



Marlowe Society of America Newsletter

Vol. IX, No. 1, Spring 1989

MARLOWE SOCIETY ELECTIONS

This is an election year for the Marlowe Society, and all members are invited to participate in the nominating process. In response to this call for nominations, a slate of candidates will be prepared by the nominating committee. A ballot will then be distributed in the Fall Newsletter, and the returns will be tallied at the annual business meeting.

The Society has five elected officers: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Membership Chair. Given the nature and size of the MSA, we do not anticipate fielding two candidates for each elective office. However, there will be both the opportunity and the need for "new blood" on the executive board. Matthew Proser, who has served two terms as President, finds that his teaching and sabbatical plans will not allow him to devote sufficient time to the organization during the next two years, and reluctantly does not plan to stand for reelection. Connie Kuriyama, our current Vice President, will run for President, and Sara Deats, our present Secretary, will run for Vice President. Treasurer Bob Logan and Membership Chair Bruce Brandt will stand for reelection.

Members may run for any office, but the Nominating Committee is eager to hear from anyone who would like to serve as secretary. The position includes responsibility for the official minutes of the Society, and consequently requires a commitment to attend the annual meeting held at the MLA Convention.

In addition to being placed on the ballot by the Nominating Committee, the MSA Constitution provides that nominations may be put forward by any member of the Society, and three such nominations will place a candidate on the ballot.

Correspondence concerning the election and nominations should be sent to Professor Brandt, who will head the Nominating Committee: English Department, Box 2275A, South Dakota State University, Brookings, SD 57007 [Phone: 605-688-4058]. The deadline for nominations is August 1, 1989.

NOMINATIONS FOR THE ROMA GILL AWARD

The Marlowe Society's Roma Gill Award is presented biennially for a significant contribution to Marlowe studies. It has been awarded twice previously. The 1985 Award (for the period 1983/4) was given to Julia Briggs for "Marlowe's Massacre at Paris: A Reconsideration," RES 34 (1983): 257-278. The 1987 Award (for 1985/6) was given to David Ormerod and Christopher Wortham for Dr. Faustus: The A-text (University of Western Australia Press, 1985).

The 1989 Roma Gill Award will be for a significant contribution to Marlowe studies published during 1987 or 1988. The entire membership is encouraged to nominate candidates for the award. Please send your suggestions concerning the best article, book, or part of a book on Marlowe to Professor Constance B. Kuriyama, who is chairing the 1989 Roma Gill Award Committee: Department of English, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas 79409-4530. Professor Kuriyama would appreciate receiving all nominations by September 1, 1989. Offprints or copies, especially of materials that may not be readily available, would be appreciated.

Members may wish to call their own publications to the attention of the committee. Note that officials of the Society are not eligible for the Award. Should no publication be deemed worthy of the award, it will not be given.

GILL VISIT

Eminent Marlovian Roma Gill will be visiting the United States between September 25 and October 13th of this year. She will be available to speak to college or high school classes in the general vicinity of New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island. Anyone interested in arranging a lecture by Professor Gill should contact her directly: Dr. Roma Gill, 1 Park Close, Templar Road, Oxford OX2 8NP, England.

DAVID WEBB
WINS HOFFMAN PRIZE

David Webb, of St. Martin's College in Lancaster, is the first winner of the Calvin and Rose Hoffman Prize for Distinguished Publication on Christopher Marlowe. Mr. Hoffman's bequest is intended to go in its entirety to anyone who can prove that Marlowe wrote Shakespeare, but failing this, the interest on the bequest is offered annually to the best piece of writing submitted on the interrelationship of the works of Marlowe and Shakespeare. The prize is administered by the Headmaster of the King's School, in Canterbury. This year's prize, adjudicated by Stanley Wells, the General Editor of the Oxford Shakespeare and Director of the Shakespeare Institute of the University of Birmingham, was worth £6,000.

Webb's essay, a part of a book he is writing about Marlowe, discusses Marlowe in the context of Shakespeare's use of metadrama, the way his plays draw attention to themselves as plays. "Instead of being seduced into suspending disbelief," he says, "an audience finds itself jerked into the awareness that it is watching a play--as it is when Hamlet mounts his own play and even lectures the actors on how to act, or Cleopatra, played by a boy actor on the Elizabethan stage, anticipates with horror the moment when 'some squeaking Cleopatra' would 'boy my greatness.'"

Webb looks for a similar preoccupation in Marlowe. He finds that in his major plays the characters adopt rôles which Marlowe calls attention to as rôles. He attributes this, "in a way that would have disappointed Calvin Hoffman perhaps," to the experience of writing for an increasingly realistic and professional theater which Shakespeare and Marlowe shared, rather than to Marlowe having written Shakespeare's plays.

REVIEWERS WANTED

MSAN has long sought to provide a forum for reviews of current productions of Renaissance drama. The Marlowe Society, of course, has a particular interest in productions of Marlowe's plays, but we have always cast our reviewing net more widely to include the plays of Marlowe's contemporaries and successors on the Renaissance stage. With our scattered membership, we should be able to share with each other the details of numerous productions. When you next see a production of a Renaissance play, please consider writing a brief review for the Newsletter. MSAN reviews have usually been around 800 words (3 pages) long. Photos are welcome. At the beginning of the review, reviewers should identify the company, the dates of performance, and the director. Reviews for the Fall issue should be received by Sept. 25, 1989.

MARLOWE SOCIETY OF AMERICA

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Edward L. Rocklin, MSA Book Reviews Editor

All business and organizational correspondence except for memberships should be addressed to the President:

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New memberships and renewals should be sent to the Membership Chairman:

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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. 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 Sept. 25, 1989. 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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MSA BUSINESS MEETING

The 1988 business meeting of the Marlowe Society of America was held during the MLA Convention in New Orleans on December 29, at 2:00 in the Newberry Room of the New Orleans Hilton, with Matthew Proser presiding.

The Treasurer's report indicated that as of December 20, the Society had a balance of \$1512.19 plus £21 in the MSA account in Sheffield, England. Projected expenses for 1989 are \$700.

Proser acknowledged the publication by AMS Press of the proceedings of the Marlowe Society, "A Poet & a filthy Playmaker: New Essays on Christopher Marlowe", and thanked the editors--Kenneth Friedreich, Roma Gill, and Constance B. Kuriyama--for their excellent work.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to discussing the following issues: the possibility of an annual publication; the expansion of future sessions to include Marlowe and his contemporaries; a forthcoming membership drive; the Roma Gill Award; and the procedures for the 1989 election of officers. Information on the election of officers and on the Roma Gill Award are included in this Newsletter.

THE WARS OF THE ROSE

As some members may have learned from very scanty coverage by The New York Times and NBC News at Sunrise, Museum of London archaeologists have succeeded in unearthing Henslowe's Rose Theater, where Marlowe's major plays, Kyd's Spanish Tragedy, and some of Shakespeare's and Jonson's early works were performed. The discovery was made in December of 1988, shortly before Christmas.

According to Julian Bowsher, the on-site supervisor of excavations, the Museum's archaeologists had been waiting some time for a chance to explore the site, located on Park Street between Rose Alley and the access road to Southwark Bridge. When Imry Merchant Developers purchased the land and demolished the existing office building in order to construct a larger high-rise structure, the opportunity arose for exploratory excavation. The archaeologists sank a trench parallel to Rose Alley, and approximately two meters below present ground level found the stone foundations of the corner of a polygonal building. While they were sure they had found an authentic Elizabethan structure, they were not certain it was the Rose until March, when the first remains of the stage began to be detected. That the ruins are those of Marlowe's theater is now beyond doubt.

About 75% of the Rose's foundations have been uncovered. Part of the site extends under Park Street to the South and a city depot to the East, and is therefore inaccessible. Nevertheless, the shape of

the theater (an irregular polygon of approximately 14 sides) can be determined from what has been found, as well as the shape of the stage, which was not a rectangular platform as shown in the Swan drawing. The pit of the theater, paved with a hard, cement-like mortar, sloped downward toward the stage to give the groundlings a better view and allow for drainage. The stage rested on foundations made of stone, brick, and scraps of wood. Although the site has been damaged by later incursions, including a large cesspool and piles sunk to support the earlier building, it is in a remarkable state of preservation. The Rose now constitutes the single most important source of information we have concerning the actual structure of Elizabethan playhouses.

From the moment of its discovery, the Rose became a battleground in the ongoing war between commercial and cultural interests in metropolitan London. Since Imry Merchant Developers must pay for the excavation, they have understandably shown less enthusiasm for the discovery than archaeologists, Renaissance scholars, and the literate general public. Continuance of the archaeological work had to be negotiated week by week, until finally a ten-week extension was granted during the first week in March. On May 15, the site was scheduled to be destroyed as construction workers moved in.

However, by early May it became apparent that the site was far richer and more important than anyone had anticipated, and serious efforts to preserve it began. The MP from Southwark, Simon Hughes, requested that the Rose be scheduled as a national historic site, and the issue was argued in the House of Commons. Such scheduling prevented the developer from destroying the site outright, and various options for preservation began to be proposed, including one by Sam Wanamaker, the guiding spirit of the Globe reconstruction now under way on the other side of Park Street, a short distance from the Rose.

The developers proposed to cover the Rose with a layer of sand and work on top of it. This would mean certain further damage to the site, since at least ten new piles would be sunk through it, and the movement of heavy machinery was likely to cause more damage in spite of the sand. As debate continued, Imry prepared to begin construction as scheduled. A number of prominent actors, including Dustin Hoffman, visited the Rose, and over the weekend of May 13-14 preservationists mobilized a demonstration. A group including Ian McKellan and Dame Peggy Ashcroft held an overnight candlelight vigil at the site, and on Monday morning blocked the construction machinery trying to enter and begin work. Later the same day, Environmental Secretary Nicholas Ridley announced that construction would be delayed for up to a month until some method of preservation could be agreed upon.

For the benefit of scholars as well as the general public, the most desirable option is obviously total preservation of the Rose. Sinking piles through the only known remains of an Elizabethan playhouse is about as outrageous as damaging Stonehenge or Westminster Abbey in the interest of putting up yet another high-rise. Members who would like to campaign for total preservation of the Rose can write to the following address:

Michael Hammerson
 Area Officer (Southwark and Lambeth)
 The Museum of London
 Department of Greater London Archaeology
 6-8 Cole Street
 London SE1 4YL
 Tel. 01-403 2920
 FAX 01-600 1058

Mr. Hammerson will direct the letters he receives into the most appropriate channels. Members who are planning to visit England this summer may want to study the site, which can be reached by exiting the underground at Mansion House and walking across Southwark Bridge.

The Marlowe Society will sponsor a presentation on the Rose at the MLA Convention in Washington this December.

STUDIES IN MARLOWE

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