

EARLY MODERN LITERARY STUDIES



Marlowe's Amplification of Musaeus in *Hero and Leander*

Bruce Brandt

South Dakota State University

bruce.brandt@sdstate.edu

Musaeus's *Hero and Leander*, as Gordon Braden has shown, is 'indisputably the principal and direct source' of Marlowe's poem, and as T. W. Baldwin has demonstrated, Marlowe read Musaeus in Greek, very likely using the edition that he had studied in grammar school.¹ Braden concludes that the only ancillary sources of any importance are Ovidian: 'the Heroides, apparently in Tuberville's translation, and the *Amores*, in Marlowe's own translation'.² Suggestions have been made concerning Marlowe's possible debts to other sixteenth-century adaptations of *Hero and Leander*, and surely Marlowe must have been aware of at least some of these works. However, Braden's examination of these other adaptations reveals no compelling parallels that cannot 'be explained without trouble in terms of general Renaissance narrative practice'.³

This article explores the way in which Marlowe's amplification of details of plot and language from the *Hero and Leander* of Musaeus transforms his own *Hero and Leander* into a poem which is funnier, psychologically richer, and attuned to a much different vision

¹ Gordon Braden, *The Classics and English Poetry: Three Case Studies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), p. 125; and T. W. Baldwin, 'Marlowe's Musaeus', *Journal of Germanic and English Philology*, 54 (1955), 478–85.

² Braden, p. 125.

³ Braden, p. 125. Warren Boutcher affirms the value of Braden's discussion, but protests that 'the search for demonstrable textual sources' can too quickly eliminate consideration of the interrelation of the European vernacular versions and their meaning for sixteenth-century readers: "'Who taught thee Rhetoricke to deceive a maid?": Christopher Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, Juan Boscán's *Leandro*, and Renaissance Vernacular Humanism', *Comparative Literature*, 52 (2000), 11–52 (pp. 19–20).

of the human condition than was its source.⁴ It will be seen that these amplifications of Musaeus cluster particularly around the role played by the narrator, the possibility of choice in love, the appearance and beauty of Hero and Leander, their sexual immaturity and Hero's seduction, and the consummation of their affair. The study concludes with the suggestion that looking closely at Marlowe's use of this rhetorical strategy offers a resolution of the long-standing debate over whether or not *Hero and Leander* is a fragment or a finished poem

Marlowe points directly to his primary source early in *Hero and Leander*, when he reminds the reader that Leander's tragedy had been sung by the divine Musaeus (52). Such a direct reference not only identifies his source, but it invites comparison. Marlowe, in effect, asks the reader to weigh his achievement vis-à-vis his predecessor's achievement, and, as Roma Gill observes, from the moment when Marlowe first turns to the description of Hero, he 'almost seems to enter into competition with the Greek writer'.⁵ In William P. Weaver's analysis, the very placement of the reference to Musaeus between two of Marlowe's long embellishments, is designed 'to draw attention to the greater abundance of Marlowe's imitation — its *copia*, or fullness of discourse'.⁶ Robert Logan similarly concludes that Marlowe intends the comparison to reveal 'how much richer Marlowe's poem is, not only in its greater thematic import but in its more sophisticated artistry'.⁷ With 818 lines, Marlowe's poem is significantly longer than the 343 lines of Musaeus's *Hero and Leander*. Moreover, Marlowe's epyllion actually builds upon only 268 of Musaeus's lines, ignoring the opening 15-line invocation of the muse and making little use of the 70 lines that follow the lovers' first night together. The greater length of Marlowe's poem derives in part from his own creative mythopoesis: he incorporates into the narrative an etiological myth purporting to explain academic poverty as well as the story of the naive Leander's encounter with the enamored Neptune. However, an important part of the greater length of Marlowe's poem reflects his use of amplification. Indeed, as Rosamund Tuve concludes in her discussion of Marlowe's imagery, 'most of his description turns out to be

⁴ Citations of Marlowe are from Roma Gill's old-spelling edition, *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe*, 5 vols, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), I. Musaeus is cited in English from the Loeb edition (Greek Authors 421): Callimachus, *Aetia, Iambi, Lyric Poems, Hecale, Minor Epic and Elegiac Poems, and Other Fragments*, ed. and trans. by C. A. Trypanis, and Musaeus, *Hero and Leander*, ed. by Thomas Gelzer, trans. by Cedric Whitman (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978).

⁵ Gill, I, p. 179.

⁶ William P. Weaver, 'Marlowe's Fable: *Hero and Leander* and the Rudiments of Eloquence', *Studies in Philology*, 105 (2008), 388–408 (p. 389).

⁷ Robert A. Logan, 'Perspective in Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*: Engaging our Detachment', in 'A Poet and a filthy Play-maker': *New Essays on Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by Kenneth Friedenreich, Roma Gill, and Constance B. Kuriyama (New York: AMS Press, 1988), pp. 279–91 (p. 284).

amplification'.⁸ Weaver urges that recent scholarly concern with the history of the book 'presents a critical opportunity to revisit and refine theoretical studies of imitation'.⁹ Doing so, he argues, reveals Marlowe's deep interest 'in the types of eloquence practiced in the Elizabethan grammar schools'.¹⁰ He finds that Marlowe's adaptation of Musaeus 'demonstrates the same strategy found in the mock-heroic amplification of a fable; he uses two formal elements for amplification: description and declamation'.¹¹ Weaver also discerns that 'The sophistical speeches of Leander are an important part of Marlowe's amplification of Musaeus'.¹²

The details that Marlowe seizes upon to make his own are often very small, calling little attention to themselves in their original context. The first moment considered here is one in which Marlowe's amplification also draws upon Turberville's translation of the *Heroides*. When Musaeus's Hero tells Leander that she lives in a high tower by the sea, she refers to 'making my home with a single maid-servant' (188). We know nothing else about this servant. Marlowe brings her to life. His Hero reveals that

A dwarfish beldame beares me companie,
That hops about the chamber where I lie,
And spends the night (that might be better spent)
In vaine discourse, and apish merriment.
(353–56)

'Beldame' is used in Turberville's translation of the *Heroides*, and from their gossiping together, Gill observes that Hero's relationship to the *nutrix* of the nineteenth *Heroides* is akin to that of Juliet and the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*.¹³ However, in Ovid the conversation with her nurse that Hero describes in her letter to Leander occurs after her relationship with Leander has been established. The letter describes her longing as she waits for Leander to come to her. Her old nurse has kept her company far into the night, but, far from chattering with 'vaine discourse', the poor women can barely stay awake. Marlowe places Hero's complaint about her servant in the same spot in the poem where the bare reference to a servant appears in Musaeus, the moment when she tells Leander where

⁸ Rosemond Tuve, *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery: Renaissance Poetic and Twentieth-Century Critics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), p. 273.

⁹ Weaver, p. 390.

¹⁰ Weaver, p. 408.

¹¹ Weaver, p. 398.

¹² Weaver, p. 401.

¹³ Gill, I, pp. 298–99, n. 353.

she lives and invites him to ‘come thither’ (358). Thus, while Ovid may be the source of a nocturnal discourse between Hero and her nurse, the beldame’s comically deformed appearance, her hopping, and her apish tricks are Marlowe’s own invention. Moreover, instead of indicating the tired nurse’s patience in listening to the love-stricken Hero, Marlowe’s version indicates Hero’s impatience with her servant’s very presence. His portrait reflects the feelings of a newly love-stricken young woman toward her servant and chaperone. The ‘apish merriment’ that may once have delighted a younger Hero now constrains her. This expansion of a few words into a full four lines of verse typifies Marlowe’s treatment of Musaeus. Musaeus’s reference to Hero living alone except for her one servant, compounded with the fact that no girls of her own age or dancing youths dwell nearby (200), establishes the isolation that will be needed for Leander’s nightly swims and their secret marriage. Marlowe’s passage performs the same narrative work of preparing for Leander’s nocturnal swim and tryst, while simultaneously transforming Ovid’s sympathetic nurse into a comic image. It is a way of reading Musaeus that Marlowe draws on throughout his poem.

While both poems are third-person narratives, Marlowe’s narrator is a character in his own right, revealed through his commentary as sententious, misogynistic, cynical, and voyeuristic.¹⁴ Most of the narrator’s perspective is Marlowe’s addition to Musaeus. When Hero is struck by Leander’s amorous gaze, the narrator explains that ‘*Such force and vertue hath an amorous looke*’ (166). Similarly, he generalizes about the forceful yet wordless response engendered by the couple’s initial touching of hands: ‘*Love deeply grounded, hardly is dissembled*’ (184). Later, in the tale of Mercury and the shepherdess, he opines that ‘All women are ambitious naturallie’ (428). Only two such moments build overtly upon statements in Musaeus. When Hero chastises him for daring to approach her in the temple, the more experienced Leander of Musaeus recognizes that such threats are actually an indication that a woman has been won over (128–132), and Musaeus subsequently suggests that a woman’s silence indicates acquiescence (165). Marlowe’s narrator similarly generalizes about women, but his statements are more aphoristic, and more judgmental. Silent acquiescence becomes ‘True love is mute, and oft amazed stands’ (186), and the idea of threats betraying unadmitted love is rendered thusly:

¹⁴ An early argument distinguishing the voice of the narrator from Marlowe’s own voice is Paul M. Cubeta’s ‘Marlowe’s Poet in *Hero and Leander*’, *College English*, 26 (1965), 500–05. William Keach argues that ‘The unity of Marlowe’s epyllion derives primarily from the complex but coherent evolution of the narrator’s attitude towards the story he tells’. See *Elizabethan Erotic Narratives: Irony and Pathos in the Ovidian Poetry of Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Their Contemporaries* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1977), p. 112.

Heroes looks yeilded, but her words made warre,
Women are woon when they begin to jarre.
(331–332)

The best-known aphorism of Marlowe's narrator is 'Who ever lov'd, that lov'd not at first sight?' (176). The question reflects the initial reaction of Musaeus's Leander to Hero. He is smitten, explains Musaeus, for the beauty of a flawless woman

Comes to mortal men keener than a winged arrow,
And its pathway is the eye; out of the eye's glances
Beauty glides and journeys into the hearts of men
(93–95).¹⁵

Marlowe expands Musaeus's brief allusion to ten lines and adds new depths to it:

It lies not in our power to love, or hate,
For will in us is over-rul'd by fate.
When two are stript, long ere the course begin,
We wish that one should loose, the other win.
And one especiallie doe we affect,
Of two gold Ingots like in each respect,
The reason no man knowes, let it suffice,
What we behold is censur'd by our eies.
Where both deliberat, the love is slight,
Who ever lov'd, that lov'd not at first sight?
(167–76)

Marlowe's expansion transforms Musaeus's allusion from an explanation of the way in which the vision of beauty engenders love to an aggressive questioning of the nature of human emotion and freedom. This meditation on the human condition goes far beyond what we find in Musaeus. Indeed, Musaeus barely mentions the idea of human fate until the time of Leander's last swim, when the beacon that Hero lights to summon her lover is said

¹⁵ The trope of love entering the heart through the eye is ancient and widespread, but best known for its use in Plato's *Phaedrus*. See Gelzer, note, p. 356–57; and Gill, I, p. 296, n.

to have become the torch of the Fates rather than that of the Loves (308).¹⁶ Musaeus's reference to the fates really means little more than that Leander will not survive his swim through the wintry sea. Marlowe's narrator pointedly interrogates human freedom, denying the possibility of meaningful human choice in love, or in anything else from athletes to ingots.

While Musaeus evokes Hero's beauty at length (54–85), he provides little physical specificity. What the reader learns is that soft blushes colour her snowy cheeks and limbs, and that graces flow from her. The youths who see her at festival time are smitten with her appearance and pray to Cythereia for marriage to her, or to one like her (81–83). She is, these young men say, more 'lovely and delicate' than the girls of Sparta (73–6), where women were legendary for their beauty.¹⁷ By dispensing with Musaeus's initial invocation, Marlowe moves the description of Hero's beauty to the beginning of the poem, and he devotes more lines to it than does Musaeus (5–50). Like Musaeus, he evokes her beauty rather than attempting to describe it directly, but he does so via elaborate metaphorical allusions. Her hair, we are told, was of such beauty that it led the young Apollo to court her (6). Her breath was of such sweetness that deluded bees landed on her lips, seeking the honey that it promised (21–22). Her hands were so perfect in their whiteness that the sun and wind danced on them and refused to burn or parch them (27–30). Her appearance was so like to Venus that Cupid himself was often confused, laying 'his childish head upon her brest' and napping there (39–44). Such language leaves the reader with no clear image of Hero, although it leaves no doubt that she is beautiful. In short, Musaeus *tells* the reader that Hero is attractive, or at least that young men find her so. Marlowe *persuades* us that she is so, and he does so by transforming Musaeus's straightforward assertions of beauty into exaggerated, hyperbolic imagery.

Famously, Marlowe's evocation of Hero's beauty is achieved in large part through his description of her clothing. This is yet another instance of Marlowe's remarkable expansion of a small detail in Musaeus. When Musaeus's Leander draws Hero aside at the temple to speak to her, he does so by pulling at her 'richly broidered gown' (118). Musaeus provides no other description of the gown. In contrast, Marlowe devotes a full dozen lines to the gown and more to the accessories that go with it: a floor-length veil of artificial flowers and leaves so realistic that they deceive both men and beasts, necklaces of pebble stones which

¹⁶ Gelzer identifies the transformation of the wedding torch into the torch of death as 'a stock motif in erotic literature (pp. 384–85, n. a).

¹⁷ Gelzer, pp. 354–55, n.

Hero's radiant neck causes to shine like diamonds, and buskins of shells and coral topped with hollow, water-filled pearl and gold sparrows that chirp as she walks (9–36).¹⁸ All of the clothing seems 'over-the-top', but certainly the chirping buskins indicate the comic bent of Marlowe's reimagining of Musaeus. The gown's embroidery is elaborately imagined: its wide green sleeves are

bordered with a grove,
Where *Venus* in her naked glory strove,
To please the careless and disdainfull eies,
Of proud *Adonis* that before her lies.
(11–14)

This rich mythological allusion is purely Marlowe, and prepares us for the detailed description of Venus's temple, which is described in Musaeus simply as 'lordly' (119). Marlowe expands 'lordly' into 22 lines of mythological allusion, most of which seems comically incongruent for even a pagan temple:

There might you see the gods in sundrie shapes,
Committing headdie ryots, incest, rapes.
(143–44)

The scenes depicted include Jove's dalliance with Ganymede, his marriage to his sister Juno, his rape of Europa, and Vulcan's trapping of Mars and Venus in his iron net. Since the list of divine wrongdoers includes Venus herself, the point of the mythological depictions on the gown and temple seems to be the irony that in insisting upon Hero's chastity, the gods hold humanity to a standard of behaviour higher than they themselves observe.¹⁹ Another interesting feature of Marlowe's description of Hero's clothing is her blue kirtle, 'whereon was many a staine, / Made with the blood of wretched Lovers slaine' (15–16). The meaning is initially obscure, deliberately so, and Marlowe does not clarify it until line 158, when Hero is shown in the act of 'sacrificing turtles blood' (i.e., she

¹⁸ Bruce Boehrer and Trish Thomas Henley's discussion of the mechanical sparrows on Hero's buskins connects them with the nature-artifice contrast within the poem, seeing Marlowe's use of automata as a metaphor for the human body, and relates the image to Hero's repressed sexuality. See 'Automated Marlowe: *Hero and Leander*, 31–36', *Exemplaria*, 20 (2008), 98–119.

¹⁹ Gill observes that 'in describing the great classical gods, Marlowe takes delight in exposing the perversity of their heightened sexuality', I, p. 181.

sacrifices turtledoves, a symbol of true lovers).²⁰ The misdirection, or joke, if one will, derives from the straightforward statement in Musaeus that Hero, fearing Cupid's arrows of love, performed sacrifices to assuage both Aphrodite and her son (39). Needless to say, the mysterious stains and the tantalizing delay are Marlowe's additions.

Musaeus succinctly makes it clear that Leander is also physically alluring, at least to Hero, for she is shown to be quite aware of the young man's 'splendid charms' (104), and when stricken by the flames of love, she trembles at his beauty (168). Marlowe replaces these two short phrases with a 40-line paean to Leander's beauty, making it very clear that Leander is objectively good-looking, and not merely subjectively so in Hero's eyes. He has dangling tresses, a straight body, a neck as white as ivory, a smooth breast, a white belly, and attractive indentations that run down his spine, and his eyes, cheeks, and lips are more attractive than those of Narcissus. His appeal crosses gender lines: Hippolytus would have loved him, barbarous Thracian soldiers were moved by him, and 'Some swore he was a maid in mans attire, / For in his lookes were all that men desire' (83–84). The descriptions become increasingly hyperbolic as they proceed: Leander's tresses could have replaced the Golden Fleece, the whiteness of his neck is said to be whiter than Pelops' prosthetic ivory shoulder, and for those who know that he is male, his feminine beauty becomes an argument that he should be pursuing love. The description convinces the reader that Leander is indeed attractive, but as with Marlowe's evocation of Hero's beauty, it is exaggerated and thoroughly humorous throughout.

Leander's courtship of Hero and their subsequent relationship are handled quite differently by Musaeus and Marlowe. This marks a difference in the conception of the protagonists, for, as Roma Gill has argued, Musaeus's Leander is adult, while Marlowe's Leander is adolescent.²¹ Inflamed by love, the Leander of Musaeus accosts Hero in the temple, urges that it would be fitting for a priestess of Venus to marry, and proposes marriage. Hero in turn succumbs to love, but protests that 'We cannot openly come into a righteous marriage' (179). Leander then proposes a secret marriage in which he will come to her only at night, and she accepts. She will live as a 'maiden by day, by night a wife' (287). No one, not even

²⁰ The connection between these lines is explored by Keach, who thinks that 'Marlowe wants us to find both passages disturbing' (p. 97). The current *Norton Anthology of English Literature* (9th edition) assures students that unsuccessful suitors have committed suicide at Hero's feet, a grim reading that misses Marlowe's humour: vol. B, ed. Stephen Greenblatt and others (New York: W. W. Norton, 2012), p. 3. Katherine Cleland describes the blood as resulting from Hero's Petrarchan suitors dueling at her feet: "'Wanton loves, and yong desires': Clandestine Marriage in Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* and Chapman's Continuation', *Studies in Philology*, 108 (2011), 215–37 (p. 224).

²¹ Gill, I, p. 183.

her parents, will know. Albeit the need for secrecy makes it morally and culturally problematic, the relationship between Musaeus's Hero and Leander is thus presented always and solely as a marital relationship. They are repeatedly referred to as *husband* and *wife*. Their first night together is labelled their wedding, albeit a marriage shrouded in gloom because of its very secrecy: there was no dancing, no hymns to Hera, and no parental blessing (274–80). In contrast, Marlowe never presents the relationship between Hero and Leander in terms of the behaviour of husband and wife. Rather, he presents the panoply of emotions — attraction, fear, excitement, passion, and regret — characteristic of a young couple's movement toward first sexual experience.

Katherine Cleland has argued that 'the paradigm of the Hero and Leander myth — a secret courtship and consummation — would have translated in an early modern reader's imagination into a story about clandestine marriage', an issue that had become controversial in Marlowe's day.²² She further urges that Chapman's response to Marlowe's poem 'can shed light on Elizabethan marriage practices and the way in which Marlowe's poetry is likely to have been interpreted in its own day'.²³ The question, though, is whether Chapman's strong focus on the marriage ceremony and its necessity responds to what is *in* Marlowe, or supplies what Chapman felt *should* have been there. The word 'marriage' (263) appears only once in Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, and not as something Leander proposes that they do nor as a secret that they must keep. Leander merely asserts that if Hero had experienced sex in marriage, then she would prefer sexuality to remaining a virgin (262–64). The comparison is simply one more arrow in his quiver of arguments against 'This idoll which you terme Virginitie' (269). A stronger sense of clandestine marriage may lie in Marlowe's use of 'affied', a word, as Gill observes, 'with solemn implications'.²⁴

He askt, she gave, and nothing was denied,
 Both to each other quickly were affied.
 Looke how their hands, so were their hearts united,
 And what he did, she willingly requited.
 (Sweet are the kisses, the imbracements sweet,
 When like desires and affections meet [...])
 (509-14)

²² Cleland, p. 216.

²³ Cleland, p. 216.

²⁴ Gill, p. 302, n. 510.

Cleland concludes that 'we can only assume that Leander asks Hero to enter into a marriage pact' even though, as she goes on to note, 'Marlowe never portrays the couple as speaking the vows associated with a spousal contract'.²⁵ However, given that throughout the poem Marlowe amplifies at great length what he wishes to use from Musaeus, drawing such an assumption seems problematic. The passage in Musaeus that Marlowe here rewrites devotes ten lines to the incomplete marriage rites that characterize the wedding of Hero and Leander (274-283). At best, one word of this survives in Marlowe, who focuses instead on the youthful passion of the lovers. Musaeus's one-line reference to 'the rites of most wise Cythereia' (273) becomes the six lines of mutually desired kisses and embracement overtly described in the passage just cited.

In developing his picture of young passion, Marlowe adds much to the events presented by Musaeus, where the couple part at the temple and Leander swims to back to Abydos while Hero returns to her tower. Marlowe emphasizes that Hero is 'with love unacquainted', and prior to their parting at the temple she swoons from gazing at Leander, searches for excuses to delay leaving him, and drops her fan to entice him to follow after her (484-96). The fan gambit fails because Leander is too much of a novice to understand its meaning, but after an exchange of letters, he stealthily goes to her tower. She is impatiently awaiting him, having 'spread the boord' and 'with roses strowed the roome' (505), and they proceed with their courtship. Leander, though, is so sexually inexperienced that in his initial dalliance with Hero he 'as a brother with his sister toyed, / Supposing nothing else was to be done' (536-537), and though he does begin to have a glimmer of 'all that elder lovers know' (553), Hero preserves her virginity. Leander's adolescent lack of discretion is obvious in the morning, when his wearing of Hero's hair ribbon and sacred ring reveals his love to all Sestos, and his behaviour makes it clear to his father as well. Musaeus's protagonists successfully concealed their on-going relationship. Marlowe's exuberant Leander cannot keep their relationship secret for a day. Albeit these many aspects of the burgeoning love affair originate with Marlowe, the roots of two key points of the courtship arise from details that Marlowe found in Musaeus. Both Leanders argue that the servant of Venus ought to emulate the Goddess in lovemaking rather than remaining chaste, and both are rebuked for their use of these verbal ploys: 'Who taught thee Rhethoricke to deceive a maid?' (338) asks Marlowe's Hero in a close echo of Musaeus (175). The difference is that Musaeus's Hero is responding to a speech of some seventeen lines, including an explicit proposal of

²⁵ Cleland, p. 227. Cleland also pauses over the ceremonial implications of the word 'rites' (p. 228), but surely Marlowe's 'amorous rites' (548) are not the same as 'rites of marriage'.

marriage. Marlowe expands Leander's argument to nearly 132 lines (most of 198–330), the bulk of which is simply the suggestion that a woman is better for the loss of her virginity.

Marlowe also incorporates and builds on the response of Hero to Leander's speech. When Musaeus's Hero asks Leander his name and whence he comes, she mentions where she herself lives, and then feels ashamed 'and angry at her own words' (195). In short, her anger reveals that she is emotionally torn between yielding to her desire and doing her duty as a priestess of Venus, and she finds the conflict disturbing. Her anger is at herself.

Marlowe turns the line into a Freudian slip in which his Hero invites Leander to her tower:

Comt thither; As she spake thus, her toong tript,
For unawares (*Come thither*) from her slipt,
And sodainly her former colour chang'd,
And here and there her eies through anger rang'd
And like a planet, mooving several waies,
At one selfe instant, she poore soule assaies,
Loving, not to love at all, and everie part,
Strove to resist the motions of her hart.

(357–64)

Marlowe's Hero may also feel the conflict between love and duty, but her anger is primarily out of embarrassment at having revealed her feelings to Leander and stepped beyond the bounds of appropriate behaviour.

Musaeus's Hero and Leander spend many nights together before his fatal last swim across the Hellespont, but it is only the first night that is described in detail. This is the only night depicted by Marlowe, and again it is instructive to see the way in which he enlarges the original and infuses it with a comic vision. Musaeus's Hero is expecting Leander; as they had agreed she has lit her lamp and held it out to guide him in his swim. When he appears at her door, she welcomes him and leads him to her chamber, dries him off and anoints him with oil to help him recover from his swim, and then they proceed without further ado to enter 'into the rites of most wise Cythereia' (273). Marlowe's Hero had not expected Leander and is surprised (albeit happy) when she hears him knocking and calling at her door. Having begun his swim by stripping to his 'yv'rie skin' (637), Leander is nude when he appears at Hero's door, and an action that was straightforward in Musaeus becomes comically transformed by Marlowe, for Hero, when opening the door, responds to the

swimmer's nudity by screeching. 'Such sights as this', says the narrator, 'to tender maids are rare' (722), 'rare' denoting both 'unusual' and 'precious'. Musaeus's Leander had swum with his clothes tied above his head (252), and there is no indication that he has not donned them, although he is dripping wet.²⁶ Marlowe's Hero is not prepared with towels and oil, and far from taking Leander immediately to her breast and proceeding directly to lovemaking, she remains conflicted over the thought of losing her virginity. She runs into the darkness to hide, finally seeking refuge in her bed and pulling the covers over her head. Leander, though, is relentless, and once he has 'Entred the orchard of Th'esperides' (782), Hero succumbs to 'the pleasure of this blessed night' (788). She is, though, still conflicted, and trying to creep away from Leander after their lovemaking, she ends up blushing so profoundly that she lights up the room, displaying her naked body to his admiring sight. Marlowe devotes fourteen lines to this comically absurd and literally impossible blush (797–820), which is the length of the entire lovemaking episode in Musaeus. Ninety-five lines are used to narrate the time between Leander's appearance at Hero's door and this luminous blush.

Whether or not Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* is a completed poem or an unfinished fragment has been much debated. Edward Blount's dedication to Sir Thomas Walsingham in the poem's first edition (1598) described Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* as an 'unfinished tragedy',²⁷ and two contemporaries, George Chapman and Henry Petowe, clearly saw it as a fragment since both published endings for the poem. Chapman's ending followed Musaeus and provided the tragic ending of the underlying myth. Petowe's knightly romance had nothing to do with Musaeus and little to do with Marlowe beyond the names of the main characters. The idea that Marlowe's poem was incomplete was challenged in 1951 by Muriel Bradbrook, who observed that 'There was never any need to take the whole of a classical story for literary purposes'.²⁸ This perception was fully developed by Louis Martz in 1972, whose facsimile reprint of the first quarto persuasively argued that Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* was complete as it stood.²⁹ His conclusion was endorsed by Roma Gill, who broke with all previous editors of Marlowe's works by asserting that she 'can see no justification for including Chapman's work in a modern edition of Marlowe's

²⁶ Musaeus's Leander thus imitates Odysseus: Gelzer, p. 377, n. 252.

²⁷ Gill, p. 188.

²⁸ M. C. Bradbrook, *Shakespeare and Elizabethan Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), p. 60.

²⁹ Louis L. Martz, ed., *Hero and Leander by Christopher Marlowe: A Facsimile of the First Edition. London 1598* (New York: Johnson Reprint Organization, and Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1972).

poem'.³⁰ Braden, citing Martz, suggests that 'it makes a good deal of sense that the English version ends where it does'.³¹ He assumes, though, that Marlowe 'probably [...] set out to cover the whole of Mousios's plot', while concluding that 'it remains intriguing that he stopped writing exactly where he did, at so satisfying a close, rather than trailing off as though he realized that he had reached some sort of logical conclusion'.³² Marion Campbell and William Godshalk both respond to this notion by arguing that Marlowe intended Musaeus's tragic ending, 'but that his comic handling of the initial parts of the narrative militated against his concluding it in the manner in which he had planned'.³³ Campbell's argument is that the construction of the poem as incomplete derives from readers who expected it to build toward the myth's tragic ending and from Chapman's successful appropriation of Marlowe's poem in writing his own poem. Godshalk determines that the poem is complete and that the ending reflects the perspective of Marlowe's comic narrator and the human condition of the young lovers. Surveying the English versions of *Hero and Leander* written before 1700, Stephen Orgel asserts that 'Marlowe deals with the necessary tragic conclusion by omitting it, not finishing the poem. This is obviously a work designed to be a fragment (another thing about it that is "classical")'.³⁴ A 'designed fragment', one gathers, is not an 'unfinished work'.

Looking closely at Marlowe's amplification of details from Musaeus's poem may shed additional light on this debate. From their wedding night to their deaths, Musaeus's Hero and Leander are described as joying in their compelling love, always eager for night to come (288–290). Marlowe does not look beyond the one sexual episode that his poem describes at length, and far from seeing mere mutuality in the feelings of his protagonists, he emphasizes the differences between them. Leander is aggressive; Hero coy. He is triumphant and, after their lovemaking, glories in the beauty of her naked body. Hero, though enjoying 'the pleasure of this blessed night' (788), is grieved by her loss of virginity and embarrassed in Leander's presence. Her emotions are the very feelings that Marlowe's concluding mythological allusion ascribes to Night: 'anguish, shame, and rage' (816). There are no hints in Musaeus either of Hero's post-coital regrets or of Leander's exultation

³⁰ Gill, p. 185.

³¹ Braden, p. 149.

³² Braden, p. 150.

³³ Marion Campbell, "'Desunt Nonnulla': The Construction of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* as an Unfinished Poem", *ELH*, 51 (1984), 241–268, and W.L. Godshalk, 'The Sense of an Ending', in *A Poet and a filthy Play-maker: New Essays on Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by Kenneth Friedenreich, Roma Gill, and Constance B. Kuriyama (New York: AMS Press, 1988), pp. 293–314. The quotation is from Godshalk, p. 295.

³⁴ Stephen Orgel, 'Musaeus in English', *George Herbert Journal*, 29.1–2 (2005 Fall–2006 Spring), 67–75 (p. 70).

in his conquest. Though a far longer poem, Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* thus tells a much shorter story than does Musaeus's *Hero and Leander*. Leander's post-coital exuberance and Hero's emotional conflict is neither the end of the myth nor of Musaeus's poem, but it is what Marlowe's narrative has led to. Throughout the poem he has selected what he needed for his story, taking a word or phrase or line from Musaeus and greatly amplifying it, and turning it to his own purpose. Subsequent nights and ultimately death are not part of that story.

Braden finds two parallels in the conclusions of Marlowe's and Musaeus's poems, observing that both of them end with a woman falling, and that they both end at dawn.³⁵ The pairing of the suicidal leap of Musaeus's Hero and Marlowe's depiction of Night angrily and violently driving her carriage down to hell is an ingenious observation, but since Marlowe does not use the suicide, there is no amplification of Hero's death in his *Hero and Leander*. That Marlowe decided to end his poem with the coming of the dawn just as Musaeus did, even though he is not ending where Musaeus did, aligns with the way that he has recast Musaeus throughout the poem. Marlowe here outdoes Musaeus by providing two dawns at the end of his poem: the 'false morne' (805) of Hero's blush, and the actual coming of the morn:

By this *Appollos* golden harpe began,
 To sound foorth musicke to the *Ocean*,
 Which watchfull *Hesperus* no sooner heard,
 But he the days bright-bearing Car prepar'd
 And ran before, as Harbenger of light,
 And with his flaring beames mockt ougly night,
 Till she o'recome with anguish, shame, and rage,
 Dang'd downe to hell her loathsome carriage.

(811–18)

Dawn plays no role in Musaeus's depiction of Hero and Leander's first night together, nor does it figure in any of the subsequent nights that they spend together, for Leander always swims back to Abydos before daybreak: 'nor did ever Dawn, / Behold the bridegroom Leander in the well-known marriage-bed' (281–83). The reference to dawn at the end of Musaeus's poem is merely that 'Dawn came' (335). At the end of his poem, Marlowe has

³⁵ Braden, p. 150.

expanded this prosaic reference with a full eight lines of richly allusive poetry that, as noted earlier, capture Hero's conflicted feelings. The elaborate echo and amplification of Musaeus's concluding use of dawn surely suggests that Marlowe knew where he wanted his poem to go and that it ended where he wanted it to. The ending thus accords with what this study has demonstrated about Marlowe's overall use of amplification in *Hero and Leander*. He builds thoughtfully and imaginatively on details of plot and language from the original poem.