

Shakespearean Authorship Trust



Christopher Marlowe

Dates:

1564 – 1593 (?)

Background:

Born in Canterbury, scholarships to King's School Canterbury and Cambridge.

Marlowe and Shakespeare:

There are seven plays and various poems and translations that are ascribed to Marlowe's name. Through the plays he gave birth to Elizabethan blank verse drama. There are many parallels in words, phrases and imagery between his work and that of Shakespeare, which, at the very least, indicate that Shakespeare learned his trade from him. Computers seem unable to differentiate between his work and that of Shakespeare.

Accidental Death, Murder or Exile?

Marlowe was a spy, and was used to living dangerously. He was arrested on serious charges including blasphemy and atheism. He was murdered in an eating house at Deptford, close to the Thames and the Naval Dockyard. Frizer, who is said to have killed him, claimed it was an accident and that he was acting in self-defence. He was pardoned and immediately welcomed back into the favour of Walsingham, his patron, who was also Marlowe's. The statements of the three companions, Poley, Skeres, and Frizer, all rascals and secret service men, with whom Marlowe spent the day, would not be accepted by a modern jury. Hence the suspicion that they and Marlowe faked his death to avoid his suffering torture and execution. He may have fled for exile to Italy, and continued to write (under the name of his friend and one-time collaborator) with all the intimate knowledge of Italy that the Shakespeare plays demonstrate. There were many clandestine references to Marlowe after 1593, seeming to imply that he was not dead, and the events at Deptford seem to be hinted at in certain of Shakespeare's Sonnets and in *As You Like It*.

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