

## *Performing Exile: John Foxe's Christus Triumphans at Magdalen College, Oxford*

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Shortly after returning from exile in Germany, John Foxe prepared to write a letter to the newly elected President of Magdalen College, Oxford, his friend and co-religionist Laurence Humphrey. A surviving draft of the letter, written in the early 1560s, outlines a message with a jocular tone, in which Foxe congratulates his sometime overseas companion while playfully chiding him for rejoining the academic establishment that had rejected Protestantism in the previous decade.<sup>1</sup> But the letter, as best we can tell, was never sent: the extant draft has been cancelled, and plans for a new letter are recorded on the opposite side of the same sheet. Apparently Foxe had received a now lost missive from Humphrey before he could send his own, as he himself records: 'And behold, just now while I write this to you, your letter conveniently arrives, bearing not only the hand of my old Laurence, but also his heart and its candor.'<sup>2</sup> We cannot know the full contents

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<sup>1</sup> See British Library MS Harleian 416, fol. 140r: 'Quid ego audio? Itane Laurentius noster praeses efficitur Magdaleneensis? [...] At ego fortunam istam semper rebar ante hac fuisse caecam aut certe lusciosam [...]. sed quid nimis ego nugator tibi gratulari incipio qui multo magis hem expostulare debeam? Age enim dic tandem o bone, Itane nos nostrumque gregem et ordinem deseruisse te, ac abijisse? fugitiue, transfuga, non pudere? Atqui ex me exemplum petere debebas maioris constantiae, quippe qui in ijsdem adhuc pannis et sordibus, quibus me recepit Anglia redem[p]tum ex Germania [...]'. [What do I hear? That our Laurence has been named the President of Magdalen? [...] Before this, I thought that fortune was blind, or at least purblind [...]. But look how silly I am: why do I congratulate you so much when indeed I should be admonishing you? Come and say, friend: how have you gone forth and left us behind, as well as our flock and company? Are you not ashamed to be a fugitive, a deserter? Surely you should have taken from me an example of greater constancy; as you see, even until now I am in the same rags and squalor in which England received me back from Germany [...].] Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. On Foxe's exile, including his persistent financial difficulties and his relationship with Humphrey, J. F. Mozley's account remains standard: see *John Foxe and His Book* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1940), 37–61. For an overview of Magdalen's religious leanings as well as Humphrey's sometimes controversial presidency, see Emily Cockayne, Lucy Wooding, L. W. B. Brockliss, and Christine Ferdinand, 'Magdalen in the Age of Reformation, 1558–1688' in L. W. B. Brockliss (ed.), *Magdalen College Oxford: A History* (Oxford: Magdalen College, 2008), 135–252, esp. 159–64.

<sup>2</sup> British Library MS Harleian 416, fol. 140r: 'Atque ecce haec ad te scribenti commodum supervenerit tuae literae, veteris laurentij mei non manum modo, sed et pectus, et pectoris candorem referentes.' Foxe uses almost exactly the same language in the subsequent letter, further suggesting that this one was never sent and the latter was sent in its place.

of Humphrey's letter, but Foxe's response goes on to suggest that one matter seemed pressing above all others: a request by Humphrey to stage a performance at Magdalen of Foxe's neo-Latin drama, *Christus Triumphans*. The exact date of Foxe's reply is uncertain, but the fact that he had not yet had the opportunity to write to his friend suggests that the correspondence must have occurred quite early in Humphrey's presidential tenure.<sup>3</sup> Staging Foxe's play, it seems, was among Humphrey's highest priorities.

Humphrey's enthusiasm, however, has not been shared by modern critics, as *Christus Triumphans* has seldom received recognition as a dramatic achievement. Charles H. Herford judged it a 'strange and lurid drama' that was 'confused in structure, unimaginative in conception, and alternately undignified and pedantic in style'; J. F. Mozley asserted that 'the play has no poetic merit.'<sup>4</sup> More recently, Ellen MacKay has claimed that 'few readers have been able to bear with the twenty-nine scenes of Latin verse that dramatize this tangled history.'<sup>5</sup> But these outright dismissals of the play's aesthetic and theatrical merit threaten to obscure the historical and intellectual appeal it held for its earliest audiences. Foxe's play was certainly performed at Trinity College, Cambridge in 1562/3, as an item in the Junior Bursar's Accounts records payment 'to master Browne and doctor wilkinson for the charges of Christus Triumphans'.<sup>6</sup> Foxe's reply to Humphrey's letter has long been taken to suggest an earlier performance at Magdalen, but the circumstantial nature of this evidence has impeded discussions of the play's presentation there.<sup>7</sup> In this article, however, I want to reconsider the possibility of a Magdalen performance, moving beyond the traditional question of whether the performance occurred to consider instead what the implications of such a performance might be. By placing the play in its institutional context, I

<sup>3</sup> The first letter is dated 1561 in a later hand, presumably based on the fact that this was the year in which Humphrey assumed the presidency. There is little reason to doubt this estimate, and given the evidence above, it seems reasonable to assume that Foxe's second letter was written only shortly after the first. Both, then, were likely composed no later than 1562.

<sup>4</sup> Charles H. Herford, *Studies in the Literary Relations of England and Germany in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1886), 139, 143; Mozley, *John Foxe*, 53.

<sup>5</sup> Ellen MacKay, *Persecution, Plague, and Fire: Fugitive Histories of the Stage in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 141.

<sup>6</sup> Alan H. Nelson (ed.), *Records of Early English Drama: Cambridge* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), I: 221.

<sup>7</sup> Although expenditures on drama are recorded in Magdalen's domestic accounts, *Libri Computi* – some of the most complete records that we have for any college, which date back to the 1480s – for the years in question, these records do not specify which plays were actually performed. The accounts for the academic year 1561/2, for example, record expenses related to the production of dramatic performances ('ad spectacula ædenda'), including construction, candles, and the repair of broken windows; while *Christus Triumphans* may well have been featured here, there is nothing to identify it conclusively. Accounts for the previous academic year, in which Humphrey arrived, record expenses for the painting of the names of heresies in a show apparently produced by the choirmaster ('depingenti nomina heresium in spectaculo, quod choristarum moderator ædidit'), though this is usually considered to be in reference to a play by John Bale, as will be discussed in my conclusion. Magdalen College Archives, LCE/6 (1559–80), fols. 17r, 35v. For full transcriptions of these accounts, see John R. Elliott, Jr., Alan H. Nelson, Alexandra F. Johnston, and Diana Wyatt (eds.), *Records of Early English Drama: Oxford* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), I: 103–05.

will show the powerful and transformative role of neo-Latin religious drama within the university setting at this crucial historical moment.

Printed in Basel in 1556 during Foxe's exile there, *Christus Triumphans* has most frequently garnered mention as an early exhibition of Foxe's apocalyptic worldview. According to Richard Bauckham, the play, subtitled 'comœdia apocalyptică', represents 'a preliminary sketch for [Foxe's] lifelong task of integrating the study of history and prophecy'.<sup>8</sup> The play's structure supports this assessment, depicting historical events as the realization of those prophesied in the Book of Revelation. The action centres around Ecclesia, an allegorical representation of the true Church, who endures the perpetual persecutions of Pseudamnus, the Antichrist, and Pornapolis, the whore of Babylon. Satan, who enters near the beginning of the play having just been cast out of heaven, sets the evil in motion, and a host of Roman oppressors dramatize the ongoing struggle against the false Church. The play culminates with an epithalamion celebrating the imminent marriage between Ecclesia and Christ, whose return will allow relief from earthly oppression. The image of Ecclesia dressed in her bridal garments, anticipating Christ's arrival, would have held clear significance for Foxe's fellow English Protestants as they, too, awaited their relief from persecution.

But Foxe limits the specific association between the English exiles and the characters in his play. It is not until Act V that Ecclesia becomes identified with the English Church through several allusions to contemporary events; most notably, the imprisonment of the characters Hierologus and Theosebes in Oxford unmistakably references Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley, who were detained there beginning in March 1554.<sup>9</sup> As Andreas Höfele notes, however, particular associations like this one are fleeting: '*Christus Triumphans* achieves the highest degree of historical and geographical specificity – but only for a few moments [. . .]. Immediately after this, the scene opens up again to encompass, in abstract generality, all of the apocalyptic theatre of war between the Antichrist and his victimized opponent, the suffering Ecclesia.'<sup>10</sup> Along similar lines, Andrew Escobedo, pointing to the presence of the characters Africus and Europus alongside Ecclesia at the play's end, sees *Christus Triumphans* as suggesting that 'the Apocalypse will have a universal rather than national effect.'<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Richard Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse: Sixteenth century Apocalypticism, Millenarianism and the English Reformation: from John Bale to John Foxe and Thomas Brightman* (Abingdon: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1978), 76; for the entirety of his discussion of *Christus Triumphans*, see 75–83. Bauckham's work remains the classic account of the development of Tudor apocalyptic thought, but on that subject see also Katharine R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530–1645* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 32–110, whose observation about Mary's reign contextualizes the publication of Foxe's play: '[F]or the development of the apocalyptic tradition in Britain no six years were more important than those from 1553 to 1559' (69).

<sup>9</sup> John Hazel Smith, *Two Latin Comedies by John Foxe the Martyrologist* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), 31–2. Smith suggests that Foxe's reference to only two bishops indicates that he did not yet know of Thomas Cranmer's execution, which occurred around the time of the publication of *Christus Triumphans*.

<sup>10</sup> Andreas Höfele, 'John Foxe, *Christus Triumphans*' in Thomas Betteridge and Greg Walker (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 123–43 (at 134).

<sup>11</sup> Andrew Escobedo, *Nationalism and Historic Loss in Renaissance England: Foxe, Dee, Spenser, Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 91–3 (at 92).

Foxe was reluctant, in other words, to prioritize the English experience, instead seeking to depict the large-scale unfolding of Church history. His goal was to compress the entirety of Christian time into a five-act 'apocalyptic comedy', culminating with a prophetic look towards its future conclusion.

Humphrey's priorities, however, were somewhat different. Although the Apocalypse had yet to be fulfilled by the time he was preparing to stage the play at Magdalen, a conclusion of a different, more localized sort had already arrived: the exile of the Marian Protestants had effectively come to an end with Elizabeth's accession. Humphrey was not thinking of a continental audience, or an audience composed of exiles: he was thinking instead of an English university community, with an audience comprising scholars and students. If Foxe wanted to depict all of Church history, Humphrey wanted to make it into a play about a particular exilic experience. Through a re-examination of the role of Paul in *Christus Triumphans*, I will argue that Humphrey deepened this play's engagement with the specific conditions of exile, and that his special interest in that character reveals much about the play's value for a generation of returned Marian Protestants, especially those who began or resumed academic careers under the new monarch. If Foxe's play looked to the future, with Ecclesia awaiting the return of Christ and an end to worldly persecution, Humphrey wanted to reshape it to look to the past, conveying and teaching the experience of the Marian exiles to a new generation of spectators.

#### APOSTLES, SCRIBES, AND THE PROTESTANT CAUSE

In his reply to Humphrey's letter, Foxe seems flattered by the suggestion of staging *Christus Triumphans*:

I greatly marvel at their reasoning in defending this, when in truth there are so many comedies in hand – Latin, Greek, sacred, and profane – on which they perhaps would be able to more usefully exert their effort. [...] Even so, I will always be among those who cheerfully applaud the brilliant endeavours of the students and fellows of Magdalen.<sup>12</sup>

Foxe's evident awareness of the available dramatic canon implies familiarity with a diverse range of texts – many of which, without question, he drew upon in crafting his own. It also serves to emphasize the particularity of Humphrey's selection: even the author of *Christus Triumphans* seems surprised at the choice of a relatively obscure play by a widely unknown dramatist. But while this portion of the letter has been of interest in suggesting that a performance may have taken place,

<sup>12</sup> British Library MS Harleian 416, fol. 140v: 'verum quum tot sint in manibus comædiæ latinæ, græcæ, sacre et prophanæ, in quibus tanto miror eorum in huius defensibus rationem poterant illi in alijs vtiliorem fortasse operam nauare. [...] non deero tamen inter eos qui præclaris Magdalensium conatibus semper applaudunt lubenter.'

what follows is a largely overlooked, though highly illuminating, statement about what such a performance might have included. Foxe writes:

Regarding the insertion of the conversion of Paul, I am not yet certain what I should promise or how I should respond. [...] At present, I am so occupied by business that there is no time left to spare, although I may desire it. But I hope that I can write to you more fully regarding this business within a few days, our triumphant Christ permitting.<sup>13</sup>

It is remarkable that Humphrey should here be asking Foxe for theatrical approval, requesting not only to stage the play but also to insert an additional scene. More significantly, we find in these lines Humphrey's apparent unwillingness to accept a merely reported conversion of Paul, insisting instead upon a visual representation. That Humphrey would single out this specific moment in the play suggests Paul's conversion as a crucial element in its performance, and suggests conversion more generally as a topic worthy of additional consideration.

The character Paul spends the majority of his time onstage as the pre-conversion Saul, first entering in Act II Scene ii to seek authorization from the high priest, Archiereus, to bring force against the followers of Christ. Foxe's characterization of Saul's fierce approach towards Christianity is unwavering (II. ii. 38–48):

<i>Saul</i>	The best of health to you, most exalted priest.
<i>Archiereus</i>	I'm waiting for your report of things.
<i>Saul</i>	We all really deserve to be called cowards for not suppressing these doltish, wool-headed fishermen who keep hammering that man into the ears of the people and upsetting Moses and the whole divine law. This surely wouldn't happen except for our neglect in that no one is hindering their audacity. But if you appoint me to this business as your proper instrument – well, authorize me with credentials from you to try a little something against them, whatever I wish and whatever I can.
<i>Archiereus</i>	Pray what will you do?
<i>Saul</i>	I? What should be done to criminals. And when it's done, you'll all say it was done well. <sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> British Library MS Harleian 416, fol. 140v: 'De pauli conversione injicienda, non dum certum habeo quid pollicear, quidue respondeam. [...] Sic autem distineor impræsentia negotijs, ut supra vacet etsi velim. Spero tamen ante paucos dies me fusius de hoc negotio ad te scripturum, permittente Christo triumphatore nostro.'

<sup>14</sup> 'Saulus Summam consummato salutem pontifici.  
*Archiereus* Expecto quid/ Rerum nuncias.  
*Saulus* Nae nos ignaviae omnes merito/ Incusandi sumus, hos qui pingues pexosque haud reprimimus/  
 Piscatorculos, hominem qui hunc nunquam populi cessitant/ Ingerere auribus ac Mosen fasque  
 omne inuertere. Quod adeo/ Haud fit nostra nisi ex incuria, dum nemo horum obuiam it/  
 Audaciae. Quod si me ad hanc prouinciam idoneum satis/ Statuitis organum, age, literis  
 inautorate me/ Vestris in hos ut liceat quid uelim quidque ualeam, paululum/ Experirier.  
*Archiereus* Quid ages cedo?  
*Saulus* Egone? Quod dignum sit in/ Maleficos, quodque omnes, quum sit factum, dicetis probe.'

All quotations from the play are taken from Smith's edition and translation in *Two Latin Comedies*.

This scene, based on the ninth chapter of Acts, is one of two featuring Saul, neither of which have received much attention in discussions of the play. V. Norskov Olsen's relatively extensive commentary, for example, all but passes over them completely.<sup>15</sup> This one in particular sets the stage for Saul's conversion, emphasizing the extent of his hatefulness in order to make his divinely inspired transformation all the more striking. But why was this portion of the play of such interest to Humphrey? What specific relationship might have existed between these events and the cause of the Marian Protestants, both at the moment of the play's composition and the moment Humphrey wished to stage it?

Around the time Foxe was composing *Christus Triumphans* – most likely during the year of its publication – the exiles drafted a petition urging an end to their persecution. The petition was in two parts: the first addressed Mary directly, imploring her to undertake the 'protection of her people'; the second addressed the English nobility, asking them to approach the queen and intercede on behalf of their estranged countrymen.<sup>16</sup> In the first part of the petition, the exiles at the outset reminded Mary of 'the danger of being carried away by a blind and furious zeal to persecute the members of Christ's church, as St Paul had done before his conversion'.<sup>17</sup> They drew an analogy, in other words, between Mary's active stance against Protestants and Saul's pre-conversion stance against Christians. Notably, Foxe uses the same terminology in *Christus Triumphans*, just several lines after the passage quoted above: after Saul tells Archiereus that '[a]n uncontrollable desire pulls me to Damascus' ('Damas cum me zelus uocat impotens'; II. ii. 51), Archiereus asks why he has been seized by 'this great zeal' ('Dic, zelus unde hic tantus te incessit, cedo?'; II. ii. 52). Saul's answer is vague: 'I don't know', he says, 'except that for a long time my mind has burned with a desire to do something notable against these people, and I hope it will do some good' ('Nescio,/Nisi quia iam dudum in hos insigne aliquid edere flagrat/Animus, et spero profore'; II. ii. 52–4).<sup>18</sup> The uncontrollable 'zelus' that Archiereus perceives in Saul seems to proceed in the same 'blind and furious' manner that the petitioners perceived in Mary.

<sup>15</sup> V. Norskov Olsen, *John Foxe and the Elizabethan Church* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 60.

<sup>16</sup> The document is described by Ferdinando Warner in *The Ecclesiastical History of England, to the Eighteenth Century*, 2 vols. (London: n.p. 1756–7), II: 370–71. The second portion was published by Foxe in March 1557 as *Ad inclytos ac praepotentes Angliae Proceres [...] supplicatio* (Basel, [1557]), of which several copies survive. As far as I can determine, the first portion was either never published, or no copy remains; either way, it has been lost, and what we know of its content survives in Warner's account, from whom I quote here and in subsequent citations. Although several nineteenth-century scholars mention the petition and quote Warner directly, none mentions this discrepancy, nor does any more recent scholarship note that *Ad inclytos ac praepotentes Angliae Proceres [...] supplicatio* appears to have been part of an originally longer treatise.

<sup>17</sup> Warner, *Ecclesiastical History*, II: 370.

<sup>18</sup> These passages also recall Galatians 1.13–14, where Paul describes the fury with which he pursued the Christians. In the 1560 Geneva Bible, on which many Protestant reformers are thought to have worked, these verses read: 'For ye haue heard of my conuersation in time paste, in the Iewish religion, how that I persecuted the Church of God extremely, and wasted it,/ And profited in the Iewish religion aboute manie of my companions of mine owne nacion, and was muche more zealous of y<sup>e</sup> traditions of my fathers.'

A similar sentiment is expressed in the second part of the petition, better known as *Ad inclytos ac praepotentes Angliae Proceres* [...] *supplicatio*, of which Foxe himself is the named author. Here, too, Paul is a crucial figure, frequently mentioned in a variety of contexts, with references to, among others, his Epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians. Most notably, Foxe, writing on behalf of his exiled brethren, beseeches the nobility as follows: ‘And where is that Pauline reasonableness? Where is your mercy? Where is that old and long-praised English kindness, even towards their enemies, if you are determined to be so fierce and so destructive towards your friends and countrymen?’<sup>19</sup> The appeal had little effect, but it does allow us to see the particular significance of Paul to the Protestant exiles. As they hoped that Mary might reconsider her treatment of her countrymen, Paul was the figure of most immediate reference: amidst the conditions of exile, there was still some hope that Mary might be persuaded to cease her persecution – that she might indeed be converted to a figure of benevolence and reason – just as Paul had on the road to Damascus.

Paul’s is not the only conversion mentioned in the play. Near the beginning of Act IV, Anabasius relates to Diocetes that power has recently fallen to Constantine, who has ‘become a friend to Christ now and our harshest enemy’ (‘Is Christo nunc amicus, nobis inimicus’st accerrimus/Factus’; IV. ii. 11–12). After Diocetes inquires further, Anabasius relates the story of his conversion (IV. ii. 14–18):

Well, as he was marching to battle under very unfavourable circumstances, he went to sleep and before his eyes a cross shone from heaven predicting victory over his enemies. He took it as his sign then and there and went into battle. The affair turned out like this: he returned a victor under the standards of Christ and with his assistance.<sup>20</sup>

As Smith notes, this account is derived from Book I of Eusebius’ *Life of Constantine*, wherein Constantine is said to have seen a ‘cross-shaped trophy formed from light’ in the heavens, bearing the inscription ‘By this conquer’ (‘τοῦτόν νικά’).<sup>21</sup> Foxe relied heavily on Eusebius in crafting his *Acts and Monuments*, looking to Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastica historia* as what John N. King has called ‘the preeminent model for ecclesiastical history’.<sup>22</sup> The importance of Constantine

<sup>19</sup> *Ad inclytos ac praepotentes Angliae Proceres* [...] *supplicatio*, 15: ‘Et ubi interim ἐπιείκεια illa Paulina? ubi clementia uestra? ubi inueterata illa, semperque laudata erga hostes etiam Anglorum pietas, si in amicos & ciues tam efferi, tamque exitiales esse uelitis?’

<sup>20</sup> ‘Enimvero incommode sane in arma dum/ Proficiscens indormit, e coelo crux in oculis fulgurat/ In hostes praefereus uictoriam. Omen arripit ilico ac/ Pugnam occipit. Denique eo res rediit: rediit uictor is/ Christi auspiciis et opera.’

<sup>21</sup> Smith, *Two Latin Comedies*, 303n. According to the story, Christ appears to him in his sleep that night with the same sign that he had seen in the heavens, commanding him to bring a likeness of the cross into battle as a safeguard against his enemies. See Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, ed. and trans. Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 81–2.

<sup>22</sup> John N. King, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 16.

to his project is apparent from the beginning of the dedication to Queen Elizabeth in the first edition:

Constantine the greate and mightie Emperour, the sonne of Helene an Englyshe woman of this youre Realme and countrie (moste Christian and renowned Prynresse Queene Elizabeth) after he had pacified and established the church of Christ, being long before vnder persecution [...] <sup>23</sup>

The parallel Foxe draws establishes Elizabeth as a new Constantine, likening her to the Roman emperor under whom the persecution of Christians came to an end.<sup>24</sup> But while Foxe in 1563 could assuredly draw this link, no such comparison was to be made in 1556, and the reference to Constantine's conversion in *Christus Triumphans* suggests a different outlook. There, we find Foxe looking to Eusebius not so much for an historical parallel as for a desired conclusion – that Mary might follow in Constantine's footsteps, seeing the light and fully embracing Christianity. Although there has been some doubt among scholars as to the legitimacy and timing of Constantine's conversion, we find Rufinus comparing Constantine's vision of the cross to Paul's experience on the road to Damascus less than a century after the former is traditionally stated to have taken place, calling attention to the similarity between the two events and strongly suggesting the reason for its retelling in *Christus Triumphans*.<sup>25</sup> Unlike Paul, Constantine is not a character in the play, but the reference to his Christian sympathies brings into fuller relief the importance of conversion to the Marian Protestants.

The second appearance of the character Saul comes in Act II Scene v, as he returns to collect the commission ordered by Archiereus from the scribe Polyharpax, who has no intention of allowing the exchange to go smoothly. His intention, it soon becomes clear, is extortion, telling the unsuspecting Saul that his 'weary fingers should have been greased with a little money' ('Nummulis erant/Perungendi aliquot lassati articuli'; II. v. 22–3). Polyharpax's name, which Smith translates as 'robber of much or many', suggests his character; he and Saul haggle over the price of the documents before eventually coming to blows. 'As I live, you'd have been better off not to abuse the scribe of the chief priest' ('Praestiterat hoc,/Si uiuo, non factum conuicium pontificis scribae'; II. v. 58–9), Polyharpax declares. 'More scrub than scribe' ('Imo scrobae/Magis';

<sup>23</sup> John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments* (London, 1563), fol. Bjr.

<sup>24</sup> For an extended discussion of how the comparison between Elizabeth and Constantine allowed Foxe to 'liken himself to Eusebius', see Gretchen E. Minton, "'The same cause and like quarell': Eusebius, John Foxe, and the Evolution of Ecclesiastical History", *Church History* 71 (2002), 715–42 (at 716).

<sup>25</sup> The comparison occurs in Rufinus' Latin translation of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastica historia*, after a description of Constantine's vision: '[...] ita caelitus invitatus ad fidem, non mihi illo videtur inferior, cui similiter de caelo dictum est: Saule, Saule, quid me persequeris? ego sum Iesus Nazarenus' [such a heavenly invitation to faith seems to me not inferior to him who was similarly spoken to from heaven – 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? I am Jesus of Nazareth']; in Rufinus, *Church History* VIII. See Eduard Schwartz and Theodor Mommsen (eds.), *Eusebius Werke: Die Kirchengeschichte*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1999), II: 829.

II. v. 59–60), Saul retorts. This scene might easily be dismissed as comic relief: such may have been the reaction of Jean Bienvenu, who omitted it from his French translation of the play in 1562, most likely failing to see its relationship to the overall plot.<sup>26</sup> But scribes held a particular significance for the Marian exiles. In their petition to Mary, they wrote that ‘the persecution which she had set on foot, was like that which the scribes and Pharisees raised against the apostles, who, it was pretended, had been once of their religion, and so were heretics and apostates.’<sup>27</sup> The reference here is to Matthew 23, wherein the scribes and Pharisees are described principally in terms of their hypocrisy and greed. Foxe realizes their corruption onstage in the form of the scribe Polyharpax, a figure who seeks only his own monetary gain and ‘raises persecution’ against a future apostle, almost presaging Paul’s conversion through his abuses.

The reasons for having Paul interact with a scribe, I would suggest, are of no less significance, and lie in the Marian exiles’ heavy reliance upon manuscript dissemination. The ability to circulate documents amongst themselves was a major sustaining force for the dispersed Protestant community, a subject on which a great deal of recent work has been done. As Thomas S. Freeman has written, ‘the Marian Protestants relied more heavily on the written than the printed word as a means of communicating with their followers.’<sup>28</sup> Freeman goes on to describe the extensive writing and elaborate networks of copying that allowed for correspondence between Protestants in England and on the continent, often taking place despite the conditions of imprisonment. Foxe himself was extremely dependent upon manuscript circulation at this point as well: as he worked to complete his Latin martyrologies in the mid 1550s, he was a tireless collector of documents, mostly coming to him via his fellow exile Edmund Grindal. According to King, Grindal provided him with ‘manuscripts concerning the prosecution and execution of English martyrs’, allowing us to see ‘the *Book of Martyrs* as a material object that rests on Foxe’s compilation of stories out of a diverse array of manuscripts including Lollard codices, episcopal registers, coroners’ inquests, and letters and documents written by Marian prisoners as they awaited execution for heresy.’<sup>29</sup> For Foxe and his co-religionists, therefore, the corruption of the written word in the hands of a figure like Polyharpax would have been recognized as a devastating blow – a significance that may have been understandably lost on or irrelevant to Bienvenu, but which would not have been lost on Humphrey as he sought to bring the concerns of exile to the fore. Howard B. Norland has claimed that ‘this scene

<sup>26</sup> Bienvenu’s translation, entitled *Le Triomphe de Iesus Christ: Comedie Apocalyptique*, was printed at Geneva in 1562. See Smith, *Two Latin Comedies*, 34n; Bienvenu added several scenes to the end of the play, but this scene represents the only major omission. It seems telling that, in his otherwise extremely faithful translation, he should have chosen to omit only the scene that was, as I argue, closest to the English experience.

<sup>27</sup> Warner, *Ecclesiastical History*, II: 370.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas S. Freeman, ‘Publish and Perish: the Scribal Culture of the Marian Martyrs’ in Julia Crick and Alexandra Walsham (eds.), *The Uses of Script and Print, 1300–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 235.

<sup>29</sup> King, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*, 25, 46.

seems most inappropriate juxtaposed with Paul's conversion.<sup>30</sup> On the contrary, however, I would argue that their linkage brings together two of the chief concerns of the exilic experience and places them front and centre, directly reflecting the exiles' petition and better helping us to understand Humphrey's interest in this portion of the text.<sup>31</sup>

#### STAGING PAUL'S CONVERSION

Even with a renewed understanding of Paul's role in the play, further knowledge of Humphrey's proposed addition remains obscure. To elucidate this issue, I turn my attention to a copy of the 1556 Basel edition of *Christus Triumphans*, held in the Houghton Library at Harvard University (Shelfmark \*EC F8364 556c). The volume appears to have been annotated for performance, containing manuscript notations in a sixteenth-century hand, mainly recording necessary properties and confirming entrances and exits. Surprisingly little notice has been taken of this volume, although it has been tentatively suggested that this may have been a prompt book for a performance at Magdalen. The strongest evidence for this claim appears in the aforementioned moment in Act V, where we learn that Hierologus has been incarcerated at the prison Bocardo (we learn that Theosebés has joined him there in the following scene). Bocardo was located in the North Gate in Oxford, and the reference to Latimer and Ridley, who were detained there, is clear.<sup>32</sup> As Pseudamnus inquires about Hierologus' whereabouts, Psycheponus, one of Satan's attendants, describes his pursuit in a town immediately recognizable as Oxford (V. ii. 19–31):

Oh, I know him: it was Hierologus who just left here with Europus. They went down this street on our right. Do you know where the college is, beyond the little bridge? I chased after him fiercely. When he realized that, he changed directions, first into one street, then into another, until he got to the church. He didn't stop there, because he saw that I was still following; he ate up the road with his feet as fast as he could. The scoundrel finally outran me. But I can pretty well guess where he is. As you approach the Cornmarket, you come to Carfax, where the intersecting streets go off at right angles. Ignore the right and turn left, where a street leads down a hill and brings you quickly right to

<sup>30</sup> Howard B. Norland, 'John Foxe's Apocalyptic Comedy *Christus Triumphans*', in Philip Ford and Andrew Taylor (eds.), *The Early Modern Cultures of Neo-Latin Drama* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2013), 75–84 (at 81).

<sup>31</sup> John R. Knott presents an important addendum to this argument in his observation that the letters of the martyrs 'resemble Pauline epistles in their basic structure'. This allowed them to identify with Paul both stylistically and in terms of experience, as their writings became a space for comparison between their persecution and that experienced by the Apostle. Knott therefore reveals a firm linkage between Paul and Marian Protestant manuscript circulation, further illuminating both Foxe's scene and Humphrey's interest in it; see Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1563–1694* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 87–93.

<sup>32</sup> On the location of Bocardo before its 1771 demolition, see Geoffrey Tyack, *Oxford: An Architectural Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 5.

the city gate, toward the two Bears. There, beside the gate – or rather right in the gate – is the prison, Bocardo. He's there.<sup>33</sup>

This is without question the most geographically specific moment in the play, as Hierologus' flight from his pursuer is described in remarkable detail. In the Harvard copy, however, the specificity has been increased: the annotator has corrected Foxe's directions, replacing 'dextra' and 'laeuam' with 'leua' and 'dextram', respectively, so as to indicate ignoring the left and turning right, instead of the reverse. This change, which might at first seem insignificant, suggests not only the annotator's familiarity with Oxford, but also perhaps an anticipation of the audience's familiarity as well. It likewise reinforces the importance of the specific association with a particular Oxford location: this is in fact the annotator's only alteration to the actual text of the play, intended to ensure that the relevance to Oxford is unmistakable. Even more intriguingly, the alteration might be seen to ensure particular relevance to Magdalen: although the 'college' is unspecified, making a right turn onto Cornmarket to reach Bocardo would indicate that Psycheponus was coming from the east, where Magdalen is located (since Bocardo lay towards the top of Cornmarket, near the church of St Michael of the North Gate). If this is indeed the case – that the annotator wanted not only to confirm the location as Oxford, but also the direction of Psycheponus' pursuit past Magdalen – it becomes perhaps the most suggestive example of Humphrey's production being shaped specifically for an audience of Magdalen men.<sup>34</sup>

If we are willing to entertain the possibility that this prompt book does, in fact, preserve notes for a production at Magdalen, then the most interesting annotation appears at the end of Act III Scene iii. That scene depicts a fretful

<sup>33</sup> 'Vah intelligo, Hierologum nempe illum, hac qui se abduxit recens/ Cum Europeo una per plateam dextram. Collegium/ Vbi sit nostin'? Ultra ponticulum. Ego pone insequor immaniter./ Vbi persensit, obliquat uiam in uicum alium, item in alium,/ Ad phanum donec uentum sit. Hic quia instare me uidet/ Nec desistere, uiam uorat pedibus quantum ualet./ Denique cursu uicit carnifex. At ubi sit prope/ Tamen hariolor. Ad forum cum acceditis escarium./ Quadriuium illic est, transuersis plateis sese in angulos/ Rectos scindens. Hic relicta dextra, ad laeuam uergite/ Vicus qua decliuus, recta ad portam uos praecipitat,/ Versus utramque ursam. Illic secus portam, adeoque uel in/ Ipsa porta potius, carcer Bocardo est. Ibi est.'

<sup>34</sup> Smith, *Two Latin Comedies*, 345n seems sceptical of the possibility that 'collegium' could originally have been intended to refer to Magdalen, stating that '[f]rom a perspective inside the city, no colleges were beyond any river bridges.' But his perplexity seems unnecessary: I see no reason why Foxe could not have been envisioning Psycheponus entering from outside the city, thus going 'beyond the little bridge' and past Magdalen College. Smith likewise dismisses the reference to the bridge being Magdalen Bridge, on the grounds that the diminutive 'ponticulum' could not denote a bridge as large as that one. But his argument seems unconvincing, especially since the use of diminutives in this period did not necessarily refer to small things. For instance, when Robert Dudley, Chancellor of Oxford, showed the Spanish Ambassador the Hall of University College during the queen's visit in 1566, it was referred to as the 'aululam', or 'little hall' in the Cambridge scholar Nicholas Robinson's account (edited and translated by Sarah Knight); see *John Nichols's The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth I: A New Edition of the Early Modern Sources*, eds. Elizabeth Goldring, Faith Eales, Elizabeth Clarke, and Jayne Elisabeth Archer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), I:521. It therefore seems to me that the annotator of the Harvard copy was clarifying a reference to Magdalen rather than inventing one; in either case, however, any level of directional ambiguity afforded by Foxe's text supports my argument above, in that the task of the Magdalen staging was to emphasize particularity.

Psycheponus and his alarmed companions, Nomocrates and Thanatus, lamenting the power of the recently resurrected Christ. An exultant Ecclesia overhears their discussion, and the scene concludes with her expression of happiness at this change in her fortune: 'What a switch this is! He's overcome with grief, I almost as much with joy. I can scarcely contain myself [. . .]. Well, I'll go share these joys with my children' (Quae haec rerum metabole'st? Luctu ille, ego/Gaudio ita pene exanimata sum, ut me uix capiam satis./[. . .] Interim ego nimis cesso haec natis simul impartire gaudia; III. iii. 38–42). Immediately beneath these lines, the annotator of the Harvard copy has written three words – *Hic interponatur Scena* ('the scene should be inserted here'). The only mention of this annotation appears in John Hazel Smith's edition, where he speculates based on Ecclesia's final line that at this point in the play the annotator might have 'envisioned a dramatization of the reunion of Ecclesia and her children'.<sup>35</sup> But as it is only forty lines later that Paul enters in Act III Scene v, having just experienced his conversion offstage, I would suggest instead that this inserted scene could be the one requested in Humphrey's letter, showing Paul's conversion rather than having it reported. Coming at a rough midway point in the text, this is the play's first moment of hopefulness, making it especially appropriate for the scene's insertion.<sup>36</sup>

But what might a scene depicting Paul's conversion have actually looked like? While 'Hic interponatur Scena' illuminates the moment at which the scene took place, the prompt gives us little information about its actual content. In the scriptural account, the moment of Paul's conversion is a striking event, beginning with a sudden 'light from heauen' that forces Paul to the ground: 'And he fel to the earth, and heard a voyce, saying to him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?/And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Iesus whome thou persecutest' (Acts 9:4–5).<sup>37</sup> The divine visitation leaves Paul 'trembling and astonied' (9:6); he is temporarily blinded and led into Damascus by his companions, where his sight is eventually restored by the Lord's disciple, Ananias. The scene is intrinsically spectacular, featuring impressive visual effects in its vivid descriptions of Paul's experience, urging the reader to imagine how the event must have appeared. The intensely visual character of the episode is reinforced by the fact that it is itself a blinding, so powerful that

<sup>35</sup> Smith, *Two Latin Comedies*, 425.

<sup>36</sup> This also makes sense from the perspective of audience comprehension: the only indicator of Paul's conversion when he returns in Act III Scene v, aside from his changed tone, is the printed stage direction: 'Ecclesia. Paulus conuersus'. This would have been of little help to Humphrey's audience, and we can understand why he might have wanted the students of Magdalen to visually experience Paul's conversion, rather than needing to discern it from context.

<sup>37</sup> I quote here from Acts 9 since, as stated above in regards to the depiction of Saul in Act II of *Christus Triumphans*, this is the biblical section from which Foxe seems to have drawn his inspiration. I rely on the English translation from the 1560 Geneva Bible, both because of this version's proximity to the Protestant cause and because it here follows the Vulgate extremely closely. The variations between scriptural accounts of Paul's conversion have little bearing upon the aspects of the story relevant to my argument, but on these variations see Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Paternoster Press, 1998), 302–26.

Paul – hitherto ‘blind’ in the religious sense – literally loses his sight, overwhelmed by the appearance of the divine presence and the spectacular occurrences that accompany it.

Considering these spectacular qualities, it is not surprising that Paul’s conversion became a source of theatrical inspiration. The most prominent dramatic depiction of the event is the Digby *Conversion of Saint Paul*, one of a collection of late medieval mystery plays that survive in the Bodleian Library.<sup>38</sup> Although it was most likely composed around 1500, the physical condition of the manuscript has been shown by several scholars to suggest that this is a play that was still in use during the second half of the sixteenth century.<sup>39</sup> John Coldewey, working from a variety of theatrical records, has convincingly argued that a performance may have taken place in Chelmsford in the county of Essex in 1562.<sup>40</sup> While the Digby play was not the only contemporary theatrical representation of conversion, it was (as far as we know) the most frequently performed depiction of that particular story, and one which may well have been active around the time Humphrey would have been thinking about how to stage Paul’s conversion. As a dramatic rendering of that event, the Digby *Conversion of Saint Paul* allows us to think about how Paul’s conversion might have been represented onstage, and gives us perhaps the clearest sense of what a scene like the one Humphrey was proposing might have looked like in the early 1560s.

The section of the play most relevant to Humphrey’s purpose, in which the titular conversion actually takes place, begins after 182 lines as Saul, on the road to Damascus, is visited by the divine presence. Like Foxe’s character, the Digby Saul is portrayed as unrelenting in his persecution: ‘My purpose to Damask fully I intende;/To pursewe the dyscypulys, my lyfe I apply!’ (ll. 169–70).<sup>41</sup> He has just stated his intent to subdue ‘tho wretchys of þat life’ (l. 181) when the Godhead appears, according to the following stage direction: ‘Here comyth a feruent, wyth gret tempest, and Saule faulyth down of hys horse; þat done, Godhed spekyth in heuyn’ (l. 182 s.d.). From the outset, the event is overwhelmingly spectacular; the Digby play capitalizes on the biblical story’s visual characteristics, amplifying them to include a ‘gret tempest’ and a horse from which Saul falls. Christ appears as the character Deus, asking Saul why he persecutes him:

<sup>38</sup> In MS Digby 133, part of Kenelm Digby’s 1634 bequest.

<sup>39</sup> See, for instance, Donald C. Baker, ‘When Is a Text a Play?: Reflections upon What Certain Late Medieval Dramatic Texts Can Tell Us’, in Marianne G. Briscoe and John C. Coldewey (eds.), *Contexts for Early English Drama* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 20–40: ‘The manuscript, in quarto, has been carefully folded in two places and the depth of the creases would seem to indicate that the folding had been done quite a number of times. [...] The evidence of use of the manuscript would seem to indicate that we are dealing with a play which had a vigorous life over a period of years’ (21–2).

<sup>40</sup> John C. Coldewey, ‘The Digby Plays and the Chelmsford Records’, *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama*, 18 (1975), 103–21.

<sup>41</sup> All quotations from the play are taken from Donald C. Baker, John L. Murphy, and Louis B. Hall, Jr. (eds.), *The Late Medieval Religious Plays of Bodleian MSS Digby 133 and E Museo 160* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

*Deuus* [sic]      Saule, Saule! Why dost þou me pursue?  
 Yt ys hard to pryke agayns þe spore!  
 I am þi Savyour þat ys so trwe,  
 Whych made heuyn and erth, and eche creature.  
 Offende nott my goodnes; I wyll þe recure!

*Saulus*            O Lord, I am aferd, I trymble for fere!  
 What woldyst I ded? Tell me here! (ll. 183–9)

Saul is made lame and blind – ‘O mercyfull God, what alyth me?/I am lame, my leggs be take me fro!/My sygth lykwyse, I may nott see!’ (ll. 197–9). Christ then visits Ananias, asking him to go and cure Saul; despite his initial reluctance (‘I here so myche of hys furyous cruelte’, l. 225), he revives Saul from what is described as a state of ‘contemplacyon’, restoring his strength and sight. Having been through this experience, Saul sees the error of his ways and no longer wishes harm upon the followers of Christ: ‘And where I haue vsed so gret persecucyon/Of þi descyplys thorow all Jerusalem,/I wyll [ayd] and defende ther predycacyon,/That th[e]y dyd tech on all þis reme’ (ll. 304–7). The scene culminates in Saul’s baptism, and the Poeta enters to confirm what the audience has just witnessed firsthand: ‘Thus Saule ys conuertyd, as ye se expres,/The very trw seruant of our Lord Jhesu’ (ll. 346–7). The scene offers everything Humphrey might have wanted in a conversion scene – an engrossing visual experience, complete with stagecraft (that is, thunder and lightning, the descent of a Christ figure) and the depiction of a repentant Saul. Regardless of whether Humphrey knew the Digby play – there is no concrete evidence, unfortunately, to suggest that he did – it allows us to approximate what a theatrical representation of this event might have looked like in the middle of the sixteenth century. It brings forth in particular the intensely visual representation that the biblical event afforded, illuminating the spectacular character of the scene Humphrey was planning to insert. Inherent in Humphrey’s request, therefore, is an inclination towards spectacle, towards visual representation, wanting to bring onstage before the eyes of his academic audience what Foxe had left to the imagination.

In addition to its spectacular elements, the Digby *Conversion of Saint Paul* is remarkable for its inbuilt flexibility. This is evidenced, in part, by the fact that there are at least three different hands at work in the manuscript, indicating later additions for subsequent performances, the lengthiest of which is a scene between Belyall and Mercury. But even in its original state, the play offered a great deal of choice to its practitioners, as Baker notes:

*The Conversion of St Paul*, in the earliest form that we have it, without the additions, was already a rather flexible play. This is clearly indicated by the introduction, with the phrase ‘si placet’, of the Poeta’s ‘conclusyon’ speech at the end

of the first action. In fact the speech, which contains the famous requirement that the audience move on to a second station, might or might not have been delivered.<sup>42</sup>

The play, therefore, can clearly be seen as lending itself to theatrical adaptation. It also, however, lent itself to devotional adaptation. Heather Hill-Vásquez demonstrates how ‘Middle English religious drama . . . seems to have been subjected to a kind of ‘reforming’ process as Protestant forces, ostensibly dedicated to righting the wrongs of the earlier faith, produced a kind of revisionist history of the religious drama in the Reformation and early Renaissance era.’<sup>43</sup> Pre-Reformation dramas that had been written for Catholic sensibilities, in other words, were adapted to Protestant settings with more frequency than has generally been realized, and Hill-Vásquez sees the continued use of the Digby *Conversion of Saint Paul* as illustrative of this phenomenon. Repeatedly revised and reworked, this was a play that was able to be adapted on multiple occasions in order to satisfy audiences from a variety of religious backgrounds.

The revival of a play like *Conversion of Saint Paul* into a Protestant framework offers an intriguing parallel for understanding Humphrey’s proposed endeavour at Magdalen. As interested as later practitioners may have been in the versatility of *Saint Paul*, so too was Humphrey interested in the versatility of *Christus Triumphans*, a play written under an entirely different set of circumstances from those in which he was proposing to stage it. Unlike the Digby play, Foxe’s play was not reinterpreted in terms of religious attitude – it was always intended to be read by and performed in front of a Protestant audience – but instead in terms of historical perspective. Humphrey’s pointed modification suggests an interest not so much in the prophecies of Revelation as in the portrayal of his own experience in exile and that of his fellow Protestants, shifting the play’s focus from an imminent Apocalypse to a recent event. His dramaturgy suggests that he had in mind the young students of Magdalen, who were not awaiting a relief from earthly persecution but instead stood to learn about the experience of those who once had. Like the Digby play, we might also say that Foxe’s play lent itself to adaptation: in particular, its open-ended, unfinished nature allowed Humphrey to redirect the play’s focus, recasting towards a different purpose the ‘final catastrophe’ (‘summam [. . .] Catastrophen’; V. v. 152–3) for which the Chorus of Virgins say they are waiting just a few lines from the end of the play.<sup>44</sup> We might also understand the Prologue’s address to ‘noui spectatores’ at the beginning of the play not, as Smith suggests, as a reference to a

<sup>42</sup> Baker, ‘When Is a Text a Play?’, 23.

<sup>43</sup> Heather Hill-Vásquez, *Sacred Players: The Politics of Response in the Middle English Religious Drama* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 8.

<sup>44</sup> Foxe likely relied on Thomas Kirchmeyer’s *Pammachius*, often considered his main source for the play as a whole, which likewise awaits a ‘catastrophe’ and in fact is structurally unfinished, with only four acts instead of five. An early modern reader of the 1556 Bodleian copy of *Christus Triumphans* (shelfmark 8° F 3(1) Th. BS.) appears to have taken special notice of the play’s unfinished nature: the notes among the endpapers are heavily cropped, but transcribe almost verbatim the section of Donatus’ *De Comoedia et Tragoedia* that deals

'young audience', but instead as an acknowledgement of the play's ability to be reshaped for future generations.<sup>45</sup> In bringing it to Magdalen, Humphrey clearly made use of that flexibility, staging for a group of 'new spectators' the exilic experience for which they themselves had not been present.

#### CONCLUSION

In Act V of Foxe's play, *Ecclesia* refers to herself as 'an exile cut off from [her] country' ('*patria exul/Mutilor*'; V. iv. 32–3). More than at any other place in the text, here we can see Foxe specifically aligning her character – if only briefly – with the English Protestant exiles on the continent, who were also at that moment 'cut off' from their homeland. Thus Humphrey's task was not to impose a concept upon the play, but rather to emphasize the importance of one that already existed. By adding the conversion of Paul, as I have shown, Humphrey was able to more closely identify *Christus Triumphans* with the conditions of English exile, tipping the balance between universal and particular in the play further in favour of the latter. We cannot claim, of course, that the experience of the exiles was uniform: there were different communities across Europe, with considerable variation and formidable disagreement between them.<sup>46</sup> Nor can we claim the importance of Paul to be exclusive to the Protestants abroad: with regards to manuscript circulation in particular, Paul seems to have been a prominent figure for all Marian Protestants, not just those on the European continent.<sup>47</sup> But while Paul was a logical figure of identification in a broad sense, conversion was a subject specifically employed by the exiles, who seized not so much upon Paul's epistolary style as upon his behaviour before conversion and the shift that occurred thereafter. This is the exilic experience Humphrey wanted to portray, seeking to relate what he and his English brethren had experienced as they hoped – and even pleaded – for Mary's conversion from across the sea. Within Humphrey's desire to have his audience see Paul's conversion, then, lies a recognition of the experiential power of drama, and recognition of its ability to teach – not just rhetoric, but also religious and historical experience.

As a biblical drama performed in Magdalen College, Foxe's play was not necessarily unique. There is compelling evidence for a production of *Three Laws of Nature, Moses, and Christ*, a play by Foxe's friend and fellow exile John Bale, having been staged at Magdalen early in Humphrey's presidency. If this was the production that incurred expenses for 'the painting of the heresies', as has

with the 'four divisions in comedy: *prologus, protasis, epitasis, and catastrophe*'. See Michael J. Sidnell (ed.), *Sources of Dramatic Theory, Volume 1: Plato to Congreve* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 78–83.

<sup>45</sup> Smith, *Two Latin Comedies*, 33.

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, Patrick Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal, 1519–1583: The Struggle for a Reformed Church* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1979), 67–82.

<sup>47</sup> On the experience of Marian Protestants who remained in England, see Andrew Pettegree, *Marian Protestantism: Six Studies* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996).

been suggested, then this too was a piece that relied heavily on visual representation.<sup>48</sup> But the fact that *Christus Triumphans* may have been part of a trend only makes Humphrey's interest in staging and revising it more significant, allowing us to draw larger conclusions about this crucial moment in the history of university drama. We can see what drama offered to the newly returned exiles; it may not be a coincidence that Robert Beaumont, the Master of Trinity College, Cambridge at the time of the play's performance there, was also a Marian exile who had been together with Humphrey in Zurich.<sup>49</sup> We can also see what drama began to offer to the university setting more generally: considering my analysis of Humphrey's letter above, the return of the Marian exiles developed an interest in the visual power of drama, leading to a university stage increasingly based in spectacle. As the editors of the *Records of Early English Drama: Oxford* volumes note, the first use of the term 'spectaculorum' anywhere in college accounts appears at Magdalen in 1559/60.<sup>50</sup> While this is unlikely to have been *Christus Triumphans*, the proximity to Humphrey's production is likely to have been close (similar language is used to refer to the entertainments of 1560/1 and 1561/2), and it is telling that we see this reference to drama's visual capacity at the outset of Elizabeth's reign. This burgeoning interest in the spectacular amongst practitioners of drama within the university paved the way, I would suggest, for the lavish theatrical spectacles presented before the new monarch in Cambridge in 1564 and Oxford in 1566.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, Humphrey's

<sup>48</sup> See the discussion in Elisabeth Dutton, Maria Sachiko Cecire, and James McBain, 'Staging and Filming John Bale's *Three Laws*', *Shakespeare Bulletin* 32 (2014), 65–84, esp. 66–9. Following the REED editors, the authors of this article assert that the play staged at Magdalen in 1560–61 associated with 'painting the names of the heresies for the show which the choirmaster produced' might well have been *Three Laws*, given its theological subject matter and the fact that it involved singing. But neither of these qualifications, I would point out, preclude *Christus Triumphans*, which obviously satisfies the first criterion and with a sung epithalamion would also satisfy the second. In the absence of further evidence, however, we simply cannot be certain, though I am reluctant to rule this out as the occasion on which Foxe's play was performed.

<sup>49</sup> See Christina Hallowell Garrett, *The Marian Exiles: A Study in the Origins of Elizabethan Puritanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), 8n. We know regrettably little of Beaumont's involvement in Trinity's dramatic productions, or indeed of his life more generally. A letter of his does survive in the Parker Library in Cambridge, however, from February 1564, the year following the production of *Christus Triumphans* at Trinity. Beaumont, in his capacity as Vice-Chancellor, advises Matthew Parker regarding the 'Queen ma<sup>ties</sup> pleasure for uniformitie in doctrine, rite & apparell' among the various colleges. Amidst a discussion of various points of religion – the wearing of the surplice, suspected papists – Beaumont makes the following observation about his own college: 'ij or iij in Trinitie College thinke it very unsemy y<sup>t</sup> christians sholde playe or be present at any prophane comedies or tragoedies.' The comment is interesting, especially given the context, and demonstrates a keen awareness of – and possibly even involvement in – his college's dramatic happenings. Whether he had a hand in its staging remains unclear, but *Christus Triumphans*, deeply rooted in biblical themes, certainly would have been a suitable alternative to the 'prophane' drama denounced by the objectors. See Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 106, p. 627; a transcription of this letter is available in Alan H. Nelson (ed.), *Records of Early English Drama: Cambridge*, I: 247.

<sup>50</sup> Elliott, Jr. et al. (eds.), *Records of Early English Drama: Oxford*, II: 603.

<sup>51</sup> On the plays performed before Elizabeth during her university visits, see Siobhan Keenan, 'Spectator and Spectacle: Royal Entertainments at the Universities in the 1560s' in Jayne Elisabeth Archer, Elizabeth Goldring, and Sarah Knight (eds.), *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 86–103.

own involvement in the latter occasion might be seen as testifying to the continuity between these entertainments.

It is in some sense surprising that Foxy himself never returned to drama. The inherent theatricality of *Acts and Monuments*, with its visual depictions and graphic descriptions, seems in a similar vein to his task in *Christus Triumphans*. But given the adaptability of his play, for which I have argued, perhaps he never felt the need to return to the stage, as his biblical drama developed an afterlife in the hands of his Protestant companions. The impulse towards visuality is not just their invention, of course: in its original form, Foxy's play is at every turn aware of visual effect. Humphrey's prefatory poem to the 1556 edition even promises that Foxy's play will bring 'to your eyes' the suffering and relief permitted by Christ ('Exhibet en oculis Foxya scena tuis').<sup>52</sup> Humphrey's proposed addition, then, was not at odds with Foxy's endeavour, but rather a continuation of it, an adaptation for a different performance setting still very much in line with Foxy's original purpose. If the Harvard copy is to be believed, the performance at Magdalen afforded a fully immersive dramatic experience: two cues for thunder ('tonitru') are prompted, once before Satan's first entrance in the opening act, and once as Ecclesia senses he is approaching in Act IV; the prompter's final annotation, based on a line in the text as Ecclesia awaits her bridegroom, calls for 'fulgor & odor' ('light and odour'). What Humphrey desired to have performed in his institution was a firsthand *witnessing* – a word with clear Foxyan resonance – the essence of which is best represented by a line from the play. Asked by Archiereus how he can be so sure that the Christians continue to preach – expressing amazement at Christianity's ability to grow and prosper, even in the face of persecution – the priest Nomologus replies, 'I saw them, I heard them, I was there' ('Vidi, audivi, interfui'; II. ii. 5).

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<sup>52</sup> Smith, *Two Latin Comedies*, 217.