

The Marlowe Society of America

Marlowe Society of America Newsletter

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Our distinguished MSA panelists in Chicago: Roslyn Knutson, William Casey Caldwell, Mary Hill Cole

Abstracts for 2014 MLA Session in Chicago

364. Christopher Marlowe and Vulnerable Times

Program arranged by the Marlowe Society of America
Friday, 10 January 2014

3.30-4.45 p.m., Northwestern-Ohio State, Chicago Marriott

1. "Players and Playbooks on the Move in Vulnerable Times,"
Roslyn L. Knutson, University of Arkansas, Little Rock

Christopher Marlowe entered the public theatrical marketplace just as major changes were taking place with the leading companies in that business. His own affiliation with companies has sufficient consensus among scholars to be considered fact, but the same cannot be said of the location of players and playbooks. As the marketplace responded to vulnerabilities of the times—i.e., deaths of players and patrons, newly-built venues, entering and exiting playwrights—the leadership across competitive companies and their stock of playbooks also responded. This presentation will address the adaptation of players and playbooks to fluctuations in the commercial environment in Marlowe's time.

2. "The 1580s and Vulnerability," Mary Hill Cole, Mary Baldwin College

The execution of Anne Boleyn for adultery and incest, as well as a series of Parliamentary Acts of Succession and Henry VIII's will, left Queen Elizabeth besmirched, bastardized, and vulnerable. Historians have debated whether Elizabeth ever acted to reassert her legitimacy, or whether her coronation and her monarchy itself created a *de facto*

Present: Knutson, McInnis, Melnikoff, Menzer, Munro, Scott, Stapleton

The meeting was called to order by the President at 12 noon on 12 April 2014 in RED Kitchen, Hyatt Regency St Louis at the Arch, St Louis, MO.

1. Announcements

MLA: The MSA panel at MLA 2015 has been finalised: it is titled 'Marlowe and Queer Futurity' and the speakers are Jeffrey Masten, Stephen Guy-Bray and Judith Haber. Garrett Sullivan and John Parker have approached Menzer offering papers for MLA 2016; a third speaker is to be arranged. The possibility of proposing a second panel with a sister organisation was also raised.

SAA: It was reported that Evelyn Tribble is programme chair for SAA 2016 (New Orleans) and is looking for panel and seminar proposals.

2. Reports

Membership (Scott): The MSA had 123 members in 2013, a rise from 97 in 2012. There are also 66 people whose membership lapsed in 2013. Ways of boosting membership, especially among career-young scholars, were discussed. It was suggested that the Britgrad conference at the Shakespeare Institute would be a good place to promote the society.

Treasurer (Melnikoff): The MSA's financial outlook is very healthy, in part due to the successful stewardship of Knutson. We spent c. \$2000-3000 on the 2013 International Marlowe Conference, having budgeted generously. Our non-profit status needs to be renewed; Melnikoff has this in hand. The executive committee agreed that should legal costs arise the MSA will cover them.

legitimacy. I argue that Elizabeth tried to reclaim the impression of legitimacy in ways that typified her personal monarchy. By examining the acts of her first Parliament that delineated her changing legal status since her birth, I argue that while Elizabeth did not directly erase the stigma of her bastardy, she found ways to reconstitute her family and claim a virtual legitimacy. The byzantine nature of her situation led her to employ tortured ambiguities in pursuit of a recognized legitimacy that ultimately remained beyond her reach. Her failure to erase the stain of bastardy affected her monarchy and left her vulnerable to plots, military threats, and succession crises that wracked England through the 1580s.

3. "The Representation of Vulnerability in Marlowe's *Edward II*,"
William Casey Caldwell, Northwestern University

I will be asking whether there is a sense in which we can say that there is a particularly Marlovian mode of representing vulnerability. My paper will divide into two parts. In the first, I provide a brief historicizing sketch of early modern emotions and affect, concluding with a consideration of emotional or "affective vulnerability" in an early modern context. In the second part, I turn to a consideration of Marlowe's *Edward II*, applying the sketch of early modern affect I have developed. My aim will be to show that, while Marlowe's own representation of affective vulnerability is continuous with its general form I draw in the first part of my paper, his staging of vulnerability critically diverges from it in the context of power and the destruction of the self. I conclude, however, that pairing affective vulnerability with the destruction of the self in a play like *Edward II* does not retroactively assign vulnerability a negative value for Marlowe.

Minutes of MSA Executive Committee Meeting, SAA, St. Louis, 12 April 2014

3. Roma Gill Award (Menzer)

It has been three years since the Roma Gill Award was last awarded. A committee will meet to consider work published in 2011-12; it is hoped that it will report by the end of 2014, but the exact timescale is to be confirmed. Bruce Brandt, Charles Whitney, David McInnis, Lisa Hopkins and Jeremy Lopez were suggested as appropriate members of the committee, and McInnis agreed to chair it. Menzer is to approach Brandt and Whitney in the first instance. It was agreed that the prize should remain at its current level of \$250 for the first prize, with \$150 for honourable mention (should there be one).

4. Election (Menzer)

Menzer's term as president will finish at the end of 2015. A nomination committee will be arranged for Spring 2015, which will finalise the slate for the Fall 2015 newsletter. Melnikoff has been approached by some members who are interested in taking on the role of Treasurer, and it was agreed that using Paypal for membership payments gives the society greater flexibility in terms of banking and the Treasurer's location.

5. International Marlowe Conference

Possible locations for the next International Marlowe Conference (2018) were discussed, including Wittenberg and London. Melnikoff and Munro are to talk to contacts in Germany.

6. Other Business

London conference: Munro is planning a conference on Marlowe at King's College London in Fall 2014, and invited Menzer as MSA president to give a plenary paper.

Marlowe Society: The possibility of contact with the British Marlowe Society was discussed, but it was noted that this Society is still

invested to some degree in what their website terms the 'Shakespeare problem'.

Lucy Munro
King's College, London



MSA Book

Reviews · David McInnis, University of Melbourne · Book Reviews Editor

Emily C. Bartels and Emma Smith, eds. *Christopher Marlowe in Context*. Cambridge: CUP, 2013. Pp. xviii + 382. Hardback [ISBN 9781107016255](#) (\$110); e-book [ISBN 9781107240131](#) (\$88).

In their introduction, Emily C. Bartels and Emma Smith announce that the purpose of this collection of essays is to “consider the multiple textual and theatrical practices that bear on Marlowe’s work and reputation” and the “shifting circumstances and conceptions that may prove Marlowe to be at least as ordinary as he is extraordinary as a poet, playwright, and translator” (2). The volume contains thirty-three essays, divided into three equal sections: Marlowe’s Works, Marlowe’s World, and Reception. An innovative feature of the collection is the length of the essays: they are uniformly short, most coming in at fewer than 5000 words. This allows the volume both to offer a valuably articulated view of Marlowe studies and, at the same time, to feel quite full. “Instead of completeness,” the editors say in their introduction, “our aim . . . is to model heterogeneity, offering diverse ways of defining what actually counts as context and deciphering how it counts, when, and for whom” (2). With such a wide range of contributors, the collection more than achieves this aim. I finished the volume impressed both by all the serious thinking that is currently going on about Marlowe and by how much remains to be done with this very small canon of work. “There is no end to the pleasures of what survives of Marlowe,” writes Paul Menzer in the volume’s final essay (364); it is a claim everywhere advanced, supported, and borne out in the preceding essays.

In a review of the 2004 *Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe*, Robert A. Logan regretted that that collection had not contained “a discussion of Marlowe’s theater from the perspective of a theater historian” (*Renaissance Quarterly* 58.2 (2005) 731-3, 732). *Christopher Marlowe in Context* nicely fills in this gap, and for me (at least) the theatre-historical essays were the highlight of the collection—particularly Lucy Munro’s “Marlowe in Caroline theatre” and Holger Syme’s “Marlowe in his moment.” A key strength of both essays is in how they work through Marlowe in order to make arguments for the importance of much less familiar texts by much less familiar authors. Munro describes an extraordinary scene in John Suckling’s *The Goblins* (a play I have not read, but plan to as soon as I am finished writing this review) where “a group of thieves disguised as devils capture a somewhat brain-addled poet who, thinking he is in hell, requests to meet poets such as Shakespeare and Fletcher.” The thieves tell the poet that these men do not reside in

hell, but they can arrange a meeting with “he that writ *Tamerlane*” (299). Suckling’s play demonstrates that, as in our own time, a “faint aura of transgression” surrounded Marlowe’s works in the Caroline period. But the larger point of Munro’s argument is to demonstrate that there are important differences between Caroline and modern and post-modern reception: in the Caroline period “we find a Marlowe whose works are somewhat old-fashioned, sometimes in tune with new theatrical aesthetics but as often at odds with them, dependent upon the actors that perform them, and defiantly popular despite attempts to make them appeal to the elite” (304). Syme’s essay also works against the grain of conventional modern and post-modern ways of thinking about Marlowe. Beginning with the question “What exactly was Christopher Marlowe’s ‘moment’?” Syme demonstrates how little theatre-historical evidence there is to support the idea that Marlowe’s writing constituted a creative revolution in the late 1580s, or that his influence as a dramatist was particularly powerful and long-lasting. At the same time, tracing what faint outline there is of the history of the now lost *Titus and Vespasian*—contemporaneous with, and just as popular as *The Jew of Malta*; possibly revived for court performance as much as a quarter-century later—Syme reminds us how much our ideas of popularity, influence, and enduring value might change if the full theatre-historical record were available to us.

In their defamiliarizing approaches to familiar questions, Syme’s and Munro’s essays are similar to all the best essays in this volume. Other examples include Chris Chism’s “Marlowe’s medievalism,” which discusses Marlowe’s digestion and revision of the “uncanny passivity of the Christs in the cycle dramas” (98); Lars Engle’s fresh take on Faustus as a representative of a “Renaissance selfhood” that “anticipates a modern secular goal of emancipatory self-recreation” (203); Mary Thomas Crane’s convincing demonstration of *Tamburlaine*’s engagement with “the cosmological controversies of [Marlowe’s] day” (259); and Thomas Cartelli’s revisiting of the relation between Shakespeare and Marlowe by way of some *Tamburlaine* echoes in *Richard II*. As good as it is at setting familiar Marlowe questions in a new light, the collection also has a number of strong essays on material that will probably be somewhat less familiar even to many scholarly readers: namely, Marlowe’s non-dramatic poetry. Danielle Clarke’s essay “Marlowe’s poetic form” begins with the just claim that “Marlowe’s impact on English renaissance poetics is wholly disproportionate to his output.” Lucid and specific engagements with the poetry by Svirthe Pugh, Jenny C. Mann, and James R. Siemon nicely illustrate the nature of Marlowe’s

impact in his own time and make compelling arguments for the continued resonance of his poetics.

Where *Christopher Marlowe in Context* is perhaps not successful in the way its editors hoped it would be—or, at least, where its form and content seem most to be at odds—is in its most literally contextualizing essays: those that deal with Marlowe’s biography, his canon and texts, and his critical history, or those that give a broad overview of a given topic relevant to Marlowe studies (e.g. “queer theory” or “religion”). In these essays the collection wavers uncertainly between the interest in “incompleteness” expressed by the editors in their introduction and the more comprehensive goals of a volume like *The Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe*. Andrew Duxfield’s claim in “Editing Marlowe’s texts” (to take just one example) that textual indeterminacy means that we can never actually “read what Marlowe wrote” (332) is certainly true, and his history of Marlowe’s texts is accurate and informative. But the claim

Robert A. Logan, ed. *The Jew of Malta: A Critical Reader*. Arden Early Modern Drama Guide. London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2013. Pp.xxxiv+254. Hardback ISBN 9781441169396 (\$100); paperback ISBN 9781441110794 (\$29.95); pdf ebook ISBN 9781408191545 (\$27.99); EPUB eBook ISBN 9781408191538 (\$27.99).

This volume is one of eleven in a series whose aim is to provide a baseline or starting point for future research on selected English Renaissance plays. These books offer an overview of past and present scholarship on the chosen play in the form of bibliographies, topical surveys, and new essays which the compilers believe reflect current trends in scholarship.

In this book we have not one compilation of resources but three. The first, by Bruce Brandt, traces the overall critical history of *The Jew of Malta* through most of the twentieth century. The second, by Andrew Duxfield, surveys criticism of recent decades under headings such as “Machiavelli,” “Genre” and “Marlowe and Shakespeare,” while the third, by Sarah K. Scott, includes some materials which consider the play from a pedagogical perspective, in addition to facilitating the research of students and scholars. Such an arrangement involves a fair amount of repetition and overlap, but given the book’s practical objectives, this is not necessarily a fault. If one misses a discussion of anti-Semitism in one place, one is certain to find it in another.

Robert Logan’s thoughtful Introduction counterbalances and supplements the inevitable sketchiness of the compilers’ summaries by concentrating on three intertwined features of Marlowe’s play which resist straightforward interpretation: the equivocal portrayal of anti-Semitism; generic instability; and, at the center of it all, Barabas’s ambiguous hero-villain persona. If these unresolved issues are disturbing to the audience, Logan suggests, they also have the virtue of keeping us engaged by opening up new lines of thought (xxvii). The remaining essays add to the book’s usefulness by taking up less familiar topics: performance history (Sara Munson Deats; Roslyn L. Knutson); early publication practices (Kirk Melnikoff); the psychological impact of mercantilism on weakening male identity in *The Jew of Malta* and *The Merchant of Venice* (Ian McAdam) and Ovidian traces in *The Jew of Malta* (M.L. Stapleton).

The Marlowe Society of America has frequently published reviews of productions of Marlowe’s plays in the *Newsletter and Book Reviews*, but since opportunities to see Marlowe staged are infrequent compared to performances of Shakespeare, the reviewers have had little basis for comparison of what they have seen to other

about textual indeterminacy is true of all early modern dramatists, and overview histories of Marlowe’s texts are readily available elsewhere—most obviously and recently in the *Cambridge Companion*. The obvious target-readership for *Christopher Marlowe in Context* is graduate students and early-career scholars, who will most benefit from the eclectic and imaginative criticism it models. I wouldn’t hesitate to direct such readers to any of the broad-overview essays in the collection: those by Duxfield, Bartels, Martin Wiggins, and Tom Rutter in particular are clear, efficient, and useful. But the most valuable essays in the collection, and the ones that will most energize Marlowe criticism, are those which are more narrowly focused, realizing the editors’ eclectic approach by making visible “the pointedness of any connections that we, critics, readers, and spectators make between text and context” (2).

Jeremy Lopez
University of Toronto

productions. Deats’s essay provides a broad historical and cultural context in which to place new theatrical interpretations of *the Jew*. It also shows the difficulty some performers have had in reconciling the play’s robust farcical elements with its underlying seriousness.

Knutson and Melnikoff both make use of indirect evidence to arrive at different theories about the popularity of Marlowe’s play. Knutson extends the existing direct evidence in Henslowe’s *Diary* to the repertoires of touring companies, contending that *The Jew* was probably performed much more often than the scanty records of provincial performances indicate. “*The Jew of Malta*” she concludes, “might well have enjoyed the longest stage life of Marlowe’s plays” (105). Melnikoff’s detailed account of Ling and Middleton’s preferences as publishers is fascinating, but there could be several reasons why they did not publish *The Jew* at the apparent height of its popularity. Among these is the desire of acting companies to keep their most profitable play texts out of print by having them registered by a printer who had no intention of publishing them.

McAdam’s and Stapleton’s essays both take some inspiration from Patrick Cheney’s theories on Ovidian and republican tendencies in Marlowe’s work. McAdam develops an elaborate argument about the effeminizing effects of merchant capitalism and its manifestations in the characters of Barabas and Antonio, both of whom he sees as harboring unconscious homoerotic attractions: “Both merchant figures . . . appear compelled by unconscious homoerotic desires—that is, ‘spiritual’ or emotional needs that are barely masked by their committed (if ultimately tenuous and surprisingly fragile) economic aggression” (122).

Stapleton directs our attention to the possibility that the translation of the *Amores* gave Marlowe a chance to develop skills that would serve him well as a playwright. In addition to featuring a devious, scheming character, Ovid’s would-be lover, “Marlowe’s translation . . . probably also served as his literal staging ground for the development of the soliloquy” (151). The comparison of the lover to Barabas, which may seem improbable at first glance, gains credibility as the essay progresses. They are, after all, both flagrantly narcissistic characters.

Taken as a whole, the book is a gift to anyone attempting to interpret *The Jew of Malta*.

Constance Kuriyama
Texas Tech University



MSA Theater Reviews • Ann Basso, University of South Florida • Performances Editor

Review of *Doctor Faustus*, by Christopher Marlowe, at The New American Shakespeare Tavern, dir. Brent Griffin, presented by the Resurgens Theatre Company. Oct. 28-30, 2013. Wednesday, October 30, 2013 7:30 pm

The Resurgens Theatre Company offered Atlanta theatergoers quite a rollercoaster ride this past Halloween: an (almost) all-female high-velocity production of *Doctor Faustus*. A short hour after sitting down, audiences had bid farewell to Faustus and were attempting to put together the pieces of their lives. One was dragged by the scruff of the neck to hell and back, but the journey was extremely entertaining.

While Resurgens declares itself to be a company devoted to “original practices,” they take mischievous glee in toying with notions of authenticity. Their work in this production included, as the program promised, “audience interaction, minimalist staging, organic music, same-sex casting, thematic doubling, uninterrupted performance, universal lighting, and a very strong emphasis on verse-speaking,” but the players were women; the text was heavily pruned and at times significantly altered; and some of the devils ended up being belly dancers! However, these choices resulted in an illuminating performance. The actors’ moments of inauthenticity, if one might use that word in a positive sense, revealed many of the strengths and even a few of the weaknesses in Marlowe’s script, and the performance was without question one of the most dynamic ever seen at the Shakespeare Tavern.

Using the 1604 quarto as their main text, the production excised nearly every scrap of low humor, leaving only the visitation to Rome intact. What remains is an intense focus upon what one of my students recently described as the play’s “bromance”: the relationship between Faustus and Mephistopheles. Ten minutes after a group of women in monk’s robes chant the Prologue, the play hurtles to the conjuration. Mephistopheles emerges not as a dreadful devil, however, but as a pot-bellied pizza delivery boy in a baseball cap. The tone of Faustus’s relationship with Mephistopheles becomes clear once the devil returns once more not as a friar, but as a gorgeous woman in skin-tight leather pants. “Pliant,” indeed!

Same-sex casting is the hallmark of Resurgens productions, but in this production we have one male actor: the director himself, Brent Griffin, who plays his role with high-velocity abandon. While male actors do make appearances in the company’s productions, the gender dynamic created in this particular play deserves consideration.

Marlowe’s play contains few actual women. Indeed, the play seems to delight in the unconvincing presence of the few female characters who appear, because they are either monstrous (like Faustus’s “wife,” the “hot whore” summoned by Mephistopheles in a fit of pique), demonic (like the figure of Lust, one presumes), or silent, such as the spirit avatars of Alexander’s paramour and Helen of Troy. The play

does wittily toy with the pregnant Duchess, showing Faustus reaching up her skirt for grapes while the Duchess alternates between cries of passion and labor, thereby erasing the only decent woman in the story.

Faustus’s Wittenberg university is a gender fortress full of male companionship and emotional deprivation into which Mephistopheles insinuates himself. However, in this production, the intense friendship becomes heterosexual with the inclusion of a female Mephistopheles. While Laura W. Johnson, the tall handsome woman who plays Faustus’s devilish companion, portrays Mephistopheles as one of the boys—her ability to physically take up space in a fashion comparable to Faustus is a subtle feat and an effective one—the play, perhaps deliberately, reveals that the power dynamics between the two are far from one-sided. Indeed, the production plays Faustus’s desire to keep Mephistopheles as something closer to sex slavery than necromancy. Over the course of the twenty-four years, we see Mephistopheles develop a strange affection for her mark, culminating in a compelling re-envisioning of Faustus’s final scene with Helen.

A weary Faustus begs his companion for Helen in order to extinguish clean his thoughts of repentance. As he kisses the silent beauty, Mephistopheles responds as though aroused and joins the two lovers in their embrace. The three leave the stage for what seems to be a *ménage à trois*, leaving the audience to see Mephistopheles anew as both complicit and desperately lonely. This moment of weakness is somewhat effaced by the demon’s appearance to recite part of the Epilogue, a neat trick to show that the theater is the devil’s work, but creating a romantically-desirous Mephistopheles raises questions about the significance of the relationship between magician and demon and the agency of either character.

Because of the play’s cuts, the rest of the characters in the play are sins and devils, although doubling allows for the clever appearance of the Good Angel as Lechery, and the Bad Angel as the Pope. These actors are marvelous, and the production uses their various talents to great effect in a series of production numbers that reveal why the Seven Deadly Sins would ravish Faustus’s soul and how knowledge can be sexy. Strange stage directions such as “Re-enter MEPHISTOPHILIS with DEVILS, who give crowns and rich apparel to FAUSTUS, dance, and then depart” in scene five were manifested by several belly dancers and fire eaters. When Faustus wishes to “argue of divine astrology,” a woman appears for each planet, and they all move around the professor to the dance of the spheres, coming to a screeching halt only when Faustus slyly asks, “Tell me who made the world?” The Seven Deadly Sins, following hard on the heels of this query, employ physical comedy to great effect before pouring into the audience to berate various tables for their seeming godliness.

Because these shows do indeed delight the viewer’s mind, discomforts about the significance of the staging choices creep in only later. The effect of all this erotic maleficence is a performance that argues women are indeed evil. When Patrick Stewart played Othello as the sole Caucasian in a race-reversed production at the Shakespeare Theatre in 1997, the inadvertent consequence was to make the tragedy into a plantation saga, largely because the powerful protagonist was a white man enacting violence against various

African American characters. While provocative, the production choices worked against the meaning of the play in some reviewers' opinions. The same issue hovers at the edges of this very entertaining play: by casting every role as a woman *except* the main role, does the play unconsciously recreate and indeed celebrate the misogyny of Marlowe's play? With a troupe like Resurgens, it would be tempting to write off this dynamic as an ironic commentary on the role of women in plays of this sort, but even if the performances were meant to be ironic, they are still compulsively reinforcing the association between the feminine and the ugly.

One hates to sound puritanical in the face of such a wildly funny and passionate play. The production does seduce, both through the intensity of Griffin's performance—the other players are hard-pressed to keep up with his speed or his emotional heights—and the wonderfully funny production numbers. Additionally, the capable musicians ensconced on the Juliet balcony created a rich emotional soundtrack for the entire performance. As my companion, a brave soul unversed in Marlowe's plays, asserted as we left the theater, "They had me at the Seven Deadly Sins." So say we all.

Meg Pearson
University of West Georgia

***The Jew of Malta*, dir. Douglas Morse, Grandfather Films (2012)**

Last summer, the attendees at the annual MSA conference in Staunton, Virginia were privileged to view the premiere of Douglas Morse's film of *The Jew of Malta* and to participate in an informative discussion with the director and Ben Curns, the actor who plays Machiavel. The film itself opens with Curns's excellent reading of the Prologue, which, in a clever touch, is delivered from the balcony of the beautiful reproduction of the Blackfriars Playhouse in Staunton. It then turns to Seth Duerr, as Barabas—and it never loses that focus. Duerr dominates the production, not only because he is almost always present, but also because, with the exceptions of Ben Steinfeld and Derek Smith in the roles of Ithamore and Ferneze, he is by far the most powerful actor in the company. As a result, one's opinion of the film depends in large part of what one thinks of his interpretation and performance.

Delivering the verse both beautifully and forcefully, Duerr gives us a strong, dignified Barabas, who seems (physically as well as figuratively) to tower over the other characters; staging and costuming emphasize his dominance: he is dressed in voluminous robes, and often positioned on a platform or seen in close-ups so that he appears much larger than those who surround him. Especially in contrast to the lesser figures in the play, whose leaning toward caricature seemed to be emphasized both intentionally and by inferior acting, he is one of the few characters who never appears ridiculous (except when that is his objective, in the role the French musician). Duerr holds the film together and moves it along with the force of this performance. One result is the inevitable downplaying of the play's farcical elements and contradictions: this is Barabas as a fully realized tragic figure, capable of some feeling for Abigail, but motivated primarily by self-interest and hatred for those who oppose him. When Abigail retrieves his treasure, for example, he delivers the line "Welcome, the first beginner of my bliss!" (2.2.49) directly to the bags of money, remembering his daughter merely as an afterthought. "I am always nearest to myself" (spoken in English as well as Latin; 1.1.188) is his clear, consistent guiding principle. Among the first-night audience, there were those who objected strongly to this portrayal, feeling that it robbed Marlowe's play of its absurd humor. While my own interpretation of the text leans toward emphasizing some of its absurdities, unexpected turns, and strange

juxtapositions, however, I found Duerr's performance—and the film in general—both powerful and persuasive.

Appearing tiny in his rags, Ben Steinfeld as Ithamore makes an excellent foil to Duerr. He gives us the wily slave as a comical evil sprite, who makes up for his deficiencies in intelligence with his dark humor. His duet with Barabas about the misfortunes they have visited on Christians is stunning and he shines even in the inevitably silly scenes with Bellamira and Pilla-Borza.

Derek Smith's Ferneze was also worthy of note. Smith plays the governor as if he were the descendant of one of Richard Burton's lesser kings: drily low-key but powerful, seeming vaguely but not wholly British, he was quite obviously deceitful from the beginning. And this is fortunate, because one of the film's excisions is the sequence with del Bosco, in which Ferneze is offered the support of Spain if he refuses to pay tribute to the Turks. Apparently, this was omitted for technical reasons, but it was one of a group of similar cuts that made the story-line (such as it is) seem much more straightforward, depriving it of some complexity. In this case, it did away with the political triangulation that Emily Bartels and others have discussed. Some in the audience also complained that it left Ferneze without a motive for his betrayal of the Turks, but Smith's portrayal of Ferneze allowed one to believe that he broke the truce simply because he, too, cared for no one but himself—an interpretation that could be justified by Barabas's earlier advice to Abigail, "[Christians] themselves hold it as a principle / Faith is not to be held with heretics" (2.3.314-15)—and certainly, Marlowe's other plays have contained similar betrayals (see particularly the Christian Sigismund's breaking of the truce with Orcanes in *Tamburlaine II*). I was more bothered by the cuts that occurred toward the end—especially Barabas's speech about his intention to play Ferneze and Calymath against each other, reprising his earlier actions. These appear to have been made in the service of moving the action more quickly towards its conclusion, but they had the unfortunate effect, at least in my view, of rendering events more confusing and diminishing the force of Barabas's death.

The remaining actors read Marlowe's lines with varying degrees of facility. Kate Heaney as Abigail did a serviceable, if slightly student-like, job, in a part that is difficult to play (and apparently, according to the director, to cast). Ian Antal and Geoffrey Murphy as a foppish Mathias and a thuggish Ludovico made a good pairing, as did Ian Gould and Paul Klementowicz as the similarly contrasting Jacomo and Bernardine. The Turks spoke with appropriate accents, but the speech patterns of the other performers seemed somewhat erratic. While it makes sense to contrast Barabas and the other Jews, for example, here they seemed to inhabit entirely different universes. The scene-setting was irregular as well, sometimes appearing almost impressionistic (Ferneze sitting alone on a battlement to meet with an unaccompanied Calymath) and at other times fully realized, though from a variety of periods: one of the oddest examples of the latter is when Barabas and the other Jews meet in a relatively modern synagogue (rather than in his home), with an ark that remains open throughout the scene; I would assume that this was done to create visual interest and to set some markers of "Jewishness" against the Maltese crosses in the following scene—but to those with a Jewish background, it could also be a little distracting.

But these are, to my mind, small cavils. I found the film, and especially Duerr's and Steinfeld's performances, quite compelling. I might hesitate to recommend it to those who have not read the play, but I think it would be wonderful to have in the classroom. While it may not be exactly in accord with my own interpretation, the differences should make for a very lively and interesting discussion.

Judith Haber
Tufts University

Dido, Queen of Carthage, Edward's Boys, Levi Fox Hall, King Edward's School, Stratford upon Avon, 20th September 2013

Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage* has not always received the critical attention it deserves, but a recent spate of productions (at the Rose on Bankside in March, Greenwich Theatre in May and at Emmanuel College, Cambridge in November) suggests that its potential in performance is at last being realised. (It is sadly lacking from Canterbury's forthcoming *Marlowe 450* festival.) Scholars have also recently begun to repudiate dismissive claims of the play's status as an undergraduate effort, and increasingly agree that it is unlikely to have been Marlowe's first play. If the proof of a play is in the performing, then productions such as *Edward's Boys' Dido, Queen of Carthage* can only encourage further engagement with Marlowe's vivid, uncompromising play.

This performance in Stratford was billed as a practice run for the following evening, when the company performed in the Banqueting Hall at Christ Church, Oxford. It was prefaced by extracts from Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, extracts from William Gager's 1583 Latin play *Dido* and a brief introductory lecture by Andy Kesson. Kesson contextualised the play with reference to the politics and drama of the 1580s and raised questions about what Aeneas' misogynistic language about the power of love to effeminate men does when spoken by boys, to boys, about boys. Elisabeth Dutton's programme notes are similarly concerned with the play of gender, asking "How will Dido – abandoned woman, queen, and, perhaps, veiled allusion to the iconic Elizabeth I, appear in the shape of a boy? How will the erotic relationship between Jupiter and his young lover Ganymede play out when played between boys? I found these scenes the least compelling of the drama when played by adult males: I suspect this will not be the case when they are returned to boy players."

Edward's Boys are undoubtedly the company best equipped to propose answers to these questions. Over the past nine years, under the expert direction of Perry Mills, they have produced laudable performances of many of the plays from the boy companies' repertory (for example, *Endymion* in 2009, *Westward Ho!* in 2012 and *Galatea* coming up in 2014). Rigorous attention to the details of the text, clear storytelling and formidable professionalism are the hallmarks of *Edward's Boys*, whose hard work has paid off not only in a series of astonishing productions, but in the invaluable resource they have provided to scholars on the performance practices of the Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre and its boy players.

The performance space, the sports hall of King Edward's School initially seemed a grimly institutional environment, even laid out (in preparation for Christ Church) with long banqueting tables, around a raised central platform. However, from the opening moments of the play it was clear that the director had recognised this, and dealt with it with good humour and a savvy nod to the particular nature of his players; boys "playing" at love and war. The entry of Jupiter (Will Lindsay) and Ganymede (Nick Jones) was heralded by a whistle, and the former appeared dressed as a high-school sports teacher, with Ganymede his diminutive pupil, who passed the time in humorously metatheatrical play with two bare-chested action man dolls. Aeneas (Barnaby Bos) made a commanding entrance in cricket whites that contrasted starkly with that of Dido (Daniel Wilkinson) in an Elizabethan style dress of burgundy velvet. Dido and Aeneas were here the helpless puppets of whimsical gods, driven through the tragedy by immortals whose high camp performance style highlighted their careless disinterest in the lives of their mortal instruments. Juno (Hamish de Nett) and Venus (David Fairbairn) were a formidable pair, the former dressed as a forbiddingly strict

schoolmarm in angled glasses, tight bun and tweed skirt suit, and the latter in a tight red dress and fluffy blonde Marilyn Monroe wig.

Comic relief frequently and mercifully undercut the relentless tragedy of the narrative, with Joe Pocknell as Cupid turning in a charmingly mischievous performance that did not shy away from the sexually explicit. The scene in which he teased the lascivious Nurse (James Wilkinson) and encouraged her lustful attentions was both startling and extremely funny. Musical settings by Benjamin Britten also played an important part in underscoring the narrative, with his setting of 'Tell Me the Truth About Love' acting as Cupid's leitmotif. Sound effects were often used with humour; Cupid's arrows hit their marks with a honking noise that made a farce of these moments and the drastic shifts in behaviour they precipitated.

The company made excellent use of their audience, frequently referring to them, with Dido using them as the pictures of her former suitors, but the audience were not always entirely certain of their role in proceedings. Dido's first entry had them all rising to their feet in a semi-spontaneous gesture, but only a few joined in with the toasts, amid some nervous shuffling of feet. Given the banqueting hall atmosphere, it seemed appropriate and natural that the audience were part of the performance, and the withering glances Dido bestowed on those who failed to rise to their feet with sufficient speed demonstrated the boys' confidence in and control over their very particular performance space. While the main action occurred on the raised central platform, the whole of the hall was used (Finlay Hatch's tense, irate Iarbus stalking its edges) and was often cleverly suggestive of the power dynamics at work in the play. Entirely bare of set, the company used their own bodies to build what scenery was needed; a gymnastic structure of boys balanced on each others' shoulders made a cave for Dido and Aeneas to disappear into, and Dido's funeral pyre was formed in a similar fashion by black-robed actors wearing flickering red lights.

The final image of the production, of Juno sweeping the floor of the empty hall after the exit of the suicides and the rest of the cast, lingered as a sung elegy to Dido faded from hearing. It was a melancholy reminder of the wreckage caused by the whimsy of the gods, and suggestive of the bare stage being made ready for the next tragedy. It seemed a fitting close to this meticulous production which is to be lauded not only for the talent on display but also for its evident commitment to thoughtful engagement with Marlowe's text.

Helen Osborne
The Shakespeare Institute

Coda

Dear MSA Members: I was honored to be asked by our president, Paul Menzer, to chair the MSA at MLA session in Chicago earlier this year on the scheduled date of 10 January. I had never been given that honor and privilege before, and I looked forward to the experience. I was set to return from travel on 8 January and to prepare for MLA. Then the first real blizzard of the New Year struck the upper Midwest and the entire Great Lakes Region. My first flight was cancelled, and I returned to fourteen inches of fresh snowfall and wind chills approaching -30 F. Our governor informed us that since Indiana residents could not expect the ice-rutted roads to be safe for at least four days, those who chose to travel would do so at their own risk. It was only at that point that I reluctantly messaged Dr. Menzer and informed him that I, with great regret, would not be able to accept the honor conferred upon me and perform my duties. I was especially sorry because I wanted to give this address to introduce our distinguished panelists. So I reproduce it here. **MLS**

Welcome to the annual MLA panel sponsored by the Marlowe Society of America. I'm honored to be asked to chair it, and it is my privilege to do so. This year's session is titled "Marlowe in Vulnerable Times," aptly named for his era and our own. Our three speakers are well known to most of you all, I'm sure, and each shares a connection to Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, Virginia, to boot.

William "Casey" Caldwell received his MFA and Master of Letters in Shakespeare and Performance at Mary Baldwin, where he won the Andrew Gurr Award for Outstanding M.Litt Thesis. He has published two articles on the early modern theater, and worked for the Shakespeare at Winedale program through the University of Texas at Austin, where he received his B.A. in Philosophy. At this time, he is a Mellon Interdisciplinary Cluster Fellow at Northwestern University, where he is pursuing his doctorate.

His paper, "Feeling Vulnerable: Friendship, Affect, and Sovereignty in Marlowe's *Edward II*," explores the issue of Marlovian representations of vulnerability. The first part of the presentation historicizes early modern emotions and affect and their relationship to "affective vulnerability." The second section applies these issues to Marlowe's historical tragedy: how does the playwright value vulnerability?

Mary-Hill Cole is Professor of History at Mary Baldwin, where her focus is on Tudor history. She teaches two graduate history courses in the MLitt / MFA Shakespeare and Performance program in Staunton. She has won or been nominated for numerous awards in teaching and scholarship. She has been the director of the Virginia Program at Oxford for her institution since 1992 and directed the Honors Program. She is the author of the book *The Portable Queen: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Ceremony*, and has published essays on Anne Boleyn, royal progresses, and other types of Tudor ceremony.

Her paper, "The 1580's and Vulnerability," analyzes Elizabeth's continual attempts to legitimize herself because of her mother's execution and subsequent vilification, well into her own reign as queen. The essay argues that in spite of her efforts, Elizabeth ultimately failed to invalidate the perception of her bastardy and that

her perceived illegitimacy affected her rule and made her vulnerable, which led to events such as the plots involving her cousin Mary Stuart, the attempted Spanish invasion, and the crisis of the succession.

Roslyn Knutson regularly visits Mary Baldwin as a guest professor in the graduate Shakespeare and Performance program. As most of you know, she is a distinguished theater historian, with many articles and two excellent books on the early modern theater. She is Professor Emerita at the University of Arkansas, Little Rock. I had the privilege of watching her teach when she invited me to visit her on campus and observe her pedagogy. She directed the William G. Cooper Honors Program in English for many years and invited me to participate twice in presentations to her department. She helped organize and run the Shakespeare Scene Festival at UALR, which featured performances by elementary, middle school, and high school students of scenes from Shakespeare's plays. She, again twice, invited me to observe and participate as I could. These were invaluable and formative experiences for my career and intellectual development. I cannot tell you how much I learned from sharing in these moments, and how much my own students have profited from my attempts to develop these pedagogical concepts at my own institutions.

Dr. Knutson's second book, *Playing Companies and Commerce in Shakespeare's Time*, analyzes the nature of commercial relations in early modern theater companies. She argues that playing companies such as Shakespeare's tended to think of themselves as cooperative guilds. They were savvy enough to adopt business practices that would allow each company to flourish rather than to engage in unprofitable cutthroat competition that would have set players, playwrights, members of the book trade, and theatrical entrepreneurs against one another.

Her paper that begins our session, "Players and Playbooks on the Move in Vulnerable Times" addresses the idea of professional adaptation in Marlowe's theatrical milieu, how company leadership responded to fluctuations in the commercial environment, which necessarily affected players and their playbooks.

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Editor's Note: MSA Book Reviews provide descriptions and evaluations of recent publications on Marlowe and his period. It gives both new and established Marlowe scholars a forum for expressing their views from a variety of critical approaches. Although reviews of books are the norm, appraisals of recent articles on Marlowe are also welcome. The reviews should be no more than 1000 words in length and should cover the book's purpose, contribution, scholarship, format, and success and achieving its purpose. The editor reserves the right to ask for revision and to make appropriate stylistic changes. A review naturally reflects the opinion of the author rather than the MSA. Reviewers should be members of the organization.

