La Curne de Sainte-Palaye *Dictionnaire historique* s.v. *Advertir, verbe*. Similarly, Cotgrave *Dictionnaire* s.v. *advertir* lists the range of meanings as 'to informe, certifie, aduertise; warne, admonish, aduise; to send word of; to signifie, give notice, or intelligence, vnto'. It was a relatively new verb in the fifteenth century, borrowed from the Latin *advertere*.

123. Except for the so-called *Livre des prologues*, no actors' parts survive from this particular play. However, Runnalls points out that conventionally, such rolls of actors' parts consist of speeches (*répliques*) separated by the cue word in the last line of the previous speech: *Études sur les mystères* 376.

124. His first prologue, as Cohen points out, is based closely upon the first prologue of Jean Michel's *Passion*, and a good deal of the Amiens-Mons *Passion* is based upon Michel's work: Cohen *Livre des prologues* 3, note; Runnalls 'Passion de Mons (1501)' 1161–71.

125. Cohen *Livre des prologues* 9. In this passage Cohen adds an *s* at the end of *lesdit* and *prologue*, thus transforming these words into plurals. Compare his shorter version of the *Livre des prologues*, where he transcribes these words accurately as singulars: Cohen *Livre de conduite* 458. He does this, I believe, because he imagines that the *meneur de jeu* (whom he refers to in this instance as the *Régisseur*) directs the priest in delivering his Prologues throughout all eight *journées* of the performance. Since this suggestion has no warrant in the text, I have not followed him in this transcription.

126. Cohen *Livre de conduite* 458 note 4: *C'est-à-dire que LE PROLOGUEUR attendra le signal du Régisseur qui tient en main l'Abregiet et en fait observer les semonces ou avertissements*.

127. As Graham Runnalls has demonstrated, the *Livre des prologues* was written after the *abregiet*: Runnalls 'Passion de Mons (1501)' 1157.

128. See above, notes 5 and 60.

129. Cohen *Histoire de la mise en scène* 255:

Le prologue du *Mystère inédit de la Conception, Nativité, Mariage et Annonciation de la Vierge* nous montre assez bien la présence de toutes les classes de la société aux représentations des mystères.

The text remains unpublished and

le restera vraisemblablement toujours, étant dépourvu de tout intérêt littéraire ou historique ... Ce manuscrit n'est pas mentionné dans le répertoire dressé par P. de J.

130. Petit de Julleville *Les Mystères* 2 626–7 briefly discusses the play and even mentions that *Le «meneur du jeu» dit le prologue*. In his research for the *Histoire de la mise en scène*, Cohen's major library research took place in only four collections: the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris; the Musée Condé in Chantilly; and the Bibliothèque Royale and the Bibliothèque des Bollandistes in Brussels (see his bibliography to the 1906 edition). The Bibliothèque nationale did not acquire the Rothschild collection until 1933. Beyond Petit de Julleville's brief description, all that he knew of the play derives from some information communicated to him by Raymond Lebègue, then his doctoral student, between 1906 and 1926. In the later editions of *Histoire de la mise en scène*, Cohen confirms a point about diction made in the first edition by referring to a few lines communicated to him by Lebègue. Otherwise, he has nothing to say about the play: Cohen *Histoire de la mise en scène* (1926) note to 236, line 1. Scholarship in general has had little to say about the play. Neither Rey-Flaud nor Konigson notice the manuscript, for instance. Le Hir publishes virtually the only circumstantial account of the play ('Indications scéniques'; see note 15). I am deeply indebted to Professor Vicki Hamblin for calling this reference to my attention.
131. References to the *meneur's* activities from Le Hir 'Indications scéniques' will be cited parenthetically.
132. Valenciennes required a more complex organization, of course, because its play stretched to 25 *jours*. *St Étienne*, by contrast, had only three *jours*.
133. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, ms Rothschild 1–7–22A thus contains *crochets* (references to unwritten stage directions), which suggest that it saw service as a working playhouse copy. However, it has also been 'written so carefully that it could well have been a gift': Runnalls *Études sur les mystères* 373–5.
134. For other appearances of the *meneur du jeu* in delivering prologues and epilogues, see 667 (prologue to second *jour*), 672 (epilogue to end of second *jour* and prologue to third *jour*), end of third *jour*.
135. Leroux 'Mistère de la Conception'. Line and page references to this edition will appear parenthetically. The manuscript, Chantilly: Musée Condé ms 616, was unknown to Petit de Julleville, and as mentioned above, Cohen probably overlooked the play's mentions of the *mestre du jeu* (above, note 129). This is perhaps not unusual, since there are only three such references in a rather long

- manuscript. Graham Runnalls, who examined the MS for his 'Typology of Play Manuscripts', seems to have overlooked the *Mestre* as well: Runnalls *Études sur les mystères* 382.
136. Runnalls *Études sur les mystères* 382 considers this manuscript, Chantilly: Musée Condé 616, a typical example of presentation manuscript. I am not as convinced as he, however, that it must have been created after the performance.
137. Leroux 'Mistère de la Conception' 20:
Malgré ces nombreuses ornements, le manuscrit reste dans son exécution assez imparfait. Ces décorations semblent avoir été effectuées au gré de la rubrication. Si elles soulignent des moments importants du récit dramatique, elles ne semblent pas être ordonnées selon un principe strict et déterminé au préalable par le rubricateur.
La qualité des traits et l'exécution des lettres capitulaires laissent parfois à désirer.
138. For *crochets*, which were first noticed by Darwin Smith, see Lalou and Smith 'Typologie des manuscrits' 573-4; Darwin Smith 'Les manuscrits de "théâtre": introduction codicologique à des manuscrits qui n'existent pas' *Gazette du livre médiéval* 33 (1998) 5-10; and Leroux 'Mistère de la Conception' 15.
139. Runnalls *Études sur les mystères* 381-2.
140. Occasionally these margins also include annotations that may be primarily of interest to a reader, such as the Latin incipits that Mary recites in French translation as she ascends the 'degrees of the Temple'.
141. Runnalls *Études sur les mystères* 381.
142. Runnalls *Études sur les mystères* 375.
143. Only one other stage direction in the manuscript has been added in this way, on fol. 180^v. It, too, fills the corner block with an extensive stage direction specifying a kind of *ordenance*. As the Temple is ceremoniously closed, the *seigneurs de temple* are to stand to one side, the *seculiers* (i.e. Mary's prospective bridegrooms) on the other side. The Virgin stands in the middle among the *autres vierges*, two of them specifically *autor d'elle*. Since there is no more room in the corner block, the scribe has to indicate a *Cilete d'orgues* in the centre of the bottom margin. The stage direction thus specifies the visual tableau in which the Betrothal sequence will take place as Joseph's rod miraculously flowers. It too is probably a late addition to record a pre-production decision about the staging of the Betrothal sequence.
144. A pen stroke beneath the last extant line — probably an expansion sign — shows that another line must have followed, perhaps an adverbial clause, something like *humblement et devotement*. Leroux emends the line to end with an adjective modifying *Temple*: *au temple tres sant*. He does not say why he

- makes this suggestion, but his emendation has the advantage of some textual precedents in the construction *temple sant*. I assume, however, that more than one word is indicated by the visible expansion line.
145. Attempting to replicate this layout on a printed or typed page may give the false impression that the scribe deliberately intends some sort of spatial metaphor by placing the *mestre du jeu* to one side, the *ordenance* to the other, and separating them both by means of the *Cilete* in the middle. On the narrow manuscript page, however, the *mestre* is not in any way isolated from the other two elements; the scribe does not place him visibly *davant tous* on the page. The *mestre du jeu* notation overlaps the *Cilete* stage direction, and all three appear quite close together so that they appear to be a coherent group.
146. *C'est exactement le rôle du meneur du jeu, qu'il définit ainsi clairement, ouvertement, et qu'il appliquera tout au long de la pièce, en dirigeant les acteurs et en coordonnant les actions successives et simultanées*: Corneliu Dragomirescu 'Un guide dans le livre: *Prescheur/meneur du jeu/auteur* dans les manuscrits enluminés des mystères' (Lille: Société internationale pour l'étude du théâtre médiéval, 27 July 2007) 9–12, <<http://sitm2007.vjf.cnrs.fr/pdf/s14-dragomirescu.pdf>>. See also *le geste du meneur du jeu qui donne le changement de locuteur en indiquant celui qui suit dans le dialogue* (19).
147. Konigson *Valenciennes* 17–19; Tydeman *Medieval European Stage* 546–50.
148. Tydeman *Medieval European Stage* 338.
149. The scribe is often inconsistent with actors' names in any case. Ysachar, for instance, is sometimes called *l'evesque* in the stage directions (as is Aaron), and Oziel is sometimes called the *metresse dez filiez*.
150. Helin's last speech occurs at line 5178, but he does not leave the stage at this point. He is not named in the *ordenance*, although if he were one of those organized in procession behind the *mestre*, one would expect him to be. Rather, in leading the procession from Joachin's house to the Temple, he apparently exits the stage as well.
- It is strange that at one point (line 4450) the *voycinez* address him as *chere amie honeste et belle*, apparently in the feminine, whereas for the rest of the time he is addressed in the masculine.
151. Dragomirescu 'Un guide dans le livre' 11; Leroux 'Mistere de la Conception' 56.
152. Compare *Lors s'en retournent a leurs lieux* (line 1428 sd); *Chesquin s'en retourne en son lieu* (line 4327 sd); and *lors lez voysins s'en retournent a leurs maysons* (line 5004 sd); among many others. All such seem to trust the actor to return to their places unprompted by anybody.
153. Cohen *Livre de conduite* xxi–xxii:

Le Livre de scène du *Mystère de la Passion*, ou plutôt, comme l'appelait devant moi Gémier, contemplant avec émotion le manuscrit de son antique prédécesseur, *le Livre de conduite du régisseur*, que les Montois avaient nommé l'*Abregiet*'.

154. Compare, for instance: 'les *abregiets*, baptisés par Gémier: *Livre de conduite du régisseur*': Cohen *Livre des prologues* xii; or 'I published these discoveries in 1925 under the title properly furnished by Gémier, former Director of the Odéon: "*Le Livre de conduite du régisseur*" or, simply, the "Prompt Book": Cohen, 'Influence of the Mysteries' 340; or an even more sentimental version of the tale:

Ayant réussi à emprunter ceux-ci, je pus les [i.e; the *abregiés*] montrer à Firmin Gémier, alors directeur de l'Odéon (c'était vers 1912), très ému en contemplant l'œuvre de ses lointains prédécesseurs et qui me dit: 'Cela c'est ce que nous appelons: *Le Livre de conduite du régisseur*'.

Gustave Cohen *Le Théâtre français en Belgique au moyen âge* (Brussels: La Renaissance du Livre, 1953) 77.

155. For a convenient study of Gémier, see Paul Blanchart *Firmin Gémier* (Paris: L'Arche, 1954).

156. Cohen *Livre de conduite* xxi:

En les lisant, je compris que j'étais en présence d'un document unique, d'une valeur incomparable pour l'histoire dramatique en général et l'histoire de notre théâtre en particulier.