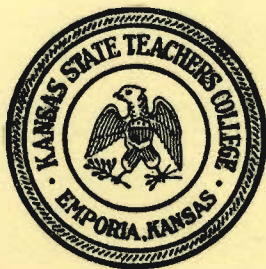


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# THE EMPORIA STATE *Research Studies*

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*To Maske in Myrthe:*  
Spenser's Theatrical Practices in  
*The Faerie Queene*



From E. Spenser, *Shepheardes Calender*, 1579 (Huntington).

By Charles E. Walton

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## FOREWORD

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In his life of Spenser (p. 12), A. C. Judson briefly considers the extent of Spenser's familiarity with the London theatrical scene and dismisses the problem with the following comment: "The fact that a number of cantos of his great epic are scarcely more than descriptions of masques or pageants proves the absorbing interest felt by him in such entertainments." Indeed, the presence of at least three masque episodes in *The Faerie Queene* firmly supports his contention. When we realize the additional fact that Spenser's "absorbing interest" is not confined to *The Faerie Queene* alone, we attach an even greater significance to Judson's remark. For example, we may turn to the dedicatory sonnet to Lord Howard in which Spenser describes his epic as a *pageant*. Or we may observe Palinode of *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579), *May Eclogue*, who asks if it is not the month of May, "When love lads masken in fresh aray." And we may recall that Colin, in the following *November Eclogue*, laments that "The mornefull Muse in myrth now list ne maske / As shee was wont in youngth and sommer dayes." In *The Ruines of Time* (1591), we witness sights which were, to Spenser, "Like tragicke pageants seeming to appear." We can hear his Thalia in *Teares of the Muses* (1591) ask where have fled ". . . the sweete delights of learnings treasure," remembering the occasion when such delights had once beautified the "painted theaters," enabling her to reign as queen, ". . . to maske in mirth with graces

well beseene." Again, in Sonnet LIV from *Amoretti* (1595), we are aware of Spenser's allusions to *pageants play*, *disguisings*, and to a *maske in myrth*. In *Astrophel* (1595?), we think he may have referred to Sidney in the lines, "And he himself seemed made for merriment / Merrily masking both in bowre and hall." The catalogue is endless. It is possible to extend the list, but the basic principle involved would be the same. If we restrict the study to *The Faerie Queene*, however, we may examine the prominent masques therein with a much clearer insight into the secondary problems which may occur. I can see no reason for lingering over Spenser's frequent use of *pageant* in the epic, at least not for the moment, because (as Spenser himself explained) *the epic is a pageant* from beginning unto end. Certainly, its inheritance from medieval pageantry is everywhere most evident to the student of this ancient tradition. However, in my desire to achieve a complete comprehension of Spenser's handling of the masque within the poem, I shall probably find it convenient to touch upon its relationship to the pageant, from time to time. It is also possible that the nature of this investigation may give rise to the problem of Spenser's "nine lost comedies," although it is not my intention to contribute to the scholarship already surrounding this subject. Rather, I hope through a careful examination of the masques within *The Faerie Queene* to add to the knowledge of the London theatrical scene (1570-1590)—the aim of the following study.

I wish to express my appreciation to *The Huntington Library, San Marino, California*, for permission to reproduce the three woodcut illustrations from Spenser's *Shepherd's Calender*, 1579.

*Emporia, Kansas*  
*August, 1960*

C.E.W.



From E. Spenser, *Shepheardes Calender*, 1579 (Huntington).

*To Maske in Myrthe:*  
**Spenser's Theatrical Practices in**  
*The Faerie Queene*

by

Charles E. Walton\*

I

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES OF THE TUDOR-STUART MASQUE

What needeth words, when great effects proclaim  
Th' attractive virtue of th' Adamantine Rocks?  
—*Proteus and the Adamantine Rock* (1594)

There are certain concepts about the background and development of the English masque fundamental to the task ahead. It is necessary, first, for us to understand the English masque as a reflection of an ancient custom recognized by royal courts from the first time nations agreed to a diplomatic exchange of emissaries. Whether we think of the masque as courtly entertainment or commemorative art, we must remember that it always fulfilled the requirements of an *occasion piece*. Its central movement was the dance. It employed music. Its dance, music, costume, and scenic contrivance were often allegorically conceived, richly embellished with folklore and mythology. In its most rudimentary form, it was already exceptionally popular by the time of Henry VIII. However, it was not until the turn of the century that it experienced its greatest development in the hands of such talented authors as Jonson, Campion, Daniel, Marston, Beaumont and Fletcher, and others, along with the architectural ingenuity of Inigo Jones. As Enid Welsford so ably demonstrated, these are the points essential to a consideration of the English masque in its vast historical setting.<sup>1</sup> Yet, it is a relatively simple problem. When the masque reached what has been called its state of perfection, possibly by no later than 1590, it differed widely from the earlier *mask[e]* in such important matters as literary setting and dialogue, for it had by then acquired its dramatic give-and-take.<sup>2</sup> Let us always remember, however, that the Eng-

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1 Enid Welsford, *The Court Masque*.

2 The spelling, I think, is inconsequential. Jonson merely adopted the French spelling of *masque*, and the fact that his pieces differ considerably from the early *maske* has nothing to do with the choice of term. I shall use *maske* to refer to performances prior to Jonson's time.

lish court masque derived its inception mainly from the ancient and noble custom of one householder's extending the hospitality of his grounds to another. Sir E. K. Chambers suggests that ". . . as a medium of courtly compliment to a sovereign it [was] already well-established in the fourteenth century."<sup>3</sup> If Chambers is correct, and records would indicate that he is, we may conclude that the English masque was a native enterprise that relied little, or not at all, upon older continental traditions, although scholars have frequently attributed its origins to Italian or French influence, establishing it in the Italian court and describing its passage into England somewhat circuitously, *en passant par la France*.<sup>4</sup> However, it is clear that they have only partially succeeded in these endeavors, since the English masque is apparently indigenous to the courtly entertainment of a guest of unusual national or international reputation, and future studies of the evolution of this dramatic form should not minimize this fact.

To appreciate the English masque in the various stages of its development, we should begin with an examination of an early masque-like spectacle contained in the account of a mumming held in the court of Edward III in 1377.<sup>5</sup> Here, we observe that the word *mumming* identifies the activities of a group of disguised performers who acted or *danced* in pantomime, remained masked during the performance, and were ushered off by torch-bearers at the conclusion of their dance. Similarly, extracts from the *Coventry Leet Book* concerning a reception in 1456 for Queen Margaret, for Edward IV in 1460, for Prince Edward in 1474, and for Prince Arthur in 1498, emphasize an elaborate use of costume, speech of welcome, and pageant-like procession.<sup>6</sup> We should also take into account another mumming, held in the court of Henry VII in 1501, in which the introduction of a *pageant wagon* denotes an innovation in the staging of the *momerie* and points, in turn, to a use of stage machinery and scenic effect in the more highly developed masques of the later period.<sup>7</sup> The next record, concerning the festivities surrounding the marriage of Katharine of Aragon and Prince Arthur in 1501, involves a pageant depicting the abstractions of Hope and Love, a Mount of Love, and a castle drawn by four beasts, all symbols derived from the ceremony itself and directly related to the royal families represented.<sup>8</sup> As tempting as it is to compare these de-

3 Sir E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, I, p. 150.

4 Both Paul Reyher, *Les Masques anglais*, and Rudolph Brotanek, *Die englischen Maskenspiele*, adopt this theory. See Brotanek, fn. 3, p. 6.

5 R. Bayne, "Masques and Pastorals," *Cambridge History of English Literature*, VI, p. 373. Also, Brotanek, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7: "Die nächste Maskerade, über welche wir aus fürhlicher unterrichtet sind, wurde 1377 von Bürgen Londons vor dem jungen Prinzen Richard (dem späteren Richard II.) aufgeführt." Cf. Glynne Wickham, *Early English Stages, 1300-1660*, I, p. 290.

6 Hardin Craig, *Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays*, Appendix III, pp. 108-18; and his *English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages*, pp. 127-50.

7 The *pageant*, or *car*, or *waggon*, was a familiar device in the production of the English miracle play; hence, the reference above would suggest a connection between the *disguising* to come and miracle play activity (*Shakespeare Society Papers*, I, p. 47). That it was still familiar to the early seventeenth century is demonstrated in Middleton's *A Mad World, My Masters* (1604), when Follywit, upon being asked the whereabouts of his "boys", replies: "They come along with the waggon, sir." (V.i)

8 Chambers, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 150-51; also, L. M. Ellison, *The Early Romantic Drama at the English Court*, p. 6.



scriptions with Spenser's pageantry in *The Faerie Queene*, we are primarily occupied with the masque at this point.

Possibly the earliest reference to a *maske* so-termed is found in Hall's description of the celebration of Epiphany in 1512. Here, we learn that the ". . . kyng with XI. other wer disguised, after the manner of Italie, called a maske, a thyng not seen afore in Englande . . ." This record further tells us how the revellers ". . . daunced and commoned together as the fashion of the Maskes is . . .," and concludes with a description of their departure. Undoubtedly, it is this document which has been used in support of the theory of continental influence. However, it is possible and equally as sound to interpret the crucial phrase, *after the manner of Italie*, as a reference to costume, for nowhere in the account do we find an indication of the use of scenic contrivance or mechanical device to suggest that this early *maske* resembled the elaborately staged Italian *intermezzi*, except in the matter of costume.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, it is a valuable document, containing what is probably the earliest use of *maske* as a reference to this kind of courtly entertainment. That the term was coming into vogue at about this time is further illustrated by the fact that, two years later in 1514, we find an allusion to "Maskes, Revelles, and Disguisings" in the *Liber Numerator Scaccarii* of Henry VIII, and from this time onward, its presence is not rare in court documents.<sup>11</sup>

So far in this investigation, we have encountered *mumming*, *pageant*, *disguising*, *revels*, and *maske*, and at this point, a problem in terminology arises. I believe that the *disguising*, because of its characteristic *masked dance*, is a direct descendant of the ancient *momerie*; and that, as a forerunner of the *morris-dance* (later performed with an attention to stage mechanics), the *disguising* is also related to the early *maske*. Indeed, because of a central dance movement, *morris-on* and *morris-off* become entrance and exit cues for the disguised participants in later *maske*-like spectacles at the court.<sup>12</sup> In passing, I think it is also important to stress that spectators at these early *disguisings*—insofar as can be determined—did not mingle with the dancers, a common practice in the *masques* by 1590.<sup>13</sup> Secondly, the term *revels*, probably in effect by 1494, appears to have been used to distinguish the occasion in which audience and maskers joined in ordinary ballroom dancing, from the *disguising*, in which no spectator or performer made contact.<sup>14</sup> When this contact became a permanent feature of the later *masque*, an element of intrigue was introduced

9 Quoted in Bayne, *op. cit.*, p. 377. See Reyher, *op. cit.*, ch. V, for a detailed account of the staging of these early entertainments.

10 Bayne, *op. cit.*, p. 377. Elaborate machinery had been employed, however, before this time in the staging of court entertainments. In an account of the 1510 Christmas celebration at court, a *disguising* is reported to have cost £ 584 19s. 7d., *Ellison, op. cit.*, p. ix.

11 Quoted in J. P. Collier, *The History of English Dramatic Poetry*, I, p. 78.

12 Welsford, *op. cit.*, fn. 2, p. 119.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 142.

14 Chambers, *op. cit.*, I, p. 71. However, he suggests that the post of the Master of the Revels was only temporary at this time. He defines a *maske* as ". . . an episode in an indoor revel of dancing," I, p. 149. See Welsford, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

into the proceedings, and from this time on, the dramatic potentialities of the masque were fully exploited.<sup>15</sup> Before this occurred, however, the disguised dance had become an integral part of the varied entertainment of the day, and it is not unusual to discover such terms as *morisco*, *sword-dance*, *entremet*, *masquerie*, *tourney*, *barrier*, *mount*, *ballet d'action*, *ballet de cour*, *intermezzi*, *dumb show*, *entertainment*, and *interlude* often employed with reference to *maske-like* performances before Jonson's time.<sup>16</sup> To help clarify this terminology, Sir E. K. Chambers has suggested that we think of two distinct kinds of masks by the end of the reign of Henry VIII. These, he calls the *mask simple* and the *mask spectacular*. He believes that performers, musicians, and torch-bearers furnished their own "decoration" through costume in the *mask simple*; whereas, he identifies the *mask spectacular* with the elaborate affair utilizing a complex system of stage machinery, lighting, and costume. His terminology enables us to conclude that Henry VIII, by the end of his reign, was accustomed to the *mask spectacular* and that his successor, Elizabeth, seemed always to have preferred the *mask simple*.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, there is reason to think that her extreme frugality in these matters exerted a retarding effect upon the development of the Tudor maske. At any rate, for the early years of her reign, we know that masks were produced at her court without much, if any, royal support.<sup>18</sup> Her indirect assistance to this dramatic art form, however, becomes obvious when we review the countless entertainments *given in her honor* in connection with her frequent progresses throughout the realm.<sup>20</sup> Upon such occasions, her visits are marked by maske-like festivities of an indoor and outdoor nature, always at the expense of her solicitous host! To put it simply, Elizabeth was a strict economist in household matters affecting her court, but she was nonetheless pleased with her subjects' own lavish preparations in her behalf. To conclude, therefore, that she was not a devotee of the *mask spectacular* may be inaccurate. An investigation of certain records related to court and private entertainments during the reigns of Henry and Elizabeth will assure us of the utility of Chambers's terminology.

We detect a notable increase in the expenses of the Office of the Revels when Henry VIII comes to the throne, and his subsequent years are the occasions for plays, interludes, masks, pageants, birthday and Christmas celebrations.<sup>21</sup> Hall's description of the activities of Epiphany in 1511 is, perhaps, typical of these court spectacles:

Against the 12 daye or the daie of the Epiphane at nyghte, before the banket in the hall at Rychemound, was a pageaunt devised like a

15 Bayne, *op. cit.*, p. 378: "Because [intrigue] is natural drama, it is often the means by which the masque gets a place in dramatic literature."

16 Sir E. K. Chambers, *The Medieval Stage*, I, p. 396.

17 Sir E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, I, p. 175.

18 *Loc. cit.*

19 Welsford, *op. cit.*, p. 149. Bayne, *op. cit.*, p. 379, claims that the masque was in ". . . frequent use, but the queen had not a special taste for it." Bayne is not entirely correct in his judgment.

20 Welsford, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

21 *Loc. cit.*

mountayne, glisteryng by nyght, as though it had bene all of golde and set with stones; on the top of the whiche mountayne was a tree of golde the braunches and bowes frysed with gold, spreding on every side over the mountayne with roses and pomegranetts: the which mountayn was with vices brought up towards the kyng, and out of the same came a ladye appareiled in clothe of golde, and the children of honour, called the Henchemen, which were freshly disguysed and daunced a Morice before the kyng; and that done reentered the mountayne, and then it was drawn backe, and then was the Wassail or banquet brought in, and so brake up Christmas.<sup>22</sup>

For the 13th of February in the same year, Hall describes the playing of a tournament and the accompanying festivities:

After supper his grace with the Quene, Lordes, and Ladies, came into the White Hall within the said Pallays, which was hanged rychely, the Hall was scaffolded and rayled on al partes. There was an Interlude of the Gentlemen of his chapell before his grace, and divers fresh songes: that done, his grace called to hym a greate man, or a Lord of Ireland called Odonell, whom in the presence of the Ambassadors he made knyght: then mynstrells beganne to play, the Lordes and Ladies beganne to daunce.<sup>23</sup>

The Christmas celebration of 1512 has already been cited elsewhere as ". . . a thyng not seen afore in Englande. . . ." The record for Christmas in the following year, however, clearly reflects Henry's lavish tastes and refers to the Master of the Revels and to the performance of an interlude:

For to do pleser the Kyngs grace, and for to pas the tyme of Chrestemas, by Sir Harry Gyllfurth Master of the Revells, was devysed an Interluit, in the wheche conteyned a moresks of vj persons and ij ladys: wherfor by hys commandement, of our soveraine lord the Kyng, and at appoyntment of Sir Harry Gylforth, was preparyd, had and wrought dyvers and sundry garments. . . . The Interlud was callyd the tryumpe of Love and Bewte, and yt was presentyd by Mayster Cornyshe and oothers of the Chappell of our soverayne lorde the Kyng, and the chyldern of the sayd Chapell. In the same Venus and Bewte dyd tryumpe over al ther enemys, and tamyd a salvadge man and a lyon, that was made very rare and naturall, so as the kyng was gretly plesyd therwyth, and graciously gaf Mayster Cornysse a ryche rewarde owt of his owne hand, to be dyvydyd with the rest of his felows. Venus dyd synge a songe with Beawte, which was lykyd of al that harde yt, every staffe endyng after this sortte:

'Bowe you downe, and doo your dutye  
To Venus and the goddes Bewty:  
We tryumpe hye over all,  
Kyngs attend when we doo call.'

Inglysche, and the oothers of the Kynges pleyers, after pleyed an Interluyt, whiche was wryten by Mayster Midwell, but yt was so long yt was not lykyd; yt was of the fyndyng of Troth, who was caryed away by ygnoraunce & ypocresy. The foolys part was the best, but the kyng departyd befor the end to hys chambre.<sup>24</sup>

In 1514, Henry commissioned a group, which he called the King's Players, to provide his court with regular entertainment, and John Heywood is mentioned, at this time, as a singer in this company.<sup>25</sup> For 1527, Hall re-

22 Quoted in Collier, *op. cit.*, I, p. 61.

23 *Loc. cit.*

24 *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

25 *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

cords the construction of a Banketing-house for the King, reportedly costing £ 760 4s. 7d.<sup>26</sup> Although it is an interesting document, it is far too detailed for inclusion, here. However, selections from the account will suggest the elaborate nature of the enterprise:

This house was richely hanged, and therein was raised a cupboard of seven stages high and xiii foote long, set with standyng cuppes, bolles, flaggons, and greate pottes, all of fyne golde, some with other stones and perles . . . . At nether ende were two broade arches upon thre antike pillers of gold burnished, swaged and graven full of cargills and serpentis, supportyng the edifices. The arches were vawted with armorie all of byce and golde, and above the arches were made many sondri antikes and devices. . . .<sup>27</sup>

This same document also mentions the use of dialogue, a refinement of the later masque conspicuously absent in many of the early disguisings:

. . . these two persones plaid a dialog, theeffect wherof was whether riches were better then love, and when they could not agre upon a conclusion, eche called in thre knightes all armed. Thre of them would have entered the gate of the arche in the middel of the chambre, and the other iii resisted, and sodenly betwene the six knightes out of the arche fell downe a bar all gilte, at the whiche barre the six knightes fought a fair battail, and then thei were departed, and so went out of the place.<sup>28</sup>

Henry's visit to France in 1532 is noteworthy for his entertainment of the French king at Calais, accounts of which bear a striking resemblance to the record just cited, particularly in the business of a golden barrier and a similar battle between three knights. We also discover, in this same record, what may be an unique instance (at such an early date) of the intermingling of performer and spectator at the maske, for we are told that the setting made use of a cave out of which issued ". . . the ladie Mary doughter to the kyng . . .," who, in company with her seven ladies, joined the maskers and danced ". . . lustly about the place."<sup>29</sup> Welsford has characterized this 1532 entertainment as ". . . a disguising followed by two masques. . .," and it is clear from this record that it does resemble those for English maske-like functions of a later date.<sup>30</sup> So much, then, for Henry's preference for what Chambers has called the *mask spectacular*.

In the case of Elizabeth, we find an abundance of examples of the *mask simple* from which to choose. In 1558, at the start of her reign, we encounter the following Revels entry concerning payment for materials used in a maske:

. . . bowghte the fyrste day of Ianuarye 1558, Anno primo reginae Elizabeth and spente in rowles and wrethes tuftings tyringe of hed-

26 *Ibid.*, p. 99. Collier alludes to accounts found in *A booke of payments of money disbursed by Sir Henry Gwylford, a knight, and Sir Thomas Wyatt, knight, in the building of a Banket-house at the king his manor of Grenewiche*.

27 *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102, fn.

28 *Loc. cit.*

29 Quoted in Welsford, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-44.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 144.

peces and gyrdells vsed in dyuerse Maskes betwene christmas and shroftyde that yere . . . .<sup>31</sup>

The entry for Christmas 1563 to Shrovetide 1564/5 lists payments for the production of three additional masks at court:

. . . And allsoo in the same year the ix<sup>th</sup> of Iune Repayringe and new makege of thre maskes with thare hole furniture and diuers devises and a Castle ffor ladies and a harbour for Lords and thre harrolds and iiij Trompetours too bringe in the devise with the men of Armes and shouen at the Courtte of Richmond before the Quenes Maiestie and the ffrench Embassitours &c . . . .<sup>32</sup>

A Revels entry for Christmas, 1564, records still another maske and a “. . . shoue and a play by the childerne of the chaple . . . ,” marking, no doubt, the commencement of Elizabeth’s patronage of the child actor, a practice which she was to continue throughout her long rule.<sup>33</sup> For this same year, under the heading of *Triumphs of the Muses*, Nichols cites a “Grand reception and Entertainment of Queen Elizabeth at Cambridge.”<sup>34</sup> His entry is brief:

Great preparations and charges, as before in the other plays, were employed and spent about the tragedy of Sophocles, called Ajax Flagellifer in Latin . . . .

We next encounter the production of six masks at court on July 14, 1567. This record, which emphasizes the re-use of old materials in the performance, is a specific example of Elizabeth’s economy in these matters. For instance, we are told that payment was made “. . . for the altering and newe-making of sixe Maskes out of ould stuffe . . . .”<sup>35</sup> The Revels entry for 1568 notes payment for the Christmas production of an unmentioned number of masks, and similar such vague entries occur for the next two years.<sup>36</sup> A note for the “. . . xiiij<sup>th</sup> yeare of oure soveraigne Lady Queene Elizabeth, 1571-1571/2,” mentions six other untitled masks and one in some measure of detail:

Item one of the forenamed Maskes had going before it A Childe gorgevly decked for Mercury, who vttered A speeche: & presented iij ffowers (wroughte in silke & golde) to the Queenes Maiestie signefieng victory, peace, & plenty, to ensue . . . .<sup>37</sup>

This same entry further shows that one of the six masks was performed at “. . . White hall before her Maiestie & Duke Mommerancie Embassadour for ffrance. . . ,” and provides a *dramatis personae*, naming, in all, forty-four persons.<sup>38</sup> The Revels entry for June, 1572, records payment made to “Haunce Eottes” for his work on the “. . . drawing and paynting of dyvers & sundry patternes /viz/ of the Chariott & mownte . . . .”<sup>39</sup>

31 A. Feuillerat, *Documents relating to the Office of the Revels in the Time of Queen Elizabeth*, in *Materialien zur Kunde des ältern englischen Dramas*, XXI, p. 82.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 116.

33 *Loc. cit.*

34 J. Nichols, *Progresses of Elizabeth*, I, pp. 1-26.

35 Feuillerat, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

36 *Ibid.*, pp. 124-26.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 146.

38 *Ibid.*, pp. 153-54.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 160.

At the same time, we learn that a certain Walter Rippon was also paid for ". . . A chariatt with all manner of Necessaries thereto belonging which served at the Tryumpe in the nighte at whitehall & there broke and spoyled . . ." <sup>40</sup> The record for 1572-1572/3 mentions further payment for additional maske work and, again, cites "haunce Eottes" for painting, and "henri kellewaye" for "the dubble Mask." <sup>41</sup>

In 1575, we find George Gascoigne, among others, contributing to the welcoming ceremonies in behalf of Elizabeth at Kenilworth Castle. The complete record and text of these proceedings is to be found in Nichols and Gascoigne, which, in combined effect, provide us with what amounts to a day-by-day commentary upon the Queen's visit. This evidence shows that the affair was carried off in the style of a lavish outdoor pastoral. Let us merely observe the first day as Queen Elizabeth is received upon the grounds. <sup>42</sup> At her approach, a group of ten Sibyls confronts her at the entrance to the first quadrangle, one delivering the formal speech of welcome:

All hayle, all hayle, thrise happy prince,  
I am Sibbilla she  
Of future chaunce, and after happ,  
forshewing what shalbe . . . . <sup>43</sup>

The Queen, then, proceeds to the Porter's Gate, where she is nervously received by a second official:

What stirre, what coyle is here?  
come back, holde, whether now?  
Not one so stout to stirre,  
what harrying have we here?  
My frends a Porter I,  
no Poper here am plast . . . . <sup>44</sup>

The Trumpeters next sound a blast of welcome, and the Queen moves into the Base Court to be met by the Lady of the Lake with two of her Nymphs, and it is the Lady herself who delivers the greeting:

I am the Lady of this pleasant Lake,  
who since the time of great king Arthures reigne  
That here with royal Court aboade did make,  
have led a lowring life in restless paine. <sup>45</sup>

The Queen continues from the Base Court to the Inward Court and is welcomed by an Actor ". . . clad like a Poet . . . ." who, like a poet, speaks to her in verse. And, thus, the activities for the first day come to an end. I do not think it necessary to pursue this Kenilworth account, since the reflective reader has, by now, a sufficient grasp of the likely pattern

40 *Ibid.*, p. 162.

41 *Ibid.*, pp. 180-81.

42 George Gascoigne, *Works*, II, pp. 91-131.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 91.

44 *Ibid.*, p. 92.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 93.

for the remaining two days. However, it is interesting that Gascoigne had also prepared a two-act "pastoral" in the Queen's honor which he had rehearsed for some two or three days, but which he was never to present.<sup>46</sup> A single stage direction from this pastoral—"Mercury departeth to heaven"—leads me to think that Gascoigne intended to make use of stage machinery in the performance.<sup>47</sup> Later, in the same year at Woodstock, he is at work upon a similar piece, *The Hermit's Tale*.

While spectacle of this kind does not, at first glance, remind us of the court maske, we must admit that it does not, at the same time, radically differ from it in purpose, tone, or visual effect. The major departure is, of course, the outdoor setting. For some time, now, I have been tempted to supplement Chambers's earlier mentioned terminology and to think of these outdoor productions as examples of the *landscape maske* or *outdoor maske*. With any sense of literary accuracy, we cannot name them *pageants*, nor can we be completely secure in our more common *pastoral* designation. Neither of these terms is specific enough. Yet, it is clear to me that these spectacles partake of the maske in a good many ways—in classical setting, costume, music, song, dance, and poetic speech. Assuredly, their occasion for being is related to the function of the maske at court. History seems to show that the English maske moved out-of-doors along with Elizabeth when her summer progresses became a regular feature of her court. The subsequent expense of accommodating the Queen and her large retinue upon these occasions must have been enormous. Furthermore, I suspect that entertainment of the nature of the maske had come to be the expected thing. To do justice to the staging of a maske—even of a *mask simple*—Elizabeth's host would certainly have had cause to increase a budget already strained by the necessary expense of the preparations for a royal visit.<sup>48</sup> It is quite possible that the private gentleman hit upon the scheme of an outdoor maske-like spectacle, partly as an economy measure, inasmuch as he could make excellent use of the natural *mise en scène* of his estate and still convey a sense of lavish splendor to his Queen by way of compliment. I think that something of this kind may have taken place, and I believe that *landscape maske*, or some such term, will better serve our purposes in future reference to these outdoor entertainments.

Returning to the Revels entries for the period 1578-1578/9, we find an allusion to the production of an "Amason's maske."<sup>49</sup> And in 1578, we discover that Sir Philip Sidney contributed his *The Lady of May* to Leicester's entertainment of the Queen.<sup>50</sup> Nichols describes it as ". . . a Contention between a Forrester and a Shepherd for the May-Lady," obviously another *landscape maske*, similar to Gascoigne's former efforts; however,

46 *Ibid.*, p. 120.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 116. See also M. C. Bradbrook, "Drama as Offering: The Princely Pleasures at Kenelworth," *The Rice Institute Pamphlet*, XLVI, 4 (January, 1960), pp. 57-70.

48 Leslie Hotson (ed.), *Queen Elizabeth's Entertainment at Mitcham: Poet, Painter, and Musician, Attributed to John Lyly*, pp. 8-10.

49 Feuillerat, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

50 Sir Philip Sidney, *Works*, II, pp. 329-38.

its speeches are mostly prose, and their great length is conspicuous. For the 1580's, subsequent entries encompass such items as the construction of castle mounts, dragons, artificial trees (1582), and the interesting business (1583) of ". . . glasinge the windowes of S<sup>t</sup> Johns Hall where the Rehearsalls be made."<sup>51</sup> We encounter, in 1591, another elaborate outdoor affair for the Queen under the auspices of the Earl of Hertford at Elvetham. This *landscape maske*—for so it is—makes use of a pond, a promontory, hills, mermaids, dolphins, ships, and fireworks.<sup>52</sup> Like the Kenilworth festivities, it is notably unrestricted in its "staging."

This brief history of the English court maske brings us, in 1594, to the Gentlemen of Grays Inn. In this year, they prepared a maske for the Queene, which is so strikingly similar in content and structure to the masque as Jonson later popularized it as to prompt scholars to consider the piece, *Proteus and the Adamantine Rock*, as the turning-point in the evolution of this dramatic art form.<sup>53</sup> A full account is contained in *Gesta Grayorum*. Its songs and speeches have been ascribed to Thomas Campion and Francis Davison, and Paul Reyher cites Spenser as the source, asserting that ". . . les auteurs du ballet de 1595 doivent à Spenser le personnage de Protée et leur décor du roc adamantin," sufficient reason for our careful examination of this work.<sup>54</sup> We learn, first, that the *dramatis personae* consisted of ". . . An Esquire of the Prince's Company, attended by a Tartarian page; Proteus, the Sea-god, attended by two Tritons; Thamesis and Amphitrite . . . likewise . . . attended by their Seanympths." The work itself opens upon the entrance of Nymphs and Tritons who sing a hymn of praise to Neptune, followed by speeches from Proteus, Thamesis, and Amphitrite. Nichols' account of the movement at this point is worth noting:

When these Speeches were thus delivered, Proteus, with his bident striking of adamant, which was mentioned in the Speeches, made utterance for the Prince, and his seven Knights, who had given themselves as hostages for the performance of the Covenants between the Prince and Proteus, as is declared in the Speeches. Hereat Proteus, Amphitrite and Thamesis, with their attendants, the Nymphs and Tritons, went unto the rock, in a very stately mask, very richly attired, and gallantly provided of all things meet for the performance of so great an enterprize. They came forth of the rock in couples, and before every couple came two pigmies with torches. At their first coming on the Stage, they danced a new devised measure, etc. After which, they took unto them Ladies; and with them they danced their galliards, courants, etc. And they danced another new measure; after the end whereof, the pigmies brought eight escutcheons, with the maskers devices thereupon, and delivered them to the Esquire, who offered them to her Majesty; which being done, they took their order again, and with a new strain, went all into the rock; at which time there was sung another new Hymn within the rock.<sup>55</sup>

51 Feuillerat, *op. cit.*, Table III, p. 350.

52 Nichols, *op. cit.*, II, "The Honorable Entertainments given to the Quenes Majestie, in Progress, at Elvetham . . .," pp. 1-23. See also Edith Rickert, "Political Propaganda and Satire in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," *Modern Philology*, XXI, pp. 53-87; 133-54.

53 Welsford, *op. cit.*, p. 163. Also, Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, I, p. 168.

54 Reyher, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-43.

55 Nichols, *op. cit.*, II, *Gesta Grayorum*, pp. 1-74. •



It is obvious that this work has achieved a kind of literary setting. Furthermore, we note the presence of numerous songs, dances, and speeches. In fact, the climax to this production is the dance, *the actual maske itself*, assuming Nichols to be reliable. In its unfolding, it involves the audience (the Queen) in the stage business—*i.e.*, the *maskers devices* given her by Esquire. In addition, it makes use of a scenic device in the shape of a rock or cave into which the maskers retire. Not only is the dance described as being well-costumed and “. . . meet for the performance of so great an enterprise . . .,” it is also depicted as an *ordered* and *conscious* movement with couples paired off at the beginning and end of performance. In addition, it makes use of a stage (“At their first coming on the Stage”). And, finally, we are aware of the authors’ conscious attention to form in the business of an opening and closing hymn. *Proteus and the Adamantine Rock* is, therefore, by 1594 an important contribution to the history of the English maske, one which prepares us for an understanding of the tremendous popularity of this kind of spectacle in the decades which follow. It is unquestionably what Chambers calls a *mask spectacular*. However, let us not for one moment assume that Elizabeth herself contributed to its expense in production!

Having examined the English court maske in the significant phases of its development, we are now prepared to establish a set of conventions accurately descriptive of its appearance in the 1590’s. First, some device was needed to attract the attention of the audience to the start of a performance, and aside from the common practice of musical notes or ensemble fanfare, the maske-writer had at his disposal one of two approaches to a “prologue.” Either he could compose a panegyric to be delivered by a member of the masking company after the fashion of a prologue in the drama, or he could confer with his stage designer and have prepared a frontal-type curtain to depict *allegorically* the main event of the performance. Indeed, I think that a combination of these alternatives may have been the general rule. Following next in order were the introductory song and dance, at which time the maskers made their official entry. Apparently, it was their custom to perform the central maske dance without further delay and to follow it, usually, with the revels, an interim during which members of the audience and masking company danced and *commoned* together. This action concluded, the maskers were recalled to the stage to perform the final song and dance which marked an end of the festivities. Furthermore, the entire production was motivated by a slight allegorical story and, occasionally, by some dramatic action. We assume, of course, that these various “steps” were often altered from performance to performance and author to author, but, in general, we may state with a measure of confidence that the Elizabethan maske by 1595 adhered rather strictly to this simple pattern. We must also take into our consideration the expensive nature of these productions in matters of costume, scenic contrivance, and musical arrangement.

While we are now prepared to examine the maske sequences in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, we should, first, review the activities of the London professional stage for a corresponding number of years. It is necessary to touch upon the associate rôle of the child actor and his connection with the maske and professional drama before turning to Spenser for a full comprehension of the problem.



From E. Spenser, *Shepheardes Calender*, 1579 (Huntington).

## II

### THE CHILD ACTOR AT COURT AND IN THE LONDON THEATRES, 1570-90

What, are they children? who maintains 'em? how  
are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no  
longer than they can sing?

—*Hamlet* (II.ii.361-63)

One of the characters in Chapman's masque, *The Middle Temple* (1613), exclaims, "Nothing but Rockes in these masking devices? Is Invention so poore shee must needes ever dwell among Rockes?" I have found it a simple matter to agree with him! It was inevitable that the time would come in the course of Elizabethan-Jacobean drama when the presence of masque-like interludes within the play would irritate the profession, as it was inevitable that the time would come when the profession, Church, and State alike would express displeasure with the child actor. It is not a matter of the fickleness of public taste, nor may we set it aside with a simple explanation of fads that will come and fads that will go. In our own time, the *Hamlet* reference to an ". . . aery of children . . ." has been sufficiently exploited as to make further commentary upon the subject extraneous. Neither Shakespeare nor Hamlet was ignorant of the ancient tradition of child acting in the Elizabethan drama. Harold N. Hillebrand, in his comprehensive treatment of the child actor, has done much to set straight our thinking about the decline in popularity of the children's companies in the early part of the seventeenth century.<sup>56</sup> However, as he

56 Harold N. Hillebrand, *The Child Actor, a Chapter in Elizabethan Stage History*, ch. VII, pp. 171-206.

has pointed out, we must never underestimate the importance of these children to the history of Elizabethan drama and, I might add, particularly to the evolution of the English masque and its emergence as an integral part of many dramas in the Jacobean period. The children are connected with this history from the very beginning. Long accustomed to service at court, trained up in the gentle arts of singing and dancing, as well as play-acting, they were obviously well-suited to the masque-play. Actually, from 1500 to 1570, play production was a matter entirely for grammar school boys and specially appointed groups of child actors, court-authorized and trained and exhibited before royalty by court-appointed headmasters.<sup>57</sup> It is not until after 1570 that we find these child actors in competition with professional adult companies in London, later to be supplanted by them in public performance. Until 1570, however, these boys were used in most of the acting assignments, especially in those at court. Chambers lists eleven such boy companies in existence during the century, and his list is nowhere exhaustive.<sup>58</sup> When Elizabeth ascended the throne, her patronage of the Children of the Chapel and Paul's Boys, stemming from her personal interest in the drama and her apparent fondness for child performers in state entertainments, increased the responsibilities, both organizational and functional, of the royal choristers, a group with a long record of service in English court history.<sup>59</sup> We know that children had been serving the court from the time of Richard III, when the practice of impressing men and boys for royal entertainment became common.<sup>60</sup> In 1490, Henry VII made use of the Children of the Chapel Royal in his Christmas celebrations,<sup>61</sup> and Henry VIII frequently called upon this same group for his court entertainments.<sup>62</sup>

It was during Elizabeth's reign, however, that these children became prominently involved in dramatic activities. During her second year as Queen, she authorized a Privy Seal which forbade impressment of children from Windsor, Paul's, or her own Chapel, but made allowance for the removal of children from any of the other chapels for royal service.<sup>63</sup> More specifically, in 1585, she granted a warrant to Thomas Gyles, then Master of the Children at Paul's, licensing him to impress children for royal duty at his own discretion.<sup>64</sup> An examination of this warrant shows us what was expected of these impressed children:

. . . as are most fitt to be instructed and framed in the arte and science of musicke and singinge as may be had and founde out within

57 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

58 Sir E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, II, p. 8. His list does not include the boys of Winchester College, nor does it suggest the activities of the grammar school boys of the time.

59 T. H. Vail Motter, *The School Drama of England*, p. 15. Also C. W. Wallace, *The Children of the Chapel at Blackfriars*, fn. 2, p. 69.

60 *Ibid.*, fn. 2, p. 63: "Richard III commissioned John Melyonek for Chapel duties, September 16, 1484." Wallace also shows that the age of impressment was from nine to thirteen, *ibid.*, p. 76. See Hillebrand, *op. cit.*, p. 89: "The children begin their dramatic career as singing supernumeraries in Court shows."

61 Wallace, *op. cit.*, fn. 2, p. 69.

62 *Ibid.*, fn. 4, p. 69.

63 *Ibid.*, fn. 2, p. 64.

64 *Ibid.*, fn. 2, pp. 67-68.

anie place of this our Realme of England or Wales, to be by his education and bringing vp made meete and hable to serve vs in that behalf when our pleasure is to call for them.<sup>65</sup>

Two similar warrants issued in 1595 and 1597 further demonstrate Elizabeth's preference for child actors, clearly showing that the primary function of these children was to provide entertainment for the Queen at her beck and call, as it had also been the duty of the earlier children of the court to administer to the "spiritual" needs of her predecessors. Although, originally, the royal choristers had been destined for training in choral work to prepare them for participation in devotional services, they had become, by Elizabeth's time, a part of her fixed entourage, moving with her about the English countryside, making it possible for their Queen to have music where e'er she might go!<sup>66</sup> At all times, these children were supervised by a headmaster, whose chief duty it was to oversee the education and well-being of his charges, further instructing them in the courtly arts of singing, dancing, and, later, play-acting, in preparation for their performances at court. Records convince us that, for the most part, these children were well-kept and provided for in a manner that would best fit them for their duties.<sup>67</sup> While I have no intentions of exceeding the limits established for this study, I feel it is necessary to refer to an entry from the diary of the Duke of Stettin-Pomerania, September 8, 1602, since it enlightens us on the care and attention accorded these children and suggests the kinds of services expected from them in return:

Thence we went to the Children's Comoediam, the argument treated of a *castam viduam*, and was the story of a royal widow of England. The origin of this Children's Comoediam is this: the Queen keeps a number of young boys who have to apply themselves zealously to the art of singing and to learn all the various musical instruments, and to pursue their studies at the same time. These boys have special praeceptores in all the different arts, especially very good musicos. And in order that they may acquire courteous manners, they are required to act a play once a week, for which purpose the Queen has erected for them a special theatrum with an abundance of costly garments. Those who wish to see one of their performances must give as much as eight shillings of our money, but there are always a good many people present, many respectable women as well, because useful argumenta, and many good doctrines, as we are told, are brought forward there . . . .<sup>68</sup>

We most fully comprehend the importance of the child actors to the development of Elizabethan drama when we realize that their court performances under Elizabeth were directly responsible for the establishing of the first private playhouse in the period.<sup>69</sup> When we discover the Children of the Chapel (and Paul's Boys) rehearsing court plays in the Blackfriars precinct during the seventies and eighties, we look in upon what may well be the first London private playhouse on record. I refer to an

65 *Loc. cit.*

66 *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

67 Hillebrand, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

68 *Transactions Royal Historical Society*, n.s. VI (1892), pp. 27-29.

69 Wallace, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.

enterprise of a most practical nature that evolved out of Richard Farrant's scheme to realize a profit for himself and co-worker, William Hunnis, from rehearsals of court-bound plays before a paying audience prior to the production at court.<sup>70</sup> I am convinced that Farrant's leasing of a Blackfriars building for use as a rehearsal hall for the Children of the Chapel marks the opening of London's first private playhouse. At the same time, I am aware of Professor Charles T. Prouty's recent discovery of what he calls Trinity Hall Theatre and his subsequent dating of its operations as a private house within the years, 1557-68, which Professor T. R. Henn has described as the possible ". . . missing link in the history of the Elizabethan theatre."<sup>71</sup> It may very well prove to be. My own research has uncovered an allusion to what is apparently Trinity Hall in William Hone's *Ancient Mysteries Described* (1823) under the title of "The Brethern of the Holy Trinity, of St. Botolph without Aldersgate," clearly indicating that Hone, as well, had evidence for an early dramatic activity at this place.<sup>72</sup> However, until I have carefully examined the full extent of Professor Prouty's discoveries relating to Trinity Hall, I shall prefer to consider Farrant's Blackfriars as the first London private playhouse.

By centering my attention upon Farrant's house, I do not mean to infer that there is a lack of evidence to account for additional child acting companies throughout the period, nor do I recommend a neglect of the private operations of other theatrical companies prior to Farrant. For example, I am aware of John Rastell's efforts in 1524, when he is known to have leased a few acres of ground from Holywell Nunnery and to have raised thereupon a platform stage for the outdoor performance of an unknown number of plays.<sup>73</sup> I have examined, as well, Ralph Radcliffe's similar actions at Hitchin in 1538 and know of his attempts to furnish an acting

70 A. W. Reed, *The Beginnings of English Secular and Romantic Drama*, pp. 21-22. Also, C. W. Wallace, *The Evolution of the English Drama up to Shakespeare*, p. 50, cites three plays possibly written by Farrant for the Blackfriars: *The History of Mutius Scævola* (1577); *The History of Loyaltie and bewtie* (1579); and *A History of Alcuis* (1579).

71 "A Model of Trinity Hall Theatre, London: 1557-1568, First Displayed at Yale University, April 24, 1953," bulletin from Brander Matthews Dramatic Museum, Low Library: Columbia University, 2pp. "It may well have become the model from which the later theatres drew some of their structural principles. In his study from the Churchwardens' Accounts he has shown very clearly the regular use of the Hall by companies of players, with the exception of the years 1559-61; and we know that in 1559 two proclamations established strict control over dramatic performances. Apart from one reference to a play in Carpenters' Hall in the reign of Henry VIII, there is no other record of plays being presented in a hall or enclosed space until the days of the first Blackfriars Theatre." Also, Charles T. Prouty, "An Early Elizabethan Playhouse," *Shakespeare Survey*, VI (1953), pp. 64-74.

72 William Hone, *Ancient Mysteries Described*, ch. II, "The Brethern of the Holy Trinity, of St. Botolph without Aldersgate," pp. 77-89; "Their inventories evidence that they knew how to get up popular shows and entertainments . . ." (p. 84)

73 There is little reason to think that Rastell's stage was any more elaborately conceived than would have been a plank or hastily constructed platform stage. Since there is an abundance of evidence to support the existence of these kinds of stages in accounts of performances held in private estates where banqueting-halls were often converted for dramatic production, Rastell's stage takes on little historical importance. Plays with which he may have been connected, such as *Interlude of Four Elements*, *The Tragicomedy of Calisto & Melibaea*, *The Pardoner and the Frere*, and *The Four PP*, contain no internal evidence to indicate the physical characteristics of his stage. It is worth noting, however, that its site was near that which was later made famous by the Theatre, Curtain, and Fortune playhouses; Reed, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

place for his boys.<sup>74</sup> I have considered Thomas Churchyard's commentary upon the Shrewsbury Show in *The Worthiness of Wales*,<sup>75</sup> and have followed the activities of the Winchester College boys so as to be informed about the nature of their play production throughout the century, intermittent as it is.<sup>76</sup> My investigations have also acquainted me with the Westminster Play, instituted by order of Elizabeth in 1560.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, I include the boys of Eton College within the scope of this general discussion, although insofar as their dramatic records are concerned, payments related to their play production end abruptly in 1572/3.<sup>78</sup> This year also marks the beginning of the activities of the famous Merchant Taylors' School, brief as they turn out to be.<sup>79</sup> As for other London theatrical enter-

- 74 Radcliffe produced his own plays, here. Like the Rastell stage, however, this one at Hitchin was probably of a rough platform type, erected in a hall or room of the school. The additional fact that Radcliffe's boys acted Latin plays would seem to preclude their need for a plastic stage. C. W. Wallace, *The Evolution of the English Drama up to Shakespeare*, p. 88. See, also, Hillebrand, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19: "Radcliffe had built a stage or theatre in some lower part of the building, and there he was accustomed every year to give 'merry and honest plays for the edification of the public.'"
- 75 Thomas Churchyard, "The Worthiness of Wales," *Spenser Society Publications*, p. 85: "And somewhat more, behind the walls as chiefe,  
Where playes have bin, which is most wortheie note,  
There is a ground, newe made Theator-wise,  
Both deep and hye, in goodly auncient guise:  
Where well may sit, ten thousand men at ease,  
And yet the one, the other not displease.  
A space belowe, to have both Bull and Beare,  
For Players, too, great roome and place at will.  
And in the same, a Cocke pit wondrous feare,  
Besides where men, may wrastle in their fill."  
Also, Hillebrand, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21. Ashton's ordinance of February 11, 1557/8, contains evidence to suggest that plays were performed at Shrewsbury, if not in the Churchyard "amphitheatre," at least in the school, there; Motter, *op. cit.*, p. 209.
- 76 There is a record for these boys which contains an account of the taking down of a scaffold, the construction of "little houses newly built," and the transportation of materials, ". . . ioystes and of other things borrowed. . .," for a performance. The document also contains an interesting allusion to the probable use of candles for foot-light illumination, indicating that the boys of Winchester held a better-than-average knowledge of stagecraft at this early time in the century. Perhaps, it is worth noting that Nicholas Udall was a student, here, c. 1517-1520; *ibid.*, pp. 33-34.
- 77 Costumes and some of the properties used in these productions were authorized and supplied by the Office of the Revels, but *moveable properties* were the usual type of equipment of these boys. The history of this group during the latter portion of the century reveals that they were in competition with companies from Paul's and the Merchant Taylors' School and that they appeared upon the stage of Farrant's Blackfriars upon occasion. In the beginning, however, they seem to have been a group of choristers who found themselves in competition, eventually, with companies from these other two schools; *ibid.*, pp. 85; 87; 100. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, II, pp. 72-73, explains that it was very often the case that grammar school boys and royal choristers acted together. He calls attention to their employment in court performances in 1564/5 in two plays, *Heautontimorumenus* of Terrence, and *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus; and again, in 1565 in a play before Elizabeth. Although the latter drama is known, *Sapientia Solomonis*, its place of production remains a mystery, even though Chambers believes that it, too, was of the court. See also, Richard Southern, "The 'Houses' of the Westminster Play," *Theatre Notebook*, III, pp. 46-52.
- 78 Motter, *op. cit.*, pp. 48; 65. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, II, p. 74, thinks it likely that Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister* (1552/3) may have been produced at Eton while Udall was headmaster, there. It is further interesting to learn that a provision was made for the boys of Eton to study and rehearse Latin plays for "education" and English plays for "subtlety and humour" during the headmastership of William Malim (1535-73).
- 79 Sir E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, II, pp. 74; 75. Upon the resignation of Richard Mulcaster as headmaster, their performances appear to have been sharply curtailed. Chambers also reprints an ordinance, March 15, 1574, taken from the company's archives, to show that the officials of the school were offended by an audience interest in the acting of the play rather than in its benefactors. As a consequence, the authorities refused permission of performance in the customary Common Hall, thereafter. See Motter, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-9, "Beginning in 1576 and continuing for ten years, there are records of six performances, all of them under Mulcaster's direction, and all at Court." Especially, J. A. Nairn, "Boy-Actors under the Tudors and Stewarts," *Transactions Royal Society of Literature*, XXXII (1913), pp. 67-68.

tainment in this period, I must not overlook the opening of the Theatre (1576) and the Curtain (1577), the two earliest public playhouses in the city.<sup>80</sup> And the record would not be complete without a parting reference to the bull- and bear-baiting houses which were in full scale operation at this time.<sup>81</sup>

But let us return to the child actor. After Elizabeth is crowned Queen, the histories of the Children of Paul's and the Children of the Chapel are of pertinent interest to us, since her patronage of these two companies was mainly responsible for their eminence in court performances during the many years of her reign. Especially important are the previously mentioned decades of the seventies and eighties when these two companies joined forces and, upon occasion, produced plays at Richard Farrant's Blackfriars. Throughout the sixteenth century, each group succeeded in obtaining the services of some of the best dramatists of the time.<sup>82</sup> It is further significant that, after the Children of the Chapel were established somewhat permanently at the Blackfriars in 1597 (until their later dissolution by order of the court), most of the important dramatists in the years following, with the *possible* exception of Shakespeare, continued to write for these children. In the beginning, then, the activities of the Children of Paul's under the direction of Sebastian Westcott (1557-1582) reflect his apparent influence with Elizabeth.<sup>83</sup> They appeared at court with a greater frequency than did the Queen's own Royal Chapel, and it becomes very much clear that Westcott's program for his children was full and vigorous.<sup>84</sup> For example, of the eighteen plays listed by Chambers as belonging in their early repertory, the majority was presented, either at court or in public performance, during Westcott's headmastership.<sup>85</sup> Chambers shows that these boys were taken to court at least twenty-seven times during the years 1560 to 1582, and we must also understand that these appearances are exclusive of preparations for and participation in annual Christmas festivities during the first ten years of Elizabeth's rule.<sup>86</sup> There is further evidence to indicate that, prior to Westcott's death in 1582, the boys were also playing in their own quarters, where it is very likely that the public was invited to observe rehearsals.<sup>87</sup> After 1582, however, they disappear from the records and remain in obscurity until 1587, at which time they re-appear at the Blackfriars, where, at least upon one occasion, they must have joined forces in performance with the Children of the Chapel and, possibly, the Earl of Oxford's Boys, both steady occupants of the Black-

80 "Journey through England and Scotland Made by Lupold von Wedel in the Years 1584 and 1585," *Transactions Royal Historical Society*, IX, n.s., pp. 223-70, contains a contemporary account of these houses.

81 *Loc. cit.*

82 Both Chambers and Wallace bear out this statement. Also, Hillebrand, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

83 Sir E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, II, p. 13; also, Hillebrand, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

84 Sir E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, II, p. 14. Arthur Brown, "Three Notes on Sebastian Westcott," *Modern Language Review*, XLIV, pp. 229-32.

85 Sir E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, II, p. 14. Unfortunately, many of these plays are lost, as are most of the ones which Chambers attributes to the Chapel Children.

86 *Loc. cit.*

87 *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.



friars by this time.<sup>88</sup> On the other hand, the mid-century activities of the Children of the Chapel seem negligible by comparison. Their surprisingly few court appearances may be related to the fact that the position of headmaster in their company was in a constant state of flux from 1545 to 1580.<sup>89</sup> Whatever the reason, we must admit that Elizabeth's own Children of the Chapel were most inactive in the early years of her reign and that their share in the activities of the court remains obscure for this period.

While Burbage was planning the opening of a public playhouse in London in 1576, two headmasters of a children's company, heretofore restricted to court performance, saw an opportunity to realize a profit from their training of boy actors for court production.<sup>90</sup> Richard Farrant, then Master of the Children of Windsor, and William Hunnis received permission from Sir William More, owner, to lease a certain building within the Blackfriars precinct. Immediately, Farrant set to work, converting the building into a house suitable for the rehearsal and presentation of his boys in public performance.<sup>91</sup> C. W. Wallace even thinks that Farrant may have taken possession in time to have rehearsed the company for the forthcoming Christmas festivities of the same year.<sup>92</sup> However, this would seem to have been unlikely when we learn that the lease was attested to on December 20, 1576.<sup>93</sup> Yet, who can tell what Farrant actually did? Wallace, for one, thinks that he fixed his "auditorium" on the second-storey level of the building and further considers that he removed some six partitions in order to achieve his rehearsal hall.<sup>94</sup> The next logical assumption would be that Farrant, then, erected a stage in one end of his newly-formed "Great Hall." Wallace also believes that he did something to the windows, possibly so that the house could be darkened for performance.<sup>95</sup> The Duke of Stettin's allusion ("They do all their plays by light, which produces a great effect") may have a bearing upon Wallace's theory that the windows at Farrant's Blackfriars were "spoyled" with just such a purpose in mind.<sup>96</sup>

88 *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17. Also, C. W. Wallace, *The Evolution of the English Drama up to Shakespeare*, p. 171.

89 Sir E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, II, pp. 32-34. Chambers shows that this position was held by four men during the same time that Westcott was in sole authority at Paul's. These headmasters were Richard Bower (1545-61); Richard Edwardes (1561-66); William Hunnis (1566-97); Richard Farrant (1577-80). The terms of office for Hunnis and Farrant overlap, a fact which is important in light of their activities at Blackfriars. There is some doubt that Farrant ever served in the capacity of Master of the Children, but rather as a deputy for Hunnis; hence, this dating by Chambers.

90 This action occurred four months after Burbage began actual construction of the Theatre. C. W. Wallace, *The Evolution of the English Drama up to Shakespeare*, pp. 130-31.

91 *Ibid.*, pp. 132-36; 151. Wallace reprints the terms of the lease.

92 *Ibid.*, p. 132.

93 *Ibid.*, pp. 131-32.

94 He shows that the old Revels Office of Sir Thomas Cawarden was located on the ground floor and was probably still used as a storeroom for the costumes of the Revels. This is an important observation, since Burbage's later Blackfriars playhouse was definitely located upon the ground level of the building, *ibid.*, ch. XVI, "Identification of the Building and Theatre," pp. 137-46; 174.

95 *Ibid.*, pp. 174-75: Wallace quotes from Sir William More, owner, ". . . the wyndows spoyled."

96 "Duke of Stettin's Journey," *Transactions Royal Historical Society*, VI, n.s. (1892), p. 29.

There is very little else that we know about the physical characteristics of this house. However, from 1570 to 1580, Farrant exhibited his boys in this Great Hall in what may be called rehearsal performances of court-bound plays.<sup>97</sup> Upon his death in 1580, his widow assumed control of the lease and promptly became involved in a complicated possession quarrel, eventually surrendering her holdings to John Newman and William Hunnis, from whom the property then passed into the hands of Henry Evans and, thence, to the Earl of Oxford.<sup>98</sup> Thereafter, we find no record of any dramatic activity upon this stage until the house is turned over to John Lyly by Oxford in 1583, the former then enjoying the unique privilege of writing and producing at his own house.<sup>99</sup>

H. N. Hillebrand's convenient check-list of known children's plays during the sixteenth century greatly simplifies our task of tracing the activities of the children in the professional drama of the time.<sup>100</sup> In most cases, a mere glance at titles tells us that these plays, written expressly with the child actor in mind, were no more than elaborations of the kinds of entertainment prevalent in the history of the child actor at court. Hillebrand, for example, includes such plays as Heywood's *A Play of Loue* (c. 1518); the anonymous *Thersites* (1537); *Tom Tiler* (c. 1540) with its Prologue allusion to ". . . a play set out by prettie boyes;" Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister* (1552/3) and *Jack Juggler* (1562); and Edwardes' *Damon and Pythias* (1564), to name but a few. This information shows rather conclusively that boy actors were considered likely candidates for the performance of maske-like plays prior to 1600, and we have little difficulty in accounting for this fact.<sup>101</sup> In the first place, child actors were readily available for court performance, as we have already seen. They were well-trained in singing, dancing, and play-acting, three requisites for the production of a maske play. Probably, their diminutive appearances imparted a kind of realism to the pastoral drama of mythological or fairy-like characters. Furthermore, their special forte must have been comedy, their voices being pitched to ". . . launch the speeches with just the piquancy that was needed."<sup>102</sup> Even their slight weight suited them to this kind of play, because we have reason to think that often the elaborate scenery employed in maske productions was not always substantially constructed to support the weight of adult actors.<sup>103</sup> Finally, their upkeep as actors could not have been an added burden to a court already accustomed to the maintenance of a group of royal choristers. At any rate, there is no record

97 C. W. Wallace, *The Evolution of the English Drama up to Shakespeare*, p. 151.

98 A. Feuillerat, "Blackfriars Records," *The Malone Society Collections II*, I, p. 123.

99 C. W. Wallace, *The Evolution of the English Drama up to Shakespeare*, p. 169: "Lyly was no poet, but he had a fair head for story, and a better one for light quip. It was a great opportunity for him to have a theatre all his own, and it made a dramatist of him."

100 Hillebrand, *op. cit.*, Appendix II, pp. 279-323.

101 Nairn, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

102 Hillebrand, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

103 *Ibid.*, p. 36: "I have supposed that the Chapel boys came into favor in Court pageants partly because they could ride securely on the tops of the devices . . . where adults would endanger stability . . ."

of fees ever having been paid to a *member* of any of these child companies.<sup>104</sup>

When we discover John Lyly, then, at the Blackfriars, our problem becomes specific. It will be helpful to examine a selection of plays by Lyly and others performed, or thought to have been performed, at this house, in an effort to understand some of the conditions affecting both dramatist and child actor in the 1580's. To begin with, Lyly's *Alexander and Campaspe* was produced at Blackfriars on New Year's Night, 1584.<sup>105</sup> At least, we are confident in this dating from the first edition quarto of the play.<sup>106</sup> It is a significant work with which to approach the problem. It provides us with evidence of the so-called "joint" performance of the Children of the Chapel and Paul's Boys, and it is furnished with two prologues, one destined for "Blacke Friers," the other, for court. Actually, there is little difference in the two. The Blackfriars prologue asks for a "general silence" from the audience; whereas, the court prologue hints at a probable use of torches for illumination of the scenes.<sup>107</sup> The play itself reflects familiar maske conventions in its costume and scenic effect. For example, we might observe Campaspe inspecting an elaborate *picture gallery* (III.iii):

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <i>Appeles.</i>  | It were a pitie, but that so absolute a face should furnish <i>Venus</i> temple amongst these pictures. |
| <i>Campaspe.</i> | What are these pictures?  |
| <i>Appeles.</i>  | This is <i>Laeda</i> , whom <i>Jove</i> deceived in the likeness of a Swan.                             |
| <i>Campaspe.</i> | A faire woman, but a foule deceit.  |
| <i>Appeles.</i>  | This is <i>Alcmena</i> , unto whom <i>Jupiter</i> came in the shape of <i>Amphitriou</i> .              |

For the most part, the pattern remains the same as they inspect other "portraits" in this gallery. How familiar is this detailed report to the student who has similarly examined the "tapestries" of *The Faerie Queene*! The play also contains four songs (I.ii; III.v; V.i; and V.iii). Furthermore, it appears to provide a special opportunity for the Children of the Chapel and Paul's Boys to display their varied talents, when Sylvius brings his sons to Diogenes (V.i) and we witness a series of dances, tumblings, and an interlude in which a youth is described as singing like a nightingale. These are the easily recognized specialities of the child actor.

Lyly's second work, *Sapho and Phao* (March, 1584), contains two prologues (Blackfriars and court) and is filled with maske-like episodes. We observe, for example, the familiar maske cave (II.i), here the abode of Sybilla:

104 C. W. Wallace, *The Children of the Chapel at Blackfriars*, p. 4.

105 C. W. Wallace, *The Evolution of the English Drama up to Shakespeare*, p. 169. Succeeding editions of this drama have title-pages asserting that the play was performed on the "Twelve Day at Night." Wallace calls attention to these discrepancies in dating and claims the New Year's date to be the correct one.

106 This drama is often alluded to as *Alexander* or as *Campaspe*. Hillebrand, *op. cit.*, p. 264: "[Lyly's] plays mark a break between the drama of the juvenile and of the adult companies."

107 "With us it is like to fare, as with these torches which giving light to others, consume themselves . . . ."

*Phao.* And loel behold Sybilla, in the mouth of her cave; I  
will salute her . . . .  
*Sybilla.* You shall for this time seeke none other inne, than my  
cave . . . . Come neere, take a stoole, and sit downe.

Once again, we find the familiar rock "set-piece," destined to become a fixed property in the later masques of the period. And we wonder if it is even necessary, at this point, to mention Spenser's numerous caves? Lyly's *Gallathea* (1584/5) is a further example of the influence of the maske, first, in its numerous songs, dances, and unusual *mise en scène* and, secondly, in its mythological setting.<sup>108</sup> We should take particular notice of the stage direction (II.iii), "Enter Fairies dauncing and playing and so, exeunt," knowing that the "prettie boyes" could have performed this scene with ease. In 1588, Lyly's *Endimion, or the Man in the Moone* was presented before the ". . . Queenes Majestie at Greenwich on New Yeeres Day at Night by the Children of Paules." As proof of the popularity of the maske-like drama, we observe the qualities of the dumb show representing Endimion's dream (II.iii) in the following stage direction:

*Musique sounds.*

Three Ladies enter; one with a Knife and a looking glasse, who by the procurement of one of the other two, offers to stab ENDIMION as hee sleepes, but the third wrings her hands, lamenteth, offering still to preuent it, but dares not.

At last, the first Lady looking in the glasse, casts downe the Knife.

*Exeunt.*

Enters an ancient man with booke with three leaues, offers the same twice. ENDIMION refuseth: hee rendeth two and offers the third, where he stands a while, and then ENDIMION offers to take it.

*Exit.*

Of course, the dumb show was not an innovation in the drama of this period, yet we realize the importance of this specific example in the dream-like quality of its pantomime and its emphasis upon the allegorical meaning of the action, two well-established characteristics of the maske by this time. Later, in this same play, when Endimion is found upon a "lunary bank" and when Fairies enter (IV.iii), ". . . daunce, and with a song pinch him. . . ," it does not tax our imaginations to think of the child actor in these rôles. Indeed, Lyly and the child actor appear to be inseparable.

George Peele's *The Arraignment of Paris*, performed by the Children of the Chapel in January or February of 1584, should be included in this investigation, since it, too, clearly demonstrates the usefulness of the children in the production of the maske-like play.<sup>109</sup> Thomas Nashe admired it in 1589:

[Peele] whose first increase, the arraignment of *Paris*, might pleade to your opinions his pregnant dexterity of wit, and manifold varietie of inuention; where in (*me iudice*) he goeth a steppe beyond all that write.<sup>110</sup>

108 Sir E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, III, p. 415.

109 C. W. Wallace, *The Evolution of the English Drama up to Shakespeare*, p. 181.

110 C. B. Harrison (ed.), *Menaphon by Robert Greene and A Margarite of America by Thomas Lodge*, p. 17.

Peele's drama is pastoral in its setting. We hear ". . . an artificial charm of birds" (I.ii) and the sound of ". . . a quire within and without." There is an approaching and breaking storm (II.ii), and we seek *Diana's Bower* as a convenient shelter from the elements. We watch as a golden tree rises from the stage (II.ii) and, in the same scene, witness two elaborate dumb shows, one of Pallas and Venus, the other concerning four Cupids. Later, Pluto, Neptune, and Vulcan make entrances by means of trap-doors (IV.iii), and *Diana's Bower* reappears in a further sequence (IV.iv). There is also an allusion to a *chair of state* (V.i), the coveted position from which to view a masque in Jonson's time. The stage direction, here, is worth noting:

The music sounds, and the Nymphs within sing or solfa with voices and instruments awhile. Then enter Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, singing as followeth: the state being in place.

We fully appreciate Nashe's high appraisal of Peele's work when we realize that the former's *Summer's Last Will and Testament* (1592) is also a combination of songs, dances, and speeches, maske-like in effect. We need only to observe the entrance of Bacchus in Nashe's play, riding upon an ass, ". . . trapt in Iuie, himselfe drest in Vine leaues, and a garland of grapes on his head," to recall Spenser's procession of the Seven Deadly Sins in the Court of Lucifera (*FQ*, I).

It is, of course, possible to extend this study to include such dramas as Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Doctor Johann Faustus* (1588), wherein, with little difficulty, we may imagine the "prettie boyes" as spirits and shapes; Lyly's *Love's Metamorphosis* (1589?), written for Paul's Boys and replete with fairies, caves, songs, and dances; or even to suggest the plausibility of considering Shakespeare's *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* (1594/5), *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1597), and *As You Like It* (1598/1600?) in the scheme. However, we should merely be extending our catalogue of apparent maske-like dramas of the period, of which there were many. Nevertheless, this brief treatment of such plays of the eighties and early nineties shows clearly the extent of the influence of court entertainment, the child actor, and the early English maske upon the professional drama. I have little doubt, at this time, about the nature of these maske-like plays or their resemblances to the maske at court prior to 1580, or, for that matter, to the maske episodes in *The Faerie Queene*. The problem is now one of understanding Spenser's concept of the early maske, in the light of what we know of its English court history and its emergence along with the child actor in the professional drama, and to accomplish this task, we must turn to *The Faerie Queene* itself and to what Judson has called Spenser's "absorbing interest" in these dramatic endeavors.



From E. Spenser, *Shepheardes Calender*, 1579 (Huntington).

### III

#### THE MASKES IN *THE FAERIE QUEENE* AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

How I could reare the Muse on stately stage,  
And teache her tread aloft in buskin fine,  
With queint Bellona in her equipage!  
—*The Shepheardes Calender*, October (1579)

To understand Spenser's "absorbing interest" in the masks and pageants of his day, we need to examine the facts at hand concerning his early years. This will be a relatively simple task, since there is little information about the young Spenser. As for his education, we know that he was a student at the famous Merchant Taylors' school in London, but we are not at all certain about his years in attendance. Judson, however, claims that Spenser was enrolled shortly after the school was opened in 1561 and that he remained there until 1569.<sup>111</sup> There is also a possible allusion to his schooling to be found in the *December Eclogue* of *The Shepheardes Calender* in which the poet, in mentioning *Wrenock* ("A good olde shepherde"), is thought to have meant Richard Mulcaster, headmaster of this school from 1561 until 1586.<sup>112</sup> However, the important idea is that, at one time, Spenser was instructed by this man who has since been called the Father of English Pedagogy and celebrated for his educational methods.<sup>113</sup> Mulcaster was a "man of system," a disciplinarian who believed in

111 A. C. Judson, *The Life of Edmund Spenser*, p. 15: "Was he one of those who flocked to the school soon after its doors were opened?"

112 Nairn, *op. cit.*, p. 67; Motter, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

113 Judson, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

a wide and thorough range of learning.<sup>114</sup> He favored an intense kind of mental and physical exercise for his pupils and believed in the efficacy of self-expression.<sup>115</sup> He was interested in the rewarding aspects of music, both vocal and instrumental, and he was particularly fond of the drama.<sup>116</sup> At an early date, he introduced play-acting into his program as a method of teaching his pupils “. . . good behaviour and audacity.”<sup>117</sup> Indeed, we find his boys performing dramas at the court on six occasions between 1572 and 1582, and there is reason to think that play-acting in the Merchant Taylors' School antedates these known events.<sup>118</sup> In fact, Judson believes it to have been a custom which came about as a “. . . welcome diversion from the monotony of [Mulcaster's] regular school program.”<sup>119</sup> In such circumstances, it is likely that Spenser may have appeared before Queen Elizabeth as a boy actor in the care of Richard Mulcaster.<sup>120</sup> His reference to Mulcaster as *Wrenock* shows a respect for the *good olde shep-herde* who had made him “. . . by arte more cunning in the same.”

We also know that Spenser entered Cambridge in 1569.<sup>121</sup> A single matter concerning this phase of his education requires our attention. In 1575, William Soone, in writing about Cambridge life, commented upon various practices of the university, one of which may help to explain Spenser's developing interest in the drama:

. . . In the months of January, February, and March, to beguile the long evenings, they amuse themselves with exhibiting public plays, which they perform with such elegance, such graceful action, and such command of voice, countenance, and gesture, that if Plautus, Terrence, or Seneca, were to come to life again, they would admire their own pieces, and be better pleased with them than when they were performed before the people in Rome . . . .<sup>122</sup>

At least, Soone's letter enables us to feel confident that Spenser was more than once exposed to dramatic performances during his stay in Cambridge. When we next encounter him in July, 1579, he is away from the university “. . . living the life of a gallant in London and confidently seeking advancement among the great.”<sup>123</sup> He appears, also, to have sustained his interest in the drama, for, as Judson claims, he was “. . . frequenting the theatres with lively companions . . . .”<sup>124</sup> These “lively companions” were the Earl of Leicester (Robert Dudley), Philip Sidney, and Edward Dyer, prominent London gentlemen whom Spenser mentions as his acquaintances in letters addressed to Gabriel Harvey.<sup>125</sup> Furthermore, at this point, we learn of his *nine lost comedies* from Harvey, who apparent-

114 R E. Neil Dodge (ed.), *The Complete Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser*, p. xii; also, Judson, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

115 Dodge, *op. cit.*, p. xii.

116 E. de Selincourt (ed.), *The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser*, p. viii.

117 *Loc. cit.*

118 Nairn, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

119 Judson, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

120 de Selincourt, *op. cit.*, p. viii.

121 Judson, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

122 Quoted in Judson, *ibid.*, p. 26.

123 *Ibid.*, p. 55.

124 *Loc. cit.*

125 *Ibid.*, p. 67.

ly considered them equal to Ariosto's, as he explains in a letter to his young poet friend.<sup>126</sup> Concerning this controversial topic, Judson thinks that Spenser *possibly* "may have experiment'd" with such forms at one time early in his career but, on the whole, believes the poet's genius "essentially undramatic."<sup>127</sup> Actually, I have discovered the complimentary sonnet to Lord Hunsdon (April 6, 1590) in the dedicatory verses to *The Faerie Queene* to be of greater significance.<sup>128</sup> The fact that Hunsdon was the founder of one of the most famous acting companies of the time suggests to me that Spenser's theatrical connections may have been more extensive than we heretofore have deemed plausible. Essentially, then, the external forces contributing to Spenser's awareness of dramatic convention were his liberal education under Mulcaster, his university experiences at Cambridge, and his London association with literary and court figures of the day. Admittedly, this is intangible information.

On the other hand, internal evidence in the works, exclusive of *The Faerie Queene*, shows clearly that the poet, indeed, must have "experimented" with the drama in his formative years. For example, his earliest known publication, *The Visions of Bellay* (1569), possibly composed during his first year at Cambridge as a contribution to Van der Noodt's *Théâtre* (1569), contains a description of a *triumphall Arke* (IV).<sup>129</sup> From E. K.'s dedicatory *Epistle to The Sheperdes Calender* we learn that, by 1579, Spenser had prepared a work entitled the *Court of Cupide*, a piece which in all likelihood may have served as a basis for his *Maske of Cupid* in *The Faerie Queene*. At the same time, we find a dance of Graces in the *April Eclogue, SC*, in which the participants are described (120) as "Ladyes of the Lake," and we recall that in the Kenilworth entertainment for Queen Elizabeth there was also a Lady of the Lake. Furthermore, E. K.'s *gloss* for the *June Eclogue, SC*, points out that Spenser had written pageants by this time: "And by that authoritye, thys same Poete, in his Pageaunts, sayth . . . ." In *The Teares of the Muses* (1591), we listen with interest as Melpomene defines her duties (152): "The Stage with Tragick buskin to adorne . . . ." We also pay attention to Thalia who comments, in turn, upon the status of comedy (176-80) and makes what is thought by some to be a reference to actor, Richard Tarleton (208): "Our pleasant Willy, ah! is dead of late." She also alludes to John Lyly as one who "Doth choose to sit in idle Cell, / Than so himselfe to mockerie to sell."<sup>130</sup> In the same work, Erato criticizes,

126 "To be plaine, I am voyde of al iudgement, if your *Nine Comoedies*, wherevnto in imitation of *Herodotus*, you giue the names of the Nine Muses, (and in one mans fansie not vnworthily) come not neerer *Ariostoës Comoedies*, eyther for the finnesse of plausible Elocution, or the rarenesse of Poetical Inuention, than that *Eluish Queene* doth to his *Orlando Furioso* . . . ."

127 Judson, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

128 *Ibid.*, p. 142.

129 George Kernodle, *From Art to Theatre*, p. 213: "Even to the last masques, the arcade façade remained important."

130 Dodge, *op. cit.*, p. 783, "The 'gentle spirit' is almost certainly John Lyly, the author of court comedies, who from 1584 to about 1590 produced no plays." It is obvious that there is a problem concerning these dates.



in general, the entire dramatic period (409-10): "For neither you nor we shall anie more / Find entertainment, or in Court or Schoole . . . ." In *Prosopopoia: or Mother Hubberds Tale* (1595), we learn of a pastor (392 ff.) whose only care is to hasten the delivery of his sermons in order to ". . . attend his playes." In *Amoretti* (1595), LIV, we find Spenser employing a metaphor of the theatre:

Of this worlds Theatre in which we stay,  
My loue lyke the Spectator ydly sits  
Beholding me that all the pageants play,  
Disguising diuersly my troubled wits.  
And mask in myrth lyke to a Comedy:  
Soone after when my ioy to sorrow flits,  
I waile and make my woes a Tragedy . . . .

In *Epithalamion* (1595), we discover a *Maske of Hymen*. And, finally, we must not overlook the fact that the *Eclogues* of *The Shepheardes Calender*, in tone and structure, resemble the pastoral dialogues which became a part of the later court masques. While this accumulative evidence appears to support what Judson calls Spenser's "absorbing interest" in the affairs of the theatre, we should examine the epic itself before drawing any conclusions.

In the introductory quatrain to *The Faerie Queene* (III.xii), Spenser refers to Britomart's visit to the House of Busyrane as ". . . the maske of Cupid." Later, however, he describes these proceedings (IV.i.3) as *The Mask of Love*. Of the three masks to be found in the epic, the *Maske of Cupid* (or *Love*) is by far the most carefully constructed, as the following analysis will verify. From the start, I think it obvious that Spenser intended for this maske to be presented before a noble audience, perhaps, in a stately banqueting-hall. In this instance, of course, the "audience" is Britomart, in whose behalf the maske is performed. He has also provided us with a stage in his description of the entrance of the maskers upon ". . . the readie floor / Of some theatre . . .," and in his statement which reveals that the costume of Ease is ". . . fit for tragicke stage." I think it entirely plausible, therefore, to imagine Britomart in the coveted position of *state* in this masking hall. As I have shown earlier, it was a seating location very much in demand at the masques by Jonson's time, because the scene designer endeavored always to make the perspective accurate within a radius of this one vantage point in the performance hall.<sup>131</sup> Thus, with Britomart in the position of *state*, we next observe Spenser's method of calling his audience to attention by means of a "shrilling trumpet sound," a roll of thunder, an earthquake, and an approaching and breaking storm—devices commonly employed in the staging of the maske. Certainly, the action of the whirlwind in opening an iron door to permit the entrance of the masking company corresponds to the shifting or re-

131 Kernodle, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

removal of a frontal curtain at the start of a professional performance.<sup>132</sup> Indeed, the whirlwind, thunder, lightning (*fireworks?*), and earthquake which usher in the *Maske of Cupid* allegorically depict the events that occur in the later production itself. Consequently, Spenser's clashing elements serve not only as warning signals for the start of performance, but also assist him in establishing the mood of the piece. Stage tricks of this nature were not alien to the London theatre of Spenser's time. W. J. Lawrence, for example, has suggested that thunder was often rather effectively produced by the rolling of a cannon-ball or other heavy object across the rough, unhewn floor boards in the upper chamber of a performance hall.<sup>133</sup> Certainly, there is an abundance of stage directions which call for this particular sound effect.

The fact that Spenser's iron door bears the legend, *Be not too bold* (III.xi), is of much importance. Since this door functions as a frontal curtain in the actual maske itself, it has occurred to me that Spenser must have been acquainted with the principles of stage "discovery," so common in the masks and dramas of his era.<sup>134</sup> Although we cannot prove the presence of a frontal curtain at the performance of every maske in the period, we do know that such curtains were put into use on specific occasions. They were the perspective hangings which an arriving audience first confronted upon entering the hall. We also assume that their designs were symbolical of the maske to be presented.<sup>135</sup> At the start of a performance, the frontal device was parted or, perhaps, made *to vanish* before the astonished spectators by means of an ingenious system of weights which caused it to drop into an especially prepared trough paralleling the front of the stage. As a rule, this curtain was never again manipulated during the performance to mark a changing or closing scene.<sup>136</sup> We know that perspective staging was well established in the Italian and French theatres by this time, but apparently it was first employed in the English maske with respect to the frontal curtain.<sup>137</sup> Spenser's iron door with its legend may reflect this practice. Certainly, the legend itself is related to the popular emblem-book and *impressa*.<sup>138</sup> T. S. Graves informs us that ". . . the Elizabethan passion for inscription [was] illustrated, not only by motto-bedecked arras, walls and pageants . . . but by labeled characters as

132 See Jonson's *Masque of Blackness* (1605).

133 W. J. Lawrence, "The Mounting of Stuart Masques," *English Illustrated Magazine* (November, 1903), p. 181; also, his *Elizabethan Playhouse and Other Studies*, p. 17.

134 T. S. Graves, *The Court and the London Theatres during the Reign of Elizabeth*, p. 72.

135 Kernodle, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

136 Allardyce Nicoll, *Stuart Masques and the Renaissance Stage*, p. 22: "For the masque there was no lowering of a curtain that the scene-shifter might alter the setting unseen by the audience." Also, Lawrence, "The Mounting of Stuart Masques," p. 181.

137 Kernodle, *op. cit.*, p. 202; Welsford, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

138 Nicoll, *op. cit.*, p. 154: "This was the age of the emblem-book and the *impressa* . . . Men delighted in devising or looking upon allegorical designs with their appropriate mottoes . . . Intellectual ingenuity was expended on these things, and to them was attached a peculiar emotional significance. The courtly gentleman took a delight in recognizing ideas expressed in symbolic forms and in truncated quotations from classical authors . . ."

well."<sup>139</sup> Spenser indicates that he was acquainted with this tradition.

The *Maske of Cupid* begins, therefore, with the opening of the iron door. The first masker enters and, ". . . proceeding to the midst," is brought into a position opposite Britomart in *state*. His actions, thereafter, identify him as the Presenter or Prologue. He motions, first, to the audience for silence (Lyly's *Alexander and Campaspe*) and with *lively actions* presents *some argument*, after which he retires to the adjoining room that serves as a tiring-house for the masking company. This individual is called Ease. His name, embroidered upon his robe in golden letters, is *discovered* to the audience as he turns to make his exit: "And passing by, his name discovered, / Ease, on his robe in golden letters cyphered,"—unquestionably a further instance of Spenser's use of the emblem motif. We recall that in *The Comedie of Olde Fortunatus* (1600), Thomas Dekker similarly identified the characters of Vice and Virtue (iii) by means of costume. In the case of Vice, for example, Dekker shows that the robe was ". . . painted behind with fooles faces & diuels heads . . .," and that it was inscribed with ". . . HA, HA, HE . . .," but this practice is common to the costuming of a good many maskes and dramas of this period.

Having dispatched Ease to the tiring-house, Spenser introduces the first song and dance of his maske, and a company of maskers marches about the room before Britomart. I think it is clearly apparent from the description of these figures that Spenser is working within the conventions of the court maske. For example, he tells us that they enter ". . . in the manner of a maske enranged orderly . . ." He re-emphasizes *order* in their marching forth ". . . in trim array;" and by observing their arrangement, we become aware of a definite plan for this maske. In the first place, we notice four couples *in faire degree*, and learn that they are the abstractions of Fancy and Desire, Doubt and Danger, Fear and Hope, Disemblaunce and Pleasaunce. Spenser's handling of their processional is similar to his treatment of the pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins (I.iv)—a fusion, as it were, of the conventions of the maske and pageant within this single episode.<sup>140</sup> At the same time, he describes the costumes of these four couples with infinite care.

There are other interesting members of this processional, however; e.g., a *faire dame*, carrying her heart in a basin; *two grysie villeins*, Despight and Cruelty; blindfolded Cupid, the *Winged God* himself, riding upon a *lion*; and a rout of other maskers in various shapes as Reproach, Repentaunce, Shame, Strife, Anger, Unquiet Care, Unthriftyhead, Lewd Loss of Time, and so on. Since Spenser does not linger over his descrip-

139 Graves, *op. cit.*, p. 72. See Dekker's *The Whore of Babylon* (1606), in which the Prologue suggests the use of a frontal curtain:

(Through these thin vailles we hang betweene your sight  
And this our piece) may reach the mistery:  
What is in it most grave, will most delight.  
But as in *Lantskip*, Townes and Woods appeare  
Small a farre off, yet to the Optic sense,  
The minde shewes them as great as those more neere . . . .

140 Welsford, *op. cit.*, p. 287.

tions of these additional maskers, I think he may have conceived them as bearing their own means of identification, perhaps, by costume, as in the former case of Ease. At the same time, I do not believe that Cupid's *lion* represents a problem in stagecraft for this period, for I recall the fantastic lion which had appeared in the court of Henry VIII. For that matter, Reyher has shown that pageant wagons, in the early sixteenth century, were drawn into an acting area by individuals often disguised as monstrous animals.<sup>141</sup>

With the maskers so arranged upon the stage, the four couples now sing and dance in *joyous felowship*:

. . . making goodly merriment,  
With wanton bardes, and rymers impudent,  
All which together song full chearefully  
A lay of loves delight, with sweet concent . . . .

Although there is no indication, here, of a *revels interlude* involving audience and maskers in a round of ballroom dancing, Britomart is actually completely surrounded by the dancers and is, in this way, engaged in the movement of the maske. Throughout the ensuing performance, Spenser fills the room with *a most delicious harmony* to the sound of which the maskers twice move about the area, eventually retiring to the *inner-room* and locking *fast* the iron door. Thereafter, Britomart's investigation of this inner-room (xxx), only to discover it empty and the maskers to have *vanisht all*, further illustrates Spenser's awareness of theatrical practices, since we have come to realize that much of the immense popularity of the masque by Jonson's time was due to the skill of the stage designer, who frequently caused an entire scene to *vanish* before his startled audience.<sup>142</sup> We know from Jonson's description that such an effect was carried off by Inigo Jones in *Masque of Queens* (1609):

. . . In the heat of their dance, on the sudden was heard a sound of loud music, as if many instruments had made one blast; with which not only the Hags themselves, but the hell into which they ran quite vanished . . . .

Indeed, the word *vanish* is a common term in the stage directions of the period. I am certain that Spenser had, at one time, witnessed similar entertainments.

In what way, then, does the *Maske of Cupid* reflect the conventions established for the *genre* in *Proteus and the Adamantine Rock*? In the first place, it follows the custom of calling the audience to attention by the striking of a musical note and the delivery of a prologue (cf. the Hymn to Neptune in *Proteus*). Furthermore, it contains an initial maske song and dance. It includes a processional and, possibly, an interlude of revels. And it concludes with a final song and dance and the vanishing of the maskers. Moreover, we should also understand that Spenser's work is not a maske-

141 Reyher, *op. cit.*, p. 333.

142 Nicoll, *op. cit.*, p. 68: *machina versatilis*.

proper but, rather, a sketch or an account of the performance itself, similar in many respects to those prepared by Jonson, Campion, Daniel, and other professional masque writers following a performance of their works.<sup>143</sup> While there are many theories concerning Spenser's probable sources for this particular episode,<sup>144</sup> I am inclined to agree with Philo M. Buck that the *Maske of Cupid* is synonymous with the one referred to by E. K. as *The Court of Cupid* in his dedicatory letter to *The Shepheardes Calender*.<sup>145</sup> I think it plausible that Spenser may have, at one time, written such a masque—*The Court of Cupid*, perhaps—or, at least, had witnessed the performance of a similar work and had seen fit, later, to incorporate an account of it into *The Faerie Queene*.

The second passage for examination in the epic is the *Maske of Satyrs* (III.x.44-46), which I have so-named for reasons that will be obvious. In this episode, which is not as complete as the *Maske of Cupid*, we find Malbecco serving as the audience, as did Britomart previously. Spenser sets the piece in the *thickest woodes* and heralds the performance with the ". . . noyse of many bagpipes shrill / And shrieking hububs." We see, first of all, a group of dancing *jolly Satyrs* emerge from the woods, leading the *Faire Helenore*. Decorated with garlands, she symbolizes the May-Lady of the Satyrs whom she promptly engages in a dance. According to Spenser, it was an unusually long dance, lasting the full day. At twilight, the maskers prepare for their final dance, and Malbecco, creeping like a goat, joins them in the *revells*, marching *emongst the horned heard*. While Spenser does not refer to this episode as a masque, it is similar in structure to *Proteus* and the *Maske of Cupid*. For the same reason, the *Dance of the Four Graces* (again, my title), which Sir Calidore observes (VI.x.10-18), may be interpreted as a masque dance, although scholars have often failed to see it in this connection. It is clear to me that Spenser had in mind a theatrical situation when he described the *open greene* upon which the masque occurs. Furthermore, Sir Calidore is his audience. Colin Clout, *the jolly shepheard which there piped*, is his musician. And the Four Graces, of course, are his maskers, assisted by *an hundred naked maidens lilly white!* There follows a brief description of the central masque dance and an allusion to the beauty and grace of the performance, before Spenser abruptly curtails his account with the remark, "Such was the beauty of this goodly band, / Whose sundry parts were here too long to tell . . ." Sir Calidore, as the main witness, does not know what to make of these strange actions and debates whether to call the affair the ". . . traine of Beauties Queene / Or nympe, or faeries, or enchanted show." His curiosity

143 Thomas Warton, *Observations on The Fairy Queen of Spenser*, II, pp. 78-79, suggests that Spenser was writing from memory.

144 R. E. Neil Dodge, "Spenser's Imitations from Ariosto," *Publications Modern Language Association*, XII (1897), pp. 151-201; E. Greenlaw, "Britomart at the House of Busirane," *Studies in Philology*, XXVI (April, 1929), pp. 117-30; Henry Sandison, "Spenser's 'Lost' Works," *Publications Modern Language Association*, XXV (1910), pp. 134-51.

145 Philo M. Buck, "Note on Milton's *Comus*," *Modern Language Notes*, XXI (1906), p. 17.

aroused, he attempts to interrupt the maskers, and they *vanish* from the green. I think that we have sufficient reasons for considering this episode in terms of the maske.

Although the processional in the House of Pryde (I.iv) is not exactly typical of the maske, it has all of the trappings of the medieval pageant and helps to explain the nature of the processional in the *Maske of Cupid*. Spenser sets his scene in the courtyard of the House of Pryde. Lucifera is seated upon a richly decorated throne chair above which is spread a "cloth of state." It is probably unnecessary to point out that throne chairs and cloths of state were common theatrical properties by Spenser's time, as indeed they had been in the entertainments and pageants throughout the medieval period.<sup>146</sup> Here, therefore, Spenser is actually making use of a very familiar stage-piece. Later, when Lucifera calls for her *coche*, it is drawn into her presence by *six unequall beasts*, strictly in accordance with pageant convention. Lucifera and her train, consisting of Satan and the Seven Deadly Sins, march forth. Spenser's detailed analysis of the Seven Deadly Sins, encompassing their apparel, their animal mountings, and their pantomimic behavior, further discloses his knowledge of the ancient morality. For example, there is a siege in *The Castle of Perseverance* (1425?) in which Seven Cardinal Virtues engage in combat Seven Deadly Sins. In addition, such figures as Lechery, Sensuality, and King of Flesh appear in *Mary Magdalen* (1378?). We also recall that the marriage ceremony of Prince Arthur and Katharine of Aragon included a pageant and a castle *drawn by four beasts*. Two other masks, prepared in 1562, around the hoped-for meeting of Elizabeth and Mary at Nottingham Castle, made use of such figures as Discord, False Report, and Prudentia, and alluded to a prison named Extreme Oblivion.<sup>147</sup> And, once again in *The Faerie Queene* (IV.iii.37-42), we recall the passage in which Canacee enters in a chariot drawn by two *grim Lyons*, for, here, Spenser discloses that there was a ". . . troblous noyes / Such as the troubled theaters oftymes anoyes." These additional observations lend strength to our theory.

Before concluding, let us consider one other aspect of Spenser's knowledge of the theatrical practices of his time. To do so, we must examine his "borrowings" from Ariosto and Tasso, manifest in Britomart's observations of Busyrane's tapestries, Sir Guyon's experiences in the Bower of Bliss, and Britomart's visit to the Cave of Merlin, for they shed additional light upon the poet's familiarity with the scenic conventions of the pageant, the maske, and the drama and particularly emphasize his acquaintance with renaissance art standards.

There is no question about Spenser's source for Britomart in the Castle of Busyrane (III.xi.28-55) and her inspection of the tapestries which line the corridor leading to the masking-hall where she is to witness the *Maske of Cupid*. It has long since been shown that the poet was borrowing from

146 Graves, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

147 Sir E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, I, p. 151.

Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (XXXIII), wherein Bradamante also reviews a series of pictures at the *Rocca di Tristano*, all of which prophesy the wars in Italy.<sup>148</sup> (Spenser's tapestries are related to the wars of Cupid.) Established in his source, the poet accompanies Britomart along the corridor of tapestry, highly reminiscent of an entertainment held in the court of Henry VIII in 1527, the record of which discloses that many rooms within the banqueting-house had been elaborately decked out and were to be involved in the performance of a maske.<sup>149</sup> This particular account has led me to think that the large estate, which was often the setting for entertainments of this nature, was frequently put on display for visiting dignitaries in the manner of a "show," and I feel that Britomart may have been a party to what was possibly a well-received custom of the age.

We know, also, that Spenser borrowed from Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* (XVI) for his Bower of Bliss sequence (II.xii.42-87).<sup>150</sup> Briefly, in the related passage, Tasso's characters pass through an elaborate gate into the Palace of the Enchanting Dame. Its doors are golden, and their hinges produce a sweet sound. Furthermore, the doors are covered with pictorial designs which the characters inspect at some length. In *The Faerie Queene*, Sir Guyon and the Palmer pass through a similar gate on their way to the Bower of Bliss. Spenser tells us that it was ". . . wrought of substaunce light, / Rather for pleasure then for battery or fight." (In a later section of the epic [III.vi.22] he similarly describes the gateway to the Garden of Adonis.) These and other passages in *The Faerie Queene* reflect the scenic conventions for the maske of Spenser's time. The "framing" quality of the gates to the Bower of Bliss and the Garden of Adonis resemble many of the elaborate frames which Inigo Jones designed for the masques in the following decade. Indeed, his work for Jonson's *Masque of Hymen* (1606) is an illustration of this scenic principle, for we learn that larger-than-life statues of Atlas and Hercules were placed on either side of the stage to support the cloud masses above. Again, Jones's designs for Daniel's *Tethys' Festival* (1610) reveal that he was particularly fond of this framing device:

148 E. Greenlaw, "Britomart at the House of Busirane," *Studies in Philology*, XXVI (April, 1929), pp. 117-30.

149 Reyher, *op. cit.*, pp. 336-37; "Of all these temporary structures, the most interesting were, undoubtedly, those which were constructed at Greenwich in 1527, for the arrival of the French ambassador. In the structure, there were two rooms, one of which would serve for banquets, the other for masquerades and courtly celebrations. . . . The first, reserved for banquets, does not directly concern us. One may call attention, in passing, however, to the *arc de triomphe* which was erected before the main entrance. The feasting completed, the court arranged itself before the masquerade room; but arriving at the door, Henry VIII turned to the French ambassadors, and they saw upon the other side of the arch, a large curtain painted to represent the siege of *Terouenne* by the English King. The work was more agreeable to them than the memories which it conjured up. This painting they admired certainly more than the delicacy and tact of their host. . . . The cortege passed finally through a corridor hung with tapestries and arrived at a second room: 'Ye long hous' or 'Disguising house. . . .' The first tiers or steps within this room were occupied on the right by the ambassadors, the second by the princes, and the third by those privileged individuals who had received admittance; the women were placed on the left slope, each one according to her rank, and the entertainment began . . . ."

150 R. E. Neil Dodge, "Spenser's Imitations from Ariosto," *Publications Modern Language Association*, XII (1897), p. 185. Also, H. H. Blanchard, "Imitations from Tasso in the 'Faerie Queene,'" *Studies in Philology*, XXII (1925), p. 198 ff.

This scene was comparted into 5 Neees, whereof that in the middest had some slender pillowes of whole round, and were made of modern architecture in regarde of roome: these were burnisht gold, and bare vp the returnes of an Architrave, Freeze, and Cornish of the same worke: on which, vpon eyther side was a Plinth, directly ouer the pil-lers, & on them were placed for furnishings, two Dolphins of siluer, with their tailes wreathed together, which supported ouall vases of gold . . . .<sup>151</sup>

Examples from renaissance tapestries, architecture, woodcuts, engravings, frescoes, tomb sculpture, and art in general may enable us to understand the probable nature of the stagecraft employed in the Elizabethan theatre.<sup>152</sup> While it is unlikely that any one example will serve conclusively as a source for a given stage designer in the period, it is possible to cite various illustrations that closely resemble the known stage designs of numerous masks. For instance, we may detect a similarity in Jan van Scorel's *The Last Supper* and Jones's handling of the stage design for the *Masque of Hymen*; or in Lotto's *Madonna with Saints* and Jones's work on *Tethys' Festival*. Indeed, the struggles of Tasso and Spenser's heroes to reach their respective destinations (the Palace of the Enchanting Dame and the Bower of Bliss) remind one very much of paintings like Gaddi's *Dream and Victory of Heraclius*, which contains three scenes within the total framework. This "dispersed setting" may, in turn, be compared with the staging principle represented in the Valenciennes stage, and actually, we may even consider Spenser's handling of Sir Guyon's visit to the Bower of Bliss in the light of the Valenciennes tradition. Obviously, Spenser has provided us with adequately spaced sign-boards to point the way to the Bower—such as *The Quicksand of Unthriftyhed*, *the Whirlepoole of Decay*, *the Rock of Vile Reproach*, and many others. *Campion's Lord Hay's Masque* (1607) also makes use of this "dispersed setting."

At the same time, Britomart's visit to the Cave of Merlin and, by the same token, Sir Guyon's visit to the Cave of Mammon point, again, to Spenser's apparent knowledge of renaissance art principles and emphasize his familiarity with some of the staging conventions of the day. His source is, once more, *Orlando Furioso* (III).<sup>153</sup> But our attention is directed to the fact that caves, mountains, cliffs, rocks, and other similar structures were familiar stage-pieces in the masks that were being produced at this time. Both the drama and the maske abound in stage directions which indicate that characters are to be *discovered* or concealed in caves or rocks. We have already examined two plays contemporary to Spenser's period (*Lyly's Sapho and Phao* and *Peele's Arraignement of Paris*) which make use of such structures, and there are many others to be found in this same decade. In placing Britomart or Guyon in cave or bower settings, there-

151 Fortunately, Daniel's description of this masque is far more detailed than any we have from Jonson.

152 On this subject, see J. H. McDowell, "Conventions of Medieval Art in Shakespearian Staging," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, XLVII, 3 (July, 1948), pp. 215-29; also Kernodle, *From Art to Theatre*.

153 R. E. Neil Dodge, "Spenser's Imitations from Ariosto," *Publications Modern Language Association*, XII (1897), p. 176.



fore, Spenser was not only following his source but was also writing in terms of a very common theatrical situation. Renaissance art provides us with abundant examples of cave scenes, as well, possibly one of the most striking of which is the well-known *Descent of Christ into Limbo*. While we cannot pursue this subject any further in this study, we may mention, in passing, that other sections in *The Faerie Queene* support this theory: e.g., The Temple of Venus (IV.x); the Temple of Isis (V.viii); the Palace of Justice (V.ix); and the banquet of the watery gods (IV.xi), to name but a few. Such evidence has prompted Reyher to conclude that *The Faerie Queene* not only reflects Spenser's appreciation of the masque and drama of the time, but also serves as a source-book, as it were, for many of the masque-writers in the Jacobean period:

Les nombreuses allusions à l'assaut du Fort de Raison ou du Château de Tempérance par les Passions n'ont-elles pas suggéré à Jonson l'idée première et fondamentale de son ballet d'*Hymenaei*? Vénus ayant perdu son fils et venant le chercher à la cour où il exerce d'ordinaire ses ravages, n'est-ce point là le sujet de l'ouverture du *Masque des noces du vicomte d'Haddington*? Les invocations aux Amazones, aux héroïnes du vieux temps et les louanges que leur décerne Spenser ont pu éveiller dans l'esprit de la reine Anne ou de son poète l'idée du noble *Ballet des Reines* . . . .<sup>154</sup>

Obviously, we may agree with Reyher, who concludes, "Mais à quoi bon continuer cette énumération? Quand on ne pourrait citer aucune imitation évidente, le poème n'en resterait pas moins l'une des principales sources d'inspiration des auteurs de 'Masques'."<sup>155</sup> It is apparent, therefore, that Spenser's concern with theatrical activities of his age extends beyond what Judson has seen fit to describe as an "absorbing interest" in such matters.

154 Reyher, *op. cit.*, p. 349.

155 *Loc. cit.*

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