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Devising the Revels

> last yeare my devise was to cum oute of the mone/ this yeare I Imagin to cum oute of a place caulled *vastum vacuum.* I. the great waste/ asmoche to saie as a place voyde or emptie withoute the worlde where is neither fier ayre water nor earth/ and that I haue bene remayning there sins the Last yeare
>
> George Ferrers

Tudor court revels were complicated entertainments. They employed elaborate, specially designed costumes and headpieces, often used fixed or moveable pageants or stages, relied on poetry, dialogue, music, song, or dance, occasionally incorporated barriers and tourneys from the tiltyard, and sometimes included plays. The notion of proprietorship in the arts has often become entangled in modern discussions of the revels, but this idea does not apply to the creation of these complex entertainments nor to the means by which they were produced. Revels were the result of collaboration by painters, sculptors, costume designers, poets, composers, artisans, and laborers in relation to whom an appointed supervisor (beginning in 1510 called the master of the revels) stood as what we might call executive producer and director. He had financial, administrative, and aesthetic control of the revels subject to the approval of the sovereign and council.

There is abundant evidence in contemporary documents to confirm that the master of the revels ordinarily devised his own entertainments. In about 1573, after he had served in the revels office for nearly twenty-eight years, Thomas Blagrave wrote a memorandum on the structure of the office and the function of the officers in which he explained that the master had to be 'of suche learning wytt and experience as hable of hym self to make and devise suche shewes and devises as may best fitt and furnisshe the tyme place and state'.[1] However, there were certain exceptions to this rule. The sovereign and the council never relinquished their authority to invent revels or to commission individuals other than the masters to create entertainments for certain

occasions. Henry VIII occasionally designed the costumes he wore in tournaments and in masks, and he invented revels himself. In one of the documents associated with preparations for his meeting with Francis I at the Field of Cloth of Gold in 1520 it is specified that Henry would devise the mummeries.[2] At Christmas in 1551–2 and again in 1552–3 the council appointed George Ferrers as master of the king's pastimes to create and perform traditional lord of misrule shows – this despite the fact that Sir Thomas Cawarden was master of the revels and was devising and producing other entertainments for those seasons.[3]

There are also a number of occasions from as early as the 1490s when the masters received aesthetic consultation and assistance in creating and producing their revels. In contemporary documents the term 'advice' is most often used to describe this kind of assistance, at least on those occasions when it is recorded. Because the 14 November 1510 revel was produced 'by the Advyse of the erll of essex & so ouersene', for example, Richard Gibson mentions that the charges for it 'stondys At the Accownte by hym', and the Twelfth Night revel in 1516 was produced 'as well by the avyes of wyllyam kornyche as by the avyes of the master of the revelles'.[4]

The contemporary term used to describe the creation of a revel is 'devised'. Sir Henry Guildford devised the interlude of Venus and Beauty for Twelfth Night 1514, for example, and the 5 June 1522 pageant-disguising of Friendship, Prudence, and Might was devised by William Cornish.[5] Tudor writers are notorious for their casual language in describing entertainments, and in recent years we have been cautioned to be less literal-minded about terms such as 'mask', 'interlude', and 'play'.[6] The term 'device' also merits scrutiny. It is used in a variety of senses in the revels documents: it can refer to a creative idea, to a completed play text, to a song, to a particular design, to a concrete pageant or property, and to a written document that explains a creative concept. An examination of the contexts in which this term is used in contemporary documents can help to illuminate the means by which court revels were created and produced.

In one of its senses 'device' can refer to a wholly imaginative idea. In 1553 George Ferrers wrote a letter to Sir Thomas Cawarden to describe his Christmas entertainments at court and to request production support. When he tells Cawarden that 'last yeare my devise was to cum oute of the mone/ this yeare I Imagin to cum oute of a place caulled *vastum vacuum*' he uses the word to refer to an imaginative conception, idea, or invention that is to serve as the premise underlying all of his entertainments.[7] Ferrers continues to describe his plans for the holidays in this letter using the term in a slightly different

sense: 'And bicause of Certaine devisis whiche I haue towching this matter/ I wolde yf it were possyble haue all myne apparell blewe the first daie that I *pre*sent my self to the king*es* Mai*es*tie'. Here the term 'devisis' refers to the plans he has for certain shows and entertainments thematically connected to his overall invention. There is no implication that these devices are complete but there is a suggestion that they are developed beyond the idea stage. This becomes clear when Ferrers explains that 'The residue of the wholie daies I will spend other devises/ as one daie in feat*es* of armes & then wolde I haue a challeng p*er*formed with hobbie horsis where I purpose to be in person a nother daie in honting & hawking/ the residue of the tyme Shalbe spent in other devisis whiche I will declare to you by mouth to haue yo*ur* ayde and advice therin'. These devices are partially developed, at least for the basic plots and possibly for some of the dialogue, but it is clear that they are not in written nor even in completed form. If they were it would be unnecessary for Ferrers to describe them orally to Cawarden and to seek his 'advice'.

In one of its more concrete senses, the term 'device' could be used to identify what we would call a play text. William Baldwin wrote to Sir Thomas Cawarden in 1555 outlining his 'Comodie' entitled 'love and lyve' which he thought 'mete' to be performed before Queen Mary.[8] The Inns of Court wanted it, but since Cawarden had earlier offered to set forth some of Baldwin's 'rude devises' he was to be given first choice. Baldwin uses the term 'devises' as a synonym for comedy or play, because it is clear from his letter that the text existed in a finished form: 'the play is iij. houres long, it is now in learnyng and well be ready within these .x. dayes'. A similar use of the term is found in Mary's 1554 warrant directing Sir Thomas Cawarden to provide Nicholas Udall with production support. Udall 'haithe at sondry seasons convenient hertofore shewid and myndeth herafter to shewe his diligence in settinge forthe of dialogwes and Entreludes before vs for o*ur* Regall disport and recreacion'.[9] Cawarden was ordered to furnish 'soche app*er*ell for his Auctors as he shall thinke necessarye and requisite for the furnishing & condigne setting forth of his Devises before vs'. The writer of this warrant regards the term 'devices' as a synonym for 'dialogwes' and 'entreludes'.

Between these two senses of the term 'device' – on the one hand to describe an imaginative idea and on the other to refer to a fully developed composition, such as a play – is the meaning of the term more familiar to medieval historians. It refers to a written document that explains in detail the creative idea and overall conception of a project. Geoffrey Webb explains how devices were used by medieval master masons and points out that if a medieval building existed on paper it did so in the form of a written text called a device, not

in the form of blueprints as it would today.[10] Such devices contained the overall explanations and directions necessary to construct buildings but left the particular details of subordinate construction and decoration to others. Some devices of this kind could be quite elaborate; the masonry directions alone for the 'Grand Devis de Fontainbleau' of 1528 consist of some 16,500 words.[11]

This sense of the term was current in Tudor England. In 1544 John of Padua was made 'Deviser of the King's Buildings'. John's title suggests special creative status and he was probably what we might call an architect or an engineer, a man properly qualified to devise buildings.[12] However, devising was a broad field and could be assigned to individuals with quite different qualifications from what we might expect. Alexander Barclay was recruited to work on the buildings at the Field of Cloth of Gold near Guisnes in June 1520 and at Calais shortly afterwards. One of the commissioners overseeing the project in France wrote to Wolsey on 10 April 1520 to send over, among others, 'Maistre Barkilye, the black monk and poet, to devise histoires and convenient raisons to florrishe the buildings and Banket House withall'.[13] Barclay was known as an author and translator, and his qualifications for the job, as Webb points out, are entirely those implied in the nature of his literary work.[14] His task was to provide a scheme of representational decoration fleshed out with inscriptions and mottos for painters to follow. Barclay was a humanist. He wrote eclogues and translated Sallust's *Iugurtha,* but his reputation rested chiefly on his translation and adaptation of Brandt's *Das Narrenschiff* into English as *Shyp of Folys.* It is just this mixture of gothic pageantry based on imitation with a suitable amount of classical, or 'antique', reference that was desirable throughout most of the sixteenth century in court revels and entertainments of the kind that were to be hosted in the banqueting house and buildings Barclay was to 'florrishe'.

Over the course of the sixteenth century the written device began to be supplemented but not entirely replaced by more specific documents. There is special payment in the Works accounts of 1531, for example, to a mason because he was 'adjoined to with the Master Mason in devysing and drawing'.[15] We also find evidence of this tendency in the revels office. Thomas Blagrave recommends that 'Soe sone as anye Maske or other devise ys finished the patterne and platte of the same shalbe Drawne and putt in collers by A painter aswell for the witnes of the worcke, as for presidente to the office, to induse, Devise, and shewe, Difference, of that is to come frome that ys paste'.[16] If this recommendation was followed in Elizabeth I's reign none of the drawings survive, but Inigo Jones' drawings and sketches for his masques at the Jacobean

court are the obvious result of a development begun in the sixteenth century.[17] Despite this tendency towards more specificity, traditional devisers found plenty of work in the seventeenth century. Thomas Heywood's reputation as a dramatist as well as a translator of Sallust fitted him as well for a position as deviser in the 1630s as it did Barclay in the 1520s. Heywood collaborated with master painter Gerard Christmas and his two sons to provide devices for the ship, Sovereign of the Seas, launched in 1637.[18] The great ships of the period, with their abundance of sculptured allegorical decorations, offered perhaps as much scope to devisers, sculptors, and painters as any royal building. Court revels of the period also offered a wealth of opportunity to devisers, sculptors, painters, tailors, composers, and poets.

There is a good amount of evidence to show how devisers of the revels communicated their devices to the artists and artisans that were to produce them. Some devices were delivered orally, as were those that Ferrers communicated 'by mouth' to Cawarden at Christmas 1552–3. Richard Gibson often mentions receiving 'instructions' from Sir Henry Guildford or from the king by word of mouth for costumes, pageants, spectacles, and revels between 1510 and 1534.[19] At Christmas 1540–1 John Bridges produced his revels by 'A Comaundement gevyn by the king*es* grace vnto S*ir* Anthony browne And so vnto me'.[20] When producing a device was straightforward, oral instructions could be sufficient, but not always. In December 1524 Henry VIII had intended to assault the Castle of Loyalty, a fortress made for an actual siege at a Greenwich tournament. He asked his carpenters to build certain equipment for the siege but they misunderstood and Henry and his friends were unable to participate in the assault.[21]

If there was not to be close contact between a deviser and those who were to produce the work then a written device was needed, but there was no guarantee that this would be sufficient either. A poorly written one could produce confusion, and even an experienced deviser like Cawarden could make mistakes. On 31 December 1551 Cawarden received a warrant from the council to supply George Ferrers and his entourage with costumes for their entry into London.[22] The details are hardly described at all. Ferrers found his own costume satisfactory but in his letter to Cawarden he complains that 'as towching the Apparell of o*ur* Counseillo*ures* yo*u* have mistaken y^{e} p*er*sons that sholde were them as S*ir* Robe*r*t Stafforde & Thom*as* wyndeham w*ith* other gentlemen that stande also apon their reput*acio*n and wolde not be seen in london so torchebererlyke disgysed'.[23] In January 1552 Sir George Howard, who was working on some of the entertainments with Ferrers, wrote to Cawarden about an idea he had for a 'triumph' (a pageant disguising that included a tourney)

of Mars, Venus, and Cupid. His letter is endorsed 'Sir George Howards Devys for a play of cvpid'.[24] As he admits, Howard was not a particularly skillful deviser. In his brief letter he mentions pageants, properties, and costumes but does not indicate the plot, suggest the dialogue, or specify the theme, 'levenge the hole Device of the thinge to yowr Desskression/ whow his better abull to Dow hit then I cane thinke hit or wryt hit'. A frustrated Cawarden had to write to Ferrers for more information. Ferrers obliged, sending a more detailed device that he wearily endorsed 'the lord Myserabell'.[25]

While there are many references to devising in the revels accounts and there is much narrative evidence to suggest that written devices circulated at one time, only one complete device for a Tudor revel survives: 'Devices to be shewed before the quenes Ma^{tie} by waye of maskinge, at Nottingham castell, after the meteinge of the quene of Scott*es*' [1562].[26] While these revels were not produced because the projected meeting between Elizabeth I and Mary was cancelled, the document provides us with some important insights into how devices functioned in the production of revels. The 1562 device distributes the revels into three separate entertainments to be held on three consecutive nights. Each entertainment develops the former one and is thematically connected to the substance of the diplomatic and political issues that were to be negotiated.

For the first entertainment a stationary pageant of a prison, called 'Extreme Oblyvion, and the kepers name thereof, Argus otherwise called Circumspection', was to be set up in the hall. The action begins with the entrance of a 'maske' of ladies consisting of Pallas riding on a unicorn and carrying a standard on which is painted 'ij Ladyes hand*es*, knitt one faste wthin thother, and over thand*es* written in letters of golde/ ffides'. Following Pallas are two ladies 'signifyinge ij vertues', Prudentia riding a golden lion and Temperantia riding a red lion. Following this enter 'vj, or viij' ladies bringing in captive with a gold rope around their necks Discord and False Report. All of the maskers march 'about the haule' before Pallas delivers her verse oration to the queen in which it is determined that Discord and False Report will both be put into the prison of Extreme Oblivion and kept there by Argus 'ineternum'. The trumpets then are to blow and 'thinglishe Ladies to take the nobilitie of the straunger and daunce'.

On the second night another stationary pageant of a castle called the 'Courte of plentye' was to be installed in the hall. The action begins with a mask of ladies led in by Peace in a chariot drawn by an elephant ridden by Friendship. She is followed by 'vj, or viij, Ladyes maskers' who march 'rounde aboute the haule' before Friendship speaks in verse to the queen explaining

that Pallas has declared to the gods how worthy an action had been taken the night before in jailing Discord and False Report. They are also assured that Prudentia and Temperantia dwell within the 'cowrte of plentye' and so sent the virtue Peace to dwell with those two ladies forever. Prudentia and Temperantia both have porters in the Court of Plenty, the one named Ardent Desire and the other Perpetuity, signifying that by these two perpetual peace and tranquility 'maye be hadd & kept throughe the hole worlde'. At this point wine flows from conduits in the pageant 'duringe w^{ch} tyme, thinglishe Lord*es* shall maske wth the Scottishe Ladyes'. According to the device the theme of this revel signifies 'that by ardent desyer and *per*petuitie, perpetuall peace and tranquillitie maye be hadd & kept throughe the hole worlde'.

On the third night a movable pageant of 'an Orcharde havinge golden Apples in w^{ch} Orchard shall sitt vj, or viij, Ladyes maskers' is to be drawn into the hall by Disdain riding on a wild boar and 'perpencyd Malyce, in the similitude of a greate serpent'. Disdain makes a speech to the queen in verse noting that his god, Pluto, is displeased that Jupiter has blessed the Court of Plenty over the past two nights. He has sent his 'chefeste Capitayne perpencyd Mallyce' to compel Argus to free Discord and False Report or to compel Ardent Desire and Perpetuitie to deliver up Pluto's enemy Peace. At this point Discretion enters leading 'Valyant courage' (Hercules) mounted on a horse 'whose name is boldnes', and following him 'vj or viij Lord*es* maskers'. Discretion then speaks to the queen in verse explaining that Jupiter has sent from heaven the virtue Valiant Courage to confound Pluto's plan, but unless Temperantia and Prudentia 'by some signe or token' embrace Peace 'in s^{ch} sorte as Iupiter hathe sent hym vnto them' it will be difficult for Valiant Courage to 'overcome those vyces'. Discretion then asks Prudentia how long Peace will remain in the Court of Plenty. She lets down with a band of gold 'A grandgarde of Assure, wherevppon shalbe wrytten, in letters of gold/ Ever'. He then asks Temperantia when Peace will depart and she hands down a girdle of azure studded with gold and a sword of steel 'wherevppon shalbe written /Never'. These were to be laid at the feet of Elizabeth and Mary where Discretion then arms Valiant Courage (Hercules) with the sword 'Never' and shield 'Ever'. The device specifies that this action signifies 'that those ij Ladies haue *pro*fessed that peace shall ever dwell wth them, and Never de*par*te from them/ and Signifyinge also that there Valyant courage shalbe ever at defyance, wth disdaine, and prepencyd mallice and never leave vntill he haue overcome them'. Valiant Courage (Hercules) then fights with both Disdain and Prepensed Malice. In the middle of this battle Disdain escapes but Valiant Courage slays the monster Prepensed Malice. The theme of this last battle, according to the

device, signifies 'that some vngodlie men maye still disdaine the *per*petuall peace made betwene those ij vertues, but as for there prepenced Mallice, it is easye troden vnder theis Ladyes fete'. The revel then concludes with six or eight lady maskers who come from the garden with a song 'that shalbe made herevppon, as full of Armony, as may be devised'.

This elaborate device consisting of some 2,000 words is preserved among Lord Burghley's papers. That a device for revels might be found among the diplomatic papers of one of the principal members of government is not surprising. By long established precedent in the Tudor period revels held to celebrate state occasions of this kind were connected thematically to the substance of the negotiations. The device is unsigned. Since Sir Thomas Benger was master of the revels in 1562, Burghley may have asked him to write it, but he was not bound to and might just as well have asked anyone else with a humanist education who had a reputation for devising. There is certainly nothing extraordinary about these revels. They consist of pageantry and disguisings familiar at court since the early part of the century. The political and diplomatic subjects that Elizabeth I and Mary were to negotiate are dealt with principally through a moral allegory complete with personified abstractions, a struggle between virtues and vices, and a poetic debate which is referred to a stylized combat. A plot line in which debate fails and the issue is referred to a combat dates from as early as 1526, or perhaps even earlier.[27] Onto this morality structure is superficially grafted a mix of classical characters. Personified abstractions of virtues such as Peace and Discretion interact comfortably with vices such as Disdain and False Report and with the classical characters Pallas, Argus, and Hercules. In the device's metaphysical structure, the world is ruled by Jupiter, whose sensibilities resemble those of the Christian God. His will is opposed by Pluto, who performs a role similar to Satan's. The classical trappings are never wholly integrated and never approach the level of myth. In the context of the plot, Argus contributes no more than his allegorical name Circumspection implies and Hercules nothing more than Valiant Courage. The classical features are little more than 'antique' colouring applied to a fundamentally gothic imagination. This strategy on the part of some devisers stretches back to Barclay in the 1520s and it is still evident in the early seventeenth century.

The elaborate 1562 device specifies much of the revels: the pageants, major properties, masks, costumes, the substance of the poetic speeches, the subject of the concluding song, the main plot, and the political themes. However, much is not specified. These revels depend heavily on visual impact, not only in costuming but also in pageants and other theatrical properties. What

exactly is to be the design of the costumes and headpieces for the three masks of ladies and the mask of lords? What is to be the design of the costumes for Valiant Courage (Hercules), Circumspection (Argus), and the other named characters? How exactly are the pageants, Extreme Oblivion, the Court of Plenty with its conduits of wine, and the movable Orchard of Golden Apples to be constructed and decorated? What about the monster Prepensed Malice, the unicorn, boar, elephant, and lions? What of the other properties – the golden rope, the band of gold, the girdle of azure, and the sword and shield? How will the battle between Hercules and Prepensed Malice and Disdain be choreographed? What musical arrangements will be needed to accompany the maskers in their dances? Who will compose the song 'full of Armony' to conclude the revels? And who will write the verses for Pallas, Peace, Disdain, and Discretion to speak before the queen? The 1562 device specifies none of this.

These details were left for the revels office to manage, and we have a fair amount of evidence to show how they were handled. In a memorandum on the revels office entitled 'Of the first Institution of the Revels' (*c* 1573) the anonymous author mentions that 'The cheife busynes of the office resteth speciallye in three poynt*es* In makinge of garment*es* In makinge of hedpec*es* and in payntinge'.[28] Setting aside the need for a poet and a composer for the moment, it is precisely in these three areas of expertise that the 1562 device is silent. That the revels office was ordinarily charged with supplying or procuring such devices is indicated in the heading of the comprehensive account for 1550–4. The chargeable costs of Cawarden's multiple offices included 'Thyoffyces of the Tentes & revelles with the Toyles lorde of Mysrule Maskes Playes and other Pastimes tryumphes Banketinghowses and other preparacions actes & devices thereto incidente appartenente and accustomed'.[29] The revels office ordinarily relied on the yeoman of the revels to devise and make costumes and contracted with master artists to devise properties and to fabricate them.

The job of costume design and fabrication was one of the oldest and most basic in the revels. From as early as 1510 when Henry VIII created a revels organization within the royal household he relied on the services of Richard Gibson, merchant tailor of London, who was among other things yeoman tailor of the Great Wardrobe.[30] All of the yeomen of the revels after Gibson's death in 1534 designed and fabricated costumes for the revels, and some of them held positions that indicate their reputations. John Bridges, yeoman from 1539 to 1550, was Henry VIII's tailor and John Holt, yeoman from 1550 to 1570, was tailor to Prince Edward.[31] The yeoman's special duty, according to Thomas Blagrave, was not only to be particularly skilled in planning the

cutting of material to the 'furdeste stretche of sarvice' and of finishing the costumes properly, but especially in 'vnderstandinge of devise and setting fourthe of the same'.[32] The yeoman had to be able to read something like the 1562 device and then to help devise the appropriate costumes to complement it.

For the 1562 revels the yeoman would have had to devise and fabricate a number of costumes. Eleven would be needed for allegorical characters, three for classical characters, and four sets of from six to eight would be required for the maskers – a total of from thirty-eight to forty-six costumes. While this is quite a few for a single revel, it is no more than had been made for revels on important occasions from as early as the 1520s.[33] The yeoman supervised a large crew of tailors and embroiderers to fabricate the garments; ordinarily some two dozen, more or less, were employed, but for a more demanding revels season such as Elizabeth I's coronation in 1559 John Holt supervised a crew of three dozen.[34] New garments were not always made. On occasion the yeoman might rely on the stock of costumes that had been made for previous revels and kept in the storehouses. These would be altered – 'translated' is the term used in the accounts for this procedure. In addition the yeoman had the option of purchasing raw or even finished material from the London mercers and milliners that were one source of supply to the revels office.

Since the yeoman worked closely with his crew of tailors, it is probable that his devices were communicated through the patterns that he made and through verbal instructions. The term 'pattern' is used concretely in the revels accounts to refer to a particular model. 'Device', of course, can refer to an idea but in the yeoman's documents it often refers to a particular design, as it does in heraldry. In a revels inventory of 1560, cloth of silver is recorded as 'Imployed whoollie in to the brestes of the Nusquams for the device of poco Apoco and in to the toppes of theire hedpeces & therof'.[35] (Nusquams are characters in a mask.) George Ferrers uses the term 'device' in this sense also in his letter when he tells Cawarden that the 'wholie bushe is the device of my Crest'.[36]

Elaborate pageants and properties would have been needed to produce the 1562 device. Two stationary pageants – Extreme Oblivion and the Court of Plenty – were required as well as a movable Garden of Golden Apples that had to be sturdy enough to carry a group of six to eight maskers, yet engineered to be pulled into the hall by two of the characters. In addition other complicated movable pageant animals were required: two lions, a unicorn, an elephant, a boar, and the monster Prepensed Malice. Some of them had to be capable of carrying riders. These and the rest of the stage properties would have been under the supervision of a property maker. Property makers were

not officers of the revels; rather they were master artists who were contracted by the revels office for each production. John Carrow, who was hired for this job in the 1550s, is called a 'karver or propertye maker' in the accounts.[37] We do not know much about him, but the backgrounds of other artists who did similar work suggest that they were what we might call master sculptors who worked in a variety of materials. Nicholas Bellin of Modena was, among other things, certainly a sculptor. He had been *valet de guarderobe* to Francis I and *sculptuer et faiser de masques* at Fontainbleu, a title suggesting that he functioned as a deviser of theatrical properties.[38] Perhaps more famous in England for his architectural work, such as his slate carvings at Nonsuch, he nevertheless devised and fabricated headpieces and other properties for the revels and ceremonies between 1546 and 1553, including the great coronation throne of Edward VI.[39] Robert Trunckwell, foreign artist and apprentice to Bellin, perhaps more famous for his decorative architectural projects such as the Preaching Place at Whitehall, probably worked on the tomb of Henry VIII, and certainly designed several banqueting houses, large pageants such as the Tower of Babylon for a play in 1547, and other properties for the revels.[40] Like the yeomen of the revels the property makers made patterns for their devices and then supervised a crew of workmen to fabricate them. In 1557, for example, Robert Trunckwell was paid 'for a patron of a devyce of a maske', and he and two others were also paid for 'woorkeinge and framinge of to dyu*ers* patrons of Maskes devysed by the M*aster*'.[41] Trunckwell was working out the artistic and construction details of creative concepts for masks given to him by the master.

Just as Jonson separated the poetry, or soul, of the masque from the mere show, or architectural display, so carpentry was not regarded as one of the main concerns of the revels office.[42] The office of the works undertook major carpentry projects such as building banqueting houses, stages, standings, and seatings. Most of the smaller carpentry projects needed for the revels were overseen by the property maker. To produce the 1562 device the master property maker would have employed the carpenters needed to cut and build frames for the stationary pageants and the main frames for the animal pageants. Basket makers would be needed to weave the wicker frames for the pageant animals and monster as they did for the tails of the great cats in the 1552–3 Mask of Cats.[43] One or more smiths might also be needed to help construct the pageants, as they were in 1574–5 to fashion 'Yron woorke for fframes and devic*es*'.[44] In the property makers' documents the term device often refers concretely to stage properties, such as in the description of the 'Castle ffor ladies and a harboure ffor Lords and thre harrolds and iiij

Trompetours to bringe in the devise' and the 'diu*ers* devisses and a Rocke, or hill ffor the ix musses to Singe vppone' in the 1563 and 1564 revels accounts.[45]

While listed as a carver in the revels accounts the author of 'Of the first Institution' lists making headpieces as the property maker's principal function. Headpieces were the elaborate headgear considered by the mid-Tudor period essential to a masking costume. The 1562 device would require four different designs for headpieces, and fabricating a total of from twenty-four to thirty-two of them for the four different masks. The revels accounts provide many details about these items. Headpieces could consist of frames made of iron, of wire, of pasteboard, of 'molded work', or of wicker. They could be non-representational creations, in an 'antique' style for example, but they could be made to represent virtually anything. Many different kinds are listed: snakes, flowers, women, men, cats, medioxes (half man–half death), and so on. John Carrow made eight of them in 1553 'of paste and Cement mowlded lyke Lyons hedd*es* the Mowthe devowringe the mannes hed helmetwis', and in 1554 he made eight molded 'helmett*es* the fraunt*es* like griffons hedd*es* w*ith* cerberus in forme of a greyhounde w*ith* iij hedd*es* stondinge on the reast' as well as sixteen 'lyons faces of molded w*or*ke of paste & cyment try*mm*ed w*ith* hear for the brestes and back*es* of the said maskers'.[46] There are many more examples in the accounts, some made by Nicholas Bellin of Modena, some by Mark, the milliner, a supplier of properties and costumes to the revels office, and others.[47]

Contemporary visual evidence is scarce but a detail from the memorial picture of Sir Henry Unton depicts a mask.[48] While this is an entertainment suitable for a country gentleman's household and not the royal court, it nevertheless provides some insight into what sixteenth-century masking headpieces and costumes might have looked like. The procession of maskers is led by Diana, who wears a headpiece with a crescent moon to signal her association with the moon and carries a bow and arrow to signal her association with the hunt. She is led into the hall by a character costumed as Mercury with wings on the back of his costume and wings on his headpiece; he carries a caduceus. Following Diana, six lady maskers march in procession, two by two, to the music of instruments played by a consort. The ladies are costumed in green and grey robes and white skirts patterned with red flowers. Their headpieces consist of flowers and they carry bows and garlands. The ten torch-bearers who accompany the maskers appear to be nearly naked children, perhaps intended to impersonate pygmies. They march in pairs and in each pair one of the children is costumed as a black Moor. All of the torch-

bearers wear sashes of greenery with red and white ribbons on their heads and they carry long staff torches to light the maskers into the hall.[49]

In 'Of the first Institution' the writer lists painting as one of the three chief businesses of the revels office. The 1562 device indicates the need for the services of a painter. The three large pageants, the pageant animals, the lettering on the banner carried by Pallas on the first day, the 'Ever' and 'Never' sword and shield used by Hercules on the third day, the headpieces, and perhaps also some of the costumes required painting. None of the revels officers were painters. This work was contracted to one of the master painters resident at court. 'Master Hans' (Hans Holbein?), for example, did some of the painting, including the ceiling, for the Greenwich banqueting house in 1527.[50] Nicholas Lizard, a Frenchman who had been employed in revels projects from as early as 1540, continued his work for the revels between 1554 and 1571 when he was the queen's sergeant painter. Lucas Hornbout, member of the Ghent Painters' guild and son of Gerard Hornbout, court painter to Margaret of Austria, was in Henry VIII's service from 1528 and was contracted to help devise and produce revels in 1543. Anthony Toto del Nunziata, who studied under Pietro Torrigiano, was employed in revels projects during his tenure as sergeant painter from 1544 to 1554.[51] All of this meant, of course, that Tudor revels were heavily influenced by continental styles, particularly Flemish, Italian, and French styles in painting. Foreign styles had become so entrenched at court that from 1544 to 1571 the sergeant painters, those painters who held their positions by patent rather than by word-of-mouth appointments, were not Englishmen but an Italian and a Frenchman.

The master painter contracted by the revels office was involved in several different aspects of production. He devised for his crew of artists to paint the pageants and properties and, on occasion, even some of the costumes. In 1551, for example, Anthony Toto was paid for 'drawinge & devisinge for painters & others'.[52] Here drawing is a specifically different activity from devising. Toto was being paid for inventing designs and colour schemes and then for drawing patterns for his painters to follow. Using devices to fabricate stage properties seems perhaps less peculiar than using them for painters. But, as in the case of sculptors, there was nothing extraordinary in the separation of the various functions of painters in creating a work of art in this period. Master painters and sculptors ordinarily took on a variety of projects, from as dreary as painting rails in the privy gardens or carving roses and buds to decorate the beams of ceilings in the palaces, to as interesting as painting portraits or

carving friezes for royal buildings. The masters devised and then explained or drew out the work for their journeymen and apprentices to follow.

As with the other artists, the term 'device' is often used concretely in the painters' documents to refer either to designs or to completed stage properties; crews of painters, for example, are paid in most of the surviving accounts for 'paynting sundry devic*es*'.[53] They are also occasionally paid for devising and painting costumes. John Leeds painted unspecified designs on a costume worn by Will Sommers in the Christmas revels of 1550–1, for example, and Anthony Toto painted a coat and cap with 'Ies tonges and eares' for the character Fame in the Easter or May Day revels of 1553.[54] It is possible that at least the costume of Argus (Circumspection) in the 1562 device would require painting, perhaps a costume painted over with eyes.

Neither Thomas Blagrave nor the writer of 'Of the first Institution' mentions composing songs, choreography, and writing verses as essential concerns of the revels office. While some revels did not require them, many did, and we have an idea of how such services would have been contracted. Between 1494 and 1522 William Cornish's revels are notable, among other things, for his use of the singing talents of the gentlemen and children of the chapel. The tradition that he established beginning in 1517 of at least one royal performance by the children was continued for most of the century.[55] The masters of the revels had regular contact with the choirmasters of the royal chapels and through them could find the composers they needed. The 1562 device specifies a concluding song on the theme of diplomatic harmony. This certainly would have required the services of a composer but the rest of the musical arrangements could have been supplied by the musicians and the performers under the master's direction. Evidence dating from as early as 1501 indicates that whatever the musicians might play for the entry of the maskers and their procession around the hall, they would certainly play music to accompany currently fashionable dances to conclude each night's revel, such as the baas dance that courtiers could be expected to perform without rehearsal.[56]

The 1562 device specifies a combat between Hercules on one side and Disdain and Prepensed Malice on the other. There are many instances where tourneys and barriers and even assaults had been incorporated into indoor revels from the very early part of the century and these continued into the next.[57] Some of these combats were as strenuous as those held outdoors in the tiltyard; others were stylized to suit the plot and theme of a particular revel. The battle specified in the 1562 device may have been modelled on a tourney but the intention must have been for a stylized version. Prepensed Malice, whose costume probably would have consisted of monster-like canvas over a

wicker frame, would not have been able to manage otherwise. It is likely that the choreography would have been worked out by the courtier-performers themselves under the master's direction. Just as the courtiers and ladies who performed in masks could be counted on for certain basic skills, such as the ability to perform fashionable dances, others could be counted on for their skills at tourney and barriers.

We also have a fairly clear notion of how the masters of the revels contracted the services of poets and dramatists. The masters kept abreast of the latest developments in poetry and drama, at least at court and around London. By the 1570s the revels officers were meeting each year to discuss possible plays to be performed before the queen; once selected and the texts altered for production, the officers rehearsed the players in the great hall of the revels office.[58] This regular association would have given the masters easy access to the talents of poets and dramatists. Even before this became a regular practice we have evidence that the masters were alert to solicit new material for their revels. William Cornish had been invited to produce revels by supervisors of the revels from as early as 1494 and beginning at least by 1516, Sir Henry Guildford contracted him to write speeches for some of his entertainments.[59] Sir Thomas Cawarden had seen some of William Baldwin's work at court in 1552 and asked him to submit some of his devices for possible production.[60]

Modern notions of proprietorship in the arts have little place in understanding the process of devising and producing revels at the Tudor court. Collaboration was the means by which these entertainments were created and produced. After the writer of 'Of the first Institution' identifies the 'connynge' of the revels office as 'skill of devise, in understandinge of historyes, in iudgement of comedies, tragedyes, and shewes, in sight of *per*spective and architecture some smacke of geometrye and other thing*es*' he explains that to achieve its goals 'the best helpe for thofficers is to make good choyce of cunynge artificers severally accordinge to their best qualitie, and for one man to allowe of an other mans invencion as it is worthie especiallye to vnderstande the Prince*s* vayne'.[61] This latter observation is important in understanding the nature of Tudor revels for they were much more than entertainments. The suppression of ego by the collaborating authors and artists, at least for the writer of 'Of the first Institution', was something akin to a spiritual exercise in the art of serving a prince: in the process of such collaboration 'every man may learne somewhat the more what service meaneth'. It is likely that this same view extended to the production of other entertainments at court, such as plays. After all, one of the master's regular jobs each year was to alter play texts for court performances.

Notes

1 BL: Lansdowne MS 83, art 58, f 157, printed in Albert Feuillerat, *Documents Relating to the Office of the Revels in the Time of Queen Elizabeth,* Materialien zur kunde des älteren englischen Dramas, vol 21 (Louvain, 1908), 17; hereafter cited as Feuillerat, *Elizabeth.*

2 PRO: SP 1/19, 237–8, abstracted in *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic of Henry VIII,* vol 3, pt 1 (London, 1867), no 704, pp 239–40; hereafter cited as *LP.* William Jerdan (ed), *Rutland Papers. Original Documents Illustrative of the Courts and Times of Henry VII and Henry VIII,* Camden Society, vol 21 (London, 1842), 56. For the revels held on 3 September 1519 at Newhall, for example, Henry designed his own costume: PRO: E 36/217, ff 100–8, 123–9, abstracted in *LP,* vol 2, pt 2, 1550–1.

3 Folger Library: MS Lb 277 is the warrant of 25 December 1551 and Lb 291 is the warrant of 21 December 1552. The first is printed in Albert Feuillerat, *Documents Relating to the Revels at Court in the Time of King Edward VI and Queen Mary,* Materialien zur kunde des älteren englischen Dramas, vol 44 (Louvain, 1914), 56; hereafter cited as Feuillerat, *Edward VI and Mary.*

4 The account for the 14 November 1510 revel is PRO: E 36/217, ff 15, 25, abstracted in *LP,* vol 2, pt 2, 1492; the account for the Twelfth Night 1516 revel, when Sir Henry Guildford was master, is PRO: E 36/229, ff 73–82, abstracted in *LP,* vol 2, pt 2, 1505–6, and partly transcribed in H.N. Hillebrand, *The Child Actors: A Chapter in Elizabethan Stage History,* University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, vol 11 (Urbana, IL, 1926), 324–5.

5 The account for the Twelfth Night 1514 revel is PRO: E 36/217, ff 81–35, abstracted in *LP,* vol 2, pt 2, 1494; the account for the 15 June 1522 revel is PRO: SP 1/24, ff 230v–3v, abstracted in *LP,* vol 3, pt 2, 976–7.

6 On the difficulties with the term 'mask' see Sydney Anglo, 'The Evolution of the Early Tudor Disguising, Pageant, and Mask', *Renaissance Drama* ns 1 (1968), 4–8. On the term 'play' see John C. Coldewey, 'Plays and "Play" in Early English Drama', *RORD* 28 (1985), 181–8. On 'interlude' see Nicholas Davis, 'The Meaning of the word "Interlude": A Discussion' and 'Allusions to Medieval Drama in Britain (4): Interludes', in *Medieval English Theatre* 6.1 (1984), 5–15, 61–91.

7 Folger Library: MS Lb 292, printed in Feuillerat, *Edward VI and Mary,* 89–90.

8 Folger Library: MS Lb 298, printed in Feuillerat, *Edward VI and Mary,* 215. On the date see W.R. Streitberger, *Court Revels, 1485–1559* (Toronto, 1994), 215; hereafter cited as *Court Revels.*

9 The queen's warrant of 8 December 1554 is in Loseley Manor Documents, vol 6, no 7; Folger Library: MSS Lb 26 (copy); Lb 27 (draft); and Lb 41, f 78 (copy entered into the revels account). The latter is printed in Feuillerat, *Edward* VI *and Mary*, 159–60.

10 Geoffrey Webb, 'The Office of Devisor', *Fritz Saxl, 1890–1948: A Volume of Memorial Essays from His Friends in England*, D.J. Gordon (ed) (London, 1957), 297–8; hereafter cited as Webb, 'Office of Devisor'.

11 Webb, 'Office of Devisor', 297; Leon de Laborde, *Les Comptes des baitments du Roi, 1528–1571*, vol 1 (Paris, 1877).

12 H.M. Colvin, D.R. Ransome, and John Summerson (eds), *The History of the King's Works*, vol 3 (London, 1975), 44; hereafter cited as *King's Works*.

13 Richard Turpyn, *The Chronicle of Calais in the Reigns of Henry* VII *and Henry* VIII, John Gough Nichols (ed), Camden Society, vol 35 (London, 1846), 83. There are plenty of precedents and parallels to the employment of a poet as deviser of painting and decorations: see Webb, 'Office of Devisor', 303–4.

14 Webb, 'Office of Devisor', 301.

15 Webb, 'Office of Devisor', 298.

16 BL: Lansdowne MS 83, art 58, f 155, printed in Feuillerat, *Elizabeth*, Table 1, following 16.

17 The sketches are reproduced in Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong, *Inigo Jones: The Theater of the Stuart Court*, 2 vols (Berkeley, CA, 1973); hereafter cited as *Inigo Jones*.

18 Webb, 'Office of Devisor', 307.

19 On 9 March 1511 Gibson was given instructions for a pageant called Le Fortress Dangerous; on 6 Jan 1513 for one called The Rich Mount; and on 6 January 1515 for one called The Pavilion in the Place Perilous: *LP*, vol 2, pt 2, 1497, 1499, 1501.

20 Folger Library: MS Lb 2, f 1; *Court Revels*, 157.

21 *Hall's Chronicle*, Sir Henry Ellis (ed) (London, 1809), 689.

22 Folger Library: MS Lb 281, printed in Feuillerat, *Edward* VI *and Mary*, 58.

23 Folger Library: MS Lb 285, printed in Feuillerat, *Edward* VI *and Mary*, 59.

24 Folger Library: MS Lb 294, printed in Feuillerat, *Edward* VI *and Mary*, 93.

25 Folger Library: MS Lb 510, printed in Feuillerat, *Edward* VI *and Mary*, 93–4.

26 BL: Lansdowne MS 5, art 38, ff 129–30v, printed in E.K. Chambers and W.W. Greg (eds), 'Dramatic Records from the Lansdowne Manuscripts', *Malone Society Collections* 1.2 (Oxford, 1908; repr 1964), 144–8.

27 The 'dialogue' *Love and Riches* performed in the banqueting house at Greenwich in May 1527 had this structure, but Cornish's 'comedy' of *Troilus and*

Pandor, performed on Twelfth Night 1516, may have had as well. *Court Revels*, 96, 127–9.

28 BL: Lansdowne MS 83, art 59, f 160, printed in Feuillerat, *Elizabeth*, 11.

29 Folger Library: MS Lb 42, f 1, printed in Feuillerat, *Edward VI and Mary*, 271–2.

30 *Court Revels*, 71–4.

31 *Court Revels*, 431–2. John Bridges' patent as king's tailor is PRO: C 66/791, mb 27, calendared in *LP*, vol 21, pt 2, no 648 (p 59); on Holt's appointment as tailor to the prince, see Feuillerat, *Elizabeth*, 426–7.

32 BL: Lansdowne MS 83, art 58, f 155, printed in Feuillerat, *Elizabeth*, Table 1, following 16.

33 For the play *Cardinalis Pacificus* in 1527 Richard Gibson made thirty-eight costumes: Gibson's account is BL: Egerton MS 2605, ff 37v–42, and PRO: SP 1/45, ff 36v–40, abstracted in *LP*, vol 4, pt 2, no. 3564, (pp 1605–6). See also *Court Revels*, 131–4.

34 Folger Library: MS Lb 42, ff 29–9v; PRO: A01/1213, no 9, f 3; both printed in Feuillerat, *Elizabeth*, 84–5, 351.

35 Unidentified Loseley MS printed in Feuillerat, *Edward VI and Mary*, 35.

36 Folger Library: MS Lb 292, printed in Feuillerat, *Edward VI and Mary*, 89.

37 He is sometimes called a joiner but most often a carver or property maker, as he is in Folger Library: MS Lb 42, f 79v, printed in Feuillerat, *Edward VI and Mary*, 164.

38 Martin Biddle, 'Nonsuch Palace 1959–60: An Interim Report', *Surrey Archaeological Collections* 58 (1961), 1–20.

39 See *King's Works*, vol 4, 194–5, on Bellin's work at Nonsuch. On Edward VI's throne, which was used also in the coronation revels, see *Court Revels*, 181.

40 On Trunckwell (Trunckey, Trunswell) see *King's Works*, vol 3, 44–5, and on the Preaching Place at Whitehall, *King's Works*, vol 4, 313–14.

41 Folger Library: MS Lb 41, ff 12v, 13, printed in Feuillerat, *Edward VI and Mary*, 220, 222.

42 C.H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson, *Ben Jonson*, vol 1 (Oxford, 1925), 59–63; hereafter cited as *Ben Jonson*. Jonson's comment was: 'So short-liv'd are the *bodies* of all things, in comparison of their *soules*' ('Hymenæi' *Ben Jonson*, vol 7, 209). The king's works employed large numbers of carpenters who were under the supervision of works officers even when they were supporting revels projects. Artists like Trunckwell (Trunckey, Trunswell) hired their own carpenters when they needed them for revels projects. See W.R. Streitberger, 'Records of Royal Banqueting Houses and Henry VIII's Timber Lodging, 1543–59', *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 15 (1994), 187–202.

43 Folger Library: MS Lb 41, f 65, printed in Feuillerat, *Edward VI and Mary*, 132.

44 PRO: A01/1213, no 4, f 9v, printed in Feuillerat, *Elizabeth*, 239.
45 PRO: SP 12/36/22, printed in Feuillerat, *Elizabeth*, 116, 117.
46 Folger Library: MS Lb 41, ff 65, 80, printed in Feuillerat, *Edward VI and Mary*, 133, 164.
47 Folger Library: MS Lb 6, f 2, printed in Feuillerat, *Edward VI and Mary*, 31. Sketches for headpieces made nearly a century later are reproduced in Orgel and Strong, *Inigo Jones*, passim.
48 The painting by an unknown artist, *c* 1596, in the National Portrait Gallery, London, is reproduced in Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (Berkeley, CA, 1977), Plate 53, 87; see Strong's commentary on the details of the mask, 104–6.
49 From as early as 1510 to Jonson's 'Masque of Blackness' in 1605 Moors were popular characters in court revels. Material for costumes for a mask of Moors in which Edward VI appeared is included in the 1548 revels accounts. The tailors and property makers made black velvet and black leather gloves, black leather netherstockings, black goatskin hose, caps of coarse budge (ie, lambskin with the wool dressed outwards), and Nicholas Bellin of Modena made face masks. These Moors carried spears and had bells hanging from the skirts of their garments. Feuillerat, *Edward VI and Mary*, xii, 30–3; *Court Revels*, 69, 185.
50 Gibson makes payments to Master Hans in PRO: SP 2/Fol. C, f 112, abstracted in *LP*, vol 4, pt 2, no 3097, p 1390. See also Sydney Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry and Early Tudor Policy* (Oxford, 1969), 218–19.
51 On the careers of these artists see Erna Auerbach, *Tudor Artists* (London, 1954), 144–94.
52 Folger Library: MS Lb 41, f 24v, printed in Feuillerat, *Edward VI and Mary*, 55.
53 PRO: A01/1213, no 4, f 3v, printed in Feuillerat, *Elizabeth*, 228.
54 The payments for this work are located in Folger Library: MS Lb 41, ff 22v, 70v, printed in Feuillerat, *Edward VI and Mary*, 49, 142.
55 *Court Revels*, 50–3.
56 London, Guildhall Library: MS 3313, f 289, printed in A.H. Thomas and I.D. Thornley (eds), *The Great Chronicle of London* (London, 1938), 313.
57 Barriers had been used in indoor revels from as early as 1516 and were still important when Jonson wrote the speeches for Prince Henry's barriers in 1610. Tourneys as part of indoor revels date from at least as early as 1515. *Court Revels*, 87, 96, 100, 103, 128, 261, 262, 292. *Ben Jonson*, vol 7, 321–36, and vol 10, 508–14.
58 See the references to the officers' meetings and their charges for altering, correcting, fitting, and reforming plays for court performances in Feuillerat, *Elizabeth*, 145, l.13; 191, ll.17–18; 238, ll.7, 12, 21, 26; 242, l.17; 267, l.15;

320, l.3; 325, l.13; 326, ll.3, 10; 336, l.4; 337, ll.16, 32; Table II, l.52; 349, l.4; 352, l.19; Table III, l.57; 365, l.4; 368, l.2; 378, l.3; 379, l.26; 388, l.5; 389, ll.26, 34; 395, l.5.

59 PRO: E 36/229, ff 73–82, abstracted in *LP*, vol 2, pt 2, 1505–6.

60 Folger Library: MS Lb 298, printed in Feuillerat, *Edward VI and Mary*, 215–16.

61 BL: Lansdowne MS 83, art 58, f 160, printed in Feuillerat, *Elizabeth*, 11–12.