Friday, 7 January 2011, 3:30–4:45 pm, Platinum Salon G, Marriott

357. Christopher Marlowe's Poetical Influence

Program arranged by the Marlowe Society of America

Presiding: Pierre Hecker, Carleton College

1. "Strength Training for *Tamburlaine*'s Weak Sons through Repertorial Commerce," Roslyn L. Knutson, University of Arkansas, Little Rock (Emerita)

In 1982 Peter Berek moved the focus on imitations of Tamburlaine and *Tamburlaine* away from biographical, psychological, and political analyses of Marlowe himself to a theory of reception by which the imitations on the early modern stage were indications of audience taste ("*Tamburlaine*'s Weak Sons,"*Renaissance Drama*, 13:55-82). Emphasizing commercial rather than aesthetic or philosophical decisions, Berek refuted Irving Ribner's argument that contemporary dramatists were "trying to correct Marlowe's erroneous ideas" with the observation that the more likely motivator was getting "a good price from the players"(57). Timely as this argument was in redirecting assessment of Marlovian poetical and theatrical influence toward the business of playing, it stopped short of considering the implications of these imitations for repertorial competition among the adult playing companies. Also, by the designation "weak sons," Berek perhaps unintentionally perpetuated a scholarship based on aesthetic judgment. In this paper I consider chronology and company ownership to argue that the so-called weak sons of Tamburlaine / *Tamburlaine* were strong participants in the burgeoning theatrical marketplace of 1587-93.

2. "Marlowe and the Epicenter of Sonnetdom," M. L. Stapleton, Indiana University-Purdue University, Fort Wayne Two of *Shake-speares Sonnets* appear ten years earlier in William Jaggard's *The Passionate Pilgrime* (1599), later numbered #138 and #144 in Q1609, together a microcosm of the later work. Their apparent variations on Petrarchan sonnet conventions are anticipated in the *Amores*, the closest thing to a sonnet sequence from classical antiquity on which Ovid's successors could model their works that emulate some aspects of his. Marlowe's translation of this text appeared in two undated versions (c. 1595), *Certaine of* and *All Ovids Elegies*, the first collection an artfully truncated precursor of the latter, just as *Pilgrime* is of Q1609. The Bishops cast *Certaine* into the *auto da fe* of their Ban on satirical materials in 1599, the same year in which Jaggard's publication appears. I contend that these occurrences—publication, censorship, revision—are not coincidental. The twofold appearance of Marlowe's translations seems related to the vogue for sonnets reflected in the similarly dual emergence of *Pilgrime* and Q1609, all four texts produced in the molten epicenter of what I call sonnetdom.

3. "Hellish Helen: Jonson's Marlowe," John Lyon, University of Bristol
It was Jonson who famously accredited Marlowe with his "mighty line." Just how mighty it was can be seen in Jonson's struggle to control and direct its influence in his own writings. This paper will focus on Marlowe's presentation of the figure of Helen near the close of *Doctor Faustus* and on Faustus's verbal and physical response to that representation. It will argue that this scene represents the playwright's characteristic thrilling ambiguity at its most intense, and that this particular scene was long felt to be such by London's theatregoers. We can infer the last point from the evidence, a generation later, of Jonson's own struggle to incorporate this Marlovian moment, first within Volpone's attempted seduction or rape of Celia and subsequently in Sir Epicure Mammon's fantasy in *The Alchemist*. Both dramatic episodes may signify tensions in Jonson's Christian humanism.

783. Spenser and Marlowe: Authorship, Aesthetics, Influence

Program arranged by the International Spenser Society and the Marlowe Society of America

Presiding: Bruce R. Smith, University of Southern California

1. "Spenser and Marlowe: English Authorship and the Early Modern Sublime," Patrick G. Cheney, Pennsylvania State University, University Park
During the late sixteenth century, a new form of authorship emerges, one that eschews the ethical paradigm of patriotic English nationalism leading to eternity on which much recent criticism depends. Instead, it fictionalizes literary greatness. The premier theorist is Longinus, whose *On Sublimity* is first printed in 1554. The sublime is Longinus's counter-national principle that replaces goodness with greatness, equilibrium with ecstasy, and self-regulated passion with heightened emotion. Under the spell of sublimity, the author tells a story about the making of a great literary work operating in "the interval between earth and heaven." A work representing the enigma of this interval produces either terror or rapture, leaving the human in the exalted condition of the gods. In a history of sublime authorship from Dante to Milton, Spenser and Marlowe perform key bridging roles, featured in their groundbreaking fictions of rapture and terror.

2. "It's Tough Being a Genius: Bees, Butterflies, and Poetic Stockpiling in Marlowe and Spenser," Meghan Davis, University of Southern California

In a recent talk entitled "Spenser's Aromatherapy," Heather James asserted that Spenser spins beautiful lists of flowers as a way of "paying himself first." That is, though his poetry must serve various political and practical ends, his flourishing descriptions allow him to enjoy the wealth of his own verse before expending it elsewhere. Marlowe also laments in *Hero and Leander* that true learning and poverty are intrinsically tied to one another: "To this day is every scholar poor; / Gross gold from them runs headlong to the boor." The "coral clasps," the "buckles of purest gold," and all the other "pleasures" he offers to his love exist only in language and can only be enjoyed there. If the virtuosic crafting of language functions as its own reward for Spenser and Marlowe, might it also be dangerous? As the narrative of *Muiopotmos* reminds us, awe-inspiring wings can incite Envie, the poet's enemy, just as Leander's beauty attracts the lusty and predatory advances of Neptune. Does beautiful and daring language threaten to impoverish or endanger those gifted with the ability to create it? Does "plentye" make these poets "poore"?

3. "Dueling Poets: Marlowe versus Spenser in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Measure for Measure*," Lauren Silberman, Baruch College, City University of New York

I propose to explore how allusions to Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* interact with *The Merchant of Venice* and *Measure for Measure* as the two Shakespeare plays that explore how modes of Spenserian allegory and Marlovian theatrical irony are dueling influences on Shakespeare's characterizations of Shylock and Isabella. In my focus on Malbecco and Barabas as both misers and villains, I suggest that Shakespeare's Machiavellian protagonists capitalize on the identities that Spenser and Marlowe construct for them. I also connect cultural themes in both poets' works to Shakespeare's treatment of the novice nun drawn from the shelter of the convent to intercede in a violent secular world. The metaphorical assault on Isabella's body recalls the literal razing of sanctuaries throughout sixteenth-century England and thus blends allusions to Abigail in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* with ravishers of innocents in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*.