

THE *MORS PILATI* IN THE CORNISH *RESURREXIO DOMINI*

THE dramatisation in the final play of the Cornish *Ordinalia* of the death of Pontius Pilate and of the events subsequent upon it is of considerable importance in various respects.¹ It commands interest first of all because of its rarity. None of the English mystery cycles includes it, nor indeed is it at all easy to find dramatisation elsewhere in European drama, even though the presentation of Pilate varies, say, in the French mysteries, when compared with those in England.² The presentation of Pilate's death not only gives greater depth to the character as such, but offers some quite specifically dramaturgical problems in the staging of an action, part of which, at least, centres upon the aberrant behaviour of a corpse; ghosts may be familiar in the theatre, unruly corpses less so.³ In spite of the positive effect upon characterisation, however, the question of how this unusual episode fits into the structure of the *Resurrexio Domini* (*RD*) and, indeed, the *Ordinalia* as a whole, must also be addressed, although earlier negative responses to this question have recently been replaced by attitudes which rightly credit the anonymous dramatist with skill and judgement. Finally, as with the equally unusual inclusion in the Cornish plays of another very well-known set of medieval legends, those of the Holy Rood, there is interest here for the study of apocryphal material in its own right. The Cornish Death of Pilate takes its place beside many other medieval versions of what is in essence but not in emphasis the same story in Latin or in one of the vernaculars, and prompts speculation on the identification of a precise source, or at least of the general nature of that source.

The central part played by Pontius Pilate in the story of the Passion gave rise at an early stage to more detailed considerations of his feelings and motivation and of his response to his Roman superiors than the Gospels provide, and legends concerned with his death soon developed. In spite of Eusebius's report of his suicide, nothing is known for certain of his actual death.⁴ Apocryphal material on Pilate

¹ All citations and translations are from the edition by Edwin Norris of *The Ancient Cornish Drama* ([Oxford 1859] repr. New York 1968), with the three plays of the *Ordinalia* referred to by standard abbreviation and line-number. The section on Pilate's death (*RD* 1588–2360) is in II, 120–179, and uses the phrase *mors Pilati* both in the introductory rubric and in the explicit. Reference may be made also to the modern Cornish edition with translation by R. Morton Nance and A. S. D. Smith in G. Sandercock (ed.), *The Cornish Ordinalia, Third Play: Resurrection* (n.p. 1984) and to M. Harris's translation in prose, *The Cornish Ordinalia* (Washington DC 1969).

² For unrelated but interesting views of Pilate in the drama, see the Frankfurt *Passionsspiel* of 1493, R. Froning (ed.), *Das Drama des Mittelalters* (Stuttgart n.d.) II, 531; the fragmentary Auvergne Passion of the mid-15th century, G. A. Runnalls (ed.), *La Passion d'Auvergne* (Geneva 1982), see p. 13; the Angers Passion of Jean Michel (with the early life of Pilate and a section on Vernone/Veronica), O. Jodogne (ed.), *Mystère de la Passion (Angers 1486)* (Gembloux 1959). Most relevant to the present context is the Saint-Geneviève Passion of around 1440, though it is not close: see E. J. Gallagher, *A Critical Edition of La Passion Nostre Seigneur from manuscript 1131 from the Bibliothèque Saint-Geneviève, Paris* (Chapel Hill 1976), pp. 47–9. An edition of the same text by Graham Runnalls was prepared at about the same time (Paris, 1974).

³ One exception comes in dramatisations of the later legend of the hypocritical doctor of Paris and the foundation of the Carthusians by St Bruno, such as Jacob Bidermann's Jesuit play *Cenodoxus*, where the corpse sits up and announces its own damnation. See Brian Murdoch, 'Devils, Vices and the Fall', *Maske und Kothurn* 23 (1977) 15–30.

⁴ See Paul L. Maier, 'The Fate of Pontius Pilate,' *Hermes* 99 (1971) 362–71. On Pilate in general see W. Creizenach, 'Legenden und Sagen von Pilatus', (*Pauls und Braunes*) *Beiträge* 1 (1874) 89–107

in Greek and Latin is, however, confusingly mixed, and may be divided broadly into positive and negative reactions. The culmination of the former approach is the acceptance of Pilate and his wife Procla as saints in the Ethiopic and Coptic churches, whilst the Cornish drama draws, in the final section of the *Resurrexio*, upon the latter tendency, which in its most extreme form has Pilate's tormented spirit haunting parts of Europe if not to this day, then at least to the late nineteenth century.⁵ The apocryphal material includes pseudepigraphic letters, the favourable *Anaphora* in Greek, sometimes attached to the Greek versions of the *Gospel of Nicodemus/Acts of Pilate*; and several Latin texts in which Pilate is treated very negatively indeed, and which are sometimes attached to Latin versions of the Nicodemus apocryphon. That this should be the case is of interest in itself, since the image of Pilate in that enormously widespread apocryphon is not particularly bad. The point has a bearing upon the view of Pilate in the *Resurrexio Domini*, the first part of which clearly utilises material from the Nicodemus-Gospel itself.⁶

The three Latin texts showing the damnation of Pilate are all related to one another, two of them being quite close together, and although dating is very difficult to determine, all are later than the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, but very widespread in the Middle Ages. The *Mors Pilati* describes the illness of Tiberius and his sending of Volusianus, his officer, to Judaea to fetch Christ. Pilate, trying to conceal the fact of the crucifixion, asks for a delay, during which Volusianus meets Veronica, who tells him the truth, but then returns to Rome with him with the image of

(discussing drama in general, and also the link between the Tiberius and Constantine legends); G. A. Muller, *Pontius Pilate* (Stuttgart 1889); E. von Dobschutz, *Christus-Bilder* (Leipzig 1899), pp. 230–5; W. Edwards, *A Medieval Scrap-Heap* (London 1939); P. L. Maier, *Pontius Pilate* (New York 1968); S. G. F. Brandon, 'Pontius Pilate in History and Legend,' *History Today* 18 (1968) 523–30. See Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History* ii, 2–7 in the Loeb edition, trans. by Kirsopp Lake and J. E. L. Oulton (London, 1926–32), i 110–27.

⁵ The best survey of available material with texts in the original Greek or Latin is that in A. de Santo Otero, *Los Evangelios Apocrifos* (Madrid 1956), pp. 501–569. The *Mors Pilati* is on pp. 544–66. Quotations from the *Mors Pilati* are according to this edition, without specific page numbers, as the brief text on pp. 526–32 also includes a translation into Spanish. The earlier standard edition is by C. Tischendorf, *Evangelia Apocrypha*, (2nd edn Leipzig, 1876), with the three relevant texts on pp. 456–8 and pp. 471–86. See not only the discussion of vernacular adaptations in Tischendorf's edition, but the review by A. Schönbach, *Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum* 2 (1876), 149–212, which has much on Pilate. There is a first-class summary of the different texts at issue in the Pilate-Veronica complex by A. Masser and M. Siller, *Das Evangelium Nicodemi in spätmittelalterlicher deutscher Prosa* (Heidelberg 1987), pp. 35–43. I am indebted to Professor Masser – whose work on continental versions of the Nicodemus-Gospel is of considerable importance – for drawing my attention to this study. It is a measure of the widespread and confused nature of the material that many additional texts may be noted: M. Rhodes James, *Apocrypha Anecdota II* (Cambridge 1897), pp. 66–81; G. F. Abbot, 'The Report and Death of Pilate', *Journal of Theological Studies* 4 (1903) 83–6 (Greek); E. Darley, *Les actes du sauveur* (Paris 1919); E. F. Sutcliffe, 'An Apocryphal Form of Pilate's Verdict', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 9 (1947) 436–41. See also D. Werner, *Pylatus, Untersuchungen zur metrischen lateinischen Pilatuslegende* (Düsseldorf 1972). There are English translations of the relevant texts by A. Walker, *Apocryphal Gospels, Acts and Revelations* (Edinburgh 1870), pp. 234–6 (*Mors Pilati*) and pp. 245–55 (*Vindicta*), by M. Rhodes James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford 1924), pp. 157–61 (all versions) and in the English version of E. Hennecke and W. Schneemelcher's collection translated by R. McL. Wilson, *New Testament Apocrypha I* (London 1963), pp. 444–476. Ruskin's comments on Mount Pilatus appear in the fifth volume (1860) of *Modern Painters* (section vii, 3, 4): see the standard edition (London, 1906), v 139. Ruskin has a more technical view of the clouds than 'the good Catholics of Lucerne' in their 'favourite piece of terrific sacred biography'.

⁶ See James, *New Testament*, pp. 157–9. Few guesses have been made on the dating of the texts.

Christ on her kerchief. This cures Tiberius of his illness, and he orders the arrest of Pilate, who appears in Rome, however, wearing the seamless robe of Christ, as a result of which Tiberius is unable to sustain his anger with him. Eventually either divine or Christian intervention causes Tiberius to have Pilate remove the robe, after which he is condemned to the most horrible of deaths. He commits suicide (the motif in Eusebius), and his body is thrown into the Tiber, but demons cause such storms that it is removed to the Rhône at Vienne (*via gebennae*). The same things happen, and it is first buried at Lausanne, then thrown into a well in the mountains (Mount Pilatus, which almost certainly – as Ruskin pointed out – derives from *pileatus*, '[cloud]-capped'), where demons are still felt. This version of the story is combined with a narrative of the early and wicked life of Pilate in the *Legenda Aurea* (which ensured further dissemination in vernacular languages), although the Bishop of Genoa is aware of the apocryphal nature of the material and leaves it up to his readers whether to believe it or not, referring them also to Peter Comestor's report that Pilate died in exile at Lyons.⁷ The tales of Pilate's origins also vary.

Related to this, and thought by M. R. James to be older, though for no clear reason, are the two texts known as the *Cura sanitatis Tiberii* and the *Vindicta Salvatoris*. In the former, Tiberius is again cured by sight of the Vernicle, but Pilate is banished. In the latter, different characters are introduced – a King Titus, Vespasian, and Nathan. Tiberius is a leper in this version, however, and is once more healed by the image of Christ when it is brought to Rome by Velosianus and Veronica.⁸ These and the *Mors Pilati* may be found appended to the *Gospel of Nicodemus*. Vernacular versions (though not in dramatic form) of all of these exist, but there are considerable variations. In two Irish versions of the *Mors Pilati* the emperor in question seems to be Nero, and even where the *Golden Legend* is a source the vernacular texts differ in size and detail. In English, that in the *Stanzaic Life of Christ* is close, but the version offered by Ralph Higden in the *Polychronicon* (with its English translations) is somewhat abbreviated, as is that in Myrk's *Festial*.⁹ There are considerable and in some cases very interesting variations in the

⁷ The full story of Pilate is found in the Passion section of the *Legenda Aurea*, of which the standard Latin edition remains that by T. Graesse, *Jacobi a Voragine Legenda Aurea*, ([3rd edn 1890] repr. Osnabrück 1969). There is an English translation by G. Ryan and H. Ripperger, *The Golden Legend* ([1941] repr. New York 1969), see pp. 214–6 and a German text by R. Benz, *Die Legenda Aurea*, (9th edn Heidelberg 1979), pp. 269–72. On Pilate's early life, see Creizenach, 'Pilatus', pp. 89–91 and 106 (especially on his supposed birth in Germany) and K. Hauck, 'Pontius Pilatus aus Forchheim', in H. R. Jauss and D. Schaller (ed.), *Festschrift für Walther Bulst*, (Heidelberg 1960), pp. 104–24.

⁸ The Albanus-legend is in the May 1 section of the *Golden Legend*, Granger and Ripperger, pp. 265–9.

⁹ Again it would be impossible to enumerate all the vernacular versions, some of which are referred to in editions of the Latin texts. We may note in Irish: G. Mac Niocaill, 'Dhá leagan de scéal Phíolaí', *Celtica* 7 (1966) 205–13, with comments by M. McNamara, *The Apocrypha in the Irish Church* (Dublin 1975), pp. 80f. (the texts have Nero as the emperor); in German the *Kaiserchronik*, ed. E. Schroder (Berlin 1892), pp. 94–6 and the rhymed *Pilatus* first edited by H. F. Massmann, *Deutsche Gedichte des zwölften Jahrhunderts* (Quedlinburg and Leipzig 1836), i 145–52 (without the death). In English, see in particular F. A. Foster (ed.), *A Stanzaic Life of Christ* (London 1926 = EETS/OS 166), pp. 223–30; T. Erbe (ed.), *Mirk's Festial* (London 1905 = EETS/ES 96), p. 121; W. Sauer, *The Metrical Life of Christ from MS BM Add 39996* (Heidelberg 1977), pp. 81–3; and the Latin *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden* translated by J. Trevisa and an anonymous later writer, edited for the Rolls Series by C. Babington and J. Rawson Lumby (London 1865–86), iv 320–5. See also – though it is a little different – E. Köbbling

South English Legendary,¹⁰ and it may be noted that an early version of the *Cura sanitatis Tiberii* in English follows a *Gospel of Nicodemus* in a manuscript now in Cambridge, but one of those given by Leofric to Exeter cathedral library in 1072, and providing evidence for a potential knowledge of one of these related texts in the south-west of England at an early stage.¹¹

Apocryphal tales are in the Middle Ages typically fluid in form, however, so that it is not possible to speak of a single *Gospel of Nicodemus* any more than we may refer except in the most general way to the apocryphal *Vita Adae et Evae* or to a single story of the Holy Rood.¹² So too, even the individual narratives of Pilate's death differ not only from one another, but (in a smaller way) from text to text of what is really the same work. Their contexts change as apocryphal narratives are combined or juxtaposed with other works with whom they may share one character, but little more. The difficulty of separating versions of the Holy Rood and of the Life of Adam – especially when searching for either in medieval manuscript catalogues – offers an illustration of one of the problems, as does, indeed, the juxtaposition of narratives of Pilate's damnation with positive or neutral presentations of the same figure.

There are, then, several approaches possible in the examination of the Cornish treatment of the death of Pilate. Beside a strictly textual approach to the work as drama and as part of a larger structure, it also provides material for the study of the way in which apocryphal tales are handled in the Middle Ages. One essential problem, however, remains the conflict between the desire to establish a source and the more pragmatic point that, while a precise source is unlikely to be found, the Cornish text may well preserve evidence of otherwise unrecorded apocryphal details. Two methodologies must be pursued, then, at the same time, although it is possible, to an extent at least, to identify and thus to eliminate from the evaluation of the text as apocrypha, individual motifs which have been added for local or for dramatic reasons. The inclusion of Cornish place-names into some of the Holy

and M. Day (ed.), *The Siege of Jerusalem* (London 1932 = EETS/OS 188), pp. 9–15. R. M. Wilson's *The Lost Literature of Medieval England* (London 1952) does not mention a separate Pilate-legend although it might well be added to his lists.

¹⁰ C. d'Evelyn and A. J. Mill, *The South English Legendary* (London 1956 = EETS/OS 235f.), ii 697–706.

¹¹ On Leofric's manuscript, see M. Swanton, *Anglo-Saxon Prose* (London 1975), p. 139 (with reference to the paper by W. H. Hulme, *PMLA* 13, 1898, 457–542). Swanton prints only the *Nicodemus* text, the end of which is of interest in the light of the negative Pilate-view. See also F. Barlow etc., *Leofric of Exeter* (Exeter 1973), especially the paper on 'Leofric as Bibliophile', by L. J. Lloyd, p. 35f. For further details of the juxtaposition of Nicodemus and Pilate, see W. H. Hulme, *The Middle-English Harrowing of Hell and the Gospel of Nicodemus* (London 1907 = EETS/ES 100). Hulme notes, p. xlvii MS Harley 149 with *Nicodemus*, a separate Vernicle narrative, and 'The Obyte of Pylate' (the *Vindicta/Cura sanitatis* form). He also refers to MS Bodley 207 of the late fifteenth century as containing a prose version. See also B. Lindström, *A Late ME Version of the Gospel of Nicodemus* (Uppsala 1974), esp. p. 34. On early French versions, see A. E. Ford, *L'Évangile de Nicodème* (Geneva 1973) and on Irish texts McNamara, *Apocrypha*, pp. 68–70, as well as D. N. Dumville, 'Biblical Apocrypha and the Early Irish', *PRLA* 73 C (1973), 321.

¹² On the fluid nature of the *Nicodemus* and the need for further work on the text, see in addition to McNamara and Dumville (preceding note), D. G. Lewis, 'A Short Latin Gospel of Nicodemus Written in Ireland', *Peritia* 5 (1985) 262–75. On the Adam-legends, see B. Murdoch, *Hans Folz and the Adam-Legends* (Amsterdam 1977), 3–13, and on the Holy Rood, E. C. Quinn, *The Quest of Seth* (Chicago 1962).

Rood sections of the *Origo Mundi* is a very simple example of this phenomenon, although with the *Mors Pilati* section of the *Resurrexio* things are not usually as clear.¹³

There have been several editions and translations of the relevant portion of the *Ordinalia* text, although Edwin Norris's two-volume edition of the *Ordinalia* remains the most useful for the moment, and is cited here, with the recent *Resurrexio* text in the unified Cornish of R.M. Nance and A.S.D. Smith and edited by Graham Sandercock a useful back-up. The translation into English by Markham Harris presents the whole work, of course, and Harris, indeed, is one of the champions of the integration of the Death of Pilate into the play and the trilogy; his translation, however, shows precisely in this section the problems of coyness and of inconsistent colloquialism that sometimes mar an otherwise valuable work. There are, in fact, a few passages that have been translated in widely varying ways in the different versions.¹⁴ To these texts we must add the translations/adaptations by F.E. Halliday and by John Gasser, although neither treats the text at all acceptably. Both treat the presentation in the *Resurrexio* of Pilate's death as an independent item, and this implies a (false) judgement on the play(s) as a whole. While both attempt versified texts, Halliday's is in blank and not rhymed verse, whilst Gasser's is in a rhymed verse which resembles the Cornish only very superficially indeed. Moreover, both omit material more or less capriciously, Gasser in particular presenting a truncated, bowlderised and in a context where this should have been avoided, a generally misleading version of *RD* 1587–2630.¹⁵

Of the various apocryphal narratives, the closest to the Cornish play is the *Mors Pilati*, but several features of the Cornish text are strikingly different. Tiberius's disease is not specified in the *Mors Pilati*, though he is in the Cornish play probably seen as a leper, as in the *Vindicta*; Pilate himself is confident and coherent in his arguments, though he is passive in the Latin narrative; the messenger (not an officer) is named *Lyght-of-fout* rather than Volusian(us), which is extremely unusual even in vernacular adaptations; the role of Veronica is far more forceful, as is her relationship to Tiberius; the Cornish adds jailers and torturers not found in any of the apocryphal texts; unusual details include the traveller who washes his hands in

¹³ The line of distinction between 'apocryphon' and 'vernacular adaptation' is frequently treated in an arbitrary fashion; thus it remains inexplicable why collections of apocrypha even as recent as H. D. F. Sparks, *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (Oxford 1984) continue to ignore the evidence of early works such as the *Saltair na Rann*.

¹⁴ Constraints of propriety and linguistic difficulties sometimes work hand-in-hand to confuse: thus *RD* 2094f. (Sandercock 2096f.) 'y ffys yn vn vrammel ovn kemerys' can be 'Thou fleest [sic] in a tremor/ Seized by fear' (Norris), 'I was so scared I let one' (Harris), 'I fled farting' (Nance/Smith/Sandercock). The last is the most accurate. There are still problems with the last part of the same speech (*RD* 2096–8), discussed by N. J. A. Williams, 'Three Middle Cornish Notes', *BBCS* 23 (1968/70), 320f. 'I declare the end of a reed/ would surely not go forward into my rectum/ as I am tight.' In view of what has gone before, this seems somewhat unlikely, but the versions of Norris and Nance/Smith/Sandercock make very little sense either.

¹⁵ F. E. Halliday, *The Legend of the Rood* (London 1955), pp. 121–40; J. Gassner, *Medieval and Tudor Drama* (New York [1963] repr. 1971), pp. 188–203, adapted from Norris. Gassner refers to the section as 'one of the plays' of the Cornish cycle, and seems to take a generally fragmented view of the plays as a whole. The episode (in Norris's version with some corrections by J. Loth, R. L. Thomson and R. M. Nance) is also printed as a separate piece in A. C. Cawley, *Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays* (London 1956), pp. 235–63.

the Tiber and dies at once; and the end of the story is quite different, with a double burial and eventual removal of the body by ship replacing the disposal of the troublesome corpse in the Rhône, and at Vienne, Lausanne and Mount Pilatus. Against this, the outline is close, as are smaller points in the *Mors Pilati*, such as the insistence on the basest of deaths for Pilate: the phrase *haccre mernans*, “cruel death” is picked up and repeated many times in the section.

It is not entirely clear that the Cornish Tiberius is suffering specifically from leprosy: Norris treats *claf* as meaning simply an illness, but others have interpreted it as meaning leprosy.¹⁶ If he is here a leper, this may reflect something in the playwright’s source, although the point is a small one. The *Mors Pilati* refers just to a serious disease, and the English adaptations of the story do not specify it. Leprosy is mentioned in the *Vindicta Salvatoris*, but it is possible that the dramatist simply equated serious illness with leprosy as a stock ingredient of such miracle tales. There are biblical parallels, and the external visibility of the disease offers, of course, a spectacular cure. In Cornish there is a later parallel in the curing of Constantine by Silvester in *Beunans Meriasek*, which is itself based on the earlier *Donation of Constantine* legend. Of other precise details, it is also difficult to determine whether or not the incident with the traveller washing in the polluted Tiber was present in source or not. The effects of the body in the Tiber are developed and exaggerated in other vernacular versions,¹⁷ although without our motif. It is on the other hand, one that aids considerably the integration of the whole story into the broader play-cycle, since it mirrors Pilate’s own washing of his hands, a point noted by Jane Bakere, for example, and to which reference will be made again.¹⁸ The differences at the end of the incident are striking, however, the fate of Pilate’s corpse matching no known Latin text. It is perhaps easy to see why distinct localities – Vienne, Rhône, Lausanne – might have been omitted, but the double rejection of the corpse by the earth and the final removal of the body by ship imply either that dramatist is working from an imperfect memory of the apocryphal narrative, that his text is unlike any known, or that his adaptation is both free and imaginative.

The introduction of the torturers and jailers, and some of the motifs associated with them, are almost certainly not a reflection of an unknown version of the *Mors Pilati*, but a link between this part of the play with the rest, even unto the inclusion here again of the jailer’s boy *whyp an tyn* from the *Passio Christi* (PC). Their introduction is typical not only of the *Ordinalia* but of *Beunans Meriasek*, and the dramatic possibilities of these figures (as of the individual devils) do not

¹⁶ Norris, *Drama* ii, 340. *Claf* means simply ‘sick’ in lines such as *Origo Mundi* 1337. *Claforec* does seem to refer to leprosy, and other translations take Tiberius as a leper, including the revision of Norris in Cawley (see note above). Tiberius is certainly a leper in some (though by no means at all) other vernacular versions, such as the Sauer *Metrical Life of Christ*. It may be noted that the description of Constantine’s leprosy and cure by St Silvester in the *Liber Pontificalis* refers to the consulship of Constantine and Volusianus, *The Book of Pontiffs*, trans. R. Davis (Liverpool 1989), p. 14.

¹⁷ D’Evelyn and Mill, *South English Legendary* has a particularly vivid view of what happens in the Tiber, though in comparison with the *Mors Pilati* it is relatively brief: d’Evelyn and Mill, ii 706, 99, 246–60. We are assured, however, of the long-term effects on the body: ‘to þysse day/ Much wo þer is of aboute. . .’ v. 259f.

¹⁸ See below, n.29 for reference to J. Bakere’s analysis of the episode.

need underlining. Dramatic consideration might have affected the presentation of Pilate himself, and possibly also of the developed character of Tiberius. However, the role of Veronica is very different from that in the *Mors Pilati* and, indeed, in most other versions. If the playwright himself made the decision to turn the otherwise passive Veronica into a vigorous (and to the modern mind even vindictive) adviser to Tiberius, then it was a bold move.

Most interesting, however, is the name of the messenger, *Lyght-of-fout*, which clearly is a name and not a description in spite of Norris’s failure to use a capital in his translation. In all Latin versions and most adaptations he is called Volusianus or Velosianus, or he is (on rare occasions) not named at all.¹⁹ The name here is given twice in English, once in rhyme position which forces the dramatist to use a gratuitous English interjection (albeit one translated differently in the various versions):

lyght of fout ow messyger
ow seruont da. . . (RD 1606f.)
lord tibery by my houd
a wette vy lygth of fout
theugh dynythys. . . (RD 1611–3)

Light of foot, my messenger,
 my good servant. . .
 Lord Tiberius, by my head {Nance: ‘hood’}
 Thou seest me, light of foot
 Come to you.

The character is a messenger (*nuncius*), and we may accept Norris’s conclusion that the manuscript division of this one part into two is an error. More important is the fact that the character has been demoted – he is an officer in the apocryphal versions, and has there a far greater role; here he seems to have yielded his place to Veronica. The name remains striking: it is awkward, and one would expect the Latin form, and failing that, either a Cornish name or none at all. There may be an echo of the name in *RD 1666*, the somewhat curious comment: ‘*ny won ple toulafow paw*,’ ‘I know not where I cast my foot,’ but the English looks like a gloss on the Latin (*volo, volatus*). With that small point, however, the likelihood of an English-language source for the Cornish is immediately increased. Leofric’s gift to Exeter cathedral provides evidence of early English texts of the Nicodemus-Gospel combined with a related text at least (although not the right one), available within the diocese already several centuries earlier, so that the availability of something similar at Glasney is hardly impossible. It remains curious, though, why there is not more evidence (in English adaptations, for example) of this use of the name. That it is a name and that it appears both in and out of rhyme position means that

¹⁹ Thus Foster, *Metrical Life of Christ*, has Volusian, that edited by Sauer has Volesianus. In d’Evelyn and Mill, *South English Legendary* he is simply a *messenger* who takes rather a long time to find a *leche* to cure the emperor. He is not named in Mirk, nor in the rather different version in the *Siege of Jerusalem*. Higden and his translators, and the German *Kaiserchronik* all retain the Volusianus name, as in the *Legenda Aurea*. There is presumably no link with the emperor Volusianus (251–3).

as a piece of evidence it has a value which is not the same as that for other English words and phrases.²⁰

Further speculation on the source is unlikely to be productive; the best that can be said is that the dramatist knew, perhaps imperfectly, a version related to the known texts of the *Mors Pilati* (which is itself flexible), possibly in English and probably appended to a *Gospel of Nicodemus*. That it was associated with material on Judas, as sometimes happens, is less likely; the Cornish plays do have the legend of Judas's soul, but no connexions are drawn between Pilate and Judas in the Death of Pilate section. It is impossible to say whether the dramatist knew about Pilate's early and uniformly disreputable career, as described in, say, the *Legenda Aurea*. As far as much of the work is concerned, the Bible and the Nicodemus-Gospel give the basis for the character, although the dramatist is aware that the Pilate of the Tiberius-episode is more wicked than we have been prepared for, and provides a hint at Pilate's early wickedness in a comment by the Second Torturer, who says:

*drok den a fue sur bythqueth
a wuk drok ny'n gefe meth
yn y thythow. (RD 1782–5)*

Bad man he was surely ever;
To do evil he had no shame
In his days.

But there are too many variances of detail for the *Golden Legend* to have been an immediate source, even though it must be said that a drama of the Passion would in any case have offered little scope for extra material on the early career of Pilate. At the end of the *Passio*, however, Lucifer himself refers to Pilate as having killed Christ (*PC* 3032f.), the substance too of Veronica's feeling in our play.

It is impossible, finally, to give a definite answer to the question of whether or not the Death of Pilate was added at a later stage into the *Ordinalia*. The suggestion, however, was made first in support of the notion that the whole episode is awkward and included simply as padding, and since such a view is no longer tenable the idea of a later addition appears unlikely. Questions which seem more legitimate, then, are concerned with the dramatic skill of the episode, and of its relationship to the rest of the *Ordinalia*; examination of the latter, indeed, may confirm and expand the opinions of Markham Harris and Jane Bakere.

What must at some stage have been a narrative version in prose (or for the immediate source perhaps even English verse) has been adapted for the purpose of the play. Features omitted for this reason would be not only verbal interpretations (such as that of Vienne as *via gehennae*, although in fact the place is omitted as well) but narrative proper to prose rather than to dramatic representation. This can lead to telescoping: the messenger is sent to Pilate and arrives at once (in the *Cura sanitatis Tiberii* and the *Vindicta Salvatoris* the journey takes more than a year), and when he is fobbed off to "walk for a little while" (in contrast with the *Legenda Aurea*

²⁰ See M. F. Wakelyn, *Language and History in Cornwall* (Leicester 1975), pp. 80–82 on the complex linguistic situation.

version, which speaks of fourteen days) he does precisely that: *et tunc nuncius iet et spaciabit in platea parumper* (Norris, II 124) until he meets Veronica. Similarly, his and Veronica's return to Rome is accomplished with equal speed. Verbal devices cover the point for the benefit of the audience: "*ha thu'm arluth fystynyn*" (and to my lord let us hasten RD 1674). The torturers, too, when summoned by the emperor, stress that they have come very rapidly through fear (even though later on one claims to have had to come via Spain and Germany, and in the middle of a meal, RD 2147–9). The distance was doubtless implied symbolically at least by the placing of the action at different levels: scenes with Tiberius will have taken place on the platform associated with him in the first instance, and Pilate too has a similar station. Just as the messenger was dismissed to walk in the *platea*, however, Tiberius comes down (*descendit*) to confront Pilate. Movement between the different levels might also underline Pilate's gradual downfall, since he comes from his own platform to the *platea* and ultimately into the earth. His twofold burial, though not matched in the *Mors Pilati* versions, was possibly treated on stage by the placing of Pilate into a pit; one sees here again the potential use of the trench shown so clearly on Borlase's illustration of Perran Round.²¹ It is not inconceivable, in fact, that the availability of this facility prompted the dramatist to a twofold rejection of the body. Ultimately, of course, the devils would remove him from the scene completely.

The shift from the somewhat sparse narrative of the *Mors Pilati* or a related text affects in the first instance, however, the presentation of character. Drama is dialogue, and the *Mors Pilati* has none. Pilate says nothing, and Veronica has a very small part indeed. The emperor has an active role – he commands Volusianus to go to Judaea, and he interrogates (or fails to interrogate) Pilate – but even so the narrative remains laconic, and there is no direct speech. This of course would have given a dramatist opportunity to develop characters and to emphasise specific points, and the Cornish playwright made good use of such an opportunity.

The presentation of Veronica (the form *Vernona* is used in the play, and the name varies elsewhere)²² is also of interest both in dramatic terms and in terms of the relationship between medieval apocryphal writings and their vernacular reflection. In the *Mors Pilati* she is passive, and only in the *Vindicta Salvatoris* is she somewhat arbitrarily identified with the woman with an issue of blood healed by Christ in Matthew 9: 20 (which might have linked with the soteriological emphasis of the whole episode). In the *Mors Pilati* there is a brief account of how Veronica obtained the image of Christ, a truncated version only of which appears in the

²¹ Borlase's illustration is in R. Morton Nance, 'The Plen an Gwary or Cornish Playing Place', *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall* 24 (1935), 190–211. The St Just round seems not to have had such a pit.

²² Saint Veronica's feast-day is July 12 and she has long had a popular following not always approved by the Church. On some vernacular texts, see K.-E. Geith, 'Zu einigen Fassungen der Veronika-Legende in der mittelhochdeutschen Literatur', in W. Besch *et al.* (ed.), *Festgabe für Friedrich Maurer* (Düsseldorf 1968), pp. 262–88, as well as Masser and Siller (above, p. 212). The *Vindicta Salvatoris* is sometimes referred to as a Veronica-legend, and her name also varies. The legend of the acquisition of the Vernicle as such, however, is rather different, and has little bearing on the Death of Pilate episode, since the emphasis is upon an earlier point in the history of the Passion. It is reported simply in the *Mors Pilati*.

Cornish play. The Latin texts do not explain (apart from the identification in the *Vindicta*) who Veronica is; here she describes herself as one of Christ's women ("my onan a'y vynynes" *RD* 1667) and the messenger, accepting her offer to return with him to Rome, rather curiously offers her not just a reward, but also freedom:

mar a kyl bones yaghēs
ty a fyth the lyfreson
hag an our the weryson. . . (RD 1675–7)

If he can be healed
 Thou shalt have thy liberty,
 And the gold thy guerdon. . .

Why specifically she should need *lyfreson* is not explained, and, as with other characters rewarded in the *Ordinalia* what she actually receives is the promise of a land-grant (*RD* 1700–3). Once in Rome, however, she assumes a dominant role. She instructs Tiberius that he can be saved if his belief in Christ is genuine – an important condition, to which the emperor agrees:

a luen colon ty a'n pys.
me a'n pys a luen golon. . . (RD 1714f.)

With full heart pray to him.
 I pray him with full heart. . .

The cure of Tiberius accomplished, Veronica assumes the role of advisor to the emperor, and her first thought is to urge vengeance upon Pilate for having killed Christ: "*hep fal l warnotho tehyugh dyal*" ("without fail take retribution of him," *RD* 1752f.), something which Tiberius at once sets in motion. The idea is his own in the *Mors Pilati*. As in the Latin, however, Pilate is wearing Christ's seamless robe (*tunica inconsutilis*, "*an bovs-na hep gvy*," *RD* 1921), although the audience does not yet know this, and Tiberius cannot be angry with him until it is suggested that it be removed. The *Mors Pilati* is unclear on how this is revealed to Tiberius, although the reader already knows Pilate's secret:

Tandem divino nutu vel forte alicuius Christiani
suasu ipsum illa tunica expoliari fecit. . .

In the Cornish play, Tiberius asks Veronica for advice, and it is she who tells him about the garment. This may have been in the source used, since, although unusual, it appears too in the Middle English metrical *Life of Christ* from the North-East Midlands at the start of the fifteenth century:

þe woman to de Emperoure ꝛede
 Sire, sche saide, so God me spede,
 He had a cote, þat God were,
 Whyle he was on lyve here. . .²³

²³ Sauer, *Metrical Life*, p. 83, vv. 4488–91.

Later still, when Tiberius is about to cut Pilate down himself, Veronica dissuades him, though not for humanitarian reasons:

*arluth henna why ny wreugh
an hagkre mernans whyleugh
ma'n ieffo ef. . . (RD 1971–3)*

Lord, that you do not;
Seek the most cruel death
That he can have.

It has been noted that the reference to a most cruel death (echoing the *Mors Pilati*) recurs several times in different forms, in the mouths of many of the characters, from the emperor to the jailer. Indeed, Tiberius himself later asks Veronica to be more specific still about the punishment for Pilate, and she voices the view that all the torments in the world would not suffice (*RD* 2055f.) Even when Pilate kills himself it is Veronica who is brought in once more to advise the emperor on the disposal of the by now troublesome corpse. Although her first suggestion proves not to work, her final advice, that the body be sent out to sea to be claimed by devils, is successful. With the diminution of the rôle of Volusian to that of a simple messenger, Veronica has come to the fore and a dramatic hierarchy is set up in which she, as a saint, converts and then advises the secular ruler, who then effects her wishes by his authority. Similar patterns are set up in *Beunans Meriasek* between Silvester and Constantine, and indeed between Meriasek and the Breton lords, the spiritual taking precedence over the temporal.

Tiberius himself (or rather, the emperor, since different names are attached to the rôle in vernacular texts, including Nero and, perhaps by confusion with the Albanus legends, Vespasian)²⁴ is the leading character in the story in its original form (one wonders about links between the fate of Pilate's corpse and that reported by Suetonius of the move to throw the body of the newly dead Tiberius into the Tiber).²⁵ Here, although he undergoes the same unhistorical conversion to Christianity, he exercises his authority by summoning torturers and jailers, and even promising them a somewhat extravagant “try mylyon our” (“three millions of gold,” *RD* 2258) to dispose finally of the body. His role is imperial and secular, rather than historical; but within the fictionality of the drama, the belief which permits of his cure is genuine, and he is, appropriately, given the last words of the entire play. The summing-up, then, is by an important but worldly figure who brings the audience back to that secular world after the heightened emotions of the angelic dialogue with Christ, Christ's own account of the passion, and the final words of Christ and of God.

²⁴ Given the lack of any historical foundation, it is to be expected that the emperor is likely to vary: Tiberius, Nero, Titus and Vespasian are all involved, the last-named in the overlap with other legends (and the quasi-etymological healing-tale that he was plagued with wasps).

²⁵ J. C. Rolfe (ed. and transl.), *Suetonius* (London 1914), i 398–401 = *Lives of the Caesars*, Tiberius, lxxv: ‘*Morte eius ita laetatus est populus, ut ad primum nuntium discurrentes pars: “Tiberium in Tiberim” clamitarent, pars Terram matrem deosque Manes orarent, ne mortuo sedem ullam nisi inter impios darent.*’ All this sounds rather like the actual fate of Pilate's corpse, although Tiberius was in fact later given a more dignified funeral.

A final point of interest is Tiberius's resolutions of the repeated motif of the most hideous death, when he praises the wisdom of Jesus and describes the suicide as being precisely the worst death of all, presumably because here as with Judas (though the connexion is not made and it is not explicit) it will guarantee damnation:

*rak hacre mernans certan
eys em-lathe y honan
ny gaffe den my a grys. (RD 2072–4)*

For a more cruel death, certainly,
Than to kill himself,
No man may find, I think.

There is a nice dramatic irony, of course, in the fact that Pilate (whose final speech picks up the established phrase) commits suicide precisely to *avoid* the horrible death promised him. He does not realise that his self-inflicted death is actually worse than any imagined tortures:

*worth henna wbeth me a wyth
yn beys na allo den vyth
gul hager vernans thy 'mmo. (RD 2039–41)*

From that I will yet preserve myself,
So that no man in the world may
Do a cruel death to me.

Tiberius's argument may have been present in the dramatist's source, but it seems more likely that this is an expression of his skill. It is part, too, of the sustained parallelism between the trial and death of Pilate and that of Christ, the objective horror of the crucifixion being set against this – in spiritual terms – far worse fate, one which leads, as we see, to damnation, rather than to heaven.

Tiberius's tone is imperious towards the torturers, just as it is reverent towards Veronica, and courteous towards Pilate when he is wearing the robe (RD 1811–6 etc.) The torturers, the jailer and his boy (the *whyp an tyn* of the *Passio*, neatly translated as “Lashbutt” by Markham Harris) all show the same coarse humour in their speeches that they show throughout the *Ordinalia* and, indeed, in *Beunans Meriasek*, a coarseness not always satisfactorily elucidated or imitated in translation. The tone is picked up in the final speech by the devil Tulfryk with which the entire section ends, and the tonal contrasts in the whole episode are an epitome of Cornish drama as a whole.

The characterisation of Pilate himself (not always unsympathetic elsewhere in the play) here shows the dramatist's not inconsiderable skill, especially when compared with the raw material of the *Mors Pilati*, and indeed his presentation in, say, the Towneley plays,²⁶ even though the death scene is, of course, not included

²⁶ A. Williams, *The Characterisation of Pilate in the Towneley Plays* (East Lansing 1950) is broadly based (referring to French and German drama, for example) and takes the Cornish texts into account insofar

there. In the Latin legends, Pilate simply dons the seamless robe, and when he is brought before Tiberius, the latter finds himself unable to approach him: "omnem animi ferocitatem abiecit." There is clearly dramatic potential in this, and the Cornish dramatist exploits the alternation between Tiberius' theoretical rage and his involuntarily gracious welcome, which gives way to renewed consternation as to why he has behaved this way, underscored by the reaction of the pardonably baffled torturers. The audience does not in fact know until Veronica reveals the fact that Pilate has donned the robe: instead it sees Pilate surprisingly confident in his reception after he has been arrested:

*geneugh why mos ny drynaf
thu'm arluith lowen ythaf
tyber cesar
gentyl yv the pup huny
ioy ov colon yn teffry
mur me a'n car. (RD 1797–1802)*

To go with you I do not grieve;
To my lord gladly I go,
Tiberius Caesar:
Gentle is he to everyone,
Joy of my heart indeed,
Much I love him.

The audience knows thus far only that Tiberius wishes to condemn Pilate, and whether the dramatist's decision not to have Pilate refer earlier to the coat depends on source or skill, the notion is effective. Pilate shows the same insouciance when he is summoned a *second* time (RD 1905), but by now Veronica has revealed the secret, and Pilate is forced to put up a series of arguments, again not in the *Mors Pilati*, to try and keep the coat: that it is dirty, that he would be ashamed to be naked. With Veronica's repeated urging – all to good dramatic effect once more – Tiberius insists, and in spite of a last thought that perhaps bribery might work (RD 1964), Pilate realises that he is doomed. His comment is prophetic beyond his imminent death:

alemma rag ny 'm byth creys (RD 1960)

Henceforth there is no peace for me.

The Cornish Pilate has depth, confident at first, then cunning in his arguments, first with knowledge superior to that of the audience, then unjustifiably confident, when, as the audience knows on this occasion but he does not, Veronica has defeated him. There is a further irony in the fact that Pilate resolutely refuses to believe in Christ, whom he (unlike Tiberius) has actually seen, and yet trusts

as they may be compared with the Towneley Cycle. The omission (for that reason) of any consideration of the Death of Pilate in the *Ordinalia* necessarily distorts the overall judgements of the presentation of Pilate in Cornish, however.

in the robe to protect him. His belief is in short-term magic, not in long-term Redemption.

Pilate's actual suicide is as in the *Mors Pilati*, even if Tiberius's comments do not appear in the known versions. Other vernacular adaptations vary the death itself, however: the *South English Legendary* inserts a scene in which Pilate begs an apple and knife from the jailer, and kills himself.²⁷ The *post mortem* antics of the corpse are, as indicated, not matched exactly, although the Latin texts do in broad outline show what is in effect a rejection by earth and water before the final fire of hell. The double emergence of the corpse from the ground parodies the Resurrection, of course, and indeed also the apocalyptic vision of the graves opening.

The final comments in the Cornish *Mors Pilati* section by the four devils belong strictly to the *Ordinalia* and to medieval drama as a whole, rather than to Latin apocrypha. The diabolical council (of Lucifer, Satan and Beelzebub) appears regularly in the cycle, gleeful when Adam is carried off to hell in the *Origo Mundi*, and complaining about their error of judgement in setting Pilate upon Christ at the end of the *Passio*. In the *Resurrexio*, the torturers comment that many devils ("mur dewolow", *RD* 2299) have carried Pilate off, and the three senior devils have a series of quatrains or eight-line stanzas in a distinctive abab pattern summarising Pilate's fate, just as they summarised the events of the divine economy of history at the end of the *Passio*. Most of this diabolical chorus – their last appearance in the play – is solemn (with the repeated motif of Pilate's song: "the cane a vyth goef" ("Thy song shall be 'woe is me!'" *RD* 2350, cf. 2313). Only the ending, sung presumably in falsetto by the junior devil Tulfryk, is obscene.²⁸

The skill of the dramatist in converting the apocryphal episode into verbal and visual form is clear. For many years, however, the view obtained that this entire section was little more than padding within the play as a whole, something underlined by the separate translations of Halliday and Gasser. Indeed, Cornish drama as a whole suffered from the individual presentation of single sections as if they were quite discrete units. In this case, however, the rejection goes back a long way: Sandys in 1865 said that it had little connexion with the rest of the play, Jenner saw it as an interpolation, a view made canonical in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, Nance thought that it interrupted the action, Longworth dismissed it as padding added later with "uncharacteristic ineptitude" and Halliday even took the view that this was an interlude put in for the benefit of the audience "fatigued by apostles, and faced with the prospect of two hundred lines of Ascension". Markham Harris, however, made a case for its integration, and this was developed fully and indeed conclusively by Jane Bakere in 1980, something noted in reviews.²⁹ Harris and Bakere correctly dismiss the supposed significance

²⁷ d'Evelyn and Mill, p. 705f., vv. 235–8 ('Len me a knyf þis appol to parye').

²⁸ See the notes to Harris's translation, p. 269 on the presumably comic last exit of the devils.

²⁹ W. Sandys, 'On the Cornish Drama', *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall* 1 (1865) 16f.; H. Jenner, 'The Cornish Drama II,' *Celtic Review* 4 (1907/8), 53; A. W. Ward, *The Cambridge History of English Literature V* (Cambridge [1910] repr. 1970[1]), p. 15f.; R. Longworth, *The Cornish Ordinalia* (Cambridge, Mass. 1967), p. 65f. Bakere (see below) cites Nance's views, and Halliday's comments are in *Holy Rood*, p. 65f. For the counter-arguments see Harris's translation, p. 267f., (though he inclines to the view on p. xvii that the section may be a late addition) and in particular Jane Bakere, *The Cornish*

of the Latin rubric; it is not unique in the *Ordinalia* – the Noah episode in the *Origo Mundi* is similarly set off, and we are in any case unclear when the rubric was added. Bakere stresses, too, the fact that the entire action in this section is a parody of the trial of Christ: Pilate is not mocked by his judges, his death is worse than crucifixion, and his quasi-resurrection depends on rejection rather than upon power over death. Pilate, Bakere points out, is the only character unaffected by the redemptive power of Christ, and the incident with the traveller washing his hands (which leads to his death) echoes Pilate's own action. Similarly, Tiberius's somewhat baffled comment that he is unable to find in Pilate '*fout vyth ol yn nep termyn*' ("any fault at any time," *RD* 1851) clearly echoes Pilate's own repeated comments on Christ (*PC* 2030, 2160, 2165, 2215). Pilate is a warning, but his fate points on to the Ascension just as his trial harks back to the Passion. The diabolical chorus, recapitulating what has happened to Pilate, preechoes the angelic chorus which welcomes Christ into heaven and leads Christ to retell the Passion. Just as Tiberius was unaware that Pilate had on the seamless robe, the angels fail at first to recognise Christ in the garments of Bosra (in the liturgical echoes of Isaiah 63: 1–3) throughout their lyrical dialogue with Christ in six-line and metrically varied strophes which differ from those used by the devils.³⁰

The importance of the episode, however, also argues against its being a mere interpolation. Not only do specific events within the section link with details of what has gone before and what is still to come, forming a dramatic bridge between the Resurrection and Ascension, and providing at the same time a contrast of interest before the final triumph, but the passage as a whole underlines the theme of Redemption in the *Ordinalia* as a whole. The story is of Pilate, and the simple satisfaction at his end should not be under-estimated in popular drama. But the first part is a story not of Pilate but of Tiberius, an exemplum of secular authority converted by the image of Christ because he came too late (one of the points emphasised in the Latin *Mors Pilati* and especially in those parallels in which Volusianus takes a long time to reach Judaea) to see any more than an image, just as the audience has done (and in incidental contrast with Thomas, another major figure of the *Resurrexio*). The play offers, in fact, a sequence of models of Redemption through right belief in the figures of the Magdalene, Thomas and Tiberius (and thence to the audience itself), with Judas and Pilate as counters to these. The soteriological emphasis of the narrative is clear in the cure, and the question of belief as the essential feature is part of the contrast between Tiberius and Pilate, whose "salvation" cannot be more than temporary. Finally, the narrative is also that of Veronica, with whom we see what is almost the first hagiographic miracle, although it is her kerchief that effects the emperor's cure. The pivot of the

Ordinalia (Cardiff 1980), pp. 96f. and especially 141–4, endorsed in Andrew Hawke's review in *Studia Celtica* 16/17 (1981/2), 365. I have discussed the question briefly in my chapter on the Cornish drama in R. Beadle (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Medieval English Theatre* (Cambridge 1994) 223–34.

³⁰ Norris, *Drama* ii 188f. notes an irregularity in the metre but refers to only two lines; in fact (apart from a Latin line at *RD* 2528) there is a loose alternation between six-line stanzas ending on a four-syllable with those ending on a seven-syllable line (which rhymes with one of four-syllable) throughout the 'dialogue' between Christ and the angels, *RD* 2481–2570, down to Christ's revelation of his identity in his impressive speech of four or eight line strophes. After this the text returns to six-line strophes, all ending on a seven-syllable line.

whole comes, however, at *RD* 1749–54, a speech in which Veronica makes clear to Tiberius that his cure proves Christ's divinity, and that vengeance must be taken upon Pilate, who killed Christ. This part of the *Ordinalia* stands beside *Beunans Meriasek* as one of the few dramatic works in England concerned with saints. It is no accident that this apocryphal legend-complex, with its three points of emphasis, should have acquired variant titles in its different forms, stressing different characters.

The aim of popular religious drama is to entertain whilst instructing the audience. The *Ordinalia* is not a simple presentation of the Gospel story embellished by legends and apocrypha, but an integrated sweep (in a three-day festival performance, the cumulative power of which must not be under-estimated) of selected and highlighted incidents designed to hold the interest and to provide for satisfaction in the minds of the audience. That selection, however, and the handling of the individual events is essentially parænetic, and even in a single incident such as the *Mors Pilati* the skill of the dramatist in using the outline apocryphal legend is patent. The earlier view that the Cornish plays are of linguistic interest, but dramatically inferior, fortunately no longer holds, but just how skilful the anonymous dramatist of the *Ordinalia* is as playwright and theologian only becomes fully apparent in detailed textual analysis.

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