

Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*, ed. William H. Sherman and Chloe Preedy (London: Bloomsbury/Arden, 2021), pb, ISBN 9781904271758, £11.69; Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*, ed. Lloyd Edward Kermode (New York: Norton, 2021), pb, ISBN 9780393643350, \$18.75.

ADAM HANSEN
NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY

Fantastic, reasonably-priced, scholarly, student-friendly, single-volume editions of *The Jew of Malta*, assembled by esteemed academics and published by equally reputable presses must be like buses: since these are the first since Mathew R. Martin's (Broadview, 2012) and before that David Bevington's for Revels (1997), clearly you wait years, and then two come at once. We are in safe hands with both sets of drivers.¹ Kermode's *Aliens and Englishness in Elizabethan Drama* (2009), and his editorship in the same year of *Three Renaissance Usury Plays* (including William Haughton's *Englishmen for my Money*, notable for its mercantile milieu and anti-Semitism) positions him as well-placed to discuss *The Jew of Malta*'s provenance, influence and socio-politics.² Preedy's *Marlowe's Literary Scepticism* (2013) was a brilliant exposition of the compromises attendant on the politicality of religion in Marlowe's world and works, and this expertise is complemented by Sherman's form in contextualising early modern writing in relation to burgeoning colonial and thus racialised settings, not least in *'The Tempest' and its Travels* (with Peter Hulme, 2000).³

This review will not try to discern which edition is better—they are both excellent, with ample illustrations and resources. But both do things differently, less as a consequence of individual editorial decisions, and more as a result of their respective formats as determined by their publishers. These differences extend beyond their rendering of characters' names (Sherman and Preedy follow Fredson Bowers' rendering of "Ithimore" in the 1973 *Complete Works* for Cambridge, while Kermode favours "Ithamore"), or use of footnotes (Kermode glosses the charge that Jews poisoned wells voiced by Barabas in 2.3

¹ Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*, ed. Mathew R. Martin (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2012); ed. David Bevington (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997).

² Lloyd Edward Kermode, *Aliens and Englishness in Elizabethan Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Robert Wilson, William Haughton and Robert Taylor, *Three Renaissance Usury Plays*, ed. Kermode (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

³ Chloe Kathleen Preedy, *Marlowe's Literary Scepticism: Politic Religion and Post-Reformation Polemic* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013); Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman, eds, *'The Tempest' and its Travels* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

with reference to Boaistuau's 1560 *Certain Secret Wonders of Nature*; Sherman and Preedy point to a 2004 article by N. W. Bawcutt).

Kermode's Norton edition could be seen to privilege an autonomous reader—whether scholar or student—willing and able to range relatively freely amongst the textual apparatus and assets, including the play itself, with only appreciably restrained editorial mediation. The preliminary editorial matter amounts to a handful of pages, which are (unproblematically) concise, which set out procedures for modernising spelling and the like, and which explain why the copious contextual and critical material coming after the play-text in the edition was selected. Then follows the play, then “Contexts” manifested in short excerpts thematized under the headings of Marlowe's theatre, “Machiavellianism and Mediterranean Identities.” and “Ideas of the Jew.” There are selections from—amongst many—Henslowe's *Diary*, Holinshed, Foxe, Luther, and Bacon. Then comes criticism: one can only applaud decision-making based on whether a piece is “written with a style or organization that gives students something eminently readable and to which they can aspire in their own work; and be likely to prompt classroom discussion” (xii). Selected scholarship includes material from the nineteenth century to the present, up to a review of a 2015 Royal Shakespeare Company production. The coverage, therefore, is excellent, incorporating performance history present and past, postcolonial or “critical race theory” perspectives (from the likes of Daniel Vitkus and Emily C. Bartels), and canonical Marlovian scholars (Harry Levin, Stephen Greenblatt). With each section of contextual or critical material preceded by a short descriptive framing, and with the whole appended by a selected bibliography, this is a wonderful one-stop shop for resources on the play, and indeed Marlowe.

Sherman and Preedy's edition is no less wonderful. The extent of editorial mediation and guidance is perhaps less light-touch, but this is no bad thing. This edition, too, emphasises the play's timeliness, and not just in our own time: a characteristically extensive and insightful Arden “Introduction” begins with a perspective on Henry James in New York in 1905, considering the strains and significance of American multiculturalism as a way in to resituating Marlowe's Malta; we are told shortly after that the play is “enduringly, hauntingly modern” (5). The Introduction walks us through what Kermode's edition places after the play: the meanings of Machiavelli, Malta, Mediterranean Jewry and Luther, generic concerns and performance history. Given the range of materials, the Arden index is helpful. Both editions include all the relevant paratextual matter from the 1633 publication. Those travelling to Marlowe's Malta with either edition might have only one regret: neither notes the play's concluding pun (which a student of mine did several years ago): Ferneze's self-

justificatory smarm both nods to and obscures Barabas's role in his success as he offers his ironic "due [or we might say Jew] praise."

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