

EARLY MODERN LITERARY STUDIES



‘And thence as far as Archipelago’: Mapping Marlowe’s ‘British shore’

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The span of Christopher Marlowe’s geographical locations underscores what Michael Neill has called ‘the intoxicated exoticism of Marlovian cosmography’.¹ According to Bill Sherman, ‘Marlowe was the earliest English playwright to attempt a systematic exploration of the dramatic potential of travel’. Sherman notes the extent to which Marlowe’s texts are tied to travel narratives and tales of empire:

The conquerors, magicians, and merchants in his plays enjoy almost unrestricted movement across the globe, and [...] offer[...] compelling fantasies to audiences whose own movement was extremely limited. They would also have served as a powerful vehicle for reflection on England’s place in the wider world and, more generally, on the ethics of travel. The fates of Tamburlaine, Faustus, and Barabas suggest that Marlowe’s visits to foreign locations were motivated more by edification than escapism. [...] Marlowe’s plays were also among the first to confront the dramaturgical challenges of presenting global movement in the small and fixed space of the stage, using choruses to take audiences through enormous geographical leaps, and peppering his plays with cartographic details (some designed to place his characters with remarkable specificity, and others to show them transcending geographical boundaries altogether).²

As such, Marlowe’s promise to ‘confute [...] blind geographers’ is part of his *tabula rasa* approach to conquest:

¹ Michael Neill, “‘Mulattos,’ ‘Blacks,’ and ‘Indian Moors’: *Othello* and Early Modern Constructions of Human Difference’, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 49: 4 (1998), 361–74 (p. 365).

² William Sherman, ‘Travel and Trade’ in *A Companion to Renaissance Drama*, ed. by Arthur Kinney (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 109–20 (p. 114).

I will confute those blind geographers
That make a triple region in the world,
Excluding regions which I mean to trace
And with this pen reduce them to a map,
Calling the provinces, cities, and towns
After my name and thine, Zenocrate.
Here at Damascus will I make the point
That shall begin the perpendicular. (4.4.73–80)³

Marjorie Garber's comment on this passage reminds us of the cartographic power behind Marlowe's rhetoric: 'Appropriately, the text that he writes and later unwrites is a map, the metonymic sign of the world he seeks to conquer, and, according to his own figure, his pen is the conquering sword [...] The 'map', present here only imaginatively, will become a visible stage property in his death scene at the end of Part 2, at a moment when, paradoxically, the unconquered territories are furthest from Tamburlaine's grasp'.⁴ Stephen Greenblatt sees Tamburlaine's efforts at confutation as vain:

'Tamburlaine's violence does not transform space from the abstract to the human, but rather further reduces the world to a map, the very emblem of abstraction [...] At Tamburlaine's death, the *map still stretches out* before him, and nothing bears his name save Marlowe's play'.⁵ This is not strictly true, since Tamburlaine's name appears in the title of several histories of the period, but the general point stands: mapping is an inexhaustible practice and complete cartographies are beyond mere mortals, even great ones.⁶ For Garrett Sullivan, 'Tamburlaine's assault on Damascus goes hand in hand with an act of measurement — his sword's tracing of a circuit of the city. While this is a metaphorical measuring, it gestures toward a literal act of surveying. In the early modern period surveying preceded and enabled a siege such as Tamburlaine's'.⁷

³ All references to Marlowe's works are to *Doctor Faustus and Other Plays*, ed. by David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

⁴ Marjorie Garber, "'Here's Nothing Writ': Scribe, Script, and Circumscription in Marlowe's Plays', *Theatre Journal* 36: 3 (1984), 301–20 (p. 302).

⁵ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1980), p. 198.

⁶ See for example Samuel Clarke, *The life of Tamerlane the Great with his wars against the great Duke of Moso, the King of China, Bajazet the Great Turk, the Sultan of Egypt, the King of Persia, and some others ... : wherein are rare examples of heathenish piety, prudence, magnanimity, mercy, liberality, humility, justice, temperance, and valour* (London, 1653).

⁷ Garrett Sullivan, 'Space, Measurement, and Stalking Tamburlaine', *Renaissance Drama* 28 (1997), pp. 3–27 (p. 13).

Sullivan views *Tamburlaine* as a play ‘saturated with the language of measurement’, a drama that ‘repeatedly concerns itself with the traversing of geographical space, which is almost invariably associated with Tamburlaine’s conquest of it’.⁸ For Tina Takapoui, Tamburlaine ‘conceives of the world in terms of the confines of the visibility of the map’.⁹ Zenocrate ‘functions as a haloed idol rather than a real entity, some dark space on Tamburlaine’s map to conquer [...] a detached inaccessible piece of land, forever detached and intact, fetishized as a territory of an empire’.¹⁰

Alongside this recognition of Marlowe’s mapping power play, scholars have been alert to the concatenation between religiosity and acts of world-describing in the playwright’s works. Lisa Hopkins links Marlowe’s geography more specifically with ‘questions of religious belief’.¹¹ According to Hopkins, the undermining of preconceived religious ideas by geography in the Renaissance impressed itself deeply on Marlowe, engendering a profound engagement with both ‘spiritual’ and ‘physical’ geographies. Hopkins specifically cites the discovery of America as ‘precipitat[ing] the great crisis of faith which ultimately produced the Reformation, since the failure of the Bible to mention the New World cast doubt on the supposed omniscience of the Scriptures’.¹² For Hopkins:

Knowledge of geography gives access to the contours of the next world as well as the present one – and as the present one expands, the imaginative space allotted to the next one visibly shrinks and withers.¹³

Much of Marlowe’s work is inflected by religious thought – *The Jew of Malta*, which portrays a bloody interaction between Judaism, Christianity and Islam, is characteristic of an artistic engagement with contemporary theological discussions and disputes. Hopkins points to the ways in which the febrile nature of religious beliefs in the sixteenth century permeated conceptions of the world and its mapping. Such disputes, as we shall see, formed just one part of the broader shifting landscape of cartography, mapping and surveying during Marlowe’s lifetime.

⁸ Ibid, p. 17.

⁹ Tina Takapoui, ‘Kristevan Femininity and Negative Theology in Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine, I and II*’, *Early Modern Culture Online*, 3.1 (2012) <<http://journal.uia.no/index.php/EMCO/article/view/27>> [accessed: 24 June 2014], 65–87 (67).

¹⁰ Ibid, 73.

¹¹ Lisa Hopkins, *Christopher Marlowe, Renaissance Dramatist* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), p. 98.

¹² Ibid, 98.

¹³ Ibid, *Christopher Marlowe*, 100.

‘The fruitful plot of scholarism’: Marlowe’s geographic learning

Christopher Marlowe was witness to a key moment in the development of geographical science in England. Situated at a point of epistemological transformation, Marlowe’s life coincided with a move away from the traditional and canonical and towards the novel and iconoclastic. The year of Marlowe’s matriculation at Corpus Christi, Cambridge, 1580, was according to Bruce McLeod a ‘ground-breaking year for ‘Imperial Britain’ [...] a year that saw the creation of new geographies based on imperial designs’.¹⁴ New surveying and mapping practices imported from the continent, allied to emerging artistic techniques, led to a flourishing of maps, globes and atlases of both the local and the foreign as the realisation and representation of space underwent profound change.¹⁵

Marlowe’s plays evince an acute sensitivity to this ‘geographic revolution’. Scholars have identified the Kentish playwright as a dramatist working simultaneously in the death throes of an ‘old’ geography and in the birth of a new discipline, perceptive to the attendant intricacies, precepts and themes of both. John Gillies, for example, explicitly invokes the multiplicity of geographies found in *Tamburlaine* to locate Marlowe at a turning point in the evolution of geographical science, imagination and morality. For Gillies, *Tamburlaine* ‘manifests — with a power unsurpassed by any other Renaissance geographic or ‘poetic geographic’ text — the schizophrenia of the Renaissance geographic imagination caught [...] between the amorality of the New Geography, and the moralism of the old’.¹⁶ Garrett Sullivan, in a broader survey of the Marlovian canon, concurs with Gillies’ assessment. For Sullivan, Marlowe’s engagement with geographic discourse and its ideas was conducted within an ‘epochal moment in the histories of geography and cartography — that of the emergence of the ‘new geography’’:

This moment is understood as marking the turning point from an imprecise and religious or mythopoetic geography to an accurate and scientific one — from, for example, the medieval map centred on the sacred site of Jerusalem to the famous cartographic projection associated with the atlas-maker Gerard Mercator,

¹⁴ Bruce McLeod, *The Geography of Empire in English Literature, 1580-1745* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 2.

¹⁵ D. K. Smith, *The Cartographic Imagination in Early Modern England: Re-Writing the World in Marlowe, Spenser, Raleigh and Marvell* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008), p. 6.

¹⁶ John Gillies, ‘Marlowe, The Timur Myth and the Motives of Geography’ in *Playing the Globe: Genre and Geography in English Renaissance Drama*, ed. by John Gillies and Virginia Mason Vaughan (New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1998) p. 226.

which allows for the representation of space as homogeneous and uniformly divisible. Characterized by the proliferation of increasingly precise representations of the world (with [Abraham] Ortelius's atlas being a prime example), the new geography was made possible by a number of historical phenomena, such as improved mapping technologies; the growing desire and need for accurate geographic information; and the ever-widening distribution of printed geographic materials, including maps and atlases.¹⁷

Sullivan situates Marlowe at a liminal point in the history of geography, revelling in the contemporary imbrication of imagination and experience, of 'spheres, globes, astrolabes, maps and the like', and the 'mythopoetic geography' of more established ideas of geographic representation (the profoundly religious T-O maps of medieval cartography which located Christ's terrestrial birthplace at the centre of the cosmos). Where Gillies suggests that Marlowe encapsulates the 'schizophrenia of the Renaissance geographic imagination' and imbues his work with a tension between 'old' and 'new' moralities, Sullivan states much more categorically that '[i]t is of the new geography that Marlowe's plays appear to be such a conspicuous product'.¹⁸ For Marlowe, according to Stewart Mottram, 'map reading is [...] an underhand activity associated with the tyrant Tamburlaine and the damned Dr. Faustus [...] Such plays are a comment on changing attitudes toward cartography in the later sixteenth century, for as props in the repertory of the overreacher and rebel, maps on stage can be seen to reflect cartography's increasingly more radical status in late Elizabethan and early Stuart society'.¹⁹

The roots of Marlowe's radicalised cartographies can be traced to his biographical background. Geographic diversity was present in Marlowe's life from an early age. Canterbury, Marlowe's birthplace, was one of the foremost sites of pilgrimage in the medieval period, drawing visitors from across the British Isles and the Continent — according to Jonathan Sumption, Canterbury retained an attraction for pilgrims rivalled only by Rome, Jerusalem and Santiago.²⁰ As an essay by Richard F. Hardin demonstrates, even after the transformative effect of the Reformation on religious

¹⁷ Garrett Sullivan, 'Geography and Identity in Marlowe' in *The Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by Patrick Cheney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 231–44 (p.232).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

¹⁹ Stewart Mottram, 'Mapping the British Archipelago in the Renaissance' in *A Companion to British Literature: Volume II: Early Modern Literature 1450–1660*, ed. by Robert DeMaria, Jr., Heesok Chang, and Samantha Zacher (Oxford and Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2014), pp. 54–69 (pp. 62–3).

²⁰ Jonathan Sumption, *Age of Pilgrimage: The Medieval Journey to God* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2003), p. 214.

pilgrimages in England, Marlowe's home town maintained a degree of ethnic and religious heterogeneity.²¹ Marlowe would have been exposed to a wide range of ethnic identities from an early age. Furthermore, awareness of different cultures was supplemented by an education rich in geographic knowledge. By the late sixteenth century, influential pedagogical tracts propagated the notion of geographical science as part of the study of 'cosmography', a kaleidoscopic subject encompassing a vast and often contradictory field. This stemmed from continental educationalists such as Desiderius Erasmus, Juan Luis Vives and Leon Battista Alberti.²² For example, in *Della Famiglia* (1434), a tract described by Kenneth Charlton as Alberti's 'championing of the personal and social ideals of civic humanism', the Italian polymath summarises the paradigmatic education of the humanist scholar, emphasising, among other disciplines, geography. Charlton surmises Alberti's idealized pupil:

[C]onversation, with his own age-group, with his tutors and with his elders, is of as much importance as his study of books. Arithmetic, geography, meteorology are to share time with the classics in preparation for the commercial life.²³

In Marlowe's intellectual formation the writings of key figures like Thomas Blundeville are instructive. According to Blundeville's popular textbook *His Exercises* (1594):

[Cosmography is] the description of the whole world, that is to say, of heauen and earth, and all that is contained therein. What speciall kindes of knowledge are comprehended vnder this Science. These foure, Astronomie, Astrologie, Geographie, and Chorographie.²⁴

Marlowe was exposed to the subject of 'cosmographie' — and the multitude of endeavours subsumed under its designation — from childhood. His education, which included a scholarship at King's School in his home town beginning at the age of fourteen and an intermittent student career at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, brought with it exposure to geographic texts, and also engagement with people and communities whose interest in geography was considerable. '[M]aps were part of both formal and informal education in early modern Europe' notes Lesley Cormack, 'From

²¹ Richard F. Hardin, 'Marlowe Thinking Globally' in *Christopher Marlowe the Craftsman: Lives, Stage, and Page*, ed. by Sarah K. Scott and M. L. Stapleton (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 22-32.

²² Jonathan M. Smith, 'State Formation, Geography, and a Gentleman's Education', *Geographical Review* 86: 1 (1996), 91–100 (p. 94).

²³ Kenneth Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England* (London: Routledge, 1965), p. 32.

²⁴ Thomas Blundeville, *His Exercises* (London: Printed by John Windet, 1594), p. 134.

the grammar schools on, both formal and informal educational systems had some interest in the study of the earth and the cosmos'.²⁵

As a consequence, it is likely Marlowe would have had access to both geographical teaching and also substantial textbooks on the subject. John Gresshop, his headmaster at King's School possessed one of the largest personal libraries in England, numbering more than 350 volumes.²⁶ These included classical texts by Ovid and Plautus, as well as more recent work by Chaucer and Boccaccio, and also the work of Neoplatonist philosophers such as Marsilio Ficino. Vivien Thomas and William Tydeman have stressed the importance of Gresshop's library for the education of the young Marlowe:

If, like many teachers, Gresshop made the contents of his personal library available to his more promising pupils, Marlowe could have obtained early access to a fine representative range of texts in both the vernacular and the classical tongues, and found his knowledge increased and his imagination stimulated by as ample a private collection as that possessed by any university tutor of the day.²⁷

If, as Thomas and Tydeman claim, Marlowe found his 'knowledge increased' and his 'imagination stimulated' by Gresshop's library, the geographical works therein can elucidate our understanding of how geography functions within Marlovian dramaturgy.

Perhaps the most notable 'cosmographical' volume within Gresshop's 'ample' collection, and the first geographical text the young Marlowe would likely have encountered, was *Cosmographie* (originally published in 1544), by the influential German cartographer, cosmographer and scholar Sebastian Münster. Münster's role in the development of geography in Renaissance Europe is important — according to Benjamin Weiss, Münster 'finally provides a clear link between the study of [Claudius Ptolemy's] Geography in an astronomical context and the making of maps'.²⁸ *Cosmographie*, a multiple-edition work that was constantly revised and augmented

²⁵ Lesley B. Cormack, 'Maps as Educational Tools in the Renaissance' in *The History of Cartography Volume 3: Cartography in the European Renaissance*, ed. by David Woodward (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007), pp. 622–36 (p. 622).

²⁶ For an inventory of Gresshop's library see William Urry, *Christopher Marlowe and Canterbury* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), pp. 112–22.

²⁷ Vivien Thomas and William Tydeman, *Christopher Marlowe: The Plays and Their Sources* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 5.

²⁸ Benjamin Weiss, 'The Geography in Print: 1475: 1530' in *Ptolemy's 'Geography' in the Renaissance* ed. by Zur Shalev and Charles Burnett (London: Warburg Institute Colloquia 2011), pp. 91–120 (p. 110).

throughout the 1500s, was a text bristling with geographical information. ‘As each text became bigger, more crammed with data’, writes Elizabeth Eisenstein in her description of *Cosmographie*’s encyclopaedism,

and more profusely illustrated, each was also provided with more tables, charts, indexes which made it possible for readers to retrieve the growing body of information that was being stored in the work. Editors worked conscientiously to keep each edition updated and to provide more thorough coverage for regions that had received short shrift in earlier versions.²⁹

Were Marlowe familiar with this storehouse of geographical knowledge from an early age, contemporaneous accounts of its reading suggest *Cosmographie* would have left a deep impression on the imagination of the emerging playwright. The preface to Richard Eden’s *A briefe collection and compendious extract of the straunge and memorable things, gathered oute of the cosmographie of Sebastian Munster* (1553), for example, gives an insight into the pleasure induced in the early modern reader by Münster’s writings:

The worke of it selfe is not greate but the examples and varieties are mani so that in a short and smal time, the reader may wander through out the whole world, and fil his head with many strange and memorable things, he may note the straunge properties of diverse Beastes, Fowles, and Fishes, & the description of far countries, the wonderfull example of sundrye men, and straunge rytes and lawes of far distante nacions.³⁰

Cited by Lesley Cormack as ‘one of the many cases of the close connections among the different branches of geography’, the *Cosmographia* would have presented to the young Marlowe an admixture of Ptolemaic and other cartographies alongside ‘basic cosmographical mapping technique.’³¹ In addition, the promise that the reader ‘may wander throughout the whole world’ in reading the book resonates with the capability of vicarious travel proffered by early modern cartographers and their maps. Such aspects of sixteenth-century geographical understanding figure heavily in Marlowe’s plays, especially in scenes which explore either explicitly or tangentially contemporary

²⁹ Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, 2 vols., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), I., p. 109.

³⁰ Richard Eden, *A briefe collection and compendious extract of the straunge and memorable things, gathered oute of the cosmographie of Sebastian Munster* (London: Thomas Marshe, 1572), sig. A2^r.

³¹ Lesley Cormack, *Charting an Empire: Geography at the English Universities 1580-1620* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 107, n. 55.

cosmographical science such as the map reading sequence of the second part of *Tamburlaine*. Münster's text incorporated quasi-ethnographic illustrations of fantastical humans, including one-footed giants, double-headed children and wolf-men. Drawn from fourteenth-century travel narratives such as *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* and cartographies like the Hereford Mappa Mundi, this extravagant facet of this mode of sixteenth-century geography, and its co-existence with more sober mathematical principles — summarised by Cormack as 'providing fantastic descriptions and illustrations of people as well as [...] more exacting maps and mathematical geography'³² — would have engendered in Marlowe an awareness primarily of the imaginative possibility of world describing. The fabulist elements of Münster's presentation of cosmography reveal the opportunities of creative geographies alongside more restrained empirical science. Michael Neill's recognition of the 'intoxicated exoticism' of Marlowe's stage chimes with the *Cosmographia* of the headmaster's library: just as Münster the cosmographer was renowned for presenting 'the description of far countries, the wonderfull example of sundrye men, and straunge rytes and lawes of far distante nacions' so the Marlovian stage was distinctive for its range of places and diversity of peoples.

Cartography at Corpus Christi

If Münster revealed to the young Marlowe the artistic potential of cosmography, what can we discern from his experience of geography in his later education? Marlowe attended Corpus Christi College from 1580 to 1587 taking a BA and later an MA, famously breaking his study to engage in 'matters touching benefits of his country', activities that possibly included spying.³³ By 1580, interest in the rich terrain of cosmography — including chorography, geography and cartography — was on the increase among both teaching faculty and students. Cambridge itself was extensively mapped in the latter half of the sixteenth century: included in Christopher Saxton's *Atlas of the Counties of England and Wales* (1579), the first book of its kind in English cartography, it was also the subject of several specific surveys, such as the highly detailed town map engraved by Richard Lyne (1574) which incorporates the

³² Ibid, p.129.

³³ This facet of Marlowe's life has been keenly debated. See Austin K. Gray, 'Some Observations on Christopher Marlowe, Government Agent', *PMLA*, 43: 3 (1928), 682–700, and Alan Haynes, *Invisible Power: The Elizabethan Secret Services, 1570–1603* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), pp. 99–100. For a more sceptical account see J. A. Downie's 'Reviewing What We Think We Know About Christopher Marlowe, Again', in *Christopher Marlowe the Craftsman: Lives, Stage, and Page*, ed. by Sarah Scott and Michael Stapleton (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 33–46, esp. p. 45.

university.³⁴ The map of the county in John Speed's *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine* (1611-12), drawn from earlier surveys, has been labelled as 'one of [Speed's] finest', attesting to the prominence of the shire in the early modern English cartographic consciousness.³⁵

The background presence of cartographic activity — surveying, plotting and mapmaking — would have been reinforced by the everyday exertions of the curriculum. Marlowe's degrees were in the arts, yet both academic qualifications required a level of geographical learning. According to Mark Curtis the English universities in the second half of the sixteenth century saw a 'broadening and expansion of the arts course'.³⁶ Such 'expansion' encompassed geographical science. Both teachers and students were the motivators of this disciplinary absorption, underlining the developing popularity of geography or 'cosmography' across the spectrum of the university. '[T]he good will of the tutors and the interest of the scholars', Curtis writes:

were all that were needed to introduce the study of modern as well as classical history, modern languages as well as Latin and Greek, geography, cosmography, and navigation as well as astronomy, the study of practical politics as well as moral philosophy, and the cultivation of manners, courtesy, and other social graces as well as piety.³⁷

As this process indicates, university teachers and scholars began to regard cosmography and its ancillary disciplines as a central part of the curriculum, recognising its inherent benefits to a wide range of professions. 'Geography', as Cormack observes, 'was [...] encouraged and studied by serious students following the curriculum, whether they planned a career in the church, in academe, or elsewhere'.³⁸ Regarding the geographical textbooks Marlowe would have encountered at university, David Riggs has shown that the playwright's MA degree included study of cosmography and incorporated such influential works as Strabo's seventeen-volume *Geographica* and Ptolemy's *Geographia* (both translated into Latin in the fifteenth century), Münster's

³⁴ Lyne's map has been singled out by P. D. A. Harvey as an 'unusually clear example' of Tudor cartography's combination of bird's-eye perspective and consistent scale. See *Maps in Tudor England* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993), p. 17.

³⁵ Jeffery John Speed, *Tudor Townscapes: The Town Plans from John Speed's 'Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine 1610'* (Buckingham: Map Collector Publications Ltd, 2000), p. 32.

³⁶ Mark Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition: 1558–1642* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 130.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 130.

³⁸ Cormack, p. 307.

Cosmographia (1544), and André de Thevet's *Universal Geography* (1558). Included in this reading list was also William Cuningham's *Cosmographicall Glasse* (1559), a text whose characterisation of the delights of 'travelling by map' echoes that of Eden's reception of Münster.³⁹ Riggs highlights the more practical political and vocational consequences of geography as a subject in university:

In theory MA-level work on astronomy, geography and cosmography taught aspiring divines to know the Creator through the study of His works. In practice, these subjects familiarized many students, including Marlowe, with the academic cornerstones of expansionist state systems; they introduced scholars to special skills that equipped them to work in the military and diplomatic sectors.⁴⁰

The growing intellectual regard for geography within English university statutes, and specifically at Cambridge, is especially highlighted by the close attention paid to the keeping of the storehouses of such knowledge, geographical books. In 1574, the University's library contained 435 volumes and, according to J. C. T. Oates' retrospective reconstruction from contemporary catalogues, incorporated a separate section or 'stall' designated 'Cosmographia'.⁴¹ Cartographic documents and instruments were also highly-prized, indicating their value to the scholarly community: in 1582, a document entitled 'Articles for the Office of Keeping the Universitie Librarie' was produced, encompassing an inventory 'conteyning the names of all the bookes and ye number of leaves of all written books.' According to Oates, included in this document is the instruction to the Library-Keeper John Matthew that "all other bookes of Imagerie with colors, all globes Astrolobes and all other instruments mathematicall, with all other bookes mathematicall or historicall (such as shalbe thought meete by the vicechancellor)" were to be locked up under two keys, of which the Vice-Chancellor was to hold one and the Library-Keeper the other'.⁴² This dictum underscores the care taken by the university libraries of geographic, and in particular cartographic texts, and by implication their valued status within the library and the university learning space as a whole. '[B]ookes of imagerie with colors' included bounded collections of maps and texts containing cartographic representations, continental atlases like Peter Apian's

³⁹ Vivien Thomas and William Tydeman call attention to the importance of Münster's textbook in the source material for Marlowe's plays: 'the heterogeneous materials laid under debt in the second part of *Tamburlaine* must include Münster's *Cosmographie*'. See Thomas and Tydeman, p. 80.

⁴⁰ David Riggs, *The World of Christopher Marlowe* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2004), p. 159.

⁴¹ J. C. T. Oates, *Cambridge University Library: A History. From the Beginnings to the Copyright Act of Queen Anne* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 115–116.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 122–3.

Cosmographicus liber (1524) and Abraham Ortelius's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1570), alongside English works such as Saxton's delineation of England and Wales (1579).

Running parallel to this burgeoning enthusiasm for geography was the increased level of private map ownership among Marlowe's fellow students. As Catherine Delano Smith has shown, private map ownership was a growing feature of life at university.⁴³ Seeking to answer key questions — 'Who bought maps? What did the buyers do with their maps? What maps did they buy?' — Smith has sketched the outlines of a scholarly community that owned, traded, exchanged, borrowed, bought and sold maps, atlases and other sundry cartographic objects. According to Smith:

Cambridge map owners fall into two main categories, distinguished not by the number of maps each possessed but by the purposes for which they seem to have wanted the maps. For instance, it appears that some wanted a map because it was an interesting or fashionable domestic decoration; others seem to have selected maps for their academic or political relevance or for use in their studies or teaching. If the latter also sometimes displayed the maps on the walls of their rooms, such display can be seen as a matter of convenience rather than as a prime objective of ownership. In addition, some had maps only in atlas format or incidentally in books.⁴⁴

In a more extensive book-length study of geographical knowledge at English universities in the period, Lesley Cormack notes that 'many Cambridge colleges showed an interest in geography'.⁴⁵ Corpus Christi, Marlowe's college, was particularly prominent in this trend. 'The analysis of books owned by students and masters at Oxford and Cambridge, as well as our knowledge of the lives of men interested in geographical topics', notes Cormack, 'shows that some colleges and foundations provided special encouragement for the pursuit of geographical studies'.⁴⁶ Cormack lists Corpus Christi among the 'best-known loci of geographical interest', emblematic of the wider interest in cosmography as a subject of study in the universities of late sixteenth-century England:

⁴³ Catherine Delano Smith, 'Map Ownership in Sixteenth-Century Cambridge: The Evidence of Probate Inventories', *Imago Mundi*, 47 (1995), 67-93.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 71.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 55-6.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 227.

Corpus Christi College, Christ Church, and St. John's College, Oxford, and Peterhouse, St. John's, and Corpus Christi colleges, Cambridge, stand out as foci of geographical emphasis. These colleges represent the best-known examples of loci of geographical interest, rather than its exclusive domain. Many more students and colleges, whose records are less complete, were undoubtedly involved in the teaching and study of geography in this period, and so these six colleges open a window on the widespread reality of geography teaching and interest at both Oxford and Cambridge.⁴⁷

For Cormack, the extent of the private ownership of geographical texts at Marlowe's university during the 1580s 'indicates a genuine and extended interest in the subject'.⁴⁸

A supplementary testament to the vibrancy of geographical learning at Corpus Christi is the geographical literature published by Cambridge graduates and teachers in the period. The aforementioned Cantabrigian William Cuninghame's *The Cosmographical Glasse* was an important text in the growth of early modern English geographical sciences. Cuninghame's occasional associate John Dee, erstwhile student at St. John's College, produced several tracts on astronomy in the 1550s.⁴⁹ Figures such as Richard Eden, Christopher Saxton, Thomas Nicholls, and later Thomas Hood also exemplify the emerging prominence of geography and its study within the university.⁵⁰

The Cambridge Marlowe would have encountered during the 1580s, then, was an institution abuzz with geographic interest. Cosmographical textbooks were highly

⁴⁷ Ibid, 55-6.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 40.

⁴⁹ See for example *De Planetarium* (1550) and *An Astronomical Treatise* (1553). For an extensive examination of Dee's geographical writing and activities, see E. G. R. Taylor, *Tudor Geography 1485-1583* (London: Methuen and Company, 1930), pp. 75-139.

⁵⁰ Nicholls, an explorer and merchant by profession, also engaged in geographical writing, and his travel narratives and chorographical descriptions of places such as Peru, China and the West Indies were incorporated into Richard Hakluyt's popular *Principall Navigations* published towards the end of the sixteenth century (R. C. D. Baldwin, 'Nicholls, Thomas (1532-1601)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20124>> [accessed 21 February 2014]). Hood was a close associate of the famed English globemaker Emery Molyneux, and published practical guides to the use of cartographic instruments including *The Use of the Celestial Globe in Plano, Set Foorth in Two Hemispheres* (1590) 'largely intended to help the student astronomer to recognize the stars and their constellations' (H. K. Higon, 'Hood, Thomas (bap. 1556, d. 1620)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13680>> [accessed 21 February 2014]), and also *The Use of Both the Globes Celestiall and Terrestriall* (1592).

prized by the university libraries. The teaching of geographical subjects was increasingly incorporated into the syllabus, at the behest of the scholarly community as a whole. Private map ownership among students themselves increased. The evolving curriculum at Cambridge, the makeup of both the student and teaching faculty, the catalogues of its library, and the private libraries of those whom Marlowe would have encountered during his study there, all indicate an environment infused with a flourishing interest in cosmography and its associated subjects such as geography, chorography, astronomy, astrology and cartography.

Archipelagic *Tamburlaine* and *Edward II*

Marlowe's extensive engagement with the multitude of geographies prevailing during his lifetime lay behind the multiple cartographies present in his plays. Moreover, we suggest, it engendered a profoundly archipelagic inclination in his plays, especially among the characterisation of some of his most famed protagonists. Later readers who employed Marlovian characters in tropic fashion to designate the multi-layered interactions on the seventeenth-century British archipelago picked up this inclination.

'Our writers and great men had something in them that savoured of the soil from which they grew,' insists William Hazlitt of the milieu that produced Marlowe. '[T]hey were truly English. [...] The mind of their country was great in them, and it prevailed'.⁵¹ Hazlitt is, in the case of Marlowe, wrong — if his plays are anything to go by, the playwright appears largely uninterested in 'the soil from which [he] grew'. Far from 'prevailing', England as a geographical entity is often marginalized in Marlowe's plays. Often, that is, where it is not elided completely. The most identifiably Marlovian plays — those which exhibit a stress on his famed 'mighty line' and foreground the agency of the central character — were resolutely un-English. In the geography of plays such as *Tamburlaine*, *The Jew of Malta* and *Doctor Faustus*, Marlowe opts to disregard homogeneity in favour of variety. The panoramic span of Marlowe's drama is especially palpable in setting: where *Tamburlaine 1* and *2* begin in Persepolis and the banks of the Danube respectively, *Faustus* opens in a study in Wittenberg ('Wertenberg'), Germany, *Dido Queen of Carthage* in North Africa, and *The Jew of Malta* in a Maltese 'Counting-house'. Only *Edward II* takes place in that staple arena of the English Renaissance history play, the royal court. And yet, even in this 'English' drama, as Marcie Bianco

⁵¹ William Hazlitt, 'Lectures on the Dramatic Literature in the Age of Elizabeth', in *Marlowe: The Critical Heritage, 1588-1896*, ed. by Millar McClure (London: Routledge 1979), pp. 77–78.

demonstrates, Marlowe's inclination to geographical breadth reveals itself in the marginal yet crucial importance of Ireland in the functioning of the play.⁵²

As Ben Jonson's remark on Marlowe's 'scenicall strutting' reveals,⁵³ the shifting geographies of the Marlovian corpus have been a persistent and recognisable trait of the playwright's work. The span of Marlowe's locational panoply — reciprocated in the extraordinarily diverse Marlovian dramatis personae⁵⁴ — exemplifies the persistent inclination towards variety in the playwright's work. Such a stress on the exotic is significant because it exhibits the scope of his geographic consciousness, indicates the extent of his exposure to cosmographical learning, and also aligns the playwright with the popular enthusiasms of the age. In late sixteenth-century England, travel (real or otherwise) captured the imagination of many. 'Al studies have theyr special tymes', observes Richard Willes in his preface to Richard Eden's popular *History of Travayl* (1577), 'of late who taketh not upon him to discourse of the whole worlde, and eche province thereof particularly?'⁵⁵

Marlowe's pointed staging of this 'discourse of the whole world' offers a key reference point for contemporary discussions of Marlowe's plays, most especially *Tamburlaine* with its continent-traversing protagonist and pointed familiarity with maps. As Richard Levin shows, the moral character of Tamburlaine — anti-hero, atheist tyrant or Scourge of God — was a vexed issue for audiences witnessing Marlowe's blockbuster.⁵⁶ Contemporaneous discussions and allusions to Marlowe's character as well as debating his moral validity also evince a clear sensitivity to the multitude of geographies subsumed under his rule, and by implication his archipelagic identity as a dramatic character. Among the many allusions discussed by Levin, Thomas Middleton's masque *The Triumphs of Integrity* (1623) makes pointed reference to 'the Great Victor Tamburlayne, Conqueror of Syria Armenia, Babilon, Mesopotamia, Scythia, Albania

⁵² Marcie Bianco, 'To Sodomize a Nation: *Edward II*, Ireland, and the Threat of Penetration.' *Early Modern Literary Studies* Special Issue 16 (2007) <URL: <http://purl.oclc.org/emls/si-16/bianedii.htm>>, 1–21.

⁵³ Ben Jonson quoted in Charles Nicholl, 'Marlowe, Christopher (bap. 1564, d. 1593)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18079>> [accessed 21 February 2014]. Hereafter Nicholl, *DNB*.

⁵⁴ Hungarians, Germans, Italians (*Doctor Faustus*), Scythians, Babylonians (*Tamburlaine*), English, Scottish, Welsh (*Edward II*), Greeks, Turks, Carthaginians, Jews (*The Jew of Malta*) and many others all intermingle – sometimes harmoniously, though often discordantly – in the playwright's works.

⁵⁵ Richard Willes in *History of Travayl* by Richard Eden (London: Richarde Jugge, 1577), sig. I1^r–2^v.

⁵⁶ Richard Levin. 'The Contemporary Perception of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*.' *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 1 (1984), 51–70.

&c.’⁵⁷ Middleton’s enumeration is particularly important, not only because it lists Tamburlaine’s conquests, but also as it synthesises previously discrete geographical regions, in particular ‘Syria Armenia’, to demonstrate a prevailing perception of Tamburlaine’s conglomeration of ostensibly differing topographies.

This sense of Tamburlaine as an analogue for the appropriation of other lands under one single yet multi-faceted identity recurs in an apparent citation of the Marlovian protagonist not discussed by Levin. In Thomas Gainsford’s conclusion to his account of the life of Hugh O’Neill, Earl of Tyrone, the author offers a Marlovian metaphor for Arthur Chichester’s drastic actions in Ulster, which led to the City of London (in England) possessing the city of (London)Derry in Ireland:⁵⁸

For when my Lord Deputy saw no other remedy: but that *Tamberlaines* blacke flagg must needes be set vp, (the white and the red quite refused) he hasted with fire and sword into the North, and not onely terrified this rebellious Lord with all his Complices, but compelled them to abandon their castles, houses, and inheritances, taking absolute possession for his new Master the King of Great *Brittaine*, and incorporated them to the Crowne so firmly and perpetually, that no fine and recouery of their rebellious power should or could disanull the contract, or frustrate the deed: for *England* presently seased on the same, and like a true Lord and powerfull Commander, placed better tenants, and diuided the Countrey into seuerall mens hands; yea, enfeoffed the City of *London* with such a right, that I am perswaded all the *Irish* in the world, or Irish Coadiutors will neuer be able to wrest it out of their hands.⁵⁹

In the passage above, Gainsford alludes to the famous speech in *Tamburlaine the Great, Part 1* where the messenger to the Soldan of Egypt reveals the ominous implications of Tamburlaine’s colour-coded tents (4.1.49-63). In his evocation of this sequence in the play, Gainsford flits from ‘the North’ (of Ireland) through ‘Great *Brittaine*’ and

⁵⁷ Ibid, 59.

⁵⁸ Gainsford’s target here is Tyrone, and he talks of Chichester’s victory as one over O’Neill, but the rebellion he is alluding to is the one that occurred in the wake of the Flight of the Earls in September 1607 that saw Tyrone flee to Rome. See Henry A. Jefferies, ‘Prelude to Plantation: Sir Cahir O’Doherty’s Rebellion in 1608’, *History Ireland* 17: 6 (2009), 16–19. For an excellent discussion of Gainsford, and other Irish analogues, see Patricia Palmer, *The Severed Head and the Grafted Tongue: Literature, Translation and Violence in Early Modern Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014) pp. 42-3.

⁵⁹ Thomas Gainsford, *The true exemplary, and remarkable history of the Earle of Tirone* (London, 1619), pp. 48-9.

'England' to 'all the Irish in the world, or Irish Coadiutors'. The emblems of Chichester's triumph combine an allusion to the cross of St George and the Houses of Lancaster and York with the staging posts of peace, blood and utter destruction mapped out in *Tamburlaine Part One*. Marlowe was of course no stranger to the O'Neills of Ireland. In *Edward II*, when the king asks, 'Shall I still be haunted thus?' Lancaster replies:

Look for rebellion, look to be deposed:
Thy garrisons are beaten out of France,
And, lame and poor, lie groaning at the gates;
The wild O'Neill, with swarms of Irish kerns,
Lives uncontrolled within the English pale;
Unto the walls of York the Scots made road,
And unresisted, drave away rich spoils.⁶⁰

Marlowe critics have noted that the allusion here to Donal O'Neill, though ostensibly referring to the fourteenth-century Prince of Tyrone, may well be a nod to his Elizabethan counterpart, Hugh O'Neill.⁶¹

In *The glory of England* (1618) Gainsford, in an echo of the militaristic kineticism of Marlowe's protagonist, conceded that violence was the key to nation- and empire-building, and not just in Ireland:

In the ouer-looking as it were the map of the worlds busines, I must needes confesse, that neuer Monarchy was established, or enlarged, but by the power of the sword: yet alas, when I consider the inconveniences impending, the affrightings of people, the demolition of Cities, the deuastation of Countries, the slaughters of Armies, the rapes, murthers, and terrors of the world in the best conquests and victorie; I cannot but lament the condition of man, that doth extract his glory from tyrannie and curses, from confusion and turmoyle, from blood and death. For thus doe wee boast of our auncestors, and the very women doe esteeme no man noble or worthy, that cannot relate the victories of his forefathers, and dare not himselfe set furie on worke to the killing of his enemie, nay to the murthering of his Competitor, whether for loue, or displeasure. But if you will truly consider the admirable composition of Commonwealths, and

⁶⁰ Christopher Marlowe, *Edward the Second* (6.151–164), ed. by Martin Wiggins and Robert Lindsay, 2nd edition (London: A & C Black, 1997).

⁶¹ Bianco, n.3.

extraordinary glorie of Kingdomes, it consisteth in sedation of troubles, and in the enriching of priuate men.⁶²

Gainsford maps out the history of the English monarchy in a manner designed to show the extent to which it dominates the archipelagic and European scene:

If you ouerlooke the life of *Edward 1.* you shall finde it a very mappe of honour, and be able to tell the world, that besides many forraine Potentates, the Prince of *Wales* and his brother *David* reioiced in his acceptation of them; and *Iohn Baliol* King of Scots was glad to be named and established by him: But come a little forward, and at the naming of *Edward the 3.* me thinkes all English hearts should leape for ioy. For 1334. *Edward Baliol* King of Scots did him homage; the Prince of Wales was glad to kisse his hands; and the Electors of *Germany* 1348. inuited him to the chaire of the Empire: nay such was our royaltie that *Henry Pichard* Vintner and Maior of *London* feasted EDW. of England; IOHN King of France; the King of *Cyprus* comming to see our worthinesse; DAVID King of Scots; EDW. Prince of Wales, Duke of Aquitane, Guien, and Cornwall, all in one day: Besides at diuers triumphes and Iusts these forraine Princes were led as it were by the hand of amasement to magnifie, and extoll the heroicke spirits of our nation.⁶³

Recent Marlowe criticism has explored links between *Tamburlaine* and Ireland, both in terms of Edmund Spenser's excavation of the Scythian origins of the Irish, and the analogies that can be drawn between England's western enterprise and its colonial ambitions in the East.⁶⁴ Where Gainsford depicts the English colonial governor as *Tamburlaine*, 'Scythian *Tamburlaine*' conversely resembles the Irish as seen by their English colonisers.⁶⁵ *Tamburlaine*'s physical resemblance to Spenser's Irish kerns with their 'glibbes' or long fringes has been noted, with his 'knot of amber hair' (*I*

⁶² Thomas Gainsford, *The glory of England* (London, 1618), pp. 316-17.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 322-3.

⁶⁴ See Kimberley Anne Coles, 'West of England: The Irish Specter in *Tamburlaine*' in *A Companion to Tudor Literature*, ed. by Kent Cartwright (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 459-74; and Lisa Hopkins, "'And shall I die, and this unconquered?': Marlowe's Inverted Colonialism.' *Early Modern Literary Studies* 2: 2 (1996) <URL: <http://purl.oclc.org/emls/02-2/hopkmarl.html>> (1.1-23).

⁶⁵ Andrew Hadfield, 'Briton and Scythian: Tudor Representations of Irish Origins', *Irish Historical Studies* 28: 112 (1993), 390-5.

Tamburlaine 2.1.23).⁶⁶ Tamburlaine looks west when he speaks of ‘Keeping in awe the Bay of Portingale,/ And all the ocean by the British shore’ (3.3.258–9). Tamburlaine ‘means to be a terror to the world,/ Measuring the limits of his empery/ By east and west’ (1.2.39–40).

If the Irish aspect of the *Tamburlaine* plays is in the process of being mapped out then *Edward II* has a more established claim to an Irish context. The idea of a court that is as mobile as the monarch has implications for the presentation of Ireland as an alternative royal power base.⁶⁷ According to Hopkins, Marlowe’s preoccupation with ‘colonialism, foreignness, and the relation of different nationalities to one another’ is evident throughout his work: ‘All of his plays except one, *Edward II*, are set abroad’.⁶⁸ Yet Hopkins goes on to say that: ‘*Edward II* ironically pits the foreign Gaveston against the equally foreign queen, and temporarily banishes Gaveston to that perennial site of colonial struggle, Ireland’.⁶⁹ For Marcie Bianco, ‘it is in Ireland’s simultaneous elusiveness and ubiquity that it manifests itself as a powerful force in *Edward II*’.⁷⁰ Bianco points to Gaveston’s ‘role as the metonymic embodiment of Ireland, which is very much related to his position as sodomite. Indeed, Gaveston [...] comes to figure as the nodal point where Ireland and sodomy intersect in *Edward II*’.⁷¹ Bianco reveals the degree to which the languages of nation and the body are fused in relation to Ireland:

Ireland [...] is the ultimate example of the dangerous blurring of inside and outside. While not discounting the various external threats posed by Scotland, France, and the Netherlands in *Edward II*, the threat Ireland poses to England is vastly different from and more significant than these other threats because of its association with the already subversive figure of Gaveston. The play’s two predominant discourses — on sodomy and on the nation-state — converge in the figure of Gaveston.⁷²

⁶⁶ Frank Swannack, ‘The Abuse of History in Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine part one* and Spenser’s *A view of the state of Ireland*’ in *History is Mostly Repair and Revenge: Discourses of/on History in Literature in English*, ed. by Liliana Sikorska (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2009), p. 46.

⁶⁷ On the court as a moveable feast for favourites and factions see Peter Sillitoe, “‘Where is the court but here?’: Undetermined Elite Space and Marlowe’s *Edward II*” *Literature Compass* 1 (2004), 1-15.

Historically, how mobile the court was and how powerful was Gaveston is revealed by the fact that when the real Edward II went to France in January 1308 to be wed he left the earl of Cornwall as regent. See Harold F. Hutchison, ‘Edward II and his Minions’. *History Today* 21.8 (1971): 544.

⁶⁸ Hopkins, “‘And shall I die, and this unconquered?’” (para 6 of 23).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Bianco (para. 4 of 21).

⁷¹ *Ibid.* (para. 1 of 21).

⁷² *Ibid.* (para. 8 of 21).

According to Bianco: ‘Marlowe’s play does not prescribe to the overarching trajectory identified by critics as the theatre’s symptomatic expression of contemporary Anglo-Irish relations, which they have derived from analyses of Shakespeare’s early histories. *Edward II* figures Ireland differently — from the margins, and from the behind’.⁷³ Thus for Bianco: ‘The portrayal of Ireland in *Edward II* — more than in any other early modern play where it figures as an explicit “point of reference” — epitomises how it was perceived by England as something slippery and unstable, present but also absent’.⁷⁴ Bianco builds on the work of Jonathan Gil Harris, who argues that: ‘Incursion through the anus was frequently employed as a figure for an illicit “back door” entrance to the body politic. In Marlowe’s *Edward II*, sodomy corporeally maps — at least for the envious Mortimer and his faction — the intolerable infiltration of a French “base mushrump” into the English bodies of the king and country’.⁷⁵ Edward II sounds like Tamburlaine the Great when he threatens Gaveston’s detractors with destruction:

How fast they run to banish him I love;
 They would not stir, were it to do me good.
 Why should a king be subject to a priest?
 Proud Rome, that hatchest such imperial grooms,
 With these thy superstitious taper-lights,
 Wherewith thy antichristian churches blaze,
 I’ll fire thy crazed buildings, and enforce
 The papal towers to kiss the lowly ground,
 With slaughtered priests make Tiber’s channel swell,
 And banks raised higher with their sepulchres.
 As for the peers that back the clergy thus,
 If I be King, not one of them shall live. (4.94–105)

Stephen O’Neill has elegantly explored the implications of Kent’s aside, ‘Unhappy Edward, chas’d from England’s bounds’.⁷⁶ O’Neill demonstrates the extent to which *Edward II* is a play bound up with boundaries and with a sense of a beleaguered England:

⁷³ Ibid (para 21 of 21).

⁷⁴ Ibid (para. 14 of 21).

⁷⁵ Jonathan Gil Harris, *Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic: Discourses of Social Pathology in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 87.

⁷⁶ Stephen O’Neill, “‘Chas’d from England’s Bounds’: Marlowe’s *Edward II* and Exile in Ireland’ in *Staging Ireland: Representations in Shakespeare and Renaissance Drama* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), pp. 90-103.

Defeated abroad, neighboured by the rebellious Irish, bordered by the powerful Scots and ruled by an ineffective king, England is imagined as a besieged and vulnerable space, its external difficulties merging with internal ones. The Scottish incursion is the most imminent — Mortimer has already asked the king to ransom his father who has been taken by the Scots — but, like the other problems, it is presented as a direct consequence of Gaveston's overbearing influence on the king. Mention of English reversal in Ireland invariably recalls Gaveston's role as a royal representative there, the inference being that Gaveston is as ineffective as governor of Ireland as Edward is a king of England. The centre, it seems, is now dangerously close to the margins, the kingdom little more than a Pale.⁷⁷

Reading *Edward II* Seamus Heaney was struck by the use of Ireland as a place of exile and in particular a place where the private griefs of the English could be exorcised, making it a pretext rather than a context:

[I was] conscious of the banishment to Ireland of Gaveston, the king's favourite, as something more than a shift of plot. Inevitably, in the present intellectual climate, it was hard not to read in Gaveston's relegation to the status of non-person an equal relegation of Ireland to the status of non-place. By its inclusion within the realm of English influence, late-medieval Ireland had become at once an annexe of the civil conquerors and the locus of a barbarism that had to be held at bay.⁷⁸

As O'Neill observes, 'the idea of the king forcibly externalized from the geographic boundaries of his kingdom is more symbolic than literal because, unlike Gaveston, Edward never reaches his destination. Ireland proves to be Edward's final but elusive chance of escape'.⁷⁹ Ireland functions as an escape route, an alternative power base, and a staging post both for rebellion and royal recuperation: 'As Edward unwittingly retraces the steps and fortunes of his beloved, it seems as if, on a symbolic level, he is seeking out that "nook or corner" where they can be together. In the play's drama of desire, Ireland is figured as a space of safe exile, the potential site for this symbolic reunification. Ultimately, then, the idyllic "nook" is located somewhere between Ireland

⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 98.

⁷⁸ Seamus Heaney, 'Extending the Alphabet: On Christopher Marlowe's 'Hero and Leander'', in *The Redress of Poetry* (London: Faber, 1995), pp. 22-3; cited in O'Neill, p. 94.

⁷⁹ O'Neill, p. 102.

and England, an interstice or in-between space where Edward and Gaveston can be free from English barons turned Irish rebels'.⁸⁰ O'Neill thus concludes that 'It is the barons' objection to Gaveston that forces Edward to send him to Ireland, later envisaged as a potential refuge from the barons for Edward himself'.⁸¹

The historical Edward II, in a letter to the Pope urging him not to allow an Irishman to be Bishop of Cashel in Ireland, called the Irish beastly and ignorant:

From the first the Irish Parliament was exclusively colonial in its composition; throughout the Middle Ages no Irish names occur in the lists of magnates summoned. Bishops or clerical proctors of Irish birth may sometimes have been present, though the jealousy with which the native and Anglo-Irish clergy regarded each other makes their presence improbable. In a letter from Edward II to the Pope, written in August 1316, it is stated that if an Irishman became Archbishop of Cashel English authority would be seriously endangered. As in the same letter the native Irish (*puros Hibernicos*) are described as *bestiales et indoctos*, it seems unlikely that writs of summons were often issued to Irish prelates.⁸²

While the topic of topography in Marlowe's work has been debated his plays have not been sufficiently exploited as resources for understanding contemporary archipelagic anxieties and ambitions.⁸³ Marlowe's preoccupation with place has not been given the attention it deserves, most especially from an 'archipelagic' standpoint, despite a growing interest in the politics of representation in Renaissance geographies, including Shakespeare's drama. According to Jerry Brotton, 'it is important to distinguish between Shakespeare's use of maps and geography with the more integral role that geography plays in the drama of his contemporaries, most noticeably Marlowe. Both parts of *Tamburlaine Parts I and II* draw extensively on the maps and geographical rhetoric to be found in Abraham Ortelius's hugely influential atlas, *Theatrum orbis terrarum* (1570) [...] which [...] is symptomatic of the intimate rhetorical relations between theatre, globe, and atlas'.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 103.

⁸¹ Ibid, p. 91.

⁸² M. V. Clarke, 'Irish Parliaments in the Reign of Edward II', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th series, 9 (1926), 29-62 (pp. 32-3).

⁸³ See Lisa Hopkins. 'Englishmen Abroad: Mobility and Nationhood in *Dido, Queen of Carthage* and *Edward II*', *English* 59: 227 (2010), 324-348.

⁸⁴ Jerry Brotton, 'Tragedy and Geography', in *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works, Volume I: The Tragedies*, ed. by Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 219-40 (p. 220).

Tamburlaine 1 ends with Tamburlaine looking westward — and forward — to ‘Keeping in awe the Bay of Portingale,/ And all the ocean by the British shore’ (3.3.258–9). *Tamburlaine 2* opens with his reported reach ‘To Amazonia under Capricorn/ And thence as far as Archipelago’ (1.1.74–5). Few editors link the ‘British shore’ with the ‘Archipelago’, yet the extent of Tamburlaine’s conquered territories depends on how we gloss these terms, and how we view Marlowe’s coordinates more broadly.⁸⁵ Recent work on the ‘Atlantic Archipelago’ invites us to look afresh at Marlowe’s complex depiction of space and place.⁸⁶ Regardless of its origins as a word alluding to the strip of sea between Greece and Turkey, by as early as the mid-sixteenth century ‘Archipelago’ could apply to any group of islands on the globe, as is evidenced by an account of the West Indies which refers to an expedition that ‘numbered above seven and fortie Islands and called the place *Archipelagus*’.⁸⁷ Likewise, when Martin Frobisher’s quest for a northwest passage to the orient took him to the Arctic — ‘Meta Incognita’ — these unknown limits had to be mapped in familiar terms: ‘These broken landes and Ilandes, being very many in number, do seeme to make there an *Archipelagus*, which as they all differ in greatnesse, forme, and fashion one from another, so are they in goodnesse, couloure, and soyle muche vnlike’.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Recent editions gloss ‘Archipelago’ as ‘the islands of the Aegean’: ‘The geography runs from the intersection of the meridian with the tropic of Cancer, south to *Amazonia* (in Africa, west of Mozambique), and north again to *Archipelago*, the islands of the Aegean’. See J. S. Cunningham and Eithne Henson (eds.), *Tamburlaine the Great: Christopher Marlowe* (Revels Student Editions, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), p. 141. See also David Fuller (ed.), *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe, Volume V: Tamburlaine the Great, Parts 1 and 2* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 231: ‘*Archipelago*: i.e., the islands of the Aegean, above north Africa’. According to D. K. Smith, ‘In bringing this ‘world of people’ to the battle, Tamburlaine can be seen to manipulate, not just the forces of his army, but the map’. See D. K. Smith, ‘Conquering Geography: Sir Walter Raleigh, Christopher Marlowe, and the Cartographic Imagination’, in *The Cartographic Imagination in Early Modern England*, p. 130. That manipulation, we submit, extends to the British shore. According to the *OED*, ‘Archipelago’ has a complex etymology, from Italian for the ‘chief sea’ — the Aegean — it morphed into any islanded seascape: ‘Hence (as this is studded with many isles): Any sea, or sheet of water, in which there are numerous islands; and *transf.* a group of islands’.

⁸⁶ See most notably John Kerrigan, *Archipelagic English: Literature, History, and Politics 1603–1707* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁸⁷ Sebastian Münster, *A treatyse of the newe India with other newe founde landes and islandes, aswell eastwarde as westwarde, as they are knowen and found in these oure dayes, after the description of Sebastian Munster in his booke of universall cosmographie: wherin the diligent reader may see the good successe and rewarde of noble and honeste enterpryses, by the which not only worldly ryches are obtayned, but also God is glorified, [and] the Christian faythe enlarged. Translated out of Latin into Englishe. By Rycharde Eden* (London, 1553), Hiii^{r-v}.

⁸⁸ George Best, *A true discourse of the late voyages of discoverie, for the finding of a passage to Cathaya* (London, 1578), p. 60.

In this essay we have explored a range of cartographical cruces in Marlowe's work, including the dramatic depiction of archipelagic anxieties in *Edward II* and *Tamburlaine*. An oft-quoted passage from Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* holds particular resonance for considerations of Marlowe's mappings: 'Just as none of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. That struggle is complex and interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about forms, about images and imaginings'.⁸⁹ It is about scholars and canons and the power of picturing places. Such observations are given further piquancy when considered alongside early modern dramaturgy's interaction with one of Said's main theoretical touchstones: orientalism. According to Jonathan Burton, early modern ideas about the orient retained a persistent fluidity: 'If a certain fixity of representation, or consistency, characterizes the eighteenth-century encounters Said investigates in *Orientalism*, their sixteenth-century antecedents were contrastingly ductile'.⁹⁰ Ductility is a hallmark both of Marlowe's protagonists and the Marlovian canon more broadly. By the same token, Renaissance notions about the Archipelago, as John Kerrigan and others have shown, are more nuanced than modern British histories allow, forcing us to reconsider monolithic conceptions of issues such as identity, language and culture. The signs of what Edward Said terms 'the struggle over geography' can be found throughout Marlowe's corpus, and his preoccupation with the exotic should not blind us to geography closer to home.⁹¹ With his location at a transitional moment in the history of topography, and the playful representation of place in his disorienting dramatic depictions of a changing world, mapping Marlowe represents a challenge, but in a world shaped by conquests and colonisations it is a challenge worth taking on.⁹²

⁸⁹ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), p. 7.

⁹⁰ Jonathan Burton, 'Anglo-Ottoman Relations and the Image of the Turk in *Tamburlaine*', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30: 1 (2000), 125–56 (p. 128).

⁹¹ For example, close to home for the authors of this essay, Hopkins suggests in the conclusion to her study of border-crossings in early modern English drama that 'Marlowe and Scotland' would be a fruitful field of inquiry. See Lisa Hopkins, *Shakespeare on the Edge: Border-crossing in the Tragedies and the Henriad* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 132–3.

⁹² The authors are grateful to the anonymous reader of this essay for constructive comments and suggestive signposting, and look forward to developing further archipelagic readings of Marlowe.