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Marlowe Society of America Newsletter

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SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE POSTPONED

MSA regretfully announces the postponement of its Second International Marlowe Conference, which had been scheduled for June 15-19 in Hartford, CT. The response to our announcement and call for papers was such that the directors felt it preferable to organize a different style of conference, perhaps at a different time of the year. The decision to postpone was made after considerable evaluation and soul-searching; however, MSA remains committed to the notion of a conference, and as details for a new one emerge, members can be sure that they will be advised about them in a timely manner. Meanwhile, MSA thanks all those who sent material. The organization will be happy to receive suggestions and advice that might be useful for future planning. Your participation will help assure that our rescheduled conference will be a successful one.



President Proser, Vice-President Kuriyana,
and Mark Thornton Burnett, New York 1986

MLA SESSIONS

The two sessions sponsored by the MSA at the MLA convention in New York both attracted good attendance. The first of the sessions was devoted to "Christopher Marlowe as Translator, Playwright, and Rhetorician." This session featured papers by Brian Striar of the University of North Florida, Alan Hagar of Loyola University of Chicago, and Jonathan Hart of Harvard University. Clarke Hulse of the University of Illinois at Chicago served as respondent for the session and capped the event with his penetrating and witty summation. Abstracts of these three papers are included in this issue of the Newsletter.



Clarke Hulse, New York 1986

The second session was titled "Problems in Marlowe's Values and Beliefs." This session featured papers by Richard Hardin of the University of Kansas, Thomas Cartelli of Muhlenberg College, and Mark Thornton Burnett of Wolfson College, Oxford. Abstracts of these papers will appear in the next issue of MSAN.

MARLOWE SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Matthew N. Proser, President
Constance B. Kuriyama, Vice President
Sara M. Deats, Secretary
Robert A. Logan, Treasurer
Bruce E. Brandt, Membership Chairman and
MSA Newsletter Editor
Edward L. Rocklin, MSA Book Reviews Editor

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MSA Newsletter publishes reviews of Renaissance, and especially Marlovian, drama; notices of recent and forthcoming publications; and notices of events or items 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. MSAN reviews are usually around 800 words long, but may occasionally be longer. The beginning of a review should identify the company, the dates of performance, and the director. MSA members are encouraged to announce publications and other items or meetings of interest to the membership. Materials for the next issue of MSAN should be received by October 18, 1987. Send inquiries, announcements, and submissions to Professor Bruce E. Brandt, Editor, MSAN, at the above address.

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

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BUSINESS MEETING

The 1986 business meeting of the Marlowe Society of America was held during the MLA Convention in New York on December 28, at 12:00, in Suite 3748 of the Marriot Marquis Hotel, with President Matthew Proser presiding.

The Treasurer's report indicated that as of December 16, 1986, the Marlowe Society had a balance of \$1,441.24 with projected 1987 expenses of \$1,700. This includes \$1,000 which has been budgeted for the International Marlowe Conference.

There was a good return of ballots in the election of officers, with ballots being received from members in Canada, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, and almost every state in the United States. The incumbent officers, who ran unopposed, were reelected: Matthew Proser, President; Constance Brown Kuriyama, Vice-President; Sara Munson Deats, Secretary; Robert Logan, Treasurer; and Bruce Brandt, Membership Chair.

Vice-President Kuriyama reported that the proceedings of the First International Conference, which have been delayed by the publisher, should be available within the next few months.

The bulk of the meeting was devoted to discussing preparations for the Second International Conference, including fees, notification of prospective participants, accommodations, entertainment, speakers, and selection of papers. Unfortunately, the conference has now been postponed.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The 1987 conference of the Medieval Association of the Midwest will be held at Cleveland State University in Cleveland, Ohio, on October 3, 1987. The theme of the conference will be "Teaching: The Roots of Medieval Culture Vernacular, Classical, and Judeo-Christian."

Features of the conference include an on-site seminar by CSU's Spenser Encyclopedia staff on the use of computers in the humanities; a one-credit graduate workshop on "Teaching in the Middle Ages," designed for secondary school teachers; and a display of books for sale by Zubal's, a nationally known, Cleveland-based dealer in antiquarian and scholarly books.

Papers on all aspects of medieval culture and cultural history are welcome. Those with an emphasis on teaching in the middle ages are especially welcome. The call for papers which was sent to MSAN requested either two copies of the paper or a 250 word abstract by May 22, 1987. Unfortunately, this deadline coincides with MSAN's anticipated publication date, but those interested should contact Professor Earl Anderson, Department of English, Cleveland State University, Cleveland, Ohio, 44115. The telephone number is 216-687-4758.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE: THE RENAISSANCE OVID

An abstract of the paper presented at the MSA Annual Meeting, New York 1986, by Brian Striar.

Christopher Marlowe's verse translations of Ovid's Amores have been traditionally regarded as juvenile, unskilled experiments which reflect his ignorance of Latin and lack of poetic invention. The fact is that Ovid was perhaps the most difficult, complex, ambiguous, and rhetorical of the Roman poets, and Marlowe's "mistakes" are actually quite sophisticated renderings of these Ovidian complexities and therefore reveal his exacting knowledge of Latin and grasp of the Ovidian voice. Even the early anatomy poetry of Ovid had its serious side, and Ovid was searching to reconcile these elements and find his true voice (elegist or epic poet). Marlowe followed in like fashion. The culmination of Marlowe's search occurs in Hero and Leander, a work whose mixed tone has ever baffled critics, but which actually represents the attainment of that ambiguous Ovidian voice.



Brian Striar, New York 1986

It is in his translations of the Amores that Marlowe embarks upon the search for his own poetic voice and poetic identity, as does Ovid. What happens is that his voice ultimately becomes the same as Ovid's, that mixture of jocund and sincere which is so

perfectly meshed that we can never really and finally locate and identify the "true persona" within the poetry. Marlowe recreates Ovid in English through translations of philological and stylistic precision, and such close and sophisticated translation reveals his acquaintance with the Continental theories of translation of Brunetti, Manetti, and Sebillot, rather than the very few and much less sophisticated theories in England. We can see through illustrative passages, such as Amores I.1,3,15, II.1, and III.15, that Marlowe emerges truly as the Renaissance Ovid.

ICARUS AND DEDALUS FUSED: A NEW LOOK AT MARLOWE'S CENTRAL OVIDIAN OVERREACHER ALLUSION

An abstract of the paper presented at the MSA Annual Meeting, New York 1986, by Alan Hager.

By an odd, yet traditional Christian fusion, Marlowe develops a mythological image for his "over-reaching heroes and heroines out of both Dedalus and



Alan Hager, New York 1986

his son, Icarus. Faustus and Dido and others become the focus of our "admiration and commiseration" because Marlowe's tragic heroes share the qualities of the pro-

vidental genius of intellect and creation who survives with those of a child-like victim of mere impulse in a world where the heavens conspire mortals' overthrow and fall at random. In an early Marlovian image of Icarus, for example, we have the spectacle of the heroine Dido, seeking in her fantasy for the absolute freedom of suicide for love, now simultaneously inventing and dressing herself in her own wings, flying and falling (that combined action of father Dedalus and son Icarus):

He frame me wings of wax like Icarus,
And ore his ships will soar unto the Sunne,
That they may melt and I fall in his arnes.

This grand synthesis, in part developed by a creative mistranslation of Ovid's version in Metamorphoses, allows for that peculiar hero of Marlovian tragedy, and its offspring in, for example, Shakespeare's Gloucester, Hotspur, and Edmund. The hero is at once a fully mature, wary, and wily genius, apparently beloved of the "Gods" because of his very insuperable vitality, and yet a mere impetuous child, unfairly victimized by a malevolent universe.

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE: MARLOWE'S USE OF APOSTROPHE

An abstract of the paper presented at the MSA Annual Meeting, New York 1986, by Jonathan Hart.

Whether it invokes gods, addresses the absent or dead, or personifies inanimate objects, apostrophe is more important than the attention it has received in recent times. Except for Jonathan Culler, theorists and critics have not looked closely enough at this trope, which calls attention to the problems of representation. Marlowe made use of this trope, which calls in the unseen from the outside and tries to make it visible, so that it makes something of nothing. By using apostrophe, many of Marlowe's protagonists attempt to use language to control the world, to exert their power, or to deny their lack of power. If in Dido Achates and Aeneas lament the inability of their apostrophes to reanimate the dead and rewrite history, Dido can show pleasure and hubris in her apostrophic rhapsodies. Tamburlaine also represents an ambivalence between the magnificence of Promethean rhetoric and the emptiness of that rhetoric. Tamburlaine dies defiantly in apostrophe, but his addresses to the dead Zenocrate, as beautiful as they are, can become grotesque in the context of his preservation and transportation of her

body as if she were alive. Faustus is also apostrophic, revealing his ambivalent self, in his attempts to manipulate the forces of good and evil. Marlowe's protagonists have literary longings. Most of them like to



Jonathan Hart, New York 1986

die with the word "die" as if its utterance signifies unity of word and event, as if they control both. Marlowe uses apostrophe to represent the problems his characters have in reconciling their inner desires and imaginations with the outside world.

THE MASSACRE AT PARIS

Presented at the American Shakespeare Repertory Theater, New York City, by the resident company Directed by Janet Farrow and Douglas Overtoom.

January 15, 1987, marked the "New World Premiere" of Marlowe's Massacre at Paris, presented by the American Shakespeare Repertory at their intimate theater on 22nd Street in Manhattan. The stated purpose of their production was to "concentrate on what made the play so popular with the general public at the time of origin: easily identifiable character types, simple plot line, and lots of action." At the same time, the ASR presented The Massacre at Paris as "play for our times," using modern costumes, music, and

staging to set the play in the twentieth century. The result was an interesting and provocative interpretation of the text, and a performance with very few dull moments.

Just before the performance began, an announcement was made by one of the directors, Janet Farrow. "You will be treated as Huguenots," was her warning to the audience. With this unnerving pronouncement as a prologue, the actors made their entrances for the wedding scene in the manner of a military procession. While the feverish choral music of Carl Orf's Carmina Catulli played, brutal guards armed with automatic weapons herded a group of prisoners into the performance space. The guards' costumes were modern military in style and olive drab in color, resembling Nazi uniforms. Their captives were meant to be Huguenot prisoners, but the prisoners' striped clothing resembled the uniforms of World War II concentration camp inmates.

The opening moments of the play established an atmosphere of terror and violence. The potential for sudden, brutal murder, preserved in the plotting whispers of Marlowe's villains, was maintained throughout the performance, breaking out periodically into the shocking excesses of poisoning, massacre, and assassination. The ASR exploited the dramatic potential of their small, crowded space, spilling the action over into the audience area. Actors moved in between the spectators, Huguenot prisoners stood in among them, and the Catholic guards trained their guns and glares on the members of the audience.

The Nazi/Catholic and Jew/Huguenot parallels proved to be effective devices of theatrical iconography, underlining Marlowe's Protestant propagandism and linking his time to our own age. The connections were clearly but not heavy-handedly drawn; the swastika or Star of David did not appear, but the point was made that the persecution of a religious minority for the sake of gaining political power is a phenomenon not limited to the sixteenth century.

The ASR's modernization of Marlowe worked particularly well at certain points in the play, and especially during the massacre scenes. The massacre was enacted using a modern warning siren as the signal for the slaughter to commence. Nylon stocking masks were worn as "burgonets," and flashlights were used instead of torches. The beams of the flashlights cut across the darkened stage onto the distorted faces of the massacrers, and the continual sounds of sirens and moaning were heard. With the action spilling over into the audience, a frightening atmosphere of chaotic violence was maintained, and scenes of modern-day war and terrorism were brought to mind.

In another scene, that in which the body of the Lord Admiral is hung up in a tree, Marlowe's black humor was given a gruesome, modern twist. Instead of a displayed corpse, a "body bag" was dragged onto the stage and hung up. The audience responded to this, as they did to several other moments of excessive cruelty, with nervous laughter.

At certain points in the production, the interpretations of the text threatened to cross the line from the shocking to the offensive and from the controversial to the unsuitable. Two of the characters were interpreted as stock figures, diminishing the audience's sympathy for them. Charles IX was played as a stumbling, bottle-swilling drunkard, and his successor to the throne, Henry III, as a stereotyped homosexual, cavorting and cuddling with his "minions." Also, in one unauthorized, silent scene, Catherine de Medici and the Cardinal of Lorraine were shown performing a strange ritual of Catholic voodoo which brought about the death of Charles.

Although the production employed contemporary trappings, the ASR followed the original text fairly closely. Only a handful of scenes were cut, and only the ending was significantly altered. While Marlowe's ending emphasizes both Henry's desire to revenge his murder upon the Catholics and his desire to unite the French cause with that of England, the ASR's version removed all of the references to England or Queen Elizabeth and placed the final emphasis upon bloody vengeance. Instead of a funeral march, the play ended with the Huguenots chanting fiercely, "Tuez, tuez, tuez!" The concluding scene of the ASR's production revealed the Huguenots as a faction who, given their chance, would be just as bloodthirsty and unscrupulous as the Catholics had been before them. The final impression was of a Navarre transformed from righteous hero into vengeful king and of a future in which the cycle of revenge would continue.

Despite the playbill's assertion that The Massacre at Paris "is a mutilated curiosity, the shadow of a play," the ASR breathed life into what remains to us of Marlowe's original text and put on a stimulating and entertaining performance. The ASR has now performed all of Marlowe's plays during the last three years. At the time of this writing, the company is "in limbo," according to co-founder and actor/manager Douglas Overtoom, and may not be able to continue due to financial problems, lack of support, and "growing pains." The company's future, if any, will be as a touring company. If this is the case, New York will lose a much-needed forum for the performance of Elizabethan drama.

Daniel J. Vitkus

Columbia University

RECENT STUDIES IN MARLOWE

- Beckerman, Bernard. "Scene Patterns in Doctor Faustus and Richard III." Shakespeare and His Contemporaries: Essays in Comparison. Ed. E. A. J. Honigmann. Manchester, Eng.: Manchester University Press, 1986. 31-41.
- Covella, Francis Dolores. "The Choral Nexus in Doctor Faustus." SRL: Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900 26 (1986): 201-215.
- Danson, Lawrence. "Continuity and Character in Shakespeare and Marlowe." SRL: Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900 26 (1986): 217-234.
- Eriksen, Roy T. "Marlowe's Petrarch: In Morte di Madonna Laura." Cahiers Elisabéthains: Etudes sur la Pré-Renaissance et la Renaissance Anglaises 29 (April 1986): 13-25.
- Leech, Clifford. Christopher Marlowe: Poet for the Stage. Ed. Anne Lancashire. New York: AMS, 1986. vii + 250 pp.
- MacIntyre, Jean. "Doctor Faustus and the Later Shakespeare." Cahiers Elisabéthains: Etudes sur la Pré-Renaissance et la Renaissance Anglaises 29 (April 1986): 27-37.
- Riehle, Wolfgang. "Marlowe's Doctor Faustus and Renaissance Italy: Some Observations and Suggestions." Medieval Studies Conference, Aachen 1983: Language and Literature. Bamberger Beiträge zur Englischen Sprachwissenschaft, 15. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1984. 185-195.
- Ronan, Clifford J. "Pharsalia 1.373-378: Roman Parricide and Marlowe's Editors." Classical and Modern Literature: A Quarterly 6 (1986): 305-309.
- Stroup, Thomas B. "Ritual in Marlowe's Plays." Drama in the Renaissance: Comparative and Critical Essays. AMS Studies in the Renaissance, 12. New York: AMS, 1986. 21-44.
- von Brentano, Alisa B. "Marlowe and Melville." Dissertation Abstracts International 46 (1986): 2687A.

von Rosador, K. Tetzeli. "Supernatural Soliciting: Temptation and Imagination in Doctor Faustus and Macbeth." Shakespeare and His Contemporaries: Essays in Comparison. Ed. E. A. J. Honigmann. Manchester, Eng.: Manchester University Press, 1986. 42-59.

Wymer, Rowland. "When I Behold the Heavens: A Reading of Doctor Faustus." English Studies: A Journal of English Language and Literature 67 (1986): 505-510.

FORTHCOMING

Mark Thornton Burnett, "Marlovian Imitation and Interpretation in Heywood's The Four Prentices of London," Cahiers Elisabéthains 32 (October 1987).

This short article suggests that Heywood Used Tamburlaine as a primary source in The Four Prentices, and offers an interpretation of the changes he made in his borrowing from Marlowe's play.

Mark Thornton Burnett, "Tamburlaine and the Renaissance Concept of Honor," Studia Neophilologia, late 1988/early 1989.

A shorter version of this article was the paper presented at the MSA meeting in New York, 1986.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

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Materials for the Fall issue should be received by October 18. Inquiries to the editor are welcome.