

‘WALKING IN THE AIR’: The Chester Shepherds on Stilts

John Marshall

I first encountered David Mills, ‘met’ is perhaps too intimate a description of the occasion, in Leeds on Tuesday, 10 September 1974, as a long-haired postgraduate (me, that is, not David) attending what became, retrospectively, the first SITM meeting. In the 33 years since, I have had the pleasure of meeting him at numerous conferences and lectures and enjoying his and Joy’s hospitality. In that time I have admired his thorough and meticulous approach to medieval drama research and his uncompromising attention to the tiniest detail of its record. It is in recognition of that admiration and in his honour that I dare to be conjectural, speculative, and even a bit vague in an area in which he is indisputably a world authority.

It is also a delight to return to the subject of the staging of the Chester Whitsun Play which I was about to begin researching in the October following my encounter with David; a coincidental rather than causal connection. I’ve always had a soft spot for the Chester records, not least for the glimpses of humanity and human frailty that lie beneath the surface of its magnificent enterprise. This is particularly true of the members of the Painters, Glaziers, Embroiderers, and Stationers’ Company whose quarrels, insults, and transgressions parallel those of the Shepherds in the pageant that they sponsored. At the time I began my research, REED was in its infancy and Larry Clopper’s edition of the Chester records was five years ahead. Initially, this meant surveying antiquarian transcriptions of the records. It was here that I first came across the cantankerous painter Thomas Poole. Unfortunately, the account that most fully exposes his irascibility is not in the old or new *REED: Chester*, for the very good reason that only in the post-modern sense does it have anything to do with performance:

Thomas Pole dyd say the laste of October att a metyying that he wolde nott come to any metying at the warnyng of anye Stuerte [Steward] upon an others warnyng no nor with Mr Mayre nether That the same tyme he bade Thomas pentnye being stuerte that he shulde nott come in his house, for if he did ... that that came for the

one shuld smarte fo ytt Att the same tyme he sayd to our Alderman by these wordes of the name of Halwood thou lies falsleye and thou wyll prove a thousand lyes I have an ... othe to lay againste the. At the same tyme he called the whole Company *Drunken Swallyguttes*.¹

It seems that the Painters' Company were as fond of the ale of Halton as the Shepherds they played. Poole's outburst had probably been simmering for some time. A year earlier, in 1574, his child was given 4d by the company 'bycose he pled not our god'.² Six years before that, in 1568, he himself received 3d as compensation for being 'bated in his parte'.³ But, I think, my favourite Chester item, for the frustration it reveals and the intrigue it conceals, occurs in the same company's accounts for 1576–7.

Robert Waytt is fyned for that he did promysse the Company that his man shuld goe vppon the Stylytes vppon mydsomer eueen 1577 and keptt bothe his man and the Stylytes from vs And went in to the Ile of man with them And [...] he [...] caused vs to be at xviiij. more charges vntyll we had neded xijd.⁴

Why Waytt reneged on his promise is not entirely clear, but his temerity in doing so was no doubt compounded by the fact that he was one of two company stewards for the year responsible for, amongst other things, the safe-keeping of the stilts.⁵ His 'man', whom he committed to stilt-walking at the Midsummer Show, was probably his apprentice or journeyman. Whatever attraction the Isle of Man might have held for Waytt, it was clearly sufficient to outweigh incurring the wrath of his guild and the penalty of a fine.⁶ He was possibly seduced by the offer of a stilt-walking engagement at the famous Isle of Man Midsummer Fair that formed a major part of the Tynwald Day celebrations held on Tynwald Hill in St John's.⁷ The Isle of Man may have paid more for walking on stilts than the Chester Painters' Company average of 6d, but no fee was ever likely to cover the cost of travel, accommodation, and subsistence for two abroad as well as the loss of reputation at home. It is possible that Waytt, as a glazier, secured work on the island that he opportunistically timed to coincide with the fair. Although there is no evidence of his active involvement with the Painters' participation in the Chester Midsummer Show after his conspicuous absence in 1577, he remained a guild member and is recorded as processing with their banner on Midsummer Eve 1591.⁸

The registering of Waytt's fine is not the only or, indeed, the first time that the Painters' Company, a glazier, stilts, and the Midsummer Show come together in the Chester records. The earliest explicit reference to

stilt-walking at Midsummer is in 1571 when two unnamed men were paid 12d for their skill. The last is in 1603 when Moses Dobe received the same sum for going solo. In between these dates, Richard Dobe walked on stilts at Midsummer in 1573 accompanied by his brother Edward who also went alone in 1576, 1582, 1583, and 1594. Another member of the family, Aaron Dobe, stilt-walked in 1602. Unnamed stilt-walkers are recorded in the years 1575, 1577, and 1580. As well as fairly regular appearances in the Midsummer Show, an anonymous stilt-walker featured in the riding and reading of the Banns in 1572; a task later undertaken by Richard Dobe in 1575.⁹ The Painters' Midsummer Show account for 1576-7 makes clear that the named and unnamed stilt-walkers appeared in the rôle and, presumably, the costume of the Shepherds from the Whitsun Play pageant with which they were associated: 'Item to the ij sheperthes for going vppon the Styltes xxd'.¹⁰ The form in which the expense is expressed is very similar to a corresponding item in the earliest surviving Painter's account of 1567-8:

Item to tow shepperttes for goyng vppon mydsomer euen x d.

*Item to the tow sheppertes when the [sheppertes whytson] banes
were Rydden* x d.¹¹

This suggests that stilt-walking may have figured slightly earlier in the records of the Painters, Glaziers, Embroiderers, and Stationers' entertainments than specifically mentioned.

All of the stilt-walkers named in the accounts were members of the Dobe family and it is likely that they were also some, if not all, of those unnamed. It is unfortunate that no record survives of the name of Robert Waytt's apprentice but it is not impossible that he, too, was a Dobe, although no one of the name quite fits the dates. Enough has been written about the Dobe glazing dynasty to require only the briefest outline here.¹² Edward and Richard were sons of Richard Dobe of Handbridge, a suburb of Chester. Richard senior was franchised later in life than usual in 1565/6 and died sometime around 1572. Edward appears to have been his eldest son and was made free in 1571. Richard, who was apprenticed to his father, gained his freedom in 1574.¹³ This makes their probable respective birth dates 1550 and 1553. Moses Dobe became a freeman in 1610/11 and was probably born in 1589 or 1590.¹⁴ If correct, these calculations mean that Edward Dobe stilt-walked between the ages of 25 and 44, Richard at 20 and 22, and Moses at the much younger age of 13 or 14. All of the

Dobes mentioned were glaziers, as was Henry Dobe, active in 1533, who, in all probability, was Edward's and Richard's grandfather.¹⁵

Edward Dobe, in particular, was much in demand as a glazier in Chester. He worked on the windows of Holy Trinity Church, the Cathedral, and the parish church of St Oswald's within the Cathedral, and the Cathedral Song School.¹⁶ The bulk of his work was repairing rather than making windows although he did supply new glass and on one occasion was paid to deface images in Holy Trinity according to the Queen's instructions.¹⁷ He took his guild membership seriously and was steward and alderman on a number of occasions.¹⁸ He died apparently intestate in 1612.¹⁹

The obvious questions that arise now are why glaziers and, it seems, only glaziers walked on stilts dressed as the Shepherds from their Whitsun Play pageant in the Midsummer Show and at the Riding of the Banns, and, as a corollary, whether the Shepherds used stilts in the performance of the pageant. The last question is the easier to answer — we simply don't know. It is certainly not possible to be as definite as F.M. Salter who stated that 'there would be no "goynge one the styltes" at the Whitsun plays'.²⁰ The pageant text, as it survives, gives very little opportunity for stilt-walking but the convention of station-to-station presentation certainly does in the movement between performances. This would not necessarily be recorded in the accounts as any fee for going on the stilts could be subsumed under the general payments to those playing the Shepherds. In this respect, it is worth noting that Trowle, the youngest Shepherd, consistently received more than the others. The extra payment may be in recognition of his stilt-walking but it is as likely to recompense him for three bouts of wrestling to the one each by Hankin, Harvey, and Tudd. Whatever circumstances the differential payment may reflect, it cannot conceal the fact that if the Shepherds did not go on stilts at some stage in the Whitsun Play there would be no obvious reason for them to do so in the Midsummer Show or at the Riding of the Banns. In the context of these instances of the city's festive culture, where guild recognition was vital, audience identification of the figures as shepherds would have been paramount. Skill in the art of spectacle was a delightful bonus.

This apparent lack of a connection between glaziers, shepherds, and stilts, succinctly summarised by David as 'it is difficult to see why shepherds should be on stilts either in the show or the play', may explain why so little attention has been paid to the relationship between the occupations and a particular performance practice.²¹ Peter Meredith, as so

often, is an exception here. He has done much to identify the Chester stilt-walkers and speculate on their possible roles in the Painters' pageant. Even he, though, concedes that, in spite of the named stilt-walkers all being glaziers, 'their occupation has nothing to do with the plays' and, by extension, that 'stilt-walking may have nothing to do with the plays'.²² This leaves us with the rather disappointing conclusion that the situation is serendipitous; the Dobes, and maybe others, could, by chance, stilt-walk and their talent added to the spectacle of customary celebration as in the case of the Moko Jumbies in Trinidadian Carnival.²³ The stilt-walkers simply took their place along with the fabulous creatures, morris dancers, and hobby-horses in the Midsummer Show.²⁴ This would be more convincing were there a history of stilt-walking on similar occasions in England and Wales. There is, though, not a single other reference to stilt-walking in the *REED* volumes to date. Notwithstanding the inconsistent survival of accounts, this absence might suggest the existence of a special relationship between glazing and stilt-walking in Chester.

It is here that I need to make a leap in time as well as in faith. Since the 1960s, Dura-Stilts, an international company, has been making stilts for use by plasterers, dry-lining contractors, painters, decorators, electricians, and ceiling installers. Their website home page also boasts specification by leading theatre groups and street entertainers.²⁵ It is easy to see the advantage a pair of stilts could bring to these occupations where height and movement are essential. Stilts, in the right circumstances, can offer a safer and/or cheaper alternative to ladders, trestles, and scaffolding. The Chester glaziers would obviously use scaffolding for any job in excess of ten feet and trestles for the installation of whole windows at anything below that but above head height.²⁶ For the kind of repairs that Edward Dobe was undertaking, much of it apparently *in situ*, a pair of stilts would be a more flexible and less hazardous option than propping a ladder against fragile glass. It is, of course, impossible to prove that the Dobes used them in their working lives. Nonetheless, it is improbable that such use would not have occurred to them following the successful employment of stilts in play. More likely is the reverse connection where the Dobes exploited an existing occupational skill in the celebratory displays of their guild. Stilts as a glazier's tool of trade might also explain why Robert Waytt was so keen to have them with him in the Isle of Man.

The type of stilts used by the Dobes for performing, and possibly working, would have been peg stilts that strap on at the foot and the knee leaving the hands free, rather than pole stilts where the feet rest untied on

struts and the hands grip the shafts. An example of peg stilts can be seen in the Luttrell Psalter left-hand marginal illumination of Vulgate Psalm 37 (PLATE 1).²⁷ The Chester stilts were painted at least twice, in the play years 1572 and 1575, either for decoration or preservation, or both, suggesting that they were visible and not covered by costume.

At the time of the Whitsun Play and Midsummer Show, the existence of an occupational link between glaziers and stilts may seem somewhat tentative, but that between shepherds and stilts is fairly conclusive. The tradition of shepherds wearing stilts to keep above marshy ground, cross streams, avoid briars, and to extend the distance at which they could see their sheep, particularly on flat ground, is best known in south-west France. The department of Landes in Gascony, bounded by the Atlantic coast to the west, the rivers Adour in the south, and Garonne in the north-east, is a region celebrated for its stilt-walking shepherds. Before forestation in the nineteenth century the area was either a waste land of heath, herbs, and brushwood or, after rain, a boggy marshland. The region lacked roads and relied heavily on the raising of sheep for a living. As an effective means of mobility in these conditions, shepherds depended on stilts. One of the earliest references to this practice survives in a letter Frederick Robinson (1746–1792) sent to his sister, Anne Robinson, from Bordeaux on 29 July 1771. At the time Robinson was Secretary to his brother, Thomas, the Ambassador to Madrid. Frederick spent a week in Bordeaux during which he made courtesy visits, swam every morning, and travelled between nearby ports by boat. On landing, he describes the terrain as consisting of black sand, briars, and fir forests and observes that this compels the shepherds to tend their sheep using stilts to avoid the briars.²⁸

Albert Racinet, in his classic, if idiosyncratic, *Le Costume Historique*, depicts a group of Landes shepherds on stilts, one of whom is also knitting (PLATE 2).²⁹ Many of Racinet's illustrations were taken from contemporary photographs. The one that may have inspired his Landes shepherds' plate survives (PLATE 2B). In both, shepherds can be seen standing on stilts that raise them about four or five feet above the ground. Their feet rest on ledges in stirrups and the stilts are strapped to their legs below the knee. The base of each stilt was often reinforced by a ferrule made of sheep's bone. To maintain balance when stationary, long staves were used, some fixed with a narrow board for a seat. The staves also enabled wearers to rise from the ground once the stilts had been attached and to lower themselves in order to dismount.³⁰

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PLATE 1: Youth wearing peg stilts, from the Luttrell Psalter, c. 1340.
London: British Library, Additional MS 42130, fol. 70^v.

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PLATE 2A: Landes shepherds on stilts (lithograph).
Albert Racinet *Le Costume historique* (1876–88)

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PLATE 2B: Photograph of Landes shepherds on stilts, late nineteenth century.
From < <http://lous.tchancayres.free.fr/stilts.html> >

Although the evidence for stilt-walking in the Landes may be relatively late, there seems no reason to doubt that it was a practice in use before the eighteenth century. In the city of Namur in Belgium, records exist for stilt-walking as a response to the overflowing Sambre and Meuse rivers from as early as the beginning of the fifteenth century. Not only did the inhabitants resort to stilts to avoid the frequent flooding but the local militia also found them useful. Even after improved drainage had removed the necessity for stilts, residents from the old and new sides of the city held regular stilt-fights which are performed to this day.³¹ In the northern Spanish village of Anguiano stilt dancers annually celebrate the Feast of Mary Magdalene. The tradition is claimed to have been handed down from father to son for generations having originated in the practice of shepherds using stilts to overcome flooded fields.³²

In England, the utilitarian value of stilts is recorded in literature from the beginning of the seventeenth century, mainly in the context of the fenlands of East Anglia. In the continuation of *Poly-Olbion* from the eighteenth song, published in 1622, Michael Drayton lists some of 'the pleasures of the Fennes':

The toyling *Fisher* here is tewing of his Net:
 The *Fowler* is imployed his lymed twigs to set.
 One vnderneath his Horse, to get a shoot doth stalke;
 Another ouer Dykes vpon his Stilts doth walke ...³³

Drayton had been researching material for this work since at least 1598.³⁴ In 1603 he had published a revised edition of *Mortimeriados*, first printed in 1596. At one point, this quasi-epic on the civil wars during the reign of Edward II extols the various virtues of fighting men and their weapons in the English counties. When considering the 'Fens and Marshlands' he notes that the 'doubtfull foards and passages' are best negotiated with 'stilts and loapstaues'.³⁵

A seemingly closer allusion to shepherds stilt-walking is found in the unflattering description of 'Fen-men or Fen-dwellers' in Philemon Holland's English translation of William Camden's *Britannia*, first printed in 1610. Camden, who worked closely with Holland on the translation, considers them, 'a kinde of people according to the nature of the place where they dwell rude, uncivill, and envious to all others whom they call *Vpland-men*: who stalking on high upon stilts, apply their mindes, to grasing, fishing and fowling'.³⁶ It is possible that Camden's Fenland findings were acquired whilst he was researching for *Britannia* in Norfolk and Suffolk in 1578.³⁷

More convincing evidence for shepherds using stilts than the literary citations is the marginal illumination illustrating Psalm 1 in the Fenland manuscript Brussels: Bibliothèque Royale MS 9961-62, fol. 14. Better known as the Peterborough Psalter, this manuscript, executed in the early fourteenth century for monastic use, is thought to owe its stylistic background to the court school of Westminster with some of the artists working in the contemporary East Anglian style. The textual and liturgical content as well as the pictorial programme was furnished by Peterborough Abbey.³⁸ The historiated initial B that begins Psalm 1 depicts David playing the harp accompanied by two musicians. In the left-hand border (from top to bottom) David slays Goliath, a young man catches a swan, or possibly disturbs it in order to steal its eggs, and a man walks on stilts carrying a crook over his right shoulder on which is draped his cape (PLATE 3). Lucy Freeman Sandler describes the lower figure as a 'jester on stilts'.³⁹ Clifford Davidson follows Sandler's identification by captioning the reproduction of the image in his book on early illustrations of the stage as a 'fool on stilts'.⁴⁰ There is, though, nothing 'foolish' about the appearance of this character other than his fingering of the crook as though it were a musical instrument. He does not wear the ass' ears and coxcomb of a medieval fool nor the motley. The carrying, rather than the wearing, of his cape implies an outdoor worker having removed a layer of clothing because of warm weather.⁴¹ Moreover, although fools do appear in Psalters it is almost always as an illustration to Vulgate Psalm 52, as is the case with the Peterborough Psalter. The implement carried over the shoulder of the figure on stilts is undoubtedly a shepherd's crook and not a 'foolstick' or marotte as suggested by Davidson.⁴² It is identical in its rather club-like shape to the crooks carried by shepherds in Annunciation scenes of contemporary manuscripts.⁴³ The border illustration in the Peterborough Psalter is almost certainly a reference to David's early life as a shepherd, shown in Fenland manner.

Although the Fens, as an extensive area, attract most attention to stilt-walking, it is clear that the inhospitable terrain, rather than a unique practice, is the reason. Stilts are an asset wherever the ground is marshy or boggy. It is precisely these conditions that the Welsh shepherds would have encountered as they worked their way from the Conway to the Clwyd and on to Chester through Saltney Marsh.⁴⁴ The first shepherd, Hankin, acknowledges as much when he reports that,

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PLATE 3: Shepherd on stilts: decorative border illustration to Psalm 1 of the Peterborough Psalter, East Anglia, c.1300.
Brussel: Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, MS 9961-62, fol. 14, detail.

© Bibliothèque royale de Belgique

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For with walkynge werye I have mee rought;
besydes the suche my sheepe I sought.⁴⁵

The fact that their sheep are prone to foot-rot, a separation of the horny portions of the hoof from the sensitive underlying tissues caused by excessive moisture, confirms exposure to a marshland environment.

It is entirely credible that the Welsh shepherds were renowned for entering the outskirts of Chester on stilts. It is also possible that the Chester glaziers used stilts in their occupation. The synergy between occupation and Whitsun Play pageant may not be as obvious as that between the Waterleaders and Drawers of Dee and their pageant of *Noah's Flood*, or the Bakers and the *Last Supper*, but to contemporary spectators of the Midsummer Show, the Riding of the Banns, and possibly the Whitsun Play, the association of the Welsh shepherds' tactics for navigating marshland with the working practices of the glaziers might have made perfect sense.

University of Bristol

NOTES

1. Joseph C. Bridge 'Items of Expenditure from the 16th Century Accounts of the Painters, Glaziers, Embroiderers, and Stationers' Company with special reference to the "Shepherds' Play"' *Journal of the Architectural, Archaeological and Historic Society for the County and the City of Chester and North Wales* 20 (1914) 153–91 at 189. The account is from the year 1575.
2. *REED: Cheshire including Chester* edited Elizabeth Baldwin, Lawrence M. Clopper, and David Mills, 2 vols (Toronto: University of Toronto Press; London: British Library, 2007) 158.
3. *REED: Cheshire* 124.
4. *REED: Cheshire* 180.
5. BL MS Harley 2054 fol. 92. I am grateful to Peter Meredith for allowing me to use his transcript of the document relating to Aldermen and Stewards of the Painters, Glaziers, Embroiderers, and Stationers' Company.
6. Waytt did not pay the fine directly. He got Thomas Pyllam, who owed him the same amount, to settle the debt: Bridge 'Expenditure' 173.
7. Tynwald Day was originally held on Midsummer Day. With the alteration to the calendar in the eighteenth century, the date was changed to 5 July. See R.H. Kinvig *The Isle of Man: A Social, Cultural, and Political History* (Liverpool University Press, 1975) 72–3.
8. *REED: Cheshire* 237.

9. The distinction between ‘reading’ and ‘riding’ the Banns is discussed in *REED: Cheshire* xxxiv–xxxv. The name ‘Dobe’ is variously spelled in the Painters’ accounts and elsewhere. I have used Dobe throughout to avoid confusion and in keeping with the index entry to the family in *REED: Cheshire* 1164.
10. *REED: Cheshire* 180.
11. *REED: Cheshire* 124.
12. See F.M. Salter *Mediaeval Drama in Chester* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1968) 22 and 113–114; Peter Meredith ‘“Item for a grone – iijd” — records and performance’ *Records of Early English Drama: Proceedings of the First Colloquium* edited Joanna Dutka (Toronto: Records of Early English Drama, 1979) 26–60 at 29–31 and *REED: Cheshire* lxxx and 1016.
13. For the dates of freemanship see *The Rolls of the Freemen of Chester: Part I 1392–1700* edited J.H.E. Bennett *The Record Society for the Publication of Original Documents Relating to Lancashire and Cheshire* 51 (1906). In this transcription, Edward’s name is given as ‘Edmund’. This must be an error or an incorrect expansion of ‘Ed.’ as no Edmund Dobe is recorded elsewhere. There is a remote possibility that Richard Dobe was Robert Waytt’s ‘man’ who failed to go on the stilts at the Midsummer Show in 1577. Richard Dobe, apprenticed to his father, did not gain his freedom until at least two years after his father’s death. Someone must have taken over the final years of his apprenticeship. It could have been his brother, Edward or Robert Waytt. If Richard Dobe continued to work for Waytt after his freedom, his absence from the 1577 Show might explain why he is only recorded as stilt-walking by name in 1573 and 1575; after the 1577 debacle his services may have no longer been required.
14. The birth-dates are calculated on the premise that craftsmen received their freedom after a seven-year apprenticeship and their coming of age at 21. This assumption is borne out, in Chester, by the report of the examination of John Boland in 1570. He is described as being ‘of the age of thryttye yeares or there abowtes’ (*REED: Cheshire* 130–1). John Boland was made free in 1559/60 making him 30 or 31 in 1570.
15. Henry Dobe (Dawby) was paid 5s 4d in 1533 for glazing the Holy Trinity steeple windows: J.R. Beresford ‘The Churchwardens’ Accounts of Holy Trinity, Chester, 1532 to 1637’ *Journal of the Chester and North Wales Architectural, Archaeological and Historic Society* 38 (1951) 95–172, at 109.
16. For references to his employment see Beresford ‘Churchwardens’ Accounts’ and R.V.H. Burne *Chester Cathedral: From its Founding by Henry VIII to the Accession of Queen Victoria* (London: SPCK, 1958).
17. Beresford ‘Churchwardens’ Accounts’ 128.
18. British Library, MS Harley 2054 fol. 92.

19. J.P. Earwaker 'An Index to the Wills and Inventories now preserved in the Court of Probate at Chester from AD 1545 to 1620' in *The Record Society for the Publication of Original Documents relating to Lancashire and Cheshire 2* (1879) 49.
20. Salter 126, note 19.
21. David Mills *Recycling the Cycle: The City of Chester and its Whitsun Plays* (University of Toronto Press, 1998) 91.
22. Meredith 'Item for a grone' 30.
23. For a recent description and analysis of Trinidad Carnival with references to Moko Jumbies see *Culture in Action — The Trinidad Experience* edited Milla Cozart Riggio (New York and London: Routledge, 2004).
24. For a list of the Midsummer Show creatures see *REED: Cheshire* 111–12.
25. See <<http://www.dura-stilts.co.uk>>.
26. In 1562 Mr Boyle was paid to set up two boards against the windows by the font of Holy Trinity Church. This is followed in the churchwardens' accounts by a payment to Richard Dobe (Dawby) for re-glazing broken windows: Beresford 'Churchwardens' Accounts' 124.
27. BL Additional MS 42130 fol. 70v.
28. Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Record Service, Lucas MS L 30/17/2/5.
29. Albert Racinet *Le Costume Historique* 6 vols (Paris: Librairie de Firmin-Didot, 1876–88). The illustration is also included in the re-edited and translated edition Albert Racinet *The Historical Encyclopedia of Costume* with an introduction by Aileen Ribeiro (London: Studio Editions, 1988) 301.
30. For information regarding stilt-walking shepherds in Landes see the website <<http://lous.tchancayres.free.fr/stilts.html>> and the entry 'Stilts' from *The Encyclopaedia Britannica: a dictionary of arts, sciences, literature and general information* 29 vols (New York: Encyclopaedia Britannica, and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 11th edition, 1910–11) 25 923.
31. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 923 and the website of the Stilt-Walkers of Namur, <<http://users.skynet.be/fa005132/eng-history.htm>>.
32. See <www.donquijote.org/culture/spain/fiestas/danzadelozancos.asp>. I am grateful to Sheila Christie and Garrett Epp for this reference.
33. Michael Drayton *The second part, or a continuance of Poly-Olbion from the eighteenth song Containing all the tracts, riuers, mountaines, and forrests: intermixed with the most remarkable stories, antiquities, wonders, rarities, pleasures, and commodities of the east, and northerne parts of this isle, lying betwixt the two famous riuers of Thames, and Tweed* (London: Augustine Mathewes for John Marriott, John Grismand, and Thomas Dewe, 1622) song 25; STC 7229.

34. See the entry for Drayton in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: From the Earliest Time to the Year 2000* edited H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, 61 vols (Oxford University Press, 2004), or online.
35. Michael Drayton *The barrons vvars in the raigne of Edward the second. VVith Englands heroicall epistles* (London: James Roberts for N. Ling, 1603) verse 43; STC 7189.
36. William Camden *Britain, or A chorographicall account of the most flourishing kingdomes, England, Scotland, and Ireland, and ilands adjoining, out of the depth of antiquitie* translated by Philemon Holland (London: George Bishop and John Norton, 1610) 491; STC 4509.
37. See the entry for William Camden in the *ODNB*.
38. Lucy Freeman Sandler *The Peterborough Psalter in Brussels and other Fenland Manuscripts* (London: Harvey Miller, 1974) 134.
39. Sandler *Peterborough Psalter* 145.
40. Clifford Davidson *Illustrations of the Stage and Acting in England to 1580* (Kalamazoo MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1991) 69.
41. Generally speaking there was no difference between summer and winter workers' clothing. In warm weather layers were removed and replaced in cold. See Françoise Piponnier and Perrine Mane *Dress in the Middle Ages* translated Caroline Beamish (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997) 44.
42. Davidson *Illustrations of the Stage* 68. For a recent discussion of fools in religious manuscripts see Sandra Pietrini 'Medieval Fools in Biblical Iconography' *Medieval English Theatre* 24 (2002) 79–103.
43. Perhaps the most convincing example is the historiated initial of the 'Annunciation to the Shepherds' in the *Graduel de Fontevraud* (Gradual of Eleanor of Brittany) executed in Limoges in the second half of the thirteenth century: Limoges, Bib. mun. MS 2, fol. 19^v. In this example the shepherd also carries his crook over his right shoulder. The image can be seen at <<http://www.moyenageenlumiere.com/image/index.cfm?id=596>> under 'Annonce aux bergers'.
44. *The Chester Mystery Cycle* edited R. M. Lumiansky and David Mills *EETS* SS3 (1974) 125, line 5.
45. *Chester Mystery Cycle* 125, lines 9–10. The word *suche* here means 'a boggy or swampy place'. See *OED* sv *sough* n 2 1.