

Moving Marlowe: The Jew of Malta on the Caroline Stage

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Moving Marlowe: *The Jew of Malta* on the Caroline Stage

In spring 2016 I submitted a proposal to Globe Education to run a Research in Action workshop on staging *The Jew of Malta* in an indoor playhouse. This was accepted and took place on 6 June 2016 in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, with the help of Will Tosh from Globe Education and four actors, David Acton, Ben Deery, Robert Mountford and Aslam Percival, who had not only studied the parts of the play they had been asked to prepare but had read the whole of it and were brimful of ideas (not forgetting Robbie Hand, who very nobly played the entire Ottoman army as well as taking notes during the workshop).¹ In this article, I am first going to discuss what happened at the workshop and then move on to consider what *The Jew of Malta* might have looked like on the Caroline stage, with specific reference to two other plays which I suggest might have impacted on its reception in the 1630s, Chettle's *Hoffman* and Ford's *Love's Sacrifice*.

The purpose of the Research in Action workshops is to explore performance practice. My proposal was prompted by the fact that the first performance of *The Jew of Malta* of which we have any knowledge was on Saturday 26 February 1592, at the Rose, but that the text of the play was not printed until 1633, which begs obvious questions about the extent to which the play as we now have it is the same as the play which was acted in the 1590s, or whether it has suffered corruption or revision. In 1977 Kenneth Friedenreich noted that

Criticism of *The Jew of Malta* has persistently sought a satisfactory explanation for the apparent change in Marlowe's conception of his hero, Barabas, who seems cast in the first two acts in the familiar mold of a Marlovian superman, but who is somehow transformed into the last three acts into a comical revenger. Until recently, there was widespread belief among the play's critics that its text was corrupt, and that the

radical transformation of Barabas after act 2 was the work of a redactor, probably Thomas Heywood, and not Marlowe.²

The 1633 printing was accompanied by a 'Prologue Spoken at Court' and a 'Prologue to the Stage, at the Cockpit', the second of which begins 'We know now how our play may pass this stage',³ and it was that question - which speaks directly to Globe Education's research priority of exploring the history of dramatic texts and their reception - which lay at the heart of the workshop: how *does* a play written for performance in an open-air amphitheatre in the 1590s translate to indoor performance in the 1630s? The prologue spoken at the Cockpit goes on to say that 'by the best of poets in that age / The Malta Jew had being, and was made; / And he then by the best of actors played', but Alleyn was no longer available to play Barabas and the kind of verse generally heard on the Caroline stage was very different from Marlowe's mighty line (the revival at the Cockpit will have been running concurrently with two comedies by Shirley).

The research questions I initially put forward were:

- How well is the action of *The Jew of Malta* suited to the stage of the SWP?
- What happens to Marlowe's mighty line in the intimacy of an indoor theatre?
- Although the play was originally written for daylight performance, does it work by candlelight?
- Lastly and most importantly, does acting the play indoors enable us to see or guess anything about the nature of the text? Does it act like a play originally written for performance in very different circumstances, or are there any signs that any changes might have been made to it? Are there, in short, any clues to whether the 1630s text was influenced by the circumstance of 1630s performance, which in turn might help

us to address that crucial question of whether the play as we have it represents the play as Marlowe left it?

In the interval between proposing the workshop and actually doing it, another question also made itself felt: *The Jew of Malta* is obviously a play about religion, but is it also a religious play? I began to think about this after seeing the Royal Shakespeare Company production of *Doctor Faustus* in the Swan in the spring of 2016, which made me understand for the first time why Alleyn wore a cross when playing the role and how it was indeed possible for so strong a sense of transgression and of the numinous to be created that an audience member might imagine that they saw an extra devil on the stage. During the winter season of 2015-16 there were productions of all four of Shakespeare's last plays in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, and each evoked for me a genuine sense of miracle; I was keen to know whether *The Jew of Malta* might, in such a space, equal *Doctor Faustus'* sense of the unhallowed.

The structure of Research in Action events is for the actors to work on the scenes throughout the afternoon and for the actual workshop (with the paying public present) to run from 6 till 8 pm. We started with the play's two prologues. The questions I had initially proposed were what does the prologue spoken by Machevill sound like on the SWP stage? Can we guess whether 'The Prologue to the Stage, at the Cockpit' replaced it or supplemented it? And can we get any sense of what else this performer does in the play - could he for instance possibly stay on as Barabas, since the information that Barabas 'favours' him suggests that he looks like him? We looked first at 'The Prologue to the Stage, at the Cockpit', and experimented with having it read both by David Acton, who was cast as Barabas, and by Robert Mountford, who spoke it as a performer rather than as any particular character but did suggest that it might be rather neatly delivered by Ithamore in his capacity as duplicitous support act to Barabas. (In the actual workshop, for reasons of time, only Robert Mountford read it.) The

actors were much amused by the way in which the Cockpit prologue praised Alleyn at the obvious expense of the hapless modern-day substitute who was just about to take the role; we wondered if the contemporary equivalent would be to introduce a production by reminding the audience that Olivier had excelled in the title role, but given that we were on the premises of the Globe the comparison that most obviously suggested itself was to imagine a revival of *Jerusalem* twenty years hence and to think about how the actor might negotiate the fact that Mark Rylance had made the role his own. The fact that we were in Shakespeare's Globe also made it very conspicuous that it is Marlowe rather than Shakespeare who is unhesitatingly identified as 'the best of poets' (a phrase to whose plosives both actors gave full value).

We then moved on to Machiavel's lines, which were spoken by Ben Deery. He delivered them first sitting down, for us to get the feel of them, then standing in the middle of the stage, and finally decided to experiment with delivering the speech from the gallery. This was an intriguing choice which worked well initially, picking up very nicely on the fact that Machiavel says he has flown,⁴ the idea of 'climbing followers' (l. 13), and the idea that he is, technically at least, a spirit; however by the end of the speech, when Machiavel has homed in on Barabas, both Ben and we felt that he seemed too far away up in the gallery. It would of course also be quite impossible for him to be up there if, as I think might be possible, Machiavel's declaration that Barabas 'favours' him (l. 35) can be taken to mean that he looks like him, because the actor playing Machiavel could at this point simply *become* Barabas, possibly by donning the red wig and false nose which we know Alleyn to have worn for the part. In the evening workshop, Robert Mountford and Ben Deery spoke the two prologues one after the other, and we asked the audience if they felt that both served a purpose. There were mixed views, but one person felt that to have prologue following prologue added an element of parody, which would be very much in keeping with the feel of the play.

Perverse though it may seem, I wanted to move from the beginning straight to the end. I have always felt that there was something in Eliot's stricture that the play ends in a very different vein and tone from how it began, but I am less confident than Eliot that the change comes at the end of the second act. I wondered if it might by any chance be possible to take the audience from the beginning to the end so that they could get a sense of quite how strongly the play drifts away from the promised sense of tragedy, and then take them back to some of the places where I thought the change in direction might become visible. The next passage we looked at, therefore, was V.v.51-65, which begins with Calymath entering and moves on to Ferneze preventing him from climbing the stairs and Barabas falling into the cauldron instead. Since David Acton had an unaccountable objection to doing a nosedive from the gallery and Globe Education seemed not to want a hole cut in the wood, the scene could not actually be staged, but the actors (and later the audience) had a lot of fun speculating on ways in which the various effects required could have been achieved, and David did in fact succeed in indicating that a fall of some sort was involved by the simple expedient of throwing himself down in the gallery and clinging onto its rails. Our best bet was that there might be a clue in the Lord Admiral's men property list compiled on 10 March 1598 which includes 'one cauldron for the *Jew*' and 'one pair of stairs for Phaeton'. Although the list does not say so, a pair of stairs intended for one play could presumably also be used for another, and that pair of stairs would have provided a good practical solution on the stage of the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse and would also have had an added theological resonance, since Todd Borlik notes that in the *Faustbuch*, Mephistopheles tells Faustus that there is a ladder in hell which tempts the damned to climb towards heaven but throws them off when they near the top.⁵

Even without a full staging, though, a number of things about this scene became startlingly clear. In the first place, the stage picture of Barabas above and Ferneze and Calymath below offers the image of a Christian, a Muslim and a Jew forming an unholy trinity in which the Jew, initially at the apex of the triangle, ultimately ends up lowest of all. Throughout the play, Marlowe repeatedly invites us to reflect on the interrelationship of the three religions of the book. Julia Reinhard Lupton notes that this was a common concern in the period and that in 1597 the anonymous tract *The Policy of the Turkish Empire* declared ‘as the Jews had a particular lawe given unto them and published by God himselfe in Mount Sinai ... so have the Turkes (in imitation of the same) certaine lawes and precepts or Commandements laide downe in their Alcoran’; she also suggests that Marlowe’s nomenclature is pointed in that Ithamore, the name of one of the most prominent Muslim characters, ‘is a variant of the biblical “Ithamar,” the youngest son of Aaron and hence part of the priestly line of the Levites, professional upholders of Jewish ritual law’.⁶ Secondly, the scene shows that Barabas becomes a parodic food item, an ingredient in what both actors and audience members independently identified as a witches’ cauldron of the kind found in *Macbeth*, but which is also readable as an inverted Eucharist. Barabas takes his name from the reprobate whom the Jews asked Pontius Pilate to pardon instead of Christ; this scene brought home the full meaning of that status as alternative to Christ when instead of body and blood being transmuted into bread and wine for the spiritual nourishment of Christians, they become part of a banquet supposedly intended to be served to the Ottoman army.

From the end we went back to the middle, specifically to the part of the play spanning from II.i.58 to II.ii.9. My interest in this passage was rather different: II.i, in which Barabas retrieves his gold from the encloistered Abigail, is an intimate, night-time scene with an obvious resemblance to *Romeo and Juliet*, whereas II.ii is a big, open, public scene set in

daytime. Previous productions in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, particularly *The Duchess of Malfi* in 2014 and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* in 2015, have made clear how much the mood can be changed by dousing the candles, but this is best done immediately before the interval, to allow for their being relit during it; Ford clearly positioned the death of Bergetto where he did to take advantage of when the trimming of the candles would need to occur. *The Jew of Malta*, though, was written for open-air performance in broad daylight, and there is no scope for a lighting change at this point. I wanted to see whether the transition would work, but this was easily my stupidest idea, because there was not the least difficulty: David Acton as Barabas acted 'small' and Robert Mountford as Del Bosco acted 'big', and while Barabas exited through a side door Del Bosco, with Ben Deery as Ferneze and Aslam Percival as a knight, made a grand entrance through the central one which carried them fully downstage and completely changed the dynamic of the space. Staging the end and the beginning of these two scenes did, though, shine a light on some things which they have in common and which I had never noticed before. Barabas exits speaking Spanish, '*Hermoso placer de los dineros*' (II.i.64), and immediately afterwards a Spaniard enters; both scenes are about incursion, since Barabas should not be at the convent and Del Bosco has arrived without leave; and Barabas's wish that he should 'hover' (II.i.62) is picked up in the fact that Del Bosco's ship is called the *Flying Dragon*, making this, like *Doctor Faustus*, a play with an interest in flight, and also in ways to bridge the gap between the upper and lower stages, as when Barabas kisses his fingers to Abigail.

We moved next to IV.i.134-84, where Barabas and Ithamore kill Barnardine and prop him up for Jacomo to find and kill again. Since they had all been trained in safe combat, Aslam Percival as Ithamore and David Acton as Barabas strangled Ben Deery's Barnardine with glee and relish, assuring us that they knew how to kill a man; they were cheerfully

unconcerned when Ben turned purple, and left him for Robert Mountford's Jacomo to fell and club much more convincingly than I had expected. It was quite extraordinary to watch how quickly the whole scene came together out of nothing, and it was also apparent that this episode prefigures the end of the play in that it too has a Christian, a Jew and a Muslim on stage at the same time, this time with the Muslim and the Jew in cahoots to kill the Christian rather than with Ferneze intervening to save Calymath and send Barabas to his death. The scene also invites us to remember that what really divides the three religions of the book is less scripture than dietary practice when a Muslim tells a Jew that a Christian 'stands as if he were begging of bacon' (160), and the pose of Ben Deery's dead Barnardine almost hinted at a crucified body, which would not achieve a resurrection but had been posed in a parodic simulacrum of continuing life.

Finally we came to V.i.50-63, the scene in which Barabas is thrown over the walls. It had occurred to me to wonder whether in this play, as I think happens in some others, use of stage levels has any bearing on an audience's sense of closeness to heaven or hell. Julia Reinhard Lupton declares that

The play's architecture of conversion and its discontents takes place in and as the scaffolding of the stage itself. Mobilizing the iconography of the Judaeo-Christian turn, the expropriation has a more contemporary reference as well, namely to Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries, including the urban and suburban holdings (liberties) on which some of London's public theaters, such as Blackfriars, now stood.

For Lupton, 'In *The Jew of Malta*, the architecture of the stage discovers within itself a series of real and symbolic transformations - of synagogue into nunnery, of Catholic monastery holdings into Protestant royal property, and of the old monastic liberties into new theatrical ones - infinite riches in a little room'.⁷ Along similar lines G. K. Hunter observes that 'the

Elizabethan stage inherited from the medieval pageant-wagon a moral as well as a physical structure, with Heaven above and Hell beneath; and we should see that the scenic enactment of Barabas' descent into the pit or cauldron has moral meaning as well as stage excitement' and that 'A cauldron was ... a traditional image of hell'.⁸ There are, in theory, four levels available at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse: the gallery; the stage; the trap; and the pit, though Globe Education staff are very aware that actors in the original Globe or Cockpit did not enter or exit through the yard or pit. We actually talked about doing the scene with no change of level at all - just rolling Barabas out through the main door, in line with Steven Mullaney's suggestion that 'it is doubtful that the wall Barabas is cast over was represented by anything but a bare, flat platform'⁹ - but in retrospect it should have been obvious to me that we were always going to use the trap, because if there *is* a trap, actors are probably going to want to use it. There remained the question of how to get the body of Barabas down from the walls, but this was solved with beautiful simplicity by Ben, Robert and Aslam, who simply stood on the gallery with their eyes fixed on the progress of an imaginary falling body before David's head popped out of the trap. This had the added advantage of giving Barabas knowledge of a way in which he could let Calymath in: he simply gestured towards the underground space from which he had just exited, suggesting that the Knights' method of disposing of him had in fact given him the advantage of superior knowledge.

We are never going to know what Marlowe's play looked like when it was first staged, or how audiences responded to specific moments. Doing this workshop did, though, help me begin to guess at how it might have felt on the Caroline stage. I never saw so clearly before how language about religion is echoed by stage pictures encoding religious iconography, or why and how it matters how high or low Barabas goes. I saw that some scenes echo and comment on each other more closely than I had thought, and that the play is more tightly

constructed than it has sometimes felt on the page. I saw how collusive an experience it is: Barabas is what he is only because the Christian and Muslim characters are what they are, and from the moment that Machiavel identifies the audience as his friends we too are implicated.

Above all, I saw that *The Jew of Malta* is a play about Easter. Marlowe's writing career is bookended by two missing bodies. At the time when he produced his earliest literary work, he was very probably a student of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Corpus Christi took its name from the body of Christ, but the Protestant Reformation had brought very different attitudes to that body, including a denial of the traditional idea that it was supernaturally manifested in the bread and wine of the Eucharist. When he died, leaving *Hero and Leander* apparently unfinished and with who knows what still left him in to write, he was buried in an unmarked grave in St Nicholas' Church Deptford. In the interim, he repeatedly dramatised and narrated stories which featured the absence or loss of one or more significant bodies. In possibly his earliest play, *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, Dido herself, Anna and Iarbas all cast themselves upon a pyre. This was not the only version of Dido's death available to Marlowe: in some versions of her story she committed suicide with a knife. There are several reasons why Marlowe might prefer a pyre. In the first place, I have argued elsewhere that Marlowe is drawn to writing deaths which are difficult to stage.¹⁰ In the second, he is consistently interested in *Dido, Queen of Carthage* in undercutting any possible suggestion of the heroic, and the repeated leaps onto the flames unquestionably work to comic effect. However, Dido's death by fire also ensures that there is no body to bury. Something alleged to be Queen Dido's tomb used to be shown to visitors to Tunis, and Henslowe's list of properties included '1 tomb of Dido', but this was meant not for Marlowe's play but for a now lost *Dido and Aeneas* acted in 1598; the body of Marlowe's Dido disappears without trace. In *Doctor*

Faustus, the hero is borne bodily to hell, and in *Hero and Leander*, Leander drowns, so there is presumably no body to be buried.

The Jew of Malta, though, both loses and finds a body. The hero, Barabas, takes his name from the thief whom Pontius Pilate spared from crucifixion instead of Jesus, and the play not only remembers the point in history at which Christianity separated from Judaism but also stages a parody resurrection. The way in which *The Jew of Malta* both withholds and supplies bodies was interestingly illuminated by the production of the York Mystery Plays directed by Philip Breen in York Minster in 2016, where Lucifer (Toby Gordon) doubled Barabas, whose body thus became literally only a temporary and contingent phenomenon. It also became obvious that Barabas' activity with the hammer in the final scene of *The Jew of Malta* recalled the way in which Jesus is nailed to the cross in the mysteries. Critics have often observed parallels between Marlowe and mystery plays. G. K. Hunter calls 'the *consummatum est* with which Faustus completes the sale of his soul to the devil' 'the ironic juxtaposition of the words in which Christ completed the ransom of mankind, and the act in which Faustus denied that mercy for himself',¹¹ and Jennifer Waldron notes that

Even as he says Christ's words, ... Faustus seems to lose sight of the "true substance" of the sacrificial body he imitates and of the divine drama in which he himself is caught. Marlowe's audience, however, is invited to imagine this connection quite clearly through two specifically theatrical effects centered on the actor's body ... the first is the moment of providential intervention when a supernatural force seems to stop the flow of Faustus's blood and to write on his arm. The second is the scene's resemblance to dramatic traditions of staging Christ's redemptive sacrifice.¹²

She identifies these as to be found particularly in mysteries, and though Douglas Cole mentions the play's 'clear exploitation of morality play devices',¹³ to me too mysteries seem

to be the best clue to *The Jew of Malta*. Perhaps most strikingly, Hunter notes that ‘By a daring reversal of the standard irony of the play, [Marlowe] seems to imply that, though Barabas is the opposite of Christ, his trial is conducted by figures who approximate to Pilate and Chief Priest’, since the Governor echoes the sentiment of Caiaphas when he says ‘better one want for a common good’ and declares that he will not stain his hands with blood.¹⁴

In Marlowe’s hands, these already resonant motifs take on still further meanings. Catherine Willits observes of Barabas admitting Calymath: ‘In this violent breach of the city, Marlowe engages a medieval topos, the royal entry, and intensifies the dramatic tradition associated with it - the staging of Christ’s entry into Jerusalem’; she argues that ‘Marlowe disrupts the dramatic tradition of Christ’s entry into Jerusalem by replacing it with Barabas enabling Calymath’s bloody entry into Malta’.¹⁵ The entry into Jerusalem was an important part of the build-up to Easter; Eamon Duffy notes that on Palm Sunday ‘the story of Christ’s entry into Jerusalem and greeting by the crowds with palms was read from St John’s Gospel’, and that after this ‘the story of Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem from Matthew’s Gospel was read to the parishioners in the churchyard’;¹⁶ Barabas is not entering Jerusalem, but he is entering the citadel of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem, this being the full title of the Knights Hospitaller, and the fact that different gospels were associated with the event may be suggestive in the light of the general view that *The Jew of Malta* itself has different textures. Catherine Brown Tkacz relates the pit into which Barabas falls to Proverbs 26.27, ‘Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein’, and says ‘The image of someone falling into a pit he had dug for another occurs seven times in the Bible, always in the Old Testament’.¹⁷ Above all Tkacz points out that ‘The specific image of the pit ... featured in the Easter liturgy’, in Psalm 57,¹⁸ and Eamon Duffy notes that on Good Friday the Host and the crucifix were placed within the

Easter tomb ‘while the priest intoned the Psalm verse “I am counted as one of them that go down to the pit”’.¹⁹ Sara M. Deats argues that

Throughout Act V, Barabas continues his mock imitation of Christ: he is betrayed by his supposed heir and leading disciple Ithamore; he is apprehended and condemned to death by the establishment; he undergoes a sham death and a bogus resurrection - like everything else in Barabas’ life, a purely physical rather than a spiritual ordeal.²⁰

Finally John Parker notes that Barabas ‘specifically owes a part of his costume’ to Judas,²¹ whose betrayal of Christ precipitated the events which Easter commemorates.²² Barabas may start the play by saying ‘we come not to be kings’ (I.i.128), but ironically he himself does come to be a king of sorts as he becomes the central participant in a parodic Easter rite, the occasion on which Christ was proclaimed ‘King of the Jews’ and on which the anthems ‘Ecce Rex Tuus’ and ‘Ave Rex Noster’ were sung.²³

What then did *The Jew of Malta* mean in 1633? In some ways, one might expect it to be less about Easter, given that the mysteries were so far in the past. In other ways, though, I think it may have been more so, because I think it had been given new meaning by two specific intertextualities. In Chettle’s *Hoffman*, one of the most iconic symbols of Christianity undergoes some strange alterations when both Hoffman’s father and Hoffman himself are killed by burning crowns. Paul Browne believes that Chettle may have been indebted to Marlowe’s *Edward II* for the burning crown image in his play,²⁴ but whatever its derivation, the burning crown clearly parodies the crown of thorns, and the fact that it is ultimately applied to Hoffman himself connects both him and his father to the Christian iconography of father and son. That iconography takes a strange turn, though, when Hoffman declares, ‘This scene is done / Father, I offer thee thy murderer’s son’ (I.i.230-31). The hanging corpse of Otho makes the playhouse look like a church with a crucifix hanging over the altar, an idea

emphasised when Martha ‘christens’ Hoffman by a false name with her eyes as the font and her tears substituting for holy water.²⁵ Hoffman even gestures at a parody of communion when he tells Lorrique, ‘Nor can my wounds be stopped till an incision / I’ve made to bury my dead father in’ (I.i.70-2), with its suggestion of ingesting human flesh with salvific characteristics, and his offering of cakes to Otho both has Eucharistic overtones and also parodies the last supper, since Otho, betrayed as Jesus was, is about to die and be crucified. Hoffman, like *The Jew of Malta*, has a pair of characters called Lodowick and Mathias (and also finds poisoning funny). The inversion of scriptural narrative is continued when Lorrique, in the role of Judas, betrays Hoffman; Lorrique will also attempt to take his own life, as Matthew says Judas did after his betrayal of Christ. Once Lorrique is dead, his body is strung up alongside the bodies of Hoffman’s father and Prince Otho and will further simulate the crucifixion of Christ’s crucifixion with the two thieves either side of him. Chettle’s play was first acted around 1602, but it was not published until 1631, two years before the first printing of *The Jew of Malta*, and it is therefore not unreasonable to suppose that it would have been part of the horizon of reception for Marlowe’s play. Tom Rutter suggests that ‘*The Jew of Malta* is an especially appropriate play to read Hoffman against’,²⁶ but I would like to reverse that to argue that, given *Hoffman*’s appearance in print only two years earlier, it is an especially appropriate play to read *The Jew of Malta* against. If one does that, the Easter element of *The Jew of Malta* is sharply accentuated.

The second play which I suggest conditioned the 1633 performance and printing of *The Jew of Malta* is Ford’s *Love’s Sacrifice*. In spring 2015, the Royal Shakespeare Company put on *The Jew of Malta* concurrently with *Love’s Sacrifice*. This was a fortuitous decision, because there is some suggestive overlap between the two plays. *The Jew of Malta* was passing through the press in the same year as *Love’s Sacrifice*, and when it was revived on the

Caroline stage Richard Perkins played in both productions. Ferneze says of Lodovico and Mathias,

Then take them up, and let them be interred
Within one sacred monument of stone;
Upon which altar I will offer up
My daily sacrifice of sighs and tears.²⁷

In *Love's Sacrifice*, Caraffa echoes this closely when he says 'Behold, I offer up the sacrifice / Of bleeding tears, shed from a faithful spring',²⁸ and all three main characters of *Love's Sacrifice* share a monument, just as Ferneze orders that Lodovico and Mathias should do.

Love's Sacrifice too can be seen as an Easter play. *Love's Sacrifice* is based on the life of Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa, famous both for murdering his wife and for composing troubling, atonal music. In 1611 Gesualdo published a collection of spiritual madrigals called *Tenebrae Responsoria*; these relate specifically to Easter Week, when 'the Tenebrae services on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday ... were snuffed out one by one to symbolize the abandonment of Jesus by his disciples: the standard sermon collections include explanations of this striking ceremony',²⁹ and include several lines which resonate with *Love's Sacrifice*: Feria Quinta, Response 4, 'My friend betrayed me by token of a kiss'; Response 7, 'I was led the sacrifice and I knew it not'; and Feria Sexta, Response 3, 'How art thou turned to bitterness, that thou shouldst crucify me, and release Barabbas?'. *Love's Sacrifice* itself can be seen as drawing on the Easter story, and indeed as offering of a form of Tenebrae Responsoria. Alex Ross observes of the Responsoria 'Those services are known as the Tenebrae, or "shadows"; in the old Catholic rite, the candles were extinguished, one by one, until the church was enveloped in darkness'.³⁰ As the 2014 production of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse showed, Ford was a master of this effect: as the

Friar began to describe hell to the terrified Annabella, two attendants, studiously mirroring each other's movements, slowly and systematically doused every candle in all four of the candelabras until the stage itself was the lightless space of which the Friar spoke, with only one taper burning. Hippolita and Vasques then played their brief following scene with hand-held candles, and the way was thus paved for the last candle to be extinguished so that the death of Bergetto could be played out in absolute darkness until the call of 'Lights!' was answered by appropriate characters rushing onto the stage with torches, before a strategic placing of the interval allowed the candelabras to be relit for the second half. Clearly the scenes are sequenced in this way precisely in order that this effect may be produced. Neither the hall of Gray's Inn, the venue of the Globe's 2015 Read not Dead production of *Love's Sacrifice*, nor the Swan Theatre, where the RSC staged the play in the same year, lent itself to similar experiments with the lighting of *Love's Sacrifice*, but the scene in which Fernando emerges from the tomb would certainly work best in near-darkness, and the pointed deferral of the funeral for three days seems deliberately calculated to evoke the idea of the Resurrection. Bianca's tomb thus becomes an Easter Tomb, with Fernando's emergence from the tomb effectively implying the question 'Quem quaeritis?'.³¹

In 1592, the probable date of its first performance, *The Jew of Malta* might have reminded older members of the audience of motifs from the mystery plays. By 1633 it would no longer have done this, but its latent Easter associations had been energised in new ways and by new collocations. I think these can help us answer the final and most difficult question that I proposed to the actors at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, which is whether *The Jew of Malta* is a religious play. Sara Deats argues that 'Implied throughout the play by Biblical reference are a series of moral standards against which the squalid society of Malta can be evaluated',³² in effect, she is suggesting that we see a double picture, an image of what is actually there

haunted and doubled by an image of what might be there which we mentally superimpose on the reality, with Barabas not only understudying Jesus but also potentially implying him. There is nothing to tell us that the Bible story is the truer of the two, but there is a lot to remind us that it is more edifying than the one which we actually see unfolding - that it is, in the terms of Sidneian criticism, closer to poetry, which inspires, than to history, which depresses. Ultimately, while watching *The Jew of Malta* is not likely to convince anyone that there is a divine power controlling human lives, it might make you think that it would be good if there were. In that sense, I think that for all its irreverence *The Jew of Malta* in performance can indeed be a religious play, and that it is therefore not surprising that it should have found an audience at the court of Charles and Henrietta Maria.

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Notes

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Louise Powell, Kibrina Davey, Caroline Heaton and Shirley Bell, who heard and commented on a version of this paper at the second Sheffield Hallam Caroline Colloquium.

² Kenneth Friedenreich, “‘The Jew of Malta’ and the Critics: A Paradigm for Marlowe Studies’, *Papers on Language and Literature* 13.3 (1977), pp. 318-326, p. 318. He also observes that in 1937 Philip Henderson suggested that it was a collaboration between Marlowe and Kyd (p. 322).

³ Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*, in *The Complete Plays*, edited by Mark Thornton Burnett (London: Everyman, 1999), p. 460.

⁴ Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*, in *The Complete Plays*, edited by Mark Thornton Burnett (London: J. M. Dent, 1999), Prologue, 2.

⁵ Todd Borlik, ‘Hellish Falls: Faustus’s Dismemberment, Phaeton’s Limbs and Other Renaissance Aviation Disasters - Part II’, *English Studies* 97.4 (2016), pp. 351-361, p. 353.

⁶ Julia Reinhard Lupton, *Citizen-Saints: Shakespeare and Political Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 61 and 63.

⁷ Lupton, *Citizen-Saints*, pp. 69-70.

⁸ Hunter, ‘The Theology of Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta*’, pp. 233-4.

⁹ Steven Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage: License, Play, and Power in Renaissance England* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 58.

¹⁰ Lisa Hopkins, *Christopher Marlowe, Renaissance Dramatist* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), p. 108.

¹¹ G. K. Hunter, 'The Theology of Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*', p. 211.

¹² Jennifer Waldron, *Reformations of the Body: Idolatry, Sacrifice, and Early Modern Theater* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 109.

¹³ Douglas Cole, *Christopher Marlowe and the Renaissance of Tragedy* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1995), p. 93.

¹⁴ Hunter, 'The Theology of Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*', p. 256.

¹⁵ Catherine Willits, 'The dynamics and staging of community in medieval "Entry into Jerusalem" plays: dramatic resources influencing Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 27 (2014), pp. 78-100, p. 78.

¹⁶ Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 23 and 24.

¹⁷ Catherine Brown Tkacz, "'The Jew of Malta' and the Pit', *South Atlantic Review* 53.2 (May 1988), pp. 47-57, pp. 47-8.

¹⁸ Tkacz, “‘The Jew of Malta’ and the Pit”, p. 50.

¹⁹ Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 30.

²⁰ Sara M. Deats, ‘Biblical Parody in Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta*: A Re-examination’, *Christianity and Literature* 37.2 (1988), pp. 27-498, p. 31.

²¹ John Parker, *The Aesthetics of Antichrist: From Christian Drama to Christopher Marlowe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), p. 196.

²² During the workshop an audience member suggested that ideally Barabas needed to be covered in the contents of the sewer when he emerged, to make it absolutely clear what the proposed route was, but while I’m sure this would be lovely resources did not allow it. It would, though, suggest an intriguing parallel between this play and *Edward II*, another play which remembers the mysteries: Patrick Ryan observes that ‘to dramatize the arrest, imprisonment, degradation, torture, and murder of King Edward, Marlowe embellishes these dramatic actions with verbal and visual images derived from conventional medieval and early Renaissance descriptions of Christ’s Passion’ and that ‘Marlowe’s Lightborn, the professional torturer and assassin, has chosen as his *nom de guerre* the name of a devil in the Chester mystery plays’; he also relates the spit to the roasting of the Passover lamb (and by implication the Paschal lamb), suggesting an Easter motif here too ‘Marlowe’s *Edward II* and the Medieval Passion Play’, *Comparative Drama* 32.4 [winter 1998], pp. 465-495, pp. 465, 489 and 479).

²³ Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 24-5.

²⁴ Paul Browne, 'A source for the "Burning Crown" in Henry Chettle's *The Tragedy of Hoffman*', *Notes and Queries* 51.3 (2004), pp. 297-299, p. 297.

²⁵ Emma Smith, ed., *Five Revenge Tragedies: Kyd, Shakespeare, Marston, Chettle, Middleton*, (London: Penguin, 2012), IV.ii.205-7.

²⁶ Tom Rutter, 'Marlowe, *Hoffman*, and the Admiral's Men', *Marlowe Studies* 3 (2013), pp. 49-62, p. 59.

²⁷ Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*, in *The Complete Plays*, edited by Mark Thornton Burnett (London: J.M. Dent, 1999), 3.2.29-31.

²⁸ John Ford, *Love's Sacrifice*, edited by A. T. Moore (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 5.3.42-3.

²⁹ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400-c. 1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 23.

³⁰ Alex Ross, 'The Rest is Noise', *The New Yorker*, 19 and 26 December, 2011
Online: <http://www.therestisnoise.com/2011/12/gesualdo.html>

³¹ For a succinct summary of the history of this idea, see Michael Kobalka, 'The *Quem Quaeritis*: Theatre History Displacement', pp. 35-51, p. 38.

³² Deats, 'Biblical Parody in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*', p. 27.