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As Above, So Below: Staging the Digby *Mary Magdalene*

Matthew Evan Davis

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AS ABOVE, SO BELOW: STAGING THE DIGBY MARY MAGDALENE

MATTHEW EVAN DAVIS

Matthew Evan Davis currently serves as the Sherman Centre Postdoctoral Fellow at McMaster University. His work focuses on medieval English book and manuscript culture, the recapture of late medieval and early Tudor dramatic staging, material textuality, and hagiographic literature, in particular that surrounding St. Mary Magdalene. Besides the current article, he has published on comparative collation surveys and has an article forthcoming in the Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures regarding the function of the chapel verses at Holy Trinity, Long Melford. He is also developing an online archive of the minor works of the poet John Lydgate, which may be found at www.minorworksoflydgate.net.

The fifteenth-century anonymous play of the Digby *Mary Magdalene* (named such after Kenelm Digby, an early owner of the manuscript) has thirty-seven locations and over fifty characters; it attempts to recount all three of the major threads of the Magdalene's *vita* as depicted in Jacobus de Voragine's thirteenth-century Latin hagiographical text *Legenda Aurea*. The beginning of the play deals with the *vita evangelica*, or the accounts of Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, and the sinner in Luke conflated into a single figure. It then segues into a modified version of the *vita apostolica*, or circumstances of the post-Biblical evangelism of the saint, before concluding with the *vita eremitica*, which describes Mary Magdalene's thirty-years living in the desert as a hermit, without food or drink (Jansen 37-39). She is framed in the *vita evangelica* portion of the play as an allegorical "everyman" figure, similar to the protagonists of the anonymous fifteenth-century East Anglian morality plays *Mankind* and the *Castle of Perseverance*, and used to discuss the importance of penance as a means of salvation through interaction with allegorical figures. The *vita apostolica* portion of the play stresses the importance of pilgrimage and Mary Magdalene's power as a female intercessionary figure through her evangelical activities in Marseilles. Finally, the *vita eremitica* portion of the play stages the spectacle of Mary Magdalene's ascension into Heaven and the circumstances of her death, cementing her position as a saint for the audience (Coletti, Gibson). Any community wishing to perform this ambitious work needed to prepare for a significant undertaking.

To stage all three portions of the Magdalene's life, the playtext calls for a space that represents both the allegorical and physical worlds. This space contains the Holy Land, Marseilles, a wilderness, and Rome, as well as Heaven, Hell, and the homes of the Kings of Flesh and the World. A moving ship traverses the space, and special effects—fire from Heaven and a moving cloud—are incorporated. The budgetary, casting, and dramaturgical concerns surrounding this ambitious work, rightfully considered the most complex staging challenge in the corpus of Middle English Drama, must have had our hypothetical community scrambling to find a way to produce the play as simply and conveniently as possible, while losing none of its impact on an audience.

Unfortunately, we lack a convenient diagram, as exists with *The Castle of Perseverance*, to show a perceived perfect staging of the play by a contemporary scribe. Nevertheless, the playtext of the *Mary Magdalene* provides some clues that can help a careful reader to determine a likely staging.¹

As Robert Weimann points out, medieval drama was not only “performed on the big four- or six-wheeled pageant wagons or movable stages . . . but also in stationary acting places—sometimes in the round—where actors spoke from atop scaffold structures or descended so as to perform at ground level” (73). These scaffolds, known most commonly as *loci*, “delimit a more or less fixed and focused scenic unit” and represent concrete and unchanging geographic locations in the staging of the play (79). The *platea*, as its origin in the Latin word for “street” might suggest, is the “nonrepresentational and unlocalized” space between these set geographic locations, which formed a “general acting area in which the communal festivities were conducted”. Weimann's primary concern is with medieval drama as presaging Shakespeare in the form of the great pageant plays, and the terminology of *locus* and *platea* reflects this. However, the general concept of the difference between the set *locus*, or “scaffold,” and the more undifferentiated *platea*, or “place” has utility for large-scale set pieces such as the Digby *Mary Magdalene* as well.

The concrete reality of the performance space requires a physical location for each stage that performers will utilize and a way to represent—visually or performatively—locations referenced in dialogue but not performed upon. Moreover, as Jerome Bush notes, these locations are “often raised scaffolds that reflect social elevation,” as opposed to the *platea*, which is seen as the domain of “the common men of the drama”—Christ, Mary Magdalene, and the apostles—alongside the watching audience. By associating Christ with the *platea*, incorporating the audience as part of those

naturally resident there, and contrasting each with the tyrants on their *loci*, the performance space represents both the real and allegorical world and is profoundly connected with Salvation History (146). However, the neat division of *locus* and *platea* that Bush posits breaks down slightly as some of the locations suggested as part of the action on the *platea* must be defined locations by virtue of the playtext. For example, the Sepulchre, Lazarus' Tomb, the Tavern, and the House of Simon the Leper each had a structure associated with them. These locations are a part of a third category, differentiated from the *platea* as a liminal space but which Bush would consider part of it by dint of its connection with the events of Christ's life. The events of Mary Magdalene's *vita* and Salvation History thus rely not just on the binary of *locus* and *platea*, but on the position of locations in relation to each other both horizontally and vertically.

Exactly how many locations are present in the play is a point of contention. Opinions differ, with Leon Eugene Lewis suggesting nineteen (lxx n. 55), John Coldewey twenty-two (115), and Glynne Wickham twenty-four (111). Further complicating the issue, the reasoning given for the number and position of locations often derives from *The Castle of Perseverance*.² However, the sheer amount of movement between locations in the Digby play invalidates direct comparison with the relatively simple centre-to-exterior axis of motion in *Perseverance*. Rather than the five scaffolds depicted on the perimeter of the performance space in *Perseverance*, there are nineteen locations mentioned in the stage directions of the *Mary Magdalene* and another five mentioned either directly or obliquely in character speeches. In addition, ten locations are referenced in character speeches but do not appear to exist in the physical play space, and three locations can be inferred. *Perseverance*-based diagrams, such as David Bevington's, place locations other than Magdalene Castle on the outer portion of the performance space, and doing so with all thirty-seven locations only reinforces the impression that the play is unwieldy.

Groups of Locations in the Digby *Mary Magdalene*

Examining the text alongside the context provided by contemporary artefacts, such as the roof bosses of Norwich cathedral and the 1475 *Rudimentum Novitiorum*, as well as the model of the world provided by Isidore of Seville's seventh-century *orbis terrarum* map, shows that many of the locations of the play fall into natural groupings. Each of these groupings consists of locations mentioned in stage directions or character speeches, and they can be classified into one of four broad categories:

1. locations explicitly identified as necessary in stage directions;
2. locations where action occurs that are mentioned in character speeches;
3. locations implied by stage directions; and
4. locations mentioned in character speeches where it does not appear that any action occurred.

Approaching the staging in the play through these four classifications allows it to be simplified into sets of associated locations, helps to reinforce the allegorical and geographic world of the play, and clarifies both the episodic nature of the Magdalene's *vita* and the delineations between the three major sections of her life.³

Groups of locations constructed on multiple levels can then be called *staging complexes* rather than single *stages*. Such complexes reduce travel time between locations for the actors as they can stay in the same place for a larger portion of the play. Movement between complexes then signals to the audience that a meaningful shift, either in episode or in character speaking, has occurred. Furthermore, these complexes can share resources in order to make the mechanics of production less resource-intensive.

Reusing locations would alleviate the need for such careful delineations, but the conventions of medieval dramatic performance would make such reuse likely to confuse the audience. As Meg Twycross notes, the *Mary Magdalene* is a large-scale historical play, where the geographical map is overlaid with a moral map containing the locations of the World, Flesh, and Devil, and such "multi-locational staging is based on the perfectly logical premise that if you want to represent two locations, they should be in two separate places" (Twycross 50). Each location must then have its own defined geographic area in the performance space.⁴ Furthermore, as Philip Butterworth asserts:

a number of explicit *stage directions* require *personages* to return 'home' . . . The requirements expressed in these explicit *stage directions* represent a staging convention where 'home' may be seen to include the precursor to the later notion of 'offstage'. 'Home' was both a place of identifiable residence and at the same time one of theatrical neutrality. When ensconced at 'home', the *personage* could presumably be recognised by the spectator as occupying a neutral position, one outside the focus of the action. (42-43)

A number of locations in the play are thus "home" to various characters. Additionally the statements at line 113 s.d. and line 962 s.d. that characters receive wine and spices also indicate a shift in audience focus as they conclude an episode. For both of these reasons it is unlikely that locations are reused.

The Locations

As Bush notes, the performance space of this play represents both the real and allegorical world and is profoundly connected with Salvation History (146). This is especially true during those portions of the play directly related to the Magdalene's *vita evangelica* and the concept of pilgrimage. That connection between the Biblical, allegorical, and geographic is best represented via the T-O or *orbis terrarum* map, a way of depicting the top half of the world first mentioned by Isidore of Seville in Book XIV of his seventh-century text *Etymologiae*. In it, he states that "Orbis a rotunditate circuli dictus, quia sicut rota est . . . Vndique enim Oceanus circumfluens eius in circulo ambit fines. Divisus est autem trifarie: e quibus una pars Asia, altera Europa, tertia Africa nuncupatur" ["the territory is called round after the roundness of a circle, because it is like a wheel . . . the ocean encompasses the ends and flows around the circle. Moreover [it] divides into three parts: of which one is called Asia, the other Europe, the third Africa"] (Isidore XIV:II.1).⁵ When drawn, these maps often situate east at the top because of the connection between Christ, the rising sun, and paradise (Genesis 2:8, Malachi 4:1-2, Matthew 24:27, Luke 1:67-80).⁶ Additionally, references in Revelations 16:12-16 suggest that the "regibus ab ortu solis" ["kings from the east" or "kings from the land of the rising sun"] are arrayed against the forces of the Devil prior to the appearance of Christ and the revelation of the heavenly Jerusalem, as indicated by figure 1.

This conception of the world, with east pointing towards the top of the map, can be seen in the thirteenth-century Psalter World Map and the Hereford Mappa Mundi.⁷ In a play that functions on the multiple levels of

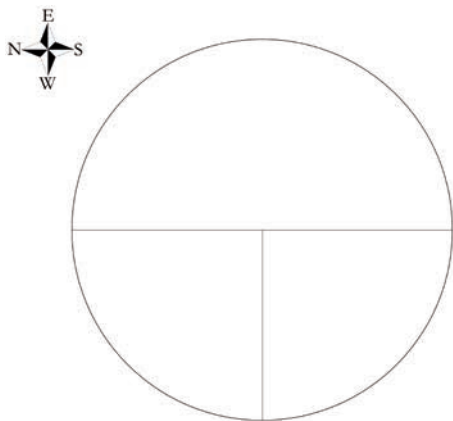


Fig 1. A stylized depiction of the T-O map. Asia is the large land mass at the top, Europe is the land mass to the left, and Africa is the land mass on the right. The three lines represent the Mediterranean, the Don, and the Nile.

the *Mary Magdalene*, a conception of the world already centuries old, understood by the play's audience, and able to be made abstract or concrete as necessary would be an attractive option for depicting the physical geography of the play.

A visual shorthand such as the T-O map is a necessary requirement because there are thirty-seven locations in the play either mentioned directly or implied in the stage directions and the speech of the characters. Those locations that actors visit require either a stage or a designated spot on the *platea*, and those mentioned narratively via dialogue must be represented visually or be plausibly gestured towards.

Besides the question of whether a location is realized or imagined, there is also the question of when in the life of the Magdalene the location first appears. Of the 2143 lines of the play, the first 1132 are primarily concerned with introducing Mary Magdalene and the *vita evangelica*. The lines between 1133 and 1987 depict the consequences of the crucifixion on the geographic and allegorical space created in the first portion of the play before segueing into the *vita apostolica*, and lines 1987-2143 deal with the *vita eremetica* and end with a four-line colophon from the scribe. How the locations are mentioned must first be considered when mapping the locations in the play to the geography suggested by the T-O map. Then the locations' relationship to each other as well as the larger conceptual issues in each of the three parts of the play needs to be described.

I. Locations mentioned in stage directions

Since these locations are named in the stage directions, they must have been spatially defined as places that actors are meant to occupy:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Magdalene Castle ⁸ (line 48 s.d.) | 10. Lazarus' Tomb ¹² (line 841 s.d.) |
| 2. Jerusalem ⁹ (line 61) | 11. King of Marseilles' Palace ¹³ (line 924 s.d.) |
| 3. Hell (line 357 s.d.) | 12. Sepulchre ¹⁴ (line 1011) |
| 4. Stage above Hell (line 357 s.d.) | 13. Heathen Temple ¹⁵ (line 1142 s.d.) |
| 5. The Tavern (line 469 s.d.) | 14. Heaven (line 1348 s.d.) |
| 6. Arbor (line 563 s.d.) | 15. The Ship (line 1394 s.d.) |
| 7. The Place ¹⁰ (line 563 s.d.) | 16. The Lodge (line 1577 s.d.) |
| 8. Simon the Leper's House (line 563 s.d.) | 17. The Mountain ¹⁶ (line 1784) |
| 9. The House Set Aflame ¹¹ (line 741) | 18. Wilderness (line 1971 s.d.) |
| | 19. The Priest's Cell ¹⁷ (line 2072) |

While all of these locations are identified in stage directions, they are not all identified in the same way. Line 357 s.d. indicates that the King of Devils enters the performance space “in a stage”, with Hell (likely here to mean Hellmouth) “ondyrneth þat stage”.¹⁸ That they are two separate areas is reinforced by the stage direction following line 1691, where the Bad Angel enters “into hell” rather than returning to the stage with the Devil. How these areas relate to each other is clarified by the Devil’s lines commanding the Bad Angel to “cum owt”, Belfagour and Belzabub to “com vp”, and the disgraced sins to also “cum vp” (lines 435, 725, 737).¹⁹

The Devil in the play resides on the uppermost portion of a staging complex, in a visually similar manner to the depiction of Lucifer and Hellmouth in the 1508 *Le livre de la deablerie* and the cloisters and nave of Norwich Cathedral (frontispiece; CEA5, CSF1, CWI3, CWL3, NL18, NN4; See also Meredith 162-163; Sheingorn 3; Davidson, *Technology* 81-100).²⁰



Fig 2. Top: Three depictions of Hellmouth from Norwich Cathedral. At the left is roof boss NL18, depicting the harrowing of Hell, the centre is roof boss NN4, depicting the damned being led into Hell at the last judgement, and the right is roof boss CSF1, depicting the opening of the fourth seal. Photographs and diagrams by the author unless otherwise mentioned. Photos taken with the permission of the Dean and Chapter of Norwich Cathedral. Bottom: The frontispiece of the 1508 *Le livre de la deablerie*, depicting Lucifer sitting on top of Hellmouth. Photograph credit. The Pierpoint Morgan Library, New York.

Thus, Hellmouth and the stage above it can be collapsed into a single complex consisting of Hellmouth, the stage above Hellmouth that the King of Devils spends the majority of the play standing upon, and the House Set Aflame, into which the Bad Angel and the Seven Deadly Sins are required to enter. See figure 3.

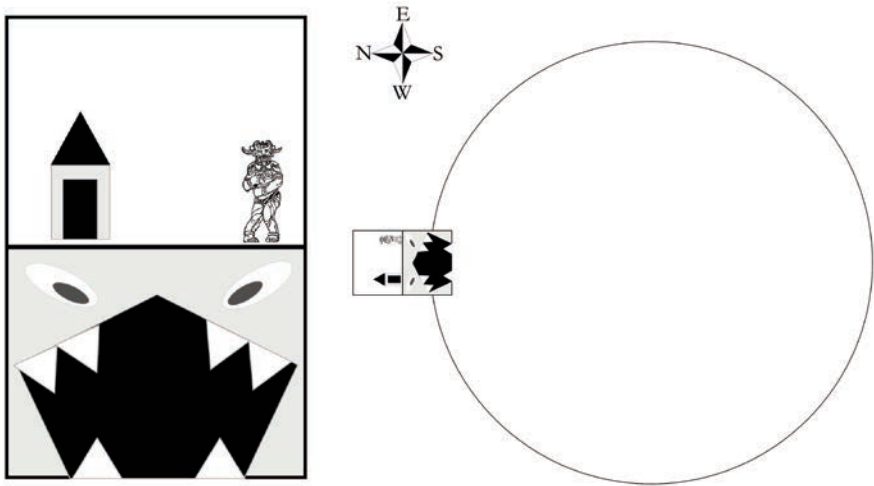


Fig 3. Top Left: The staging of Hell. Hellmouth is on the same level as the *platea*, and the Devil spends most of the play on a scaffold above Hellmouth. Top Right: Hell on the platea. The compass rose has east facing upward, as it would appear in the T-O map.

The House Set Aflame exists only to be destroyed, at the Devil's command, with the sins inside. For this reason, it must be either on or near the Hell stage. Alternative locations proposed for this incendiary scene in other studies include the House of Simon the Leper (Lewis xxiii, xxix; Jones 12-13) or the Hell Tower (Bevington, 713 n743; Bush). Neither seems likely. There is no indication of movement off the stage in either the character speeches or the stage directions prior to the destruction and no Biblical or extra-Biblical precedent for the destruction of Simon the Leper's house. Instead, the Devil first demands that the Bad Angel and the Seven Deadly Sins come up onto the stage above Hellmouth to be punished. From his place on that stage he then demands that the sins "Goo into þis howsse", which is set on fire (line 741). While Bevington reads the command "make a sowth" in that same stage direction as smoke issuing from Hell, the smoke would actually issue

from Hellmouth below the stage, either emerging from the mouth itself or, more likely, through a trap door (line 743 s.d.). There needs to be a representation of the house on the stage for the smoke to issue from to deal with the stage direction, to indicate that the sins have been punished, and to allow the Devil to give his final four-line speech at lines 744-47 before he and his fellows descend into Hell. Rather than the entire stage being destroyed, there remains a functional Hellmouth, from which the Devil at lines 963-92 emerges to lament the Harrowing of Hell before returning through it.

Hell's complex then is a set of locations with Hellmouth on the level of the *platea*, the stage at one level above it, and a house resting on and contained by that stage in much the same way that the Tavern rests within and is contained by the area designated Jerusalem. The stage direction "Here takyt Mary hur wey to Jherusalem wyth Lyxsurya, and þey xal resort to a tavernere", as well as Mary's exhortation to the Taverner to "cal hym in" when Luxury encourages her to a tryst with Curiosity, indicate that the Tavern is its own physical location within the staging complex representing Jerusalem (lines 469 s.d., 509). See figure 4.

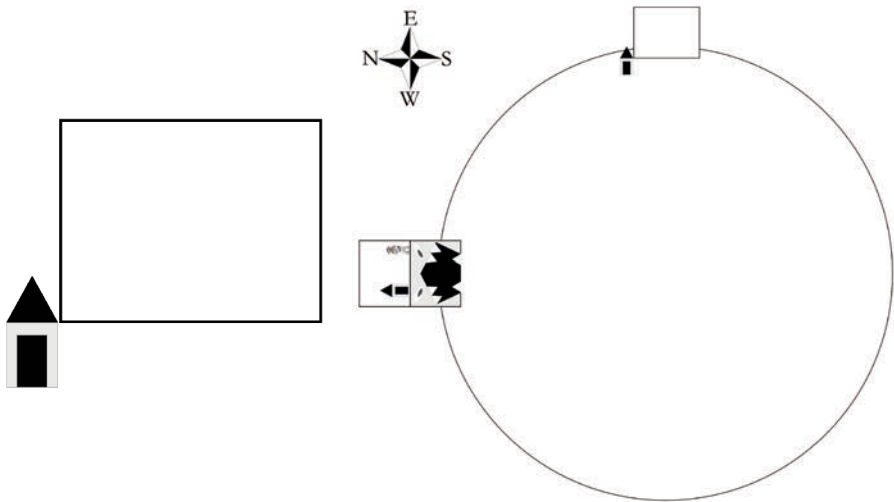


Fig 4. Left: The relationship between the Tavern and the space designated Jerusalem, depicted in such a way to allow the Tavern to be its own area at the *platea* level but associated with Jerusalem as well. Right: Jerusalem in context with the *platea* and previously mentioned stages.

The combination of stage direction and dialogue references to the Hell and Jerusalem complexes indicate that locations can be nested within other locations both laterally and vertically. The Tavern exists as part of the play's Jerusalem and as a location in its own right, while Hell exists in a conceptual space below the scaffolds an audience could see. The use of vertical representational space is common in fifteenth-century plays to indicate Heaven and Hell, particularly when representing the Fall and Last Judgement (Davidson, "Space and Time" 40-46). To this, the Digby *Mary Magdalene* adds lateral groupings and a visual indicator, via the seating of the Devil above Hellmouth on the stage, that the literal Hell exists conceptually underneath the visible complex.

This conceptual framework for Hell is mirrored and reinforced in the play's depiction of Heaven. It exists in a tower that has the ability to "opyn" in a way that is reminiscent of the semi-enclosed structure of Hellmouth (line 1348 s.d.). The T-O map traditionally places Heaven in the east, and assuming that it is in its traditional location the Heaven tower is actually the topmost part of a stage complex that includes Jerusalem beneath it. Composing the stage complex in this way allows Heaven to mirror the vertical structure of Hell, with the most conceptually important portion of the complex resting above the other stages, rather than below them. See figure 5.

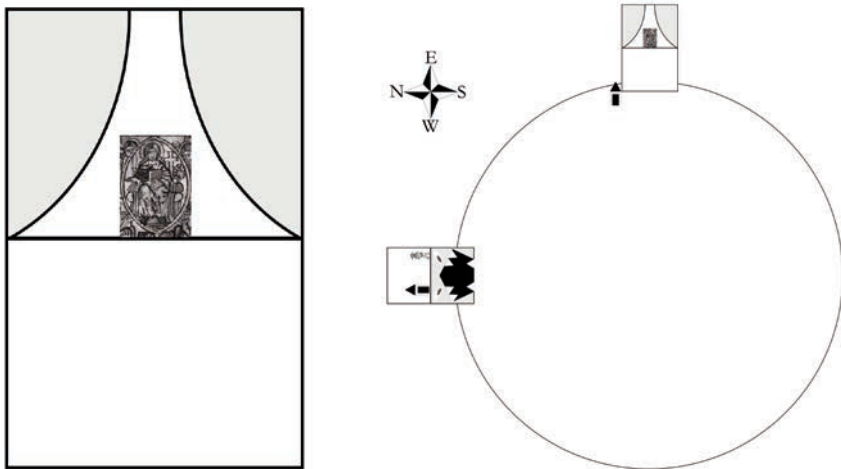


fig 5. Left: The location of Heaven, as the upmost part of a complex with Jerusalem at the bottom. The enthroned Christ is seated, and the stage is "opened". Right: The Jerusalem/Heaven complex in context.

Presenting the locations in this manner allows the play to operate in an overtly allegorical way, as elements of the play touch on the four levels of allegory referenced in biblical commentary.

The Mary Magdalene character of the play, as Stephen Mead notes, is the unified Mary Magdalene of the *vita evangelica* and the twelfth century. She is both an Everywoman figure and an exemplar signifying “the *entire* spiritual journey” for the audience, marking the connections between her personal spiritual journey and the allegorical patterns of biblical exegesis, and ultimately showing “the allegorical representation of all Christian time and the individual’s role in eschatological time” (Mead 269-70). Staging complexes help to visually display these patterns. Placing Heaven over Jerusalem suggests the connection between the earthly Jerusalem and a heavenly Jerusalem that has not yet come to earth, but which is metaphorically above the earthly Jerusalem in medieval thinking (Atiyeh). The placement of the locations together in a single complex then functions as an anagogical backdrop reminding the audience of Christ’s judgement and the necessity to assure a place amongst the saved.

Furthermore, staging Heaven as part of a complex including Jerusalem visually underscores the ascendancy of Christ over Pilate and Herod. As Bush notes, the earthly tyrants “believe that they control expanses of land beyond their respective *loca*”, but “their only connection with that nebulous territory is through the nameless messengers” (140). Likewise, both Pilate and Herod claim to control Jerusalem via their speeches, but it is Christ and Mary Magdalene who actually interact with others there. Mary Magdalene’s memorial speech performed on the *platea* at 1336-43, where she recounts the events of the Passion and resurrection, helps to clarify that the earthly tyrants who have been in charge of the city – Pilate and Herod – will fail in their schemes to suppress the resurrection and ensure the temporal power of the Emperor of Rome. She thus presages of the appearance of Christ at 1348. By recalling Christ’s Passion and resurrection through this speech while in the play’s Jerusalem, she helps to forge the connection between the earthly and heavenly Jerusalem.

Staging Heaven as the topmost part of the Jerusalem complex provides allegorical impact to an affective moment in the play – the revelation of Christ in glory – as well as a signal that the narrative is about to shift to the *vita apostolica*. Although this would not privilege Jerusalem in the way that might be expected, it is likely that the specific references to The Place at lines 563 s.d. and 587 s.d. and the relative importance of Bethany to the events of the first portion of the play encourage staging Magdalene Castle in the centre of the performance space, as suggested by Bevington’s diagram.

It is particularly telling that the Heaven stage does not open until after the Messenger's return to the three earthly lords and Mary Magdalene's speech at lines 1249-1335. The opening makes it clear that Christ is not really dead, reinforces his claim to kingship over that of Herod, and reveals who really controls the heavenly and earthly Jerusalem by explicitly connecting the two visually. The opening of Heaven becomes the fulfillment of the promise made by Mary Magdalene in her speech and serves as a presaging of the Last Judgement. In addition, the absence of Pilate and Herod from the remainder of the play indicates that their temporal power is destroyed in much the same way that the destruction of the house in the Hell complex indicates the failure of the power of the Seven Deadly Sins over Mary Magdalene.

Because of this past and future connection to Christ, the centrality of Jerusalem in the medieval T-O maps is reflective of the importance of both of the earthly and heavenly Jerusalem in medieval thought, and is a promise of the events that are to come. However, in the play this conceptual centrality is de-emphasized because it is partially predicated on the events of the Passion, which the Digby *Mary Magdalene* omits in order to maintain a focus on the saint (Mead 275). The central position that Jerusalem would ordinarily take in a T-O map is instead taken up by Magdalene Castle and Bethany, as both are central to the *vita* of the saint as performed. Placing the Bethany complex centrally on the *platea* also explains the expressly stated entrances onto "þe place" by Mary Magdalene and Simon the Leper, since they have to enter the *platea* in order to reach the Bethany complex at the centre of the play space (lines 563 s.d., 587 s.d.). Moreover, such placement allows the central miracle associated with the *vita evangelica*—the raising of Lazarus—to take centre stage.

Magdalene Castle and Lazarus' Tomb are taken from the account of the *vita evangelica* in the *Legenda Aurea*, but more specifically they are locations taken from the gospel account of the raising of Lazarus in John 11:1. Moreover, John 11:18 makes it clear that Lazarus's Tomb is part of Bethany. In discussing where Christ went to see Lazarus's grave, the Gospel states as an aside that "Bethania iuxta Heirosolyma quasi stadiis quindecim" ["Bethany was near Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off"] (Douay-Rheims).²¹ The aside would be unnecessary if the tomb were in Jerusalem. As Bush notes, despite their words rulers truly control only their *loci*, and the real action occurs on the *platea* (140). The major action concerning Martha and Lazarus, his burial and resurrection, is given no lines to cover either the interment at line 845 s.d. or the travel of Jesus, Mary, and Martha in the lines following 872 s.d. (lines 830-924). Contrast this with the King of

Marseilles' speech at lines 925-962, which introduces Marseilles as a location and its ruler in the mould of the earthly tyrants in the first part of the play, but would make more sense narratively after the end of the scriptural material at line 1132. The speech's placement here in the text serves to allow the actors to change costumes and gives time for any necessary scene dressing before the *quem quaeritis* and *hortulanus* scenes. Since scriptural precedent and the evidence of the playtext support an association between Magdalene Castle and Lazarus' Tomb, the play portrays the events of Lazarus' resurrection as part of the area designated Bethany. See figure 6.

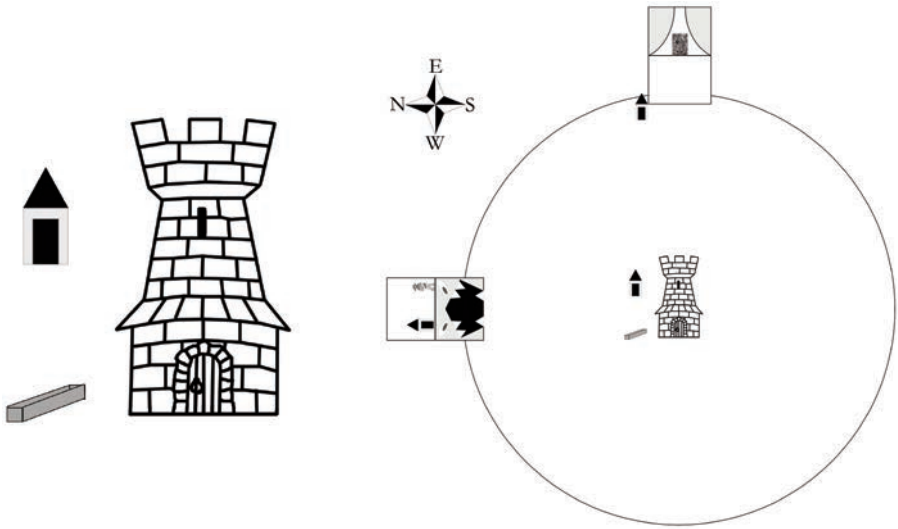


Fig. 6. Left: A possible position of Lazarus' Tomb in relation to the rest of the Bethany complex, including Magdalene Castle and the House of Simon the Leper. Right: The Bethany complex in context.

While it is tempting to assume that Lazarus's Tomb also served as the Sepulchre, this is unlikely even if reuse of a stage (perhaps as part of the same burial ground or as a single structure) was allowed in this single instance. All the Gospels suggest that Christ was crucified near Jerusalem, with John 19:20 noting that the distance was so close that many of the Jews in the city read the sign placed by Pilate on the cross. Moreover, all four Gospels agree that Christ was laid in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, and all but Mark note that the

tomb was new. Considering that the function of the *vita evangelica* is to depict the Biblical portion of the Magdalene's life, there is no reason to assume the Bible would be ignored in this instance. Additionally contemporary maps, such as the one in the 1475 *Rudimentum Novitiorum*, clearly show Bethany as a separate location from Jerusalem (352-353). See figure 7.

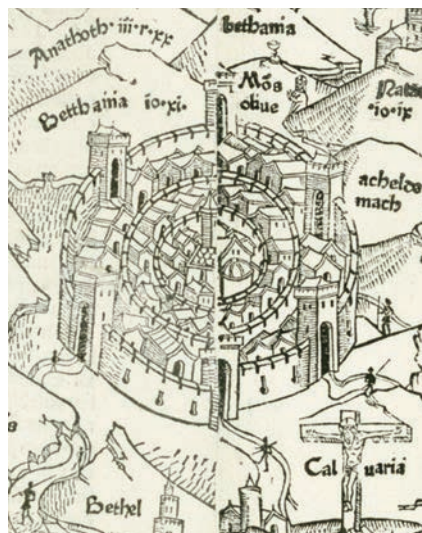


Fig. 7. Palestine from the *Rudimentum Novitiorum*:

Above: The two-page woodcut. Right: A close up of Jerusalem. Note "Bethbama" in the upper left corner, with the abbreviation "io xi" indicating that this is the area referred to in John 11. Image courtesy James Ford Bell Library, the University of Minnesota.

Neither Lazarus's nor Christ's tombs are referred to as a cave in the play. Instead, they are referred to as monuments, and it should be assumed that they were similar to the monuments to people of importance that we see in the fifteenth century—a stone tomb chest (lines 897, 1011). Examples of such chests can be seen in the tombs of John Baret, John Clopton, and Isobel Bouchier (St. Mary, Bury St. Edmunds; Holy Trinity, Long Melford; St. Mary the Virgin, Little Easton). Furthermore, the roof bosses of Norwich Cathedral show the sealing of what appears to be a tomb chest, with Christ stepping up out of what appears to be a tomb chest, and perhaps more tellingly Lazarus sitting up out of one (CNA5, NM20, NI15). That these should be seen as something different than buried coffins is shown by the risen souls at the last judgement stepping out of what appear to be tomb chests alongside individuals rising from the ground (NN8, NN13). See figure 8.



Fig. 8. Examples of tomb chests. Top left: The tomb of John Baret and top right: Looking through the tomb of John Clopton towards the altar. Photos taken with the permission of the Parish Administrator of St. Mary, Bury St. Edmunds and the Rector of Holy Trinity Church, Long Melford. Bottom: Four depictions of tomb chests in the roof bosses of Norwich Cathedral. Far left: The sealing of a tomb chest (CNA5), middle left: The raising of Lazarus (NI15), middle right: Christ emerging from a tomb chest (NM20), and far right: One of the examples of the dead rising from tomb chests at the last judgement (NN8). Photos taken with the permission of the Dean and Chapter of Norwich Cathedral.

Such a chest does not require the same level of structure as traditional depictions that make the tomb more akin to a cave. It fulfills the scriptural description of the tomb as that of a rich man hewn from stone. Moreover, Christ's command to "take of þe ston of þis monvment", fits the lid of a tomb chest far better than a stone blocking the entrance to a cave tomb (line 897).

If the Sepulchre and Lazarus's Tomb looked like the roof bosses at their most simple and the tomb of Bouchier or one of the Cloptons at their most complex, then it would not be particularly hard to produce two such monuments (each big enough to hold one actor) out of wood painted like stone. Since there is no need to have the massive edifice of a cave tomb, there is nothing to require that either stage be more than the monument placed in the appropriate portion of the performance space: the simpler Sepulchre within the bounds of Jerusalem and the more complex tomb, with the actor inside, near Magdalene Castle.

Foregrounding Lazarus's Tomb and the castle at the centre of the performance space not only makes them the focal point for action occurring during the *vita evangelica* portion of the play, but also allows the castle to serve as an architectural representation of Mary Magdalene's virtue. Mead asserts that the assault of the Seven Deadly Sins on the castle is an assault on that virtue, and for this reason it makes sense to consider the Arbour as representative of the fallen Mary's vice and her anguish at her fallen state (Mead 273; lines 602-14). The Arbour as representation of her vice also creates a mirror effect between her corruption and contrition, as the Good Angel converses with her in the Arbour in a manner similar to the way that Luxury ultimately tempts her out of Magdalene Castle.

The location of the Arbour should thus be addressed before moving on to those locations that are not part of the *vita evangelica*. There are two possibilities: Jerusalem, which is where Mary "awayd's" from or Bethany, which is attached to Magdalene Castle and which Mary must cross The Place to get to (lines 546 s.d., 563 s.d.). After her conversation with the Good Angel, Mary decides to "porsue þe Prophett wherso he be" and leaves the Arbour to follow behind Simon the Leper and the company of disciples to his home, where she will anoint Christ's feet (lines 610, 630 s.d.). For this reason, I think it is fair to assume that the Arbour is either in Bethany, or close enough as to make no practical difference.

Complexes in the post *vita evangelica* play

Locations such as Lazarus's Tomb and the Arbour in the *vita eremetica* portion of the play are affiliated in a way that forms the heart of the staging complex. These complexes are parts of larger geographic/allegorical areas within the play space. They would have several locations within them that characters would then move between.²² The description of the palace of the King of Marseilles confirms that locations should be thought of in this manner in portions of the play taken from the legendary material. The stage direction at 1576 states that "Here þe kyng goth to bed in hast, and *Mary goth into an old logge wythowt þe gate*" [emphasis mine]. The language of the stage direction makes it clear that these are considered different locations within a larger area. "Goth" indicates that the character is moving between locations, while "avoid" and "enter" are used for exits and entrances to the performance space (Butterworth 84-87).²³ Movement within a single location is not mentioned at all. See figure 9.

Although Jones suggests that the King's chamber must "back upon an area which the audience cannot see so that Mary can 'voyd' suddenly for her

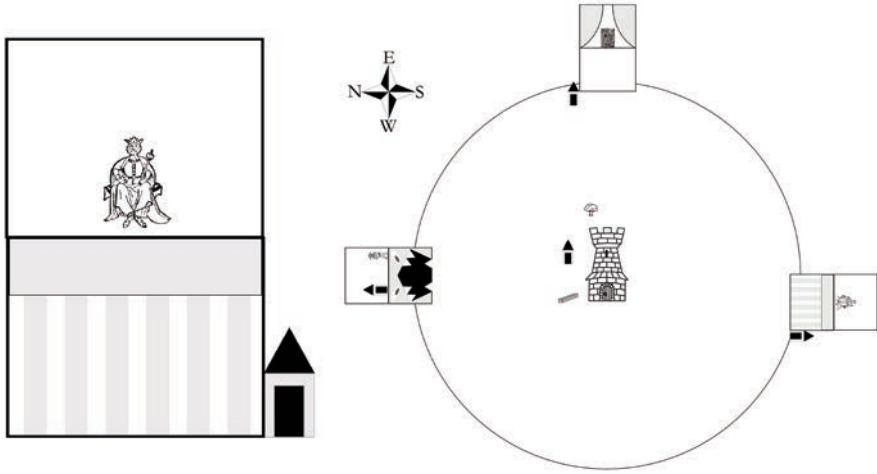


Fig. 9. Left: The relationship between the Palace, the Gate, and the Lodge. Right: Marseilles in context with other staging complexes and including the Sepulchre.

costume change” before returning to chastise the King and Queen of Marseilles whilst flanked by angels, it is really only necessary that the area at the *platea* level be enclosed in the same way as the Hellmouth (30). Mary could “woydyt” [“withdraw, depart”] down into that area, then return to the connected Lodge to await the King’s soldier at line 1641 s.d. As Mary speaks the next line after the stage direction it is unlikely she travels far, and so the audience is intended to consider both the Lodge and Palace part of the Marseilles complex. Jones suggests something similar, stating that “Marcylle may be a castle structure with a gate, Mary’s lodge being outside this gate. Thus it may be an elaborate structure, a gated castle with a throne room, a bedchamber, and a small exterior lodge attached” (30).

The next action after Mary’s speech in the Lodge is the descent of Primus and Secundus Angelus to Mary, suggesting that the Heathen Temple is also part of the same complex (line 1597 s.d.). Stage machinery used to convey the “cloud from heven”, which destroys the Heathen Temple, could be used to convey the angels as well (line 1561 s.d.). The temple would have to be above the *platea* level, as “þe pryst and þe cler[k] xall synke” after the destruction is done. A fire is lit and controlled below the Temple’s scaffold, with the same trapdoor that allows the Priest and Clerk to sink also used to release smoke to represent the destroyed temple (line 743 s.d.). Moreover, if the gate to the

palace is on the *platea* level then the Lodge is a structure resting on the *platea* rather than on a stage above it. The gate would need to remain usable after the destruction of the temple both to allow Mary Magdalene and the two angels access to the King of Marseilles and to allow Mary's costume change to be concealed from the audience, which makes the lighting of a fire underneath the entire Marseilles complex unlikely (line 1617 s.d.). Since the Heathen Temple must be near Marseilles but the palace portion of the complex must remain usable, the staging of Marseilles indicates that a stage complex could be grouped both horizontally and vertically within the performance space while still representing one geographic area. See figure 10.

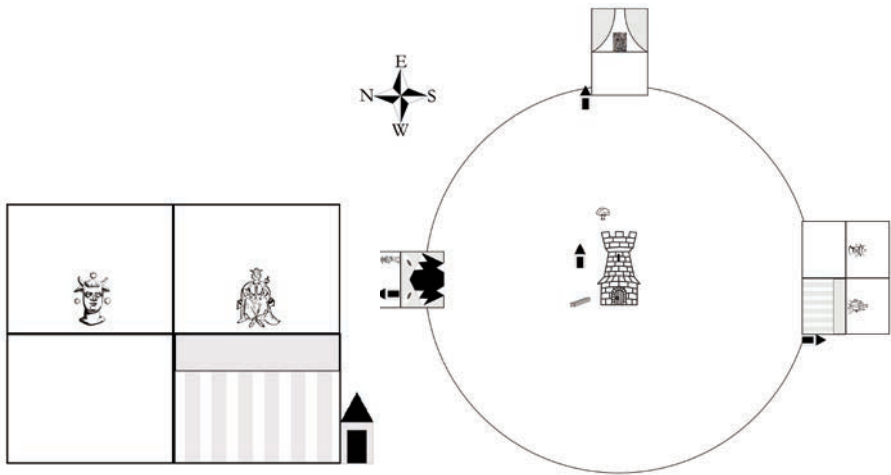


Fig. 10. Left: The inclusion of the temple in the Marseilles complex of stages. Right: The Marseilles complex in context.

Grouping of locations by geographic area is also suggested in the rest of the portion of the play drawn from the *vita apostolica*. Accepting that Christ's appearance at the tomb ending at line 1131 is the last item in the play taken from the *vita evangelica*, the locations mentioned in the stage directions for the portion of her life taken from the *vita apostolica* all fall along an axis of travel between the Jerusalem and Marseilles complexes, with the Mountain resting somewhere between them. The Wilderness and the Priest's Cell—the items taken from the *vita eremitica*—are either located near Marseilles or near the Heaven complex. In the case of the latter, the mechanism used for the "cloud" and angels in the Marseilles episode would serve to raise Mary Magdalene into the clouds, but

for the former a separate mechanism would serve that purpose (lines 2018 s.d., 2030 s.d.).²⁴ Although the location near Heaven seems more in keeping with the *vita eremetica* and with her statement that she is in a “deserte”, as the stage direction indicates the word “deserte” in the fifteenth century could also mean “wilderness”. A location near Marseilles is more likely since travel between that complex and the east in the play is conducted by ship. Mary Magdalene instead walks to her hermitage during the speeches of the King and Queen of Marseilles before the beginning of her speech at line 1989.

This places Marseilles in the southern portion of the play space, opposite Hell, which would be in keeping with the notions of the saved and damned expressed in Matthew 25:34 and 25:41. Mary Magdalene’s hermitage is then between Marseilles and Jerusalem, along the path the cloud follows when it destroys the Heathen Temple (line 1561 s.d.). See figure 11.

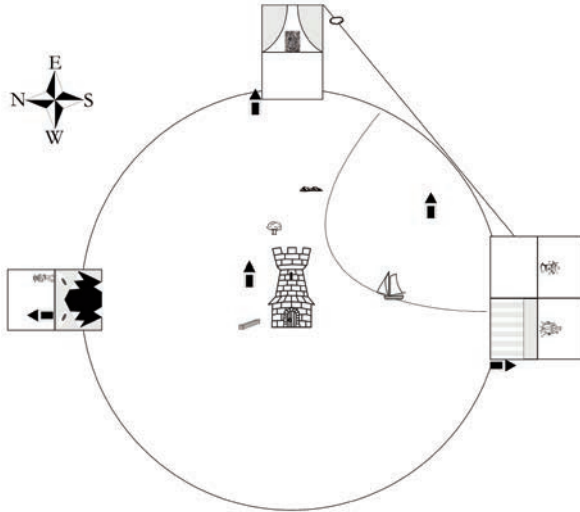


Fig. 11. Areas from the latter portion of the *vita apostolica*: The Mountain and Priest’s Cell, with a possible path of travel for the Ship and the Cloud.

Placing the hermitage along the path between Marseilles and Jerusalem would allow the angels to lift Mary Magdalene “in nubibus” to receive manna using the mechanism necessary to destroy the temple, but not require the Wilderness to be directly adjacent to Heaven (line 2030 s.d.). Mary Magdalene stays in this area for the remainder of the play except for her ascension into the clouds.

II. Locations referenced in character speeches, by first mention:

1. Rome²⁵ (line 1)
2. Bethany (line 62)
3. The King of the World's Stage²⁶ (line 386)
4. The Cross (line 1005)
5. Marseilles (line 1371)

Characters mention these areas as their present locations, and as such they must exist within the performance space. Of the five, two have already been discussed: Marseilles is the area consisting of the King of Marseilles' Palace, the Heathen Temple, the Wilderness and the Priest's Cell. Likewise, Bethany is the area around Magdalene Castle and consists of the castle itself, The Arbour, Simon the Leper's House, and Lazarus's Tomb. This leaves three locations: the Cross, Rome, and the King of the World's stage. See figure 12.

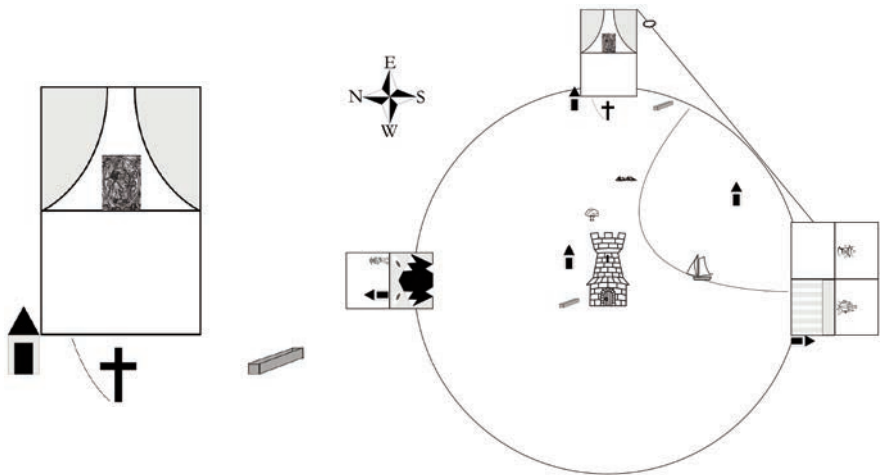


Fig. 12. Left: the Sepulchre and Cross in relation to the Jerusalem complex, along with a possible path for the three Marys' travel to the Cross. Right: The Jerusalem complex in context.

Based on the *Rudimentum Novitiorum* map the Cross must be close to the Jerusalem complex. However, the context in which the Cross is presented to the audience is not as a component of a performed and witnessed staging of the Crucifixion. Instead, it is the Cross as the audience would experience it: a venerated object associated with pilgrimage and the Stations of the Cross.

The three Marys travel, “wyth sygnis of þe passion pryntyd ypon þer brest”, towards the Sepulchre in a prototype of the pilgrimage to the stations that the King of Marseilles undergoes later in the play (lines 994-1014).²⁷

While performing this proto-pilgrimage, Mary Magdalene states “here he turnyd aȝen to þe woman of Jerusalem / And for wherynesse lett þe crosse falle”. Mary Jacobe then says “here þe Jevys spornyd hym to make hym goo, / And þey dyspytyd þer Kyng ryall” before all three women approach the Cross, hailing it in unison with “Heylle, gloryows cross! þou baryst þat Lord on hye” (lines 994-95, 1005). As Bush notes, by doing so they

do not so much point to the ground upon which Christ walked as they point to their faith and their acceptance of God. They dramatize their faith by showing us the bond between the visible and the invisible. Although they know the ground is sacred, the audience, which cannot recognize the platea as such, sees their faith instead. Christ localizes in their hearts and in their active retracing of Christ’s steps. Their pointing dramatizes this localization through faith. (Bush 145)

Combined with the recounting of the Harrowing of Hell by the Devil at lines 963-92, the speech serves to reference the events of the Passion and death of Christ without detracting from the focus on Mary Magdalene during the play. Equally important for purposes of staging, the three Marys hailing the Cross in unison indicates that there is a physical representation of the Cross present, and that this representation is connected to events that occurred within Jerusalem during the Passion. The three Marys’ words and actions make explicit the connection between the Cross and the earthly Jerusalem, and through the earthly Jerusalem to the heavenly one. Furthermore the fourteenth station of the Cross—the laying of Christ in his tomb—is represented by the Sepulchre, defined in speech and physically represented by the mock tomb chest (lines 1015-1132, 1022 s.d., 1047 s.d.). Thus, particular speeches define the locations of four of the fourteen stations, and two of them are additionally defined through the use of stage properties.

Rome is never expressly defined as such, but its representation as a location can be inferred by the speeches of the Emperor Tiberius at the beginning of the play. It is likely that it is near the western portion of the play complex, opposite Heaven. Assuming that Hell is in the northern portion of the performance space, placing Rome in the west also positions it at Hell’s left, mirroring the placement of Marseilles and Heaven. It might be thought that such mirroring would be unlikely in the fifteenth century, but the text of the play never states that Peter is in Rome. This significant shift from the *Legenda Aurea*’s placement

of Peter in that city during the *vita apostolica* portion of Mary Magdalene's life is the first indication of the playwright's willingness to alter his non-Biblical source material. Rome is not the home of the Church in the latter portion of the play; instead, Mary's statement that the King of Marseilles "xall thankytt Petyr, my mastyr, wythowt delay" (line 1680) and the subsequent direct pilgrimage to Jerusalem indicates that the Church is centred on Peter the man rather than on Rome the location. Since Peter is in Jerusalem, there is nothing to redeem Rome and thus nothing to suggest it should be closer to the Heaven complex. Moreover, from a practical standpoint, movement across the entirety of the performance space to get from Rome to Jerusalem would explain the long gap between the Messenger's exit from Rome at line 139 s.d. and his appearance in Jerusalem at line 208 s.d. See figure 13.

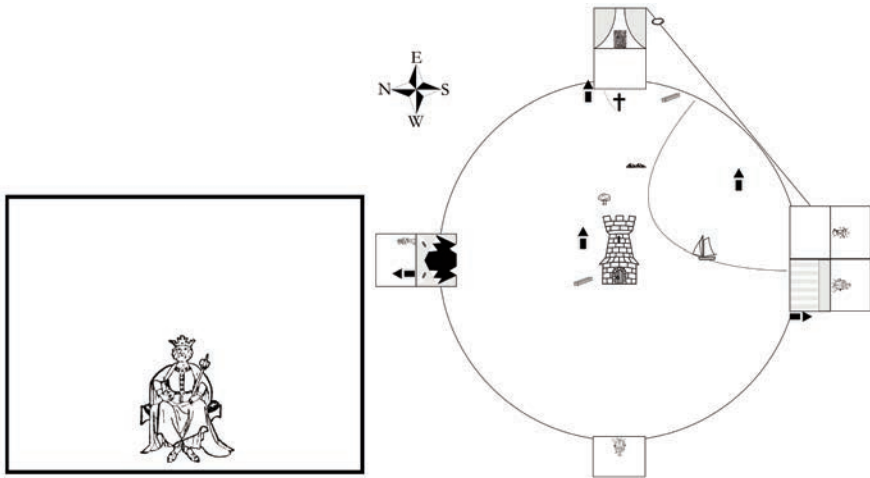
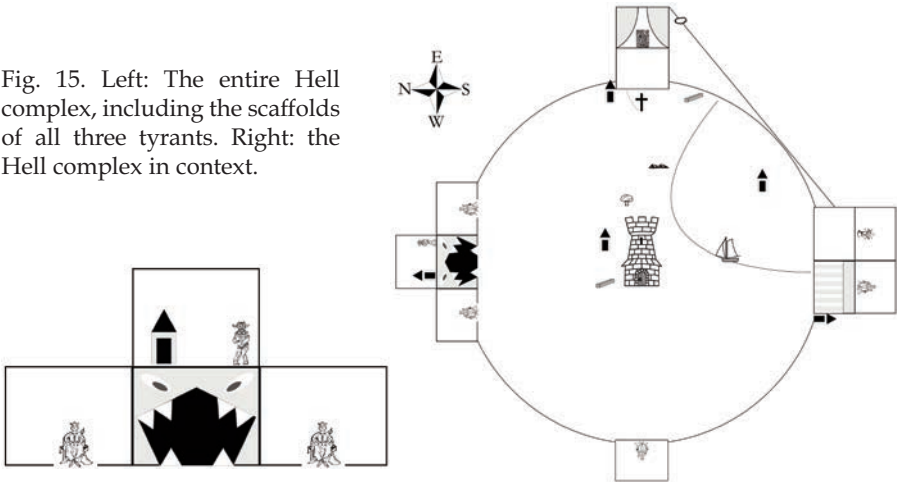


fig. 13. The Rome complex, in context with the other locations in the play in the western portion of the play space.

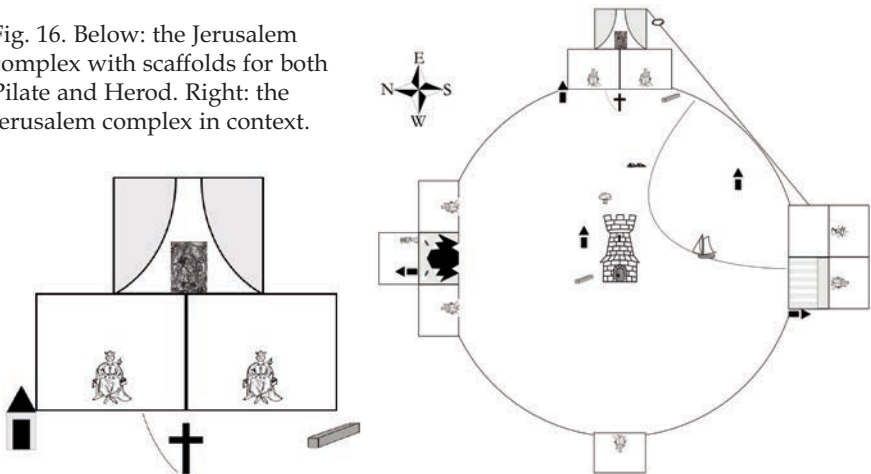
This leaves the King of the World's stage. Rather than being a separate structure at a cardinal point, as it is in *Perseverance* and *Perseverance*-based diagrams, the King of the World's stage would have been part of the Hell complex, perhaps on the same level as the stage above the Hellmouth or in a designated location on the *platea* level. The request for the Devil, Wrath, and Envy to "cum vp" onto his location is then a request to ascend to his portion of the complex (line 386). Furthermore, the "vp" mentioned here may indicate that the Devil and his company actually exit through the Hellmouth and are then invited to ascend the King of the World's scaffold. If the Hell complex's Hellmouth was constructed in a way similar to those proposed by Peter Meredith, then having

Fig. 15. Left: The entire Hell complex, including the scaffolds of all three tyrants. Right: the Hell complex in context.



The locations of Pilate and Herod as part of the Jerusalem/Heaven complex would also mirror this arrangement. As noted, Herod's statement that he is the King of Jerusalem affiliates him with the complex, and the statement in Luke 3:1 that Pilate was "procurante Iudaeam" ["governor of Judea"] also affiliates him with Jerusalem (Douay-Rheims). Moreover, placing Pilate and Herod directly beneath Heaven increases the dramatic impact when the Heaven stage opens, as it directly gives the lie to the two temporal lords' claims to authority through a visual as well as a spoken representation of the power of the risen Christ. See figure 16.

Fig. 16. Below: the Jerusalem complex with scaffolds for both Pilate and Herod. Right: the Jerusalem complex in context.



IV. Locations mentioned, but not obviously performance locations

1. Alapye (line 158)
2. Assye (line 158)
3. Bedlem (line 158)
4. Tyr (line 158)
5. **Berzaby** (line 159)
6. Abryon (line 159)
7. Galelye (line 982)
8. Torke (line 1435)
9. Satyllye (line 1437)
10. Nazareth (line 1849)

These locations are those mentioned in dialogue, but without the telltale performance indicators such as a command to “go to” someone at that location. The first six of these ten locations are mentioned by Herod in his bombastic opening speech, where he claims that the areas “byn ondyr [his] governouns” (line 160). As Herod never leaves his stage, it can be assumed that this is an example of overreach in declaring his power.

Two of the four that remain, Torke and Satyllye, are named by the Master of the Ship as reference points for the audience. His statements that he would be “full loth for to lye” about the fact they are passing Torke and that from “þis cors” past Satyllye “we thar not abaffe” underscore that the ship will not be stopping at either (lines 1436, 1438).

This leaves two locations, Nazareth and Galelye. Of the two, Galelye is mentioned as the place that Christ has gone to immediately after the resurrection, but the focus of the play stays with Mary Magdalene as she enters with Mary Jacobe and Mary Salome (lines 963-93 s.d.). Christ does not actually appear until the three Marys are at the Sepulchre. Galelye is a verbal reference for the audience, providing a cue as to when in Mary Magdalene’s *vita* these events occurred rather than serving as a cue to location within the performance space. Conversely, Nazareth and Bedlem (Bethlehem) are mentioned by Peter as places to which the king must “go wyth delygens” before he visits the Stations as part of his pilgrimage, but there are no lines indicating that he is shown doing so. Because the King is the focus of the play at this point, this seems odd and leads, in part, to the assumption of Baker and others that there are lines of dialogue missing from the manuscript. Moreover, for our purposes it raises the question of how much of a pilgrimage was realized in performance.

Neither Bedlem nor Nazareth can be placed near Bethany based on the

character speeches. Instead, they are near the Jerusalem complex. They could be realised either through a stage property, perhaps as a painted cloth or other background raised as the King of Marseilles moved through the performance space during his pilgrimage, or as points of reference mentioned in now-lost dialogue.²⁹

As mentioned earlier, several of the Stations of the Cross are referenced explicitly and defined for the audience by the three Marys as they journey, dressed as pilgrims, towards the Sepulchre. Considering that Peter's speech states that the King will walk with him to visit the Stations after his return from Bedlem and Nazareth, the King could have performed some sort of dumbshow, going through the motions of his pilgrimage, before Peter took him through the Stations, no doubt with explication that is missing from the manuscript (lines 1845-50). As with the three Marys, Peter's speech would then serve to define the locations of the various Stations as they progressed, and moreover would show how the audience could follow the three Marys in pilgrimage as well. However, it is necessary to indicate to the audience that the King was in Bedlem and Nazareth before he returned to Peter. Therefore either a physical location with some set dressing was necessary for each, or the King announced his location in a manner similar to the Master of the Ship and the three Marys. See figure 17.

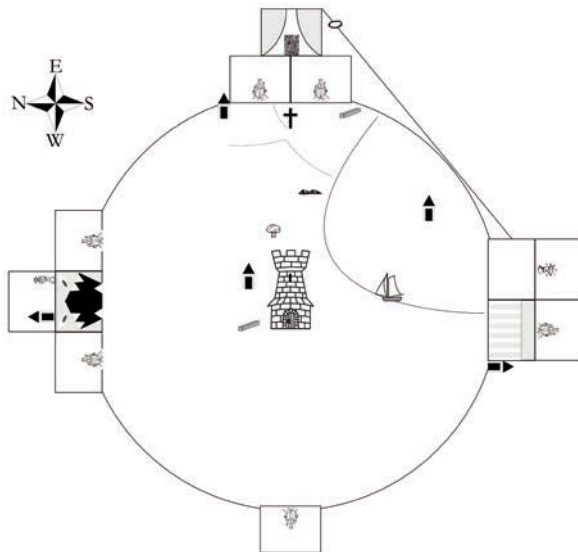


Fig. 17. The full staging, with a path for the King of Marseilles to visit Jerusalem, then travel to Bedlem and Nazareth.

Obviously, the performance of the King of Marseilles' pilgrimage as dumbshow is speculative. However, given the way that the text defines locations through the speeches of the Master of the Ship and the three Marys, the fact that the three Marys are in some sort of pilgrims' dress as they move through the Stations, and the fact that they refer to each of the stations they visit as "here", it is possible that the carefully defined Stations from the *vita evangelica* portion of the play were used by the King as he goes on his own pilgrimage in the *vita apostolica* portion. Nazareth and Bedlem may have existed at some point in performance as defined locations in the performance space, even if the other locations in the fourth category did not.

Conclusion

Putting the locations together as complexes by geographic area yields the following associations:

I. Bethany Complex

- A. Arbor
- B. Lazarus's Tomb
- C. Magdalene Castle
- D. Simon the Leper's House

II. Hell

- E. King of Flesh's Location
- F. King of the World's Location
- G. Hellmouth
- H. House set Aflame
- I. Stage above Hell

III. Jerusalem/Heaven

- J. The Cloud³⁰
- K. The Cross
- L. Heaven
- M. Herod's Palace
- N. Pilate's Palace
- O. The Sepulchre
- P. The Stations³¹
- Q. The Tavern

IV. Marseilles

- R. The Heathen Temple
- S. The Lodge
- T. The Palace of the King of Marseilles

V. Rome

- V. Tiberus's Palace

VI. Wilderness

- U. The Priest's Cell

Unassociated

- W. Bedlem
- X. Galelye
- Y. The Mountain
- Z. The Ship

VII. The Place

Complete list of locations in the Digby Mary Magdalene,
organized by staging complex.

Once the locations in the play are placed in relation to each other several things become apparent. The three portions of the Magdalene's *vita* have distinct areas associated with them, allowing the audience to focus on each as smaller plays within the larger play of the Magdalene's life and hence reinforcing its episodic nature. While the individual sets of scaffolding would be more complex, the layout as a whole is much simpler than an arrangement in which each location has its own completely isolated scaffold. Moreover, while the proposed staging is similar to that of the *Castle of Perseverance*, with complexes at the four corners and the middle, the locations follow from the play's narrative and the traditional *orbis terrarum* geography of a "historical" map rather than the exterior-to-centre performance flow of *Perseverance*. Thus, the resulting diagram is really only superficially similar. Furthermore, this proposed staging simplifies the problem of where the audience would sit, as complexes that operate both vertically and horizontally allow the audience to move freely within the performance space. The episodic nature of the play when performed in this way allows the audience to travel between locations on the *platea* without missing any of the plot.

While more expensive than a production that reuses scaffolds, which as a solution has its own problems, staging the play in complexes would eliminate some of the costs of production while not requiring cumulative plays to be performed as a means to build up the necessary infrastructure, as Coldewey proposes in positing a 1562 performance of the play alongside the *Conversion of Saul* and the *Killing of the Children* (111).³²

Scaffolds could share supports, and special effects such as the cloud would only have to move along a single path rather than multiple paths to different locations. Save for the locations around Magdalene Castle, this staging allows actors to move into and out of place without having to cross sections of the *platea*, and this means that those occasions when characters do cross it—the Messenger scenes, Christ's entrance to raise Lazarus, and Mary Magdalene's evangelical mission to Marseilles—are all the more visually striking. Moreover, when movement into the Bethany complex is necessary but should not be noticed, such as the conveyance of the Seven Deadly Sins to the House of Simon the Leper, the stage directions make it clear that this is the case. This reinforces the centrality of Bethany to the *vita evangelica* portions of the play.

Grouping these locations into complexes also explains some of the inconsistencies of the play's version of the *vita apostolica* when compared to Jacobus' *Legenda*. The location of Rome in the western portion of the performance space makes it difficult for the King to journey from Rome to

Jerusalem and breaks down the natural visual focus towards Heaven after it has opened at line 1348 s.d. This explains why Peter is kept in Jerusalem, where he has a natural association with Heaven as the representative of the Church in the play. In turn, the decision to associate Peter with Jerusalem gives a performative and visual reason for the narrative decision to have Mary Magdalene travel to Marseilles alone. Doing so alleviates the need to have additional characters introduced solely to accompany her during the *vita apostolica* portion of the play, and the decision to omit those characters stresses her agency as *apostelesse*. It also underscores Jerusalem's importance not only as the site of the crucifixion, but as a pilgrimage site, and allows Bethany to be the important location in the *vita evangelica* portion of the play.

Lastly, this staging reflects the importance of salvation and penance—two aspects of Mary Magdalene's story that resonated strongly with the fifteenth-century audience—through the placement of locations so as to reflect architecturally Mary's loss and recovery of virtue through the location both of Magdalene Castle and the Arbour. Similarly, the placement of Heaven, Hell, and particularly Marseilles reinforces the differences between the saved and the damned.

Of course, the play as it exists in Bodleian MS Digby 133 is, in some senses, the playwright's ideal version of the play—an explanation of performance with all the locations he would like to include. Any actual performances of the play could have been simplified in production. The argument presented here, however, shows even that fullest, idealised form of the play can be performed in ways that make it, while ambitious, hardly prohibitive. The staging allows the audience to focus on each of the episodes in the play while reducing the material cost of the work and retaining the geographic whole. It also reinforces several elements of popular piety and provides the same level of entertainment. Such a complex-based arrangement could easily be what our hypothetical community would have decided upon to provide the maximum amount of spectacle for the minimum amount of expense.

Notes

¹ Several scholars have proposed stagings of the play. Most of these with diagrams have been presented prior to the most recent Early English Text Society edition of the play, with the exception of Bob Godfrey (Adams 225; Albright Plate 3A; Bevington, *Drama* 688; Jones 186-92; Wickham 99-119; Godfrey 159). Several scholars both pre- and post-publication of the EETS edition have also speculated on the staging without resort to a diagram (Pollard 193; Nicholl 193; Lewis xx-xxiv;

Coldewey 103-21; Bush 139-65; Scherb 173-78; Clopper 188-89; Mead 269-82). Additionally, in 2003 the Poculi Ludique Societas at Toronto put on this play. Photos of this performance are available on the online photograph-sharing website Flickr (search for 'Poculi Ludique Societas'), but do not help to explain the layout of scaffolds, and do not seem to quite mesh with the playtext.

² Bevington, in his introduction to the play (*Drama* 688), acknowledges the debt to *Perseverance*. Adams does not, but his edition also only prints the play to line 924. The staging diagram in the Cornish *Ordinalia* presents another example of contemporary locus-and-platea staging. It is, however, composed in Middle Cornish rather than Middle English. Moreover, the accepted provenance of *The Castle of Perseverance*, based on dialect, places it in much closer relation to the Digby *Mary Magdalene*.

³ A significant and convincing portion of Jones' analysis of the play as pilgrimage hinges on the fact that the play is actually episodic rather than scenic in nature. See "Pilgrimage" 34-38.

⁴ Also, consider Lewis's statement that "this theory of doubling the sets has a certain appeal to the modern mind, which is accustomed to dealing with drama from the aspect of economy and efficiency of production, drama today being mainly a commercial venture. However, the play itself gives no evidence to support this possibility. It is highly unlikely, in fact, that any play with a list of characters numbering upwards of fifty, and which uses as an indispensable prop a 'ship' which carries at least a half dozen people, would be the production of a band of medieval travelling professionals" (xix).

⁵ All translations by the author unless otherwise mentioned.

⁶ Consider, for example, the fact that many cathedrals and parish churches are built in a cruciform pattern along an east-west axis, even when doing so is at odds with the layout of streets around them.

⁷ Of course, the staging diagram of *The Castle of Perseverance* also depicts a circular staging area, albeit one with south at the top of the map. This is likely due to widespread adoption of the compass for navigation during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Such compasses pointed to the south.

⁸ Although the castle is first mentioned in the stage directions at line 439, Cyrus mentions it in dialogue at line 59 with the statement "Thys castell of Mavdleyne is at my wylddyng" and resides on the structure from his entrance at line 48 s.d. through his exit after line 276. It seems likely, as has been noted by Bevington, Baker and others that the castle is represented by a physical structure, similar to the castle in *Perseverance*, that exists throughout the play⁹. Although Jerusalem is mentioned by Cyrus when he describes his holdings at line 61, it is identified explicitly as a location for characters to travel to in line 469 s.d.

¹⁰ While it could be argued that The Place is undifferentiated and thus exists from the start of the play, this is the first time it is directly mentioned as such in a stage direction.

¹¹ The house is mentioned by Satan at line 741, when he states "Goo into þis howsse, 3e lordeynys here" and then identified again at line 742 s.d. However, it seems likely it was part of the hell complex from the beginning of the play.

¹² Lazarus' tomb is referred to as the "ston" here.

¹³ The palace is not identified as a stage or castle, but instead as the King of Marseilles' "hom" at line 1561 s.d. It is not mentioned in characters' speeches. The

King of Marseilles, much like Cyrus, is likely using the location before then, however, beginning with his speech at line 925.

¹⁴ The Sepulchre is identified at line 1022 s.d. (where it is referred to as “þe grave”) and at line 1046 s.d., but Mary Magdalene’s remark “now to þe monument lett vs gon” at line 1011 makes it clear it exists before then.

¹⁵ The temple itself is not identified until the stage direction following line 1537, but Regina’s remark at line 1142, “Lett us gon ofer in þat hye kyngis syth”, combined with the entry of the heathen priest and his boy immediately following, indicates its existence before that stage direction.

¹⁶ The Mountain is identified several times in stage directions, starting with the one after 1790: “Tunc remiga[n]t ad montem et dicit rex”, [“Then they row to the mountain and the king says” (translation mine)]. It is first mentioned in speech as a “rock” at line 1784.

¹⁷ The cell is mentioned by the Priest at line 2072, and then in the stage direction following. This is a rare moment in this play of a stage direction embedded in a character speech being repeated in a stage direction.

¹⁸ In Middle English, “in” can have some of the same semantic scope as “on” today.

¹⁹ As Pamela Sheingorn notes, “there was a fixed location called hell in circular playing areas, in place-and-scaffold productions of the English cycle plays . . . and the entrance to that hell was most frequently represented as the gaping jaws of a beast. In both art and drama, hell is present not just in sacred narratives . . . but also in subjects treating the history of the Church on earth—that is, in the lives of the saints” (3).

²⁰ Additionally, Peter Meredith discusses how Hellmouth might have been constructed, including diagrams (“Iconography”). Although Meredith is limiting his speculation to the York, Towneley, and Chester cycles, it is not hard to imagine a similar construction serving as the Hellmouth in the *Mary Magdalene*. The description of the bosses’ location is as follows: C stands for Cloisters, the second letter the particular side of the cloisters, the third letter for the particular bay, and the number for the item within that bay. For the nave, N stands for nave, the second letter for the particular bay, and the number for the item within that bay. See Rose and Hedgecoe, 19, 47 for a plan of the whole cathedral and of the cloisters, respectively.

²¹ The Greco-Roman *stadion* is equivalent in measure to the English furlong, about 600 feet. John 11:18 is saying that Bethany is a little less than two miles, or three kilometers, from Jerusalem.

²² Nicholl proposed something similar in his discussion of the play, but his groupings do not seem to include all of the locations in the play, nor do they take into account geographic as well as dramaturgical considerations.

²³ Besides the specific mentions in the *Mary Magdalene*, Butterworth also provides an extensive analysis of the etymology of these terms and how they are used across the Middle English dramatic corpus.

²⁴ At several points in the play stage directions are given which sum up a set of actions within the play, then are repeated at the points where the individual actions occur. In this case, Primus and Secundus Angelus “desend into wyldyrnesse” and two other angels “bring an oble, opynly aperyng aloft in þe clowddys”. Then the two angels bring Mary, she receives the host, and then returns to her hermitage. This latter portion of the stage direction is repeated at line 2030 s.d.

²⁵ This is based on the statement “Masengyre, owt of þis town wyth a rage!” by the Emperor at line 1331. Since the Emperor opens the play with his first bombastic speech, whatever location he speaks on must exist from the opening of the play.

²⁶ Although it is never identified as a stage either in the stage directions or dialogue the fact that the World requests that Satan “cum vp onto my tent” suggests that there is a physical location associated with him.

²⁷ See Boehnen for an analysis of the play in terms of pilgrimage, with connections being made between the dress of the three women and contemporary pilgrim’s dress. Also worth noting is Coletti’s analysis of the actual dress of the women, rather than the symbology of the pilgrim badges they carry, as signifying their status as “chast” women (50-54). This depiction of the three Marys with symbols of contemporary fifteenth-century spirituality also makes it more likely that the Sepulchre and Lazarus’s Tomb were stone tomb chests.

²⁸ The Messenger does not have a stage direction indicating that he must go to Pilate, but Herod’s dialogue at line 226 and his response at lines 227-28 make this action clear. Likewise, the stage direction following line 248, “Her comyt þe Emprorys masengyr to Pylat”, indicates that this action is similar to the messenger going to Herod.

²⁹ The *Rudimentum Novitorium* places both Nazareth and Bedlem on the banks of the Sea of Galilee.

³⁰ The line on the diagram is meant to represent the path of travel for the Cloud between Heaven and the Heathen Temple. Mary Magdalene will be lifted into the clouds somewhere along this path.

³¹ The line on the diagram is meant to represent a possible path of travel for the three Marys. The actual stations are defined by their performance, rather than by set dressing.

³² Coldewey also notes that the stages for this proposed 1562 performance “must have been very large, very numerous, or very elaborate, since many men were occupied for weeks building them and a great amount of material was used. Six loads of timber, two loads of wood, and two loads of poles went into the stage construction at the three sites” (105).

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