The Marlowe-Shakespeare Code

A Study in Literary Biography

By Samuel L. Blumenfeld

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Speculation about Shakespeare's authorship has been the subject of discussion and many books for more than 150 years. But the burning question has always been: if Shakespeare did not write the works attributed to him who did? A number of candidates have been put forth, but each one of them has had a serious problem that prevents final acceptance. However, it was Calvin Hoffman, a writer and theatre critic, who first advanced the idea that it was Christopher Marlowe who wrote the works attributed to William Shakespeare. His book, *The Murder of the Man Who Was Shakespeare,* the first full-length exposition of his theory, was published by Julian Messner in 1955. In its first year the book went into three printings. Hoffman's thesis received some notice, and an article about it appeared in *Esquire* magazine.

Hoffman had read all of the plays and poems of both Marlowe and Shakespeare and had found so many echoes of the former in the latter, that he began to suspect that both canons were written by one man: Marlowe. He wrote: "It seemed as though versification, vocabulary, imagery, and allusion stemmed from the same psychic root."

But how could this be? Marlowe was supposed to have been murdered in 1593, before the 36 plays in the First Folio were written and published in 1623. Hoffman suspected that there was something very strange about the alleged murder and went about investigating all of the circumstances surrounding it. He finally came to the conclusion

that the so-called murder was a staged event meant to save Marlowe from certain torture and death by Archbishop Whitgift's inquisition against Jesuits, Puritans, and atheists.

I first met Hoffman in the 1950s when he brought a copy of his book to my office at Grosset and Dunlap. I was then editor of the Universal Library, Grosset's quality paperback line, and he urged that we publish a paperback edition of the book. I read the book and instantly became a Marlovian. Like so many college graduates who had read Shakespeare in high school and college, I assumed that Shakespeare's authorship had been established by solid documentary evidence. But until I read Hoffman's book, I wasn't even aware that there was an authorship problem with the Bard of Avon.

We published Hoffman's book, adding a new Introduction and Index, including a report on his efforts to open the tomb of Sir Thomas Walsingham, Marlowe's patron, hoping to find the original First Folio manuscripts of the plays. However, nothing was found.

I became friends with Hoffman and joined his small circle of supporters who met regularly at an apartment in Manhattan. We created the Marlowe-Shakespeare Society, which held a few meetings. Lack of funding meant that the Society would never be more than a discussion club. Subsequently, I moved to Boston and lost contact with Hoffman, who then retired with his wife to Sarasota, Florida. Nevertheless, he had created enough interest in his theory so that here and there small groups of Marlovians would form in England and on college campuses in the United States.

Doubts about Shakespeare's authorship were nothing new in the 1950s. These doubts first arose in the 18th century when attempts were made to write full-length biographies

of the famous playwright. It started when a retired clergyman, Rev. James Wilmot, a friend of Samuel Johnson and a great admirer of the First Folio plays, became curious about this literary genius, of whom so little was known. In 1780 or so, Wilmot moved to Stratford, intending to gather enough documentary material about the Bard so that he could write a full-scale biography of the author. He searched everywhere within a fifty-mile radius of Stratford, hoping to find books, letters, or any other records pertaining to Shakespeare, but came up with nothing.

After much frustration, Wilmot came to the inevitable and disappointing conclusion that William Shakespeare of Stratford did not write the works attributed to him. But, obviously, someone did write the 36 plays in the First Folio. Who was he? Wilmot undoubtedly gave the question some thought, but he kept his doubts and conjectures to himself and ordered his papers to be burned after his death.

Shakespeare's Biography

The most recent full-scale effort to find some unequivocal documentation that would establish Shakespeare's authorship was made by Diana Price in a book, *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography,* published in 2001. In it, the author examined all of the documents pertaining to Shakespeare unearthed by literary scholars during the last 300 years and came to the conclusion that Shakespeare was not a writer. She wrote: "These documents account for the activities of an actor, a theatre shareholder, a businessman, a moneylender, a property holder, a litigant, and a man with a family, but they do not account for his presumed life as a professional writer."

In contrast to Price's picture of Shakespeare based on documentary evidence, we have

Caroline Spurgeon's very different view of the poet-playwright. In her book, *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us,* published in 1935, Spurgeon came to the conclusion that the author is "in many ways in character what one can only describe as Christ-like, that is, gentle, kindly, honest, brave and true, with deep understanding and quick sympathy for all living things."

Obviously, we are faced with two very different people: Price's actor-businesman and Spurgeon's Christ-like poet, who resembles Christopher Marlowe far more than he does Shakespeare. Indeed, none of the other contenders, Francis Bacon or the Earl of Oxford, could be considered "Christ-like."

The Quest of Delia Bacon

Of course, Diana Price was not the first American to question Shakespeare's authorship. The first was Delia Bacon, a brilliant woman who developed a career as a very successful lecturer in history. Some of her students considered her a genius. Born in 1811 in Tallmadge, Ohio, Bacon turned her interest to literature in 1852, reading all of Shakespeare and coming to the very unorthodox conclusion that the plays in the First Folio revealed a well-hidden comprehensive philosophy which could have only been written by several philosophers—including Francis Bacon, Sir Walter Raleigh, and others. She decided to pursue her research and writing in England.

She remained in England five years, corresponding with Emerson, Carlyle, and Hawthorne, spending her last months in sickness and near poverty in Stratford where she hoped to be able to open Shakespeare's tomb. She wrote in one of her letters: "The archives of this secret philosophical society are buried somewhere, perhaps in more

places than one."

Her obsession with the authorship mystery brought her to near insanity, and she was brought back to the United States in April 1858. The opening chapter of her projected book had been published by Putnam's Monthly in January 1856, but when the book itself was published, it was largely ignored. She died in September of 1859.

Looney's Theory

But the burning question still remained: If Shakespeare did not write the plays and poems, who did? One dedicated man who tried to solve the problem was Thomas J. Looney (pronounced Loney). Charles Ogburn, his massive tome, *The Mysterious William Shakespeare,* wrote: (p. 145)

> Looney did what no one had done before. He approached the quest for the author systematically, with a completely open mind....He deduced seventeen characteristics of the author and then set out to comb through the annals of the Elizabethan age to see who would come closest to possessing them.

The man, in Looney's opinion, who fit all of the characteristics was none other than Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford. Thus was born the Oxfordian theory, which has spurred the publication of many books and articles on the subject. Of course, Looney never considered Marlowe as a possible author, since he believed the generally accepted view that Marlowe was killed in 1593.

However, the main problem with the Oxford thesis are the dates: he was born in 1550 and died in 1604. Shakespeare was born in 1564, the same year as Marlowe, and died in

1616, and the First Folio, with twenty unpublished plays came off the press in 1623. Oxford's dates badly throw off the chronology of the plays, a chronology that has been accepted by most scholars. For example, the earliest of the First Folio plays, *Titus Andronicus,* is believed to have been written in 1590, when Oxford was 40, and the latest, *Henry VIII,* in 1612, eight years after the Earl's death. In fact, thirteen of the plays were written after Oxford's death.

In addition, there is no indication that Oxford had the kind of literary genius found in the plays and poems. Oxford himself was a talented poet, but not a genius. He did not leave a legacy of writings under his own name that could be considered works of genius. C. S. Lewis wrote of Oxford: "Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, shows, here and there, a faint talent, but is for the most part undistinguished and verbose." Also, if Oxford had written plays and poems of such magnificence, he would have left evidence somewhere, in a will or in a statement, that he was the author. But no such evidence exists anywhere. Neither Francis Bacon nor the Earl of Oxford had any plausible reason to hide the fact that either of them had written the greatest works in English literary history. But Marlowe had the most compelling reason of all to hide his authorship: he was supposed to be dead. And the reason why he could not openly proclaim his authorship is that it would have endangered the very high officials in Elizabeth's government who had planned and carried out the fake murder.

To understand how and why all of this took place, a brief biography of Christopher Marlowe and a review of the political events of the time are necessary. Marlowe was born in Canterbury on or about February 26, 1564 in a family of commoners. His father

was a cobbler. Canterbury, some 62 miles south of London in Kent, was and still is a city steeped in history. It is the city through which Chistianity was introduced to England in A.D. 597 by Augustine and his missionaries from Rome. It is the city in which Thomas a Becket, the Archbishop appointed by Henry II, was murdered in 1170. It is the city of pilgrimage, of Chaucer's famous Canterbury Tales. And it is the city that became the focus of the Anglican faith with its Archbishop becoming the Primate of all England. Canterbury also carried the scars of religious strife. The bejeweled shrine that commemorated the murder of Becket was destroyed during the reign of Henry VIII and the Dissolution of the Monasteries. Henry had broken with the Vatican and the Catholic Church over the matter of his divorce with Catherine of Aragon. The ruins of St. Augustine's Abbey near the Cathedral were a stark reminder of the religious conflict that rocked England in the early 16th century.

The present Cathedral, which dominates the city center, was completed in 1154. In 1376, Archbishop Sudbury ordered the building of a new nave. The King's School, which Marlowe was to attend, occupied buildings adjacent to the Cathedral, and was developed out of the early education provided at the monastery. It was refounded by Henry VIII in 1541 as the King's School after the closing of the monastery in 1538. Thus, Marlowe was born in a city with a great and rich historical tradition that affected all of England. And there is little doubt that all of this became part of his psyche, his understanding of history, and his place in it.

The Legacy of Henry VIII

Henry VIII died in 1547 and was succeeded by Edward VI, a son of his third wife, Jane

Seymour. Henry had had six wives: Catherine of Aragon, mother of Mary I, divorced; Anne Boleyn, mother of Elizabeth I, beheaded; Jane Seymour, mother of Edward VI, died; Anne of Cleves, divorced; Catherine Howard, beheaded; and Catherine Parr, who outlived the King.

Edward was nine when he ascended the throne so that the country was ruled essentially by his uncle, Edward Seymour, the Duke of Somerset, and a regency council of sixteen. It was during Edward's short reign that the Calvinist Protestant Reformation was strongly advanced in England. Also during this period, a fierce rivalry broke out between the Duke of Somerset and the ambitious John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, who later became Duke of Northumberland. Somerset was overthrown and executed, and Northumberland replaced him as the King's protector.

However, in May of 1552, when it became obvious that Edward was dying of consumption, Northumberland and others became alarmed at the prospect of the King's Catholic sister, Mary, becoming Queen. And so, the dying King was persuaded to name Lady Jane Grey, the daughter of the Duke of Suffolk, as successor to the throne. It was also planned that Jane Grey would marry Northumberland's son, Lord Guilford Dudley, when she became Queen. Thus, a Dudley would become the ruling monarch.

Following Edward's death on July 6, 1553, the sixteen-year-old Lady Jane was proclaimed Queen. However, there was great resentment among the nobility at Northumberland's attempt to deny Mary Tudor her rightful seat on the throne. The coup collapsed and Mary entered London with her supporters. Northumberland was imprisoned and executed. Lady Jane Grey, whose reign lasted only nine days, was

executed a year later with her husband.

Mary's first act as Queen was to repeal the religious legislation enacted during her brother's reign. In July 1554 she married Philip of Hapsburg, son of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. Two years later, he became King Philip II of Spain.
Acting on her own authority, Mary forced continental Protestants to leave England and installed Catholic bishops in office. Many of England's Protestant leaders also went into exile on the Continent. In 1554, Mary had all of the anti-Papal laws dating from the reign of her father repealed. In the ensuing years Queen Mary stepped up her persecution of Protestants, having 300 of them burned at the stake, including her father's favorite prelate, Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury. As a result of her reign of terror, she became known as Bloody Mary.

Mary I died in 1558 and was succeeded by her younger sister Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn. The new queen, the last of the Tudors, inherited an England torn by religious strife. Under her tutelage, the Parliament of 1559 enacted two famous statutes: the Act of Supremacy, which finally severed England from Rome by substituting royal for Papal supremacy in the Church; and the Act of Uniformity, which gave the Anglican Church its Prayer Book and made England a Protestant country.

With Protestantism restored as the religion of England, the Marian exiles returned, and Elizabeth chose a very capable council of Protestant advisors, including: Francis Walsingham, who became her Master Spy; William Cecil, afterwards Lord Burghley, who became Secretary of State; and Nicholas Bacon, Burghley's brother-in-law, who

became Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England. These three men in particular helped Elizabeth create stability and strength to the English state. Leicester, son of Northumberland, who had known Elizabeth since childhood, became her closest confidant. Although the Protestants were now in power, the Catholics still remained a subversive threat.

This was the England that Christopher Marlowe was born into in 1564. Elizabeth had been on the throne five years. Marlowe's parents had migrated to Canterbury from other towns in Kent. His father, John Marlowe, was born in the village of Ospringe beside Faversham in 1536, during the reign of Henry VIII. His mother, Katherine Arthur came from a family in Dover. She spent her girlhood among the colorful surroundings of the great port and stronghold of Dover.

John Marlowe came to Canterbury in 1556, just at the time when Bloody Mary was burning Protestant martyrs at the stake at the sandy hollows at Wincheap, half a mile from Canterbury. There, more than 40 Protestant martyrs perished. In 1559, John became apprenticed to Gerard Richardson, a shoemaker. Four years later, he became a freeman of Canterbury and an established craftsman. In May 1561, he married Katherine Arthur.

The Marlowe Family

John and Katherine Marlowe were to produce nine children. Mary, born in 1562, died two years later. Christopher was baptised on February 26, 1564. Margaret, the third child, was baptised on December 18, 1565. At age 25, she married John Jordan, a tailor, in June 1590 and lived to the age of 76. The fourth child, born in October 1568, died a

few days after birth. Jane, the fifth child, was christened on August 29, 1569, married John Moore in 1582, and died in childbirth in 1583. Thomas, the sixth child, born in 1570, died three weeks after birth. Anne, the seventh child, was baptised on July 14, 1571. She married John Cranford, a shoemaker, in June 1593, and died in 1652 at age 81. The eighth child, Dorothy, was christened on October 18, 1573. She married Thomas Graddell, glover and later vintner, innkeeper and hackneyman. She managed to outlive her husband who died in 1625. Thomas, the ninth child, was baptised on April 8, 1576. He is listed as a choirboy at Archbishop Whitgift's Cathedral Visitation in 1589. Since he was not mentioned in his mother's will, it is probable that he was dead by the time it was drawn up in 1605.

Thus, Christopher was brought up in a house where new babies entered the fold almost every year or two. And he probably helped his mother take care of the three baby sisters, all of which no doubt added to his understanding of that early stage of life. Since he was a highly intelligent youngster—no doubt a child prodigy—we can imagine the kind of repartee that went on between the future poet, his parents, and his baby sisters.

Sixteenth century Canterbury, with a population of between 3,000 and 4,000 persons, was a wonderfully busy place in which to grow up. It was a city close to the countryside. Cows grazed within 100 yards of John Marlowe's shop and local women went milking every morning. Gleaning went on at harvest time in Barton Fields. The parish of St. George, in which Marlowe's shop was located, also lay between the cattle market on the one side and the butchers' shambles on the other. A dominant sound of Marlowe's youth must have been the groans of cattle being led to the slaughter only a few yards away.

The tubs of blood and entrails that had to be disposed of no doubt produced a very unpleasant odor in the neighborhood.

It is believed that the young future poet was taught to read at one of the petty schools founded by Henry VIII and that he would have completed his primary education by the age of eight. But Marlowe did not enter the King's School until six years later when he was 15. David Riggs writes in *The World of Christopher Marlowe* (p.35): "Since Christopher did not win his scholarship at the King's School until the winter of 1578-79, the boy's whereabouts for the intervening six years are a minor puzzle."

But it is really not a puzzle, for at the age of eight young boys were expected to engage in useful employment of one kind or another. Craftmen's sons often began apprenticing with their fathers. Aristocrats sent their young sons to higher education. For example, Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, entered Cambridge University in 1558 at age eight as an *impubes*. Lord Burghley became a page at court at age 8.

As for Christopher Marlowe, his reputation as a child prodigy was no doubt known by Archbishop Matthew Parker, since one of his duties was to recruit highly capable youngsters to become pages to young noblemen. As a close friend of Lord Burghley, Master of Wards, the Archbishop was probably asked to be on the lookout for suitable pages for some young nobles about to embark on tours of the Continent.

We contend that young Christopher was selected to serve as a page to Philip Sidney, who, in 1572, at age 18, was preparing for a two-year tour of the Continent with Queen Elizabeth's blessings. What did a page do during such a journey? He tended the horses,

took care of the baggage, and was at the beck and call of his master for any necessary task. The highly intelligent Christopher was perfect for the job. *Love's Labour's Lost* gives us a very humorous idea of what went on between a Master and his Page, the latter being far more intelligent and witty than his Master.

The Sidney Family

Who was Philip Sidney? Born at the family home at Penshurst Place in Kent in 1554, Sidney was the son of Sir Henry Sidney and Mary Dudley, the daughter of the ill-fated Earl of Northumberland and sister of the Earl of Leicester, the Queen's closest confidant. Both Sidneys served the Queen, Sir Henry as Lord President of the Welsh Marches and later as Lord Deputy of Ireland, and Lady Sidney as a lady-in-waiting to the Queen. When Elizabeth came down with smallpox, it was Lady Sidney who nursed her, catching the disease herself and passing it on to her son Philip, who was slightly pockmarked for life.

In October 1564, at age 10, Sidney entered Shrewsbury School at the same time as his lifelong friend, Fulke Greville. Four years later he entered Oxford and was a brilliant student, interested in science as well as the arts. In the spring of 1572, he was ready for his tour of the Continent. He would not travel alone. He was attached to the suite of the Earl of Lincoln who was going to Paris to sign the Treaty of Blois. Sidney followed the earl to Dover with his own company of three servants and four horses. Was young Christopher Marlowe one of the servants? The dates fit perfectly.

The entire traveling party reached Paris on June 7th. The Earl of Lincoln's party were lodged at the royal palace, while Philip's party were lodged at the home of the English

ambassador, Francis Walsingham, in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, a mile from the city. Paris was in great excitement. The nation's elite, including Huguenots and Catholics had converged on the city to attend the marriage of Princess Margot, a devout Catholic, to Henry of Navarre, the Huguenot king. Henry's mother, Queen Jeanne of Navarre, a fiercely staunch Huguenot, reluctantly consented to the mixed marriage.

On June 4th, after a day of strenuous shopping, the Queen of Navarre fell ill. Rumors spread that she had been poisoned in a conspiracy devised by Katherine de Medici, Princess Margot's mother, and the Duke of Guise. The vehicle of the poisoning was a pair of gloves. Emma Denkinger writes in her biography, *Immortal Sidney,* (p.52):

> Though poisoning was common, and rumors about it even commoner, Charles IX [father of the bride to be] was annoyed. He ordered an autopsy to be performed in the presence of the Huguenot physicians. Inflammation of the lungs was then shown to have been poor Jeanne's affliction. Undaunted, the Huguenots stubbornly clung to "poisoning," even contending that the drug used had been so subtle that every trace had disappeared.

Twenty years later, Christopher Marlowe would use the idea of such a drug in *The Jew of Malta.* At the age of eight he was already absorbing everything he heard and saw around him. Denkinger writes (p.55):

> The funeral baked meats did not furnish forth the marriage tables, but they followed as close upon them as decency permitted. Jeanne was buried in the middle of June. The wedding was postponed, but only to the middle of August.

The allusion to Hamlet's comment about the funeral baked meats being used at the marriage of his mother to his uncle, of course, comes to mind. Is this where the idea came from?

Meanwhile, Philip was having the time of his life meeting such distinguished individuals as Admiral Coligny, leader of the Huguenot Protestant party; Petrus Ramos, the French philosopher and brilliant interpreter of Aristotle; Hubert Languet, a 54-year-old scholar and statesman, who became Philip's lifelong advisor; and Francois Hotman, who spoke of free representative governments! Indeed, the young English nobleman was quite a hit with the French. He was even made a gentleman of the King's bedchamber, with the title Baron de Sidenay.

But unease among the Huguenots was growing. Someone was circulating ciphered letters among the Huguenots warning of a "conspiracy," and urging them to leave Paris. Nevertheless, the marriage that was to unite the two warring factions took place on Monday, August 18th in great splendor.

On Thursday, the 21st, Philip saw his first French tournament. Tilts were dangerous. Denkinger writes:

> Often knights were unseated, or picked up by their pages "as men dazed," to be hastily drawn from the reach of flying hoofs. Success was indeed a matter of skill. One of the reasons why Leicester sent Philip abroad was that he might "study" with Pugliano, the Emperor's Master of Horse, who trained his young knights in Vienna to "run" in "thick capps" till by practice he made them "good

men of the tourney."

Did Marlowe, the young page, accompany his master to the tournament and keenly absorb everything he saw? And did he later use these images in *Pericles?* Was Marlowe's relationship to his master Philip like that between Armado and his page Moth in *Love's Labour's Lost?* Armado calls him a "well-educated infant." The bouncing repartee between Armado and Moth is one of the wittiest in all of literature. It should be noted that the play takes place at the Court of the King of Navarre.

Also staying at the ambassador's residence during Philip Sidney's visit was Sir Walter Raleigh, who had fought with the French Huguenots at the Battle of Jarnac in March 1569, and Walsingham's 9-year-old cousin, Thomas Walsingham, who would one day become Marlowe's patron and carry out the poet's fake death.

The Massacre at Paris

The day after the tournament, an attempt was made to assassinate Admiral Coligny. The Admiral survived but sustained some injuries. King Charles promised to find the culprit and punish him. But the assassin had been hired by the Duke of Guise, and thus was protected. The Huguenots were furious but were unprepared for what was to come.
On the early morning of Sunday, August 24th, St. Bartholomew's Day, only six days after the royal wedding, the great bell of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois began to toll, signalling the beginning of the great massacre of Huguenots in Paris and later throughout France. Huguenots were dragged from their beds and butchered in what has become known as one of the most barbaric and bloody massacres in European history.

While Paris was reeking in carnage, Walsingham and his guests slept until they were awakened by the noise of shots and cries. By evening the ambassador's house was crowded with terrified English refugees. No one who was there would ever forget that day. It steeled Sidney's Protestant resolve. And years later Marlowe would write a play about these horrendous events, *The Massacre at Paris.*

Among the victims of that massacre were Admiral Coligny and Petrus Ramos. Languet managed to escape. Sidney had no desire to stay in Paris any longer, and he left for Frankfurt in early September. In Frankfurt he met Languet and they stayed at the home of the printer Andreas Wechel, a great craftsman, whose illustrated folios greatly impressed Sidney. During this stay in Germany Sidney visited members of the nobility, informing his uncle Leicester by letter of his various discussions.

In the early summer of 1573, Languet was summoned to Vienna. He urged Philip to join him there. But Philip decided first to visit some of the German universities. At Heidelberg he met the scholar Henri Etienne who took a great fancy to the young English nobleman. He presented Philip with his three-volume study of Plato. Was it during Marlowe's time in Germany with his master that he first heard of the Faustus legend, which years later became the basis of his famous play, *Dr. Faustus?*

Philip finally arrived at Vienna in September 1573. When he got there he told Languet that he wanted to visit Italy. Languet expressed concern. Italy was known as the corrupter of all manners and morals, and he feared that this impetuous young intellectual would fall prey to Italian ways. But Languet was relieved when Philip met the Count of Hanau in Venice. There Philip's young page learned of the Venetian defeat of the Turks

at Lepanto and about Mediterranean politics involving Turks and Christians. *The Jew of Malta* was set in the midst of all that conflict. And *Othello,* set in Venice and the Eastern Mediterranean, reflected Venetian history. Nor can one forget that *The Merchant of Venice* is also set in that extraordinary Adriatic port.

On February 26th, 1574 Philip sat for his portrait by Paolo Veronese. The painting took three days. In April, Sidney was given permission by the Council of Ten in Venice to carry arms. From Venice Philip went to Genoa and Florence, where he could revel in Lorenzo di Medici's magnificent library. From there he traveled to Padua, where Languet had attended the university. A number of Englishmen were regularly in attendance. There Philip took a house to pursue his studies. However, when he became ill, Languet called him back to Vienna and nursed him with loving care.

In November 1574, Philip made a journey to Poland. But he spent the winter in Vienna. It should be noted that *Measure for Measure* is set in Vienna. The play also has a body-switching scene much like what would take place in Deptford in 1593.

In March of 1575, Philip began his trek back to England, stopping at Dresden and Frankfurt. Finally, on May 31, 1575 he was in Antwerp, awaiting the ship for home, his bags full of the books and maps he had acquired during his tour. We can imagine that young Christopher, now 11 years old, was in charge of the baggage.

On return to England in June 1575, Philip joined his family at the London mansion across from Paul's wharf. His mother, Lady Sidney, served the Queen and lived at Court. Mistress Mary Sidney, Philip's 14-year-old sister, had become Elizabeth's new maid-of-

honor. His father, Sir Henry, had left Ireland in March 1571, but the Queen decided to send him back in August of 1575.

Meanwhile, Philip's uncle, the Earl of Leicester, was determined that Philip would become a graceful courtier dedicated to pleasing the Queen. In July, the Queen visited Kenilworth, the Earl's estate, where she spent 18 days being feted, amused, and entertained in the most lavish celebration of her reign yet recorded. Did 11-year-old Christopher witness the scene as Philip's page? It is quite possible that the Kenilworth extravaganza was the inspiration for *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* Harold Bloom writes about the play: (p. 148) "It is his first undoubted masterwork, without flaw, and one of his dozen or so plays of overwhelming originality and power." But Bloom could not find a primary source for the play.

If young Marlowe had been Philip's page during his tour of Europe and continued in his service when he returned, why is his name not mentioned anywhere? It is because servants, who were usually commoners, were from a historical and social point of view invisible in England's hierarchical society. There was no reason to know who they were. For example, when Elizabeth granted Leicester the estate at Kenilworth and many other valuable estates, she also gave him license to retain 100 liveried servants. She also gave Philip's father, Sir Henry, a license to retain forty liveried servants. But we don't know the name of a single one of them.

It is interesting that King Lear was chided by his daughters for wanting to stay at their palaces with 100 of his loyal knights. They said he didn't need them. Apparently, the

author of the play was aware of the sovereign's power to license any number of liveried servants she wanted upon her loyal favorites. Elizabeth was even surprised when Sir Henry rode into Court with 200 horsemen in attendance.

When the Sidney children were not with their father in Ireland or Wales, they lived at the family estate, Penshurst Place, in Kent. The manor was a sort of utopia, writes Margaret Hanney, "where all are treated with kindliness and generosity, from the 'farmer, and the clown' to the king and the poet himself." The wealth of Penshurst consisted of its natural beauty and abundant fruit trees. Although their parents were often away at Court, the children enjoyed life at this great estate. They entertained themselves with music and poetry and were tutored in the academics. The girls shared a governess, Anne Mantell, whose husband, Robert, kept the accounts for the children.

Young Mary Sidney was taught French and Italian, Latin and Greek. Years later she translated Philippe de Mornay, Robert Garnier, and Petrach. As her older brother's page, did young Christopher get to know Mary Sidney, who was three years older than he? From all accounts, she was a precocious, strong-willed young lady who would treat servants as servants. But she must have also been impressed with the high literacy of the young page and taken a liking to someone as gifted as he was.

In February 1577, Philip was instructed by the Queen to travel to Vienna to offer condolences to the Empress on the death of her husband, Maximillian II. Philip was accompanied by his friend Fulke Greville and it is likely that Philip's young page Christopher was also in the party. As a royal train they traveled in the best style then available. They stopped at Louvain and Heidelberg and finally arrived in Vienna in

April. There Philip offered the queen the condolences of Elizabeth. Languet joined Philip in Vienna.

While in Germany, Philip took the opportunity to present his idea of a League of Protestant States to Princes Lodowick and Casimir. But they could not agree. On the way back to England, Philip visited the Prince of Orange, whom he greatly admired. On June 10, 1577, the party arrived back in England.

Christopher remained in service to Sir Philip until January 1579, when he entered the King's School at Canterbury on a Matthew Parker scholarship just before turning 15. The scholarships were available to boys from ages 9 to 15 with minds "apt for learning." Christopher would have been 15 in February, and therefore he entered the school at the very last moment that the scholarship was available. Apparently, he stayed in service to Master Philip as long as possible.

Marlowe and the Countess of Pembroke

But this did not end his relationship with the Sidneys. Philip's sister Mary married Henry Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, on April 22, 1577. He was 39, with two previous marriages, and she was 16. Herbert's first wife was Jane Grey's sister Catherine. That marriage was dissolved by Mary I. His second wife, Catherine Talbot, died childless. Mary Sidney was expected to provide Pembroke with an heir. But if her husband was infertile, how was she going to satisfy him? The married couple probably had a very frank discussion about this dilemma, and he probably told his young wife to find a suitable individual to father her child. It is interesting to note that the earl's grandfather was an illegitimate son of the first Earl of Pembroke of the house of Herbert.

But in this case, the couple agreed that the stigma of illegitimacy must not besmirch the Pembroke name, and so the person chosen to be the father must be kept secret and never made known. Who did the new Countess of Pembroke choose? Her brother's former page, young Christopher Marlowe, handsome, highly intelligent, a student at the King's School. What was most convenient is that he was socially invisible.

When and how this tryst took place, we have no way of knowing. All we do know is that William Herbert, the Pembrokes' first son, was born on April 8, 1580, the same year that Marlowe entered Corpus Christi College at Cambridge in December under another Parker Scholarship. Thus, the tryst had to have occurred in August of 1579. Where? Perhaps at Penshurst or Canterbury, both of which were not far apart in Kent. Of course, all of this is speculation, but the elements of time, place, and future events over the next forty-four years seem to make all of this highly probable.

Did the 15-year-old adolescent Marlowe fall in love with the 18-year-old Countess of Pembroke? It is not only possible but probable. If his affair with the Countess was his first such experience, whatever raging emotions it may have produced undoubtedly found their way into his future writings.

When did Marlowe start writing his poems and plays? Probably at the King's School where he underwent a very rigorous classical education under the able tutelage of the school's headmaster, John Gresshop. This Oxford educated headmaster had one of the largest personal libraries in the kingdom. Among his books was a beautifully illustrated edition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Did Gresshop show this book to the highly intelligent

Marlowe? And did the book lead to Marlowe's lifelong love affair with the Roman poet, known for his erotic subject matter?

This would explain why Marlowe's first writings were a translation of Ovid's *Elegies* and *Amores*. Stephen Orgel, in a brief critique of the *Elegies,* wrote in 1971: (p. 233)

> The *Amores* were the least well known of Ovid's major works to the Elizabethans, and Marlowe's translation is the first in English. His interest would have been as much in their urbanity of tone as in their world of erotic possibilities....But Marlowe's Ovidian elegies are more than translations. They undertake, with remarkable energy and ingenuity, the adaptation of a classical mode to the uses of English poetry. In a sense, this is Marlowe's sonnet sequence, the psychomachia of a poet-lover whose love is both his creation and his ultimate monomania, frustration and despair.

Were these the emotions felt by Marlowe in his frustrating relationship with Mary Sidney? Mary was not only strong-willed and wealthy, but also older and domineering. Which may have led him to write in Book I, Elegia II. (p. 114)

> Unwilling lovers love doth more torment
> Than such as in their bondage feel content.
> Lo, I confess, I am thy captive, I,
> And hold my conquered hands for thee to tie.

It should be noted that this work required major effort on Marlowe's part. David Riggs

writes (p.103): "The work of translating 2,400 lines of Latin couplets into the same number of rhymed English verses demanded a large outlay of time and energy." Which probably implies that the work was begun at the King's School and was completed at Cambridge. Marlowe was also concerned about immortality and the notion that poetry lived far beyond the life of the poet. As the son of commoners with little standing in Elizabethan society, he saw his future fame in his poetry. He wrote in ~~Elegy~~ Book I, Elegia XV (p 135):

> Verse is immortal, and shall ne'er decay.
> To verse let kings give place, and kingly shows,
> And banks o'er which gold-bearing Tagus Flows.
> Let base-conceited wits admire vile things,
> Fair Phoebus lead me to the Muses' springs.

Those last two lines would appear in 1593 on the opening page of *Venus and Adonis.*

In December of 1580, Marlowe, at age seventeen, made his way to Cambridge where he was enrolled at Corpus Christi College as a divinity student. He held an Archbishop Parker scholarship which was given to help talented young men pursue clerical careers in the Anglican church. Marlowe's successful stint at the King's School singled him out for the scholarship, and he was to spend the next six years of his life at the college with the presumed goal of preparing himself for Holy Orders.

By entering Cambridge, Marlowe was well on his way to becoming a member of England's literary elite. Cambridge was a community of over 1,800 teachers and students. The living quarters for Parker's scholars were equipped with a small collection

of texts and reference books such as Greek and Latin Bibles, Erasmus's New Testament, and classical lexicons. We can assume that Marlowe took advantage of every opportunity to read the books available to him. The plays and poems he was to write reflected the enormous storehouse of literary knowledge he acquired at the University. At Cambridge, he probably completed his translation of the *Elegies* in Ovid's *Amores,* and circulated the manuscript among a small circle of student friends. Among Marlowe's fellow students was Thomas Nashe (1567-1601) whose name with Marlowe's would appear on the title page of Marlowe's first play, *Dido, Queen of Carthage.* Nashe was in residence from 1582 to1586. Also in residence was Robert Greene (1558-1592), who got his B.A. in 1580 and obtained an M.A. in 1584. He would go on to write short romantic novels and historical plays. Another important resident was Robert Cecil, son of Lord Burghley, the Lord Treasurer of England and Chancellor of the University. We suspect that Burghley knew Marlowe from his days as a page to Philip Sidney and treated him almost as a son.

Also resident during Marlowe's period at Cambridge, was the young Earl of Southampton (1573-1624). He studied at St. John's College from 1585 to 1589. As Lord Burghley's ward, the Earl attended Burghley's own college. Marlowe was at Cambridge until 1587 and it is believed that Burghley had Marlowe tutor Southampton, who was barely twelve years old.

The Cambridge experience had a strong impact on Southampton's life. It gave him the foundation of an educated man. He became fond of books and writers, enjoyed their company and put much importance in being regarded as a patron of literature. Later in

life he showed his gratitude toward St. John's by his gift of manuscripts and books which became the chief glory of the college library.

Marlowe, in the meantime, had managed to follow his translation of Ovid with a translation of Lucan's *Pharsalia,* which he wrote in blank verse, an innovation that was noted as a great creative advance. The subject had relevance with what was going on in England. The war between Caesar and Pompey could be seen as a prototype of the struggle between Elizabeth and her rival Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots.

Some of the lines exquisitely express the irony of Rome's political fate:

> Romans, what madness, what huge lust of war,
> Hath made barbarians drunk with Latin blood?
> Rome, if thou take delight in impious war,
> First conquer all the earth, then turn thy force
> Against thyself: as yet thou wants not foes.
> Rome was so great it could not bear itself.
> So when this world's confounded union breaks,
> Time ends, and to old Chaos all things turn ...

And then we get this very salient bit of political philosophy that sums up exactly what the problem was between Elizabeth and Mary Stuart, a view that must have pleased Lord Burghley, for whom the poem may have been written:

> Dominion cannot suffer partnership.

It is generally acknowledged that *Dido, Queen of Carthage,* was Marlowe's first play, written while he was a 21-year-old student at Cambridge in the years 1585-86. So much of the education he got was in the classics. F. S. Boas has shown how memories of lines from Ovid appear in nearly everything Marlowe wrote. His classical allusions come mainly from the Roman poet, and his mind was filled with memorized phrases from Ovid. As a student preparing for Holy Orders, he knew the Bible as well as he knew the classics, and in their contrast he found his own way.

But it was Vergil's *Aeneid,* particularly Books I, II and IV, that provided Marlowe with an exciting, dramatic subject for his first play. O. J. Oliver writes: "Working from the Latin text, Marlowe sometimes translated, (often brilliantly), sometimes paraphrased, sometimes summarized. He also often rearranged, or altered the emphasis; and sometimes he invented." He already knew how to take an original epic that was generally known to Elizabethan theatergoers and adapt it in a way to produce the effects he wished to make on the stage.

Vergil's epic story is of the fall of Troy and the escape of Aeneas and a group of his followers by ship from the city, which had been destroyed by the Greeks. While on his way to Italy, the ship is wrecked on the shores of Carthage. Dido, the Queen, welcomes Aeneas with open arms and falls desperately in love with him. He is determined to repair his ship and sail on to Italy. But Dido begs him to stay. After agreeing to stay, he changes his mind and finally leaves. Dido then kills herself.

That's the bare outline of a much more complicated plot, which includes the machinations of gods and goddesses, several other characters, and several subplots. *Dido*

would have made a great libretto for a 19th century opera, and it is surprising that no composer was inspired to write one.

What is most interesting about *Dido* is that Marlowe made reference to the Carthagenean Queen in many of the First Folio plays as his own private code to indicate his authorship. Quite significant is the scene in the play in which Aeneas recounts to Dido what happened in Troy. He describes in graphic detail the horrible murders—especially the cruel slaughter of Priam—and destruction the Greeks inflicted on the Trojans. What is striking is that Marlowe used the same passage, somewhat rewritten, in *Hamlet*. We find it in Act II, Scene II, in which Hamlet welcomes a troupe of players who will act in the play that will catch his uncle. He asks the players to give him a sample of their theatrical talent. They ask him what would he like to hear. Hamlet responds:

> I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted, or if it was, not above once, for the play, I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas caviary to the general: but it was—as I received it, and others, whose judgments in such matters cried in the top of mine—an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember one said there were no sallets in the lines to make the matter savoury, nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affectation, but called it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine.

What an exquisite review Marlowe gives of his own play! He continues:

> One speech in't I chiefly loved. 'Twas Aeneas' tale to Dido, and thereabout of it

especially where he speaks of Priam's slaughter. If it live in your memory, begin at this line—let me see, let me see:

'The rugged Pyrrhus, like th' Hyrcanian beast—'

'Tis not so; it begins with Pyrrhus:

'The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,
Hath now this dread and black complexion smeared
With heraldry more dismal....

Hamlet quotes some additional lines and then tells the actor, "So, proceed you." The player than proceeds to deliver an emotive monologue of about forty-five lines depicting the slaying of Priam and Hecuba by Pyrrhus. In *Hamlet* Marlowe rewrites his own lines, some of which very closely resemble the original. Marlowe wrote in *Dido:*

Which he disdaining whisk'd his sword about
And with the wound thereof the King fell down.

The author of *Hamlet* wrote:

Pyrrhus at Priam drives, in rage strikes wide,
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
Th' unnerved father falls.

Something of an improvement over the original, which Marlowe probably enjoyed

writing. However, this extensive reference to *Dido* in *Hamlet* was certainly Marlowe's way of telling the world that he wrote both plays.

Marlowe and the Secret Service

In 1584, at the age of 20, Marlowe received his Bachelor of Arts degree, and it is at about this time that he became involved in Her Majesty's Secret Service directed by Sir Francis Walsingham. We do not know the exact circumstances of his recruitment, but it seems likely that Lord Burghley had something to do with it. There was at the time a strong Catholic presence at the university, and both Burghley and Walsingham had good reason to be concerned about Catholic subversion at their old Alma Mater. Walsingham, master of the infiltration technique and employer of *agents provocateurs,* was no doubt delighted to have a student as intelligent and competent as Marlowe to be working for him. And Marlowe was no doubt happy to have an additional source of income and to find himself in intimate relations with the top men in Elizabeth's government.

Usually a young, inexperienced agent is put under the control of a seasoned agent. In Marlowe's case the control could have been Thomas Walsingham, young cousin of Sir Francis, whom Marlowe had met at the ambassador's residence in Paris when the St. Bartholomew massacre took place. Since 1581, young Walsingham had been a courier for the English ambassador in Paris carrying letters to the Queen in London. Marlowe probably had more than one control, including Thomas Watson, the poet, who shared rooms with Thomas Walsingham in Paris and was also a member of the Secret Service. Marlowe would later share living quarters with Watson, and put his name as a crostic in one of his Sonnets.

Another possible control might have been Robert Poley, a Cambridge alumnus and ten years Marlowe's senior, who became Walsingham's chief double-agent working among the Babington plotters who had planned to assassinate Queen Elizabeth and replace her with Mary, Queen of Scots. The plot was uncovered through ingenious undercover work, and Mary was executed on February 8, 1587.

Marlowe's first assignment in 1585 was to go to the English Catholic seminary in France at Rheims. The College had been founded by English Catholic exiles in 1568 at Douai, Flanders, but due to political unsettlement it was relocated to Rheims. There, politically protected by the Duke of Guise and financially supported by the Vatican, the seminary prospered. It became a rallying point for Catholic Englishmen from all social classes, including students from Cambridge and Oxford. It became a training ground for militant Catholics who then returned to England to further efforts to return her to the Catholic Church.

Marlowe, a born actor, was no doubt welcomed at the Seminary as a possible convertee to Catholicism. But what he actually did there we do not know. He may have gone there to deliver a message to one of Walsingham's double-agents at the Seminary who was involved in the Babington intrigue. Apparently Marlowe's mission was successful, for he returned to Cambridge in the fall of 1585.

In November 1585, Marlowe visited his family in Canterbury where he witnessed the drafting of a neighbor's will. He read the text of the will aloud to the assembled company, which included his father, uncle, and brother-in-law. This will, discovered in 1939 in the archives of Canterbury, contains the only known specimen of Marlowe's

signature.

Was Marlowe sent on other missions? He was absent from Corpus Christi for nine weeks in the Spring of 1586. But we have no record of what those missions might have been. With the conclusion of the Babington conspiracy with the execution of Mary Stuart in February 1587, Marlowe's stay at Cambridge was also soon to come to an end. But before he could leave the academic cocoon that had nursed and sheltered him for six years, he had to complete his studies for his Master's degree, which would be granted at Commencement in July. And so, on March 31, 1587, Marlowe made his final supplicant at Master and Fellows at Corpus Christi. But the university authorities rejected his supplication because of his absences during the year. Rumors had floated about that he had become a secret Catholic because of his stay at the seminary at Rheims. But he could not simply tell the authorities that he had gone there as a spy. What he needed was confirmation from the government that his absences were in service to the Queen. That confirmation came in the form of a letter to the university authorities from the Privy Council dated June 29, 1587, and signed by Lord Burghley and other members of the Council. It said:

> Whereas it was reported that Christopher Morley [one of the alternate spellings of Marlowe's name] was determined to have gone beyond the seas to Rheims, and there to remain, their lordships thought good to certify that he had no such intent; but that in all his actions he had behaved himself orderly and discreetly, whereby he had done her Majesty good service and deserved to be rewarded for his faithful dealing. Their lordships' request was that the rumour thereof should be allayed

> by all possible means, and that he should be furthered in the degree he was to take this next Commencement. Because it was not her Majesty's pleasure that anyone employed, as he had been, in matters touching the benefit of his country should be defamed by those that are ignorant in the affairs he went about.

It goes without saying that Marlowe's prestige among the university authorities was greatly enhanced and that they made sure that the aspiring poet got his Master's degree.

Now, at age 23, Marlowe was ready to make his mark as a playwright. He had completed *Tamburlaine the Great* while still at Corpus Christi, and he was chafing at the bit to get it staged. The theatre in London was thriving and attracting large audiences and there was an ever urgent need for new, exciting plays. So, when he got to the capital, he went to the newly erected Rose Theatre in Southmark, built by Philip Henslowe and John Chomley. Henslowe bought the play. The role of Tamburlaine was played by Edward Alleyn of the Lord Admiral's company of players. It was an immediate smash hit. Marlowe's instinct as a dramatist had been correct in choosing this exotic subject for his first big play. Tamburlaine, the Scythian warrior, who had risen from shepherd to conqueror, was larger than life. And the audiences loved this marvelous conquering hero of low birth but with a burning lust for power. The play was so popular that Marlowe immediately wrote a sequel, *Tamburlaine II,* which became equally popular.
With *Tamburlaine,* Marlowe had given the stage a new form of blank verse that unleashed his own literary power in a way never before expressed. Swinburne wrote about it 300 years later:

> The first great English poet was the father of English tragedy and the creator of English blank verse. Sublimity is the test of imagination as distinguished from invention or from fancy; and the first English poet whose powers can be called sublime was Christopher Marlowe....
>
> [*Tamburlaine*] is the first poem ever written in English blank verse, as distinguished from mere rhymeless decasyllabics; and it contains one of the noblest passages—perhaps, indeed, the noblest in the literature of the world—ever written by one of the greatest masters of poetry in loving praise of the glorious delights and sublime submission to the everlasting limits of his art.
> Marlowe is the greatest discoverer, the most daring and inspired pioneer, in all our poetic literature.

There is no doubt that the audiences sensed this greatness in the play they were watching and listening to with rapt attention. Marlowe had had his finger on the pulse of the younger generation of Elizabethans, among whom he had lived for six years at Cambridge.

Elizabethan England was in love with heroes and the time produced a galaxy of them: Sir Francis Drake (1543-1596) rose from humble beginnings to become Admiral of the Queen's fleet. He was the first Englishman to circumnavigate the globe. He attacked Spanish shipping and brought tons of treasure back to England, which made him a legend. During his last expedition to the Caribbean, he became ill with dysentery, died on shipboard, and was buried at sea.

Sir Walter Raleigh (1552-1618), a courtier who became the Queen's favorite, achieved hero status as a result of his efforts to create English colonies in North America. His successes against the Spanish reinforced his image as a military hero. However, after James I came to the throne in 1603, he was imprisoned because of rumors that he had opposed the new king. He spent thirteen years in the Tower of London and was released in 1616. He embarked on a new expedition, but because he disobeyed the King's order not to attack the Spanish, was imprisoned once more and beheaded on October 29, 1618.

Another ill-fated hero was the dashing, impetuous Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex (1567-1601), who became Elizabeth's favorite courtier at age 20 when she was 54. Brought up as a ward in Lord Burghley's household, he was given a good Cambridge education. He fought bravely against the Spanish in the Netherlands in 1586 at age 19 alongside Sir Philip Sidney. In 1590 he married the daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham, Sidney's widow. In 1596 he led a successful force against Cadiz, which put him at the height of his fortunes. But then, after a disastrous campaign in Ireland, he suffered an ignominious decline and on his return to England led a rebellion against the Queen. He was tried for treason and beheaded.

But perhaps the most revered of the heroes was Sir Philip Sidney who was wounded at the Battle of Zutphen in the Netherlands and died on October 17, 1586. A great funeral was held for Sidney in which the highest members of the government marched in the procession to St. Paul's Cathedral where he was buried. Many from Cambridge attended the funeral and we can be sure that Marlowe was among them.

There is also evidence that Marlowe performed some other important services for Lord

Burghley. There is good reason to believe that the university scholar was appointed to tutor Lady Arbella Stuart from 1586 to 1588, when she was living in London with her grandparents. Arbella, born in 1575, was the daughter of Elizabeth Cavendish and Charles Stuart, Earl of Lennox, who died in 1576 at age 21. Her mother died in 1582, and she then lived with her grandparents, George and Bess Shrewsbury. It was in their castle that Mary Queen of Scots was imprisoned.

As a royal heir to the English throne, Arbella required an education befitting her station, and who better to tutor her than the brilliant scholar Christopher Marlowe, who had also tutored the Earl of Southampton at Cambridge. It had not yet been decided that Mary Stuart's young son James VI would succeed Elizabeth, and both Burghley and Walsingham wanted to manage a smooth transition of monarchs to insure stability to the English Protestant state.

Apparently, Marlowe did a very good job as tutor since Arbella become known for her fine education and skill in languages. Her letters reveal that she was intelligent, verbal, and well-read. Sir John Harington said that when Arbella was thirteen (1588) "she did read French out of Italian, and English out of both, much better than I could." She was said to understand Spanish and to read Greek and Hebrew.

Another service that Marlowe may have performed for Lord Burghley was to write a set of sonnets that could be used to urge the Earl of Southampton to marry Burghley's granddaughter Elizabeth. The first seventeen sonnets in Shakespeare's *Sonnets* published by Thomas Thorpe in 1609 are addressed to a handsome young man who is being urged

to marry. No one knows when they were originally written, but it is quite reasonable to assume that they were written to order and to serve a specific purpose. A.L. Rowse writes in his biography of the Earl of Southampton (p.53):

> Burghley had a granddaughter to marry—in fact, several: these were the children of his favourite daughter Anne, whom he had married in 1571 to his ward, Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford....The eldest was Lady Elizabeth Vere, now in 1590, 15 years old, and therefore of an age to be married. (Lord Burghley was all in favour of marrying people off young.) Lady Elizabeth was a couple of years junior to Southampton—what more suitable than a match between them?...And it seems that the youth, brought up in Burghley's house and by his care, had given his promise to marry the girl.

But the young Earl held off. Apparently, the Sonnets, as brilliant as they were, did not do the job Burghley had hoped they would.

The year 1588 was a very good one for Marlowe. He had achieved instant success as a playwright with the productions of *Tamburlaine I & II*. But his literary fame was temporarily eclipsed by a much greater event that loomed over the horizon: the impending invasion of England by a Spanish Armada.

Both the Pope and King Philip II of Spain had been shocked and outraged by the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots whom they considered to be the legitimate Catholic Sovereign of England. They saw an invasion of England as a sacred Catholic crusade to liberate the English from the tyranny of the Protestant heretics. Philip had been married

to Elizabeth's older sister Mary who had launched a reign of terror against the Protestants, and he believed that he had a God-inspired mission to free England from the hated Reformation.

By May of 1588, the Armada of 125 ships and 30,000 men, the largest fleet of its kind ever seen, was ready to set sail under the command of the Duke of Medina Sidonia, a 38-year-old grandee of great eminence. The plan was for the Armada to make its way to Calais on the English Channel and meet up with the Duke of Parma's invasion force from the Netherlands with its barges loaded with men and arms ready to cross the Channel and land on English soil.

On Saturday, August 6th, the Armada, after much harassment by the Royal Navy, reached Calais and dropped anchor. But the Duke of Parma and his force were nowhere in sight. The Armada was now one big sitting duck, and the English sent a small fleet of fireships at midnight to set the Armada ablaze. Medina Sidonia ordered all ships to cut or slip their cables and move away from the path of the fireships and reassemble when the danger was over. But most captains simply cut their cables and fled. Also the weather had deteriorated and the sea had become rough and visibility poor. The result was the shattering of the Armada and a great victory for England.

In London, the victory over the Armada was celebrated with tournaments and reviews. The theatre was bursting with activity, and Marlowe was already at work on a new play, *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus.* The play was based on a German tale in which a university professor sells his soul to the devil for earthly powers. Leo Kirschbaum writes in *The Plays of Christopher Marlowe* (p.103):

> Marlowe portrays his "hero" as a wretched creature who for lower values gives up higher ones. Thus, the drama is a morality play in which Heaven combats with Hell for the soul of a Renaissance Everyman and, due to the latter's psychological and moral weaknesses, loses.

The play is steeped in Calvinist thinking about the battle between man's total depravity and his unwillingness, in this case, to fight against his own sinful nature. In short, *Faustus* was the most Christian play to come out of the Elizabethan era.

During this period, Marlowe also wrote *The Massacre at Paris* and *The Jew of Malta,* both of which were staged in early 1592. The latter play, staged at Henslowe's Theatre by Lord Strange's Men, with Alleyn in the role of Barabas, was a great success.

In 1589, Marlowe was living in London, sharing rooms with Thomas Watson, one of Walsingham's most trusted and well-traveled agents. He was also considered to be England's best Latin poet. He was the perfect companion for the young poetic genius. On the afternoon of September 18, 1589, Marlowe was accosted in Hog Lane by one William Bradley, a quarrelsome 26-year-old inkeeper, who faslsely accused the poet of having something to do with a debt Bradley had incurred with John Alleyn, brother of the actor Edward Alleyn. Thomas Watson, being nearby, separated the two men. He was then attacked by Bradley, and in the ensuing duel Watson killed Bradley with a sword thrust to his breast.

Both Marlowe and Watson were arrested and taken to Newgate prison. On October 1st,

Marlowe was released after arrangements had been made to pay for his bail and two sureties. Evidence indicates that the arrangements for both Marlowe and Watson were made by attorneys working for Lord Burghley. A trial was held on December 3rd, and both poets were exonerated from guilt in the killing of Bradley. Watson, however, remained in custody until he received the Queen's pardon in February 1590.

Apparently Watson played an important part in Marlowe's life as a spy. In 1576 he had attended the English College at Douai, the same Catholic seminary which later moved to Rheims. Watson probably provided Marlowe with intimate knowledge of the seminary in preparation for the new recruit's mission.

Sir Francis Walsingham died on April 6, 1590, and Watson wrote a Latin elegy, *Meliboeus,* for his belated employer, addressed and dedicated to Thomas Walsingham. There also appeared in this year an anonymous epitaph dedicated to the late spy master, in which the first letter of each of the twenty lines spelled out Walsingham's name. Did Marlowe write it?

At about this same time Marlowe was introduced by Watson to Sir Walter Ralegh's intimate circle of free-thinking intellectuals at Durham House which became known as "The School of Night." There he formed friendships with Henry Percy, Ninth Earl of Northumberland, Thomas Hariot, the mathematician, Dr. John Dee, the Queen's astrologer, and Richard Hakluyt, the navigational expert. Ralegh's ambition was to advance English colonization in North America. It is reasonable to assume that both Marlowe and Watson were expected to report back to Burghley on what was said at these gatherings.

With the death of Sir Francis Walsingham, Lord Burghley took complete control of the Secret Service. In February 1592, Anthony Bacon, older brother of Francis Bacon, returned to England after having spent twelve years on the continent as an intelligence agent for Walsingham. Francis Bacon had become an advisor to the Earl of Essex who was involved in an intense personal rivalry with Ralegh. With the help of the Bacon brothers, Essex was able to set up his own intelligence gathering office in opposition to Burghley and his son Robert Cecil.

The Bacon brothers were Burghley's nephews, and they resented the fact that their uncle was grooming Robert Cecil to succeed him as Secretary to the Queen. Francis, ever ambitious, wanted to become Attorney General, and hoped that Essex's influence would move the Queen to appoint him. But it didn't work. She appointed the more experienced jurist, Sir Edward Coke (1552-1634) to the position.

Enraged by the lack of their uncle's interest in advancing Francis's career in Elizabeth's government, the Bacon brothers were determined to destroy Robert Cecil's chances of succeeding his father. Did they try to recruit Christopher Marlowe in their efforts? If they did, they failed, for Marlowe's loyalty to Burghley was as strong and affectionate as a father-son relationship.

In *Hostage to Fortune,* Lisa Jardine and Alan Stewart write of Francis Bacon's ambition:

> Though dynastically well placed, Bacon's prospects were obstructed throughout his career by Sir Robert Cecil, the equally ambitious son of his mother's sister,

> Mildred Cooke, wife of Lord Burghley. Francis hedged his bets between the two factions which between them controlled the Elizabethan court in the 1570s—the Cecils and Essex. His preferred champion, the Earl of Essex, was charismatic, charming and well-educated—the kind of man for whom throughout his life Francis Bacon had a weakness.

As for the circle that Francis and his brother Anthony built around Essex, the authors write:

> [T]he exclusively male, intense and passionate forms of service which surrounded Essex, in which both Anthony and Francis Bacon were implicated until the death of the earl, could readily be represented in a less respectable light as a world rife with male sexual intrigue and sodomy. Lampoons, letters and intelligence reports from the period contain frequent suggestions that one or other of the rising young men is involved in some homosexual sexual liaison or other.

Obviously, the proclivities of the Bacon brothers may have had something to do with Burghley's reluctance to favor them for high office. But what is especially important to our story is the fact that Marlowe remained loyal and closely attached to Burghley and his son.

Indicative of that close relationship is a bizarre incident which took place in January 1592. Marlowe had been sent on an intelligence mission to Flushing in the Netherlands. The nature of the mission has never been disclosed. However, the reason we know that he was in Flushing at the time is because of his arrest there as a counterfeiter

and his deportation back to England on January 26, 1592.

The governor of Flushing, Sir Robert Sidney, younger brother of the deceased Philip, summed up the case in a letter to Lord Burghley. He wrote:

> Besides the prisoner Evan Flud, I have also given in charge to this bearer, my ancient, two other prisoners: the one named Christofer Marly, by his profession a scholar, and the other Gifford Gilbert, a goldsmith, taken here for coining, and their money I have sent over unto your Lordship.
>
> The matter was revealed unto me the day after it was done, by one Ri: Baines, whom also my ancient shall bring unto your Lordship. He was their chamber-fellow and, fearing the success, made me acquainted withal....
>
> But howsoever it happened, a Dutch shilling was uttered, and else not any piece. And indeed I do not think that they would have uttered many of them, for the metal is plain pewter and with half an eye to be discovered. Notwithstanding, I thought it fit to send them over unto your Lordship, to take their trial as you shall think best....
>
> The goldsmith is an excelllent workman, and if I should speak my conscience, had not intent hereunto. The scholar says himself to be very well known both to the Earl of Northumberland and my Lord Strange. Baines and he do also accuse one another of intent to go to the enemy, or to Rome, both as they say of malice to one another. Hereof I thought fit to advertise your Lordship, leaving the rest to their own confession, and my ancient's report.

And so we have documentary evidence of the enmity between Marlowe and Richard

Baines, who was to play an important role in the plot to destroy Marlowe.

Needless to say, Marlowe was brought before Lord Burghley, who may or may not have known the purpose of the counterfeiting scheme. In any case, Marlowe and Burghley probably had one of their great conversations, with Marlowe providing some intelligent assessment of what was going on in Flushing. Burghley may have then assigned the playwright-poet to some other mission.

The nature of the Burghley-Marlowe relationship can be understand in the Ten Precepts that Burghley addressed to his son Robert, which revealed some of the wisdom learned from his long-time relationship with the young poet. He wrote:

> Be sure to keep some great man thy friend, but trouble him not for trifles. Compliment him often with many, yet small, gifts, and of little charge. And if thou hast cause to bestow any great gratuity, let it be something which may be daily in sight.

We can easily imagine Marlowe bringing back from some mission abroad a book or some other small gift for Walsingham and Burghley in gratitude of the support he was given by the most powerful men in the realm.

There is another factor to consider. By 1592, Burghley had given his son Robert Cecil ever greater responsibilities. Since Robert had known Marlowe at Cambridge, here was another important connection that would work in Marlowe's favor, especially since he had become a successful playwright and had written of matters of particular interest to

Burghley and son. They must have found *Henry VI, Parts I, II, III,* most interesting because of the trilogy's vivid, tumultuous story of royal succession, a subject uppermost in their minds since they were concerned with who would succeed Elizabeth. Robert Cecil's future depended on all of them making the right decisions. Also, *Edward II,* a play about a homosexual monarch and the political conflict that led to his murder, may have been written to provide Burghley and son a picture of what might happen if James of Scotland, known for his proclivities, became king of England. Thus, the friendship between Marlowe and Robert Cecil would be crucial in the events that would take place in 1593.

While Marlowe's relation with the Cecils bore mainly on political matters, his relation with the Pembrokes bore on literary matters, for the Countess of Pembroke, herself a poet, had become a major patron of the arts. We have asked, was Marlowe in love with the Countess? In the Autumn of 1592, Thomas Watson died. In November Marlowe wrote a Latin dedication for his friend's last poem, *Amintae Gaudia,* to the Countess. She had persuaded her husband to form a theatrical company, Pembroke's Men, so that they could stage Marlowe's *Edward II.* Apparently, she had been following Marlowe's career as a poet and playwright. The dedication, signed C.M., reads in English:

> To the most illustrious heroine, endowed with gifts of both mind and body, Mary, Countess of Pembroke. Delia, born of a laurelled race, true sister of Sidney, Apollo's prophet; fostering parent of letters, to whose immaculate embrace virtue, outraged by the assault of barbarism and ignorance, flies for refuge, as once Philomela from the tyrant of Thrace: Muse of the poets of our time and of all most

> happily burgeoning wits; heavenly offspring, who impartest now to my rude pen the lofty inspiration whereby my poor self gains power to surpass what my unripe talent is wont to bring forth—deign to be patron to this posthumous Amyntas, as to thy adopted son, the more so in that his dying father humbly bequeathed him to your keeping....So shall I, whose slender wealth is but the sea shore myrtle of Venus, Daphne's evergreen laurel, invoke you on the first page of every poem as mistress of the Muses.

The dedication was clearly the equivalent of a discreet but emotional love letter written in Latin so that only the adept could understand it. As for the theatrical company under the patronage of the Earl of Pembroke, Hugh Ross Williamson has commented (p.196):

> It would have been more accurate to have called the new group of actors "the Countess of Pembroke's Company," for it was she, the elderly Earl's third wife whom he had married when she was sixteen, who had turned Wilton into a centre of the arts and sciences so that it was "like a college, there were so many learned and ingenious persons." The young Countess, "a beautiful lady of excellent wit, with a sharp-oval face and hair of a reddish-yellow," was the adored sister of Sir Philip Sidney....To her...he had dedicated his *Arcadia* and after his death she considered it her duty to continue his patronage of poetry and to try to raise the stage to the level of his ideals as he had expressed them in his *Defence of Poesie.*

The Countess also had her own ideas about playwriting, which no doubt had an influence on Marlowe. She considered the contemporary French dramatist, Robert Garnier, the perfect playwright. His historical plays were written in a classical Senecan style,

calculated to "chase away gross barbarism." The Countess also translated Garnier's tragedy on Mark Antony and persuaded the poet Samuel Daniel to write a companion piece on Cleopatra. Daniel, who I believe became the rival poet of the Sonnets, lived with the Countess at Wilton and tutored her ten-year-old son William.

There is good reason to believe that the Countess's relation with Daniel created in Marlowe intense jealousy, which is why he wrote about the rival poet in his sonnets. Daniel, the son of a music-master, and three years older than Marlowe, had left Oxford in 1585 without taking a degree and went to work for Walsingham, gathering intelligence in Paris.

The Countess's second son Philip Herbert was born in 1584. If the Countess's elderly husband was infertile, one must ask who was the father of Philip Herbert? Could it have been Daniel, who was 22 in 1583, the year of Philip Herbert's conception? We do not know when the poet first met the Countess, but we do know that the Countess hired him to tutor her son when he returned from France in 1586.

And who was the father of her daughter Katherine, born eighteen months after the birth of William? Katherine died in October 1584 at the age of three. A second daughter, Anne, was born in the Spring of 1583. Very little is known about Anne.

The Countess's interests also brought her into the Ralegh group. Ralegh's half-brother, Adrian Gilbert, worked with her in her alchemical laboratory. This was another venue in which she could have had occasion to meet with Marlowe and discuss with him her ideas about play writing. The Countess assigned topics to various writers and probably paid

them to carry out her wishes, and she may have paid Marlowe to write the Henry the Sixth trilogy, that brilliant retelling of the War of the Roses. Only a writer with Marlowe's genius and historical knowledge could have drawn from Holinshed and Edward Hall the basic story and put in the mouths of the myriad characters so many marvelous lines. Although this complex trilogy is considered by many scholars to be Shakespeare's first dramatic work, it seems highly improbable that a man with no education could start his writing career by producing such complex masterpieces of historical drama. Other scholars have concluded that Marlowe wrote the plays.

Another event that took place in 1592 was the death of Robert Greene, Marlowe's contemporary at Cambridge, who went on to become a writer of novels and plays. Born in Norwich in 1560, he was four years older than Marlowe and obtained his Master's Degree in 1583. Greene had followed Marlowe's career with great interest since they both wrote plays for Henslowe and Edward Alleyn. Greene's play, *Alphonsus King of Aragon,* was an attempt to outdo Marlowe's *Tamburlaine,* but it flopped.

Greene would hardly be remembered today were it not for an autobiographical pamphlet he wrote, *A Groatsworth of Wit,* published shortly after his death. In it Greene thrashed out against those in the theatre business who had used him and then left him to die in poverty. He was referring to the actor-managers who profited greatly from the work of writers like himself and bought their plays for a pittance. A much-performed play could make an actor-manager wealthy while its author lived in poverty. And so, in this last testament, Greene bitterly lashed out at Edward Alleyn whom he disliked intensely. He addressed his fellow playwrights:

> Is it not strange, that I, to whom they all have been beholding: is it not like that you, to whom they all have been beholding, shall (were yee in that case as I am now) be both at once of them forsaken? Yes trust them not: for there is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde,* supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute Iohannes fac totum, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrey. O that I might intreat your rare wits to be imploied in more profitable courses: & let those Apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired intentions.

It is obvious that the Shake-scene is the actor Alleyn, Henslowe's superstar, who had achieved great notoriety as Tamburlaine, Barabas, and Faustus. He could indeed shake a scene with his bombast and at the same time become wealthy as a part-owner of plays. If we refer to Henslowe's Diary, which begins in 1591, we can see why Greene had reason to fulminate against "those Apes." In 1591, two of his plays, *Friar Bacon* and *Orlando Furioso,* were performed by Lord Strange's Men for whom Alleyn played all or most of the heroes.

In that same year, and well into 1592 and 1593, there were numerous performances of *The Jew of Malta* and *Henry VI.* In fact, it was a line from *Henry VI, Part III* (Act I, Scene IV) "O tiger's heart rapt in a woman's hyde," that Greene parodied when he wrote, *"his Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde."*

Shakespearean scholars have taken Shake-scene to be a reference to William

Shakespeare. But the latter's name appears nowhere in the literary world before it appears on the dedication page of *Venus and Adonis,* published in September 1593 after the alleged death of Marlowe in May 1593. The poem had been entered in the Stationers' Register anonymously on April 18, 1593.

As for the authenticity of *Groatsworth,* Joseph Sobran writes (p.33):

> The pamphlet, for all its splendid invective, is probably a forgery. Warren Austin of Stephen F. Austin State College, has reached this conclusion from a computer-aided analysis of its style....Not that the pamphlet's authorship proves whether or not it is an attack on Shakespeare. But the rather late discovery that Greene could not have written it shows that, since a scholar named Thomas Tyrwhitt came across the pamphlet in 1766, few have subjected it to rigorous scrutiny.

Yet, the pamphlet is routinely and uncritically used by biographers to "prove" that Shakespeare was already known as an important writer as early as 1592.

Finally, we come to the year 1593, in which Marlowe's life was to change dramatically at the age of 29. The poet's troubles began when someone nailed a 53-line doggerel on the wall of the Dutch churchyard in Broad Street. It threatened the Dutch immigrants living in London with harm and violence if they did not leave. This was only one of a number of libels against the French, Dutch and Belgian immigrants which had started to appear on April 15, 1593.

All of this was probably caused by the action of the House of Commons on March 21,

1593, extending the privileges of resident aliens. The Queen favored the legislation, and her ministers voted for it. However, when the libels began to appear, the Queen ordered an investigation, and the Privy Council set up a commission of five men to "examine by secret means who may be the authors of the said libels."

What was special about the Dutch Church libel is that it was written in iambic pentameter, signed Tamburlaine, and contained allusions to several of Marlowe's plays. Charles Nicholl in *The Reckoning* speculates that all of this had to do with the fierce rivalry between the Earl of Essex and Ralegh for the Queen's favor. It is believed that the libel itself was written by one Richard Cholmeley, one of Essex's servants. Nicholl writes in *The Reckoning* (p.300):

> The man most likely to be handling Cholmeley was Thomas Phelippes, the old Walsingham code-breaker who was now Essex's operational chief in secret matters. A little-known fact which now becomes significant is that Phelippes was a member of the special commission set up by the Privy Council to investigate the anti-Dutch libels....He used forgery and fabrication to incriminate Babington, and through him, Mary Stuart. The campaign against Marlowe and Ralegh in 1593 has something of his trademark; his position on the secret commission gives him a logistical base; his role in the Essex retinue gives him the motivation.

It should be noted that Anthony and Francis Bacon were allied to Essex, and were competing with Robert Cecil for the highest positions in Elizabeth's government. Essex became so obsessed with seeing Francis appointed Attorney General that he told Robert Cecil in a heated conversation: "[F]or the Attorneyship for Francis is that I must have,

and in that will spend all my power, might, authority and amity, and with tooth and nail defend and procure the same for him against whomsoever; and whosoever getteth this office out of my hands for any other before he have it, it shall cost him the coming-by." Meanwhile, on May 11 the Council of the Star Chamber decided to take measures to counter the potential violence posed by the libels. The reference to Tamburlaine was obviously meant to point the finger at Marlowe. The Privy Council was so outraged that they authorized the mayor of London to enter the homes of suspected individuals and search their "chambers, studies, chestes, or other like places for all manner of writings or papers that may give you light for discovery of the libellers."

And so they searched the quarters of playwright Thomas Kyd who had shared his rooms in Norton Folgate with Marlowe two years earlier. The searchers found what they were looking for, a manuscript copy of a treatise on the beliefs of a heretic known as Arrian. In vain, Kyd explained that the papers did not belong to him. They belonged to Marlowe and had been accidentally shuffled with his own papers. But Kyd's story was not believed and he was arrested and taken to Bridewell where, on the order of the Star Chamber, he was put to the torture.

On May 18, 1593, the Privy Council issued a warrant of arrest and the apprehension of Marlowe who, at the time, was living at Scadbury, the home of his friend and patron Thomas Walsingham in Chiselhurst, Kent. The Council's messenger showed up at Scadbury and Marlowe duly accompanied him to the Court in London. Having made his appearance, he was immediately released on bail. However, he was ordered to "give his daily attendance on their Lordships, until he shall be lycensed to the Contrary."

It was obvious to Burghley and Robert that Marlowe was in great trouble and had to be saved from the torture rack where he would be forced to reveal the secrets of Burghley's own intelligence service. They also realized that the case against Marlowe was a frame-up designed by the Earl of Essex to damage Burghley and son. Essex was capable of doing anything he and the Bacon brothers could think of to destroy his rivals for political power. And he could use members of the secret service who had gone over to his side to do the job. These included Richard Cholmeley and Richard Baines, Marlowe's rabid enemy, working under Phelippes' expert direction.

The Deptford Plot

The plan to stage a fake murder of Marlowe was probably suggested by something that Marlowe himself had read in his search for ideas for new plays. The play which he would later use for the plot of *Measure for Measure,* had a body swapping scene which was later replicated at Deptford by Thomas Walsingham's own men. Apparently, both Burghley and Robert agreed to the plot. Under a new identity, which could easily be manufactured by the secret service, Marlowe could continue to work in the service and continue writing his plays. But he would no longer be able to use the name he was born with and he would have to live in perpetual disguise and exile. But it was all much better than the rack and the hangman's noose.

The faked murder was planned to take place at the house of widow Eleanor Bull at Deptford. Mrs. Bull was well-connected and a distant relative of Burghley's. Her place had long been used as a safe-house for agents coming and going to the Continent. In other words, Mrs. Bull would ask no questions about any goings on in the house, even a

"murder," knowing that it was being carried out by Burghley's secret agents.

The timing for the phony murder was crucial. It had to be coordinated with the hanging of John Penry, the radical Puritan, whose body was going to substitute for Marlowe's. Penry had been found guilty of treason and condemned to death by Archbishop Whitgift's inquisition. He was accused of having published the Martin Marprelate pamphlets which ridiculed and lambasted the Anglican church hierarchy and made them furious. It was this intense persecution of the Puritans which led many of them to emigrate to North America after 1620.

The hanging of Penry took place on May 29, 1593, at St Thomas a Watering, three miles from Deptford. Marlowe's supposed murder was scheduled to take place the very next day at Deptford. This provided enough time for Thomas Walsingham's men to take possession of Penry's body and bring it to Deptford. It should be noted that it was Burghley who managed to delay Penry's hanging so that it could be coordinated with what was planned at Deptford.

The Coroner's Inquest is undoubtedly the most important document in this whole plot. It describes the circumstances in which Marlowe was "murdered," and obviously does not describe what actually took place at Mrs. Bull's house. Since the murderer and witnesses were all Walsingham's men, their job was to create a plausible scenario that would lead to the acquittal of the murderer as having acted in self-defense. And that's what the Coroner's Inquest tells us.

The Inquest was discovered by the indefatigable Elizabethan scholar J. Leslie Hotson of

Harvard in 1925 while searching through the Public Record Office in London. It is a handsome document written in impeccable Latin by a professional scribe. It says that Ingram Fryser, Christopher Morley, Nicholas Skeres and Robert Poley at 10 a.m. "met together in a room at the house of one Eleanor Bull, widow and there passed the time together and lunched, and after lunch kept company quietly in the garden ... until the sixth hour after noon of the same day, and then returned to the room aforesaid and there together and company dined ..."

What was Marlowe doing in Deptford, spending a full day in idleness and hours walking in a garden with two of Walsingham's servants at a seaport where Burghley's spies conveniently went abroad and returned and could freshen up at Eleanor Bull's safe house before making their way to London or wait for a ship to take them on a mission? They were joined that day by Robert Poley who had just returned from Holland. Shouldn't Marlowe have remained at Scadbury, available for interrogration in London by Whitgift's commission at a moment's notice?

The Inquest tells us further "that after dinner the aforesaid Ingram and Christopher Morley were in speech and exchanged divers malicious words because they could not concur nor agree on the payment of the sum of pence, that is to say, *le recknynge*, there..."

Why this fuss over a bill that was either to be paid by Walsingham or Burghley? The four men were there on some sort of "business." So the idea that there would be a dispute between Ingram and Marlowe over the bill is preposterous. But it provides a pretext for what was alleged to have happened next:

> And the said Christopher Morley then lying on a bed in the room where they dined and moved with anger against the said Ingram Frysar because of the said words that had passed between them, and the aforesaid Ingram then and there sitting in the aforesaid room with his back towards the bed where the aforesaid Christopher Morley then lying, near the bed, that is sitting *nere the bed* and with the front part of his body towards the table, and the aforesaid Nicholas Skeres and Robert Poley sitting on either side of the same Ingram, so that the same Ingram Frysar could in no way take flight, thus it befell that the aforesaid Christopher Morley suddenly and of malice aforethought towards the aforesaid Ingram then and there drew the dagger of the aforesaid Ingram which was at his back, and with the same dagger the aforesaid Christopher Morley then and there gave the aforesaid Ingram two wounds on his head the length of two inches and of the depth of a quarter of an inch; whereupon the aforesaid Ingram, in fear of being slain and sitting on the aforesaid bench between aforesaid Nicholas Skeres and Robert Poley, so that he was not able to withdraw in any way, in his own defense and to save his life then and there struggled with the aforesaid Christopher Morley to take back from him his aforesaid dagger, in which same affray the same Ingram could not withdraw further from the aforesaid Christopher Morley.

Was Marlowe actually trying to kill Ingram Frysar with the latter's own dagger while lying in a very awkward position on a bed? And if so why did Skeres and Poley, the great mastermind of the Babington plot, do nothing to subdue Marlowe and help Ingram? If ever there were a phony scenario, this is it. What these men were probably doing in

that room was preparing Penry's body for the inquest. It is even probable that Marlowe was no longer there but had already left on his next mission for Burghley. But the Inquest continues:

> And thus it befell in that affray that the said Ingram, in defense of his life and with the aforesaid dagger of the value of 12 pence, gave the aforesaid Christopher then and there a mortal wound above his right eye of the depth of two inches and of the breath of one inch, of which same mortal wound the aforesaid Christopher Morley then and there instantly died.

Physicians have commented that a wound such as the one described in the Inquest would not kill a man. It would simply damage the brain as in a prefrontal lobotomy. Nevertheless, Coroner William Danby and the Jurors assembled for the Inquest, concluded that the poet had been murdered in self-defense. They, of course, assumed that the body lying before them was Marlowe's. None of them had ever seen Marlowe nor knew what he looked like. And so, at the close of the Inquest, Penry's body was buried in an unmarked grave at the local churchyard. It should be noted that Penry's body was never returned to his relatives, nor were they permitted to be at the scene of his hanging.

On Thursday, June 28, just four weeks after the events in Mrs. Bull's house, the Queen issued a formal pardon of Ingram Frizer for having murdered a man in self-defense. The case was closed, and Frizer returned to work for Thomas Walsingham.

Where did Marlowe, with a new identity, go after May 30, 1593? Probably to Italy.

There he could continue to work for Burghley as well as continue writing his plays. The fact that so many of them are situated in Italy lends credence to this assumption. Also, the Sonnets describing his exile and slow travel toward an unnamed destination provide dramatic autobiographical information.

Another important coincidence is that Marlowe's open career as a playwright ends on May 30, 1593, and that Shakespeare's begins in September with the publication of *Venus and Adonis*. Both men were the same age, and is it not strange that Marlowe's great career should end at the age of 29 and Shakespeare's should suddenly begin with a full-blown literary masterpiece at that somewhat advanced age? What had he been doing before then?

Diana Price concluded that whatever Shakespeare had been doing before or after September 1593, it had nothing to do with writing plays or poems. Indeed, Shakespeare's will makes no mention of anything related to the work of a professional writer.

Yet, the number of biographies about Shakespeare, which assume him to have been the greatest literary genius of all time, continue to grow. Most of them are works of pure, unadulterated fiction woven around the few facts known about the man. Probably the best book to have questioned Shakespeare's authorship was George Greenwood's *The Shakespeare Problem Restated,* published in 1908. He wrote:

> There is not a letter, not a note, not a scrap of writing from the pen of Shakspere which has come down to us except five signatures—two to deeds and three to his

> will. All these five signatures appear to differ. Almost illegible as they must have been when written, except to expert decipherers of hieroglyphics, they are doubly so now on account of the fading of the ink.

Nevertheless, new biographies continue to be written about Shakespeare. For the most part they are exercises in pure, unadulterated fiction built around the few true facts that we know about the man.

As for Marlowe, three new biographies about ~~the~~ him have appeared: *Christopher Marlowe, A Renaissance Life* by Constance Brown Kuriyama (2002), *The World of Christopher Marlowe* by David Riggs (2004), and Park Honan's *Christopher Marlowe Poet & Spy* (2005). While all three add some new detail to Marlowe's life, unfortunately they accept the Coroner's Inquest and Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit* as gospel and do not venture forth beyond them.

And it is not difficult to understand why. To assume that Marlowe lived beyond May 30, 1593 is to embark on unchartered waters. But there are many indications that he did live far beyond his reported death. First, the existence of the thirty-six plays in the First Folio, which only he could have written, are indeed proof that he lived beyond the Deptford event. Marlowe, as an experienced intelligence agent and with a keen understanding of politics and the risks that had been taken to save him, understood the need to write under a nom-de-plume. Although living in a perpetual state of exile and incognito irked him, he saw what happened to others who got into trouble with the government. Thomas Kyd died a year after his ordeal in the torture chamber. The Earl

of Essex was beheaded in 1601 for attempting to overthrow the Queen, and soon after, Anthony Bacon was found dead in his quarters.

And undoubtedly, the plot to save Marlowe was the best kept secret among those who knew the truth. Although Lord Burghley died in 1598, his son Robert, who succeeded him as Secretary to the Queen, was sensitive to any rumors or breaches that might expose the secret. Thus, when Thomas Thorpe published *Shake-speares Sonnets* in 1609, with its enigmatic dedication to the mysterious W.H., the poems were so clearly autobiographical of Christopher Marlowe, that the book was immediately withdrawn and was not seen for a hundred years.

Probably the best way to track Marlowe's activities after Deptford is to follow the publication trail. It is generally agreed by most scholars that the Henry VI trilogy was written in 1590, that *Richard III* and the *Comedy of Errors* were written in 1592. *Titus Andronicus* is believed to have been written in 1593, and according to the first published quarto edition of 1594, it was performed by a company that folded in early 1593. That company was Pembroke's Men.

Although Shakespeare's name appeared on *Venus and Adonis* in 1593 and *The Rape of Lucrece* in 1594, it wasn't until 1598 that his name appeared on the first edition of a quarto of a play, *Love's Labour's Lost,* believed to have been written in 1591. This great play, which takes place in the court of the French King of Navarre, has Marlowe's fingerprints all over it. It could only have been written by a university wit since it is a satire on pompous intellectuality. And the reason why Shakespeare's name appeared on it is that it was also a *roman a clef,* with characters that could be identified.

Another reason is that in 1598 there appeared a book by Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia,* in which Shakespeare was named as a prominent poet and playwright, as good as any of the great Latin poets. Thus, by 1598, Shakespeare's name was already known as the author not only of twelve plays but also "his sugared sonnets known among his friends." The year 1598 also saw the publication by Edward Blount of Marlowe's great romantic poem, *Hero and Leander.* The first edition was dedicated to Sir Thomas Walsingham and reads:

> Sir: we think not ourselves discharged of the duty we owe to our friend when we have brought the breathless body to the earth; for albeit the eye there taketh his ever farewell of that beloved object, yet the impression of the man that hath been dear unto us, living an after life in our memory, there putteth us in mind of farther obsequies due unto the deceased. And namely, of the performance of whatsoever we may judge shall make to his living credit, and to the effecting of his determinations prevented by the stroke of death. By these meditations (as by an intellectual will) I suppose myself executor to the unhappily deceased author of this poem, upon whom knowing that in his lifetime you bestowed many kind favours, entertaining the parts of reckoning and worth which you found in him, with good countenance and liberal affection; I cannot but see so far into the will of him dead, that whatsover issue of his brain should chance to come abroad, that the first breath it should take might be the gentle air of your liking; for since his self had been accustomed thereunto, it would prove more agreeable and thriving in his right children than any other foster countenance whatsoever. At this time

> seeing that this unfinished tragedy happens under my hands to be imprinted, of a double duty, the one to yourself, the other to the deceased, I present the same to your most favourable allowance, offering my utmost self now and ever to be ready, at your worship's disposing.

What a revealing document! The dedication tells us some very important things about both Walsingham and Blount. First, Blount considered himself to be Marlowe's "executor," and second, that Walsingham was the logical foster parent of "whatever issue of his [Marlowe's] brain should chance to come abroad." It also tells us that both Walsingham and Blount took it upon themselves to be the protectors and custodians of Marlowe's legacy. Writing in exile, Marlowe probably sent his manuscripts to Walsingham via the couriers of the Secret Service. Walsingham then had them copied by his scribe, and Blount took them to Shakespeare at the theatre. Shakespeare's colleagues often commented on the neatness of his manuscripts. Indeed, there is the famous line in the promotional preface that John Heminge and Henrie Condell wrote for the First Folio: "And what he thought, he uttered with that easiness, that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers." And now we know why.

As for the poem, *Hero and Leander,* Marlowe is credited with having written the first two Sestiads, and George Chapman wrote the next four Sestiads, which he dedicated to Washingham's wife, nee Audrey Shelton. At that time, the Lady Walsingham was one of the Ladies of Her Majesty's Bed-Chamber.

Who Was Edward Blount?

Judging from the Dedication of *Hero and Leander,* and the fact that Edward Blount was

the prime mover behind the publication of the First Folio in 1623, we believe that Blount is the key to the whole authorship mystery. Since it was clearly he who brought the plays to Shakespeare, he obviously knew of Marlowe's whereabouts. But who was Blount? He was a publisher with a substantial reputation. Son of a merchant tailor of London, he apprenticed himself in 1578 for a term of ten years to a London Stationer, William Ponsonby. On June 25, 1588, he was duly admitted a freeman of the Stationers' Company. We don't know how Marlowe and Blount became friends, but since Marlowe frequented the book stalls at St. Paul's Church, he probably met the publisher there. In 1595, Blount published John Florio's *Dictionary in Italian and English.* Florio had been in service to the Earl of Leicester and later entered the household of the Earl of Southampton. Some scholars believe that he served as the model for Don Armado, the character in *Love's Labour's Lost* with the page Moth. Which means that Marlowe knew him. In 1600 Blount gave young publisher Thomas Thorpe Marlowe's translation of *Lucan's First Book* to publish. Thorpe dedicated the publication to Blount. He wrote:

> Blount: I propose to be blunt with you, and out of my dullness to encounter you with a dedication in the memory of that pure elemental wit Chr. Marlowe, whose ghost or genius is to be seen walk the churchyard in (at the least) three or four sheets. Methinks you should presently look wild now, and grow humorously frantic upon the taste of it. Well, lest you should, let me tell you. This spirit was sometime a familiar of your own, *Lucan's first book translated,* which (in regard of your old right in it) I have raised in the circle of your patronage....

The rest of the dedication is good-humored and ends with "Thine in all rites of perfect

friendship." What is significant is that in 1609, Thorpe published *Shake-speare's Sonnets.* Where did he get the manuscript from? Obviously from his friend Blount who preferred not to publish the poems himself. The autobiographical material in them was too dangerous. So dangerous, that the book was withdrawn shortly after its publication, probably on orders from Robert Cecil.

One of the great mysteries that has baffled Shakespeare scholars is the identification of the W.H. in Thorpe's cryptic dedication. But if we understand that W.H. is William Herbert, Marlowe's son through his affair with the Countess of Pembroke, then the mystery is solved.

We have already stated our opinion that the first seventeen sonnets were written for Lord Burghley who was anxious to persuade the Earl of Southampton to marry his granddaughter. After that, Marlowe wrote personal sonnets which tell of his own love relationships. For example, Sonnet 18. For whom was it written—"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day"? I contend that it was written to his devoted friend and protector Thomas Walsingham. The love expressed in this sonnet and many others is not sexual. It is one of devotion and friendship. It ends with a theme found elsewhere in Marlowe, that the poem will outlive its subject and defy the ravages of time.

Sonnet 25 clearly relates to the poet's life after the events at Deptford. He writes:

> Let those who are in favour with their stars
> Of public honour and proud titles boast,
> Whilst I whom fortune of such triumph bars

Unlooked for joy in that I honour most.

Sonnet 50 provides a picture of the poet's agony as he travels away from England, in exile:

How heavy do I journey on the way,
When what I seek (my weary travel's end)
Doth teach that ease and that repose to say,
"Thus far the miles are measured from thy friend."
The beast that bears me, tired with my woe,
Plods dully on, to bear that weight in me,
As if by some instinct the wretch did know
His rider loved not speed being made from thee:
The bloody spur cannot provoke him on,
That sometimes anger thrusts into his hide,
Which heavily he answers with a groan,
More sharp to me than spurring to his side.

Finally, in Sonnet 29, we find the most eloquent description of his unhappy post-Deptford predicament:

When in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate...

Marlowe would have to live in this "outcast state" for the rest of his life.

There are many love poems among the Sonnets which are difficult to understand because it is virtually impossible to determine to whom they were written: Thomas Walsingham, William Herbert, the Countess of Pembroke, or someone else. In the sonnets referring to the so-called Dark Lady, it has been speculated that the mysterious raven-haired beauty was Mary Fitton, mistress to William Herbert. Fitton was the daughter of Sir Edward Fitton, a Cheshire knight, who was greatly concerned about his daughter's future. She had become Queen Elizabeth's youngest and most beautiful maid of honour and attracted a good deal of male attention. In 1600 she became the lover of William Herbert. By the New Year, she could no longer conceal that she was pregnant and Herbert admitted responsibility. Herbert was put in Fleet Prison and Mary was put in the care of Lady Hawkins. But after she delivered a still-born son, Herbert refused to marry her.
It is therefore not unreasonable to believe that when Cecil read the Sonnets published by Thorpe, he was alarmed by what he read about the Dark Lady and other clearly autobiographical material about Marlowe and immediately quashed the book's distribution. There was no second edition. The Sonnets did not reappear in their original form until 1711. By then everyone who might have known the truth about the Sonnets were dead.

Even more revealing is Sonnet 76 in which Marlowe spelled out the name of his friend Thomas Watson in a poem about the fear of revealing his true identity:

> Why is my verse so barren of new pride?

So far from variation or quick change?

Why with the time do I not glance aside

To new-found methods and to compounds strange?

Why write I still all one, ever the same,

And keep invention in a noted weed,

That every word doth almost tell my name,

Showing their birth, and where they did proceed?

O know, sweet love, I always write of you,

And you and love are still my argument.

The Sonnets have been studied and analyzed by hundreds of scholars, and yet not a single one of them found the TWATSO crostic. It was discovered by John Baker, a dedicated Marlowe-Shakespeare scholar.

In 1620, Blount published the first English translation of Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. The translator was one Thomas Shelton, whose biographical data is virtually nonexistent. The Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th Edition, Vol. XXIV (p.833) tells us that Shelton wrote the translation in forty days. The article goes on to state:

> It seems safe to identify him with the Thomas Shelton who wrote a sonnet prefixed to *Restitution of Decayed Intelligence* (1605) of Richard Verstegan, who was most likely the friend referred to in Shelton's preface, for there is reason to believe that both of them were then employed in a matter of doubtful loyalty, the intrigues of the Roman Catholics in England.... [I]n 1599 he apparently acted as

agent for Florence McCarthy to offer his service to the king of Spain, a commission for which his knowledge of Spanish especially fitted him.

Was Thomas Shelton Christopher Marlowe in a new incarnation? How many secret agents did Robert Cecil have who could translate *Don Quixote* into English in forty days? The name Thomas Shelton itself is of interest. The Thomas is undoubtedly from Sir Thomas Walsingham, and the Shelton is from the maiden name of his wife, Audrey Shelton. And is it not of equal interest that the man who published the translation was Edward Blount, Marlowe's executor?

Although the chronology of Shakespeare's plays is based on dates of registry with the Stationers' Company and dates of unauthorized publication in Quarto, it is difficult to be certain as to when each play was written. For example, the Italian plays—*Taming of the Shrew, Two Gentlemen of Verona, Romeo and Juliet, The Merchant of Venice*—appear to have been written between 1593 and 1596, a period in which Marlowe was probably in Italy living in exile. The plays are full of so much accurate geographical detail that one must assume that the writer was actually there.

The First Folio

We now come to the First Folio. Next to the publication of the King James Version of the Bible, the First Folio, containing the thirty-six plays with William Shakespeare named as author, is the single most valuable book published in the English language. It contains what has become known as the Shakespeare canon. It was a major publishing ~~project~~ enterprise requiring a large investment of time, editorial work, and money.

The idea may have been suggested by the publication of Ben Jonson's plays in a

handsome folio in 1616, the year Shakespeare died. But it wasn't until 1621 that the First Folio project got underway. The 1622 catalogue of the Frankfurt Book Fair carried an announcement of its publication. And who was the prime mover behind the project? None other than Marlowe's executor, Edward Blount, who had engaged the Jaggard company to do the printing. And the reason why it took two years to complete the project is because Jaggard had to interrupt work on the Folio in order to complete some other printing commitment.

The time of interruption was no doubt profitably used to do the enormous editorial work on the 36 plays. Sixteen of them had previously been published in unauthorized quarto editions and were quite imperfect, requiring corrections and rewriting. Who did the editing? We can assume that Marlowe was still alive at age 59 and as author was most qualified to edit his own work. Then there were the sixteen plays that had never been previously published. How did Blount find them? How did he even know they existed? What we do know is that on November 8, 1623, Blount and Jaggard registered sixteen plays with the Stationers' Registry. They were: *The Tempest, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Measure for Measure, The Comedy of Errors, As You Like It, All's Well That Ends Well, Twelfth Night, The Winter's Tale, Henry VI Part I, Henry VIII, Coriolanus, Timon of Athens, Julius Caesar, Macbeth, Antony and Cleopatra,* and *Cymbeline.* There were other plays for which the First Folio must be considered their first printing: *The Merry Wives of Windsor* had been published in a surreptitious quarto in 1602, an imperfect copy of the author's first sketch of the comedy. The First Folio's copy is the first edition of the play in its complete state. Apparently, Blount got hold of the author's

manuscript. *The Taming of the Shrew, King John, Second Part of Henry VI, The Third Part of Henry VI* saw their first publication in the First Folio.

In other words, had it not been for the First Folio some of the greatest dramatic masterpieces in the English language would have been lost. One must credit Edward Blount with having rescued from certain oblivion these great works of literary genius. And that was probably the motivating force behind the project: the knowledge that there existed these great plays that future generations should be allowed to enjoy.

And who were willing to finance this enormously expensive enterprise? Why, none other than the two Pembroke brothers, William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke, and his brother, Philip, Earl of Montgomery. In other words, the Marlowe, Blount, Pembroke connection were all there in this monumental undertaking. The rest—Jonson's poem, the poems by L. Digges, Hugh Holland, I.M., the promotional preface by John Heminge and Henry Condell—were meant to allay any speculation that the plays were written by Christopher Marlowe, who was supposed to be dead.

But what is even more interesting is that while Marlowe accepted the use of Shakespeare's name as author, he managed to inject in each play some clue which future generations of readers would find revealing the true author's identity. He must have believed very strongly that someday the truth would out.

We shall now look at the 36 plays in the Folio and see what they tell us about their authorship. For our purposes we shall examine each play in its chronological order, an order generally accepted by most Shakespearean scholars.

Henry VI and Richard III

We begin with the three plays, *Henry VI,* Parts One, Two, and Three, the earliest plays attributed to Shakespeare, plus *Richard III,* which is really Part Four of this continuous story of the War of Roses. The First Folio brings the authorized texts of all four plays together for the first time. It should be noted that the earlier Quartos of Part Two and Part Three of *Henry VI* are considerably shorter than the First Folio versions of the same plays. All of which suggests that a considerable amount of additional writing was done before the plays were ready for inclusion in the First Folio. Who did the writing, and when was it done?

Richard III was first published in an unauthorized Quarto in 1597. The play is a breathtaking *tour de force* in character development by Marlowe. In it we get a terrifying study of a psychotic character which only Marlowe could depict. Marlowe's hand can also be seen in Act I, Scene 4, in which Clarence is murdered by two executioners sent by Richard. It reminds us of the execution scene in *Edward II,* in which Edward engages in a weird conversation with the man sent to murder him.

Marlowe's fingerprints can be found throughout the four plays. A. L. Rowse writes in *The Annotated Shakespeare* (p. 756):

> The dominant influence observable again and again in *Henry VI* is Marlowe's. He had patented this grandiloquent poetic diction, in splendid blank verse, in *Tamburlaine*.... Ubiquitous is the influence of school education in the classics and of Bible and Prayer Book from constant early attendance at church.

The Comedy of Errors

The next play to consider is *The Comedy of Errors,* the shortest play in the First Folio. Scholars believe that it was written in 1591-92. Had it not been included in the First Folio, it would have been lost to history. The plot of the play is derived from the *Menaechmi* of Plautus, the Roman comic poet, and was adapted by Marlowe from the original Latin. Since it was written before the events at Deptford, we can assume that Marlowe wrote it. The fact that Blount included it in the First Folio is evidence that it was written by his good friend.

Titus Andronicus

It is believed that *Titus Andronicus* was written in 1593 and first published in an unauthorized Quarto in 1594. A. M. Witherspoon, editor of the Yale Shakespeare edition of the play, writes (p.121):

> External evidence against Shakespeare's authorship of *Titus* has been found in the absence of his name from all three Quartos of the play. The conclusiveness of this evidence is impaired, however, by the fact that the poet's name does not appear on any of the Quartos of *Henry V,* or on any of the three Quartos of *Romeo and Juliet*....The character of Aaron is by almost all critics conceded to be modeled on Marlowe's Barabas and Ithamore. Much of the verse also, if not Marlowe's, is close imitation of that poet's lines.

However, the fact that the play was included in the First Folio leaves no doubt that it was written by Marlowe. Harold Bloom writes in *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (p.79):

> An aesthetic defense of *Titus Andronicus* is possible only if you center it upon Aaron, its most Marlovian character, and if you regard the entire play as a bloody farce, in the mode of Marlowe's *Jew of Malta.*

There are more than enough clues in the text of the play indicating that it was written by Marlowe. There are about six references to Dido in the play. In fact, in Act 2, Scene 3, Tamora, in a love scene with Aaron in a sequestered part of the woods, recalls the scene in *Dido Queen of Carthage* (Act 3, Scene 4) where Dido confesses her love to Aeneas in a cave where the two had taken shelter during a storm. Is it not interesting that Tamora should know the details of the scene in Marlowe's play? One gets the impression that Marlowe was trying to publicize his play by mentioning Dido and the Trojan war in so many places in the text.

No other play in the First Folio is so full of references to classical mythology, or has so many Latin expressions and Latinized forms as *Titus Andronicus.* In Act 4, Scene 1, Titus's grandson helps speechless Lavinia point out a book in her father's library that will tell what happened to her. The book Lavinia chooses is Ovid's *Metamorphoses* with its tragic tale of Philomel who was raped by Tereus, King of Thrace, who then cut out her tongue to prevent her from exposing him. She is finally able to communicate what happened to her. That same book would later turn up in *Cymbeline.*

As for the source of the play, Witherspoon writes, "No single and direct source of the story of *Titus Andronicus* has ever been discovered." In other words, Marlowe made it up based on his reading of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and other classical writers which he read at the King's School. But obviously his aim was to create a horror play with lots of

blood and mayhem. And the Elizabethans loved it. The play was entered in Henslowe's Diary no less than fifteen times, indicating its popularity and financial success.

The text of the First Folio was printed from the Third Quarto with textual additions, and it actually contains one scene (Act 3, Scene 2) which does not appear in any of the Quartos. Which leads us to believe that Marlowe added the scene while preparing the play for inclusion in the First Folio. Also, noteworthy is the fact that the play was performed by Pembroke's Men.

Two Gentlemen of Verona

We next consider *Two Gentlemen of Verona,* a romantic play about what normal people are capable of doing when they fall hopelessly in love. There is no text of this play other than the text in the First Folio, and while scholars are uncertain of when the play was written, a consensus believes it was writtten in 1591-92. A clear indication that it was written by Marlowe is the reference to *Hero and Leander* in Act 1, Scene 1.:

> *Valentine:* That's on some shallow story of deep love,
> How young Leander cross'd the Hellespont.
> *Proteus:* That's a deep story of a deeper love;
> For he was more than over shoes in love.
> *Valentine:* 'Tis true; for you are over boots in love,
> And yet you never swum the Hellespont.

Hero and Leander wasn't published until 1598 by Edward Blount. Yet, here it is being discussed by the two protagonists as if they had read it. Only Marlowe, Blount, or

Walsingham had access to the unpublished manuscript.

The Taming of the Shrew

We next turn to *The Taming of the Shrew,* believed to have been written in 1593. Its first printing was in the First Folio. The title page of the 1594 Quarto of *The Taming of a Shrew* informs us that it was "sundry times acted by the Right honourable the Earle of Pembroke his Servants."

Who wrote *The Taming of the Shrew?* Again, we find Marlowe's clues throughout the play. The theme of the play, the battle of the sexes, the manifestations of love, are found in much of Marlowe's writings, from his translation of Ovid's *Amores* to his poetic masterpiece *Hero and Leander.* Perhaps the most tell-tale clue in the play is the reference in Act 2, Scene 1, to the Catholic Seminary at Rheims, which Marlowe had infiltrated as a spy for Walsingham. A. L. Rowse writes (p.117):

> A reference to Rheims reminds us of Marlowe, who had been sent there to report on the activities of the Catholic exiles. Lucentio 'hath been long studying at Rheims'—there is no reason why he should have studied there if Marlowe had not been close by.

We have written that Marlowe was probably hired by Burghley to tutor Lady Arabella Stuart. The Secretary took an interest in her education, not only because she was next in line after James to succeed Elizabeth, but because, like Signor Baptista, he favored women being given the best education possible. Apparently Marlowe drew on his own exasperating experience as a tutor in describing the temperamental Bianca as a pupil. She speaks in Act 3, Scene 1:

I am no breeching scholar in the schools;

I'll not be tied to hours nor 'pointed times,

But learn my lessons as I please myself.

Marlowe drew on every minute aspect of his own experience to give realism to his plays. He is known to have had an astonishing memory.

In addition, we find Marlowe's handling of dramatic situations uniquely his: the use of witty repartee, as between Petruchio and Katherine, to heighten the sense of conflict and suspense, and his uncanny ability to use dialogue as a means of drawing character. We should also mention that there is a reference to Ovid, "an outcast quite abjur'd," in Act I, Scene 3. Also, in the same scene we find a discussion of Marlowe's famous idea of "love at first sight" without any direct mention of Marlowe. And there is also a reference to Dido Queen of Carthage.

Love's Labour's Lost

The next play in our chronology is *Love's Labour's Lost.* Based on internal evidence, most scholars believe that it was written in the plague years 1592-93 when the theatres were closed. A. L. Rowse writes (p.172):

> It has long been realised that this play was originally written for private performance. It is full of topicalities, references to contemporary events and characters.... It is full of private jokes and allusions....The play is an acutely private one.

As for the source of the play, Wilber L. Cross and Tucker Brooke, editors of the Yale Shakespeare edition, write (p.127):

> The central idea of *Love's Labour's Lost*—that a scholarly prince binds himself and his chosen associates to a quasi-monastic scheme of life, which is immediately shattered by the intrusion of amorous sentiments—would seem much too obvious to be the original invention of Shakespeare, yet no earlier work, either of fiction or of history, has been discovered which can reasonably be regarded as a source of the play.

Harold Bloom has written (p.121):

> *Love's Labour's Lost* is a festival of language, an exuberant fireworks display in which Shakespeare seems to seek the limits of his verbal resources, and discovers that there are none. Even John Milton and James Joyce, the greatest masters of sound and sense in the English language after Shakespeare, are far outdone by the linguistic exuberance of *Love's Labour's Lost.*

It is hard to believe that a man with no known education could have written this highly literate play. It was obviously written by a university man with a sharp critical eye who had spent six years at Cambridge in the midst of scholars and pedants and knew of their idiosyncrasies, pomposity, ignorance, and hypocrisies. That writer was Marlowe.
The editors of the Yale Shakespeare write (p.131):

> It is not unlikely that the play is also related superficially to Marlowe's *Massacre at Paris* (written toward the end of 1589), in which the historical Navarre and

> Dumaine are both introduced, and which opens with Navarre's marriage to the Princess of France.... The opening speech of the King shows the influence of Marlowe's versification in its special sonorousness, alliteration, and exhilaration. Compare with the present line in Marlowe's *Dido,* 1. 730: 'Lest I be made a wonder to the world.'

Marlowe provides comic relief with the introduction of Constable Dull and Costard, a clown, who describe Don Adriano de Armado as "a refined traveller of Spain, a man in all the world's new fashion planted, that hath a mint of phrases in his brain....A man of fire-new words, fashion's own knight."

Don Armado and his page Moth, enter in Act 1, Scene 2. Both engage in a witty repartee which is the hallmark of Marlowe's conversational dialogue. Don Armado was a take-off on some well-known pedant whose identity has been the subject of much speculation. But most of the play is about the King and the Princess and the lords and ladies. The author's genius is in his ability to dramatize the male-female dynamic in an entertaining, humorous, and philosophical way. And the final outcome is by no means predictable. Marlowe has been characterized by many biographers as a homosexual. They have taken the attacks and accusations of his enemies as proof. Yet there is nothing in Marlowe's plays or poems that suggest that he was in any way homosexual. His relationship with Thomas Walsingham was nonsexual. The use of the word "love" in exchanges between males in those days had nothing to do with sex. In *Edward II* he wrote of a homosexual king whose predilections led to his tragic downfull. The purpose of the play was to provide reflection on what might happen should homosexual King James of Scotland

become King of England. This was a burning issue with Burghley.

In addition, there is a scene in *Hero and Leander* in which Leander rejects the homosexual advances of Nepture. While swimming across the Hellespont, Leander replies to Neptune who wishes to make love to him:

> 'You are deceived, I am no woman, I.'
> Thereat smiled Neptune, and then told a tale,
> How that a shepherd, sitting in a vale,
> Played with a boy so fair and kind,
> As for his love both earth and heaven pined.

So where did this reputation of Marlowe being homosexual come from? It came from a campaign of vilification based on rumor and false information about his supposed violent death. It came from Richard Baines's note "containing the opinion of one Christopher Marly Concerning his Damnable Judgment of Religion and scorn of gods word." It came from Catholics who detested Marlowe because he spied on them. It came from Richard Cholmley who not only accused Marlowe of atheism but stated that he, Cholmley, would have killed the Lord Treasurer, Burghley, with his own hands had he the opportunity. Cholmley accused the entire Privy Council of being atheists and Machiavellians, "especially my Lord Admirall." And finally, the vilification came from Puritans who would have liked to ban the theaters altogether. Charles Norman writes in *The Muse's Darling* (p.243):

> The outburst of Puritan wrath against Marlowe is without parallel in literature.

> No vile epithet was too vile for his detractors to use, yet most of them wrote only from hearsay, or merely embroidered one another's accounts, hardly one able to contain his gloating.

Could an atheist have written *Doctor Faustus?* T.W. Baldwin writes in *On the Compositional Genetics of The Comedy of Errors* (p. 367):

> From Shakspere's first play to his last, God's providence, as the way of God to man, is upon occasion specifically invoked....Whether Shakspere refers directly to the doctrine of God's providence or not, it was a fundamental, if not the fundamental, doctrine of the universe.

Hardly the view of an atheist. And the reason why Shakespeare never experienced the vilification suffered by Marlowe is that he was just a name on some poems and plays, he made no public statements, was not the subject of public controversy, and had no relations with the powers that be. He was not connected with the Essex cabal nor with the Ralegh circle. He was not even known as a writer among fellow writers, and his name is not to be found in Henslowe's diary.

Considering the opprobrium associated with Marlowe's name at the time, Walsingham and Blount must have thought it a good idea to use Shakespeare's name wherever necessary. And apparently the actor-businessman Shakespeare benefited financially from the scheme. In 1597 he was able to purchase the second largest house in Stratford.

Romeo and Juliet

According to Harold Bloom (p.89): *"Romeo and Juliet"* is unmatched, in Shakespeare and the world's literature, as a vision of an uncompromising mutual love that perishes of its own idealism and intensity....[T]he play is the largest and most persuasive celebration of romantic love in Western literature."

And the play has many Marlowe fingerprints. First, there is the mentioning of Dido and Hero, two important Marlowe heroines, by Mercutio in his ruthless but witty panning of romantic love in Act 2, Scene 3: "Dido a dowdy, Cleopatra a gypsy, Helen and Hero hildings and harlots. Thisbe a grey eye or so but not to the purpose."

Then there is a reiteration of that constant theme in Marlowe of "love at first sight," which both Romeo and Juliet experience at a party given by her father. Romeo says: "Sight! For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night." Juliet's experience is just as instant.

As for the dueling scenes between the Capulets and Montagues in which Tybalt kills Mercutio and Romeo kills Tybalt, A. L. Rowse writes (p.1605):

> Though a modern mind may find the feud between the Montagues and Capulets adolescent, it was utterly true of the age.... Marlowe's friend, the poet and musician Thomas Watson, came to Marlowe's aid in his affray with William Bradley and killed him.

Another painful experience Marlowe wrote of was his exile and banishment, which Romeo also experiences when the Prince banishes him from Verona after the killing of

Tybalt. On being told of his banishment, Romeo says:

> There is no world without Verona walls,
> But Purgatory, torture, Hell itself.
> Hence banished is banish'd from the world,
> And world's exile is death.

Another reference to a Marlowe work is Juliet's excited speech, "Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds ..." which echoes a speech from Marlowe's *Edward II.*

An unauthorized Quarto of the play was first published in 1597, but Shakespeare's name does not appear on its title page.

Richard II

Richard II is a historical drama right out of Holinshed. Like Marlowe's *Edward II,* this play is a story of the deposition of a king and his subsequent murder. While the murder of Edward II is dramatic and psychologically weird, the murder of Richard II is much simpler but no less sickening.

We know that Marlowe wrote *Richard II* not only because it echoes *Edward II,* but also because of its exquisite poetry. There is also the theme of banishment and exile. When Mowbury is sentenced to permanent exile by King Richard, he laments:

> A heavy sentence, my most sovereign liege,
> And all unlook'd for from your highness' mouth.
> A dearer merit, not so deep a maim
> As to be cast forth in the common air,

Have I deserved at your highness's hands.

The language I have learnt these forty years,

My native English, now I must forgo;...

Within my mouth you have enjail'd my tongue....

What is thy sentence then but speechless death,

Which robs my tongue from breathing native breath?...

How much more eloquent could Marlowe have been about his own agonies of exile? When Richard banishes Bullingbrooke from England for six years, the latter, as he goes into exile says (Act 1, Scene 3):

Then, England's ground, farewell; sweet soil, adieu,

My mother, and my nurse, that bears me yet.

Where ere I wander, boast of this I can,

Though banish'd, yet a trueborn Englishman.

This patriotic theme is grandly expressed by Gaunt in Act II, Scene I, in a famous speech while on his deathbed. These were clearly Marlowe's thoughts about his beloved country.

This other Eden, demiparadise,

This fortress built by Nature for herself

Against infection and the hand of war,

This happy breed of men, this little world,

This precious stone set in the silver sea....

This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England ...

There is no doubt that Marlowe had a deep love of his country and its magnificent language, which he mastered as no one had before him.

In the play Bullingbrooke deposes King Richard. The scene in which the king is deposed was removed from the play while Elizabeth reigned. She accused the Earl of Essex of having had the play performed to set the stage for his own rebellion against her. By early February 1601, the plans for the coup were already known by Robert Cecil and the Privy Council. Mary Ann Luke in *Gloriana, The Years of Elizabeth I* writes (p.669):

> On Friday, February 7, Lord Mounteagle and several others were rowed across the Thames to the Globe Playhouse, where they persuaded the Lord Chamberlain's Players to stage a special performance of *Richard II.* The players complained it "was so old and so long out of use" that only a forty-shilling guarantee induced them to stage the play in which the Divine right of Kings is questioned and a King is eventually deposed. Presumably the play would whet public acceptance of Essex's coup.

When Essex launched the attempted coup, he thought that he would have popular support. But he did not. His failure led to a momentous trial where the former favorite was accused of treason, found guilty, and finally beheaded on February 25th. The prosecutor for the state was none other than Francis Bacon.

According to biographer Jasper Ridley, later that summer, on August 4, 1601, Elizabeth

received the historian William Lombarde in her privy chamber at Greenwich. He presented the Queen with a copy of his book on English history. She perused it at length. When she came to the passages dealing with Richard II, she said: "I am Richard II, know ye not that?" The historian said that this wicked suggestion had been made by a most unkind gentleman. She replied, "He that will forget God will also forget his benefactors."

Who was the author who had forgotten God? It certainly wasn't William Shakespeare who hadn't said anything in public about belief in God. It was obviously Christopher Marlowe who was reputed to have forgotten God. She probably knew that he was alive, for she had done her part in facilitating Burghley's plan at Deptford. In any case, nothing seems to have been done about the play during or after Essex's trial. No action was taken against William Shakespeare or the players.

There are other echoes of Marlowe in the play. In the famous abdication scene, Richard asks for a mirror. He is given one, looks into it and says:

> Was this the face
> That every day under his household roof
> Did keep ten thousand men?

Does this not remind us of the most famous line in *Doctor Faustus,* when the Doctor asks Mephistophilis to bring him Helen of Troy, and when she appears, he asks: "Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships?"

A Midsummer Night's Dream

From all that we know, this incredibly stunning play originated in the mind of the author. According to Willard Higley Durham, editor of the Yale edition of the play, "nothing as been found which may properly be called the 'source' of *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*"

Harold Bloom writes (p.148): "Nothing by Shakespeare before *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is its equal, and in some respects nothing by him afterward surpasses it. It is his first undoubted masterwork, without flaw, and one of his dozen or so plays of overwhelming originality and power."

As we have speculated, the play may have been based on Elizabeth's progress at Kenilworth, which Marlowe witnessed as a page. It was an extraordinary event that must have left an indelible impression on his young mind.

The story takes place in ancient Athens where King Theseus and Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, will wed in four days when the new moon appears. The King tells his master of revels to "Stir up the Athenian youth to merriment, Awake the pert and nimble spirit of Mirth."

A citizen by the name of Egeus comes before the King with his daughter Hermia and her two suitors, Lysander and Demetrius. Hermia is in love with Lysander, but her father wants her to marry Demetrius. The King proclaims that under Athenian law, she must obey her father and marry Demetrius or face death or a future life as a nun. The King gives Hermia four days in which to make up her mind.

When Hermia and Lysander are alone, he tells her that he has a wealthy aunt who lives beyond Athens' jurisdiction and that they must secretly go there in order to marry. They plan to meet in the wood outside of town. Hermia speaks:

> My good Lysander!
> I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow ...
> And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,
> When the false Troyan under sail was seen,
> By all the vows that ever men have broke,
> In number more than ever women spoke,
> In that same place thou hast appointed me,
> To-morrow truly will I meet thee.

Note the reference to Dido, Queen of Carthage and the fact that the initials of Hermia and Lysander are the same as Hero and Leander.

The play has all of the elements of a great fairy tale, plus scenes of high comedy as a group of rustic amateurs rehearse a play to be performed in celebration of the marriage of the King and Hippolyta. Marlowe satirizes how plays are put on, how parts are assigned, and how some amateur actors try to play all of the roles. His portrayal of amateur theatrics reveals his understanding of human vanity which anyone will find in summer stock in our day.

If we believe that the author of this fantastic play was Christopher Marlowe, then we can understand the depth of the poet's genius. The actor-businessman could have never

conceived of nor written anything so profoundly original and philosophical. Also, in the speech in which Bottom reveals that he has had "a most rare vision," he parodies the Geneva Bible's rendering of 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 and the text of the Bishops' Bible. Marlowe, who had access to these Bibles at Corpus Christi, would have known how to make pleasant use of these passages.

The Life and Death of King John

King John has all of the hallmarks of a Marlowe play. It is believed to have been written around 1590. Harold Bloom writes (p.58):

> There is something curiously antithetical about *King John,* with much in it that is Marlovian rant, yet much more that is very subtle and memorable. I associate this mystery of the play with the greatest mystery in Shakespeare, which is the missing first *Hamlet* .... The common mystery is the nature of Shakespeare's complex apprenticeship to Marlowe's example, the only influence relationship that ever troubled the greatest and ultimately the most original of all writers.

A very peculiar statement, inasmuch as neither Marlowe nor Shakespeare ever knew one another. There was no apprenticeship.

Typical of Marlowe, the play opens with the conflict between King John of England and King Philip of France clearly stated in the opening lines. Philip demands that King John cede his sovereignty to his young nephew, Arthur Plantagenet, who is by right the lawful sovereign. King John rejects the demand: "Here we have war for war, and blood for blood."

Meanwhile, the two Faulconbridge brothers come before King John for a judgment about their inheritance. Robert, the younger son of Sir Robert Faulconbridge, accuses his older brother Philip of being a bastard and thereby ineligible to any inheritance. He claims that his father revealed all of this to him on his deathbed. But the Queen Mother notices Philip's resemblance to her son Cordelion. She asks him whether he would rather be a Faulconbridge or the reputed son of Cordelion? Philip decides to cede his inheritance to his brother and accept the state offered by King John who then knights him as Sir Richard and Plantagenet. The Queen is pleased and tells Richard, "I am thy grandam, Richard; call me so."

Later, when Richard confronts his mother about his real father, she confesses that it was indeed Cordeleon who seduced her. Richard is overjoyed with this confirmation and tells his mother:

> Madam, I would not wish a better father....
>
> With all my heart I thank thee for my father!

Did the Countess of Pembroke ever tell her son William who his real father was? All we know is that many of the Sonnets were addressed to William Herbert, and perhaps that is why they were not included in the First Folio.

In the course of battle, King John captures the young Arthur Plantagenet, who is claimed by his mother to be the rightful king. King John orders the boy be put to death, and tells the executioners to prepare hot irons.

The use of hot irons in this plan to murder Arthur makes us immediately think of the execution scene in *Edward II,* where a hot iron was used to kill Edward. Marlowe was extremely adept at creating gruesome and suspenseful murder scenes that riveted the audience in frigid emotion.

The publication history of *King John* is of great interest. The play as it appears in the First Folio is a revision of an earlier play written about 1589 and published anonymously in London in 1591. This earlier version was also published as late as 1622 in Quarto. Yet a revision was made for the First Folio. Who did the revision? Marlowe no doubt. Evidence that Marlowe wrote the earlier version is a passage spoken by Arthur's mother, Constance, lamenting the loss of her child. Heartbroken, she says: "Let Dido sigh, and say she weeps again to hear the wrack of Troy." Another mention of Dido in another play.

The Merchant of Venice

The comparison between *The Merchant of Venice* and Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* is inescapable. In Act 4, Scene 1, we find Shylock referring to Barabas, saying: "I have a daughter; Would any of the stock of Barabas had been her husband than a Christian!" When Shylock's daughter runs off with Lorenzo, her Christian boyfriend, Shylock cries:

> My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
> Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!

Which immediately reminds us of Barabas in *The Jew of Malta* who exclaims:

> O my girl!

My gold, my fortune, my felicity...

O girl! O gold! O beauty! O my bliss!

In Act Five, Scene 1, we find Lorenzo referring to Dido. He says:

In such a night
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand
Upon the wild sea-banks, and waft of her love
To come again to Carthage.

As for the source of the play, William Lyon Phelps, editor of the Yale Shakespeare edition, writes (p.106):

> The chief source is probably an Italian work, *Il Pecorone,* written in 1378 by Giovanni Fiorentino, and published in 1565. No English translation of this is extant....*Il Pecorone* is a collection of tales, and one of them has the story of a rich woman at Belmont, who is eventually married to a young gentleman, whose friend, in order to lend him money, had come within the danger of an avaricious Jew, who demanded as surety a pound of flesh.

Since we have no indication that Shakespeare could read Italian, he could not have written this play. Marlowe had a facility for learning languages, and we can be sure that he could read Italian.

A Quarto edition of the play was published in 1600, which is substantially the text used in the First Folio of 1623.

Henry IV, Part One

If you believe that *Richard II* was written by Marlowe, then you must believe that *Henry IV, Parts one and Two,* and *Henry V* were also written by Marlowe, for they are all one long story. For example, in the closing scene of *Richard II,* when Bullingbrooke (Henry IV) has learned of Richard's murder by his man Exton, he is overwhelmed by remose and vows:

> I'll make a voyage to the Holy Land
> To wash this blood off my guilty hand.

That theme is picked up in the first scene in *Henry IV, Part One,* where Henry IV is forced to put off his trip to the Holy Land because of a brewing rebellion. He says:

> It seems that the tidings of this broil
> Brake off our business for the Holy Land...
> And for this cause a while we must neglect
> Our hold purpose to Jerusalem.

Also, Bullingbrooke's concern for his wayward son Hal is revealed in Act 5, Scene 3 of *Richard II,* when he tells Percy:

> Can no man tell me of my unthrifty son?
> 'Tis full three months since I did see him last.
> If any plague hang over us, 'tis he.
> I would to God, my lords, he might be found.
> Inquire at London, 'mongst the taverns there,

For there, they say, he daily doth frequent,

With unrestrained loose companions,

Even such, they say, as stand in narrow lanes

And beat our watch and rob our passengers,

Which he, young and wanton and effeminate boy,

Takes on the point of honor to support

So dissolute a crew.

Of course, the "dissolute crew" included Sir John Falstaff, who had become the beloved friend of the prince, all of whom we shall meet in *Henry IV, Part One*. Falstaff is one of the great original characters of the author, about whom much has been written by critics and scholars. Marlowe's genius was in his ability to create immortal characters that will live as long as civilization exists.

How do we know that Marlowe wrote the play? First, it was included in the First Folio by Edward Blount, who knew the true author of the plays. Second, it follows the same style as the earlier historical plays. There is a continuity of style from *Henry VI, Part One* to *Henry V*.

Henry IV, Part Two

In this play, King Henry IV dies and Prince Hal becomes Henry V. All of the serious scenes are interspersed with the comic antics of Falstaff, Pistol, Bardolf, Justice Shallow, Justice Silent, Mouldy, Shadow, Feeble, Wart and the ladies. When Falstaff is informed that Hal has become King, he is overjoyed and decides to go to London with Shallow and Pistol to see the King. They reach Westminster just as the Coronation has ended and the

new King and his train are departing. When Falstaff sees the King about to pass by, he exclaims:

> God save thy Grace, King Hal, my royal Hal!
>
> *Pistol.* The heavens thee guard and keep, most royal imp of fame!
>
> *Falstaff.* God save thee, my sweet boy!
>
> *King Henry.* My Lord Chief Justice, speak to that vain man.
>
> *Chief Justice.* Have you no wits? Know you what 'tis you speak?
>
> *Falstaff.* My King! My Jove! I speak to thee, my heart!
>
> *King Henry.* I know thee not, old man. Fall to thy prayers....
>
> Reply not to me with a fool-born jest;
>
> Presume not that I am the thing I was;
>
> For God doth know, so shall the world perceive,
>
> That I have turn'd away from my former self.

Thus ends the special relationship between Prince Hal and Falstaff.

Did Marlowe leave any clues in this play? Pistol makes a direct reference to Marlowe's *Tamburlaine II* in Act I, Scene III, by paraphrasing Tamburlaine who has hitched the captive kings of Asia to pull his chariot. Pistol speaks:

> Shall pack-horses,
>
> And hollow pamper'd jades of Asia
>
> Which cannot go but thirty mile a day,
>
> Compare with Caesars and with Cannibals,

And Troyant Greeks?

Tamburlaine's actual lines are:

Holla, ye pamper'd jades of Asia!

What, can ye draw but twenty miles a-day,

And have so proud a chariot at your heels,

And such a coachman as great Tamburlaine ...

Marlowe's fingerprints are found in the very structure of the play in which he makes history live. But as in *Henry IV, Part One,* he provides common humor to entertain an audience who loved it.

Henry V

This is the last of the Henriad plays. It opens with a prologue urging the audience to use its lively imagination in bringing to reality what cannot be seen on the stage. But what can be seen is a scene with some of Falstaff's old crones. Falstaff's page enters and tells them that his master is very sick. Hostess Quickly remarks, "The king has kill'd his heart." She goes with the page to visit Falstaff. When she returns, she tells them: "Ah, poor heart! He is so shak'd of a burning quotidian tertian that it is most lamentable to behold." And so, Falstaff dies.

This is a play about war and its justifications. As such, it is very modern. But King Henry returns from France a conquering hero. The great victory at Agincourt was won on St. Crispin's day. Who was St. Crispin? He was the cobblers' Saint, the Saint who blessed Marlowe's father, a cobbler.

In Act V, the Chorus informs us that King Henry has returned to England where the people of London welcomed him back as their conquering Caesar. The Chorus then adds:

> As, by a lower but loving likelihood,
> Were now the general of our gracious empress,
> As in good time he may, from Ireland coming,
> Bringing rebellion broached on his sword,
> How many would the peaceful city quit
> To welcome him! Much more, and much more cause,
> Did they this Harry.

R. J. Dorius, editor of the Yale edition of the play, comments (p.157):

> Lines 29-34 in the Prologue to Act V compare the glorious return from France of England's 'conqu'ring Caesar,' King Henry, with that of 'the general of our gracious empress' from Ireland, 'Bringing rebellion broached on his sword.' This general has long been identified with Essex, who left England to establish firmly England's supremacy over Ireland in March 1599 and returned in disgrace the following September. Since public expectation concerning this venture began to wane by June of that year, Shakespeare's high-spirited parallel must have been penned by midsummer.

Since we believe that Marlowe wrote the play, we may ask why did he insert this matter about Essex? Probably because it was rumored that Essex had failed in his mission to

destroy the Irish rebellion. Indeed, when he returned from Ireland, he launched his own rebellion against the Queen. Marlowe knew that it was Essex and the Bacon brothers who were behind the attempt to destroy him as their means of undermining the positions of Robert Cecil and Sir Walter Raleigh. But Marlowe and his confederates had managed to outwit Essex. In the end, it would be Essex who would face the executioner's block.

The play also has the most charming courtship scene in all of English literature between King Henry and the French Princess Katherine. It required the author to have a fluent knowledge of French, which Marlowe had.

The more one reviews the plays in the First Folio the more obvious it becomes that Marlowe was alive when the project was planned and carried out. Only he could have done the editing that was needed. In the case of *Henry V,* extensive editing took place. Henry Norman Hudson writes in the New Hudson Shakespeare edition of the play:

> The text of *King Henry the Fifth* in the Quartos is less than half the length of the present accepted text, which is mainly that of the First Folio....In the Quartos, as the reproductions of the title-pages in this edition show, the author's name is nowhere given,...the five Chorus-prologues, the whole of the first scene, the first scene of the third act, the second scene of the fourth act, and many other passages, those too among the best in the play, and even in the whole compass of Shakespeare's works, being wanting altogether. All these, besides more or less of enlargement in a great many places, together with the marks of a careful finishing hand running through the whole, were supplied in the First Folio.

Whose careful finishing hand ran through the whole of the play to produce the text in the First Folio? The last of the three Quartos was published in 1608. There would have been no reason to completely redo the play before 1623. It was only the occasion of the publication of the First Folio, the only authorized edition of all of the plays, that warranted that careful finishing hand to produce the final finished text, and it could only have been done by Marlowe.

Julius Caesar

Marlowe's fingerprints are found in the very first scene of the play, where a group of commoners have gathered to see Caesar as he returns to Rome. Among them is a cobbler. And when the Roman Tribunes, Marius and Flavius, try to disperse the crowd, one of them asks: "You, sir, what trade are you?"

Cobbler. Truly, sir, in respect of a fine workman,
I am but, as you would say, a cobbler.
Marius. But what trade art thou? Answer me directly.
Cobbler. A trade, sir, that, I hope, I may use with a safe conscience;
Which is, indeed, a mender of bad soles.
Marius. What trade, thou knave? Thou naughty knave, what trade?
Cobbler. Nay, I beseech you, sir, be not out with me:
Yet, if you be out, sir, I can mend you.
Marius. What mean'st thou by that? Mend me, thou saucy fellow?
Cobbler. Why, sir, cobble you.
Flavius. Thou art a cobbler, art thou?

Cobbler. Truly, sir, all that I live by is with the awl:

I meddle with no tradesman's matters, nor women's matters, but with awl.

I am, indeed, sir, a surgeon to old shoes; when they are in great danger,

I recover them. As proper men as ever trod upon neat's leather have gone upon my handiwork.

Flavius. But wherefore art not in thy shop to-day?

Why dost thou lead these men about the streets?

Cobbler. Truly, sir, to wear out their shoes, to get myself into more work.

But, indeed, sir, we make holiday to see Caesar and to rejoice in his triumph.

Marlowe's father, as we know, was a cobbler, and this was his son's way of honoring this common but intelligent man who had his own philosophy of life drawn from his craft as a cobbler. As a child, Marlowe must have watched his father "perform surgery" on shoes that badly needed repair.

If there is any humor in this play it is in this opening scene where the cobbler talks about his craft. Otherwise, the play goes from conspiracy to assassination to revenge.

The source of the play is Plutarch's *Lives*. As for its publishing history, the earliest extant version of *Julius Caesar* is that found in the First Folio. In other words, there was no Quarto with the author's name on it. As for when it was written, we know that it was staged in 1599, since a German traveller witnessed a performance of the play on September lst of that year. The question is: who had possession of the original manuscript during all of those years?

Much Ado About Nothing

This is one of the playwright's romantic comedies, set in Italy, a light entertainment, in which he nevertheless manages to create two memorable characters, Beatrice and Benedick, as he deals with the vicissitudes of love.

Marlowe's fingerprints are all over this play. A. L. Rowse writes in *The Annotated Shakespeare* (p.390):

> It is arresting that Shakespeare should have chosen the name Hero for his heroine....plenty of other names were available, but *Hero and Leander* (whose name also occurs) was ready to hand.

Besides inserting the names Hero and Leander in the play, the plot of a fake death also reminds us of Marlowe's predicament. Claudio's epitaph is more in keeping with Marlowe's fate than Hero's. Also, the remarkable dialogues and conversations between Beatrice and Benedick are hallmarks of Marlowe's ability to create humor as well as tension between sympathetic characters. Marlowe's uncanny ability to enter the minds of women is well demonstrated in this play.

Another Marlowe fingerprint is a line from Thomas Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy:* "In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke," which Don Pedro says to Benedick in Act One, Scene One. Marlowe had shared rooms with Kyd, which led to the latter's arrest and torture by Whitgift's inquisition. Kyd died a year later. This may have been Marlowe's way of paying tribute to his dead friend.

As for the sources of the play, Tucker Brooke, editor of the Yale Shakespeare edition,

writes (p.124):

> No source other than the poet's own invention has been discovered for those parts of the play which give it its particular charm and interest—the story of Benedick and Beatrice and the delectable folly of Dogberry ... The author turned to books for his material only in the case of Hero and Claudio.

It is believed that the author took that story from a tale in the writings of Italian story-teller Matteo Bandello (1480-1561), published in Lucca in 1554. In that story Hero is called Fenicia Lionata. According to Brooke, "No English translation of Bandello's tale is known to have existed in Shakespeare's lifetime, but a free French version by Francois de Belle-Forest was published in 1582."

The characters of Dogberry, Verges, the Sexton and their roles in the plot were original with the author, who, having lived among commoners and experienced run-ins with the law, understood their mentality. It is also possible that Marlowe had access to a letter that Lord Burghley wrote to Sir Francis Walsingham describing the ignorance and stupidity of constables and watchmen. The Yale edition reprinted the letter in its entirety. As for publication history, Brooke tells us (p.128):

> On August 23, 1600, this play was licensed for publication along with the second part of *Henry IV,* and it appeared in the same year in the only early quarto edition. This version was evidentally followed by the [version] in the 1623 Folio, and the two texts exhibit only trivial differences.

As You Like It

This is another of the playwright's exquisite entertainments, full of wit and wisdom, with some of his best lines, plus a female character, Rosiland, who is considered one of the best in all of the author's work. It begins with a strong conflict stated in the opening lines by Orlando, youngest son of the late Sir Rowland de Boys, who complains of having been mistreated by his older brother, Oliver.

It is in this play that the author expresses his opposition to hunting on humanitarian grounds. Also, in Act 3, Scene 3, we find several Marlowe clues. A new character is introduced. Her name is Audrey, the same name of Sir Thomas Walsingham's wife. Touchstone tells her: "I am here with thee and thy goats as the most capricious poet, honest Ovid, was among the Goths." Ovid, as we know, was Marlowe's favorite poet. He goes on to say: "When a man's verses cannot be understood, nor a man's good wit seconded with the forward child, it strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room."

S. C. Burchell, editor of the Yale edition of the play, writes in his notes (p.112):

> Many editors have seen in this line a reference to Marlowe's death on May 30, 1593, in a quarrel over a tavern bill, finding in addition an echo of his line in the *Jew of Malta*: 'infinite riches in a little room.'

Since editors assume that Shakespeare wrote the play, they must also assume that he had access to the coroner's report, which gave the details of what took place in that little room. But that is highly unlikely since Marlowe's "death" was the subject of rumor,

misinformation, disinformation, and outright falsehoods. Marlowe, through Lord Burghley, may have read the coroner's report, but it was not made public.

Another Marlowe fingerprint. When Touchstone tells Audrey that he will marry her, he says, "To that end I have been with Sir Oliver Martext, the vicar of the next village, who hath promis'd to meet me in this place of the forest and to couple us." Is not the name Martext shorthand for Marlowe's text?

When Silvius and Phebe are having a lovers quarrel, Rosiland steps in between them. She chides Phebe for being cruel to Silvius (Act 3, Scene 5):

> Must you be therefore proud and pitiless?
> Why, what means this? Why do you look on me?
> I see no more in you than in the ordinary
> Of Nature's sale-work. 'Ods my little life,
> I think she means to tangle my eyes too.
> No, faith, proud mistress, hope not after it;
> 'Tis not your inky brows, your black silk hair,
> Your bugle eyeballs, nor your cheek of cream
> That can entame my spirits to your worship.
> You foolish shepherd, wherefore do you follow her
> Like foggy south, puffing with wind and rain?
> You are a thousand times a properer man
> Than she a woman. 'Tis such fools as you
> That makes the world full of ill-favor'd children.

'Tis not her glass but you that flatters her,

And out of you she sees herself more proper

Than any of her lineaments can show her.

Is Marlowe really talking about William Pembroke and Mary Fitton, the Dark Lady of the Sonnets? Pembroke's liaison with the Dark Lady led to a pregnancy that ended in a stillborn. Rosiland also makes an eloquent reference to Leander, when she tells Orlando (Act 4, Scene 1):

> Leander, he would have liv'd many a fair year though Hero had turn'd nun, if it had not been for a hot midsummer night; for, good youth, he went but forth to wash him in the Hellespont, and being taken with the cramp, was drown'd.

Marlowe often uses a character in his plays as his own philosophical mouthpiece. In this play it is the character Jacques who gives a short dissertation on melancholy in Act Four, Scene One.

As You Like It was not printed in any Quarto before its publication in the First Folio. In other words, if the play had not been given to or found by Ed Blount, it would have been lost to posterity. With so many Marlowe clues in the play, it is quite possible that Blount got the text from Marlowe himself. But what is known is that the play was entered on the Stationers' Register as a book to be stayed on August 4 of an unspecified year.

Most scholars have recognized the overt references to Marlowe in the play. But since they believe that it was written by Shakespeare, the see no unusual significance in this.

However, to this writer, these references leave no doubt that Marlowe was the author, since a play of this complexity, with its many characters, could have only been written by him. The fact that Ed Blount included it in the First Folio indicates that it was Marlowe's.

The Merry Wives of Windsor

This is a comical farce in which Falstaff, the old reprobate, is the central figure, with some characters from previous plays—Mistress Quickly, Justice Shallow, Bardolph, Nym and Pistol—taking part. Falstaff becomes the butt of a series of humiliating jokes as he tries to persuade two loyal and respectable Windsor wives to commit adultery with him. Much of the play's humor relies on puns and the misuses of language.

One of the most amusing scenes is in Act Four, Scene One, where Mrs. Page accompanied by Mistress Quickly, is taking her son William to school. They meet Sir Hugh Evans, a Welsh parson, who questions the boy on the nitty-gritty of grammar. The result is one of the most hilarious dialogues in Elizabethan literature. There can be no doubt that Marlowe, with his experiences as a schoolboy, wrote it.

As expected, the play also has its Marlowe clues. In Act One, Scene One, Pistol says, "How now, Mepistophilus." Editor George Van Santvoord writes in his notes for the Yale edition (p.110): "*Mephistophilus.* The evil spirit attendant upon the hero in Marlowe's tragedy, *Doctor Faustus.*" And in Act Four, Scene Five, Bardolph talks of the cozeners "like three German devils, three Doctor Faustuses." Concerning lines 17-26 in Act Three, Scene One, the Yale editor writes (p.115): "Stanzas from a popular song by Christopher Marlowe. In line 24 Sir Hugh substitutes for one of Marlowe's lines a line

from a metrical version of Psalm 137."

We know that the Countess of Pembroke was writing a metrical version of the Book of Psalms. Did that line come from her work?

In Act One, Scene Three, Falstaff refers to one of the wives he hopes to seduce as, "a region in Guiana, all gold and bounty." Santvoord writes in his notes (p.112): "*Guiana.* In 1596 Sir Walter Raleigh returned from an expedition to South America and published a book entitled 'The Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana, with a relation of the great and golden Citie of Manoa, which the Spaniards call El Dorado.'

We know that Marlowe was part of that Raleigh circle and no doubt remained interested in Raleigh's adventures.

The Merry Wives of Windsor was largely of the playwright's own invention. It is the only one of his plays which deals exclusively with English country society. It was entered in the Stationers' Register on January 18, 1602 and performed a number of times before the Queen who, delighted with Falstaff, is said to have requested the author to write a play about Falstaff in love. We wonder who it was who conveyed Elizabeth's wishes to Marlowe.

Hamlet

Hamlet is no doubt the most famous play ever written. It has no equal anywhere because of its literary excellence, its unforgettable characters, and its intense human conflicts. It could have only been written by a superlative poetic genius. Every emotion in the play points to Marlowe, whose obvious sufferings gave Hamlet's lines the power they have.

We shall find many Marlowe clues in this mastepiece.

In Act One, Scene Two, the King tries to persuade Hamlet not to return to the university at Wittenberg. That, of course, is the same university Doctor Faustus attended. Hamlet then thinks of suicide in an eloquent soliloquy:

> O that this too too sullied flesh would melt,
> Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew.
> Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
> His canon 'gainst self-slaughter. O God, God,
> How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
> Seem to me all the uses of this world!

We wonder how often Marlowe himself thought of suicide, living in his perpetual exile.

We discover another interesting Marlowe clue when the ghost describes to Hamlet how his uncle murdered him by pouring the "juice of cursed hebona" in his ear while he napped. That is the very same poison Barabas used in *The Jew of Malta* to kill his own daughter.

In Act Two, Scene One, we find Polonius conferring with his man Reynaldo whom he is sending to Paris to spy on his son Laertes. Did Marlowe model Polonius on Lord Burghley, his boss in the Secret Service? Polonius's instructions to Reynaldo may be one of the techniques that Marlowe was taught by his mentor on how to elicit information about a particular person in this indirect manner.

We have already related how Marlowe inserted a huge chunk from Dido in Act Two, Scene Two, of the play. He also has Hamlet echo a passage spoken by Tamburlaine in Act Two, Scene Seven:

> Nature, that fram'd us of four elements,
> Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds;
> 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 ...

Hamlet says in Act 2, Scene 2, in conversation with Rosenkranz and Guildenstern:

> What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action like an angel! In apprehension how like a god!

As for the origin of the play, William Farnam writes in the Pelican edition (p.20):

> A not very revelatory passage in Thomas Nashe's epistle to Robert Greene's *Menaphon* contains a reference to "whole Hamlets, I should say handfuls, of tragicall speeches" as being lifted from Seneca, which indicates that a *Hamlet* was on the stage by 1589, the date of *Menaphon,* and that it was a Senecan tragedy. Some even more tantalizing words of Nashe's in the same passage have led many to believe that Thomas Kyd, the author of the *Spanish Tragedy,* wrote this old

> *Hamlet.* A performance of it is recorded for 1594 and a glimpse of a part of its action comes in 1596 in Thomas Lodge's *Wits Miserie* with a description of a countenance "pale as the Visard of ye ghost which cried so miserally at ye Theator like an oister wife, *Hamlet revenge.*"

Note that Marlowe knew both Thomas Nashe and Thomas Kyd. Thomas Lodge (1558-1625) was Marlowe's contemporary. His novel, *Rosalynde* (1590), was a source for the plot of *As You Like It.*

The version of the play we presently have is believed to have been written in 1601, based on Francois de Belleforest's *The History of Hamblet.* The latter's source of the story is the 12th century *Historio Danica* of Saxo Grammaticus. A bad quarto was published in 1603, which was followed by the publication of an authentic copy of the play in 1604-05. The 1623 Folio version is believed to have come from the theater company's prompt book, but there is no absolute verification of this.

As we have already noted, *Hamlet* is full of Marlowe's clues: the extensive reference to *Dido, Queen of Carthage;* the relationship between Marlowe as Hamlet and Lord Burghley as Polonius; Polonius's lessons on spying; Hamlet's intensive interest in the theater, giving speech lessons to the players; the reference to university performances of plays; Polonius's advice to Laertes, very much like Burghley's advice to his own son; the reference to Wittenberg; the soliloquys that reflect Marlowe's state of mind as he lives in perpetual exile and no doubt contemplated suicide. Also, as in his other plays, Marlowe maintains a very high level of emotional tension and physical conflict.

Obviously, it is easier to relate the circumstances of Marlowe's life to Hamlet's internal agonies than to what we know of William Shakespeare, the actor-businessman. That is why solving the authorship riddle will provide us with a new illuminated way of looking at the plays in the First Folio.

Twelfth Night or What You Will

This romantic comedy has several characteristics that remind us of Marlowe. First, it reflects his obsession with love and the idea of love at first sight, then it makes clever and amusing use of the confusion caused by mistaken identities, a girl pretending to be a boy, as with Rosiland in *As You Like It,* and finally the playwright manages to intersperse, between scenes where love is the subject, clownish hilarity generated by comic characters.

Twelfth Night has some of the loveliest and delightful poetry and songs to be found in any Elizabethan play. It takes place in Illyria, an ancient country in Southern Europe on the Adriatic Sea. It's ruler is the romantic Duke of Orsino who has fallen in love with Olivia, a wealthy lady, who is mourning her dead brother and refuses to see the Duke or entertain his proclamations of love.

The idea of a beautiful woman mourning the death of a brother reminds us of the Countess of Pembroke's mourning the death of her heroic brother Sir Philip Sidney who died from a wound suffered on the battlefield. Mary Sidney and her brother both wrote poetry and shared an intense literary life, and his death formed a great shadow over her life.

Olivia's uncle Sir Toby Belch and his friend Sir Andrew Aguecheek are constantly drunk and she instructs her steward, Malvolio, to put a stop to it. He is the perfect butler, and much of the secondary plot of the play is how Belch, Aguecheek and Olivia's maid Maria manage to make Malvolio miserable. One of the reasons why they so dislike him is that he is a Puritan. Maria says:

> The devil a puritan that he is, or anything constantly but a time-pleaser; an affectioned ass that cons state without book and utters it by great swaths; the best persuaded of himself, so crammed, as he thinks, with excellencies, that it is his grounds of faith that all that look on him love him. And on that vice in him will my revenge find notable cause to work.

Later, in Act Three, Scene Two, Andrew says: "I had as lief be a Brownist as a politician."

Maria's accusing Malvolio of being a Puritan who can recite Scripture by heart, and Andrew's reference to Robert Browne's religious beliefs assumes that the audience knew what Puritans and Brownists believed. There were no Puritans or Brownists in Illyria. All of this relates directly to Marlowe. David Riggs, in his biography, *The World of Christopher Marlowe*, writes (p.93):

> The students and Fellows of Corpus Christi are conspicuously absent from all the petitions and lists of Puritan activists at Elizabethan Cambridge.... On the other hand, key leaders of the radical Puritans who advocated *total* separation from the English Church did attend Corpus Christi. Robert Browne, the charismatic

> founder of the Separatists, took his BA from Corpus in 1572, returned to Cambridge six years later, and soon attracted a congregation in the church of St Benet, hard by his old college. Browne had come 'to be a witness of that woeful state of Cambridge.' He persuaded Robert Harrison, another Corpus man (BA 1567, MA 1572), not to take Holy Orders in the English Church, and the two graduates founded an independent Church at Norwich. When the local bishop complained to Burghley in 1581, the entire congregation migrated to Middleburg, in Holland. Another of Browne's followers, John Greenwood, still resided at Corpus during Marlowe's first six months there. A notation in the Buttery Book indicates that Marlowe bought him dinner during one week in the spring of that year. Greenwood fell under arrest in 1586. His collaborator and co-religionist Henry Barrow took his BA at Clare College, but may have been admitted to Corpus Christi in 1576 to study for his MA.

To what extent was Marlowe influenced by these Puritans who were critical of the English Church? Marlowe had entered Corpus Christi in December 1580 and remained there for the next six years. Did the views of the Puritans influence Marlowe's decision not to take Holy Orders? And why did Marlowe include these references in the play? Was this another way of letting the audience know who was the real author of the play. The only people among his audiences who would have recognized these references were university men and the young lawyers at the inns.

The play's amusing charm is based on the author's clever use of mistaken identities. Obviously Marlowe himself was living with an identity other than the one he was born

with. When Viola tells Olivia on meeting her: "What I am and what I would are as secret as maidenhead," we can easily see Marlowe's own predicament.

We find another Marlowe clue in Act 4, Scene 2, in which the Fool remarks: "I say there is no darkness but ignorance." Machiavel says in the prologue to *The Jew of Malta,* "I count religion but a childish toy, And hold there is no sin but ignorance."

Twelfth Night was first published in the First Folio of 1623. It had not been printed before in any Quarto. Had it not appeared in the First Folio, we might never have had its text. It is believed that it was written in 1601 and was performed at the Middle Temple on February 2, 1602. While the love story was taken from a number of published sources, the subplot involving Malvolio seems to have been created by the author. The editors of the Folger Library's edition comment:

> The particular gossip that Malvolio's portrayal may have touched concerned Sir William Knollys, Comptroller of the Royal Household, a pompous and unpopular Official, whose quarters adjoined those of some of the Queen's maids of honor.... More than this, though he was married and affected great probity, he secretly pursued Mary Fitton, one of the maids of honor, who led him on for sport, though she was carrying on a serious love affair with the Earl of Pembroke. The character of Malvolio is so like that of Sir William that it is hard to resist the belief that some courtier supplied Shakespeare with the material for a caricature that would have rocked with laughter everyone except Sir William.

Since we believe that Marlowe wrote the play, we can assume that he was well

acquainted with the likes of Sir William Knollys. But whether or not the theory of the Folger editors is true will have to be determined by the detective work of future scholars.

Troilus and Cressida

Troilus and Cressida is a play written by a bitter, cynical, and disillusioned Marlowe whose imposed exile must have made his life at times miserable if not unbearable. We can imagine that, like Hamlet, he too thought of suicide, but in the end decided that life, even as it was, was preferable to death.

The setting—the Trojan war—was quite familiar to Marlowe. In *Dido,* we find Aeneas, the one son of Priam who survived the holocaust at Troy and escaped by boat to Carthage. Helen, about whom the war was fought, we find in *Doctor Faustus.* And in *Hamlet* we find a reiteration of what Aeneas had told Dido about the horrible bloodletting in Troy.

However, the events in *Troilus and Cressida* take place before the final debacle, during the Greek siege of Troy. After seven years of siege, the Greeks have not been able to destroy Troy, which is so well protected by its walls and towers. Only by the gift of the famous Trojan Horse were the Greeks able to penetrate the city and destroy it.

Why Marlowe returned to this familiar ground is probably because it provided him with characters who demonstrated the true madness and folly of love when it is mixed with war. Troilus falls madly in love with Cressida who later betrays him, and Priam's sons argue whether Helen is worth the war that will ultimately destroy them. And while Helen is a great beauty, she comes across as an ancient bimbo, not unlike Paris Hilton, whose

idea of enjoyment is counting the hairs on Troilus's youthful chin.

Harold Bloom writes of this play (p.328):

> The matter of Troy is reduced to "a whore and a cuckold," Helen and Menelaus, and to a company of rogues, fools, bawds, gulls and politicians masquerading as sages—that is to say, to the public figures of Shakespeare's day, and of ours. Yet the play's bitterness surpasses the limits of satire, and leaves us with a more nihilistic impression than "heroic farce" or "travesty" would indicate.

It is the opinion of this writer that *Troilus and Cressida* is one of the greatest plays ever written. It is a devastating commentary on the Trojan War, which could have been avoided had Priam demanded that Paris give Helen back to Menelaus. She was little more than a trophy, and the couple lived a life of pleasure, love, and sex. But Priam, so indulgent of his sons, lacked the wisdom or will to see the utter superficiality of their relationship and that its cost was far above its worth to Troy.

As one would expect, scholars have been puzzled by this play because they believe that William Shakespeare, the actor-businessman, wrote it, and they cannot see any connection between the incredible emotional power of the play and the mild-mannered actor from Stratford.

But *Troilus and Cressida* could not have been written by anyone but Marlowe, who had the genius and understanding to take this story and turn it into a play of stark, common, unrelenting reality. Achilles' dragging Hector's body by the tail of his horse is a fitting

ending to an unvarnished, gut-wrenching account of what happened at Troy. Marlowe was able to bring this ancient story to life so that its universal power can still be felt today. *Troilus and Cressida* is about universalities of which we all experience: love, fidelity, betrayal, stupidity, war, cruelty, self-indulgence, misjudgment, and death.

Scholars believe that the play was written shortly before February 1603 when it was first entered in the Stationers' Register. According to Henrietta Bartlett (p.40): "The play was first printed in 1609 with two title-pages, the first stating that it had been acted at the Globe and the second omitting this statement and with a preface which says distinctly that it was never acted."

The first production of the play was actually given in 1898 before King Ludwig II of Bavaria. Its first modern production took place in London in 1912.

Measure for Measure

Measure for Measure is a play about moral hypocrisy and how it corrodes a civil society. In the opening scene, the Duke of Vienna, dismayed by the growing violation of the state's moral laws because of his leniency, decides to take a leave of absence and place full authority in the hands of his deputy, Angelo, who, because of his dispassionate and severe character, will enforce the moral laws more strictly.

Lord Angelo's first act is to close down the houses of prostitution. He is then confronted with the case of Claudio, a young man accused of getting his fiancee, Julietta, with child. Angelo orders him imprisoned. Lucio, a free-floating character who seems to know his way around the whorehouses, asks Claudio why this new moral strictness in the city.

Claudio explains:

> From too much liberty, my Lucio, liberty.
> As surfeit is the father of much fast,
> So every scope by the immoderate use
> Turns to restraint. Our natures do pursue,
> Like rats that ravin down their proper bane,
> A thirsty evil, and when we drink we die.

That is pure Calvinism. Also, the last three lines are a powerful paraphrasing of Marlowe's enigmatic motto on his portrait, *Quod me nutrit, me destruit.* What nourishes me, destroys me. We find that same motto repeated in line 12 of Sonnet 73.

In order to demonstrate that the new laws have real teeth, Angelo orders Claudio to be executed "by nine tomorrow morning." Claudio's sister, Isabella, a nun, goes before Angelo and begs him to pardon Claudio. Angelo is totally captivated by the virtuous Isabella and tells her that he will pardon Claudio only if she will give herself to him. But she refuses to submit to his lust.

Meanwhile, the Duke, disguised as a friar, enters the prison where Claudio is awaiting his execution. He tells Claudio to prepare for death. However, after apprising himself of the situation, he decides to save Claudio from execution. He tells Isabella about Mariana, whom Angelo promised to marry but abandoned when Mariana lost her dowry. The plan is for Mariana to take the place of Isabella in Angelo's bed. He won't know the difference because all of this will take place in complete darkness.

The love encounter successfully takes place, but Angelo reneges on his promise to Isabella and sends the following message to the prison Provost (Act 4, Scene 2):

> Whatsoever you may hear to the contrary, let Claudio be executed by four of the clock; and, in the afternoon, Barnardine. For my better satisfaction let me have Claudio's head sent me by five. Let this be duly performed, with a thought that more depends on it than we must yet deliver.

The Duke, still disguised as a Friar, orders the Provost to delay Claudio's death. He asks:

> Alack! How may I do it, having the hour limited, and an express command, under penalty, to deliver his head in the view of Angelo? ...
>
> *Duke.* By the vow of mine order I warrant you, if my instructions may be your guide. Let this Barnardine be this morning executed, and his head borne to Angelo.
>
> *Provost.* Angelo hath seen them both, and will discover the favour.
>
> *Duke.* O, death's a great disguiser; and you may add to it. Shave the head, and tie the beard; and say it was the desire of the penitent to be so bared before his death....

But Barnadine, in drunken rebellion, refuses to be executed. But as chance would have it, a prisoner by the name of Ragozine, a pirate, has just died of fever. He is Claudio's age and looks somewhat like him. The Duke remarks: "O, 'tis an accident that heaven provides!" The Provost cuts off Rogozine's head and brings it to Angelo.

Did Marlowe, Thomas Walsingham, Lord Burghley, and Robert Cecil consider John Penry's coincidental hanging the "accident that heaven provides"? We read that on May 29, 1593, Penry was suddently and hurriedly pulled away from dinner to be hanged in some obscure place without witnesses, and no one knows where he is buried.

Was John Penry's body substituted for Marlowe's? Penry was a radical Puritan, executed by Whitgift's inquisition for having published the Marprelate papers. It was probably Burghley or his son who managed to make the body available to Walsingham's men after the hurried hanging prior to the planned phony murder of Christopher Marlowe. It is even likely that Walsingham's men were authorized to take possession of the body after the hanging and bring it to Deptford for the coroner's inquest.

Note that it is the Duke, with the same authority of Lord Burghley, who orders the substitution of bodies. He tells the Provost: "Let this Barnardine be this morning executed, and his head borne to Angelo." The Provost comments: "Angelo hath seen them both, and will discover the favor." But the Duke replies: "O! death's a great disguiser."

They probably didn't have to do much disguising at Deptford. Penry was only five years older than Marlowe. All Walsingham's men had to do was put a knife through Penry's eye into his frontal lobe in accordance with the story they told of how Marlowe was killed. And so the coroner at Deptford and his witnesses were given a body purported to be Marlowe's. It was Walsingham's men who asserted that the body was Marlowe's, and the coroner took their word for it. After the inquest, the body was buried in an unmaked

grave in the local churchyard.

Thus, Marlowe escaped torture and hanging, and went on to write the thirty-six plays in the First Folio. There is a seamless continuity between the plays and poems he wrote before Deptford and those he wrote after. All one has to do is read both canons in their approximate chronological order to become convinced that they are the work of one literary genius.

It should also be noted that the play was not published in Quarto before its appearance in the First Folio. J. W. Lever writes in his edition of *Measure for Measure* (Methuan, 1965, p.xiii):

> Shakespeare's play was said to have been drastically cut for the court performance on 26 December 1604, and then expanded after 1606 by an unidentified reviser who added hundreds of lines of prose and verse couplets to the already revised text.

Who was that unidentified reviser? Marlowe himself? Shakespeare died in 1616. Lever also tells us (p.xi): "It is generally accepted that the copy for these plays, as well as for *The Winter's Tale,* was the work of Ralph Crane, a professional scrivener who was connected with the King's Men in the early 1620's." If these transcriptions were made after Shakespeare's death, who ordered them? And who wrote the original manuscripts from which Crane made his copies?

Measure for Measure is considered one of the dramatist's "problem plays." What made it a "problem" has never been fully or convincingly explained by the scholars who have

pored over it. Harold Bloom comments (p.159):

> [W]e never can be certain as to just how we ought to receive the play....[It] involves [the] audience in what I am compelled to call the dramatist's simultaneous invocation and evasion of Christian belief and Christian morals....I scarcely see how the play, in regard to its Christian allusiveness, can be regarded as other than blasphemous. Ultimately that includes the title and its clear reference to the Sermon on the Mount: "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again," a reverberation of "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

We find it difficult to understand why Professor Bloom cannot simply accept the play as one about moral hypocrisy. In the end, the dramatist's aim was always to entertain his audience. However, it was his genius to provide more than just entertainment. He also provided philosophical discussion, exquisite poetry, amusing characters, comments of love and lust, beauty and seduction, brothers and sisters, whores and bawds. And from scene to scene everything flows in a dramatic order that gives the play suspense and meaning. For those of us who believe that Marlowe wrote it, the play contains some of the strongest and most convincing clues that he was indeed its creator.

Othello

So many perceptive editors and critics regard *Othello* as a powerful masterpiece about good and evil, that it seems unlikely that the actor-businessman from Stratford could have written it. There is nothing in Shakespeare's life that even remotely suggests that he himself had ever had to deal with anything so powerful as the emotions in this play.

Othello is a play about the ways of evil written by a man who had faced such evil in the person of those who had tried to destroy him, namely Richard Baines and others whose slanders have marred his reputation to this very day. As a student of Calvinism, Marlowe understood and obviously accepted Calvin's view of man's innate depravity, which had been drummed into his head for eight years by his teachers. This permitted him not only to understand human nature in its mixed manifestations, but also to dramatize it so powerfully in this play.

Alvin Kernan of Yale University writes in his perceptive analysis of the play (Signet *Othello,* p.xxxiv):

> When Iago's schemes are at last exposed, Othello, finding it impossible for a moment to believe that a *man* could have contrived such evil, stares at Iago's feet and then says sadly, "but that's a fable." What he hopes to find when he looks down are the coven feet of the devil.... [H]e is forced to realize that far from living in some simplified, "fabulous" world where evil is a metaphysical power raiding human life from without, he dwells where evil is somehow inextricably woven with good into man himself.

The basic plot is well known. Desdemona, the beautiful daughter of a Venetian Senator, falls in love with Othello, a Moor, who through his bravery and intelligence has risen to the position of general of the Venetian army. Othello had often visited the Senator's home and Desdemona, captivated by stories of his youth, loves him enough to marry him without her father's knowledge. Meanwhile, Iago, Othello's chief officer, becomes

intensely jealous of Othello and is determined to destroy him. He does this by cleverly convincing Othello of his wife's infidelity. Othello, convinced that Iago is telling him the truth, rejects Desdemona's pleas of innocence, and kills her. When in the end he discovers that Iago had lied and deceived him, he kills himself.

The play itself is masterfully constructed and proceeds from one dramatic scene to the next with ever increasing tension and suspense. When Othello finally realizes that he has killed his innocent wife, he stabs himself, then looks at Desdemona, and says: "I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee: no way but this, Killing myself, to die upon a kiss."

So ends this magnificent tragedy which has come down to us as one of the greatest plays ever written. Did Marlowe write it? The play itself is one big Marlowe clue. First of all, the subject is far beyond anything remotely connected with Shakespeare's life. The actor-businessman could not possibly have written about evil in the intense way that only Marlowe could. The Iago in Marlowe's life was Richard Baines whose aim was to destroy Marlowe. The dueling scene between Roderigo and Cassio in Act Five, Scene One, was probably modeled on the actual dueling fracas that Marlowe experienced when his friend Watson came to his rescue and killed William Bradley.

The highly dramatic scene in which Othello murders Desdemona reminds one of the murder scene in *Edward II,* in which Marlowe created high drama and emotional intensity. Marlowe was a master of such scenes.

As for the source of the play, Thomas M. Parrott, editor of the Tudor edition, informs us that the *Othello* plot was derived from an Italian collection of tales published in 1565 and

not translated into English before Shakespeare's death. There were French and Spanish editions. Parrott comments (p.ix): "[T]here is perhaps no more striking example in literature of the power of genius to transmute base metal into gold than the transformation of the Italian novel into the English play." As for its publication, Parrott writes (p.vii):

> The first edition of *Othello* was published in 1622....It was properly entered on the Stationers' Register (October 6, 1621), decently printed, and presents a very respectable text.... The text is about 160 lines shorter than that in the Folio.

Lawrence Mason, editor of the Yale edition, writes (p.150):

> [The First Folio] is unquestionably the better and more authoritative text. The Folio contains about 160 lines lacking in the Quarto, many of them absolutely essential, while the Quarto contains only about a dozen peculiar to itself, few of them important.

Nothing in the history of the First Folio indicates who made the revisions or additions in the final Folio texts of the various plays. As we have already asserted, only Marlowe himself could have made the revisions and additions.

A reference to Marlowe is made in the Notes of the Yale edition by Tucker Brooke (p.168):

> V.ii.347. *Like the base Indian.* There is no significance in the first Folio spelling, 'Iudean.' Shakespeare is thinking of the savage who throws away a king's ransom because he cannot realize its value. In his mind, probably, were the lines near the beginning of Marlowe's *Jew of Malta:*

'Give me the merchants of the Indian mines . . .
The wealthy Moor that in the eastern rocks
Without control can pick his riches up,
And in his house heap pearl like pebble-stones.'

In his last speech, Othello identifies himself as the "base Indian" richer than all his tribe, who threw a pearl away. A very significant Marlowe clue.

The diabolical character of Iago has intrigued Shakespearean scholars almost as much as the inscrutable character of Hamlet. A. L. Rowse writes in *The Annotated Shakespeare* (p.1804):

> Iago is the most complex and interesting psychological study in the play....In a way, Iago is a psychotic, as Hamlet was; it forms another aspect of the universality of Shakespeare's genius that he should have had such an intuitive understanding of the operations of psychosis....There is no love in Iago; he hates human beings for the fools they are....Perhaps Iago was mad—he certainly is not sane—with envy, hatred and contempt.

What personal experience could have given the actor-businessman such knowledge of psychotic evil? None that we know of. However, Marlowe's personal experience was with Richard Baines, who would fit any man's description of a psychotic. He not only tried to get Marlowe tortured and executed, but at one time tried to poison everyone at the Catholic Seminary at Rheims. He tried to get Marlowe prosecuted for counterfeiting in Holland. The man had the mind of a Iago.

According to Charles Nicholl in *The Reckoning* (p.128), Baines, who was ordained a priest in 1581, was sent to Rheims as a double-agent, with the intention of destroying the seminary. He revealed his plan to a fellow-seminarian whom he tried to recruit by promising a very generous payment from Sir Francis Walsingham. But the seminarian took all of this to Dr. Allen, the head of the college. Baines was arrested on May 28, 1582. A year later, on May 13, 1583, Baines wrote and signed a detailed, six-page confession, which he wrote in exchange for his release. It revealed his diabolical plans to destroy the seminary, including a plan to poison its water-supply.

Equally interesting is what the confession revealed about Baines's personality. He believed that there was a "devil" within him driving him to do terrible evil. He confessed that he "delighted in profane writers, and the worst sort of them, such as either wrote against the truth, or had least taste of religion." Nicholl writes (p.129):

> Suddenly the young Catholic stands before a doctrinal abyss of doubt and rejection. 'Proceeding farther and farther in wickedness', he 'began to mock at the lesser points of religion.' From there he went on to 'utter divers horrible blasphemies in plain terms against the principal points of religion.' In all this he tried to influence the other seminarists, 'by arguments and often communications.'

Nicholl then offers a fascinating and plausible speculation:

> The extraordinary thing about this part of Baines's confession is its closeness to that other product of his pen, the 'Note' on Marlowe....This immediately throws

> new light on the Baines 'Note.' In one sense, it makes it more psychologically complex....He was, on the evidence of the confession, far *closer* to Marlowe than we have realised. He has travelled down this 'highway to heresy.' Yet it also makes the 'Note' more questionable as an indictment of Marlowe.

In other words, Baines may have been writing more about himself than Marlowe. For, how well could he have actually known Marlowe and his religious beliefs? Clearly he was driven more by hatred and jealousy of Marlowe than by any love of truth. But Burghley and Walsingham knew Marlowe much, much better than the psychotic double-agent, and that is why they took the risk of staging a phony murder to save the poet.

King Lear

This is a play about the depredations of old age, ungrateful children, and sibling rivalry turned murderous. It is a very complex play, with two intertwining plots, that requires careful reading and rereading. Harold Bloom writes (p.476):

> *King Lear,* together with *Hamlet,* ultimately baffles commentary. Of all Shakespeare's dramas, these show an apparent infinitude that perhaps transcends the limits of literature....The experience of reading *King Lear,* in particular, is altogether uncanny....I emphasize reading, more than ever, because I have attended many stagings of *King Lear,* and invariably have regretted being there.

It is believed that the play was written in 1605 or early 1606, when James I had already been King since April 1603. The play was entered on the Stationers' Register on November 26, 1607. These years were considered a particularly dark period in the

author's life. Which infers that it fits more with Marlowe's unhappy circumstances than with those of the actor-bussiness, who was then waxing quite prosperous.

Obviously, the so-called dark period could hardly apply to the man known as William Shakespeare who was busy buying and selling real estate and suing anybody who owed him money. Yet he never sued the publisher who printed an unauthorized Quarto of *King Lear*. Nor did he sue Thomas Thorpe for publishing an unauthorized edition of his Sonnets. It is highly unlikely that during this period he sat down and wrote a play of such Biblical darkness as *King Lear*.

The sources of the play were Holinshed and a rather bland play, *The True Chronicle History of King Leir,* published anonymously in 1605. Marlowe recrafted the play into the masterpiece we have today. As for its publication, the Pelican edition states (p27):

> In 1608 a version of *King Lear* appeared in a quarto volume .... Its text was reproduced in 1619 in a quarto falsely dated 1608....In 1623 a greatly improved though "cut" version of the play appeared in the first folio, evidently printed from the quarto after it had been carefully collated with the official playhouse manuscript.

If the official playhouse manuscript was available, why would it have been even necessary to correct the Quarto? John Berryman, in his book, *Berryman's Shakespeare* (p.183), writes that the First Folio version of the play "was printed from a copy of the quarto which had been heavily corrected in order to bring it more or less into accord with the prompt book.":

> At some time between 1608 and 1623 a copy of it was extensively corrected by a playhouse scribe to bring it into agreement with the prompt book at the Globe, and was then used by Jaggard as copy for the folio. (p.193)

Again, if the prompt book at the Globe was the correct version of the play, why was it necessary to extensively correct the Quarto since the prompt copy would have given Jaggard the copy he needed to set the play for the First Folio? However, if Marlowe had made the corrections, he would not have needed the prompt copy. As the author of the play, he would have known how to correct the Quarto, add the needed lines and eliminate other lines to tighten the play. Incidentally, neither the corrected Quarto nor the prompt copy have survived.

It is assumed that the only reason why anyone would have corrected the Quarto was because correct copy was needed for the First Folio, and it is unlikely that a "playhouse scribe" could have made the kind of extensive changes that were made by someone, most likely Marlowe, who made changes in many of the other plays as well in preparation for the Folio. We know of no scribes or editors who could have made all of the changes that were made in so many of the plays in the Folio. And we can also assume that it was Ed Blount who gave Marlowe the opportunity to make the changes the author wanted.

Like so many of Marlowe's previous plays, this one also begins with intense conflict: between Lear and and his daughter Cordelia, Lear and Kent, Cordelia and her sisters, the bastard Edmund and his brother Edgar. Thus the stage is set for murder and tragedy reminiscent of Biblical stories. We know that Marlowe knew the Bible inside out,

chapter and verse.

Thomas Carter, in his 1905 book *Shakespeare and Holy Scripture,* writes (pp.3-4):

> No writer has assimilated the thoughts and reproduced the words of Holy Scripture more copiously than Shakespeare....The spontaneous flow of Scriptural ideas and phrases which are to be found everywhere in the plays reveals the fact most clearly that the mind of Shakespeare must indeed have been "saturated" with the Word of God. He most readily expresses his mind in Biblical phrase or illustration....He may be said to use Scripture on any and every occasion, to dignify the thought of a king, to point the jest of a wit, or to brighten the dullness of a clown.

Shakespeare's will indicated that he didn't even own a Bible! Carter continues:

> But it is of importance to notice how much Shakespeare is indebted to the English Bible for his vocabulary. I have studied every line in the plays in order to trace out how far this indebtedness extends, and after a careful comparison have come to the conclusion that the Genevan Bible was the version used by Shakespeare.

Marlowe's education and training at the King's School and Corpus Christi at Cambridge provided him with as intense a Biblical education as could have been had in Elizabethan England. He was being trained for Holy Orders, a career he chose not to pursue after leaving Cambridge.

What shall we make of *King Lear,* this immensely moving and passionate play? So much

cruelty, so much suffering, so much pain. What could have driven the author to write such a play? There is no doubt that Marlowe put much of his own suffering in this play. Like Edgar, he had lost his identity, was forced to live in disguise since May, 1593, and was unable to assert his true identity publicly.

Was he ever able to see his parents since his supposed death? What was their reaction to the news of their brilliant son's demise? Did they believe the slander heaped on his reputation? Did Marlowe ever disguise himself as a madman in order to see his father John Marlowe before he died in February 1605? A Bible was listed among his goods. Marlowe's mother Katherine died barely a month after her husband's death. Was Marlowe ever able to visit their graves?

We know that Marlowe began writing *King Lear* after the death of his parents. Burdened with grief, he was in a state of mind to pour his own suffering into this extraordinary play. The vivid images of Dover must have brought back happy moments of childhood with his family. He had the same filial love and devotion for his father that Edgar had for Gloucester, that Kent had for the King, that Cordelia had for Lear.

It is quite easy to believe that Marlowe identified with Edgar, the hunted son who had to live in abject disguise in order to stay alive. He is the one with the vivid memories of Dover. Obviously, Marlowe suffered greatly as he lived in social exile, and he must have wondered why God would let this happen to him, the same God that had endowed him with such powerful literary gifts.

Did Marlowe write *King Lear* under a cloud of despair, having suffered over twelve years

of namelessness, yet producing one literary masterpiece after another, masterpieces that would move audiences for generations to come? We know that they will be read and performed as long as Western civilization exists. Yet, they were written by a genius who could not even proclaim his authorship. He had to use his own code, embedded in each play, to put a mark in its text. If he was no longer Marlowe, who was he? Lear asks: "Who is it who can tell me who I am?"

Did Marlowe ever think of suicide? The answer was given by Hamlet himself. Edgar, of course, was faced with the same dilemma. But Harry Levin comments:

> But Edgar's moral ... redefines patience as the ability to bear one's sufferings, to face and endure them in calm of mind; "Bear free and patient thoughts."

These words, put into the mouth of Edgar, must have reflected Marlowe's own philosophy of endurance. He would continue to write plays for as long as he could and not complain of "fortune's blows," preferring to think, in the end, of those who saved his life and of God'd ultimate goodness.

Macbeth

This is a play about murder and tyranny as personified by Macbeth and his wife, a happily married couple, who make a deliberate decision to embark on a bloody course of evil. That is the irony of the play: that a happy couple with great ambitions should choose to fulfill their dreams in a way that would ultimately destroy them.

Marlowe, from early on, had a deep interest in that aspect of human nature which we call

the dark side. He eagerly explored it in order to understand it, for he saw it all around him. As a secret agent for the Cecils, he had a front-row seat to the political intrigues which made heads roll. He knew the history of Northumberland's attempt to gain the crown for the Dudley family. He knew of the struggle between Mary Queen of Scots and Queen Elizabeth for the throne of England. He had written about this great ambition to be king in *Tamburlaine* (Act 2, Scene 7), in which Tamburlaine rhapsodizes about his restless ambition which would not stop, "Until we reach the ripest fruit of all, That perfect bliss and sole felicity, The sweet fruition of an earthly crown."

Although it is probable that Marlowe drew on more than one source for the history of Macbeth, Sylan Barnett writes in the Signet Classic edition of the play (p.136): "Holinshed alone seems to have provided Shakespeare with the raw material of the story of Macbeth." One merely has to read what Holinshed wrote, selections of which are in the Signet edition, to see how the author made changes for the play. Apparently, the changes were more political than literary. The play was performed before King James I and his guest, the King of Denmark, his brother-in-law, at Hampton Court in 1606.

Since King James did not like long plays, it should not surprise us that Macbeth is "abnormally short," as the Yale edition notices. Also, in Holinshed's account, Banquo, Macbeth's fellow general, is an accomplice to the murder of King Duncan. But in the play Banquo takes no part in the murder. Why? Because King James was a descendant of Banquo who was considered the father of the Stuart line.

Was *Macbeth* written especially for King James? It probably was, and the author was no doubt paid handsomely for his efforts. No Quarto of the play was ever published. The

only text we have is the one published in the First Folio. This is another play that would have been lost had it not been published in the Folio.

Another indication that *Macbeth* was written for King James are the witchcraft scenes that dominate the play. James was an expert on witchcraft and demonology and had written a tract on the subject, *Demonologie,* published in 1597. He had become interested in the subject in 1590 when there were witch trials in Scotland at New Berwick. He personally interrogated some of the accused witches and even prescribed their torture. Antonia Fraser writes in her biography of James (pp.57-58):

> James's interest in the trials led him to send for one or two of the witches, and be fearfully impressed by what he heard: one, Agnes Simpson, was supposed to have repeated to him things he whispered to the Queen on their wedding night, matters which he swore that all the devils in hell could not have discovered.

It was this experience that made James a believer in the power of witchcraft. And, as an expert, he was able to judge the authenticity of what was in the play. Marlowe, as we know, had written one of the most popular plays about demonology, *Dr. Faustus.* James may have seen it.

Macbeth also takes place in Scotland, and many of the names in it were familiar to James: Ross, Lennox, Fife, Glamis, Angus, all of which must have brought to mind memories of the past. It is believed that Marlowe had gone to Scotland on a mission for the Cecils when the young king was enthralled by his French cousin, Esme Stuart, who had been sent to Scotland by the Duke of Guise to convert James from

Protestantism to Catholicism.

Antony and Cleopatra

Antony and Cleopatra is a complicated love story in which two highly sophisticated, jaded adults, with heavy political baggage, manage to create romantic electricity on the stage. Antony is the same protagonist who avenged the murder of Julius Caesar by defeating and killing Cassius and Brutus. He is now the most celebrated general in Rome, a member of the Triumvirate that rules the Empire. Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, who was once mistress to Pompey the Great and also lover of Julius Caesar and bore him a son, has fallen in love with Antony who had come to Egypt seeking support for his campaigns in the east.

Kenneth Muir, in *Shakespeare's Sources,* names Plutarch's Life of Antonius as the main source of the play (p.201):

> Shakespeare's portrait of his hero is very close to Plutarch's, much closer, indeed, than his Antony in the earlier play. He made use of almost every incident in the later years of Antony's life, except the long, absorbing, but irrelevant account of the Parthian campaign.

Marlowe's genius was in his ability to transform Plutarch's story into a living drama of two passionate adult lovers caught in the political turmoil of their day. But what is even more interesting and confirms our view that Marlowe wrote the play, is what Muir tells us about the Countess of Pembroke:

There is some evidence that Shakespeare consulted the Countess of Pembroke's translation of Garnier's *Marc Antoine*. The clearest parallel has been pointed out by Professor J. Dover Wilson. In the Argument, Antony's marriage is described in these terms:

> Who for knitting a straiter bond of amitie between them, had taken to wife *Octavia*.

Agrippa in Shakespeare's play uses a similar phrase in proposing that Antony should marry Octavia.

> To hold you in perpetuall amitie,
> To make you Brothers, and to knit your hearts
> With an un-slipping knot, take *Antony*,
> *Octavia* to his wife.

In a later scene Enobarbus prophecies:

> You shall finde the bande that seems to tye their friendship together, will be the very strangler of their Amity.

The links between the two writers are substantial: knitting-knit, bond-band, amitie, taken to wife *Octavia*—take *Octavia* to his wife.

Equally interesting is what Muir tells us about the influence of Samuel Daniel's work on the author. Daniel, as we know, was the Countess of Pembroke's protégé, who lived in her house at Wilton and was tutor to her son William. He has been identified as the rival poet in the Sonnets. Muir writes (p.209):

> There is stronger evidence that Shakespeare made use of Daniel's *Cleopatra* and

his *Letter to Octavia*. The latter poem, which first appeared in 1599, has an Argument prefixed containing an account of Antony's marriage to Octavia.

> For *Antonie* hauving yet vpon him the fetters of *Aegypt,* layd on by the power of a most incomparable beauty, could admit no new Lawes into the state of his affection, or dispose of himselfe, being not himselfe, but as hauing his heart turned Eastward, whither the poynt of his desires, toucht with the strongest allurements that ambition, and a licentious soueraignty could draw a man vnto.

So in the play, Antony exclaims (I.ii.113):

> These strong Egyptian Fetters I must breake,
>
> Or loose my selfe in dotage....

It is probable that Shakespeare had read the early version of *Cleopatra.* There are a number of details common to both plays, which are not to be found in Plutarch.

What does all of this mean? It means that "Shakespeare" was acquainted with both the Countess of Pembroke's translation of Garnier's *Marc Antoine* and also Daniel's *Cleopatra* and *Letter to Octavia.* There is nothing in Shakespeare's biography to suggest that he knew the Countess or Samuel Daniel. Also, we read in A. L. Rowse's *The Annotated Shakespeare* (p.2007):

> In 1607 Daniel considerably revised his *Cleopatra* in light of Shakespeare's play, trying to make it more dramatic. Earlier he had been influenced by *Richard II* in revising his account in the *Civil Wars,* to which Shakespeare in turn was indebted.

But Muir makes us question Rowse's assumption. He writes (p.215):

> The evidence that Daniel revised his play after seeing a performance of Shakespeare's is much less conclusive. The date of the latter is not known, and it may have been written after the 1607 edition of Daniel's play.

The inability to establish the exact date that *Antony and Cleopatra* was written makes it impossible to determine for sure which poet was influenced by whom. Although it was never published in Quarto before its publication in the First Folio, the Shakespeare play was apparently entered in the Stationers' Register in May 1608.

A likely theory is that the Countess of Pembroke influenced both Marlowe and Daniel and urged them to write historical dramas in the manner of Garnier. Her translation of *Marc Antoine* was published in 1592. But obviously the Countess, Marlowe, and Daniel had read the original in French well before 1592.

There are other indications that *Antony and Cleopatra* was written by Marlowe. Muir writes (p.217):

> Finally it may be mentioned that Miss Ethel Seaton has pointed out some curious echoes of the book of *Revelation* in *Antony and Cleopatra.* Some of these are in the scene in which Antony falls on his sword.... A second parallel is to be found in the image of the falling star.... One of Octavius's speeches seems to echo
>
> > I will shew thee the damnation of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters, With whom have committed fornication the kings of the earth ...
> >
> > He hath given his Empire

Up to a Whore, who now are levying

The Kings o' th' earth for warre.

Cleopatra's description of Antony in the last scene may likewise be based on another passage from *Revelation.*

And, of course, we find in the play Marlowe's usual fingerprints, Dido and Aeneas. Antony has just been brought the news of Cleopatra's death. He cries out:

I will o'ertake thee, Cleopatra, and

Weep for my pardon....

And with our sprightly port make ghosts gaze:

Dido and her Aeneas shall want troops,

And all the haunt be ours.

He then calls Eros, his attendant, and orders him to kill him. But Eros cannot bear the idea of killing his master, and so Eros kills himself.

There is no record of the play's performance or publication before its appearance in the First Folio. It is believed that the text in the First Folio was derived from an original manuscript copy that Ed Blount was able to obtain. From whom?

An additional source of the play is Sir Thomas North's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes,* published in 1579. This was an English translation of a French translation of the original Greek of Plutarch's Lives. It is obvious that Garnier, the Countess of Pembroke, Samuel Daniel, and Christopher Marlowe were well acquainted with

Plutarch's Lives either in the French or English translations. Also, Daniel's sonnet sequence, *Delia, with the complaint of Rosamund,* was published in 1592. Henrietta Bartlett writes (p.120):

> Shakespeare was much influenced by *Rosamund* and traces of it appear in *Lucrece, A Lover's Complaint* and *Romeo and Juliet.* The subjects are of the same nature and are treated in much the same manner. Shakespeare's sonnets also owe a great deal to Daniel, especially to *Delia,* and there are lines in *Twelfth Night* which are an echo of that poem.

That Daniel was the rival poet in *Shake-speares Sonnets* becomes increasingly obvious the more we learn of that small coterie around the Countess of Pembroke, all writing on the same subject of Antony and Cleopatra.

Coriolanus

Coriolanus is a very strange play and for that reason alone it should be attributed to Christopher Marlowe. According to what we know about William Shakespeare, he was too normal, too much the businessman, too pedestrian to have written this unusual play, or any other play in the First Folio. D. A. Traversi, in *An Approach to Shakespeare* (1954) writes (p.216):

> *Coriolanus* has rarely satisfied the critics. Most of them have found it frigid and have even suggested that Shakespeare's interest flagged in the writing of it; on the other hand, an important minority—including T. S. Eliot and J. Middleton Murray—have been considerably attracted by the play, and have even found an

> important place for it in the development of their own experience. The only point upon which there seems to be agreement is that *Coriolanus* is difficult and that its artistic quality is peculiar.

And that is because of the character of Coriolanus himself, a strange anti-social character that must have attracted the playwright as a fitting subject for a highly dramatic play. Tucker Brooke, in the Yale edition, writes (p.158):

> The chief and almost sole source of *Coriolanus,* as Shakespeare's other Roman plays, is North's translation of Putarch's *Lives*....About 550 lines of North's prose are woven into the text of *Coriolanus,* and the verbal adherance of the poet to the translator is even closer than it is in the earlier Plutarchian plays of *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra.* The two principal characters, Coriolanus and Volumnia, owe most to Plutarch, though Shakespeare has given to each of them distinguishing traits hardly implied by his original.

It is not difficult to understand why Coriolanus has his admirers. He is not only a fierce warrior but also a hater of the mob that seeks to destroy its betters. Thus, he had a political instinct that his flawed character was unable use to his advantage.

As for the composition of the play, it appears to have been written after *Antony and Cleopatra* in 1608 or 1609. There is no evidence that it was ever performed before the Restoration. The first inkling we have that the play existed is found in the licensing of a group of sixteen uncopyrighted plays by Shakespeare, entered at the Stationers' Company on November 8, 1623 by Ed Blount and Isaac Jaggard, publishers of the First Folio. The

fact that *Coriolanus* had not been copyrighted before 1623 probably indicates that it had not been performed prior to that date. Concerning the First Folio text, Tucker Brooke writes (p.163):

> The manuscript upon which the Folio text of *Coriolanus* was based appears to have been carefully prepared. The play is accurately divided into acts, though not into scenes, and contains rather full and explicit stage directions.

It is possible if not probable that the manuscript came directly from Marlowe when Blount was gathering the plays for the First Folio. In any case, he knew it existed and knew where to get it.

Timon of Athens

Timon of Athens is a very bitter and cynical play, which has troubled critics and scholars of Shakespeare because of its deep pessimism. It is about money, debt, and hypocritical friendship and how they affect human relations. Since Shakespeare was a prosperous theater shareholder and a contented money-lender, the play is totally out of character with the Stratford man.

Did Marlowe write the play? It certainly applies more to Marlowe's life than Shakespeare's. The theme of banishment reminds us of Marlowe's own predicament. Timon's choice of a cave in a wooded area near the seacoast as his new home may actually indicate where Marlowe was living in social exile when he returned to England, after retiring from the Secret Service, in Kent near the seacoast and not too far from

Scadbury, Walsingham's home.

The basic legend of Timon is a very old one. The story of the misanthrope in Plutarch's *Life of Antonius,* and Lucian's comic dialogue, *Timon the Misanthrope,* are most likely the sources of the play.

It is believed that the play was written between 1606 and 1610. Theatrical annals record no performance of the play until the close of the 18th century. It was entered in the Stationers' Register on November 8, 1623, along with fifteen other unpublished plays that Ed Blount and Isaac Jaggard intended to include in the First Folio. Where did Blount find a copy of the manuscript? The fact that the play had neither been performed or published in Quarto before 1623, would clearly indicate that the manuscript came directly from the hands of the playwright. Since Shakespeare had died in 1616, the only other possible owner of the original manuscript would have been Marlowe.

Pericles, Prince of Tyre

Pericles, Prince of Tyre, was entered in the Stationers' Register in 1608 by Edward Blount, Marlowe's executor, but was neither published by him nor included in the First Folio of 1623. This has led scholars to believe that there was a problem with the play. Nevertheless, it was published a year later, 1609, by Henry Gosson in two Quarto editions. Other editions followed in 1611, 1619, 1630 and 1635. It was finally included in the second printing of the Third Folio of 1664 and the Fourth Folio of 1685.

As for the sources of the play, the story appears to have originated as a pagan Greek romance, which was later translated into Latin. John Gower, an English poet,

contemporary with Chaucer, included the story in his *Confessio Amantis,* written about 1390. The fact that Gower is the narrator in *Pericles* and that the play opens with an acknowledgment of him as its literary father, indicates that Gower was indeed the chief source of the play.

But in all of the earlier publications of the story, the hero is known as Apollonius. How did he become Pericles? Alfred R. Bellinger, editor of the Yale edition of the play, provides an important clue (p.114):

> [I]t seems more likely that the name was suggested by Pyrocles, the hero of the romance, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia written by Philippe Sidnei,* published in 1590. There are other instances of similarity...which make it probable that Sidney's book was fresh in the playwright's mind.

It would also indicate that Marlowe started writing the play much earlier in his career, while he was still part of the Countess's coterie, and finished it later. The title page of the 1609 quarto reads (in modern spelling):

> The Late, And much admired Play, Called Pericles, Prince of Tyre. With the true Relation of the whole Histories, adventures, and fortunes of the said Prince: As also, The no less strange, and worthy accidents, in the Birth and Life, of his Daughter Mariana. As it hath been divers and sundry times acted by his Majesty's Servants, at the Globe on the Bank-Side. By William Shakespeare. Imprinted at London for Henry Gosson, and are to be sold at the sign of the Sovereign Pater-noster row, &c. 1609.

It would seem that the publication of the play and its sale to His Majesty's Servants provided the playwright with the cash needed to maintain himself, and that it was Blount who managed all of this as an agent for his exiled author.

Because of its joyous, happy ending, *Pericles* became a very popular play. But it also has several Marlowe clues. In the jousting scene, where the knights are contending for Thaisa's hand, the fourth knight states his motto as: "Qui me alit me extinguit," which is a variation of Marlowe's motto "Quod me nutrit me destruit." Also, Thaisa's father, the King, questions Pericles:

> *King.* Sir, you are music's master.
>
> *Pericles.* The worst of all her scholars, my good lord.

Was Marlowe referring to his days at the King's School where students were admitted because of their ability to sing? The conversation continues:

> *King.* Sir, my daughter thinks very well of you;
>
> Ay, so well that you must be her master.
>
> And she will be your scholar: therefore look to it.
>
> *Pericles.* I am unworthy for her schoolmaster.
>
> *King.* She thinks not so.

Was Marlowe thinking of the days he tutored the princess Arbella at the behest of Lord Burghley? There are many questions that will only be answered by continued research. The basic facts about Marlowe's life have been slowly gathered by scholars and

biographers. But when we consider that Shakespeare's life has been the subject of thousands if not millions of hours of research by armies of scholars who have come up with nothing related to the man as a professional writer, we wonder what could be uncovered if the same amount of time and effort were made to answer the many questions this writer has raised in this essay.

Cymbeline

There is so much exile, banishment, disguise, mistaken identities, and dirty tricks in *Cymbeline,* that one is tempted to believe that the only author who could possibly have written it must have experienced some of it. Shakespeare's humdrum life as businessman, part theatre owner and actor cannot account for a tenth of what goes on in this complex and chaotic play. The plot is so preposterous that Dr. Johnson wrote of it (Bloom, p.615):

> To remark the folly of the fiction, the absurdity of the conduct, the confusion of the names, and manners of different times, and the impossibility of the events in any system of life, were to waste criticism upon unresisting imbecility, upon faults too evident for detection, and too gross for aggravation.

Harold Bloom writes (p.615): "Nothing fits, anything goes in this wild play, where Shakespeare really does seem to let himself range."

Henry N. Hudson, in *Shakespeare: His Life, Art, and Characters,* writes (p.420):

> In its structure, *Cymbeline* is more complex and involved than any other of the

> Poet's dramas. It includes no less than four distinct groups of persons, with each its several interests and course of action. First, we have Imogen, Posthumus, Pisanio, and Iachimo, in which group the main interest is centered; then, the King, the Queen, and Prince Cloten, the Queen's shrewd blockhead of a son, who carry on a separate scheme of their own; next, the Imperial representative, Lucius, who comes first as Roman Ambassador to reclaim the neglected tribute, and then as general with an army to enforce it; last, old Belarius and the two lost Princes, who emerge from their hiding-place to bear a leading part in bringing about the catastrophe.

Yet, the playwright manages to pull the whole thing off quite brilliantly. Schlegel called *Cymbeline* "one of Shakespeare's most wonderful compositions." Bloom has a different view, when he says, "You can say of *Cymbeline* that nothing works or that everything does, because the play is a large ellipsis with too much left out." He goes on later to say (p.635):

> Shakespeare cannot stop himself, in his run-on self-parodies....Compulsive self-parody does not exist elsewhere in Shakespeare; in *Cymbeline* it passes all bounds. Shakespeare probably cannot stop, or if he will not stop, that hardly alters the critical question: Why is the self-travesty so unrelenting?

It probably had more to do with Marlowe's state of mind at the time than with Shakespeare's. Scholars keep trying to find in the man William Shakespeare what is not there. If we simply recognize that the name Shakespeare is a cover for Marlowe, then we

can go to the real source of the unrelenting self-travesty. Bloom seems to put his finger on it when he draws our attention to Act Five, Scene Four, in which Posthumus is put in prison. Alone he speaks:

> Most welcome, bondage! for thou art a way,
> I think, to liberty. Yet am I better
> Than one that's sick o' the gout, since he had rather
> Groan so in perpetuity than be cur'd
> By the sure physician death, who is the key
> To unbar these locks.

It was Marlowe's boss, Lord Burghley, who suffered miserably from the gout.

Posthumus then falls asleep and has an elaborate weird dream in which his family appears in a circle around him. In poetic chant they describe what has happened to him. They call for Jupiter to appear, which he does and predicts future happiness for Posthumus. The dream then ends. Posthumus awakes. He says:

> 'Tis still a dream, or else such stuff as madmen
> Tongue and brain not; either both or nothing;
> Of senseless speaking, or a speaking such
> As sense cannot untie. Be what it is,
> The action of my life is like it, which
> I'll keep, if but for sympathy.

Was Marlowe, under the pressures of his strange life, becoming schizophrenic? Bloom

writes (p.636):

> Through Posthumus, I hear Shakespeare observing that the action of our lives is lived for us, and that the desperate best we can do is to accept ("keep") what happens as if we performed it, if but for ironic sympathy with ourselves. It is another of those uncanny recognitions in which Shakespeare is already beyond Nietzsche.

The businessman William Shakespeare was hardly the type to go beyond Nietzsche. We can only find the answer in Marlowe. Did Marlowe suffer depression when writing these last plays? Or had he taken one of those strange Elizabeth medications to cure some ailment? Questions that beg to be answered.

The final scene of the play is the reconciliation scene to end all reconciliation scenes. It begins with the announcement that the wicked queen is death. King Cymbeline is told that she confessed that she never loved him and married him to advance her son. Imogen and Posthumus are reconciled but not before he knocks her down. They are also reconciled with the King. Iachimo describes his villainy, admits his dirty tricks and repents. The King's abducted sons are revealed for who they really are, and their abductor, Belarius, is forgiven by the King, who exclaims, "Thou art my brother; so we'll hold ever." And Cymbeline is reconciled with Rome.

Are there any Marlowe clues in the play? We find out through Iachimo that Imogen had been reading the story of Tereus in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* before she fell asleep. That is the very same book that Lavinia referred to in *Titus Andronicus* in order to reveal what

had been done to her (Act 4, Scene 1):

> *Titus.* Lucius, what book is that she tosseth so?
>
> *Boy.* Grandsire, 'tis Ovid's Metamorphoses;
>
> My mother gave it me.
>
> *Marcus.* For love of her that's gone,
>
> Perhaps, she cull'd it from the rest.
>
> *Titus.* Soft! So busily she turns the leaves! Help her.
>
> What would she find? Lavinia, shall I read?
>
> This is the tragic tale of Philomel.
>
> And treats of Tereus' treason and his rape;
>
> And rape, I fear, was root of thine annoy.

Many Shakespearean scholars believe that *Titus Andronicus* was written by Marlowe. Is it not interesting that Imogen should have been reading the very same story in the very same book that mute Lavinia showed her father? And in Act 3, Scene 4, Imogen refers to "false Aeneas," a reference to the story of Dido, the subject of Marlowe's earliest play, of which we find references throughout the plays in the First Folio. As for sources, elements of the complex plot were taken from Holinshed, early French romances, and Bocaccio's novels. The French romances had to be read in French, and Bocaccio had to be read in Italian. Marlowe could read both. Only King Cymbeline was historically real. All the other characters were fabrications of the playwright.

The Winter's Tale

The Winter's Tale is a play based on a novel, *Pandosto,* by Marlowe's old belated friend Robert Greene who died in 1592. Greene, born in 1558 and six years Marlowe's senior, attended St. John's College at Cambridge from 1575 to 1578. He is best remembered for his diatribe, *A Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentence,* written during his final illness and edited by Henry Chettle. Orthodox scholars assume he was referring to Shakespeare when he wrote of "an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers...and in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in the country." Greene was actually referring to Edward Alleyn, the famous actor, who was the great Shake-scene of the time and hated by Greene. In 1592, William Shakespeare was a complete unknown.

Frederick E. Pierce, editor of the Yale edition of the play, writes (p.128):

> The novel—or novelette, for it can be read in an hour—from which Shakespeare drew most of the plot of his *Winter's Tale* was *Pandosto: the Triumph of Time*...which first appeared in 1588 and was a 'best-seller' for years before Shakespeare dramatized it.

In other words, the playwright took an inferior novel and, after making considerable improvements, turned it into a successful pay that has survived four centuries. It was first staged in the Spring of 1611. It seems to have become a favorite at King James's court. No Quarto editions of it exist, and apparently its first appearance in print was in the First Folio of 1623.

The play is fast moving, with an easy-to-follow plot, without the cross-weaving of

several subsidiary plots as in *Cymbeline*. It is full of disguises, hidden identities, an individual kept secretly hidden for sixteen years so that a resurrection could take place. It also has escapes by sea which undoubtedly Marlowe experienced when he left Deptford in 1593. The fact that Robert Greene's novel was the basis of the play indicates that Marlowe was very familiar with Greene's work and found *Pandosta* eminently adaptable for the stage.

The scenes on the sheep farm and of the shearing festival might have been modeled on the Countess of Pembroke's vast country estate at Wilton, which has been called a sheep farm. Harold Bloom writes (p.639):

> *The Winter's Tale* surges with Shakespeare's full power, though changed altogether from any of its earlier displays....[I]t is a vast pastoral lyric.... "Pastoral romance" increasingly seems a very odd description of *The Winter's Tale*, "grotesque comedy" is much apter. Again, Shakespeare writes no genre; extravagance, a wandering beyond limits, is his truest mode. He will not be confined by any convention or by any intellectual enterprise. (p.660)

Which accounts for the tremendous scope of the poet's vision and his ability to write in so many different moods. Such genius required the kind of education Marlowe had, the many books he had to have read in Latin, French, Italian, and the kind of extraordinary knowledge of human nature he possessed. He created a world of immortal characters who remain vital and alive four hundred years after their creation.

The Tempest

Few of the plays attributed to Shakespeare have been as difficult to analyze as *The Tempest.* It is considered the poet's last play, and therefore a kind of swan song. Of its source, Robert Langbaum, editor of the Signet edition of the play, writes (p.125):

> There is no known source for the plot of *The Tempest.* As far as we know, *The Tempest* and *Love's Labor's Lost* are Shakespeare's two original plots....The names of many of the characters probably derive from Thomas' *History of Italy* (1549), and the name "Setebos" derives from Robert Eden's *History of Travaile* (1577), which mentions the "great devill Setebos" worshipped by the Patagonians. Shakespeare paraphrases a passage from John Florio's translation (1603) of Montaigne's essay on the American Indians, "Of the Caniballes"... and he paraphrases a speech of the witch Medea in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*—using Arthur Golding's translation (1567), which he apparently checked against the Latin original.

The idea of a ship damaged in a storm and taking shelter off a tropical island was probably suggested by Sylvester Jourdain's *A Discovery of the Barmudas,* published in 1610. The island manages to feed and sustain the survivors until they can repair their ship and continue to Virginia.

Harold Bloom confesses to being puzzled by certain aspects of the play. He writes (p.662):

> The play is fundamentally plotless;...It is a wildly experimental stage comedy,

> prompted ultimately, I suspect, by Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. Prospero, Shakespeare's magus, carries a name that is the Italian translation of Faustus, which is the Latin cognomen ("the favored one") that Simon Magus the Gnostic took when he went to Rome. With Ariel, a sprite or angel (the name is Hebrew for "the lion of God"), as is familiar rather than Marlowe's Mephistopheles, Prospero is Shakespeare's anti-Faust, and a final transcending of Marlowe.

Bloom is certainly right in finding an affinity in the play between Shakespeare and Marlowe, although the latter was supposed to have been dead for eighteen years. He writes further (p.674):

> Authority seems to me the play's mysterious preoccupation. I say "mysterious" because Prospero's authority is unlike anyone else's in Shakespeare.

And that's because Prospero *is* Marlowe! Indeed, if we see the play as having been written by Marlowe, it begins to make sense, for it is Marlowe who speaks through Prospero.

The play opens with a violent tempest and a shipwreck on the coast of an island in the Mediterranean between Tunis and Italy. The island has only three inhabitants: Prospero, his daughter Miranda, and Caliban, their misshapen servant. Prospero and his daughter were exiled from Milan by his brother Antonio, who usurped Prospero's position as Duke of Milan.

Prospero, a very scholarly man, loved his books more than he loved power, and so he let Antonio run the Dukedom. Eventually, Antonio, tired of playing second fiddle, sent

Prospero and little Miranda into exile on this remote island where they found adequate shelter in a large cave. They only found one human being on the island, Caliban, a savage, the son of the witch Sycorax, who had been exiled from Argier in North Africa to the island and died there leaving her son to fare for himself.

When Prospero found Caliban, he took him into his dwelling, taught him language with Miranda's help, treated him as one of the family until Caliban "didst seek to violate the honor of my child." From then on Caliban would be treated as a servant and slave.

Already we have the beginnings of Marlowe's own situation. He had been living in a state of exile since 1593 and it is possible that he had a daughter living with him. But what is Prospero? He is an author, who creates characters, events, and the world they live in. Miranda knows that her father has these creative powers and tells him:

> If by your art, my dearest father, you have
> Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them....
> O! I have suffered
> With those that I saw suffer: a brave vessel
> Who had no doubt some noble creature in her—
> Dash'd all to pieces....
> *Prospero.* Be collected:
> No more amazement. Tell your piteous heart
> There's no harm done.

In other words, he had the power to create the tempest, wreck the ship, and save its

passengers. And that is the same inventive power Marlowe had since he started writing plays with characters that have become immortal. In a sense, the playwright is the god of his own universe, creating a world of people from his own creative powers, fictional characters who have had as much influence on mankind as historical persons. George Morrison, in his book *Christ in Shakespeare,* understands that power of creation very well. He explains (p.13):

> It is one mark of a great dramatist that he loses himself in the beings he creates. He does not make them speak; it is rather as if he listened to them speaking. Dickens used to laugh heartily at the comical things Sam Weller said, as though he were hearing them for the first time.
>
> You can get at Dante or Milton through their poems: you cannot get at Shakespeare. He creates, and then his characters go their way, speaking and acting as they will. They are not marionettes, controlled by strings which are jerked by an external hand; they are free and self-determined beings. The things they say spring from what they are. They betray nothing of what Shakespeare is.

Prospero is helped in his creative labors by Ariel, his creative spirit, whom Prospero sends among his characters, to listen to them and see what they are up to. Although Prospero has created them and put them in place and time, they have their own autonomy. Some are good, some are evil, and they are as real as historical human beings. Who can deny the reality of Hamlet, or Othello or Lear or Juliet? Marlowe must have realized that there was something supernatural about his poetic genius. He could write as

no one else had ever written or would ever write after him. To have that genius within him was both a great blessing and a curse. And therefore, he had no choice but to write.

Prospero tells Miranda how they were helped in their exile by a noble Neapolitan, Gonzalo:

> Out of his charity...did give us, with
> Rich garments, linens, stuffs, and necessaries
> Which since have steaded much; so of his gentleness,
> Knowing I lov'd my books, he furnish'd me
> From my own library with volumes that
> I prize above my Dukedom.

The above could easily be seen as an account of how Marlowe was helped in his exile by Blount and Walsingham who also helped him find a comfortable cottage with a garden when he returned to England. There, surrounded by books, he would continue to turn out plays, which were taken to Shakespeare at the Globe theatre.

If anyone truly loved books and needed them for his work, it was Marlowe, who had haunted the booksellers at St. Paul's, where he probably met Ed Blount, who was to play a crucial role in his life. As for Shakespeare, according to his will, he had no library and no books, not even a Bible.

In Act Two, Scene One, we find the survivors of the shipwreck discussing their predicament, with most of them bewailing their loss. But Gonzalo, optimistic by nature, sees their preservation as a miracle.

Gonzalo. Here everything advantageous to life....How lush and lusty the grass looks! How green!...That our garments being—as they were—drench'd in the sea, hold, notwithstanding, their freshness and glosses, being rather new-dy'd than stain'd with salt water....Methinks our garments are now as fresh as when we put them on first in Afric, at the marriage of the king's fair daughter Claribel to the King of Tunis.

Sebastian. 'Twas a sweet marriage, and we prosper well in our return.

Adrian. Tunis was never grac'd before with such a paragon to their queen.

Gonzalo. Not since widow Dido's time.

Antonio. Widow? A pox o' that! How came that widow in? Widow Dido!

Sebastian. What if he had said 'widower Aeneas' too? Good lord, how you take it!

Adrian. 'Widow Dido' said you? You make me study of that. She was of Carthage, not of Tunis.

Gonzalo. This Tunis, sir, was Carthage.

Adrian. Carthage?

Gonzalo. I assure you, Carthage....

Sebastian. Bate, I beseech you, widow Dido.

Antonio. Oh, widow Dido? Ay, widow Dido!

Why all this badinage about Dido? This was Marlowe's code, his way of letting the world know that he wrote this play and all the others in the First Folio.

In Act Five, Scene One, Prospero enters wearing his magic robes. An author who can create out of nothing a drama filled with characters, gods and goddesses, fairies and elves is indeed a magician. He can even raise the dead. That is the mystery of story telling, of narrative invention, of fictional dialogue. Out of nothing something, very much like Genesis in which God creates the universe and its first humans out of the void and darkness.

Why did Marlowe decide to stop writing plays? Probably because it was extremely hard work, even for a genius. He had been writing plays and poetry nonstop for twenty years since his days at Cambridge. It was time to retire. It is also significant that William Shakespeare also retired from acting at about the same time, 1611.

King Henry VIII

King Henry VIII has all of the hallmarks of a Marlowe play. The conflict between the nobles and Cardinal Wolsey is dramatically stated in the opening scene, the dialogue throughout is brillant, the characters come alive, and the plot moves ahead in a tight, logical way. We know that it was first performed on June 19, 1613 because a cannon used in the play accidentally caused a fire that burnt down the entire Bankside theatre. The text that has come down to us is from the First Folio of 1623.

It is probable that the play was written long before 1613, but was put aside because it dealt with Queen Elizabeth's parents, the divorce of her father from his first wife, Katherine of Aragon, who is treated quite sympathetically by the playwright. Henry's meeting with Anne Boleyn (spelled Bullen in the play) at Cardinal Wolsey's banquet, the

secret marriage, the extravagant coronation of the new Queen, and the birth and baptism of Elizabeth, future Queen of England, are important events in this great royal drama. Another reason why we can believe that the play was written much earlier than its first performance in 1613 is the fact that the playwright had ended his writing career in 1611, when *The Tempest,* his farewell play, was written. Thus, although *Henry VIII* may have been written earlier, it may not have been performed until 1613.

According to R. A. Foakes, editor of the Arden Edition of the play, the marriage of King James's daughter Elizabeth to Prince Frederick, the Elector Palatine of Germany, on February 14, 1613, may have been the occasion for the production of the play, which was probably first performed between February and June of 1613. Concerning the playwright's working methods, Foakes writes (p.xxxvi):

> Many passages in the text give an impression that Shakespeare was reading two or three histories at the same time, and taking ideas from more than one.... In places, the sources were very closely followed, and some speeches are little more than Holinshed or Foxe versified.... Not only did Shakespeare transfer material from one time and person to another, he also amalgamated stories from different sources, or took a phrase or an idea from one source not otherwise followed in the particular context.

In other words, the complexity of the playwright's working style, which combined intensive research with the poetic skills of a literary genius, was beyond anything the actor-businessman Shakespeare was capable of. Writing good plays was hard work, even for a genius. As for the quality of the First Folio text, Foakes writes: "The text is a very

good one.... It seems to have been taken from a fair copy, possibly made by a meticulous scribe, of the author's manuscript."

The question then arises: what happened to the original manuscript? Indeed, what happened to all the manuscripts of the thirty-six plays in the First Folio? This is a question that has puzzled Shakespearean scholars for centuries. Since sixteen of the plays in the First Folio had never before been entered in the Stationers' Register or been published, where did Ed Blount find them? And what did he and the Pembroke brothers do with the manuscripts when the Folio was finally published? Were they destroyed or hidden? Shakespeare made no mention of any unpublished manuscripts in his will drawn up shortly before his death in 1616.

Concerning the text, A. L. Rowse writes (p.1349):

> The text of *Henry VIII*, as it appeared in the Folio, was a tidy one, with many more detailed stage-directions than usual, consistent with the dramatist being retired in the country and giving full instructions for production.

It wasn't as if Shakespeare, in retirement in Stratford, could lift up the phone and tell his colleagues in London how the play should be staged. It was probably Marlowe who provided the play with its detailed stage-directions for production in 1613, and then further helped prepare the text for publication in 1623. And it was probably Ed Blount who was the go-between in all of these activities.

The play ends with the Archbishop Cranmer officiating at the baptism of the newly born

Princess Elizabeth and predicting that she will become the greatest monarch in English history. Of course, Elizabeth had to wait until the death of her sister Mary who, as the Catholic Queen, burned Cranmer at the stake, before she could ascend the throne and establish the dominance of the Protestant Church of England.

Harold Bloom makes an interesting observation in his essay on *Henry VIII* (p.691):

> I cannot solve the puzzle of *Henry VIII,* and I have trouble responding to the rapture and exultation of Cranmer's concluding prophecy concerning the infant Elizabeth. Dead at fifty-two, Shakespeare never experienced old age, and yet the style of old age dominates *Henry VIII.*

Shakespeare may have not experienced old age, but we have every reason to believe that Marlowe did. The text that has come down to us was first published in 1623, when Marlowe was 59, which was old in those days. But Marlowe was capable of creating convincing characters of any age: witness King Lear.

The Marlowe-Shakespeare Code

Did Christopher Marlowe use a special code to provide evidence to future generations of readers and playgoers that he was the author of the thirty-six plays in the First Folio? We believe that, indeed, he did. And it is obvious that the code he used had to be carefully inserted in the plays, lest it might lead to the discovery that he continued to live after his reported murder at Deptford in May 1593. Such revelation would have been fatal to himself and his protectors. But four hundred years later, it no longer matter.

It was obvious to those in positions to know, that the name William Shakespeare was being used to hide the identity of the true author. But apparently, there was no urgent need in those days to know who the true author was. Certainly that was the case before the publication of the First Folio. During that time, many works were published without authors' names on them. There were no drama critics writing for daily newspapers keeping track of a playwright's evolution. There were no public libraries where a reader might peruse quarto editions of various plays. Before the publication of the First Folio in 1623, the name William Shakespeare only appeared on the unauthorized quartos of nine plays. His name first appeared in print in September 1593, several months after the alleged death of Marlowe, on the dedication page of *Venus and Adonis*. His name was not on the title page. The same is also true for *Lucrece*, published a year later with his name appearing on the dedication page, not the title page.

From 1594 to 1597 his name appeared nowhere. Then in 1598 it appeared on the title page of a quarto of *Love's Labour's Lost* as "Newly corrected and augmented by W. Shakespere." In that same year, a 600-page volume entitled *Palladis Tamia* was published in which the author, Francis Meres, credited Shakespeare with having written twelve plays and revealed the existence of his "sugar'd sonnets" being circulated among his friends. How many people read Meres' *Palladis Tamia?* It was a large book containing anecdotes and quotations under a hundred or more different categories. It also mentions every English poet of the time. Therefore, it was probably read by every poet mentioned in the book, a rather small circle of literary men, each one struggling to further his own career as a writer.

By 1598, therefore, Christopher Marlowe was long forgotten and there was no suspicion that he was still alive, living and writing under a different name. Therefore, he felt safe in inserting his clues where they would be passed over as normal text, particularly if the reader or playgoer was not familiar with his early works. It should also be noted that writers were producing hundreds of plays that were being staged daily by theatres that needed new plays as badly as today's cinemas need new movies. They didn't have time to wonder about who was writing the plays under the name William Shakespeare. Bernard Beckerman writes in *Shakespeare at the Globe,* 1962 (p.8):

> In the total winter season from August 25, 1595, through February 28, 1596, of which we have considered four weeks, the company gave one hundred and fifty performances of thirty different plays. Eighty-seven performances, or 58 per cent of the total, were of the fourteen new plays produced that season. Five

> performances, 3.3 per cent, were of one play, *The Jew of Malta,* revived that season.... Only twelve performances, 8 per cent, were of the seven plays which were more than a year old. This distribution, which is similar for all seasons covered by Henslowe's records, emphasizes how dependent the company was on the continuous addition of new plays to its stock in order to maintain itself in London.
>
> The sheer volume of production is staggering. How strenuous the demands must have been upon the actors!... In the three-year period from June 5, 1594, to July 28, 1597, a leading actor of the Lord Admiral's company, such as Edward Alleyn or Thomas Downton, had to secure and retain command of about seventy-one different roles, of which number fifty-two or fifty-three were newly learned....
>
> Although the names of a large number of playwrights appear in Henslowe's records, most of the new plays performed by the Admiral's men came from the pens of less than a dozen men.

Obviously, poets and playwrights writing for the theatre, actors and producers staging so many new plays had no time to think about who wrote what under Shakespeare's name. And by the time the First Folio was published in 1623, virtually everyone who had known Marlowe was dead, including William Shakespeare. But the most important individuals—Ed Blount, Sir Thomas Walsingham, The Earl of Pembroke—were still alive.

What we have uncovered in our review of the plays in the First Folio is the code that Marlowe used to indicate his authorship. And you have to have read Marlowe's works to

be able to detect the code, which consists mainly of references to the plays and poems published under his own name.

Marlowe also inserted biographical data that would go undetected by a reader unfamiliar with the poet's life: for example, in *Julius Caesar,* the character of the cobbler was modeled after his own father; in *King Lear* the way to Dover and the view from the cliffs was based on Marlowe's own childhood when he and his mother walked or rode from Canterbury to Dover to visit his mother's relatives; also the mention of the Catholic Seminary at Rheims in *The Taming of the Shrew* refers us to the spy mission he was sent on by Walsingham and Burghley; in *Measure for Measure* we have a body-switching scene much like what must have taken place at Deptford; and in *Romeo and Juliet* there is a duel scene that reminds us of the actual fight in which Watson saved Marlowe's life by slaying Bradley. And it may be in commemoration of that incident that Marlowe put the name of Watson (TWATSO) in the first letters of lines 4-9 in Sonnet 76.

It should be noted that *Julius Caesar, Measure for Measure,* and *The Taming of the Shrew* were not even in print until 1623 so that their hidden clues would not have been known to anyone before that time.

The most frequently used code word by Marlowe was Dido, from his earliest play, *Dido: Queen of Carthage*. We found such references in *Titus Andronicus, The Taming of the Shrew, Romeo and Juliet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, King John, The Merchant of Venice, Hamlet, Cymbeline,* and *The Tempest.*

We found references to *Hero and Leander* in *Two Gentlemen of Verona, Romeo and*

Juliet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice, Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It, and *Twelfth Night.*

Tamburlaine is referred to in *King Henry IV (Part Two),* and *All's Well That Ends Well.* Dr. Faustus is directly or indirectly referred to in *The Merry Wives of Windsor, Hamlet,* and *Troilus and Cressida.*

Marlowe's motto, found on his portrait, *Quod me nutrit, me destruit* is reiterated in Sonnet 73, *Measure for Measure,* and *Pericles: Prince of Tyre.* His famous dictum from *Hero and Leander:* "Who ever loved, that loved not at first sight?" is either repeated or alluded to in *The Taming of the Shrew, Romeo and Juliet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It, Twelfth Night, The Tempest,* and *King Henry VIII.*

The themes of exile and banishment, the use of disguises, faked deaths, and mistaken identities can be found in *Richard II, As You Like It, Twelfth Night, Measure for Measure, King Lear, Coriolanus, The Winter's Tale, All's Well That Ends Well* and *Cymbeline.* Obviously, Marlowe, who was forced to live in exile and banishment and whose death was faked, could write about all of this from experience. He also, no doubt, used disguises to hide his identity. We know that he used the name Thomas Shelton for his translation of *Don Quixote*, which was published by his executor Ed Blount.

Hamlet, the most famous play ever written, is full of Marlowe clues. The same can be said of *As You Like It.* These are just the more obvious examples that we have found in the First Folio plays. A more intense search will no doubt enable us to uncover many more clues.

Another important indication that Marlowe wrote the works attributed to Shakespeare is the enormous amount of biblical references one finds throughout the plays. Marlowe's education at the King's School and Corpus Christi gave him an intimate knowledge of Holy Scripture, and according to Park Honan's new biography of Marlowe, the poet in his works "refers to biblical passages over a thousand times." And in the works Marlowe wrote under the name William Shakespeare will be found even more biblical references. Whole books have been written citing these references. Marlowe's father owned a Bible. But Shakespeare, in his will, revealed that he owned not a single book, let alone a Bible.

We have not even mentioned the sources of plays that clearly indicate Marlowe's authorship: *The Winter's Tale* based on a novel by his friend Robert Greene, or *Antony and Cleopatra,* with its Pembroke-Daniel connection.

Another proof that Calvin Hoffman cites confirming Marlowe's authorship of the First Folio plays is the work performed in the late 19th century by Dr. Thomas C. Mendenhall, professor at a college that later became Ohio State University. The professor devised a purely mechanical method of determining the writing style of an author by simply counting the letters in each word of that author's published works. With the use of graphs he was able to show that each author had his own peculiar characteristics in the use of words.

Mendenhall hired several women to count the letters in the two million words written by Ben Jonson, John Fletcher, Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, Joseph Addison, and others. One day, a wealthy Boston believer in the Baconian theory engaged

Mendenhall to count the letters in the works of Francis Bacon and compare them with the works of Shakespeare. When the counting was completed, the graphs of the two writers revealed no possibility of similitude. However, when Mendenhall analyzed Marlowe's works, he wrote in 1902:

> It was in the counting and plotting of the plays of Christopher Marlowe, however, that something akin to a sensation was produced among those actually engaged in the work. In the characteristic curve of his plays Christopher Marlowe agrees with Shakespeare as well as Shakespeare agrees with himself.

What does all of this do for the average reader, the lover of Shakespeare? It reveals the plays in a new light and explains what has hitherto been unexplainable. The Sonnets begin to make sense. Some of the characters, dialogues, and events in the plays begin to make more sense. What does it do for the biographers and historians of the future? It opens new vistas about the past, and provides an insight into the greatest literary mind in all of human history, who was forced to live and endure his own tragic drama in silence. There is nothing in all of literature, in all of history, that can match this story. But in the world of Elizabethan England, with its incredible array of personalities involved in a life-and-death religious struggle, the most bizarre conspiracy in all of history could take place.

For over a century, the authorship question has plagued us because of the great doubt that Shakespeare's biography poses. In 1909, Mark Twain wrote in *Is Shakespeare Dead?* (p.33):

> The will mentioned not a play, not a poem, not an unfinished literary work, not a

> The will mentioned not a play, not a poem, not an unfinished literary work, not a scrap of manuscript of any kind. Many poets have died poor, but this is the only one in history that has died this poor; the others all left literary remains behind.

The need and yearning to know the truth is what has kept this problem alive for so long. We believe that we have at last found the truth, so that future generations will understand how strange history can be, and how the author of the greatest plays ever written suffered a fate even stranger than those of his own heroes.

Irwin Leigh Matus, in his 1994 book, *Shakespeare in fact,* wrote (p.10):

> I will confess that my most memorable evening of theater was at an off-Broadway production of Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus.* I must agree with my dear friend, Roy Kendall, that if this play had Shakespeare's name on it, it would be one of the most performed of classical dramas.

Thus, the whole issue of "what's in a name?" is at the center of the authorship problem. And that is why the great plays that bear Marlowe's name are hardly performed today.

It is the fate of great genius to suffer at the hands of society. Mozart died in poverty and was buried in an unmarked grave. Marlowe lived in the prison of perpetual exile and yet produced the greatest plays ever written. We owe it to future generations to restore him as the greatest literary genius that England has ever produced.

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