

# The Medieval Period, Day Nineteen

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*Second Shepherds' Pageant* or  
Edible Babies?

# Final Exam

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Our final has been scheduled for

■ Monday, December 18, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

# *Second Shepherds' Pageant*

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- This pageant is known as one of the 'Towneley' plays, so called because the Towneley family owned the manuscript containing the plays for a long time.
- The date of Towneley manuscript is debated—it was created some time between 1422 and 1530, most likely between 1485 and 1530. The collection of plays is probably an accretion over time.
- Linguistic and historic evidence shows the plays originated within the West Riding of Yorkshire, some surely within the manor of Wakefield—hence the designation of the plays as the 'Wakefield Cycle'

# Connections between the York register and Towneley manuscript?

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- 5 of the Towneley plays contain 4 guild names in later marginalia
- 5 of the Towneley plays are parallel in subject to plays in the York Register manuscript
- 3 others are metrically linked to York plays

# Speaking of metrics...

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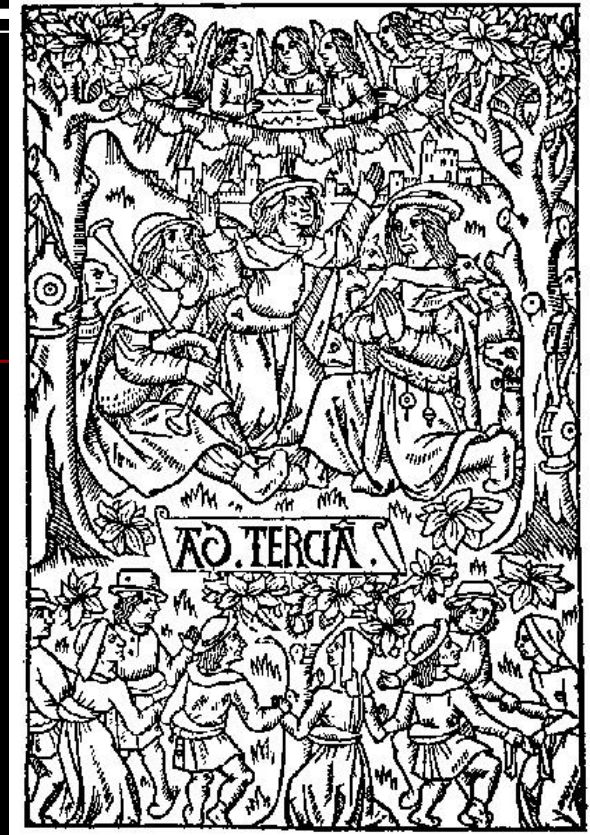
There is a scholarly debate over the verse form of the “Wakefield stanza”—is it nine or thirteen lines?

Look at the image of the manuscript. Martin Stevens has suggested that writing the stanza as if it were nine lines long was a device to save space and that the stanza is really thirteen lines.

Why does identifying this special verse form matter?

# This play was brought to you by the number... Three?

- 3 shepherds, 3 soliloquies, 3 gifts...  
3 families?
- Mak, Gil, baby sheep (human children)
- Mary (Joseph) Jesus
- God the father, son, holy ghost



Whether or not we interpret the characters as figural in this sense, clearly there are intentional parallels between human and divine activities—between the two not quite human babies (“little day stars” 577, 727), between the different kinds of songs, between the different discoveries made in the course of adoration...

# Puns and Piety?

## ■ *agnes dei* in a manger



As I am true and leal, to God here I pray  
That this be the first meal that I shall eat this day (521-2)

I pray to God so mild,  
If ever I you beguiled,  
That I can eat this child  
That lies in this cradle. (535-8)

# A complex simplicity...

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What is the effect of beginning with individual monologues rather than, say, a group all talking with one another?

What makes the character of Mak different from the shepherds? See his first entrance on page 85-6.

What is the place of magic (88) and of dreams (91-2) in this play?

What are the gender dynamics in this play?



# The Wheatley Cycle!

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So called because it will be performed *here*!

No additional reading for Thursday—just preparations for performing.

We will spend the rest of our time in class in groups working on the 5 minute scenes.

Tomorrow, these six groups will present two different dramatic interpretations of three significant scenes (A and B).

In keeping with today's national activity, we will VOTE tomorrow to determine the single group that assisted class learning most with its performance. The members of that group will have extra participation credit added to their final grades.

What are our criteria for judging the performances?

Energy, Enthusiasm, Clear Pronunciation, Memorization, Movement, Use of Costumes and Props...etc.

# The Groups:

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## Group 1A

Mak--Jessica Cronin

Wife (Gill)--Sharon Biggie

1 Shepherd (Coll)--David Mount

2 Shepherd (Gib)--Ed Callahan

3 Shepherd (Daw)--Jake Tavakoli

## Group 1B

Mak--Jake Tavakoli

Wife (Gill)--Sharon Biggie

1 Shepherd (Coll)--Denez McAdoo

2 Shepherd (Gib)--Roger Johnston

3 Shepherd (Daw)--Bob Waldron

## Group 3A

Angelus--Nell Taylor

1 Shepherd, aka Pastor (Coll)--Nora Walsh

2 Shepherd (Gib)--Hillary Carollo

3 Shepherd (Daw)--Caitlin Coleran

## Group 2A

Mak--John Curley

Wife (Gill)--Molly Kelleher

1 Shepherd (Coll)--Crystal Cuneo

2 Shepherd (Gib)--Winne Yam

3 Shepherd (Daw)--Keith Flaherty

## Group 2B

Mak--Chris Campbell

Wife (Gill)--Michelle Antoni

1 Shepherd (Coll)--Daniel Noel

2 Shepherd (Gib)--Sebastien Jean

3 Shepherd (Daw)--Joy Holiday

Note: the Latin word “Pastor” means “Shepherd” and the Latin word “Uxor” means Wife—if there are any confusions about the Latin character designations, check the lines against your Cawley edition.