



## INTRODUCTION

# THE ART OF LOVE

*To these souls, mingling on all sides, the Sibyl  
Spoke now, and especially to the mighty seer Musaeus . . .  
And the great soul answered briefly: "None of us  
Has one fixed home. We walk in peaceful groves  
And bed on riverbanks and dwell in green meadows  
Fresh with hilly streams and bright shining plains."  
—VIRGIL, THE AENEID*



*As You Like It* is one of the most delightful romantic comedies of all time. The plucky heroine Rosalind's spirited wit, her suitor Orlando's moon-struck courting, the clown Touchstone's jaded humor, the melancholy sage Jaques's world-weary cynicism, and the shepherdess Phoebe's proud disdain have enthralled generations of viewers and readers. But beneath the comic tour de force of the irrepressible, cross-dressing heroine and the antics of the other "country copulatives" lies a penetrating critique of Elizabethan England's Church and Crown, especially its recent crackdown on dramatists and satirists who flouted the established order.

Compelling new historical and literary evidence suggests that the death of Christopher Marlowe was staged during a heresy investigation, and the leading playwright on the Elizabethan stage and an intelligence agent for Her Majesty's realm went on to pen the immortal plays and poems and stage them in partnership with actor William Shakespeare. These events are alluded to in *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, and other plays but nowhere more explicitly than in *As You Like*

*It*, composed in the shadow of the public book burning of Marlowe's version of Ovid's ribald verse.

According to the history books, Marlowe died in a tavern brawl in 1593 at the tragically young age of twenty-nine at the zenith of his theatrical fame. In this witty comedy, composed about six years later, Marlowe is eulogized as the "Dead Shepherd," or poet, and his romantic sentiments and iconoclastic spirit permeate the play. As Harold Bloom, the dean of American Shakespearean scholars, states: "In the background to *As You Like It* is the uneasy presence of Christopher Marlowe, stabbed to death six years before in a supposed dispute over 'a great reckoning in a little room' . . . Marlowe, the dead shepherd, defines *As You Like It*, by negation."<sup>1</sup> Historian James Shapiro, an Elizabethan scholar at Columbia University, goes even further, "It's hard not to feel that these [allusions to Marlowe's death] are but the tip of the iceberg. Looking beneath the surface of the play is a decade-long struggle on Shakespeare's part to absorb and move beyond his greatest rival's work, an engagement that is its most intense in 1598 to 1599 in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Henry the Fifth*, *As You Like It*, and, finally, *Hamlet*."<sup>2</sup> But beyond his ghostly presence in the play, Marlowe escaped his reputed fate, as we shall show in this book, and in the flesh and blood went on to compose *As You Like It*. He fled from the capital for his life like Rosalind, Orlando, and the other exiled denizens of the Arden forest. With its dazzling themes of mistaken identities, role reversals, and royal banishment, the play satirizes the stifling conformity and censorship of the Elizabethan church and state, which sought to silence Marlowe, Tom Nashe, Ben Jonson, and other writers.

Unlike the anti-Stratfordians, or those who reject Shakespeare's authorship of the plays and regard him merely as a front man, I believe that William of Stratford played a key literary and dramatic role in their development. Indeed, Shakespeare may well have been a courier or fellow spy in the employ of Lord Burghley, Queen Elizabeth's most trusted counselor, head of her intelligence network, and Marlowe's protector.

Recognizing that Shakespeare and Marlowe collaborated to bring the plays to life on the stage immeasurably enriches the enjoyment of *As You Like It*. In addition to the play's well-known references to Marlowe, there are a host of more subtle allusions, puns, and parallels to, or echoes of, his life and works that add to an appreciation of the play. For example, there is a series of quips on shoes and footwear that would come naturally to a cobbler's son from Canterbury. Whether you are a high school student, a soccer mom, or a connoisseur of literary and historical mysteries, this edition of *As You Like It* will fundamentally alter the way you perceive Shakespeare and the golden age of dramatic art and literature.

This is the second in a series of annotated editions of Marlowe and Shakespeare's works. The first volume—the 400th anniversary edition of *Hamlet* by Marlowe and Shakespeare (Amber Waves, 2005)—includes a long account of Marlowe's life, "death," and afterlife, his relationship with Shakespeare, over 100 parallel passages between *Hamlet* and Marlowe's earlier works, and a comprehensive literary and historical interpretation of *Hamlet* and its many allusions to Archbishop Whitgift, Queen Elizabeth, and Marlowe and his destiny.

Until recently, the authorship question has been taboo in academia. For example, in a review of my edition of Marlowe and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in the *Times Literary Supplement*, Brian Vickers, a leading British literary critic, said that anyone who rejected Shakespeare's authorship was akin to a Holocaust denier.<sup>3</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, an English professor at Harvard and one of America's best-known Shakespeare biographers, has invoked the same metaphor.<sup>4</sup> "Use of such analogies cheapens the gravest of matters and aims to silence intellectual questioning of an academic issue," counters William S. Niederhorn, a *New York Times* editor and critic. "All of this is indicative of how extreme these Stratfordians' absolutism really is." There is a "tone of desperation" in their books, he continues, as if they are "trying to convince" themselves.<sup>5</sup>

In the last several years, the case that Marlowe survived the deadly altercation in which he was reputedly slain in 1593 has drawn mounting support. Westminster Abbey dedicated a new stained glass window to Marlowe with a question mark before the date of his death in the Poets' Corner, England's literary shrine, suggesting he escaped his fate. Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London inaugurated forums on the authorship controversy and presents evidence for Marlowe and other candidates, in its playbills. The Shakespeare Authorship Coalition has garnered thousands of signatures calling on universities, colleges, high schools, and publishers to acknowledge the authorship controversy as a legitimate topic of inquiry. Supporters include Mark Rylance, Sir Derek Jacobi, Michael York, and other top Shakespearean actors and directors, as well as many historians, literary critics, and other theater people.

In his recent book on the authorship controversy, *Contested Will*, James Shapiro breaks ranks with his fellow Shakespearean scholars on the propriety of the debate and notes that Marlowe's star is on the rise. "There's a lot more energy and enthusiasm behind Marlowe" than Oxford, Bacon, or any other candidate for the literary laurels, he observes.<sup>6</sup> There is skepticism in the received story in even higher places. The *Wall Street Journal* recently featured an article entitled: "Justice Stevens Renders an Opinion on Who Wrote Shakespeare's Plays: It Wasn't

the Bard of Avon, He Says; ‘Evidence Is Beyond a Reasonable Doubt.’”<sup>7</sup> Two other Supreme Court justices have also joined the chorus in rejecting William of Stratford’s sole authorship. Breaking new ground, Concordia University in Portland, Oregon and Brunel University in the UK are the first academic institutions to offer an advanced degree in Shakespeare authorship studies.

Echoing Marlowe’s own life, themes of liberty vs. authority, natural vs. learned, and common vs. courtly lie at the heart of *As You Like It* and inform the background to the play’s early history. In the pages that follow we will examine the harrowing climate of religious persecution and artistic censorship that gave rise to the play and probe why it was not published in the lifetimes of its authors. On June 4, 1599, Marlowe’s *Ovid’s Elegies*—the first English edition of the classic manual on the art of seduction—was publicly burned along with other reputed lewd and seditious writings. This witch hunt, known as the Bishops’ Bonfire, may have precipitated *As You Like It*’s composition and is alluded to in the play. Though approved for publication, the play was marked “stayed,” or withheld from print, after it was entered in the Stationers’ Register in London the following year. Like about half of the Shakespearean canon, it only appeared in print in the First Folio in 1623.

As one of the most romantic of the Shakespearean comedies, *As You Like It* holds a mirror up not only to love and marriage in early modern England but also to the poet’s own views on sexuality and gender. Marlowe earned a reputation as gay because of the sympathetic portrayal of same sex love in his poems and plays and the insinuations of an informer. But he also composed some of the most popular heterosexual love poetry of the era, and as the Shakespearean Sonnets suggest, he was hopelessly entangled in a love affair with a black-haired and -eyed seductress.

## The Modern Chroniclers



In the early twentieth century, the discovery of primary documents led to what became the authorized version of Marlowe’s death. In 1925, Leslie Hotson, a young graduate student in English literature at Harvard, was combing through dusty files in the Public Records Office in London. He said, “As I turned over the leaves of the Calendar of Close Rolls, my eye fell upon the name Ingram Frizer. I felt at once that I had come upon the man who killed Christopher Marlowe.”<sup>8</sup> Further investigation led him to the discovery of the original Coroner’s report (which had never been published or mentioned in print before), a writ of *certiorari* referring

the case to Chancery court, and the queen's pardon of Ingram Frizer.

Hotson not only unearthed the basic facts of the case and an authoritative version confirming Marlowe's death, but he also planted seeds of doubt as to its veracity and the folklore that had grown up around the event. The possibility that Frizer provoked the quarrel and attacked Marlowe, he said, could not be ruled out. In the end, Hotson decided to err on the side of caution and accept the veracity of Coroner Danby's inquest. "Two courses are open to us: (a) to believe as true the story of Marlowe's attack on Frizer . . . or (b) to suppose that Frizer, Poley, and Skeres, after the slaying, and in order to save Frizer's life on a plea of self-defense, concocted a lying account of Marlowe's behavior, to which they swore at the inquest, and with which they deceived the jury." In his book *The Death of Christopher Marlowe*, Hotson observed that the facts could fit either scenario. "In all probability the men had been drinking deep (the party had lasted from ten in the morning until night!); and the bitter debate over the score had roused Marlowe's intoxicated feelings to such a pitch that, leaping from the bed, he took the nearest way to stop Frizer's mouth."<sup>9</sup>

Over the next half century, scholars accepted the Coroner's report as gospel, and Hotson went on to become an acclaimed Shakespearean critic. "The mystery of Marlowe's death, heretofore involved in a cloud of contradictory gossip and irresponsible guess-work, is now cleared up for good and all on the authority of public records of complete authenticity and gratifying fullness," observed G. L. Kittredge, the great *Hamlet* authority. Such accolades—the final spades of earth thrown on Marlowe's unmarked grave—proved premature.<sup>10</sup> In 1928, Samuel Tannenbaum, M.D., wrote *The Assassination of Christopher Marlowe*, questioning the medical evidence, but expert witnesses frequently disagree, and his technical objection raised few critical eyebrows.

Details about the quarrel and scuffle continued to baffle even those who accepted the inquest's veracity. A writer in the *Times Literary Supplement* voiced questions about the peculiar passivity of Skeres and Poley, the other two men who witnessed "the great reckoning in the little room." Why didn't they intervene and stop the fight? "Is it conceivable that any man in mortal earnest would recline on a bed to hack at an antagonist who is sitting upright and certain to retaliate? . . . and this without interference from the other two men who (apparently) waited passive. These two inactive observers were exceedingly competent to keep Friser within the reach of Marlowe; but as for separating them no such reasonable effort is recorded."<sup>11</sup> "There is something queer about the whole

episode,” concluded John Bakeless, author of *The Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe*, a magisterial modern biography. “Fraser’s own wounds are strangely slight if Marlowe, armed with a dagger, really sprang at the seated and helpless man from behind, as the inquest states. It is also hard to believe that Fraser sat with his back to any angry opponent while they disputed ‘le recknyng’ . . . It is also still to be explained why these four men—three precious scoundrels and a poet who had been involved in confidential government affairs—had business together so important that it required a whole day’s private conversation. The fact that Marlowe was at this time held by the Privy Council . . . makes matters still more suspicious.”<sup>12</sup> Still, Bakeless, like other early and mid twentieth century biographers, accepted Marlowe’s death because of the government’s imprimatur on the proceedings.

The 400th anniversary of Marlowe’s death in 1993 focused fresh scrutiny on the events in Deptford. Indeed, with the new century, there has been a paradigm shift in the way that historians, literary scholars, and the general public have viewed the poet’s last days. The consensus is that Marlowe was murdered and the quarrel over the reckoning was a cover story.

Charles Nicholl, author of *The Reckoning: The Murder of Christopher Marlowe*, the most influential modern study, explains that the poet was caught in a bitter factional struggle between Sir Walter Raleigh and the Earl of Essex. In the first edition of his book (1993), he theorized that Skeres, a servant of Essex, silenced Marlowe as part of a campaign to discredit Raleigh. However, in the second edition of his book (2002), he retracted his conclusion about Essex’s involvement. “I believe that in this [their testimony], as in so much in their careers, Skeres and Poley were lying. They were lying to conceal their involvement—and through them the involvement of ministers of the Crown—in the killing of Christopher Marlowe.”<sup>13</sup> He continues to think that Raleigh was the main target of the plotters, but that in the meeting in Deptford Marlowe refused their threats to incriminate him. The hit men, in his view, were probably working for Sir John Puckering, the Lord Keeper, or perhaps Robert Cecil, Queen Elizabeth’s acting Secretary, but he doesn’t speculate on the identity of the ultimate person responsible. “As for the story of the ‘recknyng,’ concocted within hours and elaborated over the centuries, it was a lie. It neutralized potential embarrassments. It served to cover up the tracks that led from Mrs. Bull’s house, through the back-ways of government service, to the doors of Her Majesty’s Privy Council. It was just another of those ‘fictions and knaveries.’”<sup>14</sup>

In *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (1998), Harold Bloom

described Marlowe's influence on Shakespeare and came to a similar judgment: "Tradition has left us with no anecdotes concerning any encounters between Marlowe and Shakespeare, but they must have met frequently, sharing the leadership of the London stage until Marlowe's murder by the government in early 1593."<sup>15</sup>

Roy Kendall, the author of *Richard Baines and Christopher Marlowe: Notes from the Elizabethan Underground* (2003), also concluded that Marlowe's death "looks planned."<sup>16</sup> He conjectured that the queen, Burghley, Cecil, or any combination of the three, perhaps acting with Whitgift and his allies on the Privy Council, "ordered the removal of this turbulent ex-divinity student before he could leave [defect] for Scotland."<sup>17</sup>

The following year, David Riggs, in his well-received biography, *The World of Christopher Marlowe* (2004), described the fine line the poet was treading: "[I]n the passage referring to Marlowe, and throughout *As You Like It*, Shakespeare allows the fool to voice the anti-authoritarian impulses that motivate the satirist, but only on the condition that he cloak his rebellion in innocuous jokes. The clown can flout Shakespeare's ethic of civility because he is, after all, a clown. Such was the lesson of Marlowe's meteoric career. Teachers of desire play a dangerous game; when they cross the line that separates art from politics, they are in for a reckoning."<sup>18</sup> Noting that "all the relevant evidence leads back to the Palace," Riggs argued that Elizabeth likely ordered the murder, and Marlowe was probably in the middle of the affray, pinned down, with Frizer attacking him, rather than the other way around.<sup>19</sup>

The same year, in his illuminating book, *A Year in the Life of Shakespeare: 1599*, devoted in large part to the cultural and political milieu in which *As You Like It* was composed, Robert Shapiro writes that Marlowe was "possibly assassinated" and that there are echoes of this event "lurking beneath the surface of the play."<sup>20</sup>

Park Honan, author of another major biography, *Christopher Marlowe: Poet & Spy* (2005) attributes the slaying to Thomas Walsingham, Marlowe's patron. In his view, the atheism charges hanging over the poet proved to be an embarrassment and Frizer, his servant, did his bidding or took matters into his own hands.<sup>21</sup>

In a review of Riggs and Honan's books in the *New York Review of Books* entitled "Who Killed Christopher Marlowe?" Stephen Greenblatt agreed that the poet was assassinated, but feels it was primarily for theatrical reasons. "[T]he Queen and her tough, sober councils were not easily spooked. The argument [that he was deliberately killed] only makes sense, I think, on one condition, that someone in the government, perhaps the Queen herself, had actually seen Marlowe's plays and taken in

their terrible, subversive power. That power does not reside either in outrageous aphorisms or in plot outlines. Faustus makes a pact with the devil, but in the end, like the homosexual King Edward and the Jew Barabas, he pays for his transgression with his life. Even the Nietzschean superman Tamburlaine finds that his will to power cannot escape the natural limitations of his mortal body. None of this really matters. What happens again and again in Marlowe's plays is that incantatory power of his verse releases a destructive energy that cannot be contained within any conventional boundaries. . . . Reckless desire, mocking all hierarchies and indifferent to the consequences, had been given a passionate, devastatingly eloquent voice. . . ." In Greenblatt's view, "The daughter of the ruthless Henry VIII and a determined survivor, Elizabeth I was no fool: she wanted this kind of thing stopped."<sup>22</sup>

British historian Lisa Hopkins joined the growing consensus that the dramatist was purposefully slain in her study *Marlowe: Renaissance Dramatist* (2008): "Marlowe was posthumously figured by Shakespeare as the 'dead shepherd' whose brutal slaying haunts *As You Like It*."<sup>23</sup>

As these quotations from the leading Elizabethan historians and Shakespearean scholars show, the perception of Marlowe's fate has profoundly changed in the last generation. From the tragic result of a drunken brawl, his "death" has metamorphosed into a state murder or assassination. From conceding his death was shrouded in intrigue and politically inspired, it is not unreasonable to take the next logical step and consider that the slaying may have been staged and the poet assumed a new literary identity as well as an intelligence cover. Certainly there are enough suspects to fashion an Agatha Christie who-dun-it. Was the mastermind behind the slaying Archbishop Whitgift or one of his hardline cronies on the Privy Council, the Cecils, Raleigh, Thomas Walsingham, or the queen? Or was it an elaborate sting to only give the appearance that Marlowe had been killed?

After all, the conclusions by these modern chroniclers that Marlowe was deliberately slain leave us with an even bigger question than that of a faked death. If Marlowe was assassinated, why was it necessary to insert secret government agents into a Coroner's inquest when the most expedient method would have been to simply poison him in a tavern or knife him on the street and leave his body for others to find? On the other hand, if the purpose was *not* to assassinate Marlowe, but merely to convince others that he was dead by providing an official Coroner's report, the experienced double agents in the room would have been necessary to "witness" his "death" and lie convincingly about his identity and what transpired to the jury at the inquest.



As Roy Kendall observed, “[D]eaths in the murky world of espionage can often be ‘blinds’ for disappearance, and vice versa.”<sup>24</sup> Among the modern academic chroniclers, the only one who has entertained the possibility that the poet survived is Park Honan: “Useful research has been stimulated by the infinitesimally thin possibility that Marlowe did not die when we think he did, just as it has been by improbable theories about Shakespeare’s ‘Dark Lady’. History holds its doors open.”<sup>25</sup>

Table 1 summarizes the changing paradigms surrounding Marlowe’s death. These will be explored more fully in the commentary that follows.

<b>Table 1 Paradigms of Marlowe’s Death</b>			
<i>Critic/historian</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Catalyst/Key Point</i>
<b>1. Rumor, Slander, and Theological Dogma: God’s Judgment</b>			
Thomas Beard	<i>Theatre of God’s Judgment</i>	1597	“God’s judgment” for atheism & blasphemy
Frances Meres	<i>Palladis Tamia</i>	1598	“lewd love” with a “bawdy serving man”
Anonymous	<i>The Return from Parnassus</i>	1598	“vices sent from hell”
<b>2. Coroner’s Report: A Tavern Brawl over “The Reckoning”</b>			
William Vaughan	<i>The Golden Grove</i>	1600	Stabbing at backgammon
Leslie Hotson	<i>Death of C.M.</i>	1925	With “malice” Marlowe was slain in self-defense
G.L. Kitteredge	Intro to above	1925	“authority of the public records”
John Bakeless	<i>The Tragical History of C.M.</i>	1942	Accepts Coroner’s report despite strong suspicions
Jonathan Bate	<i>Danger Down in Deptford</i>	2005	A “cock-up . . . alcohol and heated tempers”
Stanley Wells	<i>Shakespeare &amp; Co.</i>	2006	“the unimpugnable documentary evidence”
<b>3. A Murder Conspiracy: A Political Assassination</b>			
Charles Nicholl	<i>The Reckoning</i>	1993, 2002	Conspiracy involving the Privy Council
Harold Bloom	<i>The Invention of the Human</i>	1998	“murder by the government”
Ray Kendall	<i>Richard Baines &amp; C.M.</i>	2003	Marlowe’s death “looks planned”
Robert Shapiro	<i>A Year in the Life of Shakespeare 1599</i>	2004	“possibly assassinated”
David Riggs	<i>The World of C.M.</i>	2004	Ordered by Elizabeth
Paul Honan	<i>C.M.: Poet &amp; Spy</i>	2005	Ordered by Walsingham
Stephen Greenblatt	<i>Who Killed C.M.?</i>	2006	Ordered by Elizabeth
Laurie McGuire	<i>Marlowe: Renaissance Dramatist</i>	2008	“brutal slaying”

#### 4. A Staged Death: Secret Service Plot to Spare Kit's Life and Career

Touchstone Rosalind	<i>As You Like It</i>	1599	Questions “a great reckoning in a little room” and “foolish chroniclers”
Wilbur G. Ziegler	<i>It Was Marlowe</i>	1895	Novel on Kit's survival
Dr. T. C. Mendenhall	<i>Popular Science Monthly</i>	1901	Marlowe's literary fingerprint matches W.S.'s
Calvin Hoffinan	<i>The Murder of The Man Who Was 'Shakespeare'</i>	1955	First major historical and literary presentation of the Marlowe theory
Rev. David Rhys Williams	<i>Shakespeare, Thy Name Is Marlowe</i>	1966	Study of Kit's freethinking religious views
A.D. Wraight	<i>The Story That The Sonnets Tell</i>	1994	A Marlovian reading of the Sonnets and exile
Peter Farey	<i>A Deception in Deptford</i>	1997	Elizabeth and Privy Council's role in saving Marlowe
David More	<i>Dead Sailor or Imprisoned Writer?</i>	1997	Penry's body substituted for Marlowe's
Isabel Gortazar	<i>Marlowe Society Newsletter</i>	2004-	Marlowe's Spanish connections and afterlife
Alex Jack	<i>Hamlet by Marlowe and Shakespeare</i>	2005	Marlowe's titanic struggle with the archbishop and puns on Whitgift in <i>Hamlet</i>
Daryl Pinksen	<i>Marlowe's Ghost</i>	2008	Role of Ben Jonson in cover up & First Folio
Cynthia Morgan	<i>Reconsidering Corkyne vs. Marlowe</i>	2012	New evidence refuting Kit's violent nature

### Plot and Counterplot



his edition of *As You Like It* addresses the two principal dimensions to the play: 1) the main plot or forest romance between Rosalind and Orlando and 2) the subplot or Marlowe's autobiographical musings on his “death,” exile, and literary resurrection. For this latter purpose, Touchstone the fool serves as the voice of the poet/playwright. The Commentary is divided—sonnet like—into fourteen parts or chapters, and each chapter carries a subtitle featuring a shepherd or shepherdess:

1. *The Divine Shepherd* sets the stage in London in 1599, the year in which *As You Like It* was likely composed. It sketches the epic struggle between Marlowe, the freethinking author of *Tamburlaine*, *Doctor Faustus*, and other iconoclastic plays, and John Whitgift, the Archbishop of Canterbury, whose harsh edicts sent numerous clergy, dramatists, and printers to prison and several radical Protestant divines to the gallows.

2. *The Dead Shepherd* explores the several well-known references to Marlowe's “death” and his works in the play and other possible allusions.

3. *The Passionate Shepherd* analyzes the love story between Rosalind and Orlando and shows numerous similarities and allusions to Marlowe's early romantic poetry, especially *The Passionate Shepherd to His Love*, *Hero and Leander*, and *Ovid's Elegies*.

4. *The Weeping Shepherd* portrays the subterranean stream of biblical lamentation that runs through the play. As a chorister who won a scholarship to Cambridge based on his musical talents, Marlowe was influenced by the Psalms, especially Psalm 137, the iconic lament of the captive Babylonian Jewish musicians and actors to whom he compares himself.

5. *The Reckoning Shepherd* examines stylometric studies and recent computerized linguistic research that suggest Marlowe wrote *As You Like It* and the other Shakespearean works.

6. *The Foolish Shepherd* looks at Sir Oliver Martext, the hedge priest in the play, whose name resonates not only with Marlowe but also with the Marprelate Affair (a satirical underground press attack on Archbishop Whitgift) and points to a reviled churchman in the poet-spy's past.

7. *The Bawdy Shepherd* holds a mirror up to Touchstone, the ribald jester who compares himself to the Roman love poet in exile, Ovid, and his witty commentaries on Will Shakespeare, the London theatrical audience, and the lies and disinformation surrounding Marlowe's "death."

8. *The False Shepherd* explores the theological subtext to the play, especially its mockery of Archbishop Whitgift, church dogmas, and persecution of satirists and poets, symbolized by Jaques, the melancholy sage, and the sobbing deer dying in the forest.

9. *Queen of Shepherds All* outlines subtle references to Queen Elizabeth in the play, especially her symbolic role as the lioness who protects the snake (the archbishop) when Orlando saves his brother under an oak.

10. *The Good Shepherd* reviews Christian interpretations of the play, including radical Protestant and Catholic responses.

11. *The Black-Eyed Shepherdess* examines an exciting, highly controversial new Jewish interpretation of the play and the possible role that Aemilia Bassano Lanyer, the putative Dark Lady of the Sonnets, may have played in its composition as well as its characterizations.

12. *The Transgressive Shepherd* evaluates psychological and social interpretations of the play, including Freudian, Feminist, and Marxist readings.

13. *The Mystic Shepherd* looks at the poet's own views on spirituality whose roots go back to classical mythology, the quest for the Holy Grail, and Renaissance Neoplatonism. In the forest of Arden, Rosalind adopts the name of Ganymede, the young cupbearer to the gods. However, Ganymede may itself be a mask for another little recognized mythic figure that fits Rosalind's character and Marlowe's personal faith perfectly.

14. *The Golden Shepherd* explores the deepest literary and spiritual well springs of the play. Like many other Shakespearean works, *As You Like It* has an alchemical foundation that grounds the characterizations, informs the unfolding narrative, and illuminates the climactic ending.

The Epilogue, *The Ever-Living Shepherd*, offers a new theory on the origin of Touchstone's name. It squares the circle by identifying a sacred geometric figure in *As You Like It's* intricately choreographed masque. The final dance crowns the main romantic plot and suggests that the Dead Shepherd—the slain poet Kit Marlowe—is not really dead after all. Like Virgil's Sibyl, as a Living Shepherd, he is guiding us to Elysium.

*Appendices* amplify several key themes introduced in the commentary. *Afterlives* traces echoes of *ATLI* up to the present time and offers some personal reflections on Marlowe's return from exile and final destiny.

I am grateful to my grandfather, Rev. David Rhys Williams, who introduced me as a child to the authorship question; to Calvin Hoffman, A.D. Wraight, and other pioneer Marlovians; and to present day researchers who are creating a new paradigm, including Michael Rubbo, Peter Farey, John Hunt, Mark Rylance, Isabel Gortazar, John Baker, David More, Carlo DiNota, Daryl Pinksen, Samuel Blumenfeld, Donna Murphy, Maureen Duff, and Ros Barber. I am especially appreciative of Cynthia Morgan, whom the gods made poetical, for reviewing and commenting on a draft of this manuscript. Her web site, [TheMarloweStudies.org](http://TheMarloweStudies.org), is an indispensable resource for everyone interested in the authorship question. Gale Jack, Lucy Williams, Blake Alcott, David and Nicola McCarthy, Anne Teresa de Keersmaecker, Nadine Barner, Katya Thomas, and Susan Lee Cohen also encouraged and supported this effort.

Marlowe's *As You Like It* promises to be one of the most provocative and controversial editions of the play ever published. Although 400 years later, it rights a literary wrong and places Christopher Marlowe, whose mighty line popularized blank verse and gave birth to Elizabethan tragedy, firmly at the center of the golden world of comedy, pastoral, hermeticism, and the dramatization of the art of love where he rightfully belongs.

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