



*Special 400th Anniversary
Wheaten Garland Edition*

HAMLET

By Christopher Marlowe and
William Shakespeare

*Edited by Alex Jack
Vol. 1: The Play*

“As peace should still her wheaten garland wear”
—*Hamlet* 5.2.44



Amber Waves
Becket, Massachusetts
www.shakespeareandmarlowe.com

Hamlet
By Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare
© 2005 by Alex Jack

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. First Edition.

For further information on special sales, mail-order sales, wholesale or retail distribution, translations, foreign rights, and performance rights, contact the publisher:

Amberwaves, P.O. Box 487, Becket, Massachusetts 01223, USA
• SAN 256-4254 • Tel (413) 623-0012 • Fax (413) 623-6042
• www.amberwaves.org • info@amberwaves.org

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616.
Hamlet / by Christopher Marlowe and William
Shakespeare; edited by Alex Jack. — Special 400th
anniversary Wheaton Garland ed.
v. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

CONTENTS: v. 1. The play — v. 2. History and commentary.

LCCN 2005920537

ISBN 0-9708913-5-0 (v. 1)

ISBN 0-9708913-6-9 (v. 2)

1. Hamlet (Legendary character)—Drama. 2. Kings and rulers—Succession—Drama. 3. Murder victims' families—Drama. 4. Fathers—Death—Drama. 5. Revenge—Drama. 6. Denmark—Drama. 7. Princes—Drama. 8. Tragedies. 9. Marlowe, Christopher, 1564-1593. 10. Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616. Hamlet. 11. Marlowe, Christopher, 1564-1593—Authorship—Collaboration. 12. Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616—Authorship—Collaboration.
- I. Marlowe, Christopher, 1564-1593. II. Jack, Alex, 1945- III. Title.

PR2807.A2J33 2005

822.3'3

QBI05-200022

Front Cover: From the putative portrait of Marlowe, © Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, England, reprinted with permission. The college cannot vouch for the identity of the portrait.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*In remembrance of Franklin Myers and Ernest Painter
and in honor of other high school English teachers and mentors
who, like Yorick, have “borne [their charges] on their back
a thousand times,” and inspired them with a love of
Elizabethan poetry, drama, and mirth.*



The Gravediggers' Scene
(Painting by Delacroix with Hamlet to the right
and Horatio to the left, 1839, The Louvre)



PRINCIPAL SOURCES

Q1—*The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke* by William Shakespeare. 1603. Huntington Library facsimile in Maxwell E. Foster, *The Play Behind the Play: Hamlet and Quarto One*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1998. [Quarto 1]

Q2—*The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke* by William Shakespeare. 1604. Facsimile in *Shakespeare's Hamlet: The Second Quarto, 1604*. San Marino, Calif.: Huntington Library, 1964. [Quarto 2]

F—*Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies*. 1623. *The Norton Facsimile*, 2nd ed. Ed. Charlton Hinman. New York: Norton, 1996. [First Folio]

Amleth—*Amleth, Prince of Denmark* in *Historica Danica* by Saxo Grammaticus. ca. 12th century. Pub. in Latin in 1514. Trans. Oliver Elton. *The Sources of Hamlet*. Ed. Israel Gollancz. London: Oxford UP, 1926. [The Viking Hamlet]

Hamblet—*The Hystorie of Hamblet, Prince of Denmarke* in *Histories Tragiques*, vol. 5, by François de Belleforest. 1582. Trans. anonymous, 1608. An adaptation of Saxo's original story and main Shakespearean source. [The French Hamlet]

Der BB—*Der Bestrafte Brudermord oder Prinz Hamlet aus Dannemark*. 1710. A German version of *Hamlet*, possibly incorporating material from Marlowe and/or Kyd's original *Ur-Hamlet*. *Der BB's* prologue, similar to the witches' chorus in *Macbeth*, is included as an appendix on pp. 121–122. [The German Hamlet]

Marlowe's Works—Christopher Marlowe. *The Complete Plays*. Ed. Mark Thornton Burnett. London: Everyman, 1999, and Marlowe, *The Complete Poems*. Trans. Burnett. London: Everyman, 2000. Citations from Marlowe's early works are from these editions. [The Mighty Line]

Shakespeare's Works—*The Riverside Shakespeare*. 2nd ed. Ed. G. Blakemore Evans. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1997. Except for *Hamlet*, citations from the Shakespearean works are from this edition. [The Canon]

Geneva Bible—*The Geneva Bible*. 1560. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1969. Facsimile of the original. Biblical references are from this edition. [The Scriptures]

Whitgift's Life and Works—Sir George Paule. *The Life of John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury*. 1612. *The Writings of John Whitgift*. 3 vols. London: Parker Society, 1857. [The Mighty Opposite]

Elizabeth's Correspondence—G. B. Harrison, ed. *The Letters of Queen Elizabeth I*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1935. [The Queen]

The Informers—Roy Kendall, *Christopher Marlowe and Richard Baines*. Cranbury, NJ: Associated UP, 2003. [Adders Fang'd]

Please see Works Cited in Vol. 2 for other sources and references.



CONTENTS

<i>Principal Sources</i>	4
<i>Chronology</i>	6
<i>Introduction: Sage Requiem</i>	7
The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke by Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare	17
The Prologue to the German <i>Hamlet</i>	121
Three Versions of the “Wicked” Whitgift Passage	123
Shakespeare’s Literary Fingerprint	124
Echoes Between <i>Hamlet</i> and Marlowe	125
The Shakespeare Compact	143
The Early Marlovian and Shakespearean Works	156
<i>Resources</i>	159
<i>Quick Order Form</i>	160



CHRONOLOGY

- 1558 Elizabeth ascends as queen of England and the next year the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity establish the Church of England
- 1564 Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare born
- 1583 John Whitgift consecrated archbishop of Canterbury
- 1587 Mary Queen of Scots executed to stem the Catholic threat
The Queen and Privy Council praise Marlowe's "good service" to his country and direct Cambridge University to award his M.A.
Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* revolutionizes the London stage
- 1587–93 Marlowe composes *Dido Queen of Carthage*, *Doctor Faustus*, *The Jew of Malta*, *Edward II*, and *The Massacre at Paris*
- 1588 The Spanish Armada turns back from invading England
- ‡1590 Whitgift possibly censors and closes down Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*
- 1592 Richard Baines and Marlowe trade charges of treason in Flushing, Marlowe is arrested and released by Lord Treasurer Burghley
- 1593 *February-May*: Religious persecution under Whitgift and Elizabeth reaches a climax, as parliamentary leader James Morice is detained, several Separatist leaders are hung, Thomas Kyd is tortured, and Marlowe is arrested amid charges of atheism
May 30: Marlowe "dies" at Madame Bull's house in Deptford
June 12: *Venus and Adonis*, Shakespeare's first work, appears
- 1594 First documented evidence of Shakespeare in London
- 1598 *Love's Labor's Lost*, the first play in Shakespeare's name appears
- 1599 Marlowe's works undergo a revival and Archbishop Whitgift orders that his translation of *Ovid's Elegies* be burned publicly
- 1603 Queen Elizabeth dies and James I accedes to the throne
First Quarto of *Hamlet* published
- 1604 Archbishop Whitgift dies
Second Quarto of *Hamlet* published with puns on Whitgift
- 1616 William Shakespeare dies
- 1623 Shakespeare's First Folio published



INTRODUCTION: SAGE REQUIEM

A good traveler leaves no track.

—Lao Tzu



Shakespeare, the poet laureate of the human heart, has been called the Lao Tzu of the West. Both poets have astonished and perplexed readers for centuries, and in their boundlessness have become all things to all people. Yet like the ancient sage, Shakespeare the historical person remains virtually invisible. The known facts about their lives can be jotted down on a single piece of paper. But, unlike the Chinese master who left behind only a slender, solitary volume of verse, Shakespeare bequeathed to us four narrative poems, thirty-nine (or more) plays, 154 sonnets—and a ghost that has haunted the castle of English literature ever since.

This year marks the four hundredth anniversary of the publication of *Hamlet*, the most sublime achievement of the Elizabethan stage. Like the seven heavens traditionally upholding the firmament, Prince Hamlet's seven soliloquies light up the world's most famous play, charging it with a current of vital energy. In the manner of Hamlet's ghost, a specter hovers over the literary and theatrical worlds that intimates that Shakespeare is not the sole or principal author of the works that bear his name. Like the Danish crown, the laurels may rightfully belong to another. Those who have doubted that William Shakespeare of Stratford penned the plays and sonnets number among the shining literary lamps of heaven: Emerson, Hawthorne, Henry James, Whitman, Whittier, Twain, Freud, Joyce, Keller, and du Maurier. "The life of Shakespeare is a fine mystery, and I tremble every day lest something should turn up," confessed Charles Dickens.

In the face of new historical information, stylometric studies, and fresh, multicultural approaches to culture, art, and gender, the sole authorship of

some of the works attributed to Shakespeare is coming under reevaluation. In *Shakespeare: Co-Author*, British scholar Brian Vickers presents compelling evidence that Shakespeare collaborated with others in at least five plays. In a recent cover story for the *Times Literary Supplement*, Jonathan Bate, professor of Shakespeare and Renaissance literature at the University of Warwick and general editor of the *Arden Shakespeare*, acknowledges that the plays are “working scripts for the theatre rather than finished products of a single authorial mind.” “‘Romantic Shakespeare,’ with his unblotted manuscripts and solo inspiration, has had a very long run for his money,” Bate continues. In the future, he asserts, Shakespeare’s plays will be regarded as “co-authored” and shaped “by many different hands.” In an essay on “Marlowe’s Texts and Authorship,” Oxford scholar Laurie E. Maguire notes that recent stylometric, or linguistic, studies have presented tantalizing evidence that “Marlowe’s hand appears in several Shakespearean texts,” including the *Henry VI* plays, *Titus Andronicus*, *Edward III* (a play recently accepted as Shakespeare’s), and *Henry V*. Oxford University Press this autumn published *Timon of Athens* with Shakespeare and Middleton as co-authors.

From conceding the influence of other writers on individual plays, some scholars and actors are beginning to question the entire canon. For example, while studying *Hamlet* in order to perform the lead role, Mark Rylance, the artistic director of the Globe theatre in London, found a void between the circumstances in Shakespeare’s life and the depth of the play. “The only rational response at the moment is to say that [the authorship] has to be an open question,” says the actor, who leans toward Christopher Marlowe as the author of *Hamlet* and the other plays.

In *Shakespeare’s Ghost Writers*, Marjorie Garber, professor of English and director of the Center for Literary and Cultural Studies at Harvard University, observes, “Shakespeare’s plays are full of questions of authority, legitimacy, usurpation, authorship, and interpretation . . . Thus again and again, the plays themselves can be seen to dramatize questions raised in the authorship controversy: who wrote this? did someone else have a hand in it? is the apparent author the real author? is the official version to be trusted? or are there suppressed stories, hidden messages, other signatures?”

In the nineteenth century, during an era of theosophy and spirit mediums, some of the literati acclaimed Sir Francis Bacon, the brilliant essayist and polymath, as the author, but the ciphers said to be hidden in the First Folio and messages from the beyond did not win many adherents in a more scientific age. In the twentieth century, the Earl of Oxford won many supporters, including prominent jurists and scholars who helped fashion an impressive case against William of Stratford’s claim. But Oxford’s star also dimmed, given the absence of any major surviving literary works in his name

and the fact that he died before nearly half the plays were written. Christopher “Kit” Marlowe, whose “mighty line” prefigured Shakespeare’s, demonstrated the literary capacity to compose the plays, but he also was known to have gone to his grave too soon. Queen Elizabeth’s coroner signed a death certificate attesting that he died in an altercation in a Deptford tavern over payment of “le recknyng,” or bill. He was allegedly buried in an unmarked grave on June 1, 1593, at the age of twenty-nine—before a single Shakespeare play was published.

New evidence on Marlowe’s espionage connections has caused a seismic shift in literary and historical circles. Where the poet was once viewed as having died in a tavern brawl, scholarly opinion now generally holds that he was the target of a murder conspiracy. As Yale literary critic Harold Bloom notes in *Shakespeare: Inventing the Human*, Marlowe, a member of “the royal Secret Service, the CIA of Elizabethan England,” was probably the victim of “a state-ordered execution, with maximum prejudice.” Several recent historical investigations have come to similar conclusions. From conceding that Marlowe’s death was shrouded in intrigue and politically inspired, it is not too difficult to imagine that his passing was faked.

Recognition of Marlowe’s life, art, and possible authorship of the Shakespearean works is mounting. *Shakespeare in Love*, the popular Hollywood movie, portrayed young Marlowe and Shakespeare as collaborators. In 2003, PBS’s *Frontline* televised Michael Rubbo’s documentary, *Much Ado About Something*, featuring scholars, Shakespearean actors, and other professionals who believe that Marlowe survived and continued to write plays under the *nom de plume* of Shakespeare. Westminster Abbey in London recently made headlines by unveiling a stained glass window dedicated to Marlowe in the Poets’ Corner, the nation’s literary shrine. The plaque bears the poet’s name, his date of birth, and his reputed date of death preceded by a question mark. Across the Thames, the new Globe theatre now hosts conferences on the authorship question, offers displays on other possible authors including Marlowe, and plans to open a research library. “We each have a different idea of who Shakespeare was,” a page in each Globe program guide explains. “Whoever you imagine him to be, you are most welcome here.” In featuring this story, the *New York Times* reported that Mark Rylance, Derek Jacobi, John Gielgud, Orson Welles, and other noted actors who have questioned the Bard’s authorship “approach Shakespeare from the inside, committing the plays to memory, getting under the skins of the characters, finding ways to make their parts work onstage—and perhaps discovering in that intimacy more things than are dreamt of in [academic] philosophy.” Questioning Shakespeare’s sole or principal authorship is no longer the third rail of literary scholarship and dramatic performance.

The Muse's Darling

If Shakespeare is the dazzling sun of this mighty period, Marlowe is certainly the morning star.

—Alfred Lord Tennyson



Christopher Marlowe, “the muses darling,” in the words of his contemporary, dramatist George Peele, was the foremost poet and playwright of the early Elizabethan theater. Born in Canterbury in 1564, Kit (as he was known) excelled in music and languages at the King’s School, studied theology for six and a half years at Cambridge University, and served Her Majesty’s government in a covert capacity. Forsaking the ministry, he turned to the theater. His “mighty line” popularized blank verse, and his plays revolutionized the London stage. They included *Tamburlaine*, *Dr. Faustus*, *The Jew of Malta*, *Edward II*, and *The Massacre at Paris*.

As the Church of England’s persecution heightened against Puritans and nonconformists in the spring of 1593, Marlowe was arrested on May 20 and faced charges of heresy during a witch hunt promulgated by John Whitgift, the archbishop of Canterbury. As demonstrated in the pages that follow, rather than submit to torture like his fellow dramatist Thomas Kyd, Marlowe apparently staged his death ten days later in Deptford, London’s port. As a trusted government agent and molder of public opinion, he was evidently shielded by his superiors on Queen Elizabeth’s Privy Council.

History duly recorded that Marlowe died in a tavern brawl, but as new research has shown, Mistress Eleanor Bull’s house in Deptford, where the knife fight took place contained a customs office associated with the Muscovy Company, a joint trade venture managed by his kinsman, Anthony Marlowe, that had close military, commercial, and familial ties to his patrons at court. Several of the men involved in the sting had served as government agents and carried out similar operations. *Venus and Adonis*, the first work in Shakespeare’s name, appeared on June 12, just two weeks after Marlowe’s “death.” It is not known exactly what happened to Marlowe, but the broad contours of his activities over the next twenty years are apparent.

The first volume of this work presents the text of the play, parallels with Marlowe’s early works, and a brief summary of the historical and literary evidence for Kit’s survival. It can be enjoyed on its own. For those readers who would like further information, the second volume presents a comprehensive look at Marlowe’s life, “death,” and literary resurrection; his creative

relationship with Shakespeare; and an analysis and interpretation of the play. *Hamlet* is the most autobiographical of all of the Marlovian and Shakespearean plays, and there are multiple references and allusions to contemporary events. *Hamlet's* overall theme of an incestuous marriage and usurpation, for example, has affinities with a poisonous union between Church and State. In revealing how Claudius has masterminded his murder and seized the throne, Hamlet's ghost puns on the name of Archbishop Whitgift, Marlowe's nemesis, who has lusted for power and acquired absolute moral and spiritual sovereignty over Queen Elizabeth:

GHOST. Ay that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
 With witchcraft of his **wits**, with traitorous **gifts**,
 O wicked **wit**, and **gifts** that have the power
 So to seduce; won to his shameful lust
 The will of my most seeming-virtuous Queen
 (1.5.47–51)

The First Quarto of *Hamlet* contains a version of this passage, but the word play regarding Whitgift's name did not appear until after the archbishop's death and the publication of the Second Quarto. By this time, Queen Elizabeth—who referred to Whitgift as her “little black husband,” or spiritual spouse—had also passed away. The First Folio's capitalization makes the pun even bolder: “Oh wicked Wit and Gifts.” At a social level, Claudius and Gertrude's “o'erhasty marriage” (2.2.60) in *Hamlet* signifies the unholy matrimony between the Crown and Church of England that characterized the Elizabethan era.

The word play in Act 1 of *Hamlet* pointing to “Wicked” Whitgift's tyrannical reign and diabolical hold over Queen Elizabeth is concealed within the single most harrowing passage in the entire play. Though in plain sight of every high school student and Shakespearean scholar, it has gone unnoticed until now—almost as if Hecate, the queen of Night invoked in *Hamlet's* play-within-the-play, had scattered fairy dust over four centuries of viewers and readers. The witty puns long escaped me as well, revealing themselves under ghostly circumstances, as noted in the Afterword to Volume 2, that can only be termed Shakespearean. In contrast, there is nothing to suggest that William of Stratford wrote these lines. The only personal connection between the archbishop and the provincial actor occurred in 1582 when, as bishop of Worcester, Whitgift waived the banns (public announcements) on the proposed marriage of Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway. (Stratford fell within the diocese of Worcester, and Anne was several months pregnant at the time.) While some may argue that being

unhappily married is worse than being bound to the stake, the only literary revenge Shakespeare appears to have taken is to draft a will leaving his “second best bed” to his wife.

The play’s registration date offers a further clue to the principal identity of the author. As researcher John Baker has observed, *Hamlet* was first entered in the Stationers’ Register in London on July 26, 1602, St. Christopher’s Day, the anniversary of Marlowe’s namesake and the saint who providentially watches over and spirits away people in danger! The first edition of *Hamlet* was published by Nicholas Ling, who registered an early edition of Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta*, and typeset by Valentine Simmes, a dissident printer who had been arrested and tortured by the archbishop’s pursuivants and later printed *Dr. Faustus*. Shakespeare’s *Sonnets* were registered on May 20, 1609, the anniversary of Marlowe’s arrest, and the First Folio of Shakespeare’s works was brought out by his friend, publisher, and literary executor Edward Blount. The seditious friendships and connections, word play, registration dates, and other telltale allusions and mischievous echoes are more than passing strange, leading the open-minded reader to conclude that Marlowe’s hand (with the help of Shakespeare) guided the production of these mighty works of literature.

The Text



The familiar text of *Hamlet* presented in this volume is similar to most ordinary editions available in bookstores and libraries and may be enjoyed irrespective of who wrote it. The relationship between Marlowe and Shakespeare appears to be a long, happy, and fruitful one, as we shall see in the commentary on the play. Though probably not a poet or dramatist like Kit, William of Stratford may well have contributed important ideas, themes, and performative elements, including allusions to his native Warwickshire, characterizations, and stage directions that helped shape the final outcomes, as well as serving as the poet’s confidant and indispensable theatrical persona. Hence, on the title page to this edition, in view of the highly likely creative nature of their partnership, Shakespeare is credited as co-author.

Marlowe’s and Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* is designed to convey the impression, rhythm, and spirit of the original Elizabethan texts. While no authorial manuscripts survive and none of the three early versions is considered definitive, this edition is based on the 1604 Second Quarto (Q2) in the Huntington Library, which includes 270 lines and eighteen major passages not found in the First Folio (F) of 1623. Except for the byline and dedica-

tion (based on Marlowe's earlier work), the graphics and format of the text, including the asides in the margins, follow Q2. As in many modern editions, about eighty-five line changes and several hundred word substitutions have been made from F (based on the Folger Library facsimile). Scholars disagree whether these discrepancies arose from poor handwriting, copyist errors, faulty typesetting, theatrical cuts made by producers or actors, or authorial revisions. Several word changes and one brief passage (3.2.35–45) have also been included from the First Quarto (Q1), an abbreviated 1603 edition in the Huntington, which has fuller stage directions than Q2 and material that echoes Kit's earlier works. A dozen small alterations have also been made from later editions that correct printers' errors, add missing text, or transpose lines or speakers. The prologue from *Der Bestrafte Brudermord* (the German *Hamlet*), which may possibly contain material from the *Ur-Hamlet* (ca. 1589–94) that Marlowe and/or Thomas Kyd composed and that resonates in the play, is included in the background material after the text.

Spelling has been modernized (with the long staff “ſ” replaced with a regular “s,” and “u” and “v” and “i” and “j” altered to current usage), but punctuation, italicization, capitalization, speech prefixes, and versification generally follow the Second Quarto. The modern spelling of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern is used, though it is not found in the originals. (For clarity, “he” is used instead of the obsolete “a.”) For convenience, a *Dramatis Personae* has been added, which has been customary since the eighteenth century. Similarly, acts and scenes have been provided in square brackets, line numbering is added, and the songs in the play are enclosed in quotation marks. Volume 2 includes Annotations to the text, describing unfamiliar words and phrases, biblical and literary allusions, and correspondences with Marlowe's earlier plays; Changes (emendations in the text); a Glossary to key people, places, and events; Works Cited; and a comprehensive Index.

The Key to *Hamlet*



In order that readers may fully appreciate the historical, mythical, and autobiographical dimensions of *Hamlet*, a commentary entitled “Hecate’s Ban: The Comical History of Marlowe, Clown Prince of England” is included in Volume 2. In contrast to *The Tragical History of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke* (the full name of the original play) and most biographies and studies of Marlowe’s life, it has a happy ending. Its sections include the following:

1. “Marlowe’s Ghost” examines Marlowe’s life as a playwright and gov-

ernment agent and sets the background for the authorship of *Hamlet*. It focuses on the contest of ideas and wills between the poet and Archbishop Whitgift; Queen Elizabeth's complicity in religious persecution; and what actually took place at Deptford. The section will show that May 30, 1593, the date of Kit's reported "death" in Deptford, has a strong symbolic connection with Hecate, the queen of Night and goddess of magic, forbidden knowledge, and the Underworld, who appears in the Marlovian and Shakespearean plays, especially *Hamlet*.

2. "Shakespeare's Ghost" describes Will of Stratford's arrival on the London literary scene shortly after Marlowe's exit and examines how he came to serve as the poet's theatrical partner in an arrangement that can be called the Shakespeare Compact. It describes how the early Shakespearean plays focus on issues of Church and State dear to Marlowe; Whitgift's *auto de fè* (public burning) of some of Marlowe's works; and events leading up to the publication of *Hamlet*, especially Elizabeth's declining years, the Essex rebellion, and the accession of James VI of Scotland, as well as the publication of the First Folio of the Shakespearean works.

3. "Hamlet's Ghost" looks at the play's penetrating critique of contemporary Elizabethan society and its allusions to the loyal bond between Marlowe and Shakespeare. This section also suggests historical parallels with some of the major and minor characters in the play, including Claudius and Gertrude, Polonius, Ophelia, Horatio, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, the Gravediggers, Yorick, Osric, and Fortinbras. From the outset, it is important to state that *Hamlet* is not a roman à clef, and there is not a one-to-one correspondence among the characters in the play and actual people and events. But as in any work of literature, the characters are partially woven from autobiographical strands in the authors' minds that consciously or unconsciously shaped and influenced the play's overall themes and development.

For those who have access to only the first volume, limited time, or who wish a concise summary of the historical and literary material in the second volume, a summary of the key points is presented at the end of this volume. However, it is strongly suggested that you read the actual play before reading either this material or "Hecate's Ban" to familiarize yourself with the basic text and to develop your own intuitive interpretation. Then, after reading the commentaries, you may go back and read the play again at least once. It may take multiple readings for you to escape the enormous gravity of received opinions that has pressed down on our minds since high school and for an entirely new paradigm to constellate. Try to approach *Hamlet* fresh with new eyes or what Zen refers to as Beginner's Mind.

Exactly what happened on May 30, 1593—how Marlowe escaped the

murderous net that the archbishop had cast for him, where he went in self-imposed exile, who assisted him—as well as his precise relationship with Shakespeare, what other pen names he may have used, and all the other literary questions that arise, such as the identities of the Fair Young Man, the Rival Poet, and the Dark Lady of the Sonnets, will remain unanswered. Aside from being convinced that Marlowe survived and served as the principal author of the Shakespearean works, I am not wedded to any particular version of events, and the interpretation advanced herein is very much a work in progress. Like an audience attending *Hamlet*, *Dr. Faustus*, *Measure for Measure*, or *Othello*, I find ample room for multiple, often contradictory readings. A change in the pronunciation of a word, a slight inflection in the voice, or the subtle motion of an actor can completely alter our perspective and allow kaleidoscopic new patterns to emerge.

The Topless Towers



I am especially grateful to my grandfather, Rev. David Rhys Williams, as I explain in the Afterword along with other acknowledgments, for introducing me to the authorship controversy as a child. As the author of *Shakespeare, Thy Name Is Marlowe*, he contributed, along with Calvin Hoffman, A. D. (Dorothy) Wraight, and other pioneer Marlovians, to developing some of the key planks in the case for Marlowe's authorship.

Though I have lectured and written about Marlowe and Shakespeare, I am not an Elizabethan scholar or linguist. My limitations are all too apparent to myself, especially as I parse the three original editions and several modern versions of *Hamlet*, sift various phrases, spellings, and punctuation, and gloss obsolete and obscure words. For any grievous errors, outrageous blunders, and careless mistakes, I apologize, taking solace in the thought that I am the latest in a line of printers, compositors, and editors who (like the gravedigger) have mangled *Hamlet's* diction and meter. In the commentaries, I have tried to avoid misstatements of historical fact and reading too much into the play. Whatever insight and perspective on the Elizabethan era that appear in this edition are due largely to the great Marlovian and Shakespearean editors, scholars, and critics, past and present.

This edition of *Hamlet* is for everyone who has been touched by the play and would like to know more about the creative imagination and partnership that lies behind it. It is also for everyone to whom the Marlovian and Shakespearean works are still an “undiscovered country.” To paraphrase Jacques in *As You Like It*, it is for every high school student with a backpack

and shining face who expects to plod through *Hamlet* or *Romeo and Juliet* at a snail's pace only to discover that these works are breathtakingly fresh and alive and speak to his or her contemporary life. It is for every lover, wreathed in sighs, who has ever given a Shakespearean sonnet to his or her beloved. It is for every politician and statesman who consults the Shakespearean histories for insight on strategy and matters of state. It is for every mother, father, teacher, artist, farmer, worker, or professional who has reached the peak of his or her calling, mastered the practicalities of life, and found a measure of contentment. It is for every older person who has weathered all the comic and the tragic that life has to offer and seeks solace in the winter of his or her days. It is even for the baby in the womb whose heartbeat naturally aligns with the iambic cadences and rhythms of the Shakespearean works. It is for those of any age or station who have found heaven ordinant in the ephemerality of daily life and are willing to set aside all preconceptions and marvel anew.

In presenting a deeper, more intimate portrait of Marlowe, Shakespeare, and their supporting cast, I hope that this edition of *Hamlet* will help exorcise, or set free, the troubled spirits involved in the authorship controversy that, to borrow an image from *Tamburlaine*, has haunted the topless towers and high literary turrets of the English-speaking world for several centuries. On the global stage, the absolutism and intolerance of the Tudors and Stuarts led the Pilgrims and early Puritans to leave England for America to create institutions embodying freedom of conscience and elective office, as anticipated in *Hamlet* and the other plays. In a contemporary era of state terror and religious fanaticism, the humanity and spirit of toleration that shine through the Marlovian and Shakespearean works—from *Dido Queen of Carthage* and *Dr. Faustus* through *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*—are needed on the global stage more urgently than ever.

Beside helping to resolve a four-hundred-year-old mystery, it is my fondest wish that this book, including the play that I regard as Marlowe's and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Quarto 1, will inspire further research into the many unresolved areas explored in these pages. I sincerely hope that this edition can serve as a bridge between Stratfordians and anti-Stratfordians. New discoveries and interpretations, based on mutual respect and cooperation, could then lead to more authoritative editions in the future and eventually to a new First Folio of the complete works of Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare, sweetly singing the muse's song.

Alex Jack
Becket, Massachusetts
31 October 2004