



Appendix A

LE RECKNYNGE

[I]t strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room.

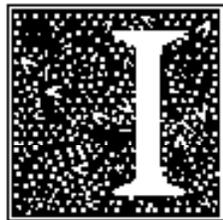
—*As You Like It*

(3.3.14–15)

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 bar'd before his death.

—*Measure for Measure*

(4.2.174–177)



In his inflammatory tracts, Martin Marprelate clashed with Archbishop Whitgift and the other bishops over an allegorical representation that shares affinities with the Deptford tableau. In a sermon preached at Canterbury, the churchmen likened the pamphleteer to Calumniator, a false accuser who carried the flaming firebrand of a fury in one hand and dragged by the hair of his head a young man named Innocency in the other. He was attended by Cankered Malice and Dame Repentance. On the way to meet Lady Truth, he comes upon a magic table on which is engraved: “Who so ever slaundereth honest men, shall come to iust punishment.”¹ In his reply, Martin turned the tables on the bishops, claiming that he was young Innocency hauled to the bar by the churchmen before “Midas of Cant[erbury],” the judge (i.e., Whitgift).²

As a possible play-within-the-play, the official coroner's report on Christopher Marlowe's last day on earth also reads like one of the old morality scripts. His death was witnessed by three gentlemen who testified under oath (Sirs See, Hear, and Speak No Evil), his body was identified by a pious

widow (Dame Virtue) and sixteen jurymen as honest as the day is long (Truthful Tom, Just Dick, Upright Harry, and their fellow townsmen), and the inquest was presided over by the Crown coroner (Lord Probity) himself. To the archbishop and his cronies, the filthy playmaker would have come to his predestined end. God turned the hand by which he wrote such blasphemous and heretical sentiments upon himself. The scholar Baldock's injunction, "stab, as occasion serves" (*Edward II* 2.1.43), could be his epitaph.

The Deptford sting reminds us of scenes in the then newly minted *Sir Thomas More*, or even *Hamlet*, which lay in the future. Did Marlowe, the playwright par excellence, have a hand in the Deptford script? Was he even present? Or did he slip away on the riverfront with a copy of Ovid, a box of goosequills, and a pouch of tobacco?

The reportedly sparse furnishings of the room—a bed, a bench, and a table—sound like props. The only portable item is the 12-penny dagger, a common enough fashion accessory. The standard explanation for listing the dagger's price is that it counts as surety and goods chattel of the accused, Ingram, which would revert to the Crown in the event he is convicted. Like most Elizabethan dramatists, Kit was a minimalist, and without a curtain, everything on the Elizabethan stage was revealed—or hidden in plain sight. As his stage directions show, Marlowe kept props few and simple. Could his death have been staged theatrically as well as faked politically? This question suggests itself as the dramatic elements in the story come to the fore.

When I first began to consider this question, I was struck by a comic scene in *Dr. Faustus* (the 1616 edition) in which four men—Robin and Dick, the two clowns; the horse-courser; and a carter go to an inn. They are entertained by the Hostess and proceed to haggle over the reckoning:

ROBIN. I am eighteenpence on the score. But say nothing. See if she have forgotten me.

HOSTESS. Who's this that stands so solemnly by himself? What, my old guest?

ROBIN. O Hostess, how do you? I hope my score stands still.

HOSTESS. Ay, there's no doubt of that, for methinks you make no haste to wipe it out.

(4.5.8–15)

The foursome proceeds to talk about Faustus and discover that he has deceived two of them. The conjuror tricked the carter by eating all the hay in his cart. He fooled the horse-courser by forbidding him to ride into a river whereupon his horse evaporated. When he subsequently went to accost the magus and took him by the leg, it pulled right off. Similarly, Marlowe—like Faustus—vanished into thin air in Mrs. Bull's inn. As with Robin in the above passage, his score, or reckoning, still stands, because he has escaped

final payment. The scene does not appear in the 1604 edition (A-text) of *Faustus*, which was probably composed prior to the events in Deptford. According to scholars, the revised 1616 edition (B-text) in which this scene appears was completed later by other hands, but if Marlowe survived, he could have added this scene himself and be pulling our collective leg. The reference to “score,” or twenty, may further pun on May 20, the day of Marlowe’s arrest, but is more likely coincidental.

In a subsequent scene in the 1616 edition, after some bawdy jokes (reminiscent of *Hamlet*), the quartet repairs again to the tavern with a duke and duchess and discusses the art of cozening (dissimulation). The scene ends with Faustus charming everyone dumb, including the hostess—the muse?—who asks who’s going to pay for the bill before she too is rendered speechless. In the end of the play, of course, Faustus is dragged away to hell by three devils. (There are also faint parallels between the Deptford setting and the ending to Marlowe’s *Edward II*, which concludes with a murder of the king in a small room by three men with only a bed and table as furnishings.) Could Kit be turning the tables once again on the plodding theologians? Luring an impressionable young man to a tavern, where he was tempted by the Vice (a devil in disguise) was a staple of the old morality plays.

Another indication that Marlowe’s murder was possibly a Dumb Show is the name of the assailant, Ingram Frizer. “Ingram” (variant “yngram”) is an old English word for ignorant. In the first of the Marprelate tracts, *The Epistle*, Martin refers to Dean Sarum, one of his opponents, as an “ingram man.” In a direct reference to the archbishop in *The Epitome*, he goes on to use the word as a synonym for ignorance, “For, may I not say that John of Canterbury is a petty pope, seeing he is so? You must then bear with my ingramness.”³ Curiously, in the coroner’s inquest on Marlowe’s death, Ingram is referred to by his first name a half dozen times in the document. Allegorizing the name of his assailant in the document, we read:

[A]fter dinner the aforesaid **Ignorance** and the said Christopher Morley were in speech and publicly exchanged diverse malicious words because they could not concur nor agree on the payment of the sum of pence, that is to say, *le recknynge*, there . . . thus it befell that the aforesaid Christopher Morley suddenly and of malice aforethought towards the aforesaid **Ignorance** then and there maliciously unsheathed the dagger of the aforesaid **Ignorance** which was visible at his back and with the same aforesaid dagger gave the aforesaid **Ignorance** two wounds on his head of the length of two inches and of the depth of a quarter of an inch; whereupon the aforesaid **Ignorance**, in fear of being slain and sitting on the aforesaid bench between the 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 **Ignorance** could

not withdraw further from the aforesaid Christopher Morley . . . And thus the aforesaid jurors say upon their oath that the aforesaid **Ignorance** killed the aforesaid Christopher Morley the aforesaid thirtieth day of May . . .⁴

Marlowe is referred to once in the document by his first name, and Frizer's last name appears several times. But it is curious that in the most salient parts Kit's adversary reads like an allegorical figure. Whether the punster had a hand in the coroner's report and is up to his old verbal and dramatic tricks, the symbolic meaning may be more than coincidental. Ignorance had been the chief enemy of the reformist ministers, and their attacks on the bishops are peppered with references to the ignorant and unlearned ministry. In a notable exchange with John Whitgift that possibly sheds further light on the Deptford affair, Giles Wigginton, who was interrogated by the archbishop in connection with the Marprelate tracts, refused to incriminate himself. "I account it as unnaturall a thing for me to answer against myself as to thrust a knife into my thigh. The matter I understand is dangerous and doubtfull, and therefore I will neither accuse my selfe nor others about it. The heathen Judge said to the Apostle in the Acts, 'I will hear thee when thine accusers come.'"⁵ Christopher Morley fought valiantly against Ignorance and lost his good name, if not his actual life, in the witch hunt for atheists in spring 1593. In *The Jew of Malta*, he had written, "I count religion but a childish toy, / And hold there is no sin but ignorance" (Prologue 14–15). The Deptford morality play makes the same point. When Kit's false accusers came, he symbolically thrust a knife into his eye rather than incriminate himself, submit to the rack, or falsely implicate others.

Echoes of Gethsemane

Where is the lodging where I shal eat the Passouer with my disciples?
And he will shewe you an vpper chamber which is large, trimmed and
prepared; there make it readie for vs. . . . And as they sate at table and
did eat, Iesus said, Verily I say vnto you, that one of you shal betray me
—Gospel of Mark 14.14–15, 18



Another reason to view the Deptford affair as a construct of Marlowe's is that the events of May 30, 1593 also echo the Last Supper. Indeed, as far as Archbishop Whitgift—a jowly gourmand—was concerned, it was Marlowe's last meal, the atheist's final banquet before his descent into the realm of quenchless hunger and thirst. From the poet's view, of course, just the oppo-

site would hold true. He is Christ casting his pearls before swine, Whitgift performs the roles of Pilate and Caiaphas, the Roman procurator and the Temple High Priest, and the one who betrayed him—Drury, Baines, Munday, or Ingram—is Judas. (Marprelate even referred to Munday as Judas because of his past role in informing on religious dissenters.) Also Ingram, presumably acting as treasurer for the Deptford quartet (hence the quarrel over the bill), played the part—pardon the pun—to the hilt!

The sparse furniture in Mistress Bull's room mirrors not only the upper story setting of the New Testament meal (which possibly included a bed for diners to recline in after eating in the Roman manner), but also the Anglican rites in which a table served as the communion altar. The famous bench in which Marlowe's three companions were wedged in like the proverbial monkeys who see, hear, and do no evil echoes the pews, settles, and benches set out for the preacher and congregation.

In meeting with three associates and strolling in the garden after dinner, Marlowe's behavior mimics that of Jesus with his closest disciples at Gethsemane (though Marlowe probably shared a pipe with his comrades in the sacramental manner alluded to in the Baines Note). Mistress Bull, at whose house they met, performs the role of Martha. Penry, the Separatist minister convicted of treason who died alongside Marlowe (24 hours earlier), is the fellow thief on the cross. Or, according to another gloss, the saintly preacher plays the real crucified prophet to Kit's Barabas, the one who gets away. To the extent that he converts to Marlowe's cause (despite his rivalry with the Cecils), Essex in his martial role is the Roman centurion, and Elizabeth is cast, appropriately, in the role of the stoic Virgin, pining for the English stage's leading son. The unmarked grave in St. Nicholas's churchyard mirrors the empty tomb in Golgotha, and Marlowe's resurrection as "Shakespeare" anticipates the Second Coming.

Missing from this version of the Last Supper is the actual food, though we can easily imagine loaves and fishes, along with unseasonal grapes à la Faustus, materializing in multiple courses from the Deptford wharf.

The dagger as the murder instrument of choice also calls to mind the gospels, as it was a knife that the disciple Peter used to slice off the soldier's ear when the arrest party came to the garden to apprehend Jesus. Kit seems to have had a dagger on his mind even while writing *The Massacre at Paris* in January (several months earlier) and featured a dozen or more fatal stab-bings. A knife also plays a central role in *Faustus*. The conjurer stabs his arm to draw blood and sign the fateful contract with Mephistopheles, thus selling his soul to the devil. As for banquets, in *Faustus* Marlowe puns on the dual meanings of the phrase "the place of execution" (1.2.25), by using it for both eating and putting to death. In *The Jew of Malta*, Barabas fakes his

own death and prepares a final banquet at which to slay his opponents only to be foiled in the final scene when a trapdoor opens and he falls into the boiling cauldron. Thus we see that many of Kit's plays incorporate feasts into their plots. Considering that depictions of the Lord's Supper were banned from the Elizabethan stage, is it possible that the Deptford performance was a theatrically constructed devil's banquet prepared for the archbishop to divert his attention and "to entertain his soul" (*Tamburlaine II* 3.5.29). Certainly, the Three Magi (Harriot, Warner, and Hues) and other wise men under suspicion of atheism at the School of Night would have appreciated the symbolism and irony of the performance.

The resemblances continue to mount, as the meal in Deptford shares an affinity with another notorious repast. In an eerie dress rehearsal of the cast assembled in Deptford, Robert Poley and probably Nicholas Skeres were present as double agents for the Crown at a dinner party on August 2, 1586 at which the trap was sprung against the unsuspecting August Babington and other Catholic conspirators. The dramatic action unfolded at "Poley's Garden," lodgings secretly provided for by the government (i.e., the Walsinghams and the Cecils), and Thomas Walsingham was observed in the background, probably acting as the control for the operation. As a result of this last meal, Mary Queen of Scots, combining the roles of Salome and John the Baptist, eventually lost her head.

Another figure who may have played a role in both dramas in London and Deptford is Anthony Munday, the double agent, co-author of *Sir Thomas More*, and possible Judas in the Deptford affair. An associate of Munday's provided the lodgings to Poley that were used for the meeting in the Babington affair, and Munday was chums with Henry Maunder, the queen's messenger, who arrested Marlowe in Scadbury. The modus operandi of the staging, the actors, and the managers behind the scenes in 1586 and 1593 are virtually the same, hinting at secret service involvement in both cases. They are also mirrored or recreated in a play-within-the-play in *Sir Thomas More*, *Dr. Faustus*, and later *Hamlet*.

Does the Deptford affair mimic or parody the Bible? Though scriptural representations on and off the stage were taboo, they were not unknown. One of the best known examples involved Queen Elizabeth herself. On a progress to visit her subjects early in her reign, an incident known as the Norwich Burning erupted when her host, Richard Rookwood, was unmasked as a Catholic. Her officials promptly took him into custody, complaining "how he durst presume to attempt to her reall presence, he unfytt to accompany any Chrystyan person."⁶ As the local villagers danced for their visiting ruler, the queen's men found an icon of the Virgin Mary hidden in a loft. Interrupting the nightly revels, the triumphant searchers held the

image aloft over the dancers' head, turned the mob against the unfortunate Rookwood, and Elizabeth herself led the throng in casting Mary's image into a hastily made bonfire. In her deconstruction of this event in *Puzzling Shakespeare*, critic Leah S. Marcus perceptively notes that by affirming her "real presence" as sovereign over affairs spiritual and temporal, Elizabeth appropriated to herself the divine role that Jesus played at the Last Supper. When her courtiers raised the icon over the assemblage's head at the dance, Marcus observes, they unintentionally mimicked the worship of the Golden Calf or Dagon in the Old Testament.⁷ As for the host (no pun intended), poor Rookwood died in prison, and all of his estate was forfeit. In this provincial drama, Marcus sees the theatrical hand of Richard Topcliffe, the Crown's most fanatical bigot and torturer, who produced an "ingenious public dramatization of the Catholic menace."⁸ In his stealthy, unctuous persona as master of the revels, we may also see Topcliffe as a prototype for Mephistopheles in Kit's *Dr. Faustus*.

Le Recknynge

'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes
Between the pass and fell incensèd points
Of mighty opposites.

—*Hamlet*

(5.2.64–66)



Besides the uncanny parallels between the original Lord's Supper and the two Elizabethan espionage banquets mentioned above, the key to understanding the Deptford affair may lie in plain sight—in the coroner's report—at least until it was buried, classified, or lost as the result of a clerical error for three hundred years. The original Latin document, contains one unusual construction—"le recknynge"—by which the whole episode is known. "Le recknynge" is not a French word, as we might presume. The French word for bill or check is "l'addition." "Recknynge" is an old English word, and its variants are known from Chaucer's time in the early 1300s. In *The Canterbury Tales*, we read: "After soper . . . Whan that we hadde maad our rekenynges." Why is the word singled out in the official document with a French definite article? Is it simply a vestige of ancient Norman usage that innocently crept into the report? The more I have thought about it, the more puzzling this has seemed. My mind wandered to the phrase "the sum

of pence,” which preceded and clarified “le recknynge.” A reckoning is a sum of pence, ostensibly the object of the quarrel. What if “the reckoning,” dressed up as a French noun, pointed to another English word that was not so fashionably attired? In short, what if we rendered “pence” into French—which gives us *pensée* or “thought”? A sum of pence equals a body of thoughts or doctrines. Voila! Wasn’t the entire conflict between Whitgift and Marlowe all about the clash of doctrines: freedom versus authority, liberty versus conformity, and other great pairs of “mighty opposites”?

Of course, it is rather a stretch to imagine that even such a master word-smith and punster as Marlowe could have doctored Danby’s official report, especially considering that Kit had more pressing matters to attend to, such as fleeing the scene before Topcliffe stretched him on the rack and, as in Kyd’s case, crippled his writing hand, or the archbishop had him drawn and quartered. Also, the original Latin reads *denariorum*, not “pence,” he would have to be thinking ahead to the time when the Latin original was translated into the vernacular for the benefit of the English reading public, who had a passing acquaintance of French. But on second thought, *denariorum* was probably the most commonly known Latin word in the realm, since its symbol—d—was universally used to indicate pence, hence L.S.D., the Latin abbreviations for pounds (*libria*), shillings (*solidari*), and pence (*denarium*). Mentioning the cost of the dagger in the coroner’s report—12d or pence—reinforces this allusion, but overall this reading is more suitable for an Agatha Christie novel or a Faustean parlor trick than a Renaissance espionage caper. Still, it’s an intriguing coincidence and one, as we saw earlier, that gave rise to a cluster of “reckonings” that enjoyed an immediate afterlife in Elizabethan literary circles, including Shakespeare’s plays.

The unusual term in the document also points to the ultimate meaning of the term “reckoning.” In most discussions of Marlowe’s death, “reckoning” is taken simply to mean “bill” or “sum,” as the plain text of the coroner’s report suggests. In fact, as a computation of the amount due, especially at an inn or a tavern, the term enjoyed a wide provenance, as indicated by the Chaucer quote above and a typical line from Fieldings’s later novel *Tom Jones*, “Having now pretty well satisfied their Thirst, nothing remained but to pay the Reckoning.”⁹ However, the term has several other meanings. A secondary meaning of the term refers to “dead reckoning,” a term for navigating without a map—another good pun for the whole Deptford affair. Still a third definition refers to a term of pregnancy, akin to Marlowe’s famous line “Infinite riches in a little room” in *The Jew of Malta* (1.1.36–37) alluding to Christ’s birth. A fourth meaning is erotic, and along with many bawdy jokes, the word may have been used later in this way in one of the Shakespearean plays. A fifth meaning of “reckoning” is theological, referring

to God's final judgment. "God will acsi rekeninge ate daye of dome," we read in one theological text dating to 1340.¹⁰ *Henry V* uses the term in this sense, "But if the cause be not good, the King himself hath a heavy reckoning to make" (4.1.134–135). Whitgift, Hooker, and other divines would have recognized the term primarily as a moral and spiritual accounting or last judgment. And was it not precisely in this context that Marlowe, playing at tables with Ingram, the designated treasurer and Judas of the fable, turned the tables on the clerics?

The Martin Marprelate affair offers yet another curious prologue to this word play. In the last of his seven tracts, *The Protestation*, published in September, 1589, Martin envisions martyrdom for the first time. With the smashing of the pilgrim press, the arrest and torture of several printers, and John Penry in flight to Scotland, Archbishop Whitgift's net closed on the merry pamphleteer. As Ritchie D. Kendall explains in *The Drama of Dissent: The Radical Poetics of Nonconformity, 1380–1590*, "This valedictory satire is imbued with an air of grim determination predicated upon the author's growing spiritual resolution in the face of a new, irresistible wave of persecution. It is a work written in blood, composed in the shadow of the Tower."¹¹ Abandoning his irrepressible wit and levity, Martin steels himself for the rack and the flames: "I have long ago set up my rest; making that account of it, as in standing against the enemies of God, and for the liberty of His Church, it is no value in my sight. My life in this cause shall be a gain to the Church, and no long to myself. I know right well; and **this is all the reckoning** which, by the assistance of the Lord, I will make as long as I live, of all the torments they have devised for me" (emphasis mine).¹²

But then, retreating from the flames, Martin dares the archbishop's pursuivants to catch him. As a bachelor who has never been married or had a child, he observes that he is harder to catch than married men (such as Penry). And then, reverting to his usual merry humor, he talks about getting married and settling down. He even mentions inviting some "good and honest lord bishops" to his wedding to dance with him, but then in a Hamlet-like aside, quips that "it is not possible, naturally, that there should be any good and honest lord bishop."¹³

In a final challenge to Archbishop Whitgift, Martin offers to appear publicly, debate with the bishops and prelates, and make his identity known. "Martin is an inveterate actor (as are all men who see life as a drama of true identity revealed)," Kendall observes. ". . . But even those critics who acknowledge the high seriousness that underlies its jests, fail to perceive its passionate rendering of the soul's search for Christian identity amid the noise and confusion of a fallen world. It is this pageant of the soul's awakening that transmutes silver to gold, that turns a glorious satire into a deeply

moving exercise in spiritual self-discovery.”¹⁴

After his final challenge went unanswered by the Church, Martin’s pen fell silent. He was never apprehended, and his identity was never unmasked. But his spirit endured, and four years later, the witty writer Kit Marlowe found himself about to be consigned to the torture chamber and the quenchless flames. Following his reckoning in a little room in Deptford, yet a third phoenix rose from the ashes under the name of Shakespeare.

An Earlier Authorship Controversy

Howbeit let no rekening be made with them of the money, that is deli-
vered into their hand; for they deale faithfully.

—2 Kings 22.7



he events in Deptford may be constructed as a parody of the Last Supper, in which the poet-shepherd is betrayed, slain, and rises again. In this play-within-the-play, the final reckoning is passed not on Marlowe but on the archbishop of Canterbury and other inquisitors before and since who have tried to stifle the human mind and spirit. A coda, clue, or exclamation point to this morality play is found in the Geneva Bible’s use of the term “reckoning.” In 2 Kings, the word appears in connection with the story of Josiah. It is worth taking a look at this reference to see another possible echo of Elizabethan events in the coroner’s report.

Josiah, the King of Judah, was elevated to the throne by the “people of the land” at age eight after his father was murdered. In the eighteenth year of his reign, “the book of the law” was discovered in the Temple in Jerusalem during reconstruction. (This event calls to mind the fortuitous discovery of Marlowe’s portrait in Cambridge during reconstruction in 1953.) Since God provided the righteous king with faithful servants who went about their work “zealously” (a Puritan code word used in the Geneva Bible commentary), there was no need for a “reckoning” of their wages, as the above quotation from 2 Kings indicates. The mysterious book turned out to be a copy of the original covenant with the Jews that Moses had left them but which, according to the Geneva gloss, “ether by the negligence of the Priests had bene lost, or els by the wickednes of idolatrous kings had bene abolished.”¹⁵ (Richard Baines, who claimed that Marlowe characterized Moses as a juggler, would appreciate this irony!) Forsaking the high priest and even male prophets such as Jeremiah, the king turned to Huldah,

a prophetess, for advice. She told Josiah that because “thine heart did melt” and thou hast humbled thy self,” the Lord God of Israel would spare him and “gather thee to thy fathers, and thy shall be put in thy grave in peace,” whereas the idolatrous priests would become a desolation and a curse and feel the full force of the Lord’s unquenchable wrath.¹⁶ Josiah eventually initiated reforms that cleansed the temple of longstanding abuses. The code he implemented became the core of the book of Deuteronomy, and Josiah went down in history as the perfect embodiment of the just and righteous monarch who judged the cause of the poor and needy.

All in all, this biblical tale featuring a manuscript of unknown authorship, a rebuke by a righteous monarch to an archbishop, and reliance on a wise female (a Hebrew Hecate) has a Marlovian and Shakespearean resonance. For the record, after thirty-one years of rule, Josiah died honorably on the field of battle against Pharaoh at Megiddo (the original Armageddon) and was buried “in his own sepulchre.” Like a reflection in Dr. Dee’s magic glass, could history be repeating itself here, with Christopher Marlowe’s good name slain in the literary field of battle against a modern pharaoh and, thirty years later, his work appearing in the First Folio?

In Martin Marprelate’s fourth pamphlet, *Hay Any Work for Cooper?*, distributed surreptitiously in 1589, there is an uncanny passage (addressed to Archbishop Whitgift) that almost reads like prophecy in light of the theory that John Penry’s body was substituted for Marlowe’s:

Assure yourselves, I will prove Marprelate ere I have done with you. I am alone. No man under heaven is privy, or has been privy unto my writings against you. I used the advice of none therein. You have and do suspect divers, as master Paggett, master Wiggington, master Udall, and master Penry, etc., to make Martin. If they cannot clear themselves their silliness is pitiful, and they are worthy to bear Martin’s punishment. Well, once again, answer my reasons, both of your Antichristian places in my first epistle unto you, and these now used against you. Otherwise the wisdom of the magistrate must needs smell what you are. **And call you to a reckoning for deceiving them so long**, making them to suffer the church of Christ under their government to be maimed and deformed (emphasis added).¹⁷

Penry certainly bore Martin’s punishment, when he was hanged by Whitgift, but whether Marlowe had a hand in the Marprelate affair remains an open question. What are we to make of this remarkable series of “reckonings,” spanning the ancient Jewish scriptures to the Elizabethan court, from 600 B.C.E. to nearly 1600 A.D.? Is it chance, synchronicity, a Rosicrucian conspiracy? Call it providence, destiny, “*Che serà, serà*” (*Dr. Faustus* 1.1.49), or free will, there’s a pattern that spirals through our lives, rough hew or fine tune it how we will. In the case of Marlowe, “the muses dar-

ling,” he seems to be channeling night and day, so I don’t feel the need to attribute any of these remarkable coincidences to his own design. With the imminent delivery of the Baines Note to the queen, I seriously doubt he had the time to consciously script the Deptford performance or to stick around afterwards to insert the reference to “le recknyng” in the coroner’s report and salt it with other symbols and allusions. More likely it just happened because of the energy field in which he lived, moved, and breathed.¹⁸

The “reckoning” enjoyed an active literary afterlife in the Shakespearean plays (appearing over fifty times) and in other Elizabethan arts and letters. Curiously, the word does not appear in the plays Marlowe wrote under his own name. Like the proverbial silence of the Sherlockian dog in the night, absence of this distinctive term calls attention to an abrupt change in the poet’s working vocabulary after 1593. Like Hecate’s ban (see Appendix B), it is a reckoning that must be taken into account in any consideration of the Shakespeare authorship controversy.