

The Word made land: Incarnationalism and the spatial poetics and pragmatics of largesse in medieval Cornish drama

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Abstract

The presence of local Cornish place-names in medieval Cornish drama on biblical themes is perhaps the most salient feature of these texts. This paper suggests that the deployment of place-names from the locality of performance must be understood in the context of textual largesses for good or evil services from which these localities take on moral valuations. Within the context of a semiotic ideology of medieval realism, gifts of Cornish land in biblical drama thus serves metapragmatically to mediate between cosmological order of the text and the actual order of the context of performance, strongly regimenting the possible contexts of performance and imbuing the context with transcendent values. The parochial locality of the plays is thus performatively transformed by opposing the immediate locality of performance (associated with good biblical characters) to more distant regions (associated with evil biblical characters). [Pragmatics, drama, performance, semiotics, ideology, anthropology of space, place names, landscape.]

Ideologies of incarnationalism and place-naming in medieval Cornish drama

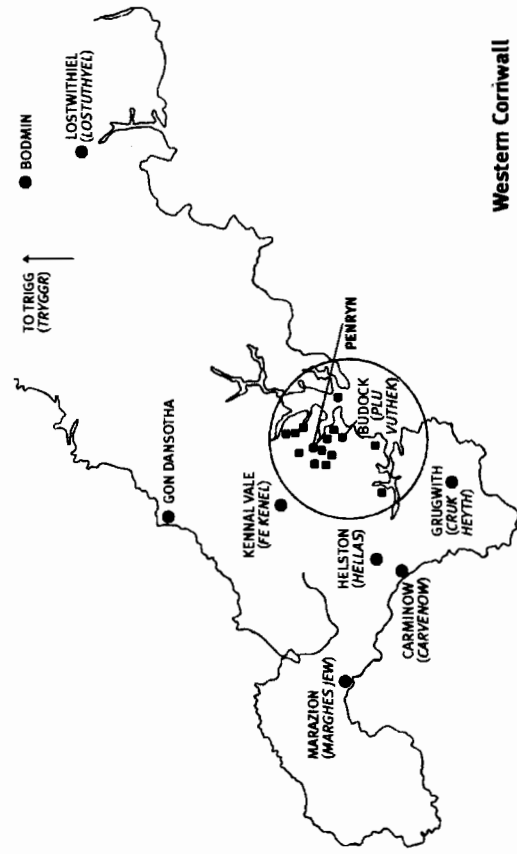
Recent work on medieval biblical drama has emphasized the way that this and other medieval genres are informed by a specific form of semiotic ideology of 'incarnationalism' (Gibson 1989; O'Connell 1995; and more generally Parmentier 1997, Bedos-Rezak 2000). Incarnationalism refers to the ways in which the centrality of the semiotic moment of Christ's incarnation informed various genres of late medieval life, theatrical (O'Connell 1995) as well as liturgical [such as the Eucharist (Gibson 1989; Parmentier 1997)] and civic [the royal advent (Kipling 1998)], among others (Bedos-Rezak 2000). Medieval biblical drama did not merely represent in performance distanced textual events, but 'embodied and enacted the central myths of the culture' (O'Connell 1995: 82). As O'Connell argues, the rise of

medieval drama as genre (both within liturgy and in general) can be tied to the rise of the importance of this ideological thematization of the incarnation in the twelfth century, 'the new interest in corporeality is intimately involved with [the dramatic] mode of representation' (O'Connell 1995: 69). Similarly, the intense antipathy of Reformation iconoclasts toward medieval religious drama as being a kind of 'idolatry' is a manifestation of a change from medieval incarnationism to Reformation 'textualization of God's body, the turning of the incarnation (and the devotions and ritual practices associated with it) from expression in physical and material ways to predominantly textual and verbal modes' (O'Connell 1995: 63; for parallel 'textualizing' ideologies of the period, see Bauman 1983). The differing readings of the incarnation were particularly important for drama because biblical drama in particular typically portrayed aspects of the incarnation itself and associated sacraments, and specifically these were singled out as being beyond the limits of dramatic representation by early Reformation decrees (O'Connell 1995: 65–66; White 1997: 139–140). Such an 'entextualizing' semiotic ideology, stressing the autonomy of texts from their contextualizations in performance, would have as its corollary a purely *representational* and *secular* drama, with a clear division between text and context, likewise transcendental and historical, absent from drama in the incarnationist mode (for 'entextualization' and 'contextualization', see Bauman and Briggs 1990). From such a 'textualizing' semiotic perspective, medieval drama comes to be viewed as being defective in various ways other than its idolatry, as lacking clear and absolute divisions between ritual efficacy and dramatic representation (Hardison 1965, Schechner 1977: 122–124; Davidson 1991, Enders 1992: 3), audience and performers (Tomasch 1987; King 1987; Diller 1989), discursive universes of audience and narrative (Kolve 1966; Tomasch 1987; Diller 1989), often taken to be definitional of drama (as an ahistorical typological category) in general (Schechner 1977; Beeman 1993: 378–380). Indeed, it might be said that the anti-ritualism and anti-incarnationism of the Reformation has as its *historical* product our modern *typological* opposition between ritual and drama, giving some historical perspective on the otherwise ahistorical dialectic between these forms posited by Schechner (1977: 120ff). In this article, I will take 'incarnationism' and 'textualization' as historically positioned and opposed semiotic ideologies (Parmentier 1997, Bedos-Rezak 2000), which, like language ideologies (Woolard and Schieffelin 1994), regiment (regulate) the production and interpretation of signs, in particular such semiotic entities as genres of performance.

Nothing illustrates this 'incarnationism' in medieval drama better than the pervasive 'anachronism and anglicization' that Kolve identified as a feature of medieval English drama that serves to 'blur' these

boundaries between eternal *veritas* and the carnal present both to produce a sense of 'vividness and immediacy', as well as for doctrinal purposes (Kolve 1966: 114–116). While the English medieval drama is filled with apparent anachronism and geographical transpositions of biblical events to English soil (Kolve 1966: 101–123), nowhere are such geographical transpositions as systematic as in Middle Cornish Miracle Plays, the *Ordinalia*. In the *Ordinalia*, Cornish place-names are scattered in clumps throughout the text, always as part of seemingly incongruous and anachronistic gifts of Cornish land to biblical characters, so that, as Kolve puts it, 'something curiously like a Cornish gentry is created out of actions involving Christ' (Kolve 1966: 114).¹ These land grants have attracted more attention than any other stylistic element in these plays (Bechter 1996: 111), but they have rarely been mobilized by critics for the purpose of any argument other than the dating and localization of the plays. Because the place-names seem to center on the vicinity of Penryn in Western Cornwall, it has been generally assumed that that is where they were performed, possibly under the aegis of a local college for canons at Glasney in Penryn (Fowler 1961, Bakere 1980, but see Bechter 1995, 1996).

Basso has noted, in his ethnographic discussion of place-naming among the Western Apache, that



Map 1: Location of place names mentioned in the *Ordinalia* in Western Cornwall (adapted from Bakere 1980: 32)

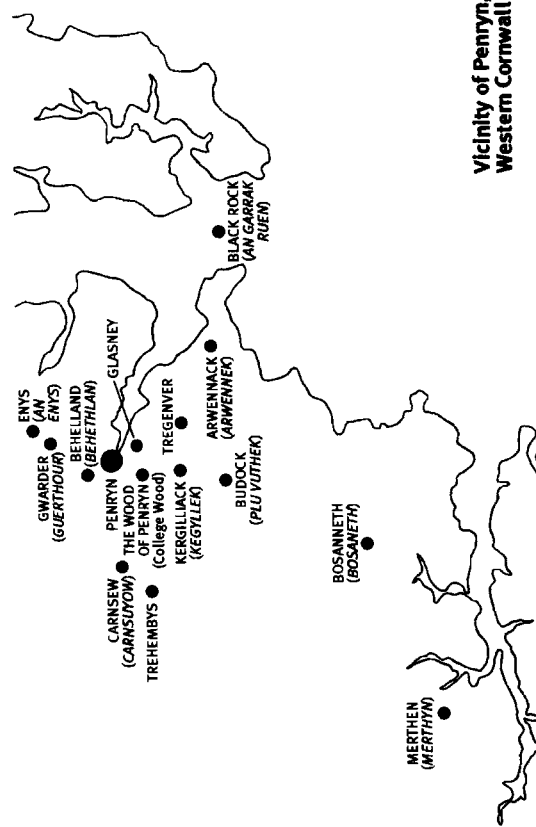
I argue that that the dramatic context of the largesses, which divide these largesses into gifts in the service of good and evil, produces a set of moral 'values' that are calibrated to proximal and distal regions (parishes) in the context of performance. This has a strongly 'centering' effect on the pragmatics of performance, each contextualization in performance inscribing a kind of parochial magic circle that unites the parishes immediately local to the place of production (Penryn), and the audience and actors of the play and their community, as being 'good' with respect to the ring of outer darkness just beyond this parochial horizon. By 'actualizing cosmology', the largesses of place-names in these places invite comparisons with similar pragmatic effects in ritual, which 'relates the distant, memorial structures of cosmology to the emergent, centered structures of the corporeal field' (Hanks 2000: 241).

Discussion of existing literature

According to a recent assessment (Murdoch 1993), the value of these place-names lies only in their value as extrinsic clues to the authorship, dating, and localization of the text, but they have no intrinsic poetic value to the text or its performance as such. That is, they are addressed to an audience of latter-day philologists and not to the proximal audience at performance!

The names . . . are all of land-grants given to various characters, are frequently found in rhyme position, and have, in fact, no bearing on the substance of the plays. They serve to localize the work as a literary product (though not, of course, to set it anywhere but in Palestine or Rome) in Glasney/Penryn, and may help with the dating, although this is less sure. (Murdoch 1993: 42)

What value might this 'localization' have had for Cornish audiences? Bakere (1980: 47) has argued that the inclusion of such place-names produces a kind of vividness and immediacy of the didactic message of the text to the here-and-now of performance that is semiotically analogous to the doctrine of the incarnation itself (whereby Christ is both God and Man, so too the textual universe is 'incarnated' in Cornwall by these place-names). More recently, Bechter (1996) has argued that previous accounts (such as those of Fowler 1961 and Bakere 1980) have failed to take into account the textual poetics of these largesses of Cornish land. Seeking to dispense with the conventional wisdom that the land grants serve to conclusively localize the play's setting in the Penryn area (Bechter 1996, also 1995, 1999), she emphasizes the ways in which the ambiguous reference of place-names can



Map 2. Location of place names mentioned in the *Ordinalia* near Penryn in Western Cornwall (adapted from Bakere 1980: 33)

place-names are arguably among the most highly charged and evocative of linguistic symbols. Because of their inseparable connection to specific localities, place-names may be used to summon forth an enormous range of mental and emotional associations. . . . And in their capacity to evoke, in their compact power to muster and consolidate so much of what a landscape may be taken to represent in both personal and cultural terms, place-names acquire a functional value that easily matches their utility as instruments of reference. (Basso 1990: 144)

Basso's ethnography of place-naming practices among the Apache invites comparisons with the evocative power of place-naming in Cornish drama. I argue that the seemingly anachronistic deployment of these place-names in a dramatic context has regimenting effect on the possible localization of performance, that is, that they have a metapragmatic function with respect to the possible pragmatic contexts of performance (Silverstein 1993). By 'metapragmatic function', I mean that the textual invocation of place-names serves reflexively to overtly specify (regiment, stipulate) features of its pragmatic context of performance, presupposing a place of performance near Penryn and creatively transforming the sociospatial oppositions of the local community by imbuing them with cosmological values deriving from the text. Because the place-names are all part of acts of largesse of Cornish land from the locality of performance for actions performed in a distantiated cosmological narrative of fall and redemption,

serve to evoke multiple localities in Cornwall for differing local audiences. She nevertheless concludes that the land grants would function to produce a sense of 'immediacy' for otherwise distanced biblical events, but not only for a putative audience from the Penryn area in Western Cornwall, but indeed for audiences throughout the whole of Cornwall, who could selectively understand each place-name as being that most familiar and nearest to them (Bechter 1996: 120). Although it could be argued that Bechter here translates philological uncertainty into stylistic ambiguity and *jouissance*, the remainder of her argument is more compelling. Instead, she analyzes the five land grants that are found in the first play of the series, the *Origo Mundi*, from the perspective of their textual and dramatic context and function, which leads her to draw attention to the fact that the place-names are all distributed in acts of largesse that powerful personages use to extend their authority. She adds:

The grants of Cornish land in the play would also have built a sense of familiarity and immediacy for the audience. The play-goers could not only have seen the parallels between the biblical leaders' largesse and the political strategies of their own English kings, they could have felt that the biblical action took place in Cornwall. (Bechter 1996: 113)

Bechter's analysis has the salutary effect of drawing our attention to the textual dimension of these gifts of land, although her analysis does not go far beyond exploring the textual importance of largesse in the first play of the trilogy. Bechter's analysis, moreover, remains a partial one, considering only five of the eight total grants of Cornish land, considering only those in the play of the first day *Origo Mundi*, and neglecting those that occur in the last day, *Resurrexio* [the same is true of Hall's analysis (Hall 1999)]. All the place-names in this play are also largesses of Cornish land for biblical services, indicating that some more general logic of largesse unites all of these gifts.

I argue that an analysis of all of the grants does not merely generate a sense of 'immediacy', but rather reinscribes or recenters the textual universe of good and evil onto a contextual map of Cornwall, mapping proximal and distal regions geographically onto a biblical and cosmological opposition of good and evil. The performance of acts of largesse within the plays that exchange biblical services for Cornish territory effect a pragmatic calibration of the textual and cosmological ('there-then') order to the contextual and historical ('here-now'), producing a 'spatial poetics' as moral values of good and evil generated in the textual universe are mapped to the local geography in the context in which the plays are written to be performed (*pace* Bechter). These textual largesses of land are metapragmatic in function, that is, they have a stipulative or regimenting

effect on the pragmatic contexts of their plausible performances (Silverstein 1993). The possible contextualization of this play's performance is regimented textually by these land grants, serving to 'localize' the play not merely for philologists, but in the first instance in the pragmatics of the performance of the plays. This 'localization' allows the moral universe generated within the text as a distanced mythic cosmological order to be translated into the here-and-now of the plays' performance; the basic moral divisions of the play and its characters are reinscribed on the locality of performance and the audience [in a manner comparable to ritual (Hanks 2000)].

To capture the complex textual and contextual pragmatics of these land grants, I adapt a convenient Jakobsonian notation originally devised as a metalanguage for metapragmatic categories call 'shifters', duplex signs like deictics (this, that, here, there) whose values 'shift' according to their context of utterance (Jakobson 1971). E^n denotes a 'narrated event' (belonging to the world of the narrated text, that is, the narrated world of the play) and E^s ('speech event') denotes the actual event of narration (the context that the former presupposes, that is, the actual universe in which the play is inserted as a momentary narrative diversion). The plays, like shifters, are 'duplex', making direct reference both to elements of a purely textual order (E^n), as well as to elements of a contextual order (E^s). The semiotic logic of the plays imbues these two orders with asymmetric values. The economy of salvation portrayed in the plays deals with a cosmological set of themes and foundational charters (E^n) for synchronic institutions (E^s), reversing the dependence of E^n on E^s , treating E^s as being a token level instantiation of a typological order whose institution the plays themselves narrate, making E^s depend on E^n as a transformed host depends on the ordinary last supper. I assume, then, that the textual universe of the plays is not necessarily to be taken as a prior historical order, merely distanced in space and time (E^n prior to E^s), but instead as a mythic cosmological order, where history itself is understood as the history of the economy of salvation, E^n having no specific spatiotemporal relation to E^s . The plays present a historical model that is Christocentric, and indeed posits the Resurrection as a central historical event for which all preceding events are typological (specifically *figural*) anticipations and to which all subsequent events attest (Hardison 1965, Longworth 1967, 1991; for a discussion of the medieval semiotic ideologies of *figural* calibrations of history to eternity, see Auerbach 1984). In medieval drama, as in medieval liturgy, history 'emerges from eternity in the first episode and disappears into it once again in the last' (Hardison 1965: 287), leaving the historical narrative of the plays as a distanced mythic order with respect to the universe of the audience. Therefore, the deployment of Cornish place-names in the

context of a cosmological narrative need not imply that Cornwall was historically the site of the crucifixion (as is implied by calling the gifts 'anachronistic'), but rather that the cosmological oppositions relevant to the story are 'made flesh' in the land of Cornwall itself (to borrow Bakere's apt analogy). The gifts of land existing at E^s given and received by characters at Eⁿ for actions performed there and then underscores the linkage of E^s to Eⁿ as particular to universal, grounding the mundane day-to-day order in the cosmological order narrated by the plays. By these means, the landscape of Cornwall at E^s is imbued with moral values from Eⁿ, and is transformed in the process. At the same time, the local audience members of the plays at E^s are articulated to the characters and events of the narrative at Eⁿ, mediated by this exchange of Cornish land in the context of performance for services rendered in the text. As a result of this mapping achieved by these exchanges, the representation of biblical events in the *performance* serves to *performatively* transform the context of performance.

In the *Ordinalia*, a total of eight separate largesses of Cornish land, each consisting of more than one place-name and sometimes several, are given to lower-ranking characters in the play as rewards for service to higher-ranking characters (Bechter 1996). I argue, following Bakere (1980), that a mapping is thus effected between the domains of cosmological biblical truth (Eⁿ) and the here-and-now of historical narrative (E^s), a mapping that mirrors the logic of incarnation semiotically. Moreover, just as the gifts themselves can be divided textually (at Eⁿ) into good and bad gifts on the basis of the flature of the services for which they are exchanged [respectively acts leading to the building of the temple in *Origo Mundi*, and acts seeking to obscure the resurrection of Christ (the new temple) in *Origo Mundi* and *Resurrexio*], so too the geography of which the gifts consists can be divided into proximal and distal locations. By these means, local geography is imbued with cosmological moral values, a mapping is introduced that seems to valorize the local community of the play over and against distant regions, and, at the same time, incorporates the audience of the play performance at E^s (through their associations with the lands mentioned in the gifts) with the cosmological narrative of salvation of the characters in the narrative at Eⁿ.

The gifts of land

The *Ordinalia* consists of three separate plays intended to be staged over three consecutive days. The first day of the play, *Origo Mundi*, covers the period from the creation of the world through the reigns of King David

and King Solomon, the building of the Temple in Jerusalem, and its subsequent neglect. The second day is the Passion Play, *Passio Domini Nostri*. The third day, *Resurrexio Domini Nostri*, covers Pilate's attempts to hide the fact of the Resurrection, the Resurrection itself, the death of Pilate, and the conversion of the Emperor Tiberius. Of the eight gifts of Cornish land in the *Ordinalia*, five occur near the end of the first day of the play (*Origo*) (these are discussed by Bechter 1996), and three near the beginning of the third day of the play (*Resurrexio*). Of the 24 total Cornish place-names in the *Ordinalia*, 15 are found in the five land grants of *Origo Mundi* and seven are included in the three land grants of the *Resurrexio Domini*. There are no gifts on the second day, during the Passion, but there are three mentions of Cornish localities in this play (not, however, as part of gifts of land).² All eight grants involve more than one, and sometimes several, identifiable place-names, many of which are local to the Penryn region, where it is believed the plays were performed, and this is part of the evidence for this location (see Fowler 1961, Harris 1969, Bakere 1980, Murdoch 1993; see Bechter 1995, 1996 for a dissenting view). The above literature contains a good deal of discussion of these place-names, and I have relied as much as possible on the consensus of the above scholars where there is one, duly noting Bechter's strongly revisionist approach to this question (1995, 1996).

The first five gifts of land occur in the first day of the play, *Origo Mundi*, which covers the history of salvation from the creation through the building of the temple in Jerusalem by David and Solomon, and the installation of the first bishop there. The theme of the play follows the legend of the Holy Rood (Bakere 1980, Murdoch 1993, Hall 1999), an apocryphal legend tracing an economy of salvation following the history of a holy tree grown from seeds taken from paradise by Seth, planted in Adam's grave, growing into three holy rods intertwined into one [transparently symbolic of the trinity and the promise of salvation (Bakere 1980, Murdoch 1993, Hall 1999 and references there)], which are ultimately installed in the Temple in Jerusalem, only to be thrown out of the temple by the first evil bishop. The gifts of land are all in one way or another related to the building of the temple toward the end of *Origo Mundi*. Hall sees a typological connection between the building of the Temple and the building of the College of Canons at Glasney near Penryn, which presumably hosted the plays (Hall 1999:168–170).

The first gift (Norris 1967a) is given by King David to his messenger as a reward for his service in summoning the masons who are to begin building the temple. The gift is described as involving a charter and consists of two Cornish place-names, Carnsew and Trehembs, both in Mabe parish near Penryn (Bakere 1980: 34; Bechter 1996). Both of these places are part of a

single farm that formed the seat of a certain Carnsew family (Bakere 1980: 34; Bechter 1996).

Messyger rag the seruys Messenger, for thy service
the rewardye my a ra I shall reward thee;
carn suyow ha trehembyys Carnsew and Trehembyys,
chartur annethe thys gua Make for thyself a charter for them

The second gift (Norris 1967a) is the first of a series of gifts by King Solomon upon his ascension to the throne. His first gift is a coronation gift to his counselors and consists, apparently, of the large Cornish town Lostwithiel (*lostwithyef*) and possibly Bodmin (*bosuene*), as well as another place (*lanerhy*) whose identity is uncertain (many proposals have been given; see Bakere 1980: 35–36, Bechter 1996: 116–117). Bechter (1996: 116–118) gives persuasive philological arguments for the reading of the town of Bodmin for *bosuene*, as opposed to a small farm of the same name (Bosvannah) near Penryn (Bakere 1980: 33). This would make this otherwise incoherent gift (Bakere 1980: 35) more cohesive, so that it would consist of large but relatively distant Cornish towns.

serys gromersy ynweth Sirs, gramercy as well;
mara pewaf why a-veth If I live, you shall be
ov chyf prive gyuth thysy My chief private guards
ha rag why thum kerune And because you crowned me
me a re thuygh bosuene I will give you *Bosuene*
lostwithyel ha lanerhy Lostwithiel and *Lanerhy*

Solomon's next two gifts are directly related to the building of the temple. When the masons have finished their work, Solomon (Norris 1967a) grants them the parish of Budock (*plu vuthek*) adjacent to Penryn (Bakere 1982: 36) as well as 'seal rock' (*an carrak ruen*), usually identified as a prominent rock ('Black Rock') in Falmouth harbor near Penryn (Bakere 1980: 36–37; but see Bechter 1996: 120).

dew vody tha ough yn guyr You are two good bodies, truly,
ha rag bos agas wheyl tek and because your work is fair
my a re thuygh plu vuthek I give you the parish of Budock
han garrak ruen gans hy thyr And Seal Rock with its land

Solomon's final gift (Norris 1967a) is to the carpenters, who receive an extensive list of lands in payment for the completion of their work in the temple, lands that, like those given to the masons and the messenger, are within three miles of Glasney College in Penryn (the presumed site of authorship and performance of the plays), these last lands all being part of the Episcopal Manor of Penryn Foreign associated with the Bishop of Exeter (Bakere 1980: 38–41, Bechter 1996: 123). Bohelland, Gwarder,

Enys, and Penryn wood are in St. Gluvias Parish, while Arwennack, Tregenver, and Kergilliack are in Budock Parish. Both of these parishes are adjacent to Penryn. Again, they are told to make a charter for themselves.

banneth an tas re-ges bo May you have the blessing of the
Father
why as byth by godys fo By God's foe, you shall have
agas gobyr eredy Your reward, surely.
war barth ol gucel behethlen The field of Bohelland altogether,
ha coys penryn yn tyen And the wood of Penryn, entirely,
me as re femyn though-why I give them now to you;
hag ol guerthour And all Gwarder
an enys hag arwennak Enys and Arwennack,
tregenver ha kegyllek Tregenver, and Kergilliack,
an nethe gureugh though make yourselves a charter
chartour of them.

The final gift of the series, given by the evil bishop to the torturers, is indirectly linked to the former. This gift stands in contrast to the preceding gifts, which are payment for the building of the temple; this last gift is a pious act, because it is occasioned in the coda of *Origo Mundi* for the killing of the first martyr, Maximilla, an evil act. It also contains one location (Bohelland, *behethlan*) that had just been given to the carpenters by Solomon. In addition, the torturers are told to 'seize' (*seyssse*) their gift 'before nightfall', implying that they will not have a clear and legitimate charter such as the carpenters have been granted. The gift contains land near Penryn [Bohelland in St. Gluvias Parish, according to Hall *Behethlan* (Bohelland) was formerly the name for Penryn (Hall 1999: 1287, n. 24)] as well as other locations further away (Bosanneth, in more distant Mawgan Parish). Interestingly, this gift also contains 'this town' (a deictic expression, presumably the town nearest the performance site, Penryn) as well as the 'Canony of the Close' (usually taken to refer to Glasney College in Penryn, the supposed site of the authorship and performance of the play). This is clearly a local joke because these are gifts given by an evil bishop to his torturers, because the land given here is also part of the Episcopal Manor of Penryn Foreign (Bakere 1980: 40–41). If these identifications are correct, then portions of this gift (the town Penryn) will in turn be given away again as part of a still later gift.

rag as lafur why as beth For your labor you shall have
behethlan ha bosaneth Bohelland and Bosanneth;
eugh whare thaga seyssse Go at once to seize them,
kynys by bos nos Before it is night.

my a rea
 thyugh an dremma
 hag of an chenanry an clos
 I do give
 To you this town
 And all the Canonly of the Close.

The remaining three gifts occur near the beginning of the third day of the play, the *Resurrexio Domini*, which follows the apocryphal *Gospel of Nichodemus* (Bakere 1980, Murdoch 1993) tracing both the Resurrection of Christ and the attempts of Pilate to prevent the fact of the Resurrection from becoming known, along with the death of Pilate, the harrowing of Hell, and the ascension of Christ into Heaven. The final three gifts occur in the context of Pilate's attempts to prevent the apostles from stealing Christ's body and then to cover up the fact of the resurrection, an intention he announces in the first speech of the play. In contrast to the gifts found in *Origo Mundi*, most of which are within a couple of miles of Penryn (Lostwithiel and Bodmin excepted), the gifts in *Resurrexio Domini* are the inverse, with the exception of the town of Penryn itself and a small farm in St. Gluvias, the remainder cover a wider range of territory that is quite far from Penryn.

The first land grant in *Resurrexio Domini* (Norris 1967c) is given by Pilate to the jailor who has imprisoned Joseph and Nicodemus, to prevent them from stealing Jesus' body and claiming he had risen. Three places are included in this gift, the fief of Kenall (*fekenel*) in Stithians, Carminow (*carvenow*) in Mawgan, and Merthen (*merthyn*) in the parish of Consantane. These places all belong to the scattered manor of Winnianton, belonging to the Carminow family (Bakere 1980: 43-46). None of these parishes is adjacent to Penryn.

rak the vos geyler mar len Because, gaoler, thou art so trusty;
 ma a re thy'so lemyn I give thee now
 fe kenel ol yn tyen The fief of Kenall, all entirety;
 carvenow inwet merthyn Carmenow, also Merthen.

The next land granted by Pilate (Norris 1967c) is given to his knights as a reward for watching over Christ's tomb. The places mentioned have in common only the fact that they are rather distant and obscure, tentatively to be identified as the plain of Dansoatha in the parish of St. Agnes and Grugwith in St. Keverne Parish (Bakere 1980: 46).

gueyteugh ol er agas fyth All take care on your faith,
 pan bostyas the pen try deyth Since he boasted, at the end of three days
 y tasserghy the vewnans He would rise again to life;
 gobar da why agas byth A good reward you shall have,
 gon dansoatha ha cruk heyth The plain of Dansoatha and Grugwith.

The final gift given by Pilate (Norris 1967c) is again given to the same knights in payment for holding their tongues about the truth of the resurrection that they witnessed. The gift is more valuable than the one that preceded it, consisting of two local towns, Penryn and Helston (Hellas) (Bakere 1980: 46-47):

teweugh awos lucyfer Hold your tongues, by Lucifer;
 a henna na geuseugh ger Of that speak not a word,
 pypenagol a wharfo Whatever may happen;
 ha why a's byth gobar bras And you shall have a great reward;
 penryn yn weth ha hellas Penryn and likewise Helston
 me a's re theugh yn luen ro I give them to you in full gift.

Having described the gifts as a whole, I turn to a consideration of the overall function of this mapping of the textual order to the contextual order, so that the text incorporates within it its possible contexts. How then is this mapping to be grasped in terms of an indigenous semiotics?

The semiotic logic of incarnationism

Bakere (1980) draws attention to the way in which these grants of Cornish land allow a calibration of the world of cosmological (biblical) narrative (E^n) to historical Cornish audiences (E^s), which she sees as being primarily a matter of the kerygmatic constancy and relevancy of the message to the here-and-now, mediated by an 'imaginative grasp of the doctrine of the Incarnation' (Bakere 1980: 47). In effect, Bakere argues that the semiotics of incarnation underlying both the Medieval christology (whereby Christ is both fully God and fully man) and the Eucharist are homologous to the semiotic logic underlying grants of Cornish land in that both involve an indexical alignment (incarnation, transubstantiation, charter) of the cosmological and eternal order (of incorporeal types: God, Body, and Blood of Christ, biblical events) (E^n) to the order of historical particulars (corporeal tokens: Man, (this) bread and wine, here-and-now places) (E^s):

The particular detail is Cornish, the concept is medieval and completely Christian in the unique power of this period to give dignity and significance to the local and particular by seeing it, made relevant by the Incarnation, in the framework of Eternity. (Bakere 1980: 49)

The Incarnation [itself the referential object (E^n) of the second play in the series] is simultaneously both the exemplary and the privileged semiotic linkage of these two orders for Medieval Realism (Parmentier 1997). The Incarnation is unique historically, just as the Eucharist that re-presents it is

unique in its sphere (though iterable): 'The very centrality of the eucharistic action implies its uniqueness; that is, its privileged semiotic transformation cannot be replicated outside this marked ritual sphere' (Parmentier 1997: 84). The Incarnation becomes by its uniqueness and exemplariness the prototype and model for the evaluation of other such linkages, 'the focal metasemiotic moment when the transcendent Word is realized in fleshy form' (Parmentier 1997: 84; on incarnationism, see also Gibson 1989, O'Connell 1995).

Expanding upon Baker's analogy, I argue that the granting of Cornish lands (Eⁿ) to biblical characters (Eⁿ) asymptotically follows the semiotic logic of the Incarnation by affecting a mapping or mediation of the two opposed and hierarchically articulated spheres of the universe (see Corti 1979, Parmentier 1997). By means of specific acts of largesse in the performance of the text, historical tokens of actually existing Cornish land (Eⁿ) are brought into indexical correspondence with a quasi-mythic order of cosmological types (Eⁿ). Moreover, the alignment so achieved has an attenuated typological function, conferring specific values associated with that type on the token, but not actually identifying the two, in a manner similar to, for example, the typological transformation of a particular (historical) city into the general (cosmological) type 'Rome' or 'Jerusalem' during an imperial or royal advent (Kipling 1998).

The hierarchically ranked levels of the universe correspond to the split between subordinated signifiers and elevated signifieds, that is, between appearance and truth, profane and sacred, visible and invisible, flesh and spirit. . . . The gap between the two levels is bridgeable, however, because the material and spiritual worlds exist in systematic correspondence such that the former consists of symbols of the latter. . . . The two realms were also linked by a logic of spatio-temporal 'types' operating to link Old and New Testaments, as well as Rome and Europe: a particular time and space participated in a sacred and immutable age (*aevum*) distinct from real-time chronology, as, for example, Rome is incarnated in Constantinople, Aachen, and Moscow. (Parmentier 1997: 82–83)

Whereas the Incarnation relies on explicit conflation and identification, the trope of associating these two orders by acts of largesse and charter produce attenuated types of indexical linkage that are homologous [involving a mapping between the cosmological order of timeless truths (Eⁿ) and the historical order of here-and-now (Eⁿ)] but which are less immediate (Parmentier 1997), such as these incongruous biblical charters of Cornish land, which cannot be understood merely as charter myths of the literal sort. Cosmological truths are literally 'made present' in these gifts in a manner homologous to the Incarnation, but *Lostwithiel* no more becomes a 'New Rome' any more than *Penryn* becomes a New Babylon

(pace Bechter 1996, who suggests that the intent of these land grants is to mediate this divide, making Cornwall the actual locus of biblical events). The granting of Cornish land (Eⁿ) in the context of a cosmological narrative (Eⁿ), then, affects a calibration, but not identification, between the here-and-now of historical fact and the there-and-then of cosmological truth, producing the sense of 'immediacy' noted by Bechter (1996). The hierarchical opposition between cosmological orders of eternity and present is presented as a product of feudal hierarchical relationships of lords and vassals within the narrative, so that cosmological hierarchical oppositions are mediated by reciprocities constitutive of feudal hierarchies, specifically largesse and service.

The textual poetics of largesse and service

The calibration between these two orders is achieved in performance by acts of largesse, exchanges in which characters from the textual universe (Eⁿ) exchange gifts from the contextual order (land at Eⁿ) for services rendered in the textual order (Eⁿ). It is, then, the simple act of exchange and the notion of 'value' it generates (Simmel 1971) that allows commutation, comparison, and calibration of the textual and contextual orders, allowing the land of Cornwall to be imbued with biblical values (Service = Land, so Eⁿ = Eⁿ) without explicitly identifying the two. Bechter (1996) rightly directs our attention to the neglected textual moment and dramatic context of these exchanges, emphasizing that the gifts of land are linked to a feudal logic of largesse, which mediates the relations between powerful characters and their servants within the world of the text. However, these acts of largesse also mediate relations between these characters and the audience by the kind of gift transacted. The gifts acquire values not merely from their spatial disposition in context, but also from the textual moment of their bestowal.

First, the gifts are divisible into two basic groups on the basis of the identity of the giver and recipient. The first four gifts are given by the good kings David and Solomon. The second four gifts, by contrast, are given by subaltern potentates, the evil bishop and Pilate. The two sets are parallel in that there are two givers within each set of gifts, mirroring each other so that the first giver of each set (King David, the evil bishop) gives one gift, the second of each set (King Solomon, Pilate) gives three. As Bechter emphasizes, the central opposition that is enacted and mediated in all these acts of largesse is the relation of lord and servant. The 'synallagmatic' (reciprocal) exchange of gift of land for service at the center of the feudal contract between lord and vassal rendered draws their actions together

similarly, 'for part of the "real" relationship between lord and vassal is, in fact, the relationship of "real estate"' (Haidu 1993: 56, also Bechter 1996).

The gifts then are transmitted to subaltern characters from a source whose authority or lack thereof lends or denies their charters legitimacy. The good gifts are given legitimately by true kings (following the conventions of Cornish staging, occupants of the western seat of the stage diagrams reserved for true kingship), the bad gifts are given by subaltern potentates, the evil bishop and Pilate, who lack the legitimate authority to confer such gifts with full charter. Two of the first four gifts are given with explicit reference to a charter, while one of the bad gifts is given with instructions to 'seize' (*seisse*) the land by force. Indeed, a piece of land (*behelhan*) given as part of Solomon's final gift with an explicit charter is among the parcels of land that the evil bishop directs the torturers to 'seize' in the first bad gift a little later in the same play, bringing the paradigmatic contrast between good (chartered) and bad (unchartered) gifts into syntagmatic opposition.

Second, the textual moment of the gift reimagines the contextual value of the land given in moral terms: Gifts of land at E^s acquire moral 'value' on the basis of the service for which they are exchanged at Eⁿ (Eⁿ = E^s). The exchange of largesse for service sets up parallel and opposed series of gifts, based initially on the moral quality of the service that they stand in payment for, but also therefore in the moral qualities of the givers and the servants. The value of the gift in moral terms is determined in relation to the moral qualities of the recipient, as well as more particularly the service with which it is exchanged. The broader *telos* of the particular services for which the gifts are given as rewards allows us to divide the gifts into two consecutive groups of four gifts each. The first four gifts are given by good kings to good servants for service in the building of the Temple in Jerusalem (the symbol of the old dispensation), while the last four gifts are given by evil lords (not kings) to evil servants for evil actions, specifically attempts in one way or another to prevent the dissemination of the new dispensation, whose symbol is the Resurrection. As Longworth (1967: 22-45; 1991: 181) notes, the events of *Origo Mundi*, and particularly the building of the Temple in Jerusalem, 'unfold a regular and cumulative typology: They provide classic prefigurations of Christ, and they suggest a dramatic principle that conceives the Resurrection of Christ as the central event in time for which everything previous prepares and to which everything subsequent testifies' (Longworth 1991: 181). The pairing of two opposed sets of gifts related to the Temple and the Resurrection establishes that these two events are typologically parallel, that is, the Temple is a 'figure' which anticipates the Resurrection, which fulfills it (Auerbach 1984).³

	Dyad	Service (E ⁿ)	Reward (E ^s)
1	David—Messenger	Building of temple	Local land
2	Solomon—Messenger	Coronation gift	Distant towns
3	Solomon—Masons	Building of temple	Local land
4	Solomon—Carpenters	Building of temple	Local land
5	Bishop—Torturers	Killing of Maximilla	Distant land
6	Pilate—Jailor	Hiding the resurrection	Distant land
7	Pilate—Knights	Hiding the resurrection	Distant land
8	Pilate—Knights	Hiding the resurrection	Local towns

The two separate sets of gifts are morally the inverse of one another. The resurrection (the figurative rebuilding of the temple) typologically parallels the literal building of the temple, so that the attempt to hide the resurrection is the inverse of building the temple. Thus, the gifts themselves form two sets of parallel opposed gifts, so that the building of the temple, as the culmination of the old dispensation narrated in the first day (*Origo*) is paralleled by the new dispensation, the new, immaterial temple, established in the second day of the play by the passion (*Passio*), which, on the third day of the play (*Resurrexio*), the old order, represented by Pilate, seeks to hide (generating the second set of negatively valued gifts, variably by killing the first saint in *Origo* (Maximilla, who prophesies the new order at the end of the first day of the play), jailing Joseph and Nicodemus in *Resurrexio* (to prevent them from stealing the body), setting guards to watch the corpse and then paying them to lie about the resurrection in *Resurrexio* (thus, in each case, seeking to prevent the figurative 'rebuilding' of the temple).

Third, the specific individual services that are rewarded by land are morally quite distinct. The peaceful and constructive activities of carpenters and masons of the early gifts stand opposed to the fundamentally destructive activities of knights, jailors, and torturers of the later gifts, and the activities of messengers as peaceful conveyors of the will of a king who need not coerce his subjects stand opposed to the manifestation of the temporal power of coercion that is represented by torturers, jailors, and knights. The moral nature of the specific services, as well as their ultimate purpose, which are paid for in land, confers moral values on the land itself.

When all these textual factors are considered, the distribution of the gifts in textual terms is revealed to have a highly poeticized organization. The gifts are divided into two groups of four gifts each, based on both the moral nature of the service for which they are received (respectively services in the interest of good and services in the interest of evil), as well as the thematic opposition between the first four gifts that relate to the building of the Temple in Jerusalem, which is the culmination of the first play *Origo Mundi* and the old dispensation. The coda of *Origo Mundi*, where

the evil bishop orders the killing of Maximilla, the first martyr, marks the beginning of the new dispensation of Christ, which is produced by the Passion (the second day of the play), and the last four gifts are given by forces eager to prevent the new dispensation from being disseminated (an intention that serves as the theme of Pilate's speech at the beginning of *Resurrexio*). The Passion play itself, then, is flanked by gifts of land given in the service of evil. Within each group of gifts, the first gift is given by one giver, the remaining three by another, with the first evil gift given on the first day of the play, the remaining three given on the last day.

The two sequences in which these gifts are embedded are the main exceptions to the otherwise dominant compositional principle that the events of the plays replicate the events commemorated in the liturgical calendar from Septuagesima to the Pentecost (Longworth 1967: 103ff), that is, the medieval commemorative Easter cycle, whose Lenten observances began with Septuagesima (three weeks before modern Lent) (Hardison 1965: 87ff). That is, by virtue of continuously indexing the relevant liturgical ceremonies by reproducing portions of their Latin texts in macaronic intertextual reference (Longworth 1967: 103–113), as well as producing an icon of the events commemorated in the liturgy, the *Ordinalia* enacts a diagram of the liturgical calendar itself (Longworth 1967: 113–121), an extended dramatic gloss on a cycle of rituals that themselves are also often attenuated commemorative ritual reenactments of these biblical events [Longworth 1967: 103–104; more generally Hardison (1965: 87ff) on the commemorative quality of the Easter cycle].⁴ In fact, the very name of the play, *Ordinalia*, has a liturgical referent, the *Ordinalia* being 'a kind

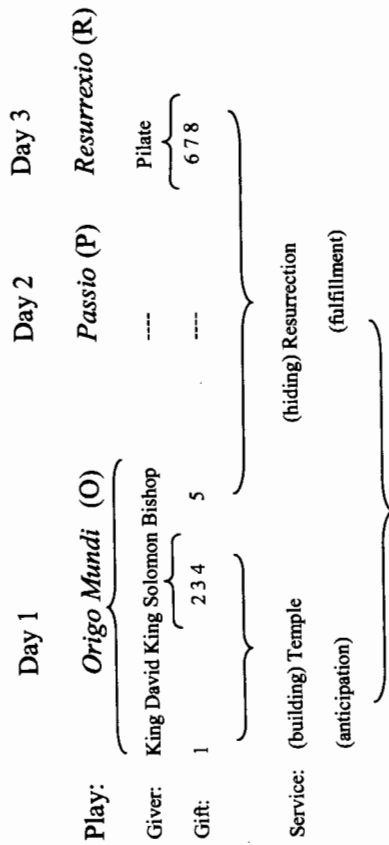


Figure 1. Poetic organization of gifts

of stage manager's guide to the rites and the ceremonies of the church' (Longworth 1967: 105). This otherwise complete compositional principle that links the events of biblical drama to the liturgical calendar is only 'disrupted' by these two paired sequences (Longworth 1967: 115–116). The anomalous character of these sequences is explained by their parallel role in linking the biblical space of this economy of salvation to the everyday world of performance. Taking these two principles together, the plays reproduce in their structure both temporal and spatial dimensions of the religious community, respectively the liturgical calendar and the parochial organization of space, to which I now turn.

Grounding cosmological categories in Cornish soil

This moral distinction between 'good gifts' and 'bad gifts' at Eⁿ parallel a spatial distinction at E^s between local (good) versus distant (bad) land, and for towns, inversely distant (good) versus local (bad) towns. Here, the moral quality of the gift, derived from the service in the narrative for which it is a payment (Eⁿ), is calibrated to a spatial distinction in the world of the audience (E^s) by the act of exchange itself [which exchanges services in the textual order for land in the contextual order (Eⁿ = E^s)], so that distinctions of locality come to be mapped to moral distinctions of good and evil. Here we find that 'good' gifts (gifts by good characters to good servants for good services at Eⁿ) are mapped to immediately local regions at E^s, while 'bad gifts' at Eⁿ are mapped to distant regions at E^s, and this relation is reversed for towns. By means of land grants for loyal service, a moral schema of cosmological opposition at Eⁿ between good and evil within a narrative of the economy of salvation is projected or mapped onto delineable local oppositions at E^s, organizing and giving cosmological values to local spaces. Separate gifts of land are overlaid and linked in the performance of the plays to produce a sense of a unified parochial locality associated with good gifts opposed to distant parishes associated with bad gifts.

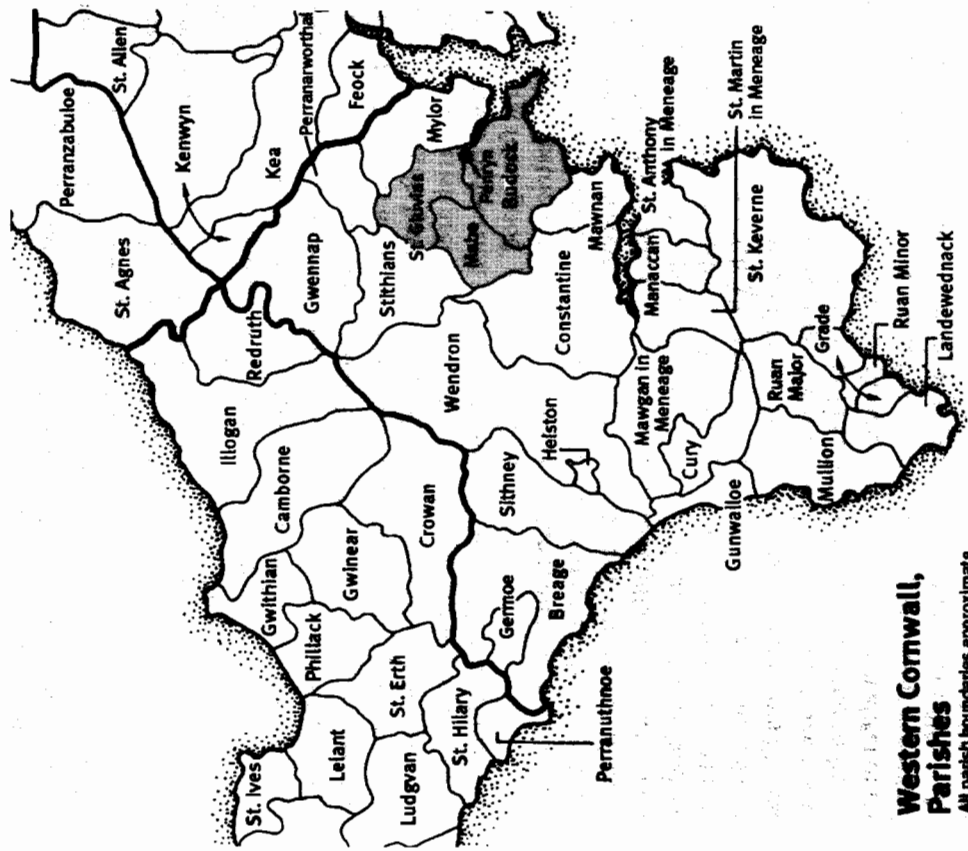
The content of the gifts themselves do not make clear whether the places chosen cohere by virtue of being included within larger localities, or what order of locality (manorial or parochial) is being indexed. In terms of the world of the play, in which the gifts are bestowed, the places given could be taken as being manorial ones or tithings, whose boundaries do not coincide with parishes (Harvey 1997). Many of the gifts from the first play (*Origo*) and none from the third play (*Resurrexio*), with the exception of towns in both cases, belong to the Episcopal Manor of Penryn Foreign, and this has been noted before (Bakere 1980). Some of the irony that is

involved in the opposition between the first four gifts (given by good kings) and the fifth (given by an evil bishop) is surely addressed to this manorial unity, perhaps indicating a certain discontent with episcopal, rather than royal, authority in the locality (which is certainly the case with the plays themselves, where Herod is a relatively mild character compared to the procession of evil bishops who 'out-Herod' him (on the Herod character in general, see Staines 1982)). Indeed, Hall suggests that the gifts of land mark a memory of the transformation of common or family lands into lands held by the Church, and at the same time a transformation of land from feudal or traditional tenure to 'a kind of capital or instrument of exchange' from which the Church was the primary beneficiary (Hall 1999: 185).

Moreover, as has been noted before, the first gift in *Resurrexio* consists of the names of three tithings associated with the manor of Winnianton (Harvey 1997: 33–35), just as the first gift in *Origo* consists of territory from the tithing of Trehembris (overlapping the Parish of Mabe). The specific reasons for mentioning this or that specific place within a larger locality may have to do to some extent with their salience as tithing centers. But none of these manorial logics, while surely significant for some purposes, seem to cover all the bases.

Recent scholarship on English parochial drama has emphasized the role that similar plays and other entertainments filled in other localities in Britain in parish financing (Johnston 1996: 9–10; Johnston and Hüsken 1996; Clopper 2001: 108–137). Parochial drama served both moral and economic ends; the performance surely would attract both an immediately local audience as well as an audience from the rural hinterland, all of them paying, and the labor for the play itself and its performers would be recruited from the immediate locality [as was the case, for example, in the staging of a comparable play in New Romney (Gibson 1996)]. Clopper additionally emphasizes that such parish performances and games would not only 'create a sense of *communitas*' (which he intends in the Turnerian sense of 'anti-structure') within the parish, but also bring others into the parish from outside, both as paying customers and as an acknowledgement of a broader Christian community (Clopper 2001: 125–126).

We can well imagine a scenario in which the College of Canons at Glasney, faced with economic necessities similar to that of a parish church situated adjacent to a town (Penryn) that stood at the juncture of three parishes (Mabe, St. Gluvias, and Budock), could contribute the writing and organization of a play that drew its performers and laborers both from the canonry itself and from the local community, for an audience consisting of at least these local parishes. Placing the Cornish *Ordinalis* within such a moral and socioeconomic framework of parochial drama, then,



Western Cornwall, Parishes

All parish boundaries approximate

Map 3: Parishes (darkened) in Western Cornwall containing place names associated with 'good' gifts in the *Ordinalia* (adapted from Duffin 1996: 20)

suggests that the relevant sociospatial unit indexed by the performance would be the parish.

The boundaries of parishes bring the patterning of gifts established textually into spatial relief. As a heuristic strategy, I map gifts to parishes, by a synecdochic logic of part to whole, as if we could treat the logic of the gifts as a kind of 'name-dropping' intended to index whole localities (in this case, parishes) by mention of their prominent parts. Then, the parishes thus indexed by mention of one of their parts can be divided into two sets,

to the idealization of distant towns, but this is speculation. Hall suggests that a feudal economy based on husbandry in rural parishes as opposed to an economy based on monetized exchange in the towns, keyed to this ethnic contrast, may be a significant element in the political economic backdrop to the plays (Hall 1999: 184–185). All we can safely say is that the exceptional valorization of towns is not in itself surprising.

With the remaining gifts, the contrast between the 'good' gifts and the 'bad' gifts produces a territorial opposition of 'local community' versus 'distant communities'. The density of synecdochic sampling of local territory in the first four gifts compared with the scattered occasional sampling of territory from distant parishes reinforces the sense of the familiar parochial locality versus less familiar, but still known, distant communities. The opposition between gifts produces a map of parochialism, a magic circle of local parishes surrounding the place of performance, standing opposed as a moral community to the outer darkness of distant parishes. Moreover, the transition between the first and second series of gifts is achieved by partial overlap of content and syntagmatic opposition: Gift 4 is immediately syntagmatically opposed to gift 5, which significantly signals the beginning the series of 'negative' gifts by appropriating part of the land of the final 'positive' gift (which is pointed out in the 'charter' for the gift, which directs the torturers to 'seize it before night'). Rural communities are coded, moreover, in opposition to towns, so that distant, unfamiliar large towns (associated, perhaps, with royal authority, which is positively viewed in the plays) are positively valorized, while local, familiar small towns (perhaps associated with episcopal authority, which is fairly consistently given a negative representation in the plays) are negatively valorized in relation to their surrounding hinterlands.

The clearest logic to the opposition between good gifts and evil ones is in terms of proximity or distality to the actual E^s , the place of performance, as refracted through parish boundaries. For gifts of towns, distance at E^s (Lostwithiel, Bodmin) is positively valued in terms of E^n (good gifts for good service), while proximity at E^s (Penryn, Helstone) is negatively valued at E^n (evil gifts for evil service). For the other, non-town gifts, the opposite is the case: Proximity at E^s is positively valued in terms of E^n , and vice versa. Thus, there are parallel series to good and evil gifts. Clearly, the parishes immediately adjoining Penryn are those that constitute the good gifts, whereas evil gifts are a good sampling of parishes to the south and west and a smattering to the north. Thus, the gifts enact an opposition between the local parishes around Penryn (Budock, Mabe, St. Gluvias), who would have included the people putting on the play and presumably much of the audience, in opposition to the 'pale' of neighboring parishes outside this charmed circle, some of whom might well have been among

the audience, but if they were, they would have been guests of the former group. As Davidson notes for medieval drama in general, these dramas, always occurring in tandem with some local festival (Longworth 1967: 11–12), played a moral role 'as an affirmation of *community* and in asserting *social differentiation* within that community' (Davidson 1991: 74; see also Johnston 1987, Clopper 2001).

Conclusions

Various authors have proposed that the inclusion of gifts of land in the *Ordinalia* has an effect of producing a sense of 'vividness and immediacy' (Kolve 1966), that is, mediating the divide between the distal, almost mythic, universe of the text and the proximal universe of the place of performance, thus blurring the already weakly coded boundary between audience and performers in the playing space (King 1987: 47). King notes that the medieval stage abstains 'from dividing playing space from audience, theatre from the world' (King 1987: 56). At the same time, as King points out, there are uses of deixis in speeches in medieval plays that act, in a manner similar to the centering properties of Cornish land grants, to transform the 'interstitial relationship between Christ and the audience', but the identification created is not an existential one, but one of iconic resemblance:

Although the boundary of the 'illusion' cannot be 'broken', it is desirable not to reinforce it physically [i.e., by a rigid separation in the staging between audience and stage], but rather to create a counterillusion, that of the world of the play running over into the world of the audience at the edges. Various sign-systems can be shown to achieve this effect in the York *Crucifixion*. . . . The deixis [in Jesus' speech] . . . briefly proposes iconic identity between the audience and those who performed the *Crucifixion*. (King 1987: 56)

The semiotic logic of incarnationalism is at work here as it is in the Cornish plays. The gifts of land in the *Ordinalia* do not necessarily convert Lostwithiel into a momentary token of the cosmological type 'Jerusalem', nor do they necessarily imply that the terrain of Cornwall is historically identical to the holy land (as Bechter suggests). But they do mediate the divide between the text and its performance, the narrated universe and the universe of narration, as the moral categories generated 'there and then' are reinscribed on the moral boundaries of the parochial community 'here and now', so that drama, for a moment, verges on ritual in moving from pure representation to efficacious action, making the spatial oppositions of the community into an instantiated (or better, incarnated) diagram,

an indexical icon (Silverstein 1993: 52), of the moral oppositions of the play, the economy of salvation. As in ritual, the linkage is both indexical (because the real connection is proposed between biblical events and Cornish locality by their involvement in acts of exchange, and the cosmological is centered on the local) and iconic (in that qualities of sociospatial proximity and distance in the context of performance become a diagram of the moral qualities of good and evil in the text). The gifts of land echo the semiotic logic of the incarnation, the 'Word made flesh', only here the 'flesh' is the land of Cornwall.

My argument here moves beyond Bakere's suggestion that this mediation has to do with incarnationism, making relevant these timeless truths to a local audience by literally 'bringing them home' by use of these gifts of land. Her argument, like Bechter's argument about the production of 'immediacy', does not fully address the range of gifts and the fairly clearly coded oppositions between them within the text. Bechter's argument seeks to challenge the assumption that these gifts of land uniquely metapragmatically regiment the place of performance to Penryn. Instead, she focuses on moments of textual indeterminacy of reference to show that this sense of 'immediacy' could be shared across Cornwall, as each member of the audience and each audience supplied its own local referent for an ambiguous place-name in the text. Among other problems, her arguments presuppose that the play was addressed to a specifically and generically Cornish public, as opposed to a purely local parochial audience, an 'imagined community' for whom the play would be more or less equally immediate.

My argument is the opposite. I have shown that the text strongly regiments the local space of its production metapragmatically; that is, it textually stipulates the place of its contextualization. The text centers itself in the Penryn area by the deployment of local place-names in the contexts of gifts that seem to charter differences between local communities in the here and now in terms of the order of the text, there and then. This is not a matter of merely producing a sense of immediacy and familiarity for the audience or merely 'localizing' the place of authorship of the text for philologists, but in fact, it is a matter of inscribing the moral universe of the play on the spatial categories of the community of the performance, 'actualizing cosmology' (Hanks 2000: 227). The play, then, is strongly parochial in the way that the text, using these gifts of land, stipulates the possible contexts of its performance. Indeed, in a manner akin to ritual rather than drama, the *performance* of the play *performatively* transforms and recreates the local community, informing the spatial categories of the locality with the transcendent moral categories developed in the play, in a manner that mirrors the semiotic logic of the incarnation itself.

Notes

1. The *Ordinalia* consists of three connected plays covering the economy of salvation from the creation of the world through the Resurrection of Christ, the events chosen for dramatization closely following the liturgical calendar of the church (Longworth 1967, see Note 4 below). Unlike most English cycle plays, which are linked to the Corpus Christi celebration (Kolve 1966), the Cornish cycle seems to follow instead the liturgical calendar of the Easter Cycle (Longworth 1967: 103ff). By itself, the *Ordinalia* constitutes fully half of what remains of medieval Cornish literature. Bechter gives a fair account of the consensus regarding the provenance of these plays as follows: 'The *Ordinalia*, a religious trilogy comprised of a Creation Play, a Passion play, and a Resurrection play, was written at Glasney Collegiate Church, Penryn, sometime between 1350 and 1375 and performed for a local Cornish-speaking audience' (Bechter 1995: 436). Bechter strongly dissents from this account, admitting that while a Penryn locality and a date before 1370 remain within the realm of possibility, she believes that it is 'more likely written between 1395 and 1419 ... in or near Bodmin in central Cornwall' (Bechter 1995: 436). There are problems with Bechter's account, however. A notable one is that she makes the staging of the *Ordinalia* depend on a guild structure (Bechter 1995: 445-447) such as would be found in Bodmin, but not in tiny Penryn. In doing this, she assimilates rural parochial drama to the model of town drama, where guild structure played a central role in organizing and performing the plays (see Johnston 1996, and the papers in Johnston and Hüskén 1996 for the differences between the two). Moreover, while the population of Bodmin easily would be able to accommodate the projected needs for the performance of the plays, it is not at all clear that any great proportion of the audience would have been able to understand Cornish at that time (Bechter 1995: 448-449).
2. The first place mentioned in the Passion are Treguer or Trigg (Norris 1967 b, 2274), the Northeastern hundred of Cornwall (the play's probable locality being the Southwestern Hundred of Kerrier) in the collocation 'I cannot find, from here to Treguer' (that is, 'I can find nowhere'). The second is Market Jew (Marazion), a town in Southwestern Cornwall, where the torturers seek a smith to make nails to crucify Jesus (Norris 1967 b, 2667-2668). The last is the river Hayle, in the collocation 'there is no one west of Hayle' (that is, 'no one in Western Cornwall'). As Bakere notes (1980: 43), these last two place-names are far away from Penryn and suggests perhaps that the *Passio Domini* has the locality of Marazion in mind.
3. Figures (*figura*) are asymmetrical semiotic dyads, standing between the literal sense (*littera*) or event related (*historia*) and cosmological truth (*veritas*), to be distinguished from allegory or myth: 'Figural interpretation establishes a connection between two events or persons, the first of which signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second encompasses or fulfills the first' (Auerbach 1984: 53). Unlike allegory and myth, both events are historical (*historia*), yet they are asymmetric, in that the anticipation is treated as an image (*imago*) or shadow (*umbra*) of the fulfillment, which ultimately belongs to the cosmological order of truth (*veritas*) (Auerbach 1984: 34). Figural interpretation, unlike allegory or mythic symbolism, is 'incarnationalist', as Auerbach points out, because 'Real historical figures are to be interpreted spiritually ... but the interpretations to a carnal, hence historical fulfillment ... for the truth has become history or flesh' (Auerbach 1984: 34).
4. With the exception of the events of the Building of the Temple and the Death of Pilate, the correspondence between biblical events chosen for the drama and the liturgical calendar is precise and exhaustive. *Origo Mundi* covers the biblical events (Creation and Fall, Noah, Abraham, Moses) commemorated from Septuagesima to Lent (respectively, the themes commemorated on Septuagesima, Sexagesima, Quinquagesima before Lent, and

Laetare Sunday in Lent), along with the anomalous sequence of the building of the temple. *Passio* covers the biblical events of the Temptation, Entry into Jerusalem, Anointment, the Last Supper, and the Passion) commemorated from Lent through Good Friday of Holy Week. *Resurrexio*, aside from the events relating to Pilate, covers events through Easter and Ascension. Because the *Ordinalia* would have been performed over a three-day period in connection with a local festival celebrating some church holiday, it is likely that this period occurs during the minor Rogation days preceding Ascension day (Longsworth 1967: 11–12).

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