

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-42667-2 - Marlowe: Edward the Second
Edited by E. E. Reynolds
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

English Literature for Schools

MARLOWE
EDWARD THE SECOND

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-42667-2 - Marlowe: Edward the Second

Edited by E. E. Reynolds

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-42667-2 - Marlowe: Edward the Second
Edited by E. E. Reynolds
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

MARLOWE
EDWARD THE SECOND

Edited by
E. E. REYNOLDS
Author of Exercises
in English



CAMBRIDGE
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1955

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-42667-2 - Marlowe: Edward the Second
Edited by E. E. Reynolds
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107426672

© Cambridge University Press 1930

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1930

First edition 1930

Reprinted 1950, 1955

First paperback edition 2014

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-107-42667-2 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-42667-2 - Marlowe: Edward the Second
Edited by E. E. Reynolds
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CONTENTS

TITLE-PAGE OF THE 1594 QUARTO	<i>page</i> vii
INTRODUCTION	ix
TEXT	i
NOTES	83

¶ The text has been prepared by the editor from the Quarto of 1594 with occasional modernisation of the punctuation. For scene divisions and locations, Dyce's Edition (1850) has been followed.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-42667-2 - Marlowe: Edward the Second

Edited by E. E. Reynolds

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-42667-2 - Marlowe: Edward the Second

Edited by E. E. Reynolds

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The troublefome
raigne and lamentable death of
Edward *the second*, King of
England: with the tragicall
fall of proud Mortimer :

As it was fundrie times publiquely acted
in the honourable citie of London, by the
right honourable the Earle of Pem-
brooke his seruants.

Written by Chri. Marlow *Gent.*



Imprinted at London for *William Iones*,
dwelling neere Holbourne conduit, at the
signe of the Gunne. 1594

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-42667-2 - Marlowe: Edward the Second

Edited by E. E. Reynolds

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-42667-2 - Marlowe: Edward the Second

Edited by E. E. Reynolds

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

CHRISTOPHER, the son of John Marlowe a shoemaker, was born on 6 February 1564 at Canterbury. He entered the King's School, Canterbury, on 14 January 1579, and in 1581 went to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. He took his B.A. degree in 1584, and his M.A. in 1587. During part of his Cambridge years, he seems to have been absent on political affairs.

After leaving the University, Marlowe came to London, and immediately plunged into the life of the theatre. He was probably associated with a group of "University Wits" who turned to the public stage as a means of livelihood, at a time when there was need for Plays to meet a rapidly growing demand. The group included John Lyly, George Peele, Thomas Kyd, Thomas Lodge, Robert Greene and Thomas Nash. Marlowe soon came to the front with a turgid drama called *Tamburlaine*. This was followed during the next five years by *Dr Faustus*, *The Jew of Malta*, *The Massacre of Paris*, *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, and *Edward II*.

The last was registered by the Stationers' Company on 6 July 1593.

Entred for his copie under thandes of Master Richard Iudson and the Wardens./A booke. Intituled The troublesome Reign and Lamentable Death of Edward the Second, King of England, with the tragical fall of proud Mortymer.

The Play was probably printed in that year, but no copy is known to exist, the earliest Quarto known bearing the date 1594.

In addition to his Plays, Marlowe also wrote a translation of Ovid's *Amores*, and of the First Book of Lucan, and a poem, *Hero and Leander*. A line in the last poem is quoted by Shakespeare in *As You Like It*, III, v, 81-82:

Dead shepherd, now I find thy saw of might,
"Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?"

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-42667-2 - Marlowe: Edward the Second

Edited by E. E. Reynolds

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x

INTRODUCTION

This line occurs in *Hero and Leander*, sest. 1, 175–176:

Where both deliberate, the love is slight:
Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?

We should know little of Marlowe's London life, were it not for the fact that his heterodox opinions roused opposition. He seems to have been a member of that coterie headed by Sir Walter Raleigh, known as "The School of Atheism." The Privy Council began to take an interest in their proceedings, and in 1593 a warrant was issued for Marlowe's arrest, but his violent death stayed further action. On 30 May 1593 Marlowe, in company with three men of shady characters, Ingram Frizer, Robert Poley and Nicholas Skeres, spent the day in the house of Eleanor Bull in Deptford. In the course of a quarrel, Frizer mortally wounded Marlowe. At the Inquest it was stated that the quarrel was about "le recknyng" and that Frizer struck in self-defence; there is, however, strong reason for believing that political intrigue was the motive.

A possible reference to Marlowe's death has recently been pointed out in *As You Like It*, III, iii, 9 ff.

When a man's verses cannot be understood, nor a man's good wit seconded with the forward child Understanding, it strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room. (See New Cambridge Edition of the Play, p. 105.)

The fact that Marlowe is the only contemporary dramatist to whom Shakespeare refers, that the two men were of the same age, and that both lived in London and worked for the theatres for six years, makes it possible that they influenced each other. Whether they were friends or not, is unknown, though poets and dramatists have allowed their fancies to play round the idea. Marlowe's turbulent nature, at war with orthodoxy, may more likely have proved incompatible with the level temperament of Shakespeare. Nor is it clear to what degree, if any, the two men collaborated. The customary view is the one expressed by Swinburne, "After his [i.e.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-42667-2 - Marlowe: Edward the Second

Edited by E. E. Reynolds

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

xi

Marlowe's] arrival the way was prepared, the paths made straight for Shakespeare." It has also long been held that Shakespeare's first dramatic work was the refurbishing of Plays on which his contemporaries had already worked. The whole problem is complicated by our lack of knowledge of the exact dates when Plays were written, and particularly by ignorance of the connection and authorship of *The First part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster*, *The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke*, and the three parts of *Henry VI*, and *Richard III*.

This question of collaboration has recently been examined in detail by Mr Peter Alexander in his *Henry VI and Richard III*. It must suffice here to say that he suggests that whatever Shakespeare owed to Marlowe, Marlowe also owed much to Shakespeare. At the other extreme is Mr J. M. Robertson who sees the hand of Marlowe in the least suspected places, and of the early Plays leaves little for Shakespeare himself to have written. These contentious matters are referred to here as a warning to the student of *Edward II* not lightly to leap to conclusions when he sees parallels between that Play and, for instance, *Richard II*.

It is of more importance that we should realise something of Marlowe's achievement, and then consider how far *Edward III* indicates a development in the dramatist's work.

The credit of transforming the popular drama belongs chiefly to Marlowe. . . Marlowe appealed to the people. He brought blank verse on to the public stage and sent it echoing through the town. He proved that classical fable needs no dictionary to make it popular. Above all, he imagined great and serious actions, and created the heroic character¹.

Blank verse was first used in a Play in *Gorboduc* (1562) by Norton and Sackville; its quality may be judged from the following lines:

Ye know, the gods, who have the sovereign care
For kings, for kingdoms, and for common weals,

¹ Raleigh, *Shakespeare*.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-42667-2 - Marlowe: Edward the Second

Edited by E. E. Reynolds

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Gave me two sons in my more lusty age,
 Who now, in my decaying years, are grown
 Well towards riper state of mind and strength,
 To take in hand some greater princely charge.
 As yet they live and spend their hopeful days
 With me, and with their mother, here in court.
 Their age now asketh other place and trade,
 And mine also doth ask another change,
 Theirs to more travail, mine to greater ease.

Even from these few lines it is clear that such blank verse lacks movement; it is rigid in its framework. It can be easily imagined that two hours' listening to a drama so written would be an intolerable infliction.

With these lines may be compared a passage from Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*.

Our souls whose faculties can comprehend
 The wondrous architecture of the world,
 And measure every wandering planet's course,
 Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
 And always moving as the restless spheres,
 Will us to wear ourselves, and never rest,
 Until we reach the ripest fruit of all,
 That perfect bliss and sole felicity,
 The sweet fruition of an earthly crown.

At times Marlowe's verse is apt to exceed the limits of probability and to deteriorate into bombast such as we associate with the name of Aunchient Pistol; but the Elizabethans undoubtedly liked a good, rolling speech and appreciated the arts of declamation. In *Edward II* there is a greater control of verse than in the previous Plays; after *Tamburlaine* it reads almost tamely, but the gain in reasonableness is considerable.

In his choice of subject Marlowe was also an innovator. "Men's passions, clothed with all the woes they wrought" were his early themes. Each of his early Plays is dominated by a display of one all-powerful passion in the person of the chief character, Tamburlaine, Barabas or Faustus. Other characters are imperfectly defined; they are foils to the hero. In this respect, also, *Edward II* marks a development. While the King himself is the

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-42667-2 - Marlowe: Edward the Second

Edited by E. E. Reynolds

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

xiii

dominant character, the others have individuality, though not as clearly portrayed as in even the earliest work of Shakespeare. It is possible that Marlowe was impressed by the success of the York and Lancaster Chronicle Plays and endeavoured in his *Edward II* to rival them; if he had a hand in their production, he profited by that apprenticeship, and wrote his last Play with greater attention to form and dramatic development of plot than his earlier work shows.

It is inevitable that in reading *Edward II*, Shakespeare's *Richard II* should come to mind. There is much similarity in theme; each concerns a weak King who is deposed and murdered, but who gains in dignity as the catastrophe draws near. A careful study of the two Plays throws much light on structure and characterisation. Such problems as the following should be considered. What use did the two dramatists make of their sources? Shakespeare relies almost entirely on Holinshed, while Marlowe also uses the Chronicles of Stowe and Fabyan. How far did each deviate for dramatic purposes from historical accuracy? In this connection, the "Historical Framework" given at the beginning of the Notes to this Edition, should be compared with the events of the Play. To what extent does the chief character dominate the Play? Are the subsidiary characters sufficiently delineated? Which of the two Plays gives the more vivid picture of a past age?

These and other questions should be thought out carefully. Two Scenes in particular call for consideration in this manner: the Deposition and the Murder Scenes. In writing of the Deposition Scene in *Edward II*, Charles Lamb made the comment, "The reluctant pangs of abdicating Royalty in Edward furnished hints which Shakespeare scarce improved in his *Richard II*." Of the Murder Scene, he said that it "moves pity and terror beyond any scene, ancient and modern, with which I am acquainted." These opinions cannot be lightly dismissed, and their truth needs to be tested on the stage and not in the armchair. It is probable that, for instance, the

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-42667-2 - Marlowe: Edward the Second

Edited by E. E. Reynolds

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

brutality of Edward's murder would be unbearable as a spectacle. Dyce's Edition gives as the stage direction, "King Edward is murdered by holding him down on the bed with the table, and stamping on it." In contrast with this, the death of Richard in an armed conflict is dignified.

Richard II has always been a popular Play. *Edward II* is no longer acted except for academic reasons. This fact should be kept in mind in any parallel study of the two, especially if the problem of how much Shakespeare owed to Marlowe is under consideration. It must further be remembered that there is no definite knowledge of the dates when these Plays were written. Both may have been written early in 1593, and there is a possibility that the success of *Edward II* suggested the subject of *Richard II* to Shakespeare; but these are matters of conjecture.

Shakespeare's own personality remains a mystery, but Marlowe reveals himself in his method of approach and treatment; his Plays are expressions of his own character to a degree that is unknown in the work of his great contemporary. Sufficient has been said of Marlowe's life to show that he was a rebel by nature. The latest enquiry into the facts of his death emphasises this characteristic.

There is perhaps no figure among the great Elizabethans whom it is so difficult to approach without a sympathetic bias. He comes trailing the clouds of glory of the pioneer, of the herald of the full dramatic day. His is the magnetic appeal of genius cut down in its prime, with rich achievement, and with an even richer promise unfulfilled. But it is not only as playwright and poet that he wins the suffrages of to-day. He challenged with uncompromising boldness the religious and political orthodoxies of his time, and thus is secure of the sympathies of every generation, and not least our own, that seeks to reconstruct the bases of its intellectual and social life. . . .

The fact remains that the evidence from the various sources is consistent, and that it presents a figure of passionate impulse and restless intellect, quick at word and blow, equally ready with the dagger-point and the no less piercing edge of a ruthless dialectic. The combination in

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-42667-2 - Marlowe: Edward the Second
Edited by E. E. Reynolds
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

xv

Christopher Marlowe of such characteristics with the dramatic and lyrical genius that created *Tamburlaine* and *Dr Faustus*, *Edward II* and *Hero and Leander*, is one of the marvels of the English Renaissance. In Florence or in Venice he would have breathed congenial air. It was Fortune's crowning irony that this most Italianate of Elizabethan Englishmen should have been born and fostered under the shadow of the central sanctuary of the *Ecclesia Anglicana*. (Boas, *Marlowe and His Circle*.)

E. E. R.

February
1930