

Introduction

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This special issue marks the contributions to “The Marlowe Festival,” a week-long set of conferences held in Reims and Paris from 16–21 May 2022. The Festival was split between two sites. From 16–18 May 2022, the Festival was housed in Reims for an international conference themed around “Marlowe and the Topicality of Textual Encounters.” Next, the Festival moved to Paris from 19–21 May 2022, for a second international conference marking and commemorating the 450th anniversary of the Saint Bartholomew’s Day Massacre: “Representations and Uses of the Saint Bartholomew’s Day Massacre, in Europe and Beyond (1572–2022).” For the Festival a fresh French translation of Marlowe’s *The Massacre at Paris* was undertaken, and there were performances at both conference sites (see the article by Anne-Marie Miller-Blaise and Christine Sukic, 45–61). At Reims there was a staged reading of *Le Massacre à Paris* for conference attendees by professional actors from/in continuous training at the Comédie de Reims, directed by Jean-François Auguste. At Paris there was a sell-out performance of *Le Massacre à Paris* at l’Oratoire du Louvre, with a new group of student-actors from the Studio Asnières, again directed by Auguste (see a review of these performances by Emma Rose Kraus, 174–77). Complementing such performance activities, there were walking tours around Reims (sites connected with the English College) and Paris (sites connected with the Massacre), and guided tours of Notre-Dame de Reims and Musée Carnavalet. The Marlowe Festival was a collaboration between researchers from Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, Sorbonne Université, and the University of Kent, with research feeding into the forthcoming *Oxford Marlowe: Collected Works* edition for Oxford University Press.

The occasion of this special issue prompts some reconsideration of Marlowe’s connections with France. First among these is the question of whether Marlowe ever went to France. Certainly, it was reported that he meant to do so, but the Privy Council’s response to this on 29 June 1587 renders the situation deeply ambiguous:

Whereas it was reported that Christopher Morley was determined to have gone beyond the seas to Reames and there to remaine, their Lps thought good to certefie that he had no such intent, but that in all his accions he had behaved himself orderlie and discretie, wherebie he had done her Majestie good service, & deserved to be rewarded for his faithfull dealinge. Their Lps request was that the rumor thereof should be allaied by all possible meanes, and that he should be furthered in the degree he was to take at this next Commencement, because it was not Her Majesties pleasure that any imployed as he had been in matters touching the benefit of his country should be defamed by those who are ignorant in th'affaires he went about.¹

We cannot be certain whether the Privy Council “certifie[d] that [Marlowe] had no such intent” to go to Reims or that he planned to “remaine” there. But what would he have found in Reims if he had gone? William Allen had established a seminary for the training of English priests at Douai, in north-eastern France, in 1568. Many of these priests returned to England to advance the counter-reformist cause, and some were executed for such activities. The English College moved to Reims in 1578, and it was from there that, in 1582, a new English translation of the New Testament was published.² The Protestant theologian William Whitaker issued a robust critique of the Catholic project, prompting William Rainoldes (“Student of Diuinitie in the English Colledge at Rhemes”) to publish a *A Refutation of Sundry Reprehensions, Cauils, and False Sleights*.³ The dispute would continue with Whitaker issuing his own *Answere to a Certeine Booke* a couple of years later.⁴ Such high-profile disputes only lent greater notoriety to the college at Reims.

Reims was one of two English Colleges at this time, the other in Rome. The English authorities wished to infiltrate such sites of training, and young English men, posing as would-be priests, were sought to serve this purpose. For Marlowe then to have determined to go to Reims is plausibly defensible if, as implied by the report, he was doing so to serve Queen and country. But for him to have wished to “remaine” there would have been treasonous. There is a fascinating parallel here with the early career of another English dramatist. In the late 1570s, Anthony Munday found himself welcomed into the English College in Rome. In his *The English Romayne Life*, Munday describes how he and his companion, Thomas Nowell, travelled overseas out of a desire to “sée straunge Countreies” and “learne the languages.”⁵ Robbed by soldiers near Amiens, the pair soon rely upon an

¹ *Acts of the Privy Council of England 15 (1587–1588)*, ed. John Roche Dasent (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1897), 141.

² *The New Testament of Iesus Christ, Translated Faithfully into English* (Reims: 1582), STC 2884.

³ William Rainoldes, *A Refutation of Sundry Reprehensions, Cauils, and False Sleights* (Paris: 1583), STC 20632. Rainoldes’s connection to the college at Reims is stated on the title page.

⁴ William Whitaker, *An Answer to a Certeine Booke* (London: 1585), STC 25364a.

⁵ Anthony Munday, *The English Romayne Lyfe* (London: 1582), STC 18272, B1r.

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English priest to accommodate them and secure them money for their travels. The priest says they should go to Reims and passes on his commendation to William Allen. Munday and Nowell decided to forego that plan and travelled to Paris instead, where they were encouraged to travel on to the English College at Rome. Munday took on another name, pretending to be the son of a respected Paris-based English Catholic, and he and Nowell, also through a false identification, gained access to the English College, where they partook in training activities. Munday's account, written and published back in England two years later, documents the daily life of the College and notes the friendships he developed and kindnesses he enjoyed. But, ultimately and necessarily, Munday acknowledges throughout the treason committed by those he encountered, renounces their activities, and insists upon his innocent participation with the aim of gathering information. Upon his return, Munday contributed to the Catholic witch-hunts of the early 1580s, supplying information against some of those English priests he had encountered in Rome. In his *A Breefe and True Reporte*, describing the execution of seven priests at Tyburn on the 28 and 30 May 1582, Munday was himself called forth at various times to attest to the priests' treason.⁶ We know this because of his travel account and execution report; what, we might wonder, did Marlowe see or do for which we have no documentary evidence?

A second major connection between Marlowe and France was his lived experience with a "Stranger" Huguenot population throughout his youth in Canterbury. The connections between Kent and Europe had always been strong, and Canterbury sits on the main road from London to the crossing point. During the period in which Calais was an English territory, both garrison and administrative staff were recruited from the county, and for the wealthy, landholding on both sides of the channel was not uncommon. This made the city a springboard for wider trade with the continent, especially in Picardy and the Low Countries.⁷ Religious turmoil in continental Europe activated these familiar connections, networks, and journeys in a different way. A large influx of Flemish, Walloon, and Huguenot families settled at the cinque port of Sandwich through the 1560s, with a similar popular explosion at Rye. The Sandwich congregation was established in 1561; the first Canterbury settlers arrived from Winchelsea in 1574 and were joined by Strangers from Sandwich in 1575. They entered a town that had been suffering economically for several decades, older centres in the county

⁶ Anthony Munday, *A Breefe and True Reporte, of the Execution of Certaine Traytours at Tiborne* (London: 1582), STC 18261.

⁷ Peter Clark, *English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution: Religion, Politics and Society in Kent 1500–1640* (Harvester Press, 1977), 11.

in particular having suffered throughout the first half of the century. Immigrant populations brought essential new industrial skills, especially in the manufacture of domestic goods and new techniques of weaving, and these cultural capitals, plus the financial ones that travelled with them, led to shoots of economic growth in Canterbury.

Of particular interest to us is the level of integration between these new arrivals and indigenous manufacturing families like the Marlowes. The way the Strangers established themselves within the town's commercial and administrative cultures is significant. An initial agreement between the Canterbury congregation and the Mayor, for instance, includes provision for a totally separate community with, for example, its own baker, butcher and tailor.⁸ St Alphege's church, in the shadow of the cathedral's precinct walls, was given over for their services, with their own minister and teacher, before a designated Huguenot chapel was established in the cathedral crypt. In addition to the establishment of their own Consistory, in 1582, just after Marlowe left for Cambridge, the Canterbury Strangers apparently set up a group with authority devolved from the town's mayor to settle secular disputes, and draft and preserve their legal documents. It was a "half way house" between the community's "ideal of total autonomy, and the complete abdication of power to their English hosts."⁹ Coexisting jurisdictions, over probate, for instance, suggest a confused picture of partial integration.¹⁰ In material terms, the community was marked out by a rather different attitude towards wealth and its physical manifestations, and by a significant investment in book ownership—nearly three times as prominent in the Stranger community than among the townspeople as a whole.¹¹

Geographically, at least, the Marlowes lived cheek-by-jowl with this Stranger community. Marlowe was eight years old at the time of the massacre and cannot have been unaware of the sudden influx of this sizeable group with their different language and practices. What stories were shared about the wars of religion or the massacre? Marlowe's father, a shoemaker, must have dealt often, and in various ways, with members of the refugee

⁸ Francis W. Cross, *History of the Walloon & Huguenot Church at Canterbury*, vol. 15 (London: Publications of the Huguenot Society of London, 1898), 29.

⁹ J. A. Ailes, "Foreign Protestant Communities and the Law 1570–1630," unpublished MPhil thesis (University of Kent at Canterbury, 1977), 160. See also Cross, *History*, 34–35. They show the Consistory in overall control, and under them the Draperie and the Twelve Politic Men.

¹⁰ This also applies to birth: J. Meadows Cowper identifies children baptised in the Stranger church who were also registered in St Peter's parish, for instance. See "The Foreign Element in the Parishes of St Peter and Holy Cross Canterbury; 1575–1684," *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of London* 2 (1887–88): 197–204.

¹¹ 2.84 books per Stranger inventory, 4 books for every 5 wider Canterbury inventories. 60% of Stranger inventories contained one or more books, as opposed to 25% of other Canterbury inventories. For further analysis of the material distinctions, see Catherine Richardson, "The Material Culture of Stranger Life," *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society* 28, no. 4 (2006): 495–508.

community. It is striking that Marlowe would then write a play, however corruptly preserved, about the build-up to and aftermath of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, tracking the crisis that so altered the urban make-up and landscape of the city of his youth.

The Marlowe Festival served to commemorate both the local and pan-European impact of the infamous massacre in Paris. Beyond that, it allowed us to reconsider Marlowe's plays and poems within a variety of circumstances that opened up new worlds for readers and audiences. More than they are simply shaped by context, Marlowe's texts seem to have the power to found, body forth and address moments of rupture and transformation. When he referred to the "Seminary at Remes" in *The Massacre at Paris*, Marlowe was using a topical allusion that endowed the text of his play with a daring religious and political relevance. Reims was most often associated with Rome in book titles at the time. Back in England, much effort was devoted to the correction of errors committed by "the trayterous seminarie at Rhemes."¹² Not unlike the "Temples of that Mahomet" which Tamburlaine proudly rages against (2 *Tamburlaine*, 5.1.174), it was seen by some as housing "heaps of superstitious books" (2 *Tamburlaine*, 5.1.173) that blurred the lines between the sacred and the blasphemous.¹³ Marlowe's allusion to the Reims seminary creates both a moment of ideological tension within the text of the play and a sign of unsettling aesthetic disturbance. Couched between the lines of this *history* of a foreign, French massacre, lies the *drama* of internal rifts and turmoil, the *tragedy* of an impossible reconciliation not only of opposites but also of self with self. Oppositional differentiation is conflated with the ambivalence of disruptive/disrupted sameness, testifying to Marlowe's distinctively radical art. Similarly, in *The Jew of Malta*, Marlowe has Barabas use the word "Jebusite" (2.3.302),¹⁴ drawn from the Bible (Judges 1:21) but also, as John Parker noted, "a term of opprobrium for the Jesuits then infiltrating England."¹⁵ It so happens that William Fulke used the word in his attack against the Reims seminary.¹⁶ This occurrence speaks possibly less to Marlowe's disputed political

¹² Quoting from the title of William Fulke's *A Defense of the Sincere and True Translations of the Holie Scriptures into the English Tong against the Manifold Cauils, Friuolous Quarels, and Impudent Slaunders of Gregorie Martin, one of the Readers of Popish Diuinitie in the Trayterous Seminarie of Rhemes* (London: 1583), STC 11430.5. There are numerous editions of this work, under various titles, well into the first half of the seventeenth century.

¹³ Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine*, ed. J. S. Cunningham (1981; repr., Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).

¹⁴ Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*, in *Doctor Faustus and Other Plays*, ed. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 247–322.

¹⁵ John Parker, "Barabas and Charles I," in *Placing the Plays of Christopher Marlowe. Fresh Cultural Contexts*, ed. Sara Munson Deats and Robert A. Logan (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 174.

¹⁶ Fulke, *A Defense*, 505.

and religious allegiances than to his ability to pin-point tensions and their embeddedness in words that become, as it were, privileged verbal sites of his intense dramatic art.

This perspective on Marlowe's texts allowed us to reconsider his art of writing not only as one of borrowing or imitating, a practice he had in common with the authors of his time, but also as one of creating tensions, clashes, oxymora, or on the contrary innovating through unexpected and often distorting appropriation and integration. These complex textual encounters are thematic as much as they are aesthetic, and enable Marlowe to engage dialogically and critically with his own texts. In *Edward II*, he refers in passing to *Hero and Leander* by having Gaveston say:

Sweet prince, I come; these, these thy amorous lines
Might have enforced me to have swum from France
And like Leander gasped upon the sand (*Edward II*, 1.1.6–8)¹⁷

This reference creates multi-layered textual and cultural encounters, between the play and the poem, between Gaveston and Edward as well as between Leander and Neptune, and between Europe and Asia, as if Marlowe was insisting on the fluidity and instability of texts that are “on the edge,” as Lisa Hopkins observes.¹⁸ Marlowe's art of writing can be envisioned through such productive connexions and confrontations, as well as through his astute use of *topoi*—whether classical or early modern, literary or visual—to shape his own worldview. But it can also open up new avenues for future re-explorations of his textual encounters and their renewed topicality: Chapman's addition to Marlowe's poem, for instance, signals how later re-writings and adaptations of Marlowe's works can become relevant in other cultural milieus, and suggests how Marlowe's texts have been, in turn, reworked into *topoi*. His correlations of “hot extremes” (*I Tamburlaine*, 5.1.46) and powerful layering of conflicting references could only encourage topical re-uses and fruitful textual appropriations.

The Festival also marked the beginning of a new editorial project centred on the writings of Canterbury's most famous literary son: *The Oxford Marlowe: Collected Works* edition. Marlowe's French encounters continue to be investigated. French characters abound—such as Isabella's turn as the “she-wolf of France” in *Edward II* or the depiction of Joan la Pucelle in *I Henry VI*—while France forms part of Marlowe's broader interest in mapping the

¹⁷ Christopher Marlowe, *Edward II*, in *Doctor Faustus and Other Plays*, ed. Bevington and Rasmussen, 323–402.

¹⁸ Lisa Hopkins, *Renaissance Drama on the Edge* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014): “In *Edward II*, Marlowe revisits both the Hero and Leander narrative and the edge between Europe and Asia. Here it is specifically national borders which are seen as permeable, unstable, and sometimes literally fluid, and this is something which the play insistently connects to sexual transgression” (54).

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land mass beyond England's shores. Marlowe's plays and poems are set variously in Germany, Italy, Malta, Tunisia, Greece, Turkey, Syria, and Egypt; he is interested in exploring the relationship between character identity and geographical place. Still, the Marlowe Festival helped to establish Marlowe's special interest in France and Anglo-French relations, commemorating, as Marlowe did himself, a landmark moment in European history with ramifications far beyond the French capital and its environs.

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