

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-12620-6 — Christopher Marlowe, Theatrical Commerce, and the Book Trade
Edited by Kirk Melnikoff, Roslyn L. Knutson
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CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE, THEATRICAL COMMERCE, AND THE BOOK TRADE

Presenting the first exploration of Christopher Marlowe's complex place in the canon, this collection reads Marlowe's work against an extensive backdrop of repertory, publication, transmission, and reception. Wide-ranging and thoughtful chapters consider Marlowe's deliberate engagements with the stage and print culture, the agents and methods involved in the transmission of his work, and his cultural reception in the light of repertory and print evidence. With contributions from major international scholars, the volume considers all of Marlowe's oeuvre, offering illuminating approaches to his extended animation in theatre and print, from the putative theatrical debut of *Tamburlaine* in 1587 to the most current editions of his work.

KIRK MELNIKOFF is Associate Professor of English at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He is currently President of the Marlowe Society of America and was the 2013 co-winner of the Calvin and Rose G. Hoffman Prize for a Distinguished Publication on Marlowe. He is the editor of *Edward II: A Critical Reader* (2016), has edited two volumes of essays on Marlowe's contemporary Robert Greene, and is author of *Elizabethan Publishing and the Makings of Literary Culture* (2018).

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University of North Carolina, Charlotte

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University of Arkansas, Little Rock



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Kirk Melnikoff dedicates this book to his dissertation director James R. Siemon, who first introduced him to Marlowe and his world.

Roslyn L. Knutson dedicates this book to Robert A. Logan and Sara Munson Deats, whose friendship and professional support encouraged her to look more closely at Marlowe's plays in repertory.

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Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	x
<i>To the Reader</i> David Scott Kastan	xvi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xviii
<i>Notes on the Text</i>	xix
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xx
Introduction	
<i>Kirk Melnikoff and Roslyn L. Knutson</i>	I
PART I MARLOWE AT WORK	
<i>Argument</i>	
1 Marlowe's <i>Lucan</i> : Winding-sheets and Scattered Leaves	II
<i>Sarah Wall-Randell</i>	
2 Marlowe in Repertory, 1587–1593	26
<i>Roslyn L. Knutson</i>	
3 Marlowe in Miniature: <i>Dido, Queen of Carthage</i> and the Children of the Chapel Repertory	41
<i>Eoin Price</i>	
4 'Then breath a while': Compression, Kinesis, and Temporality in <i>The Massacre at Paris</i>	56
<i>Evelyn Tribble</i>	
5 Alarums: <i>Edward II</i> and the Staging of History	68
<i>Lucy Munro</i>	
6 Doctor Faustus's Leg	81
<i>Genevieve Love</i>	

viii	<i>Contents</i>	
	PART II TRANSMITTING MARLOWE	93
	<i>Argument</i>	
7	Making Marlowe <i>Adam G. Hooks</i>	97
8	Making a Scene; or <i>Tamburlaine the Great</i> in Print <i>Claire M. L. Bourne</i>	115
9	Marlowe's Early Books: The <i>Contention</i> and a 'Marlowe Effect' <i>Peter Kirwan</i>	134
10	Richard Jones, <i>Tamburlaine the Great</i> , and the Making (and Remaking) of a Serial Play Collection in the 1590s <i>Tara L. Lyons</i>	149
11	Companionate Publishing, Literary Publics, and the Wit of Epyllia: The Early Success of <i>Hero and Leander</i> <i>Andr�as Kis�ery</i>	165
12	Thomas Heywood and the Publishing of <i>The Jew of Malta</i> <i>Richard Dutton</i>	182
	PART III MARLOWE RECEIVED	195
	<i>Argument</i>	
13	Allusions to Marlowe in Printed Plays, 1594 <i>Tom Rutter</i>	199
14	The Devil and <i>Doctor Faustus</i> <i>Paul Menzer</i>	214
15	Booking Marlowe's Plays <i>David McInnis</i>	228
16	Marlowe's Lost Play: 'The Maiden's Holiday' <i>Matthew Steggle</i>	243
17	' <i>The best of Poets in that age</i> ': Christopher Marlowe's Posthumous Reputation <i>J. A. Downie</i>	258
	<i>Bibliography</i>	272
	<i>Index</i>	304

Figures

- Frontispiece ‘Satan Tempting Booth to the Murder of Lincoln’ by John L. Magee from Theatrical Scrapbook B.7.5 Edwin Booth. Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library
- 4.1 Scene divisions in *The Massacre of Paris*, 1987, ed. Esche, pp. 332–3. Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library page 60
- 4.2 Stage directions in *The Massacre of Paris*, 1596?, B2^r. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California 61
- 8.1 The recycled portrait of Tamburlaine from 1 & 2 *Tamburlaine*, 1590, F2^v–F3^r. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California 121
- 8.2 Stage direction calling for ‘the battell’ from 1 & 2 *Tamburlaine*, 1590, B6^v–B7^r. Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California 125
- 9.1 Stage directions and broken text in *The Contention*, 1594, A2^v. Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library 139
- 9.2 Typography in *The Contention*, 1594, F2^r. Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library 142

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Notes on Contributors

xi

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Notes on Contributors

xiii

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Notes on Contributors

xv

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To the Reader

Even after critical fashion has focused our attention on the materiality of the book, we still usually think that the body of the text differs from the embodied text. The body of the text is that portion of the embodied text that we know we must read to think we have read the book, while some of what is ‘embodied’ almost always seems optional. The theoretical distinction underwriting all this is, of course, that between text and ‘paratext’, which Genette, however, called ‘peritext’, but what do authors know?

This, then, is optional for you to read, as this particular paratextual genre has always been thought to be. Yet, as scholarly attention has begun to focus on early modern habits of reading almost as much as the early modern texts we read, we have learned to attend to their gestures of solicitation. The ubiquitous prefatory ‘To the Reader’ provides interesting reading material for scholars rethinking what reading is – or what authors or publishers think or, better, hope it should be.

Readers are regularly flattered in these addresses as ‘Learned’, ‘Judicious’ and ‘Courteous’. They are said to be ‘Honest’ (or more generally ‘Virtuous’); they are often identified as ‘Gentle’ (though particularly as ‘Gentlemen’, changing the meaning of the adjective). The writers nonetheless hope their readers, regardless of gender or status, will be ‘Friendly’, although the anxiety that they might not be is, however, clearly evident in an address to the ‘Friendly Censurers’. The desire is always that the readings will be ‘Favorable’, but the recognition is that readers are always free to ‘judge’ as they will, and that opinions about the book can be ‘thine or any man’s for a testar’. That’s the truth about the epistle ‘To the Reader’: it is always implicitly addressed ‘To any that will read it’ and written in the knowledge that the desired reading cannot be compelled.

This book will have cost somewhat more than sixpence, but the same is true here. No amount of flattery will affect what you think of this collection. I will say, however, that it is a book I have always hoped would be written. Marlowe has been thought about mainly as an outrageous bad

To the Reader

xvii

boy, brilliant but deliberately provocative, edgy and shameful, especially seen in relation to a Shakespeare who has been too easily thought of as capacious and inclusive, ‘gentle’ and ‘sweet’, the voice and guarantor of our best instincts about ourselves. But the comparison framed that way arguably misrepresents both playwrights.

By 1675, Edward Phillips would call Marlowe ‘a kind of second *Shakespear*’ (Aar2^v). It would, however, be better to say he was the *first* Shakespeare, or that Shakespeare should be said to be a kind of second Marlowe. Both were born in 1564, but at the time of Marlowe’s too-early death at the end of May in 1593, he had influenced Shakespeare much more so than the other way around; also by 1593, Marlowe must have been recognized as the better playwright, though his genius from the beginning seemed to be of the sort that might easily burn out quickly.

But true or not, these are stories we tell of authors – authors implausibly removed from the necessary circumstances of artistic possibility, whether in print or on stage. Some of the most interesting work on Shakespeare in the past two decades has returned him to the networks of individuals and institutions in which he wrote; in which his plays were performed, printed and published; and that enabled his audiences and readers to encounter them. This is a scholarly activity that does not diminish his remarkable artistry but recognizes and recovers what motivates it and what provides the conditions of its realization.

Christopher Marlowe, Theatrical Commerce, and the Book Trade does the same for Marlowe, whose talent and temperament, arguably even more so than Shakespeare’s, might easily seem to be defiantly independent of the collaborations, of the contingencies, that enable (and sometimes inhibit) what an artist can achieve. This is, therefore, a volume that is long overdue, and, in your engagement with it, ‘Gentle Reader, I wish thee all happiness’.

David Scott Kastan

Acknowledgements

This volume began at the Seventh International Marlowe Society of America Conference in 2013 where versions of a number of the chapters gathered here were first presented. At the time, we recognised that new and exciting approaches to Marlowe in repertory and Marlowe and the book were emerging, and we wanted to make sure that this research had a solid venue through which it could be disseminated. We are obliged to Rebecca Niles for her digital design work, and to Mark West and the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, English Department for paying the costs associated with our cover image and appendices. We owe a significant debt to Sarah Stanton at Cambridge University Press, whose wisdom and support were essential as our plans for the volume began to take shape. The diligent and knowledgeable staff at the Folger Shakespeare Library assisted us throughout the project; it was at the Folger that we copyedited and finalized most of these chapters.

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Notes on the Text

Full citations for all parenthetical and note references are listed among the three sections of the bibliography: (1) Early Modern Marlowe Editions, (2) Other Early Modern Editions and Manuscripts, and (3) Secondary Scholarship and Modern Editions. Early modern edition titles in the bibliography are taken from the English Short-Title Catalogue (ESTC) and from *Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO)*. Entries in the bibliography for early modern titles give place of publication, publisher(s), and the Short-Title Catalogue (STC) or Wing number. All early modern English titles in chapters have been modernised for spelling and capitalisation. All parenthetical year references with early modern titles in chapters refer to first editions unless otherwise indicated. All quotations from early modern titles are from early modern editions unless otherwise indicated. Quotations from early modern editions are in old spelling, and they are mostly derived from *Early English Books Online (EEBO)* copies. Abbreviations in early modern texts have been silently expanded; italics not used for emphasis have been reversed in quotations from early modern paratexts unless otherwise indicated. Quotations from Arber's transcription of the Stationers' Register have been amended to remove italicisation and all-caps renderings of proper nouns; years have been modernised to begin on 1 January. Parenthetical references to Wiggins's *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue* provide catalogue entry numbers (e.g. 'Wiggins #784'). Finally, the date of 1596 proposed by Carter Hailey for the first edition of *The Massacre of Paris* has been accepted.

Abbreviations

<i>BEPD</i>	<i>A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama</i>
BL	British Library
<i>CELM</i>	<i>Catalogue of English Literary Manuscripts 1450–1700</i>
ca.	circa
cf.	compare
<i>DEEP</i>	<i>Database of Early English Playbooks</i>
<i>DEx</i>	<i>A Database of Dramatic Extracts</i>
<i>EBBA</i>	<i>English Broadsides Ballad Archive</i>
<i>ECCO</i>	<i>Eighteenth Century Collections Online</i>
ed(s).	editor(s)
<i>EEBO</i>	<i>Early English Books Online</i>
<i>EEBO-TCP</i>	<i>Early English Books Online – Text Creation Partnership</i>
e.g.	for example
esp.	especially
ESTC	English Short-Title Catalogue
ff.	and the following pages
fol(s).	folio(s)
i.e.	that is
l(l).	line(s)
<i>LION</i>	<i>Literature Online</i>
<i>LPD</i>	<i>Lost Plays Database</i>
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
p(p).	page(s)
<i>PMLA</i>	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association of America</i>
r	recto
qtd.	quoted
<i>REED</i>	<i>Records of Early English Drama</i>

List of Abbreviations

xxi

St.	Saint
STC	Short-Title Catalogue
<i>TLS</i>	<i>Times Literary Supplement</i>
tp	title page
v	verso
Wing	<i>Short-Title Catalogue . . . 1641–1700</i>

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