The *Ordo ad repraesentandum Herodem* from the *Fleury Playbook*: Biblical Reception and Representational Ritual

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The so-called *Fleury Playbook* (Orléans, Bibl. de la Ville, ms 201, pp. 176–243) may – as C. Clifford Flanigan pointed out many years ago[1] – be taken to indicate an early interest in dramaticity as a genre characteristic. The probably twelfth-century collection of ten Latin musical representations consisting of four Saint Nicholas plays, two representations belonging to the Christmas cycle, two to the Easter cycle, a *Conversion of St. Paul* and a *Raising of Lazarus* has been discussed more than most other sources of Latin so-called music drama. Some of these representations show connections to liturgical offices for feasts with which their narratives have obvious links (by using traditional liturgical items as is the case of the texts from the Easter and the Christmas cycles), others (as some of the St Nicholas texts) display no such liturgical links. Generally speaking the collection does not specify a performance context for its texts, but the use of a liturgical item from the relevant feast (or a general liturgical item such as the *Te deum*) may in some cases – with greater or lesser probability – point to a particular position within the services for that day. This situation formed the background for Flanigan's observation. The texts which scholarship since they were discovered in the nineteenth century had understood as "liturgical dramas" were usually found in liturgical books for the Office of the Hours or the Mass, copied into their particular place within the liturgical day. In contrast, the collected ten representations of the *Playbook* seem to belong to completely different parts of the liturgical year (comprising among other days St Nicholas Day (6 December), Epiphany (6 January), Holy Innocents (28 December), Easter Day, Second Easter Day, the Conversion of St Paul (25 January), and possibly the feast of St Lazarus (17 December), mentioned in the order of the texts in the Fleury Playbook. As already stated, a number of these attributions to the calendar are rather uncertain.[2] In other words, the main principle behind the collection is not liturgical. The *Service for Representing Herod* – the *ordo ad*

[1] C. Clifford Flanigan, "The Fleury *Playbook*, the Traditions of medieval Latin Drama, and Modern Scholarship" in Thomas P. Campbell and Clifford Davidson, eds. *The Fleury Playbook: Essays and Studies* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1985), 1–25 (p. 4–15).

[2] See the overview in Campbell and Davidson, eds. *The Fleury Playbook*, Appendix, 164 with page references to Karl Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church* 2 vols (London: Calrendon Press, 1933), where these issues are discussed for each of the ten texts.

repraesentandum herodem – combines the traditional Christmas texts of an *ordo pastorum* (based on Luke 2:8–18) with the narrative of the encounter of the Magi with Herod and the following adoration of the Magi (Matthew 2:1–12) and thus belongs to Epiphany. This is a fairly general situation, a number of medieval Latin representations concerned with the Magi found in liturgical books for Epiphany include an *ordo pastorum*.[3] In the *Playbook* this text is followed by the *ad interfectionem puerorum* (*The Slaughter of the Innocents*), a representation of the narrative connected to Holy Innocents (Matthew 2:13–23).

The idea of the development of modern drama from what was conceived as the dramas of the medieval liturgy is a construction of nineteenth-century scholarship; this idea was – in some respects – critically discussed by O.B. Hardison in his *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages* (1965) whereas the critique of the idea that it was meaningful to understand the medieval texts used in such a context as "dramatic" texts only became an issue later, notably through C. Clifford Flanigan in the 1970s but raised also in a different way by Johann Drumbl a few years later. Flanigan developed a ritual understanding of these texts admitting, at the same time that a dramatic reception of such texts seems to have been in existence in the twelfth century (as indicated above).

In 1861 when Edmond de Coussemaker published his *Drames liturgiques du moyen âge*, he formulated the situation thus:

> In spite of the discovery of important documents during the eighteenth century […], the religious drama was completely unknown; its origin, its real character, and its transformations were ignored. Scarcely thirty years ago, it was still believed […] that the modern dramatic art did not antedate the fourteenth century. At least it seemed to have been asleep for a long time when this branch of national literature and archaeology – as several others in oblivion for too long – finally attracted the attention of scholars.
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> In a memorable course given at the Sorbonne in 1835, Monsieur Magnin, for the first time, gave an account of the various phases of the religious – aristocratic and popular – drama, from the beginnings of Christianity to modern times. This course became a veritable revelation.[4]

[3] Young, II, 59.
[4] E. de Coussemaker, ed. *Drames liturgiques du moyen âge (texte et musique)* (Paris: Librairie archéologique de Victor Didron, 1861), Introduction, v (my translation).

The question of genre assumptions in the early – and even modern – history of "liturgical drama" scholarship constitutes an important problem.[5] I shall try o elucidate this through the so-called *Sponsus* from the miscellany manuscript Pa 1139 (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale ms lat. 1139, ff. 53r–55v) copied just around 1100. This representation of the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matthew 25, 1–13) has been received by modern scholarship as a "dramatic text", even by those cautious in their use of this concept for the early layers of *quem queritis* ceremonies (for Easter morning).[6] In the manuscript, there is absolutely no indication of a performance context or even in what social environment it might have been performed.

In the following I (mainly) refer to the text edition (and translation) of Peter Dronke. The manuscript seems to be corrupt in places, rubrics are seemingly missing (or misleading, maybe because of others that are missing) and it is not easy to know what "genre" one is dealing with. The manuscript does not give much help for such a discussion. The word *Sponsus* is given on the bottom of f. 53r (abbreviated) on the same line where the first song begins (*Adest Sponsus qui est Christus*). At the end of the representation (f. 55v), there is another rubric (*Modo accipiant eas demones et precipitentur in infernum*) and towards the end also a rubric indicating the arrival of the bridegroom at the point when his condemnation of the Foolish Virgins begins (also f. 55v, but editorially moved by Dronke so that it stands before the lines of the Foolish Virgins beginning *Audi sponse voces plangentium…*(see to this further below); the manuscript places the rubric after this prayer).[7] These are the only rubrics indicating that something more than singing takes place. Other rubrics are all ascriptions of songs to persons of the narrative. This does not necessarily mean that the text was not staged, of course. On the other hand, the staging indications are weak enough that

[5] Flanigan, op.cit; C. Clifford Flanigan, "Comparative Literature and the Study of Medieval Drama" in *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* 35 (1986), 56–104, see also Claus Clüver, "On Genres: Their Construction, Function, Transformation, and Transposition" in Nils Holger Petersen, Mette Birkedal Bruun, Eyolf Østrem, and Jens Fleischer, eds. *The Cultural Heritage of Medieval Rituals: Genre and Ritual* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2004 forthcoming), 29–48.

[6] Thus Susan Rankin, "Liturgical drama" in Richard Crocker and David Hiley, eds. *The Early Middle Ages to 1300*. The New Oxford History of Music II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 310–56 (pp. 325 and 348). See also Young, II, 1933, 361_69; David Hiley, *Western Plainchant* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 194 and 267; Peter Dronke, ed., "*Sponsus*: *The Bridegroom*, from Limoges", in *Nine medieval Latin plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 3_23; Lynette R. Muir, *The biblical drama of medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge Unievrsity Press, 1995), 29 and 261; Michel Zink, "Les deux sens du *Sponsus*: La leçon de la glose et le langage du drame", Revue de Musicologie 86 (2000), 29_35; Nils Holger Petersen, "Les planctus d'Abélard et la tradition des drames liturgiques" in Jean Jolivet et Henri Habrias, eds. *Pierre Abélard: Colloque international de Nantes* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2003), 267_76 (p. 273).

[7] Dronke, 1994, 20. See n. 15, below.

one may also well assume that only a very limited amount of actual role playing was carried out and that the representational devices aside from role ascriptions of songs (which, in the manuscript as it has often been pointed out, are not carefully or systematically carried out) may have been very rudimentary.

In any case, the question must be raised whether the staging of the "text" was of any importance for the scribe or the institution for which it was copied. Nothing points to any special awareness of this being a "drama" unless we identify "dramatic" with "representational". The point of a distinction here is not made in order to give any special definition of what "drama" ought to be at the time. On the contrary, the reason to be careful is precisely that it is not necessarily meaningful to operate with a concept of drama in this context. Having in mind the anachronicity of Karl Young's interpretive approach (involving the concept of "impersonation"), it seems reasonable – at least at first – to avoid preconceived genre notions as much as possible. The notion of representation is, of course, also a modern concept (although – as the opening rubric of the "Herod" makes it clear – a notion also used at the time of the Fleury *Playbook*). In the first place, the notion is much broader than "drama" and carries much less traditional weight of interpretation. It does, at the same time – at least in its modern use –seem to be applicable to much wider practices within the church celebrations of the Middle Ages and even the Antiquity than the so-called "dramatic" practices (for instance the use of narratives in readings and songs in all known church rituals, and the processional practices since the fourth century). For the time before the fourth Lateran Council (1215), Michal Kobialka has interpreted the so-called dramatic practices of the Church as experimentations with how to represent the body of Christ in the liturgy, claiming that at this time such a concept (of representation) was not stable but was negotiated through these practices.[8]

The means chosen to represent the parable involve the narrative construction, the attribution of lines to various persons of the narrative, and the construction of the songs with regard to music and

[8] Michal Kobialka, *This Is My Body: Representational Practices in the Early Middle Ages* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999). For the drama concept of Karl Youn g, and further discussions of the concept of drama in this connection, see O.B. Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1965), essay 1. Recently, I have discussed these issues, also in the light of Kobialka's work in some published papers: "The Representational Liturgy" in Nigel Hiscock, ed. *The White Mantle of Churches: Architecture, Liturgy, and Art Around the Millenium* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 107–117, and "*Danielis ludus* and the Latin Music Dramatic Traditions of the Middle Ages" in László Dobszay, ed. *The Past in the Present: papers Read at the IMS Intercongressional Symposium and the 10th*

words. The latter involves _ not surprisingly _ features common to the new songs which appear at just that time (and are represented in the very same manuscript to a high degree), the so-called *nova cantica*: syllable counting and accents; rhymes, formal parallelisms of paired lines, refrains, and regularity of melodic phrases.[9] This has been noted for the Latin text by Peter Dronke, indicating the opening song (lines 1_10, f. 53r+v), by Dronke attributed to *Ecclesia*, as 4p + 4p + 7pp. Similarly, this is so for the Latin part of the concluding words of Christ (lines 83_84, f. 55v) which are not neumed (just like his concluding lines in the vernacular, 85_88). Dronke further points out that all the remaining Latin strophes are composed of 4 + 6pp verses and that the composition of strophes wholly made up of such verses seems to be a feature of the eleventh century, with the *Sponsus* being among the earliest examples.[10] He also notes that the vernacular verses generally are 4 + 6 lines thus corresponding to the majority of the Latin verses (although without their systematic pp). The repeated use of only few melodies confirms this impression.

The use of refrains in certain parts of the representation is interesting and has been thought by some scholars to be problematic. This is connected to the distribution of lines among the persons of the narrative. Fundamentally, the narrative follows the biblical account, but there are certain differences. It is not surprising that the short parable has been extended and that there have been made lines for the merchant to whom the Foolish Virgins must go to try (in vain as it turns out) to get the oil they desperately need. Also other parts of the brief narrative have been elaborated.

In the parable all fall asleep, Wise and Foolish alike. The difference in the parable is that the Wise have made provisions to have enough oil whereas the Foolish have not. The Foolish, of course, ask the Wise for help when the bridegroom is coming at midnight, but these refuse by the rational argument that there wouldn't be enough for them all. So the Foolish Virgins have to go to the merchant, and in the meantime the bridegroom comes and thus the end of the parable where the Foolish Virgins are not admitted to the wedding (Matthew 25:12). In the *Sponsus*, however, there is no mention of the Wise Virgins falling asleep. The Archangel Gabriel is not mentioned by any rubric in the manuscript but is made clear as the author of the lines 11_27 through a remark in line

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Meeting of the Cantus Planus. Budapest & Visegrád, 2000 (2 vols. (Budapest: Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, 2003), II, 291–307.

[9] See Andreas Haug, "Ritual and Repetition: The Ambiguities of Refrains" in Nils Holger Petersen, Mette Birkedal Bruun, Jeremy Llewellyn, and Eyolf Østrem, eds. *The Appearances of Medieval Rituals: The Play of Construction and Modification* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004 forthcoming), 47–60.

[10] Dronke, 1994, 10, (p = paroxytone, pp = proparoxytone)

25: *Gabriels soi* ("I am Gabriel"). Both his exhortational refrain *Gaire noi dormet* ("Don't fall asleep") and the refrain repeated throughout the exchanges of strophes between the foolish and the Wise Virgins: *dolentas, chaitivas, trop i avem dormit* ("We, wretched in our grief, have slept too long") correspond to the (editorial) conclusion in Matthew 25:13 (clearly not the narrative point of the parable, however, since all have fallen asleep). The biblical narrative point of having enough oil is not taken up in the *Sponsus*. In both the biblical narrative and the *Sponsus*, of course, the Foolish Virgins are not allowed to enter the wedding hall in the end. Not having enough oil for the arrival of the bridegroom they are referred (in vain) to the merchants to purchase oil. The Wise Virgins are nowhere reproached for their sleeping, so the most obvious reading is that only the Foolish Virgins fell asleep and that the lack of oil was a consequence of their having fallen asleep (with their lamps lit); this is not made clear, however.[11]

Dronke, in his reading of the text, emphasizes the very sharp rejection which the Foolish Virgins get from the Wise Virgins and also the general focus on the prayers of the Foolish Virgins to the extent that he sees these as subversive figures with respect to the official biblical church morale of the parable. For him, the Foolish Virgins have turned into the heroes of the representation:

> … this playwright gives full emotional weight to the vulnerable victims, and shows the ugliness of the well-provided, who can 'endure to the end'. At the same time he faces the harshness of the parable without extenuation: he dwells on it unflinchingly, or even heightens it, establishing a keen tension between the human perspective and the divine. He lets the Foolish Virgins show a contrition and repentance for their negligence (54_6) that has no equivalent in the gospel, and that, if it were thought through in theological terms, would ensure their pardon. He then gives an even more contemptuous vernacular strophe to the Wise Virgins (63_5), who, as they see their sisters making their way to the Merchants, are determined to be rid of these importunate siblings once and for all.[12]

Consider the exchanges between the Foolish and the Wise Virgins: the mentioned sorrowful refrain of the Foolish Virgins is given after each of their lines (only omitted in the strophe of the merchants, lines 67_74). In the parable narrative construction, this refrain would – in principle – be

[11] Dronke lines 32_76. See the different understandings in Dronke, 1994, 4_6, and Zink, 2000, 30_33.
[12] Dronke, 1994, 6.

as relevant for the Wise Virgins as for the Foolish, and one might consider whether it could have been intended to have been sung by both groups in the *Sponsus*. On the other hand, this would seem to not work in the mentioned narrative build-up of the *Sponsus*. For Zink, this raises the question whether Coussemaker was justified in his emendation as he changed the *avem* in the refrain to an *avet* ("we have" into "you have") when it seems to belong to the Wise Virgins although there are no indications of such a difference in the manuscript (indicating the refrain by the same incipit throughout.[13]

This may be one place where a preconceived idea of genre complicates matters. Taking as one's point of departure that the *Sponsus* is a "drama" may trigger a demand for roles and dramaturgical consistency which is informed by later understandings of what constitutes a dramatic text. The way the manuscript was copied does not point in such a direction. The role ascriptions may all just have been put in to clarify whose voice in the narrative we would be hearing in the following song. Nothing indicates that the refrain has to be a part of a "dramatic line" for either of the groups or that it is necessarily sung in alternation by them. Could it possibly have been read as a more general response, acknowledging that the congregation or audience also should participate in the contrition and repentance shown by the Foolish Virgins? Could these have been seen to represent not just the biblical figures but maybe some kind of "everyman" in need of redemption and in danger of damnation?

If so, the seeming problem of a "dramatic" inconsistency disappears. So does the urgency of the rather emotional reading of Peter Dronke. Similarly, it seems unnecessary to discuss _ as does Dronke _ which person sings the opening lines (1_10). Dronke demonstrates that it cannot be Gabriel who is talking here and consequently proposes *Ecclesia* as the relevant character.[14] But if we leave the idea of a "drama" why should a specific dramatic role be assigned these very general lines joyfully summarizing the Christian gospel in an eschatological perspective?

The deplacement of the rubric announcing the arrival of the Sponsus also seems unnecessary if we are not thinking in terms of a dramatic representation on a scene. For Dronke the necessity (which is

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[13] Zink, 2000, 32. Cf. Edmond de Coussemaker, ed., *Drames liturgiques du Moyen Âge* (Paris: Librairie archéologique de Victor Didron, 1861), 1_10, here 4_5, 8_9.

[14] Dronke, 1999, 3, since the "person" includes himself among those redeemed by Christ (lines 6 and 8). Oppositely, Zink, 2000, 31.

not explained) would seem to come from the fact that the Foolish Virgins need to address the bridegroom when they say their ultimate prayer, *Audi sponse*. But since the bridegroom has from the outset been identified with Christ, his presence is not a problem at all. And he might just as well either simply have been announced in the manuscript when he had to sing or _ possibly _ even have come in at that point in order to answer the prayer of the Foolish Virgins.[15]

The *Sponsus* follows the overall structure of the parable closely. On the other hand, as Peter Dronke has rightly observed, it has a much sharper tone. The Foolish Virgins are uncomfortably human and easy to identify with. They are treated in a way which is well suited either to make the listener, congregation, or audience indignant of the seemingly arbitrary way their ultimate fate is decided _ the point that Dronke makes but which I would tend to fear has a slightly anachronistic touch to it _ or to make the listener, congregation, or audience feel that this could easily happen to me too. In a brief remark about the *Sponsus* in connection with a discussion of the lamentations of Pierre Abélard, I have claimed that it is not necessary to see the identification of the bridegroom with Christ (made in the very first line of the *Sponsus*) in terms of the Youngian concept of impersonation. It may very well simply be a means of making the allegorical understanding of the narrative (and thus its anagogical implications) explicit. The intention in doing so could be to let a congregation, audience, or listener to the songs _ in whatever way possible _ experience a spiritual transfer to the (transcendent) place where the scene must take place.[16] This is not necessarily a "dramatic" technique. It would seem rather to be a ritual technology, if I take as a point of departure for a practical definition of a ritual the idea that the ritual should bridge the basic theoretical understanding of life or fundamental (religious) ideology and the practical life experiences of the participants in the ritual (leaning on formulations by Clifford Geertz).[17] By a technology of identification, emotionally and through the everyday narrative content, the parable and maybe even more the representation transposes listeners to a situation where they are confronted with a situation

[15] Dronke, 1994, 20, before line 80. Young, II, 364 (n. 4) claims that there is one more indication of the *modo veniat sponsus* in the extreme left margin at this place (to which he also moved the rubric from its place in the body of the text). This is not to be seen in the microfilm of the (full) manuscript page that I have seen, and Dronke does not mention such an indication. Neither does Coussemaker whose transcription accords with my reading of the ms.

[16] See my "Les planctus d'Abélard…", 273.

[17] See Clifford Geertz: *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 112_13. See also Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 27.
Compare Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 159_64, 224, and my discussion of this in my "introduction" to Petersen, Bruun, Østrem, and Fleischer, *The Cultural Heritage of medieval Rituals: Genre and Ritual*, 7–27.

not to be understood. A relevant biblical context to this may be the parable, Matthew 25:31–46, about the judgement of the World where no one present, whether sentenced to Hell or invited into Heaven, ultimately understands why. The parable _ as its representation in the *Sponsus* _ calls for a certain anxious energy in being awake and keeping the lamp filled with oil.

This points more in the direction of a ritual participation than a play for an audience, also if Peter Dronke may be right in suggesting that there is something grotesque about the demons mentioned towards the end.[18] Whether a halfways or completely comical or critical or _ oppositely _ serious attempt at a ritual transposition of the listeners to the Final Judgement, this could be seen to respond to traditional rituals of the early Middle Ages where _ as Flanigan has argued _ the congregation of St Martial in the tenth century during the trope version of a *quem queritis* ceremony before the introit to the Easter Day Mass may be understood to have been spiritually transposed to the Heavenly Throne in order to witness the return of the resurrected Son to the Father.[19] The *Sponsus* may do something similar in a way which seems to correspond to basic features of the *nova cantica*: in a way which is playful in formal respects. Just as the "new song" exhibits features which a modern observer would readily interpret as artistic, it also does so in a playful interaction with traditional rituals which form the stable background for the unfolding of this "new song" as this has been emphasized by Andreas Haug recently (see above).

Using the terminology of the Old Testament exegete André LaCocque and the theologian-philosopher Paul Ricœur, the *Sponsus* may be said to form part of the foreground of Matthew 25:1–13 since it constitutes a reception of this biblical text. The idea of the foreground of a text – the readings which in interpretive communities (as for instance particular congregations or religious groups or traditions) are added to the commonly accepted understanding of a text – may be characterized as a reader response oriented parallel to the idea of the "background" of a text.[20]

Obviously, the preserved representations of the Magi and the Shepherds (including the "Herod" of the Fleury *Playbook*) belong to the foreground of the biblical narratives of Luke 2 and Matthew 2 (as indicated above). In contrast to the situation with the *Sponsus*, however, we're here dealing with

[18] Dronke, 1999, 9.
[19] C. Clifford Flanigan, "The Liturgical Context of the *Quem Queritis* Trope" in *Comparative Drama* 8 (1974), 45-62 (pp. 57-60). See also my "Representational Liturgy…" (p. 113).

a situation where we have preserved several different (but fairly similar) versions (although not nearly in numbers as in the case of the Easter dialogues, but enough that a special traditional core of items has been constructed for preserved texts of this kind).[21]

Comparing the Fleury *Herod* to another Magi ceremony – British Library, ms. Add. 23922, ff 8v–11r, from Strassburg Münster, copied in the early thirteenth century – both confirms the idea of a core and puts some question marks on the usefulness of this idea. Certainly, the transmission of the magi ceremonies (and those concerning the adoration of the shepherds) – just as in the case of the corresponding Easter texts – has been one of transmitted elements composed together, sometimes including more rare (maybe even newly composed) items in traditional, yet individual ways.

In the case of the Fleury text, there is first a full representation of the shepherd narrative (Luke 2:8–18) which includes in a traditional way a dialogue between the shepherds and two women who keep watch over the manger which is shaped in a way resembling the Easter dialogue *quem queritis in sepulchro*.[22] The "scene" concludes (unusually) in an invitation to the *populum* (standing around) to participate in the adoration. At this point the magi appear (at a different place); there are a number of rubrics in this text more or less precisely indicating places and directions – also making it clear that the performance is to take place in a church. Here the traditional core (as constructed by Smoldon) begins. Very soon it is supplemented by a rich and unique version which gives a detailed account of how the magi come to Jerusalem, how they ask for directions, are led to King Herod and in a dialogue with him reveal who they are and what they want while the King gets his learned scribes to find information from the Old Testament, their answer being reflected through a

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[20] André LaCocque and Paul Ricoeur, *Thinking Biblically* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998), see introduction.

[21] See, William L. Smoldon, *The Music of the Medieval Church Dramas* ed. posthumously by Cynthia Bourgeault (London: Oxford University Press, 1980), 127–29.

[22] Cf. Young, II, 3–29. And see the edition of the words of the Fleury text in Young, II, 84–89, and his discussion of the "play" ibid, 89–92. Also the edition with English translation in David Bevington, ed. *Medieval Drama* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1975), 57–66. Part of this text (only the shepherds' part) is edited in Susan K. Rankin, *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama in France and in England* 2 vols. (London: Garland, 1989), II, 120–21. The whole of the magi representation (words and music) is transcribed diplomatically in Noah Greenberg and William L. Smoldon, eds. *The Play of Herod* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965) followed by the Innocents' text (also from Fleury), 82–91. The edition primarily gives a rhythmicized performance edition of these two "plays" but also includes a small facsimile of the manuscript pages. Campbell and Davidson, eds. *The Fleury Playbook* contain a facsimile of the whoel Playbook. And Coussemaker, ed. 1861, has edited the words and music, 143–65.

traditional Christmas (or advent) antiphon, *Bethleem, non es minima* (based on the quotation from Micah 5:1 in Matthew 2:6).[23]

While Herod (as in the biblical narrative) tries to fool the magi to come back after visiting the child in Bethlehem (with the intention of killing his rival as it becomes clear later in the story), they proceed following the star and arriving at the manger where they meet the shepherds who are now returning from their adoration. Here follows what would seem to be the climax of the representation (and the biblical narrative) as they (after a brief exchange with the midwifes to whom they present themselves as kings from the East, although they have also done so at Herod's court) arrive at the child whom they adore and to whom they hand over their traditional gifts (as in the Bible text). They are warned in their sleep by an angel and return by another way (again just as in the biblical text) chanting the Christmas antiphon, *O admirabile commercium*.[24] They end in the choir of the church where the cantor intones the *Te deum*.

The Strassburg version is much shorter and copied in what is described as a processional by Walter Lipphardt.[25] It is placed between the Magnificat (for Vespers) at the Octave of Epiphany and the feast of St Hilarius (28 February) which – as Young mentions – gives many possibilities for the execution of this representation (if it was determined).[26]

In this representation the magi begin with the same (traditional) items as they begin their first appearance in the Fleury version, the *Stella fulgore nimio rutilat* ("This star radiates with exceeding splendour).[27] In a similar narrative construction (with overlapping blocks, but some times different lines and some times the order of certain lines different in the two versions), the representation goes on to show the magi at King Herod's court. The biblical antiphon (*Bethleem, non es minima*) is also used in the Strassburg version but the rage of Herod after this in the Fleury version is not matched in the Strassburg manuscript. The versions are similar in idea and general construction, but different enough that it is impossible to imagine one to be a direct reception of the other or both of one and

[23] R.-J. Hesbert, ed. *Corpus Antiphonlium Officii*. 6 vols. (Roma: Casa editrice Herder, 1963–79) , III, 89 (no. 1737).
[24] Hesbert, III, 362 (no. 3985).
[25] Walter Lipphardt, ed. *Lateinische Osterfeiern und Osterspiele* , 9 vols. (Berlin: Walther de Gruyter, 1975-90), VI, 451.
[26] Young, II, 68 suggesting (because of the seeming freedom in the placement) as a possibility the end of Matins for Epiphany (because of the concluding *Te deum*).

the same third version.[28] They are clearly different texts constructed by means of the same kind of narrative and representational techniques and the use of traditional (some times the exact same) elements, but often going each their way. Both fill out the biblical scheme and remain completely faithful to the text. The meeting between the magi and the shepherds is narratively the same but shaped differently (in the individual lines). From the encounter of the magi with the midwives, however, the two versions are again on common ground (and basically agreeing with the core version of Smoldon). At the very end, however – after the warning of the angel – the Strassburg version gives a very brief indication of what would otherwise be included in the traditional representation of the slaughter of the innocent children of Bethlehem: Two abrupt lines move the scene back to Herod's court where he is told that the magi have deluded him by going back a different way. Here the King lets loose his rage, *incendium meum ruina extinguam* (f. 11r).[29] Both these lines are found in the Fleury *Ad interfectionem puerorum*.[30] The Strassbrug ms does not give a representation of the slaying of the innocent children so one could take this to simply be an extremely short indication of that representational tradition. But my point is another.

In terms of the biblical foreground the two versions discussed here provide overlapping contributions where, however, the Fleury manuscript version is clearly more concerned with the staging and the physical arrangements in the church of the representation. Thus it is a witness to the conscious development of an emphasis on a special and bodily oriented foreground to the biblical text. The Strassburg version has no indications of action at all or of movement, all rubrics only indicate who is singing, whereas for instance the Fleury ceremony specifies that Herod in his anger throws the biblical book to the ground at the point where his scribes have just read about Bethlehem.[31]

Even so, the Fleury text is by no means more removed from the biblical or the liturgical traditions. It is in no way marked by a wish to move away from a representation of the details of the biblical story. No other narrative additions than in the Strassburg version are found (and they are all traditional and found in many such texts as the editions of Karl Young show). The emphasis on

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[27] Ms. Add. 23922, f. 8v. Young, II, 64, Bevington, 1975, 58. The translation is quoted from Bevington.
[28] Also the music of the Strassburg version – which is given in adiastematic neumes – seems mostly to be traditional when the lines are found in other places, see Smoldon, 1980, 200.
[29] Young, II, 66.
[30] Bevington, 1975, 67–72 (p. 68), Greenberg and Smoldon, 93.
[31] Bevington, 1975, 63.

traditional items of liturgical praising is just as high in the Fleury version as in the Strassburg. So the interest in "drama" in the Fleury book has not – in this case – led to a foreground which has moved away from the devotional framework of this type of ceremony. A ritual function may be seen in the way the shepherds (as mentioned) invite the congregation to participate and – as in the *Sponsus* and as in the St Martial *quem queritis* – in the way the onlookers may be led to be present at the very moment when the magi (and similarly the moments earlier when the Angel announced the birth of Christ and the adoration of the shepherds) thus establishing a mental transposition of the participants in the ceremony to the "actual" places of the underlying myth belonging to Christmas and Epiphany. This would seem to be the same in both versions. But in the Fleury version, the processional movements – at least as the Fleury manuscript was copied – forms a much more clear invitation to such a mental transposition and identification with the adoration of the original participants in the wonsdrous mythical events than does the Strassburg ceremony.

The figure of Herod and his contrast to the focus on adoration and praise (both in the biblical text and the two representations) mainly can be seen to have the function of indicating how God makes sure to lead his flock to the true adoration even in spite of evil and of contradictory circumstances, a point which would no doubt also invite identification from individual participants.

What both representations – and this whole tradition it seems – adds to the biblical narrative is mainly the actual carrying out of the praising. Whereas the biblical narrative can only tell about the praises, the representation can carry them out. This is done – in the same way as such representational techniques are found for instance in the Easter representations – concretely. Here representation turns into to a traditional ritual mode *hic et nunc* just as it would usually be experienced in any church ceremony where the praising would constitute an open passage between Heaven and Earth.[32]

Whether one should call the Strassburg version and/or the Fleury versions dramas is an open question. The continuity from the biblical narrative to representations which some times emphasize physical movement and spatial set-ups (at least as it is reflected in manuscripts) shows how this foreground also contains elements of finely nuanced ways of representing a biblical text; this seems to be a more adequate description than to talk in straight forward terms about dramatization.

[32] See the discussions of this aspect in my "Danielis ludus", as well as in my forthcoming Carolingian Music, Ritual, and Theology in Petersen, Bruun, Llewellyn, and Østrem, eds. *The Appearances of Medieval Rituals*, 15–30.

Certainly, there are features which are in continuity with a later idea of drama. But certainly, there are just as many features to point at which emphasize the devotional ritual representation of the biblical text, allowing members of a congregation to engage vividly – but in a traditional "liturgical" way with foundational mythic narratives basic to the (both theoretical and practical) contemporary understanding of Life. What one might see here, is how a biblical narrative and a ritual is transformed – with small additions and changes in elements of the foreground – supplementing it in ways which we may see as both dramatic (seen in continuity with a much larger and chronologically far away foreground) or (in a shorter perspective) as devotional and ritual.

How the medieval representational parts of the foreground of such biblical narratives were perceived by their "original" congregations we have no way of telling except through (modern) readings of these pieces belonging to the foreground as I have tried to do here.