

Contemporary Productions Of Medieval English Theatre

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Abbreviations

BL MS 35290	British Library Manuscript 35290
REED: Cheshire	Baldwin, Elizabeth, Lawrence M Clopper and David Mills, eds. <i>Records of Early English Drama: Cheshire: Including Chester</i> . 2 vol. London: The University of Toronto Press, 2007.
REED: Coventry	Ingram, RW. <i>Records of Early English Drama: Coventry</i> . Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981.
REED: York	Johnston, Alexandra F and Margaret Rogerson, eds. <i>Records of Early English Drama: York</i> . 2 vol. Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1979.

Introduction

This thesis examines *The Annunciation* from the York mystery cycle from a dramaturgical perspective, incorporating research of medieval, early-modern and contemporary production practices in order to better understand how contemporary productions draw influence from original practice (OP). I have utilized traditional as well as practice-based research including dramaturgical methods in examining and directing *The Annunciation* in order to test my theories of OP and modern practices. While other forms of medieval English drama exist aside from cycle drama/pageant wagons, the great amount of research and scholarship devoted to the topic has meant that it is the form most commonly produced, particularly on the professional scale.

Since William Poel's landmark 1901 production of *Everyman*, contemporary productions of medieval English drama have sought to either embrace the practices of medieval theatre or to distance themselves from it. OP techniques have been either intentionally used or disregarded by directors, designers and other theatre-makers for various reasons. While some may see these techniques as restrictive, out-dated or simply unnecessary, others have embraced them as a means to explore the ways that medieval theatre-makers worked, thereby better understanding the original context in which these plays were written and performed.

Chapter One will examine the historiography of *The Annunciation*, in order to provide the background on which the play, and any production of it, is based. Chapter Two discusses the question of editing the text as well as the problems that arise when one attempts a production using original pronunciation. Chapter Three explores the ways in

which historical and art-historical research help to inform the costume and scenic design as well as acting styles and movement choices of *The Annunciation*, investigating if and how contemporary productions have chosen to use such information.

Chapter One: Historiography

Due to the lack of a clearly documented performance history for any English drama in the medieval period, one must begin with an examination of its historical roots, which may not reflect actual performance practices. Once this early history is established, it then becomes possible to discuss how contemporary productions have either been influenced by this early history, or have chosen to distance themselves from it. York's play of *The Annunciation* is no different.¹ Knowledge of the frequency of performance during the medieval period is slim; this is also the case in contemporary productions. In *Playing a Part in History: The York Mysteries, 1951-2006*, Margaret Rogerson lists *The Annunciation* as present only in the 1951, 1984 and 1994 productions.² Additionally, a photograph of *The Annunciation* from Greg Doran's *The York Millennium Mysteries* (2000) shows clear symbolism from and awareness of medieval iconography of the Annunciation.³ Performance of a play that is so intrinsically imbedded in a time, religion, place and society brings with it certain ingrained factors that the dramaturg must explore and then relate to the rest of the production team in order for the production to be not only an accurate presentation of the text, but also of the world in which it was created. While this is true of any play, it is particularly apt for a text written in a world so alien and yet so similar to our contemporary world.

¹ As the Annunciation refers to both a play and an event from the Gospel of Luke, I will distinguish between the two by referring to the play as *The Annunciation* (in italics) and the event as the Annunciation (no italics).

² Ibid, 42, 129, 220. The 1994 production was a pageant wagon production.

³ 'Photographs: The Annunciation. Gabriel (Tom Davey) visits Mary (Frances Marshall)', archive reference YMP/A/17/2/13, from www.yorkmysteryplays.com, accessed 29 May 2012.

The cycle plays of England are inextricably linked to the feast of Corpus Christi, first celebrated in England in 1318.⁴ However, it was not until the end of that same century that records first show the existence in York of pageant wagons (1376) or the connection of craft guilds to the plays (1386/7).⁵ These guilds undertook all aspects of producing the plays, and evidence indicates that ownership of each play became a point of pride for each guild.⁶

Documentary evidence of *The Annunciation* from York's cycle, assigns it to the city's Guild of Spicers. In 1415 York's *Memorandum Book* (MB) describes the Spicers' play as 'A learned man declaring the saying of the prophets concerning the future birth of Christ, Mary, the Angel greeting her, Mary greeting Elizabeth'.⁷ Further on in the same manuscript (MS) the Spicers are listed again, this time in the official order of the pageants, as performing 'the annunci[a]tion to Mary by Gabriel'.⁸ The Spicers' play is the twelfth in the cycle of fifty-six (as of the writing of the MB of 1415) and is located between the 'Hosyers' *Moses and Pharaoh* and the 'Pewterer ffounours' *Joseph's Troubles About Mary*.⁹ As their name implies, the Guild of Spicers was responsible for the purveyance of spices, a valuable foodstuff at a

⁴ Richard Beadle (ed), *The York Plays* (London: Edward Arnold, 1982) 20.

⁵ Ibid, 20.

⁶ REED: York, xiii-xiv. See also Richard Beadle (ed), *The York Plays*, 19-30 for a succinct explanation of the plays, the city guilds and their connection to the city and the performance of the plays.

⁷ Ibid, 704. Some editors refer this document as the *Ordo Paginarum*, as it is a distinct section of the *Memorandum Book*. I will refer to the document in whole as the *Memorandum Book*.

⁸ Ibid, 710.

⁹ Ibid, 18. The names given to the plays here are not those given in the MS, but are the more common modern names. Rather than names, the MS records a short description of each play and the name of the guild that performed it. See REED: York, 18, 25 (for the original Latin) or REED: York, 704, 710 (for the English translations). Of the fifty-six plays mentioned in the *Memorandum Book* only forty-seven are extant, and some of these, such as *The Coronation of the Virgin*, exists only in fragments. Richard Beadle (ed), *The York Plays*, table of contents.

time when its use was not only confined to the flavouring of food and drink, but also for the preservation of food.¹⁰ Unlike many other cycle plays, the attribution of the Spicers to the story of *The Annunciation* lacks the thematic relevance commonly associated with certain of the other plays.¹¹ For example, the Shipwrights were responsible for *The Building of the Ark* and the Pinner (makers of nails) were charged with bringing forth *The Crucifixion*.¹²

The MB of 1415 marks the earliest extant, documentary account of the play of *The Annunciation* at York.¹³ However, the only surviving MS of the play, indeed the only surviving MS of any of the York cycle plays, is British Library MS 35290 (BL MS 35290), dated at sometime between 1463 and 1477.¹⁴ The interim forty-eight to sixty-two years between the entry in the MB and the dating of the MS could very well have seen various versions of *The Annunciation* written and performed by the Spicers. There is no reason to believe that the play as it was recorded in BL MS 35290 was the only version to be performed at York; however, the absence of both an alternate text and of a reference to more than one text means that the play as it appears in the MS is the most accurate surviving account on which to base any research or production.

There does appear to be one significant chapter in the story of BL MS 35290 in the early-modern period. John Clerke, referred to as 'Hand C', was the servant of the Common

¹⁰ Richard Beadle (ed), *The York Plays*, 424.

¹¹ Alan D Justice, 'Trade Symbolism in the York Cycle', in *Theatre Journal* 31.1 (1979): 58. For a discussion of thematic links between the plays and certain guilds' individual religious devotions, see also Richard Beadle (ed), *The York Plays*, 29-30.

¹² REED: York, 18, 22.

¹³ Evidence points to certain plays being performed in York starting in the last quarter of the fourteenth-century, but a detailed account does not exist until the 1415 *Memorandum Book*. See Richard Beadle, *The York Plays*, 19-23, 'Origins and early history of the cycle' for a fuller account of the pre-1415 records and what they say.

¹⁴ Richard Beadle (ed), *The York Plays*, 18. *The Annunciation* appears on f. 44v - 47r.

Clerk of York from 1538/9, possibly until his death in 1580.¹⁵ According to Richard Beadle, editor of *The York Plays* and co-editor of the facsimile edition of BL MS 35290, it was Clerke who added not only the character delineation of 'Doctor' to the MS sometime during his tenure to the Common Council of York, but also added marginalia next to the Doctor's speech adding: 'this matter is/newly mayde wherof/we haue no copy' [**image 1**].¹⁶ This is not to say that the introduction was never produced on the stage; the 1415 MB states that the play began with a man declaring the prophets' foretelling of the coming messiah, which is exactly what Doctor does in his lines. It is interesting to highlight that John Clerke, the man who was in charge of the MS less than one-hundred years after its creation can seemingly note the existence of a substantial piece of text (roughly sixty per cent of the overall lines) as being entirely new to him. Perhaps the play as it was performed in his day did not include Doctor or his lines. Unfortunately, since so little documentary evidence survives, there is no way to know the exact content of the play from year to year.

Very few accounts pertaining to the performance of *The Annunciation* are extant. The lack of documentary evidence for the existence of the plays in this period cannot be read as evidence that they were not performed. Records imply that by 1415 the

¹⁵Richard Beadle (ed), *The York Plays*, 16.

¹⁶ Richard Beadle and Peter Meredith (eds), *The York Plays: A Facsimile of British Library MS Additional 35290, Together with a Facsimile of the Ordo Paginarum Section of the A/Y Memorandum Book, with an Introduction by Richard Beadle and Peter Meredith and a Note on the Music by Richard Rastall* (Leeds: University of Leeds, School of English, 1983) sig. f. 44r. The speech prefix 'Docto' appears to be an earlier addition than the above-mentioned note, though its form does not follow the speech prefixes given in the rest of the MS that pertains to *The Annunciation* (f. 44r – f. 47v). The character delineation is on a slightly different, vertical line, than the added notation, which slants slightly up to the right. Further, the size of the letters, the width of their minims and their style do not match, making me believe that they were not written at the same time or possibly even by the same person, as Beadle suggests. This does not mean the Clerke did not write both the character delineation and the notation, simply that they may not have been written at the same time, though it would seem strange for Clerke to both mention the name of the character while at the same time noting the character's newness.

performance of the cycle plays was common enough that they needed to be committed to writing, possibly to help organize what had become a major civic event. The few extant records from this time period are notoriously rooted in clerical concerns, more likely to record daily financial expenditure and bureaucratic proceedings, rather than as archival material purposefully relating to aspects of performance. This is possibly because the plays had been consistently performed throughout the living memory of the people of York and recording such specifics was deemed unnecessary. Nearly every person living within York would have known enough about the performances so perhaps writing about them could have seemed unnecessary. Specific notations related to expenditures only contain enough information to allow the reader to glean the most basic knowledge: date (usually very general), amount of money spent and the basic reason for the spending.

Unfortunately there is not much historical information pertaining to the performance of *The Annunciation* in the Records of Early English Drama (REED) volumes either.¹⁷ In addition to the 1415 entries in the MB, the Spicers are mentioned only once more. On 6 November 1433 the Spicers are recorded, once again in the MB, as coming before the council in complaint that others, not licensed to do so, were selling various types of wines without the permission of the guild; this infringement on the rights that they 'haf hadd wyth outen tyme of mynde' would lead to lower profits to the guild, thus damaging its ability to produce its pageant.¹⁸ The guild was certainly producing the play annually by

¹⁷ As the Records of Early English Drama (REED) cover all performances in York for which records survive from the beginning of the records until the closing of the theatres by parliament in 1642, it can be rightly assumed that if an account does not exist in REED's two volumes related to York, then it is very unlikely that a further known account exists at all.

¹⁸ REED: York, 54. The term 'producer' is of course an anachronism, but its use here is to best describe to a contemporary audience the responsibility of the guild in relation to *The Annunciation*, and not to accurately reflect late medieval theatrical terminology. The term 'pageant' is commonly used to refer to the plays.

1433, though no record explicitly states the ownership of the play until BL MS 35290 begins the play with the title 'The Spicers', roughly fifty years later.¹⁹ There is a document that is important to the history of *The Annunciation* not for a reference to the play or guild, but rather due to the conspicuous absence of both.

The City Chamberlain's Rolls for 1535 records the following statement:

Item for asmyche as my Lord Maior & his
Bredren agreyd to spare the sayd play
Corpuscrysty Therefore all the occupacions
of this City grauntyd of yer own frewylls to
paye to the Comon Chambre of this sayd
Citie the moyte of all suche money as thay
haue beyn accustomyd to pay in oon yere²⁰

The actual payments, in all totalling vij li x s viij d (roughly £2,400 in contemporary money), were collected from the guilds, but the list of those payments records at most thirty-five guilds (and by association, their respective plays);²¹ one of those missing from the list is the Spicers, though the guilds directly preceding and following them in the *Ordo Paginarum* are present in the rolls.²² This could imply the absence of *The Annunciation* from the 1535 running order, and perhaps the absence of the play from previous and even subsequent running orders. There are no special notations indicating that some plays were spared the payment or otherwise absent from the list for any reason. Neither is there anything that denotes the strangeness of such absences, which in itself could signal the previous loss of *The Annunciation* from the cycle some years previous. It would be convenient to say that

¹⁹ Richard Beadle (ed), *The York Plays*, 424. See this entry for an interesting note on the discovery, through ultra-violet light, that the title had once read 'The Spicers and Foundours'.

²⁰ REED: York, 257.

²¹ Converted using the 'currency converter', from www.nationalarchive.gov.uk, accessed 31 August 2012.

²² REED: York, 258-259.

the advent of the Reformation had stripped the Marian plays from the cycle two years prior, but the inclusion of the Drapers' extra-Biblical play *The Death of the Virgin* annuls that argument. The play appears to have been simply left out of the cycle for an unknown reason.

There is no account of a performance of the York cycle plays after 1569 until the revival for the 1951 Festival of Britain. Reverend JS Purvis, canon of York Minster, was tasked with the challenge of adapting and translating the forty-seven medieval play-scripts of roughly sixteen-hours into a single, three-hour performance text.²³ Purvis, both an Anglican priest and Canon of York Minster, was an obvious choice for the job, given his knowledge of Middle English and his position in the Anglican sacerdotal hierarchy. The York festival director, Keith Thomson, had in mind a processional performance, presenting the plays in a manner similar to medieval practices.²⁴ However, E Martin Browne, the director of the play, decided on a single location, staging the play in front of the ruined north wall of the nave of the former St Mary's Abbey, just outside the walls of the city.²⁵ The choice of performance space provided a grand, if decaying, backdrop for the scenic design.²⁶

Nora Lambourne's designs drew on medieval iconography and scenic designs, recreating her version of the famous set design of the Valenciennes Passion of 1547 **[image**

²³ JS Purvis, *The York Cycle of Mystery Plays* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1962) 7. This monograph is a collection of Purvis's translations of the entire, extant cycle, and is not a reflection of the unpublished, 1951 performance text.

²⁴ 'In the Beginning', from www.yorkmysteryplays.org, accessed 3 May 2012.

²⁵ Ibid. The Archbishop of York had decreed that the performance must take place on a sacred site, thereby connecting the play to its spiritual and (wrongly perceived) historical past, which also affected Browne's choice of location.

²⁶ From this point on, the term 'the play' will refer to *The York Mysteries*, the compiled plays from medieval York, and not the individual plays that compose its structure, such as *The Annunciation*, which will be referred to as 'scenes' which make up the play as a whole.

2], spanning some 145 feet from stage right to stage left [image 3].²⁷ This, though generating an epic feeling, created sightline and auditory issues, even with the modification of arching the set in a semi-circle and the addition of microphones on certain actors.²⁸ A 145-foot wide stage, coupled with the ruined north wall of what was once the largest abbey in northern England, had the unwanted and unavoidable effect of dwarfing the performers onstage. Anyone who has acted in an outdoor space knows the difficulty of projecting one's voice clearly. How can an audience understand the language of the play, even with the assistance of microphones, when actors are forced to project in such a large area, to an audience of thousands, on an outdoor stage that was not, like the Greek amphitheatres, designed to accommodate the voice of an actor? The requirements of the space seem to have been a consideration, but the actions taken to rectify the problems were not sufficient. The mansion-house design used meant that at moments, parts of the audience must have been more than 200 feet from the action of the play, effectively obscuring their view.

A photograph, possibly of *The Last Judgment*, beautifully illustrates the epic feel and grand scale the production so elegantly accomplished [image 3];²⁹ however, how can such a sprawling performance space also convey the innate intimacy of *The Annunciation* or the savage horror of *The Slaughter of the Innocents*? The ruins of the nave wall created not only the backdrop for the stage, but the glass-less clerestory windows were converted into

²⁷ 'Programmes/Posters: Mystery Plays Programme', archive reference: YMP/B/1/4, from www.yorkmysteryplays.org, accessed 3 May 2012; John McKinnell, 'Modern Productions of Medieval English Drama', in *The Cambridge Companion to Early English Theatre*, second edition, Richard Beadle and Alan J Fletcher (eds) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 290. Katie Normington, *Modern Mysteries: Modern Productions of Medieval English Cycle Dramas* (Cambridge: DS Brewer, 2007) 55.

²⁸ John McKinnell, 'Modern Productions of Medieval English Drama', 290.

²⁹ 'Photograph: 1951 scene', archive reference: YMP/A/1/3, from www.yorkmysteryplays.org, accessed 3 May 2012.

acting spaces, framing the action and creating the position of the 'heavens' from which God could speak and to which Christ could ascend. In this way the abbey wall was re-purposed and brought to life in the twentieth-century, just as the plays themselves.

Each production brings with it the capability to put forth certain ideas or doctrines, as well as an opportunity to ask the important question of 'Why this play now'? An area of contention that is always present when producing overtly Catholic plays in a Protestant country is not only the inclusion of Mary, but precisely what her role should be. The 1951 script did not include the three plays, *The Death of the Virgin*, *The Assumption of the Virgin* and *The Coronation of the Virgin*.³⁰ Each of these plays depicts expressly Catholic ideas about the divinity of Mary as well as extra-Biblical events that modern Protestant doctrines do not support. This is in contrast to one of the biggest annual performances of medieval drama in Europe, The Fest d'Elche in Valencia, Spain, which is a play concerned entirely with those three events cuts from the 1951 production at York. This dichotomy is present due to the contradictory religious beliefs between contemporary Protestant England and Catholic Spain.

To this day the content of the play and the manner in which it is performed can cause doctrinal controversy. One of the most famous examples is John Doyle's 1996 production, which included a woman, Ruth Ford, playing the part of God.³¹ Doyle stated 'It seems that seeing a woman in this role at this particular time is making them [the church] ask fundamental questions about their church and their beliefs'.³² Doyle's casting

³⁰ Margaret Rogerson, *Playing a Part in History*, 43.

³¹ *Ibid*, 150.

³² *Ibid*, 150.

commented on the argument at that time over the ordination of women into the priesthood in the Church of England, while at the same time distancing himself and the play from the church and the controversy by twice referring to 'their' church and beliefs, affirming his disassociation.

As with any discussion of the place of Mary in a Protestant church, the question of the place of women in the church as whole can be called into question. The event of the Annunciation can be seen as evidence for the inclusion of women into the church's structure beyond the level of Deaconess. Jesus may have been the child of a male god, but it was through his conception by a woman that his birth was made miraculous, and thus proof of his divinity. Without a woman, the miracle of Christ's birth is negated by the absence of divine conception by the Holy Ghost, an event explicitly mentioned in *The Annunciation* and its source, The Gospel of Luke. Mary's virginal conception, and thus Christ's divinity, is confirmed by Elizabeth, who herself has been granted a miracle with the pregnancy of John the Baptist at an advanced age and presumed-barren state. Thus the first people to be made cognizant of the presence of God-the-Son on earth are themselves women, witnesses to the first miracle of Jesus, his conception. And it is women, one of them Mary, who are also the first to be made aware of the risen Jesus and thus present for his ultimate miracle, the Resurrection. These events emphasising the importance of women are not only present in the Bible, but in the York plays themselves.

Controversy surrounding the content of the plays is not a contemporary peculiarity. Such complaints relating to the plays' content date back at least as far as the sixteenth-century. A letter from Christopher Goodman and Robert Rogerson to the Archbishop of York, dated 1572, contains a list of the 'Notes of the absurdities &c in the Chester plays',

enumerating extra-biblical and obviously Catholic contents of the Chester plays performed in that year against the wishes of the Archbishop.³³ One can assume that even before the official English split with Rome in 1533, the content of the various cycle plays would have been under attack. Such attacks could have come under the auspices of any number of reform-minded religious groups from the Lollards of the fourteenth-century to the Puritans of the late sixteenth-century, and might well have influenced the content of the plays over time, though there does not appear to be any evidence that expressly indicates this.

One current doctrinal argument within the Church of England is the call for the consecration of female Bishops; on 21 May 2012 the House of Bishops approved legislation allowing for this.³⁴ However, on 9 July the General Synod of the Church of England voted to delay a vote on the consecration of female Bishops, to 'allow a late amendment to be considered'.³⁵ The issue instigated further outrage on both sides of the debate. While it may not seem to be directly relevant to the issue at hand, choices in any production of medieval cycle drama, such as the role of Mary and cross-gender casting, can comment on the role of women in the Church. *The Lincoln Mysteries* (2012) may have done so in terms of cross-gender casting. Lincoln, which uses The N-Town text for its play, casted the tripartite role of God as one man and two women, God-the-Father and God-the-Holy-Ghost being played by women while God-the-Son/Jesus was portrayed by a young man, while at

³³ REED: Cheshire, 144-148.

³⁴ 'House of Bishops Approves Women Bishop Legislation', from www.churchofengland.org, accessed 31 July 2012.

³⁵ Robert Pigott, 'Women Bishops: Church's General Synod Delays Vote', from www.bbc.co.uk, accessed 31 July 2012.

the same time cutting the extra-biblical Marian plays.³⁶ This casting choice exemplifies the idea that theatre should not reflect on society, but rather comment upon it. By casting God not as male or female, but both at once, the production interrogated gender binaries in religious theology and imagery, while drawing attention to the very subject of that binary.

The history of York's *The Annunciation* is added to with every professional or amateur production and every new piece of scholarly research. The play's long and maddeningly obscure history makes it at once a delight and a problematic piece of theatre history with which to work. The next chapter will discuss the use of speech and text both historically and in my production.

³⁶ The N-Town text uses the convention of a tripartite God, having three actors representing God-the-Father (Pater), God-the-Son (Filius) and God-the-Holy-Ghost (Spiritus Sanctus), thus reinforcing the doctrine of the Trinitarian deity. For the complete cycle see Stephen Spector (ed), *The N-Town Play: Cotton MS Vespasian D 8*, 2 vol (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

Chapter Two: Speech and Text

Before discussing the intricacies of textual editing and adaptation, it is important to consider the topic of the language of *The Annunciation*. BL MS 35290 is not written in modern English nor in the modern, Italic script. The manuscript (MS) was composed entirely in Middle English (ME) written in a late medieval secretary hand; a form of the language and an alphabet that can seem not only foreign, but also daunting and problematic to the modern reader. Even once transcribed into a modern italic font, the addition of the letters yogh (ȝ/ȝ) and thorn (þ/ þ) can easily cause confusion in both meaning and pronunciation.³⁷ For example, the letter thorn is commonly substituted for the letter 'y', but it was in fact an independent letter representing the 'th' sound (as in *thick*, the interdental voiceless fricative /θ/; or as in *then*, the interdental voiced fricative / ð/). Given this information, does 'pou' stand for 'thou' or 'you'? The editor's choice as to the proper transcription of this word affects not only its meaning but the relationship between the characters speaking such a word, given that 'thou' is the informal form of 'you'.³⁸

The choice whether to translate the original ME of *The Annunciation* into modern pronunciation is fraught with considerations, from rhyme scheme and pronunciation to the level of modernisation and the question of adaptation versus translation. As a short case study I will use the first twelve lines from *The Annunciation*, comparing Richard Beadle's transcription in ME and JS Purvis's edition, which attempts to keep the original metre and rhyme, while also modernising and normalising certain words and spellings. I have chosen

³⁷ The letters are shown first in their uppercase, and then their lowercase forms.

³⁸ FP Lock, 'Thouing the King in Shakespeare's Plays', in *Essays in Criticism* 58.2 (2008): 120-142.

to maintain Beadle's punctuation; however, as the original MS contains no punctuation within the lines here, so the reader should keep in mind how much more difficult this could be to read were the punctuation removed.

Lord God, grete meruell es to mene
Howe man was made withouten mysse
And sette whare he sulde euer haue bene
Withouten bale, bidand in blisse
And howe he lost pat comfort clene
And was putte oute fro paradys,
And sithen what sorouse sor war sene
Sente vnto hym and to al his;
And howe they lay lange space
In helle, lokyn fro lyght,
Tille God graunted pam grace
Of helpe, als he hadde hyght.³⁹

Lord God, great marvel this may mean,
How man was made with nought amiss
And set where he should ever have been
All without bale, bidding in bliss;
And how he lost that comfort clean,
And was put out from Paradise,
And since what sorrows sore where seen,
Seen unto him and to all his,
And how they lay long space
In hell locked from light,
Till God granted them grace
Of help as he had hight [sic].⁴⁰

Purvis's 'guiding principal [sic]' when working on his edition of the plays was 'to alter nothing that could possibly be retained, either in the words, the arrangement of the words, the verse-forms, or the rhymes and the alliteration, so long as the result might be clear to a modern audience'.⁴¹ For the most part, Purvis was successful in his task, having only a few moments when rhyme is lost or the retention of an archaism creates a break in the flow of the reader/auditor.

Of the two versions above, Purvis's modernised version may be much clearer to understand to a contemporary audience, replacing the majority of the obscure ME words with a contemporary equivalent while maintaining the rhyme scheme the majority of the time, even when it requires a slightly forced rhyme, as between 'mean' and 'been'. Purvis

³⁹ Richard Beadle (ed), *The York Plays* (London: Edward Arnold, 1982) 110-111.

⁴⁰ JS Purvis, *The York Cycle of Mystery Plays* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1957) 79.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 10.

attempts to maintain the original rhyme scheme of the MS, which is not only implicit in the text, but also explicitly diagrammed by rhyme-brackets inserted into the MS by the original scribe [image 4].⁴² These rhyme-brackets are present throughout nearly the entire MS, and clearly show the words that the scribe wished to rhyme.⁴³ The only rhyme that may seem slightly forced in the MS is between 'paradys' and 'his' in lines six and eight, respectively. This most likely indicates the pronunciation of these words in the fifteenth-century York accent, where terminating syllables appear to have been voiced either the same or very similarly.

The pronunciation of the text whether using original pronunciation, contemporary pronunciation or an amalgam of the two is a consideration of utmost importance when attempting to produce these plays. The topic of original pronunciation can cause slight controversy. Meg Twycross, editor of the journal *Medieval English Theatre* and Professor Emeritus of English Medieval Studies at Lancaster University, said:

I started off [when directing medieval drama] using 'medieval English' pronunciation, but very rapidly realised that I couldn't be certain of reproducing a mid-fifteenth-century Yorkshire accent, or a sixteenth-century Cheshire accent [...]⁴⁴

This search for authenticity in pronunciation is hampered by a lack of certainty. The idea seems to be that if OP cannot be achieved due to a lack of certainty, than that convention

⁴² Richard Beadle and Peter Meredith (eds), *The York Plays: A Facsimile of British Library MS Additional 35290, Together with a Facsimile of the Ordo Paginarum Section of the A/Y Memorandum Book, with an Introduction by Richard Beadle and Peter Meredith and a Note on the Music by Richard Rastall* (Leeds: University of Leeds, School of English, 1983) xxvi; sig f 44r.

⁴³ Interestingly, these rhyme brackets prescribe the rhyming of the MS. In prescribing the rhymes the scribe may be indicating that the chosen words may not have rhymed in normal, day-to-day speech. The choice of the scribe to be prescriptive may indicate that his spelling is not descriptive of the York accent of the mid-fifteenth-century, making the MS a document showing not the daily speech of life in York during the period, but rather a presentational style, perhaps not completely representative of actual speech patterns.

⁴⁴ Meg Twycross, personal email to the author, 27 April 2012.

can, and perhaps should, be dropped. We can only at best reconstruct a general approximation to the spoken language, with no guarantee of it being reliably authentic. The great variation in regional dialects in the late medieval period must also be taken into account. William Caxton's 1490 *Boke of Eneydos* contains an anecdote about London merchants who were washed up on the Kent coast, and due to the great difference of the Kentish and London dialects of ME, were at first unable to communicate their wish for food, in particular eggs, to a woman they encounter. Caxton wrote of the incident that 'in my dayes happened', commenting the following: 'Loo what sholde a man in thyse dayes now wryte. egges or eyren [respectively the northern and southern forms of the word 'eggs'] certaynly it is harde to playse euery man bycause of dyuersite & chauge of language'.⁴⁵ As Caxton lived in the time period ascribed to the creation of BL MS 35290 (1422-1491), it can be surmised that, as Caxton himself said, the 'comyn englysshe that is spoken in one shyre varyeth from a nother' and that a completely accurate recreation of the language in its various dialects and accents must be near, if not completely, impossible.⁴⁶

My decision to use original pronunciation came from a desire to experiment with a convention that seems to have been overlooked by other directors, and to determine, through practice, why original pronunciation is either a good or bad convention for

⁴⁵ William Caxton, *Here fynyssheth the boke yf Eneydos, compyled by Vyrgyle, which hathe be translated oute of latyne in to frenshe, and oute of frenshe reduced in to Englysshe by me wyll[ia]m Caxton, the xxij. daye of Iuyn. the yere of our lorde. M.iiij.Clxxx. The fythe yere of the regne of kyng Henry the seuenth* De casibus virorum illustrium. De casibus virorum illustrium, (Westminster: Printed by William Caxton, not before 23 June 1490) sig. A1v; Hans Kurath and Serman M Kuhn (eds), *Middle English Dictionary* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952) 25, 45.

⁴⁶ William Caxton, *Here fynyssheth the boke yf Eneydos, compyled by Vyrgyle, which hathe be translated oute of latyne in to frenshe, and oute of frenshe reduced in to Englysshe by me wyll[ia]m Caxton, the xxij. daye of Iuyn. the yere of our lorde. M.iiij.Clxxx. The fythe yere of the regne of kyng Henry the seuenth* De casibus virorum illustrium. De casibus virorum illustrium, (Westminster: Printed by William Caxton, not before 23 June 1490) sig. A1v.

performance. As an experiment it proved to be quite useful, bringing up issues of scansion, pronunciation and lyrical flow that otherwise would have been lost in rehearsal. It also offered a chance for an audience to hear both the original and contemporary pronunciation of the same text, thus allowing audiences to hear the differences between the two versions and to draw their own conclusions.

Certain contemporary productions have attempted to use the contemporary Yorkshire accent as a basis for pronunciation, possibly believing it to be some sort of middle ground between the original and the British Received Pronunciation. While working with the Cottesloe Company on their production of *The Mysteries* (1977) playwright Tony Harrison said that he was brought in as ‘a Yorkshire poet who came to read the metre and to monitor the preservation of the play’s northern character’.⁴⁷ The metre and character are perhaps two of the most important qualities of the text, and in this way Harrison’s job was to safe-guard the text. While using a contemporary Yorkshire accent may be a middle ground that can be accepted as both original and contemporary at the same time, few productions seem to attempt a ME pronunciation of the original text.

While complete and accurate recreation of the Yorkshire accent of the mid-fifteenth-century is an impossible task, using an approximation can bring out nuances not possible when using contemporary pronunciation. While learning the lines in ME, my all-male cast (two of whom had experience with ME and one of whom did not) the uncertainty of ME pronunciation was a key issue. One of our first concerns was whether or not the terminal ‘e’ was to be voiced. We decided to try voicing it, and so continued our read-through using that convention. We discovered that while voicing the terminal ‘e’ in certain cases created

⁴⁷ Tony Harrison, *The Mysteries* (London: Faber and Faber, 1985) forward.

or maintained a rhyme, in most instances it actually destroyed the rhyme. For example,

Mary's line:

Thou aungell, blissid messenger,
Of Goddis will I holde me payde;
I love my lorde with herte clere,
Þe grace pou he has for me layde.
Goddis handmayden, lo me here
To his wille all redy grayd;
Be done to me of all manere
Thurgh thy worde als pou hast saide.⁴⁸

is very clearly indicated to have an ABABABAB rhyme scheme, but if the terminal 'e' in 'clere', 'here' and 'manere' is voiced, then the rhyme scheme is changed to ABCBCBCB, leaving an awkward, half-rhyming stanza. We observed that the terminal 'e' is a diacritic to indicate that the vowel in the previous syllable is long. Once this was made clear the choice was then made to voice the terminal 'e' when the word appeared in the middle of a verse line, but not to voice it at the end of a verse line. The reason for this was the scansion of the lines, as this would create a set of iambic feet, which would lend more of a singsong quality to the line and be less harsh on the ears of the audience.⁴⁹ Once we decided on pronunciation rules, the language flowed with surprising clarity.

The Great Vowel Shift occurred when the vowels of the English language changed from having one sound, to having multiple. In other words, the system changed from using the basic five tense vowels of Latin, to using a variety of realisations; thus a word as simple

⁴⁸ Richard Beadle (ed), *The York Plays* (London: Edward Arnold, 1982) 115; for the complete rhyme brackets, see Richard Beadle and Peter Meredith (eds), *The York Plays: A Facsimile of British Library MS Additional 35290*, sig f 44v-47r.

⁴⁹ William Poel's *Everyman* (1901) used a chanting style of speech, a convention that was designed, according to editors Douglas Bruster and Eric Rasmussen, to employ 'the historical distance of *Everyman's* script to their advantage' in order 'to imitate what they felt was historical practice'. Douglas Bruster and Eric Rasmussen (eds), *Everyman and Mankind* (London: Methuen, 2009) 69.

as 'he' would have been pronounced more closely to 'hay' ([hei]), than 'hee' ([hi:]).

According to Linguist Seth Lerer, the shift completed by the mid-sixteenth-century, and was 'the single most important change that transforms [ME] into Modern English'.⁵⁰ As the language of *The Annunciation* was recorded prior to the Great Vowel Shift, we used this convention as standard. The actor with no experience of ME had difficulty trying to remember how to pronounce the vowels, until he was told to pretend he was reading Spanish (a language he can read and write fluently), which instantly improved his pronunciation, making him more understandable.⁵¹

My ME pronunciation version of *The Annunciation* drew differing responses from the audience. One audience member said how surprised she was at the amount of the text that was understandable. Some commented that the flow of the ME compensated for the loss of understanding of certain words. Eleven of the sixteen audience members said that they could understand fifty per cent or more of the ME pronunciation. In contrast all but one audience member acknowledged understanding at least ninety per cent of the contemporary pronunciation, and most believed they understood one-hundred per cent.⁵² While this shows that contemporary pronunciation is clearly more comprehensible to a

⁵⁰ Seth Lerer, '14a-The Great Vowel Shift – Making Modern English', on disc 14 of *History of the English Language* (The Teaching Company, 2008?) audio recording.

⁵¹ Spanish, like other Romance languages such as Italian and Portuguese, did not undergo the dramatic vowel shift, making the pronunciation of vowels in that language very standardized, as it still uses the five basic Latin vowels.

⁵² The actors in my cast consisted of two Americans, one English and one Spaniard (who speaks with an impeccable RP accent). While this created a varied spectrum of accents, I did not attempt to unify the actors' accents into one style, hoping that the varied accents would lend to discoveries about the different pronunciation and scansion of words. This proved to be especially useful in the ME version, where hearing differing accents from the three actors helped us to understand the various ways to pronounce the words of the text.

contemporary audience, it is important to recognize how much of the ME a contemporary audience could also understand.

York's version of *The Annunciation* is easily divided into three sections: the introduction (lines 1-144), the Annunciation (lines 145-196) and the Visitation (lines 197-240).⁵³ In terms of overall structure and narrative the introduction is irrelevant to the subsequent narrative, because it is purely expository, and is not part of the narrative structure of the play as whole. The expository content of the introduction makes for its easy extraction from *The Annunciation's* structure without losing the narrative arc. The second section tells the story of the Annunciation from the Gospel of Luke.⁵⁴ The third and final section of the play tells of the event that is commonly segregated from the Annunciation, known as the Visitation, in which Mary is sent to the house of Zacharias to witness that her cousin, Elizabeth, is pregnant.⁵⁵ At this meeting Elizabeth confirms the words of the angel Gabriel and Mary praises God for what he has done.

⁵³Line 197 in the MS (the beginning of the third section) falls in the middle of a stanza attributed entirely to Mary, but line 193 continues the stanza on to a new folio. Lines 194-196 are clearly not meant to be said by Mary, and were therefore meant for Gabriel (who the script refers to as *Angelus*), who is the only other character in the scene and therefore the only candidate. Most editions fix this error by assigning lines 193-196 to Gabriel. I will follow their example in doing so. See Richard Beadle (ed), *The York Plays*, 10-19 for a description of the MS.

⁵⁴ Luke 1:26-38 AV. The Annunciation exists only in the Gospel of Luke, and is the second event described in it, the first being the miraculous conception of John the Baptist by his aged parents Zacharias and Elizabeth, which itself is a form of exposition for the Annunciation. All Bible quotes, unless otherwise noted, are from the Authorized (King James) Version (AV) of 1611. Although using a Bible compiled for a Protestant monarch fifty years after the playing of the Catholic cycle was banned in York may seem awkward and inappropriate, the basic story does not change from the Latin Vulgate, or even from Wycliffe's ME translation of the Bible from the last quarter of the fourteenth-century. For this reason, as well as familiarity, I have chosen to use the AV.

⁵⁵ Luke 1:39-56 AV.

Beadle notes the existence of ‘partial revisions or complete rewriting’ evident in the MS prior to the 1559 prohibition put on plays of a religious matter.⁵⁶ As the records of York show, this censorship of religious plays does not seem to have been much enforced. Alterations are also known to have occurred in Chester at roughly the same time, giving precedence to suggest such revisions at York.⁵⁷ This can lead to the conclusion that the extant MS is probably not an accurate reflection of the scripts as they were presented in late medieval or early-modern York. As only one text of *The Annunciation* survives, it is impossible to know what alterations, if any, were made at varying performances. While this does not mean that one can say with authority that, given Clerke’s comment, the introduction was not performed at some point in the medieval and early-modern periods, it does mean that the possibility of contemporary textual edits cannot be disproved, and in fact is backed by both circumstantial and documentary evidence.

For the revival of the plays at York in 1951, Purvis was commissioned to provide a translated edition of the plays, cut for performance. The use of a priest as both translator/adaptor/playwright ensured the preservation of the Christian message in the play and the advocacy of Anglican dogma, while also keeping the play firmly in the hands of the Church. Purvis’s acting edition of 1951 included twenty-nine of forty-eight extant plays.⁵⁸ According to Margaret Rogerson, in her study of the York cycle, *Playing a Part in History*, only two (*Fall of Man* and *Temptation*) were ‘left reasonably intact’, and the

⁵⁶ Richard Beadle (ed), *The York Plays*, 28. EK Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923, reprinted 1967) IV, 263-4. The last recorded instance of the cycle’s performance in York until the twentieth-century was in 1569, as recorded in the *House Books*. REED: York, 355-358.

⁵⁷ REED: Cheshire, xxxvii.

⁵⁸ Margaret Rogerson, *Playing a Part in History: The York Mysteries 1951-2006* (London: University of Toronto Press, 2009) 54. See page 50-55 for an analysis on Purvis, the legacy of his script and translations, and how they have shaped *The York Mysteries* to today.

remaining twenty-seven 'suffered further heavy cuts'.⁵⁹ Many prologues were excised from the text in director E Martin Browne's belief that 'pomping' and 'telling' in the prologue 'would have a boring slowness'.⁶⁰ These cuts served a dual purpose in both streamlining multiple plays and their narratives into one and reducing the acting time to a manageable size for a contemporary audience. Performing every prologue would not only add hours to the performance, but detract from the story being told in the rest of the play; it seems doubtful that many would argue with Brown's assertions, mentioned above. While drastic in the overall amount of original text cut, by extracting these sections the 1951 play was made not only more accessible to a wider audience, but also more fluid. This was arguably the most drastic shift in performance conditions from the fifteenth- to the twentieth-century. Purvis's final script version does not present the late medieval York cycle, but instead a twentieth-century version adapted from the fifteenth-century original.

Purvis attempted to publish his acting script for the 1951 production with publisher Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (who was later to publish his translation of the entire cycle); unfortunately, he was unsuccessful in having the script published, making the precise content of the 1951 play difficult to determine.⁶¹ As a result, an examination of the surviving documents, is the best method for determining actual content for many production years. Cast lists contained in the programme for the 1951 production reveal the absence of any character called 'Elizabeth', which implies that the third section of *The*

⁵⁹ Ibid, 54.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 55.

⁶¹ Ibid, 54.

Annunciation (the Visitation) was excluded from performance.⁶² Two actors are listed as 'Doctors'. It is unlikely that either of these men played the part of 'Doctor' in section one of *The Annunciation*, as the cast list lists players in order of appearance onstage, and these men are positioned quite far down the list. As Mary and Doctor first appear in the cycle in *The Annunciation*, one would expect to find them together on a cast list arranged in this order; however, they are not. Moreover, the Doctors are positioned in an area most likely representing the play *Christ and the Doctors*.⁶³ It would appear that Purvis's script, while maintaining the Annunciation, cut both the introduction and the Visitation.

Dramaturgically this edit is a logical choice and in the spirit of Brown. It cuts the 240 lines of dialogue down to fifty-one, significantly reducing the playing time of the scene while not interfering with the narrative structure. My ME pronunciation production of *The Annunciation* ran to roughly seventeen minutes with the prologue, and six minutes without; illustrating the eleven minutes the introduction can consume. An audience, whether Christian or not, does not need an expository introduction explaining what they are about to witness. While the introduction serves as a bridge between the Old Testament stories and those of the New Testament, it does not further the narrative slows down the pace of the show, taking one from the action of *Moses and Pharaoh* to the subdued calm of *The Annunciation's* introduction, interrupting the flow of one play into the next. The Visitation, while theologically important for its confirmation of Gabriel's words and the introduction of John the Baptist, also serves no purpose in furthering the overall story, and superfluous if

⁶² 'Programmes/Posters: Mystery Plays Programme', archive reference: YMP/B/1/4, from www.yorkmysteryplays.org, accessed 3 May 2012.

⁶³ Ibid

included in a compilation of the cycle. These two end-capping scenes enrich the plot of *The Annunciation*, but are not integral to the scenes' or play's dramatic structure as a whole.

Subsequent productions of *The York Mysteries* have followed suit. Purvis's script has been the basis for the majority of productions, though other scenes have either been grafted on or used to replace those chosen by Purvis and Browne for 1951.⁶⁴ Fidelity to Purvis's script has frequently been maintained, but only to the degree that still allows for each production's artistic team to make their personal mark on the play. Only twice between 1951 and 1992 (when Liz Lohead was commissioned to write an entirely new script to coincide with the play being moved indoors to the York Theatre Royal) were scripts so drastically changed as to have been called, by Rogerson, 'adaptations based on the Purvis text' rather than a re-forming of Purvis's work.⁶⁵ Even the most recent script, compiled for the 2012 production by playwright Mike Kenny, uses Purvis as its base before drawing from Happe, Beadle, King, Lohead and Poulton's script, as well as consulting Harrison's script compiled from various cycles, mentioned earlier.⁶⁶

The question of translation versus adaptation is one of importance in the field of medieval drama, and yet one that has little critical discussion. Unlike the plays of ancient Greece there appears to be no total adaptation of medieval drama in English, rather the

⁶⁴ Margaret Rogerson, *Playing a Part in History*, 58, 55.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 58. The two editions were Howard Davies' 1973 version that was criticized by Elliot as a 'kind of Protestantized Passion Play' (as quoted in Margaret Rogerson, *Playing a Part in History*, 58), and Steven Pimlott's 1988 text. *Ibid*, 58.

⁶⁶ Mike Kenny, personal email to the author, 31 January 2012; Mike Kenney, personal email to the author, 30 May 2012. Peter Happe (ed), *English Mystery Plays: A Selection* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975); Richard Beadle and Pamela M King (eds), *York Mystery Plays: A selection in Modern Spelling* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Tony Harrison, *The Mysteries* (London: Faber, 1985).

original text is always preserved, even if edited and cut.⁶⁷ Perhaps our historical, religious and cultural distance from classical Greece makes for a more careful adaptation of its drama, when compared to the relative closeness of contemporary English society to the plays of medieval England. Sarah Ruhl's three-part *Passion Play* (2011) is perhaps the closest version of an adaptation, as it deals with the ways in which three groups in three drastically different geographical, cultural and temporal settings deal with how their lives begin to reflect the Passion Plays they regularly produce.⁶⁸ *Passion Play* deals with similar themes, and self-consciously references the similarities between the medieval drama and those who perform it. Aside from Ruhl's play, in my search for scripts I was unable to come across a single adaptation of a medieval play that was not merely a cutting and rearranging of the text. This was also the case for Columbia University's production of *Devil Scenes* (2003), a compilation of scenes portraying devils from medieval drama.⁶⁹

The exclusion of *The Annunciation* seems not to have doctrinal, but rather practical implications in contemporary productions at York wishing to decrease overall playing times of the productions. Mike Kenney, playwright for the 2012 production at York, said his choice to cut the Visitation and trim the Annunciation was motivated by a desire to focus on 'God made in man's image. I cut a lot on the basis that it wasn't strictly necessary in order to tell that story. As a result I moved sharply from the Annunciation to Joseph's troubles [sic]

⁶⁷ By 'adaption' I refer to works based on medieval drama that have not necessarily altered their content or structure, but their texts. For adaptations of classical Greek drama see Ellen MacLaughlin, *The Greek Plays* (New York: Theater Communications Group, 2008).

⁶⁸ Sarah Ruhl, *Passion Play* (New York: Samuel French, 2010).

⁶⁹ Peter Greenfield (compiler), 'Census of Medieval Drama Productions', in *Research Opportunities in Renaissance and Medieval Drama*, vol 43 (2004): 135.

just because they were more dramatic'.⁷⁰ John Elliott, author of *Playing God: Medieval Mysteries on the Modern Stage*, commented that Purvis's script had the effect of being 'essentially a Passion Play with a Prologue and Epilogue...[that] purged the cycle of some of its more controversial legendary and apocryphal accretions, especially the Mariolatrous matter'.⁷¹ A look at the plays selected for inclusion in Purvis's play-text would give credence to this statement and to the idea that the plays had been edited to a more Protestant taste.⁷²

⁷⁰ Mike Kenney, personal email to the author, 12 April 2012.

⁷¹ John R Elliot Jr, *Playing God: Medieval Mysteries on the Modern Stage* (London: University of Toronto Press, 1989) 78.

⁷² See also footnote 31.

Chapter Three: Acting Style, Movement and Design

In her work on the acting and performance styles of late medieval England, Sharon Aronson-Lehavi divides acting of the period into 'epic' and 'total'.⁷³ The former owes much more to the style of Bertolt Brecht, while the latter adheres more to the ideas of Constantin Stanislavski.⁷⁴ Aronson-Lehavi argues that different texts in the same cycle can call for different acting styles, a theory also put forward by Peter Happe in reference to the cycle plays at York (1988);⁷⁵ at the same time Aronson-Lehavi explains that 'This devotional celebration of their faith and culture creates a unique and total kind of theatrical experience that encompasses every level of its participants' existence, in complex interplay'.⁷⁶ This complex interplay has the capacity to shift acting styles from 'epic' to 'total', due to the devotional experience of those involved in such a play. Richard Schechner commented that 'Theater and ordinary life are a möbius strip, each turning into the other'.⁷⁷ While not a direct comment on the nature of acting styles, Schechner's insight does speak to the ability of theatre, and by association acting styles, to metamorphose from one form to another. Inherent in this argument is the belief that the acting mode is in a state of flux due to a

⁷³ Sharon Aronson-Lehavi, *Street Scenes: Late Medieval Acting and Performance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) 115.

⁷⁴ It is not within the scope of this paper to explain these styles in depth, for a greater discussion of these styles see Constantin Stanislavski, *An Actor Prepares*, Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood (trans) (London: Eyre Methuen, 1980); Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, John Willett (trans) (London: Methuen, 1957).

⁷⁵ Peter Happe, 'Acting in the York Mystery Plays: A Consideration of Modes', in *Medieval English Theatre 10:2* (1988): 112-116.

⁷⁶ Sharon Aronson-Lehavi, *Street Scenes*, 115.

⁷⁷ Richard Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1985) 14.

combination of what the text and what the play means to the performers and producers at any given point in its performance history.

The now archaic-sounding language of *The Annunciation's* Middle English can reinforce Aronson-Lehavi's 'epic' acting, where the story being conveyed focuses of the performance, rather than the actor's ability to make the audience believe that they have merged with and become one with the character.⁷⁸ It seems likely that the following quote by Brecht would be an accurate reflection of medieval acting styles as they relate to performances of religious drama:

The actor does not himself become completely transformed on the stage into the character he is portraying...he produces ...[the character's] remarks as authentically as he can; he puts forward their way of behaving to the best of his abilities and knowledge of men; but he never tries to persuade himself (and thereby others) that this amounts to a complete transformation.⁷⁹

The practice of having more than one person to portray one character in the cycle would further this disconnect and promote an 'epic' acting style, naturally working against the idea of mimesis needed for and inherent in 'total' acting. However, the casual, almost conversational style and structure of *The Annunciation*, and the absence of repetitive, quasi-ritualistic line beginnings (as are prevalent in other York plays) opens the door for 'total' acting.

The York Mystery Plays 2012 (2012) embraced 'total' acting. Movement and delivery of lines was as naturalistic as possible, giving the feeling of watching a play rather than a

⁷⁸ Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre: Developing an Aesthetic*, John Willett (trans) (London: Methuen & Co, 1964) 137.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 137.

religious festival or service. Ferdinand Kingsley, the actor who played God and Jesus in the production, said he could not play God 'as a floating figure in the sky. I've got to play him as a young man who has created something huge, and then has to take responsibility for it'.⁸⁰

Stylised movement was brought into the York 2012 production by the angels, who punctuated their performances with the ritualistic movement of Sufi dervishes throughout the play. Their first entrance was a direct reflection of the dervish ceremony of *sema*, or whirling.⁸¹

My research-based production involved three versions: an original practice (OP) and two contemporary practice editions. For the OP I sought to highlight the almost ritualistic feel of the play, and so incorporated 'epic' acting and directing styles. The position of the actors on stage, the placement of their hands and even the direction of their gaze at times, was influenced by the survey of medieval iconography of the Annunciation and the Visitation.⁸² The actors of the OP version were made familiar with the best examples of these images, in order to familiarise them with the look and posture of the iconographic source. The style was presentational, incorporating direct address to the audience and non-naturalistic movements. A particular convention was the placement of the hands of Mary: palms out and up, usually below the waist when possible, in reflection of images consulted **[image 5]**. I witnessed the pose numerous times, and by numerous characters, in both *The*

⁸⁰ 'York Mystery Plays 2012-Talking to God and Satan', www.yorkmysteryplays-2012.com, accessed 29 August 2012.

⁸¹ Dervish information from: 'Customs of Whirling Dervishes', www.turkeyforyou.com, accessed 29 August 2012. This movement from the play can be seen in the cinematic trailer for the play, available at www.yorkmysteryplays-2012.com/article/cinematic_trailer.php and compared with a video portraying an actual *sema* at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qdi-it43j30.

⁸² See Appendix A: Costume Renderings for *The Annunciation*; Appendix B: Image Surveys of the Annunciation and the Visitation; Appendix C: Images Consulted for the Survey of the Annunciation and the Visitation; Appendix D: Original Practice Costume Justifications.

Lincoln Mysteries (2012) and *The York Mystery Plays 2012* (2012). At times the pose seemed natural, at others it appeared to be a generic position for the actor to retreat to in order to avoid feeling awkward about the placement of their hands. This position clearly had a meaning for the actors who used it, especially when used without instruction by the director; there seems to be an ingrained semiotic association between this position and the nature of religious imagery.⁸³

My contemporary version of *The Annunciation* radically changed after it was first shown to an audience and feedback was collected. Initially, I attempted to modernise the play too much, adding more movement than was necessary in order to fill what I thought of at the time as awkward gaps. The second version reverted to a simpler, more reverent style. Just as in the OP version, Mary was found kneeling at prayer with a book, while Gabriel approached Mary from stage right. Each of these decisions was taken from visual tropes prevalent in medieval manuscripts that are hard for me to deny in performance, even when not attempting OP.⁸⁴ This is the same position used by Gregory Doran in *The York Millennium Mysteries* (2000) [image 6]. *The York Mystery Plays 2012* (2012) contrasted to this observance of medieval imagery; directors Paul Burbridge and Damian Cruden, chose to eschew the traditional symbolism of movement and placement, instead placing Mary on a chair as Gabriel descended the stairs and approached from stage left. While this reflects the medieval spatial ideas of the supernatural descending from the *loca* into the natural world

⁸³ I cannot speak with certainty as to when the position was adopted as directed by the director, and when it was chosen by the actor, but while watching the performance it seemed clear that not all the instance when this position was used were guided by the director.

⁸⁴ See Appendix C: Images Consulted for the Survey of the Annunciation and the Visitation

of the *platea*, it can also be seen as reinforcing and reproducing the spatial concept of good coming from the left of the figure in question.⁸⁵

Burbridge and Cruden's production broke with traditional imagery in various ways. To an audience not expecting medieval imagery, absolutely nothing was lost.

The majority of the surviving play-texts of medieval English drama lack nearly all information pertaining to the visual aesthetic of medieval theatre. The few records that give the contemporary researcher any aesthetic clues are the expense accounts that have been preserved along with the few manuscripts (MS) illustrating stage layouts.⁸⁶ On the whole the accounts contain massive gaps, and the only alternative to these gaps is to make a study of medieval iconography examining the relevant characters and Biblical episodes to help to inform the researcher and designer.

No accounts from medieval York give clues as to the nature of costume and scenic design for *The Annunciation*.⁸⁷ Furthermore, the text also provides no clues as to the design aspects of the play, with no scenic or costume implements explicitly mentioned, leaving the designer with a seeming dearth of primary material on which to base their work. However, accounts exist from other cities in relation to contemporaneous productions. This information provides a precedent, giving a possible skeleton onto which one can mould and form a design. An undated Coventry Drapers' guild account records payment for four pairs

⁸⁵ Jerome Bush, 'The Resources of *Locus* and *Platea* Staging: The Digby *Mary Magdalene*', in *Studies in Philology* 86.2 (1989): 140.

⁸⁶ The most famous of these manuscripts is the stage plan for the Cornish play *The Castle of Perseverance* (late fifteenth-century). See Janette Dillon, *The Cambridge Introduction to Early English Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 9, for an illustration.

⁸⁷ It must also be noted that no accounts from the Guild of Spicers are extant, and they are only mentioned in the accounts and records of other organizations.

of new, painted angel wings.⁸⁸ When this account is combined with the account of 1545 from the Corpus Christi Guild listing ‘a new Coit & a peir of hoes for gabriel’, a general idea of how Gabriel may have been costumed comes together: a man wearing a coat, hose and painted wings.⁸⁹ A later account, from 1577, inserts ‘svrplisses [surplices]’ into this inventory, adding another layer of costuming to the visual of Gabriel.⁹⁰

While these costumes and properties help narrow the research for an original practice (OP) production, they also raise many questions. As an example of this, I will look at the last entry, calling for the angels to wear surplices. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines a surplice as ‘A loose vestment of white linen having wide sleeves and, in its amplest form, reaching to the feet [...]’.⁹¹ The definition immediately points out both the colour and the material of the surplice, but the variable length of the garment and the lack of any mention of decoration also draw one’s attention.

Addis and Arnold’s *A Catholic Dictionary* states that by the mid-fifteenth-century the length of the surplice was to be ‘ultra medias tibias [beyond the knee]’, and no mention is made of a shorter version until the mid-eighteenth-century.⁹² Addis and Arnold maintain that the lace, now widely present on many surplices, was not commonly seen until the mid-

⁸⁸ REED: Coventry, 468.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 173.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 283. While the dates given above reflect the early-modern period, and not the medieval period, the wording of the accounts suggests a tradition stretching back an unknown amount of years. Many of the items are listed as being mended, or as new, suggesting their use to replace items used previously, such as the angel wings.

⁹¹ ‘Surplice (a)’, *Oxford English Dictionary* (online), accessed 28 August 2012.

⁹² William E Addis and Thomas Arnold, *A Catholic Dictionary Containing Some Accounts of the Doctrine, Discipline, Rites, Ceremonies, Councils, and Religious Orders of the Catholic Church* (London: Routedledge & Kegan Paul, 1960) 782.

seventeenth-century.⁹³ Given this information, a simple, knee length surplice, devoid of lace, and made of white linen can be assumed to be the most accurate version of the surplice as it was worn for the production of religious theatre in medieval and early modern Coventry. Of course there are far too many variables present here to speak with complete authority on the exact look of the surplice, but research points to the simple version mentioned above.

It has become common to draw inspiration from medieval iconography in order to inform costume and scenic design for medieval drama, because these works of art are the only pictorial accounts that exist and thus show the ways in which medieval European people viewed the physical world of the Bible. As a result, this methodology must remain the most accurate mode of research for OP design. This method is given credence by an account from a Russian Bishop who witnessed a play of the Annunciation in Florence in 1439, who describes the angel in the play as appearing 'exactly as celestial angels are to be seen in paintings'.⁹⁴ This method of research has also been used in the contemporary age since at least 1901, when William Poel's landmark production of *Everyman* drew its inspiration from works by Hans Holbein.⁹⁵ Poel's production can be seen as the genesis of all contemporary productions of medieval English drama, since there is no record of such a play since the seventeenth-century.

In order to inform my own designs for my production of *The Annunciation I* conducted a survey of more than forty images of both the Annunciation and Visitation from

⁹³ Ibid, 782.

⁹⁴ Barbara D Palmer, 'Staging the Virgin's Body: Spectacular Effects of Annunciation and Assumption', in *The Dramatic Tradition of the Middle Ages*, Clifford Davidson (ed) (New York: AMS Press, 2005) 168.

⁹⁵ Douglas Bruster and Eric Rasmussen (eds), *Everyman and Mankind* (London: Methuen Drama, 2009) 69. For information related to this historically important production and Poel's inspiration for choosing the play see also Robert Speaight, *William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival* (London: Heinemann, 1954).

medieval England and France.⁹⁶ The samples came mostly from Books of Hours, church wall paintings and alabaster carvings, representing both private, devotional icons as well as more public representations of the two biblical episodes.⁹⁷

Costume design decisions for my OP version of *The Annunciation* were not based solely on what design elements were the most prevalent in the survey of images; neither were they based solely on the extant records available in the Records of Early English Drama (REED).⁹⁸ Instead, choices were made based on what was the most commonly present element in these images and what might work best for that design onstage. For instance, in the images of the Annunciation surveyed, sixteen of the twenty images show Mary with a halo. Given this information it can accurately be stated that visual portrayals of Mary in the Annunciation commonly included this object. However, the indexes for REED do not refer to a halo as a prop or costume piece for any of the cities for which extant cycle dramas survive.⁹⁹ An alternative, theatrical version of the halo may have been a crown or diadem, which is mentioned throughout the accounts for Chester and Coventry, and therefore would be a viable option for Mary's costume.

After I completed the survey of images, and the most common garments and colours were clear, works on historical costuming were consulted to better inform the look and

⁹⁶ This method was also used to make decisions on the placement of actors in relations to one another, and to study stylized movements and placement of hands and direction of gaze. See chapter four.

⁹⁷ See Appendix A with a list of the images used.

⁹⁸ Due to constraints of space, a detailed account of my costume designs for *The Annunciation* will not be discussed in this chapter; rather, this can be found in Appendix D: Original Practice Costume Justifications, while the costume renders are in Appendix A: Costume Renderings for *The Annunciation*.

⁹⁹ Until 1664, The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) does not record the word 'halo' in a religious sense. This accounts for the absence of the word in English in medieval records. 'Halo (2),' Oxford English Dictionary (online), www.oed.com, accessed 31 August 2012.

flow of garments. The images surveyed tend to offer little in the way of detail of the garments, so once the general clothing item was decided upon, the more intricate nuances of the garment were informed by contemporary costume scholarship.¹⁰⁰

Colour choices were made as informed, best guesses due to the nature of the pigment used in the images. Many images are taken from churches that were whitewashed during the Reformation, and therefore may be badly damaged. Images taken from Books of Hours may also have faded, or their pigments turned from their original, intended colour over time. Stained glass too may not be the best indicator of actual colour, as creating carefully controlled, detailed shades in glass was not possible at the time. As a result, the colours can only be estimated and never laid down with certainty, especially when shades within a colour are concerned. So while exact colour matching is difficult, if not impossible, it is possible to ascertain the general colour of the costumes, based on artistic trends.

The issue concerning the portrayal of two pregnant women onstage in *The Annunciation* becomes slightly more problematic once one realizes that many images of the Annunciation do not show Mary as pregnant, while images of the Visitation nearly always show Elizabeth as pregnant, and very often show a pregnant Mary as well. This transition creates the issue of whether or not, and how, to make Mary become visibly pregnant between Gabriel's exit (the most logical place for the event) and her arrival at the house of Elizabeth. In both *The York Mystery Plays 2012* (2012) and *The Lincoln Mystery Plays* (2012), actors simply helped Mary tie on an apron that contained a pregnancy belly [image 7]. This stage-business created an awkward moment, stalling the action as the actors fumbled with

¹⁰⁰ In particular, Nancy Bradfield's *Historical Costumes of England from the Eleventh to the Twentieth Century* and John Peacock's *Costume: 1066 to the Present* proved to be of most help. Nancy Bradfield, *Historical Costumes of England from the Eleventh to the Twentieth Century*, third edition (London: George G Harrap & Co, 1970); John Peacock, *Costumes: 1066 to the Present*, second edition (London: Thames and Hudson, 2006).

the device, as no logical place exists within the text to do this. My decision was not to show Mary as pregnant, and rather to show Elizabeth as pregnant.¹⁰¹ In her work discussing stage effects in various versions of *The Annunciation* and *The Assumption*, 'Staging the Virgin's Body: Spectacular Effects of Annunciation and Assumption', Barbara D Palmer does not mention a moment in any of the play-texts she has analysed as seeming to support the idea of a 'spectacular effect' related to the actual physical conception of Jesus in Mary's womb.¹⁰² It appears that no special miraculous conception device was or would be needed for *The Annunciation* in production.¹⁰³

Scenic design choices for medieval English drama can be more difficult for contemporary designers wishing to be inspired by OP. Many of the surviving medieval play-texts, including the entirety of the York cycle, are for pageant wagons, a mode of presentation and performance not common in contemporary, western theatre outside of research-inspired, OP productions.¹⁰⁴ A discussion surrounding the contents and style of

¹⁰¹ There is also textual evidence that this occurred in the productions. If Mary was to arrive at Elizabeth's house visibly pregnant, then Elizabeth's confirmation of Gabriel's words would be merely stating the obvious, and have no, or very little, miraculous effect; Mary's words of surprised joy would be awkward and seemingly unmotivated.

¹⁰² Barbara D Palmer, 'Staging the Virgin's Body', 155-172. Palmer notes that previous editors have mentioned the medieval practice of portraying the conception as a light through a window, but no editor seems to suggest that such a visual effect would be apt for the performance of the play-texts.

¹⁰³ It is possible that since *The Annunciation* was a separate play using a separate cast from *Joseph's Troubles About Mary* and *The Nativity* (in which the actual birth of Jesus is enacted) that there was no reason to make the actor playing Mary pregnant in *The Annunciation*. Contemporary productions that often move from conception to birth have a practical reason to make Mary appear pregnant as soon as possible, as in the subsequent scene (*Joseph's Troubles About Mary*) Joseph clearly sees that Mary is pregnant when he says 'Thy wombe is waxen grete, thynke me'. Richard Beadle (ed), *The York Plays* (London: Edward Arnold, 1982) 119.

¹⁰⁴ It is beyond the scope of this paper to explain the intricacies of pageant wagon drama. For a general overview of the practice as it pertains to the city of York see Richard Beadle, 'The York Cycle,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, second edition, Richard Beadle (ed) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 99-124. For examples of research-inspired of pageant wagon productions see Margaret Rogerson (ed), 'The York Wagons: Construction, Dressing and Performance,' in *The York Mystery Plays: Performance in the City* (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2011) 125-134.

presentation of English pageant wagons is the subject of much study and scholarship, and attempting to offer a reasonable discussion here would be superficial enough as to make the topic near pointless. I will look at the scenic furniture of *The Annunciation*, a topic that includes two, symbolically imperative items: a lily and a prieu-dieu. Images of the Annunciation commonly contain these symbols of the divine trinity and the piety of Mary [image 8].

The lily is a traditional symbol of motherhood, purity and resurrection. During the middle ages the lily was closely associated with Mary where it was 'almost invariably pictured in the subject of the Annunciation placed in a vase standing by [Mary]'.¹⁰⁵ *The Annunciation* uses imagery of the lily when Mary is first introduced by Doctor, who says 'pis lady is to pe lilly lyke -/ðat is bycause of hir clene liffe,/For in pis worlde was never slyke/One to be mayden, modir, and wyffe'.¹⁰⁶ Of the eighteen images consulted for the survey, twelve contain a lily with three blooms.¹⁰⁷ The symbolic significance of a white, three-bloomed lily points at once to the purity and motherhood of Mary while also reinforcing the Trinitarian doctrine of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Doctor's division of Mary into the Marian trinity of 'mayden, modir, and wyffe' further connects her to the white, three-blossomed lily. The emblematic quality of resurrection points not only to the future resurrection of Jesus but also the resurrection of God on Earth.

¹⁰⁵ Ernst and Johanna Lehner, *Folklore and Symbolism of Flowers, Plants and Trees: All Times and Countries, Legendary Stories and Secret Meanings, Over 200 Rare and Unusual Floral Designs and Illustrations* (New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1960) 33.

¹⁰⁶ Richard Beadle (ed), *The York Plays*, 113.

¹⁰⁷ While forty images were used for the survey, only eighteen were useful for determining scenic elements, do to either deteriorated backgrounds or the absence of scenic elements.

The second piece of scenic furniture that is too common in images of the Annunciation to ignore is the prieu-dieu on which Mary is commonly positioned.¹⁰⁸ Although a clear anachronism for a first-century Jewish woman, the prieu-dieu is an important devotional property, advertising Mary's piety and obedience to God, a key theme in *The Annunciation*. Commonly involved in this scene is a book, most likely a book of prayers, which Mary holds while at the prieu-dieu. While a devotional property, it is also an anachronism; it provides insight into the back-story of Mary, who is commonly pictured as a child, being taught how to read by her mother, Saint Ann.¹⁰⁹

The common visual tropes of the prieu-dieu and the lily are frequent enough in iconography of the period to have relevance to scenic design choices of contemporary productions. To a certain extent, these tropes, though not directly traceable to medieval theatrical performance, should supersede what the extant accounts do not say. No accounts from York record payment by the Spicers for a lily, but such records do regularly exist in Coventry.¹¹⁰ It would seem strange to have such a common visual trope as Mary kneeling at the prieu-dieu excluded from a performance of the event, but there is no evidence in the records that a prieu-dieu or some other similar device was involved in the performance of the scene at York. While no evidence places Mary at a prieu-dieu, no evidence contradicts this image either. Perhaps the reason no account survives is that the necessary items were

¹⁰⁸ The prieu-dieu takes many forms in the images consulted, but usually consist of a place before which Mary kneels in prayer or contemplation.

¹⁰⁹ Religious historian Eamon Duffy points to the prevalence of female owners of Books of Hours in the medieval world. This can indicate a meta-theatrical device, whereby the image of Mary at prayer is reflected in the actual position of the female devotee while daily reading the prayers from the book, possibly kneeling at a prieu-dieu. See Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and Their Prayers 1240-1570* (London: Yale University Press, 2006).

¹¹⁰ REED: Coventry, 162, 173.

borrowed from a guild member and were therefore not mentioned in the expense accounts of the Spicers. To go against this visual tradition seems out of place and inconsistent with extant representations if one is trying for authenticity.

For *The York Millennium Mysteries* (2000) designer Robert Jones used both the lily and prieu-dieu in *The Annunciation*, showing clear knowledge of medieval iconography, and in so doing brought the play, visually, back to its medieval roots.¹¹¹ In contrast to the 2000 production, *The York Mystery Plays 2012* (2012) eschewed both lily and prieu-dieu, as neither would have fit with designers Sean Cavanagh and Anna Gooch's 1950s English setting for the production.¹¹² The 2000 production sought to connect the play to York's history by incorporating contemporary aesthetics into medieval design conventions, as evidenced in the photos available through the online archive. Mike Kenney's 2012 script connected the play to the contemporary moment, with the designers dressing all characters, except the angels, in clothing immediately recognizable as mid-twentieth-century western European [**image 8**], and disregarding the archaic, and arguably Catholic, symbolism of the lily and prieu-dieu.¹¹³ Both productions' choices were valid and each helped to accomplish the goal of their respective productions.

¹¹¹ 'Programmes/Posters: Programme of the 2000 Mystery Plays Programme', archive reference: YMP/B/18/1, from 'York Mystery Plays Archive,' www.yorkmysteryplays.org, accessed 29 August 2012; 'Photograph: The Annunciation. Gabriel (Tom Davey) visits Mary (Frances Marshal)', archive reference: YMP/A/12/2/13, from 'York Mystery Plays', www.yorkmysteryplays.org, accessed 3 May 2012.

¹¹² 'York Mystery Plays 2012', souvenir program (2012) 9, 20. While the general setting was 1950s, there were moments obviously influenced by World War Two, particularly in the Old Testament plays, where the war was used as a symbol for a godless world, devoid of grace and crying out for help. One moment, not easily assigned to any of the mystery plays, was eerily similar to Francisco de Goya's painting 'Tres de mayo' (1814), connecting the play even farther back into the past.

¹¹³ Interestingly, the angels were dressed as Sufi dervishes (though in brightly coloured robes, rather than the traditional white), complete with conical hats, trousers, cloaks and robes. The connection continued with the angels performing a dervish dance, *sema*, representing the creation of the world and the Garden of Eden, complete with appropriate hand and foot gesture and placement, as well as the traditional bow to the master

Conclusion

This dissertation has investigated the problems faced by modern productions of medieval English theatre when they attempt to utilise original practice (OP) techniques, and to what extent some productions will use these conventions, focusing on *The Annunciation* from the York cycle. Chapter One provided the historical framework necessary for the study of *The Annunciation*, containing a strong foundational research centred on performances from the medieval, early-modern and contemporary periods. Chapter Two explored issues concerning the use of original pronunciation in addition to editorial considerations for *The Annunciation* for various productions. Chapter Three drew on a study of medieval visual culture in order to explore acting, movement and design techniques, and how those can be applied to contemporary productions.

The length of this dissertation naturally meant that a great deal of information was to be left unexplored. The staging of specifically non-cycle drama, OP techniques as they relate to pageant wagon performance and the influence of religious devotion on attitudes towards performance remain important topics to be explored. What has been shown is that not only can contemporary theatre-maker use historical and art-historical records to inform an attempted recreation of medieval performance practices, but also that such influences are present throughout many productions even when overtly contemporary conventions are used

(in this case, God). Dervish information from: 'Customs of Whirling Dervishes', from www.turkeyforyou.com, accessed 29 August 2012.

Appendix A: Costume Renderings for *The Annunciation*

Note: All costume renderings are the work of the author, Jason Burg. For descriptions and justifications of the choices made, as well as the sources used for inspiration see Appendix B: Image Surveys of the Annunciation and the Visitation, Appendix C: Images Consulted for the Survey of the Annunciation and the Visitation and Appendix D: Original Practice Costume Justifications.

MARY
FROM
"THE YORK
ANNUNCIATION"



Costume rendering for Mary from York's *The Annunciation*.

GABRIEL
FROM
"THE YORK
ANNUNCIATION



Costume rendering for Gabriel from York's *The Annunciation*.

ELIZABETH
FROM
"THE YORK
ANNUNCIATION"



Costume rendering for Elizabeth from York's *The Annunciation*.

Appendix B: Images Surveys of the Annunciation and the Visitation

Contents:

Mary in Images of the Annunciation

Gabriel in Images of the Annunciation

Elizabeth in Images of the Visitation

Scenic Elements in Images of the Annunciation

Scenic Elements in Images of the Visitation

Note: The placement of the characters in the images/scenes is described using basic stage directions (eg SR [stage right], DS [down stage], OS [off stage], et cetera). Basic costume terminology comes from John Peacock, *Costumes: 1066 to the Present*. Second edition. (London: Thames and Hudson, 2006).

Mary in Images of The Annunciation

Image	Date	Position in Scene	Posture/ Stance	Clothing Pieces	Clothing Colour	Head	Props	Gaze	Other
Talbot Hours		DR	Seated; arms crossed in front of chest, right over left	Red/orange chemise; Blue cloak with white fur trim and black streaks	Red/orange; blue	Blonde hair; hair down; golden halo	Book open on left (US) knee	At floor in front of Gabriel	Illuminated manuscript
Beaufort/ Beauchamp Hours		SL	Kneeling facing onstage but head turned back to Gabriel	Blue robe/cloak (?)	Blue	Blonde; cloak has attached hood that covers head	Open book on table before her	At floor in front of Gabriel	Illuminated manuscript
V&A #1	Late 14 th C	SL	Seated facing forward, but head turned to SR and up toward Gabriel; right hand is raised, bent	Flowing robe; only hands and face exposed		Hood from cloak covers head; halo	Book held in left hand is partially open	Unsure; either at Gabriel or just below him	Alabaster panel

			Gabriel					
V&A #2	Late 15 th C	SL (?)	Kneeling facing SL; head turned back SR; hands up as if in prayer, but held apart.	Robe; cloak wraps around in front of body and goes over right shoulder		Hair down; crown	Book	Partial alabaster showing only Mary
V&A #4	Late 15 th C	SL	Kneeling facing SL; head turned back SR; hands up as if in prayer, but held apart	Robe; hard to tell as image is very small		Uncovered	Book (?)	Alabaster panel showing the Annunciatio- -n in the top third with Christ supported by God in the bottom two thirds.
V&A #5	Late 15 th C	SL	Kneeling facing SL; head turned back SR; hands up as if in prayer, but held apart.	Robe/bodice dress with long sleeves		Hair down; elaborate halo	Book	Gabriel Alabaster panel; very elaborate; shows God the Father with a dove coming out of his mouth as the holy

								Spirit in UR	
V&A #6	Late 15 th C	SL	Kneeling facing SL; head turned back SR; hands up as if in prayer, but held apart.	Loose robe; over coat/cloak opened at the front		Hair down; crown	Book	Gabriel	Alabaster Panel. Very similar to V&A #5
V&A #7	Late 14 th C	SL	Seated facing out; upper body and head turned SR towards a flying Gabriel; right arm bent at elbow with hand pointing towards Gabriel	Long robe; over cloak with hood		Head covered by hood	Book	Gabriel	Alabaster panel
V&A #8	1380- 1390	SL	Seated; facing DR with head raised to Gabriel; Right arm is bent at elbow; the	Robe; flowing cloak/over coat		Head covered by hood attached to cloak; remains of a red painted	Book	Gabriel	Alabaster Panel

			right hand is missing but may have been bent in his direction as in other panels with a similar arm position			halo			
V&A #9	1400-1430	SL	Kneeling; body facing offstage; torso and (presumably) head facing SR	Dress synched at the waist with long sleeves and high neck	Remains of what looks to be god trim on dress	NA	Book (?)	NA	Alabaster panel; top portion starting at Mary's neck is missing
V&A #10	C 1400	SL	Kneeling facing offstage; head and torso turned SR towards Gabriel; hands held up, elbows bent and palms toward the sky	Dress with very long sleeves that trail on the ground; belt	Red and gold	Hair down; red and gold halo	Book	Above Gabriel	Hinged wooden case; the Annunciation takes up the lower half of the central panel

Chalgrove, Oxfordshire	Early 14 th C (?)	SL	Standing, facing SR towards Gabriel; right hand may be raised towards Gabriel, but it is unclear	Robe; cloak	White (?) robe and blue (green?) cloak, opened near the bottom	Blonde hair down; red (?) halo	Book in left hand	Down, perhaps at Gabriel's feet	Paintings in a chancel in two lancet niches.
South Newington	C 1330	SL	Standing; facing Gabriel on SR; right hand raised in greeting	White robe; red cloak	White; red	Too damaged to tell	Book in left hand	Too damaged to tell	Badly scratch wall painting
Gisleham, Suffolk	Late 14 th /Early 15 th C	Vertically below	Standing; arms bent at the elbow and indicating SL	Robe; cloak clasped at neck	Too difficult to tell	Blonde hair down; crown of white and red/blue flowers		Away from Gabriel	Wall painting
Barnby, Suffolk	C 14 th C (?)	SL	Kneeling facing offstage, hard turned back towards Gabriel SR	Too difficult to tell	Too difficult to tell	Halo, possibly outlined with painted pearls at one point	Book	Too difficult to tell	Wall painting

Slapton, Northamptonshir -e	14 th or 15 th C	SL	Standing; facing away from Gabriel with hand raised	Robe; other too difficult to tell	Too difficult to tell	Hair covered (?); halo		Away from Gabriel	Wall Painting
Hampton Court (Herefordshire)	15 th C	SL	Kneeling facing offstage, hands up, palms facing out	Robe/tunic; over cloak with no sleeves, clasped golden and pearl(?) clasp	Blue robe; red cloak	Blonde hair; halo; thin banded crown; almost looks like a padded crown	Book	Off stage, away from Gabriel	Strained Glass Window
Syracuse MS 7 (r)	Late 15 th C	DL	Kneeling at the foot of her bed; holding a book; body faces offstage, but head is turned front	Robe/dress with a high v- neck and synched/belte -d below breasts; large, flowing cloak that is open at the front and not clasped	Royal blue robe and cloak, with thin trimming in gold on edges of cloak and belt/sync h of robe/ dress	Dark blonde hair is worn down; thin, golden halo		Looks forward, not at Gabriel	Book of Hours
Syracuse MS 3 (f.25r)	Late 15 th C	SR	Kneeling on both knees; hands held together in	Dress with wide collar; cloak around shoulders is	Wine robe; blue cloak with gold	Strawberr -y blonde; thin halo	Book	Looks away from Gabriel,	Book of Hours

front of chest as if in prayer open and unclasped, and could be mistaken for a large blanket, as no obvious silhouette is given highlights and shadowing at floor in front of her

Conclusions:

Position in Scene	Posture/Stance	Clothing Pieces	Clothing Colours	Head	Props
SL: 16	Kneeling: 11	Robe: 15 ¹¹⁴	Robe/Dress:	Blonde: 7	Book: 16
SR: 2	Seated: 4	Dress: 3	-Red: 2		
	Standing: 4		-Blue: 3	Hair worn up: 8	
		Cloak: 13	-Gold: 2 ¹¹⁵		
	Hands:		-White: 1	Halo: 9	
	Extended in greeting: 9		-Wine: 1		

¹¹⁴ The distinction between robe and dress is my own. I have chosen to distinguish dresses from robes if they meet three criteria: (1) the garment must have obvious sleeves, (2) the garment must be synched/belted at the waist/hips and (3) the garment must have a collar that exposes the clavicle. This is my own system for distinguishing type, and may not match other designers' ideas and nomenclature.

¹¹⁵ The gold mentioned here was used on the trim of the robes/dresses and cloaks, and was not the main color of the piece.

Prayer: 7

Crown: 3

Holding a book: 1

Cloak:

-Blue: 5

Hood up: 5

-Red: 2

-Gold: 3

Flowers worn in
hair: 1

Gabriel in Images of The Annunciation

Image	Date	Position in scene	Posture/ Stance	Clothing Pieces	Clothing Colour	Head	Wings	Other
Talbot Hours		SL	Kneeling on Left knee; hands	White robe; red	White; red (?)	Halo	Sharply pointed;	Illuminated manuscript

			extended to Mary	(?) over coat/cloak with arms, synched at the waist; colour or darker colour			white with blue (?) ends	
Beaufort/ Beauchamp Hours		SR	Kneeling on right knee; looking up at Mary	robe	Both robe and cloak are the same colour	Golden Halo; blonde hair	Pointed; golden outside with red inside (?)	Illuminated manuscript
V&A #1	Late 14 th C	UR	Standing on a cloud	Robe possibly more but very difficult to tell		Either a crown or his hair is done up, in tight curls	Harp shaped	Alabaster panel
V&A #3	Late 15 th C	SL (presumed)	Standing; possibly kneeling; right hand extended	Robe (?); cloak with hood worn down		Small, simple crown (?)	Either lost or never present	Alabaster panel; only Gabriela and the pot of lilies is still present
V&A #4	Late 15 th C	SR	Kneeling; hands held together and down	Robe (?); cloak with hood worn down		Possibly a halo	Too difficult to tell	Alabaster panel showing the Annunciation in the top

V&A #5	Late 15 th C	SR	Kneeling on left knee; right hand held up in greeting, the other holds a scroll	High necked robe; barefoot	Only a small amount of paint survives, but there may have been red on Gabriel's clothing	Small crown	Pointed and high (very difficult to tell).	third with Christ supported by God in the bottom two thirds. Alabaster panel; very elaborate; shows God the Father with a dove coming out of his mouth as the Holy Spirit in UR
V&A #6	Late 15 th C	SR	Standing; right hands points to Mary; he is about one half the size of Mary	High necked robe; barefoot		Crown with point in front	Narrow and tall	Alabaster panel; very elaborate; shows God the Father with a dove coming out of his mouth as the Holy Spirit in UR
V&A #7	Late 14 th C	UR	Standing on a cloud; bent over to look at Mary below; right	Long robe; barefoot		Hair is short	Very narrow; nearly same	Alabaster panel

			hand points to her; Mary is roughly twice his size					height as body	
V&A #8	1380-1390	UR	Standing on a cloud; right hand pointing to Mary; facing Mary; Mary is roughly twice the size of Gabriel	Robe; barefoot			Short hair; possible a crown/circlet	Narrow; nearly as long as the body; arched	Alabaster panel; very similar to V&A #7
V&A #10	C 1400	SR	Kneeling, or has left foot placed higher than right, giving that appearance; arms extended toward Mary	Robe; cloak possibly worn in toga style	Gold (?)			Tall; graceful concave arch frames the silhouette of Gabriel's head	Hinged wooden case; the Annunciation takes up the lower half of the central panel
Chalgrove, Oxfordshire	Early 14 th C	SR	Standing; facing SL; left hand raised; palm towards Mary (?)	Too difficult to distinguish	Red		Halo	Too difficult to distinguish	Paintings in a chancel in two lancet niches.
South Newington	C 1330	SR	Facing Mary SL	White robe; green cloak that covers to	White; green		Possibly blonde hair; red halo	Red green and yellow	Badly scratch wall painting

				the back of the knees and the top of the thighs				
Gisleham, Suffolk	Late 14 th / Early 15 th C	Vertically above Mary	Standing (though he is cut off at the waist by clouds); holding a broad scroll	Cloak with clasped collar; belt	Too difficult to tell original colour with certainty	Medium long blonde hair, crown; halo	Colour too difficult to tell; sharply pointed	Wall painting
Barnby, Suffolk	C. 14 th C (?)	SR	Standing/flying/ hovering	Too difficult to tell	Too difficult to tell	Blonde hair; small dark halo	Very wide, mimic birds wings more than others	Wall painting
Slapton, Northamptonshire	14 th or 15 th C (?)	SR	Standing; facing Mary, hands stretched toward her	Robe; cloak closed in the middle	Too difficult to tell	Halo (?)	Wide with only small attaching point to his back	Wall painting
Hampton Court (Herefordshire)	15 th C	SR of Mary	Kneeling on right knee; right hand raised in sign of the trinity	Robe worn over left shoulder	Blue robe		No visible wings, but his body is covered in feathers, from neck	Stained glass window

Syracuse MS 7 (r)	Late 15 th C	UR	Gabriel appears to be floating in a kneeling position; in his left hand he holds a thin scepter/wand; right hand points to a dove (the Holy Spirit) above Mary	Billowing robe; toga style cloak worn over left arm	White robe; red cloak	Dark blonde/light brown hair; thin, golden halo	Wings are very bird like, white with golden tips to ankles	Book of Hours
Syracuse MS 3 (f.25r)	Late 15 th C	SL	Kneeling on right knee; right hand points to a dove (the Holy Spirit) above his head; left hand is placed on knee, elbow bent	Robe; over tunic	White robe; golden yellow over tunic with possible embroidery in red; shadows done in red as well	Strawberry blonde hair	Dark blue wings	Book of Hours

Conclusions:

Position in Scene	Posture/Stance	Clothing Pieces	Clothing Colours	Head	Wings	Props
SR: 14	Kneeling: 7	Robe: 18	Robe:	Halo: 8	Colour:	Wand: 1

SL: 3	Standing: 5	Over Tunic: 1	-Red: 2	Blonde hair: 6	-White: 2
Vertically above: 1	Flying: 6 (including standing and/or kneeling on a cloud)	Cloak: 12	-White: 3 -Blue: 1	Crown: 4	-Blue: 1 -Gold: 2
	Arms extended: 7	In four (all alabasters) Gabriel is barefoot. Elizabeth and Mary are not barefoot in any of the images studied	Cloak: -Red: 3 -Green: 1	Long hair: 1	-Red: 2 -Green: 1 -Yellow: 1
	Hands together: 1			Short hair: 3	
	Hand making the sign of the Trinity: 1				One pair was white with blue tips; one was gold with red tips and one was white with gold tips
					Shape: -Harp: 1 -Pointed/Narrow: 4 -Tall: 4 -Bird: 2

Elizabeth in Images of The Visitation

Image	Date	Position in Scene	Posture/ Stance	Stomach	Clothing Pieces	Clothing Colour	Head	Props	Other
Magnificat	?	SL	Standing; her right hand holds Mary's left; her left hand points to a book	Appears pregnant	Robe; cloak is open in the front and not clasped at the neck	Red robe; gold/yellow/ brown cloak	White wimple; outline of halo	Book on what appears to be railing	Book of Hours
Lauds	Mid 14 th C	SL	Standing; left hand points to Mary, perhaps indicating her stomach	Does not appear pregnant	Cloak; possible robe under cloak	Cream (?)	White wimple; gold halo		Book of Hours
V&A #11	15 th C.	SL	Standing; right hand is on Mary's stomach; left hand is on her heart (?)	Appears pregnant	Robe synched at natural waist; cloak open in the front, not clasped at the neck	Trace of red on cloak	Wimple		Alabaster panel

Hours of Rene of Anjou		SR	Kneeling on left knee; left hand on Mary's shoulder; right hand holds Mary's right wrist	Too difficult to tell	Robe; large sleeveless cloak covers the left arms but not the right	Yellow/orange robe; red cloak	White wimple; gold halo	Book of Hours
Salisbury, Wiltshire	15 th C	SL	Standing; left hand placed on Mary's stomach; right hand raised in greeting (?)	Appears pregnant	Robe; cloak thrown over shoulder	Red (?) robe; white (?) cloak	Wimple, red/orange (?) halo	Wall painting; the picture is framed, and outside the frame is a repeating pattern of a potted lily with three blooms
Faversham, Kent	14 th C (?)	SR	Standing; right arm reaches across Mary and grabs her right shoulder; kisses Mary on the cheek	Too difficult to tell	Robe; cloak	Too difficult to tell, though the cloak is clearly darker than the robe	Wimple with exposed neck	Very badly damaged wall painting

Ashampstead, Berkshire	13 th C	SR	Standing; right hand is on Mary's face; kissing Mary (cheek?)	Too difficult to tell	Robe; cloak (?)	Dark red (?)	Halo (?)	Wall painting; it is not certain who is Mary and who is Elizabeth in this painting, the figure on the SR side is clearly kissing the cheek of the other. As this is seen in other representations of the Visitation, and Elizabeth is the one giving the kiss in all of those, it can be assumed that Elizabeth is the figure on the SR side
St Peter Mancroft	15 th C	SL	Standing; left hand on her stomach, right hand raised in greeting to	Appears pregnant	Robe; cloak open at the front, no clasp at the neck	White robe; red cloak	Halo	Strained Glass Window

			Mary					
C 1460 Hours	C 1460	SL	Standing; left hand on her stomach; right hand on Mary's stomach	Appears pregnant	Robe; cloak has been thrown off and is laying behind her feet	Green robe; red (?) cloak	Golden halo; white wimple	Book of Hours
Sts Peter and Paul	15 th C	SL	Standing; left hand on stomach; right hand extended to Mary	Appears pregnant	Robe; hooded cloak; cloak is pulled up around her body, exposing only her stomach	White robe; dark red cloak (possibly with hints of black)	Appears to be a white wimple under the cloak hood; halo	Stained Glass Window
NYPL 425961	15 th C	SR	Elizabeth is kneeling with her head near Mary's stomach; both hands on Mary's stomach	Too difficult to tell	Robe; cloak opened at the front, possibly clasped at the neck	Blue robe; red (?) cloak	White wimple	Book of Hours
NYPL 427144	C 1450	SL	Standing, though possibly either	Too difficult to tell	Robe; blanket like cloak that does not clasp and appears to	Red/pink (?) robe; deeper red cloak with	Wimple; golden halo	Book of Hours

			curtseying or slightly hunched over; right hand on Mary's left arm reaching in greeting (?)		be only draped over her shoulders	green lining		
NYPL 427207	C 1500	SL	Standing; hands together as if in prayer, held in front of chest	Too difficult to tell	Robe; over tunic that is slit to the armpits and comes down just over the elbow	Red robe with gold shadow and highlights; blue tunic with gold shadowing and highlights; pale yellow wimple	Wimple is pale yellow and massive, covering the shoulders as well	Book of Hours
NYPL 425916	C 1450	SL	Standing; left hand on her stomach; right hand extended, almost touching Mary's stomach	Too difficult to tell	Robe; cloak that is open at the front and is not clasped; cloak is held across stomach from right side, covers her from the waist down	Red robe; blue cloak	White wimple	Book of Hours

Syracuse MS 7 (r)	Late 15 th C	SL	Standing; either hunched over or bowing to Mary; both hands are out stretched, holding Mary's hands	Appears pregnant	Robe	Red	White wimple with a veil that covers half way to her elbows	Book of Hours
Syracuse MS 3 (f.37r)	Late 15 th C	SL	Kneeling on left knee; both hands extended towards Mary's hands, held at her stomach; gaze is directed at Mary's face	Too difficult to tell	Robe; under tunic, of which only sleeves from the forearm are visible	Robe is dark red; under tunic is yellow/orange (?)	White wimple with short veil; halo	Book of Hours
Hours of the Duc de Berry	Early 15 th C	SL	Kneeling on left knee; both hands	Appears pregnant	Dress; sleeved undergarment; blanket style cloak,	Light blue dress lined with white; black	White wimple with hood pulled up	Book of Hours

			extended towards Mary		unclasped and open, draped over the shoulders with a hood	undergarment; pink (?) cloak lined in aquamarine (?)	from cloak	
Willingham	Early 15 th C	SL	Standing; left hand placed on top of stomach; right hand extended, touching Mary's stomach	Appears pregnant	Robe with strange zig-zag pattern, implying lacing, from about navel to just below breasts; cloak with elbow length sleeves clasped at neck with pointed hood worn up	Robe appears white; cloak is dark blue (?) lined with white (?)	Wimple; pointed hood attached to cloak worn up	Wall Painting
Hours of Jay Gould	1460	SL	Standing; left hand indicating her own stomach; right hand pointing with index finger at Mary	Appears Pregnant	Robe; cloak clasped at neck and worn open in the front	Red robe; brown (?) cloak lined with white	Wimple with short, shoulder length veil; gold double ringed halo	Book of Hours
French Latin	1265	Too difficult	Standing; US arm	Does not appear	Dress; blanket style cloaks	Dresses are gold (?); SR	Both figures	Book of Hours. The figures are

Book Of Hours	to tell; see note in 'Other' column	wrapped around other's back; DS hand placed on other's stomach	pregnant	open at front, worn around the backs of the women, but not over shoulders wrapped in front of stomachs from off stage side to onstage side	figure has a red (?) cloak lined with green (?) with some sort of trim at the base hem; SL figure has a blue cloak lined with red (?) with some sort of trim at the base hem	wear wimples with shoulder length veils; golden halos with lines radiating outward from the head	too similar to distinguish, thought the SL figure may be Mary, given the blue cloak, though the SR figure is taller than SL, which could also indicate the figure as being Mary. I have included this image here for the stylized design and to examine the cut of the cloaks.
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Conclusions:

Position in Scene	Posture/Stance	Stomach	Clothing Pieces	Clothing Colours	Head
SL: 15	Standing: 16	Appears pregnant: 10	Robe: 18	Robe/Dress:	Wimple: 18
SR: 4	Kneeling: 4		Dress: 2	-Red: 9	
		Does not		-White: 3	Veil: 3

Hands:	appear	Cloak: 17	-Blue: 2	
-On Mary's	pregnant: 2	-Clasped at neck:	-Cream: 1	Halo: 11
Stomach: 4		3	-Yellow: 1	
-On Mary's	Too difficult	-Open at the	-Green: 1	Blonde hair:
hand/arm: 4	to tell: 8	front: 11	-Gold: 1	1
-On Mary's				
shoulder: 3		Belt: 1		
-On her own			Cloak:	Hood worn
stomach: 7				up: 3
-Extended: 12		Overtunic: 2	-Red: 7	
-Folded in prayer: 1			-Brown: 2	
		Undergarment: 1	-Blue: 2	
Kissing Mary on the			-Gold: 1	
cheek: 2			-Yellow: 1	
			-Pink: 1	
			Overtunic:	
			-Blue: 1	
			-Orange/Yellow: 1	

Cloak Lining:

-White: 2

-Green: 1

-Aquamarine: 1

Dress lining:

-White: 1

Undergarment:

-Black: 1

Scenic Elements in Images of The Annunciation

Image	Date	Setting	Props	Colours	Set Pieces	Other
Talbot Hours		Interior; blue vaulted ceiling with golden ribs	Book; single small lily	Blue; gold; red; white	Red canopy	Illuminated manuscript
Beaufort/Beauchamp Hours		Unclear; perhaps a little room or gazebo; there is blue orb in the upper right of the scene that appears to contain an image of what could be God the Father; a red line runs through the top; an elaborate golden background blends with the golden floor	Book	Blue; green; gold; red, white	Green Pieu Dieu with canopy embroidered with gold; book rests on red cushion	Illuminated manuscript. The page shows two people (the books owners?) praying outside the confines of the image of the Annunciation, which is framed in a carved, white chapel, or some such other building. The description here only speaks about the scene framed in the building.
V&A #1	Late 14 th C	Unclear	Book		Potted lily with three blooms SR; Mary sits on what appears to	Alabaster Panel

					be a stone bench	
V&A #2	Late 15 th C	Unclear; though the lectern could imply interior	Book; kneeling cushion		Cranked column lectern	Partial alabaster showing only Mary
V&A #3	Late 15 th C	Unclear	Possibly a kneeling cushion		Potted lily with three branches and blooms	Alabaster panel; only Gabriel and the pot of lilies is still present
V&A #4	Late 15 th C	Unclear; though the lectern could imply interior	Book (?)		Pieu-dieu; potted lily with three branches and blooms	Alabaster panel showing the Annunciation in the top third with Christ supported by God in the bottom two thirds.
V&A #5	Late 15 th C	The remaining paint on the lower portion seems to represent grass and flowers, which implies outside. God the Father and the Holy Ghost (as a Dove) both also appear in this	Book	Green grass (?); white flowers (?); red background (?); blue sky (?)	Cranked column lectern kneeling cushion; potted lily with three blooms	Alabaster panel; very elaborate; shows God the Father with a dove coming out of his mouth as the Holy Spirit in UR

		version.				
V&A #6	Late 15 th C	Possible outside; God the Father appears with 'a small Christ Child proceeding from His mouth'	Book		Cranked column lectern (with many cranks); potted lily with three blooms; kneeler	Alabaster Panel. Very similar to V&A #5
V&A #7	Late 14 th C	Unclear as to location	Book		Mary sits on a substantial (stone?) bench; potted lily with three blooms SR	Alabaster panel
V&A #8	1380-1390	Unclear as to location	Book		Mary sits on a small (stone?) bench; potted lily with three blooms CC	Alabaster Panel
V&A #9	1400-1430	Green paint showing white (and possibly gold) flowers could imply an exterior location	Book	Gold details survive on pieu-dieu and pot holding lily	Stone (?) pieu-dieu; pot holding a lily with three blooms	Alabaster panel; top portion starting at Mary's neck is missing
V&A #10	C 1400	Unclear, though the elaborate back could imply an interior		Gold; red; green (?)	Pieu-dieu, very large potted lily with three blooms	Hinged wooden case; the Annunciation takes up the lower half of the

		setting				central panel
South Newington	C 1330 (?)	Unclear		Red background; cream pot	Potted lily with three blooms	Wall painting
Barnby, Suffolk	C. 14 th C (?)	Unclear; the background is a lighter color, marked with many rosettes	Book	Too difficult to tell	Pieu-dieu/ lectern	Wall painting
Slapton, Northamptonshire	C 14 th /15 th C	Unclear	Book (?)	Too difficult to tell	Ewer with lid (used instead of the traditional pot) with a lily growing out of it	Wall painting
Hampton Court (Herefordshire)	15 th C	Could be either outside with Mary under a canopy or inside.	Book	Red and green canopy walls with white and gold top; Pieu- dieu is covered with a white cloth embroidered with gold flowers (lilies?); red (?) tiled floor	Pieu-dieu; potted lily with three blooms	Strained glass window; God the Father is present in the UR section, watching the event
Syracuse MS 7 (v)	Late 15 th C	Inside a stone building; bedchamber; SL is taken over by a	Book	Red bed, Grey walls, ceiling, floor and	Large canopied, red bed	Book of Hours

		red, canopied bed; UR is a window with a step leading up to it; grey tiled floor		exterior	
Syracuse MS 3 (f.25r)	Late 15 th C	Interior of a building, window with facing benches in the background; window shows out onto a hill; floor is tiled in a checkerboard pattern of red (?) and white	Book	Warm reds (?); cool exterior with whites and blues	Book of hours

Conclusions:

Background

Interior: 6

Exterior: 1

Colors

Red: 7

White: 6

Gold: 5

Blue: 4

Green: 4

Set Pieces

Lectern/Pieu-dieu: 9

Lily with three blooms: 12

Other

Grey; 1

Scenic Elements in Images of The Visitation

Image	Date	Setting	Props	Colours	Other
Magnificat		Interior of a house (?); window showing a tower in the background; large fireplace or ornate doorway	Book	Brown (building); blue sky; white tower with red roofs	Illuminated manuscript
Lauds	Mid 14 th C	Exterior; in front of castle/city walls; stylized geometric pattern in the sky		Blue (castle/walls); dark blue and gold sky; green grass and tree	Illuminated manuscript; two angels blow trumpets from the towers on the castle/walls
V&A #11	15 th C	Possible paint remains could imply grass meaning an exterior setting		Green grass (?)	Alabaster panel
Hours of Rene of Anjou		Exterior; in the mountains with a city in the distance shown with towers; a small house is shown nearby in the middle distance;		Green grass and foliage; light brown mountains; gradated blue sky	Illuminated manuscript
Salisbury, Wiltshire	15 th C	Exterior; trees in the distance; to SL is a square door in a rounded archway leading to a house (Elizabeth's, presumably)	Outside the frame of the picture are pots of lilies with three blooms as well as the symbol for the Order	Too difficult to tell for certain	Wall painting

of the Garter

Ashampstead, Berkshire	13 th C (?)	Exterior (implied by the presence of a horizon showing towers in the background); they stand in a central alcove or archway (there are three), flanked by white curtains pulled back to frame them	Too difficult to tell	Wall painting
St Peter Mancroft	15 th C	Exterior; city in UR background; entry into a building (house?) UL background	Green grass; blue sky; white buildings; red roofs	Stained glass window
C 1460 Hours	C 1460	Appears to be a walled garden, with archway leading out on SR and doorway into a house SL, with a low stone wall connecting the archway and door; in the background are hills, trees, bushes and possibly a town on a hill in the distance	Grey walls; green ground; blue hilltops; interior of house shows a red wall	Book of Hours
Sts Peter and Paul	15 th C	Hard to tell, as the glass is very intricate; house in background; image framed with gothic arches	Blue sky	Stained glass window

NYPL 425961	15 th C	Stylised hill in the background with a windmill on top; small cluster of trees on SR side of hill	Golden sky; green hill which turns brown and base	Book of Hours
NYPL 427144	C 1450	Mary and Elizabeth stand on a peninsula with two trees and a pond before them; US of the river on SL is a grey castle; UR is a hill with trees	Blue and white sky; green grass; hill gradates from green on the bottom to light brown/beige at the top	Book of Hours
NYPL 427207	C 1500	Mary and Elizabeth stand at the base of a hill with two women in the background watching on; in the back are many trees and shrubs leading to a river; on the SL is a rocky hill	Blue sky; green/beige grass and shrubs	Book of Hours
NYPL 425916	C 1450	The scene is very simple, only the ground and a painted backdrop for the sky. The sky is red with a geometric pattern of diamonds in gold	Light brown ground; red backdrop with gold detail	Book of Hours
Syracuse MS 7 (r)	Late 15 th C	Mary and Elizabeth stand at the bottom of a hill which is UC; UR, beyond the hill is a castle/tower/ town wall; thin, tall trees stand in the distance UR beyond the hill	Rust red castle; brown hill; blue and white sky; green grass (?) on which the two figures stand	Book of Hours

Syracuse MS 3 (f.37r)	Late 15 th C	Mary and Elizabeth take up the foreground; the distance is occupied by a rounded hill with a series of three towers/castle on the top; bushes on hill		White and light blue sky with darker blue clouds; green hill with darker green shrubs; the ground on which they stand is light brown/red	Book of Hours
Hours of the Duc de Berry	Early 15 th C	Mary and Elizabeth stand center; SR, behind Mary, is a doorway/tower/city gate with a paved walkway on which Mary stands; behind the two are three mountains; the UL section of the picture shows a walled city with many towers half way up a hill	Mary holds a red book	Blue sky; green earth tones make up the hills; the doorway and UL city are grey with a small amount of colour on the certain of the city's towers	Book of Hours
Hours of Jay Gould	1460	Mary and Elizabeth stand with a small stump between them; in the background is a small hill, with two smaller hills and two rocks in front of the far hill; twelve skinny trees are spaced throughout the scene		Blue sky; far hill and near ground are green; tree stump at Mary and Elizabeth's feet and central hill are light brown; rocks on the right and left of the central hill are grey	Book of Hours
French Latin book of Hours	1265	Very stylised; Mary and Elizabeth embrace DC, flanked by vines/lilies (?); above them (representing		Blue roofs of the city; olive green background; red highlights on city	Book of Hours. The extant colours are possibly not a good reflection of the

behind (?) is a city

original colours.

Conclusions:

Background

Exterior: 16

Interior: 2

City/buildings in background: 12

Hills: 10

Buildings in Foreground: 7

Colours

Sky:

-Blue/White: 10

-Blue/Gold: 2

-Red/Gold: 2

Buildings:

-Grey: 2

-White: 2

-Red (Exterior): 2

-Red (Interior): 1

-Blue: 1

-Brown: 1

Ground:

-Brown: 4

-Green: 9

Hills:

-Green: 4

-Brown: 3

-Blue: 1

Roofs:

-Red: 3

-Blue: 1

Grey Rocks: 1

Appendix C: Images Consulted as Part of the Image Survey of the Annunciation and the Visitation

[NOTE: All images are the copyright of other organisations and are not available in the digital version of this thesis. The original thesis contains the images and is available for reference at the University of Birmingham Main Library.]

Note: The following are all the images consulted as part of the image survey presented in Appendix B. I have named each image for ease of working with such a large amount of material. Images are listed alphabetically using my name for the image. My name for the image is in italics, followed by the citation information.

- Ashampstead, Berkshire*. Photo: 'Annunciation/Visitation, Ashampstead, Berkshire', from www.paintedchurchs.org, accessed 1 March 2012.
- Barnby, Suffolk*. Photo: 'Annunciation, Barnby, Suffolk', from www.paintedchurchs.org, accessed 1 March 2012.
- Beaufort/Beauchamp*. From Scot McKendrick, et al (eds), *Royal Manuscripts: The Genius of Illumination* (London: The British Library, 2011) 148.
- Chalgrove, Oxfordshire*. Photo: 'Annunciation, Chalgrove, Oxon,' from www.paintedchurchs.org, accessed 1 March 2012.
- Circa 1460 Hours*. Photo: 'Circa 1460 Hours', from special.lib.gla.ac.uk, accessed 3 March 2012.
- Faversham, Kent*. Photo: 'Annunciation/Visitation, Faversham, Kent', from www.paintedchurchs.org, accessed 1 March 2012.
- French Latin Book of Hours*. Photo: 'French Latin Book of Hours 1265', from www.fineartamerica.com, accessed 2 March 2012.
- Gisleham, Suffolk*. Photo: 'Annunciation, Gisleham, Suffolk', from www.paintedchurchs.org, accessed 1 March 2012.
- Hampton Court (Herefordshire)*. Photo: 'Hampton Court (Herefordshire)', from english.cam.ac.uk, accessed 2 March 2012.
- Hours of the Duc de Berry*. Photo: 'Hours of Duc de Berry', from www.histroymedren.about.com, accessed 6 March 2012.
- Hours of Jay Gould*. Photo: 'Hours of Jay Gould, 1460, Vault Case MS 188', from www.publications.newberry.org, accessed 1 March 2012.
- Hours of Rene of Anjou*. From Scot McKendrick, et al (eds), *Royal Manuscripts: The Genius of Illumination* (London: The British Library, 2011) 47.
- Lauds*. From Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and Their Prayers 1240 1570* (London: Yale University Press, 2006) 12.
- Magnificat*. Photo: Prof Plinio Correa de Oliveira, 'The Visitation of Our Lady', from www.traditioninaction.com, 7 March 2012.
- NYPL 425916*. Photo 'Image ID 425916,' from digitalgallery.nypl.org, accessed 3 March 2012.
- NYPL 425961*. Photo: 'Image ID 425961', from digitalgallery.nypl.org, accessed 3 March 2012.
- NYPL 427144*. Photo: 'Image ID 427144', from digitalgallery.nypl.org, accessed 3 March 2012.
- NYPL 427207*. Photo: 'Image ID 427207', from digitalgallery.nypl.org, accessed 3 March 2012.

- Salisbury, Wiltshire.* Photo: 'Visitation, Salisbury (S. Thomas), Wilts', from www.paintedchurchs.org, accessed 1 March 2012.
- Slapton, Northamptonshire.* Photo: 'Annunciation, Slapton, Northants', from www.paintedchurchs.org, accessed 1 March 2012.
- South Newington.* Photo: 'Annunciation, Sth Newington, Oxfordshire', from www.paintedchurchs.org, accessed 1 March 2012.
- St Peter Mancroft.* Photo: 'St Peter Mancroft, 15th century', from english.cam.ac.uk, accessed 2 March 2012.
- Sts Peter and Paul.* Photo: 'Sts Peter and Paul, East Harling, Norfolk', from www.norfolkchurches.co.uk, accessed 5 March 2012.
- Syracuse MS 3 (f.25r) (late 15th century).* Photo: 'Syracuse MS 3 (f.25r)', from library.sur.edu, accessed 4 March 2012.
- Syracuse MS 3 (f.37r) (late 15th century).* Photo: 'Syracuse MS 3 (f.37r)', from library.sur.edu, accessed 4 March 2012.
- Syracuse MS 7 (r).* Photo: 'Syracuse MS 7 (r)', from library.sur.edu, accessed 4 March 2012.
- Syracuse MS 7 (v) (late 15th century).* Photo: 'Syracuse MS 7 (v)', from library.sur.edu, accessed 4 March 2012.
- Talbot Hours.* From Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and Their Prayers 1240-1570* (London: Yale University Press, 2006) 66-7.
- V&A 1 (late 14th century).* Photo: 'The Annunciation (Panel)', museum number A.75 1946, from collections.vam.ac.uk, accessed 3 March 2012.
- V&A 2 (second half of the 15th century).* Photo: 'The Annunciation (Fragment of panel)', museum number A.33-1946, from collections.vam.ac.uk, accessed 3 March 2012.
- V&A 3 (second half of the 15th century).* Photo: 'The Annunciation (Fragment of panel)', museum number A.42-1946, from collections.vam.ac.uk, accessed 3 March 2012.
- V&A 4 (late 15th century).* Photo: 'Trinity with Annunciation', museum number A.37 1946, from collections.vam.ac.uk, accessed 3 March 2012.
- V&A 5 (second half of the 15th century).* Photo: 'The Annunciation (Panel)', museum number A.54-1946, from collections.vam.ac.uk, accessed 3 March 2012.
- V&A 6 (late 15th century).* Photo: 'The Annunciation', museum number A.77-1946, from collections.vam.ac.uk, accessed 3 March 2012.
- V&A 7 (late 14th century).* Photo: 'The Annunciation (Panel)', museum number A.75 1946, from collections.vam.ac.uk, accessed 3 March 2012.
- V&A 8 (c 1380-1390).* Photo: 'The Annunciation (Panel)', museum number A.28-1950, from collections.vam.ac.uk, accessed 3 March 2012.

V&A 9 (c 1400-1430). Photo: 'The Annunciation (Fragment of a Panel)', museum number A.85-1946, from collections.vam.ac.uk, accessed 3 March 2012.

V&A 10 (c 1400). Photo: 'The Annunciation with Trinity (Panel)', museum number A.193-1946, from collections.vam.ac.uk, accessed 3 March 2012.

V&A 11 (15th century). Photo: 'The Visitation (Panel)', museum number A.78-1946, from collections.vam.ac.uk, accessed 3 March 2012.

Willingham. Photo: 'Willingham, 15th century', from www.flickr.com, accessed 8 March 2012.

Appendix D: Original Practice Costume Justifications

Note:

While forty-four of images are listed in the survey in Appendix C, not all were suitable for analysing costuming for all characters. Certain images contain only one of the three characters, while others do not retain any pigmentation. For these reasons the number of consulted images varies from character to character.

Gabriel

Garments:

The image survey shows that all of the images used (eighteen) show Gabriel in a robe, and the majority (twelve) also show a cloak worn over the robe. The most common colour for Gabriel's robe is white (three) and the most common colour for the cloak is red (three). It must be remembered that many of the images studied have either lost their paint or it have faded over the centuries, which accounts for the small proportion of images with colour.

Costume Crafts:

Twelve images show Gabriel wearing a crown/halo. The survey implies the most common hair colour and style for Gabriel is short and blonde, which will be the fashion for the OP design.

There appears to be no consensus on the wings, as too much variety exists in the chosen images. It can be assumed, however, that the feather-covered angel visible in two images was not common onstage as no accounts record a suit of feathers, and the

accounts that do record an angel's costume refer to a surplice and/or wings.¹ The most common shape present was what I have called the pointed and narrow wing shape. I believe that, given the presence of the narrow wings on the alabasters, the narrowness is a necessity of the medium, and not an accurate portrayal of late medieval ideas of angel wing shape. Because of this I have decided to keep the pointed silhouette but make the wings a bit wider than the alabasters suggest. Colour is also a problem, as the variety present does not lend itself to the extrapolation of concrete conclusions. For this reason I have decided that choosing the colour combination that matches the above-mentioned robe and cloak best would be appropriate. The three colour combinations are white with blue tips, gold with red tips and white with gold tips. In order to best match the colours of the robe and cloak, while at the same time attempting cohesion with the crown, I have decided on white wings with gold tips.

Mary

As Mary exists in images of both the Annunciation and the Visitation there is a larger amount of material from which to draw conclusions. *The Annunciation* does not allow a time period for a costume change for the actor playing Mary when she travels to visit Elizabeth, and she will therefore only have one costume. For this reason, conclusions drawn from images of Mary in the Annunciation and the Visitation will be used to inform the design of Mary.

Garments:

¹ REED: Coventry, 283, 468, 474.

The most common garment in both the Annunciation and the Visitation is by far the robe (twenty-nine of the thirty-nine images). Nearly all images also show Mary wearing a cloak, though the manner in which it is worn varies not only between the Annunciation and the Visitation, but also between individual images. The most common colour for these garments is blue, though darker blue seems to be preferred in the Visitation and a lighter blue in the Annunciation. This combination of a dark blue robe and cloak is only present in one image and therefore may not be the most accurate combination, even if those colours appear the most on an individual basis. For this reason I have decided to use the second most common robe colour, red, while keeping with the dark blue cloak. The lining of the cloak in a contrasting colour is not present in the majority of the images, though it does exist in four. Lining is therefore possible, though by no means necessary, and will not be included in this design.

The most obvious difference in the way in which Mary's garments are worn between the Annunciation and the Visitation is how the cloak is made to frame the stomach of Mary. Few of the surveyed images of the Annunciation show an obviously pregnant Mary, while the majority of representations of Mary in the Visitation clearly show her as pregnant. Various methods are used to emphasize the pregnancy of Mary, from a robe or dress that is belted or synched just below the breast, thereby creating an empire waist and defining the top of her stomach, to a gold belt worn on the hips that dips down in the front, emphasizing the bottom of her stomach. Both of these methods draw attention to the full belly, while at the same time reflect actual fashion.

There is not enough visual evidence for the belt to be considered vital to an OP production, but it certainly does not exclude the possibility. The key purpose of the belt, should it be incorporated into the design, would be to hold up the robe of the actor playing Mary. As Mary does not appear pregnant in the Annunciation, using the belt

would not be necessary to emphasize the stomach. Another option, which can be used when needed by the actor, is the draping of the cloak.

Six of the Annunciation images show a cloak that is clasped in some way near the neck, and then drapes open in the front. Fifteen images show a cloak that, regardless of being clasped at the neck or not, drapes open in the front, framing the pregnant belly of Mary. This draping immediately draws the eye of the observer to the stomach, whether it is obviously pregnant or no. This is common enough in the Visitation that it should be incorporated in the OP production. Framing Mary's stomach with the cloak will draw the attention of the audience to her stomach, even if there has not been enough time to place a pregnancy belly on the actor. This framing will have to be done by the actor onstage, and be incorporated into the character's movements, thus allowing the actor to decide at what moment to emphasize the belly.

Costume Crafts:

The most common hairstyle and colour for Mary in both the Annunciation and the Visitation is blonde hair (varying from dirty-blond to golden) worn down. Light brown hair is also occasionally present; though the regularity with which blonde hair is present suggests a common enough trend that another colour could be inappropriate for a late medieval portrayal.

Just as with Gabriel, a halo or crown is nearly universally present in these images.² A crown seems an appropriate choice for Mary, and will thus be used in the design.

² This most likely alludes to her as the Queen of Heaven, a title given to her in popular Marian lore when she ascended to Heaven and was crowned by her son, Jesus. It may seem anachronistic to have her crowned during the Annunciation and the Visitation, as these events clearly happen earlier on in the chronology. However, anachronism is prevalent throughout religious iconography and must be accepted as a valid design choice.

Evidence also shows precedence for a wimple (more commonly associated with Elizabeth) and a hood on the cloak worn up on the head. While this precedence allows for the addition of these items, I believe they would cover the crown, which is of more importance and is more common in the iconography.

Elizabeth

Garments:

Elizabeth's garments are similar to Mary's in the Visitation: a robe with a cloak that is draped open in the front. In the images where it is evident, Elizabeth is pregnant more often than not, a fact that is emphasized by the cloak framing her stomach. The most common colours are red for both the robe and cloak, though in none of the images are a red robe and a red cloak paired together. The second most common colours are white and blue or brown, for the robe and cloak respectively. I have decided on a white/cream robe paired with a brown cloak. White and cream are present a combined total of four times in the images surveyed, while the brown is represented an equal number of time with blue (twice each). Once again, neither robe nor cloak will be lined with a contrasting colour of fabric, as it is a possibility but by no means a universal design choice.

Costume Crafts:

The most prevalent item of costume craft relating to Elizabeth is the wimple. The styles vary slightly, with some covering the neck and chin, extending up and around the face, with others masking the hair and part of the neck. Some wimples include a veil that is either ear or shoulder length. Due to the near universal presence of the wimple

in the images (only one does not appear to have a wimple, but a hood covers so much of the head and face that it serves much the same purpose of the wimple) it would be a mistake to not include one in the costume for an OP production. The colour varies from white (the most common) to cream and yellow.

Do to the wimple Elizabeth's hair is of little importance, as it hides her hair in all but one of the images. In this image Elizabeth's hair matches that of her cousin. The wimple, however, will cover the entirety of the hair in my design, following the precedence set in the images.

Appendix E: Images

[NOTE: All images are the copyright of other organisations and are not available in the digital version of this thesis. The original thesis contains the images and is available for reference at the University of Birmingham Main Library.]

Image 1: Detail of British Library Manuscript 35290 f. 44r, showing John Clerke's possible annotation to the text on the right. From Richard Beadle and Peter Meredith, eds. *The York Plays: A Facsimile of British Library MS Additional 35290, Together with a Facsimile of the Ordo Paginarum Section of the A/Y Memorandum Book, with an Introduction by Richard Beadle and Peter Meredith and a Note on the Music by Richard Rastall*. Leeds: University of Leeds, School of English, 1983.

Image 2: Set design for the Valenciennes passion (1547). From 'Images Related to Medieval English Drama'. From www.luminarium.org. Accessed 3 September 2012.

Image 3: Nora Lambourne's set design for the 1951 *York Mystery Plays*. From 'Photograph: 1951 scene', archive reference YMP/A/1/3. From www.yorkmysteryplays.org. Accessed 3 September 2012.

Image 4: Rhyme brackets. From Richard Beadle and Peter Meredith, eds. *The York Plays: A Facsimile of British Library MS Additional 35290, Together with a Facsimile of the Ordo Paginarum Section of the A/Y Memorandum Book, with an Introduction by Richard Beadle and Peter Meredith and a Note on the Music by Richard Rastall*. Leeds: University of Leeds, School of English, 1983. f 44r.

Image 5: Judi Dench as the Virgin Mary in *The York Mysteries* (1957), showing stylized arm placement. From 'Scrapbooks; [sic] 1957 scrapbook', archive reference YMP/E/4. From www.yorkmysteryplays.org. Accessed 3 September 2012.

Image 6: *The Annunciation* from *The York Millennium Mystery Plays* (2000), showing medieval symbolism common in images of the Annunciation. From 'Photographs: The Annunciation. Gabriel (Tom Davey) visits Mary (Frances Marshall)', archive reference YMP/A/17/2/13. From www.yorkmysteryplays.org. Accessed 3 September 2012.

Image 7: God (right) helps Gabriel (left) tie a pregnancy stomach disguised as an apron onto Mary in *The York Mystery Plays 2012* (2012). From 'York Mystery Plays 2012 - Dress Rehearsal 01.08.2012 - 44'. From www.flickr.com. Accessed 3 September 2012.

Image 8: *The Annunciation* from *The York Mystery Plays 2012* (2012), showing mid-twentieth-century costuming. From 'York Mystery Plays 2012 - Dress Rehearsal 01.08.2012 - 42'. From [ww.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com). Accessed 3 September 2012.

Image 9: Pre-reformation stained glass of the Annunciation, showing prier-dieu and lily. From 'The Annunciation to Mary'. From english.cam.ac.uk. Accessed 3 September 2012.

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