



Marlowe Society of America Newsletter

Vol. XX, No. 2, Fall 2000

MSA ANNUAL MEETINGS WASHINGTON, DC, 2000

Marlowe and Dramaturgy

Wednesday, 27 December, 5:15-6:30 p.m., Park Tower Suite 8209. Marriott Wardman Park. Presiding: Bruce Edwin Brandt, South Dakota State University.

1. "I'll Play Diana': Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and the 'Acteon Complex,'" Christopher John Wessman, New Jersey City University.
2. "Edmund Kean and *The Jew of Malta*," Stephanie Moss, University of South Florida.
3. "Man Fly: Sam Shepard's Adaptation of *Doctor Faustus*," Johan Herman Callens, Free University of Brussels.

Marlowe and Intertextuality

Thursday, 28 December, 12:00-1:15 p.m., Hoover, Marriott Wardman Park. Presiding Robert Alexander Logan, University of Hartford.

1. "Dido Queen of England," Deanne M. Williams, York University.
2. "Unresolved Ambiguities: Marlowe's Interrogative Dramas," Sara Munson Deats, University of South Florida.
3. "Reinventing Marlowe's Life and Death," Martha Tuck Rozett, State University of New York, Albany.

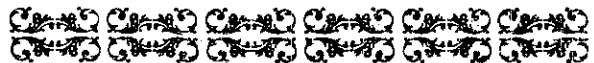
CALL FOR PAPERS

The Marlowe Society solicits papers for its December 2001 sessions at the MLA Convention in New Orleans. Send abstracts or papers of fifteen-minute length by March 1 to Robert Logan, MSA President, 23 Dockerel Road, Tolland, CT 06084.

FROM THE EDITOR

Greetings to all. My name is Rick Bowers and I am pleased to report that the editorial office of *MSAN* has moved north successfully to the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Devoted to the study of Christopher Marlowe, our international organization has much to be proud of and to communicate. I look forward to my role as editor in keeping the channels of communication and information open to all members. Please do contribute all items of notice, interest, and information to me via any format as detailed in the following standard invitation.

MSAN has no backlog and depends upon the membership for its contents. We welcome reviews of films or productions of Renaissance (especially Marlovian) drama, brief articles and notes on Marlowe or other matters of interest to Marlovians, announcements and calls for papers, and ideas or experiences related to teaching Marlowe. The address and deadlines appear on page 2. Inquiries to the editor are welcome.



MARLOWE SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Robert A. Logan, President; Bruce E. Brandt, Vice President; Laurie Maguire, Secretary; Roslyn L. Knutson, Treasurer; Paul Whitfield White, Membership Chair; Rick Bowers, Editor, *MSA Newsletter*; Duke Pesta, Editor, *MSA Book Reviews*

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Membership Fees: We can accept checks for U.S. dollars drawn on U.S. banks or checks in other currencies drawn on a bank in that country. Checks payable in dollars but not drawn on a U.S. bank do not work. Please note that the overseas rate is slightly higher because of the additional postage costs. The membership fee is set in U.S. dollars, but equivalent rates are shown for Canada and the United Kingdom. Overseas members outside of the United Kingdom may pay in U.S. dollars or they may write or e-mail the membership chair to ascertain the equivalent fee in their own currency.

United States	1 year = \$20 3 years = \$50 US Graduate students = \$10
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Other Overseas Memberships	1 year = \$25 US or inquire for equivalent fee 3 years = \$65 US or inquire for equivalent fee Graduate students = \$15 or inquire for equivalent fee

MSA Newsletter publishes reviews of Renaissance, and especially Marlovian, drama; notices of recent and forthcoming publications; announcements; and brief articles or notes of interest to Marlovian scholars. The opinions expressed are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect that of the MSA. The editor reserves the right to refuse items, to ask for revisions, and to make stylistic changes that he deems appropriate. The deadline for the Spring issue is March 1 and for the Fall issue Sept. 1. Send inquiries, announcements, and submissions to:

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MSA Book Reviews publishes reviews of books on Marlowe and his period. Send reviews, suggestions for reviews, and inquiries to the *Reviews* Editor:

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MSA web site <<http://www.sla.purdue.edu/academic/eng/marlowesoc>>
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SLAVERY AND COMMODITY IN *THE JEW OF MALTA*

A summary of the paper presented by Daniel Vitkus, Florida State University, at the MSA session, "Marlowe and the Early Modern Economy," Chicago, 1999.



Daniel Vitkus, Chicago, 1999

In his paper, Daniel Vitkus showed how the commodification of human flesh is represented in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* in various forms: the buying and selling of entire communities ("a kind of kingly trade, to purchase towns," Barabas calls it), the tribute paid to the Turks, the "selling" of Abigail by her father, the prostitution of Bellamira, the purchase of Ithamore at the slave market, and the ransom demanded for Selim-Calymath, who is held hostage at the end of the play. This selling of the flesh in the play is an exaggerated representation of the trade in bodies that was a way of life for Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the Mediterranean region. It is the most spectacular version of the economic activity and desire for gold that motivates all of the characters in the play.

Vitkus began by describing the emergence of England as an important commercial player in the Mediterranean toward the end of the sixteenth century, making the argument that this historical context strongly affected Marlowe's representation of the "triangular trade" between Roman Catholics (including the Maltese), Jewish merchants and middlemen like Barabas, and Muslims (including both the "Moors" of the Barbary coast cities and the Ottoman Turks) in *The Jew of Malta*. There are records from the late sixteenth century of huge gains made by English merchants who invested in the Mediterranean trade and imported luxury goods to England. Next Vitkus pointed to the evidence of strong English anxieties about their new role in the foreign trade economy, and claimed that the wealth of Barabas is a demonized version of the profits made by the English and others from venture capitalism

based in overseas trade.

The selling of human flesh was business-as-usual in the early modern Mediterranean. There was a major slave market in Malta, which was the Christians' answer to the Muslims' slave markets in Tunis, Algiers, and Istanbul. Slaves were bought and sold throughout the region, and captives were either forced to labor (sometimes as galley slaves) or held for ransom. Vitkus claimed that the people of Elizabethan London perceived the Mediterranean maritime sphere, with Malta at its center, to be a violently unstable sea of troubles—and yet one where vast fortunes could be made by trade and plunder. The early modern Mediterranean was the ultimate "free market" in which privateers under many different flags took what they could by force.

The paper then turned to issues of identity formation: claiming that the Mediterranean littoral in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was a place where identity—in terms of moral position, political, and religious affiliation—was frighteningly unstable. International alliances shifted rapidly and territorial changes were constantly taking place, including trade agreements and mutual defense pacts between Christian and Muslim leaders. Furthermore, the widespread practice of piracy (taking the cargo of a vessel by force, including human cargo) was not simply a practice undertaken by "wicked" pirates against "honest" merchants or by treacherous Muslim renegades against law-abiding Christian traders: rather, it was increasingly a free-for-all in which multi-cultural crews, some made up of renegade Muslims, fought each other for spoils, the strong preying on the weak.

Vitkus argued that this historical context provided Marlowe with the perfect setting for a multi-cultural economy of violence, treachery, and greed, where religious difference is dissolved because religious differences are merely an excuse to kill or enslave (and profit from) the Other. Vitkus read the Mediterranean milieu, and Malta in particular, as a symbolic site where shifting alliances and conspiracies lead to the triumph of a slave-trading Christian over the usurious Jew and the tribute-taking Muslim. His concluding observation was that the Christians' anti-semitism is linked to the fear and awe felt toward Turkish-Islamic wealth and power, but that the Christians' greed, cynicism, and hypocrisy implicate them in the same commodification of the flesh practiced by the Muslims and the Jews.

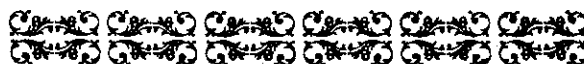
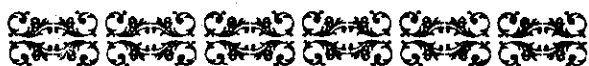
**"TO AFFECT SWEET DIVINITY":
METEMPSYCHOSIS, METAMORPHOSIS, AND
PERFORMANCE IN *DOCTOR FAUSTUS*"**

An abstract of the paper presented by Laura King, University of Vermont, at the MSA session, "Marlowe and the Pagans," Chicago, 1999.



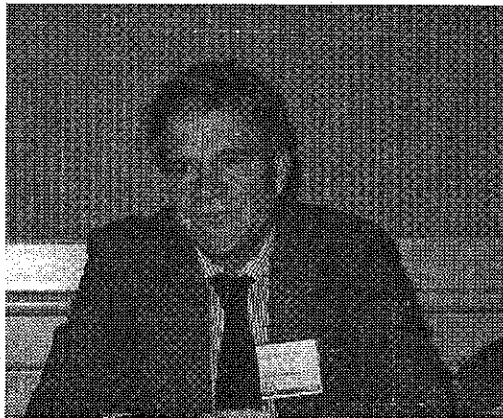
Laura King, Chicago, 1999

King's paper makes the argument that *Doctor Faustus* stages competing existential models simultaneously, producing in effect two irreconcilable plays, a dramatization of the coincidence of contraries that Giordano Bruno adapted from Cusanus. This coincidence is most dramatic at the end of the play, where Faustus's death adumbrates both the familiar torment of the unrepentant damned and the exalted dissolution of the finite self, depending upon whether a viewer's point of reference is *The Castle Of Perseverance* or Bruno's *De Gli Eroici Furori*. Though the coincidence is most evident to those familiar with Bruno's revision of Ovidian myth, it manifests itself in other ways as well, including the rudiments of Faustus's language, the words with which he names himself. Philosophies of grammar assigned existential distinction to first, second, and third persons. Faustus's compulsive alternation between them, up to the moment of his death, slyly effects the transmigration he claims will save him, as "Faustus" becomes "thou" then "I" then "Faustus" again.



"MARLOWE'S GRADUATES"

An abstract of the paper presented by David Riggs, Stanford University, at the MSA session, "Marlowe and the Pagans," Chicago, 1999.



David Riggs, Chicago, 1999

Riggs's paper relates the hermetic magic in Giordano Bruno's *The Expulsion Of The Triumphant Beast* to the Cambridge M.A. course that Marlowe completed in 1587 as well as to the theme of idolatry in *Tamburlaine* which was first performed in the same year. Bruno published six important works of neoplatonic philosophy in England during the years 1584-85, making him the main source for Elizabethan ideas about magic and an important influence on Marlowe that has never been taken into account. Bruno recapitulates the passages in Aesclepius's *Pimander* that taught mortals how to become gods. Marlowe put these ideas on the stage.

RECENT STUDIES IN MARLOWE

Cervo, Nathan A. "Marlowe's *Edward II*." *The Explicator* 58 (Spring 2000): 123-24.

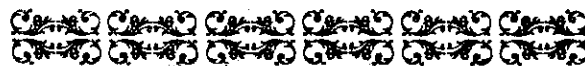
Grande, Troni Y. *Marlovian Tragedy: The Play of Dilation*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1999.

MacDonald, Joyce Green. "Marlowe's Ganymede," *Enacting Gender on the English Renaissance Stage*. Ed. Viviana Comensoli & Anne Russell. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999. 97-113.

McAdam, Ian. *The Irony of Identity: Self and Imagination in the Drama of Christopher Marlowe*. Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1999.

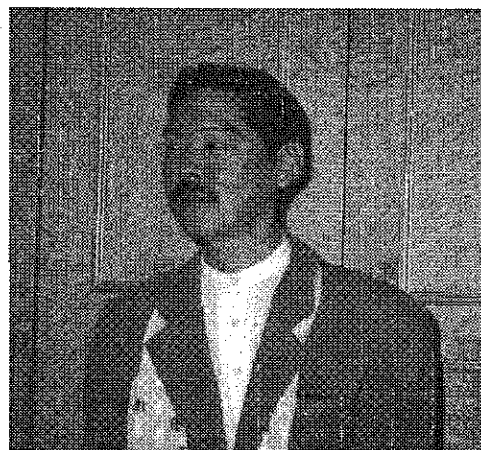
Smith, Peter J. [Performance Review] "*The Jew of Malta*, Almeida Theatre, London, 1999." *Cahiers Elisabethains*. 57 (April 2000): 126-28.

Stump, Donald. "Marlowe's Travesty of Virgil: *Dido* and Elizabethan Dreams of Empire." *Comparative Drama* 34 (Spring 2000): 79-107.



"I KNOW SHE IS A COURTESAN BY HER ATTIRE": CLOTHING AND IDENTITY IN *THE JEW OF MALTA*"

An abstract of the paper presented by Randall Nakayama, San Francisco State University, at the MSA session, "Marlowe and the Early Modern Economy," Chicago, 1999.



Randall Nakayama, Chicago, 1999

This paper examines the relationship between clothing and identity in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*. What was Bellamira wearing to make her identifiable to Ithamore as a courtesan? Bellamira does not dress herself in clothing which is the "uniform" of a prostitute; rather, her attire is that of a lady. The care that Bellamira takes in her garments mirrors the fastidiousness of Barabas' attention to his wardrobe, thus revealing Marlowe's acute awareness regarding the conjunction of clothing and social status, and aligning him with other early modern dramatists, like Jonson and Shakespeare, who underline the connection between costume and identity.

