

## The Epilogue in *Doctor Faustus*: The Petrarchan Context

Roy Eriksen, University of Agder at Kristiansand

### *Abstract*

Metaphors used in Epilogue in *Doctor Faustus*, particularly the cut branch and Apollo's burned laurel bough, are indicative of Marlowe's intellectual involvement with Petrarch and the former's role in the literary circle centered on the Countess of Pembroke. His Latin epistle to Mary Sidney in Thomas Watson's *Amyntas* (1592) repeats similar metaphors, and the combination in the Epilogue of these images with that of the "forward wits" point both to Petrarch's Sonnet 269 ("Rotta l'alta colonna e 'l verde lauro") and Sonnet 307 ("I' pensava assai desto esser sul l'ale"). In fact, lines in the Epilogue are strongly evocative of some verses in Sonnet 307, where Petrarch ponders the theme of overreaching. The Epilogue thus would document a continuation of the interest in Petrarch that is so evident in the Tamburlaine plays.

\* \* \*

WHAT does the Epilogue in *Doctor Faustus* tell us about Marlowe's literary preferences and aspirations? It contains but eight verses, but these are verses fraught with metaphors and allusions that display a density of meaning worthy of accomplished sonneteers like Petrarch, Michelangelo and Shakespeare:

Cut is the branch that might haue growne full straight,  
And burned is *Apollo's* Lawrell bough,  
That some time grew within this learned man,  
    *Faustus* is gone, regard his hellish fall,  
Whose fiendfull fortune may exhort the wise  
Onely to wonder at vnlawfull things:  
Whose deepnesse doth intice such forward wits  
To practise more then heauenly power permits. (2114–2121)<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> All references are to Greg 1950.

## 2 Roy Eriksen

These powerful lines establish what Harry Levin termed the play's "celestial-infernal antithesis"<sup>2</sup> by juxtaposing images of learning and ascent against images of punishment and downfall. Marlowe describes the condemnation of overreaching ambition and the clash of irreconcilable forces involved in a manner recalling a well-known Renaissance emblem featuring a scholar with wings attached to his raised right arm and a heavy rock in his left. The image with the accompanying four-verse Latin poem was first printed by Andrea Alciati in 1531 and repeated by Geoffrey Whitney in 1586.<sup>3</sup> By sheer coincidence, another variant of the emblem is also printed on the frontispiece of the 1604-version of *Doctor Faustus*, being the personal emblem of the tragedy's printer. In addition to bearing on the protagonist's desperate state in his final soliloquy, where the scholar is torn precisely between heaven and hell, Marlowe's verses also point to his own ambitions as a poet and his choice of literary models – in this case Petrarch, who seems to have been one of his favourite poets.<sup>4</sup> Of course, Marlowe did not leave us any sonnet sequence and the chances are very slight indeed that we shall ever come across sonnets by Marlowe.<sup>5</sup> After surveying the critics who have written on Marlowe and the sonnet, Patrick Cheney conjectures that "we may at least have three Marlovian sonnets."<sup>6</sup> Possibly, D. Nicholar Ransom's suggestion that Marlowe hides behind "Phaeton" in the

---

<sup>2</sup> Levin 1961: 154.

<sup>3</sup> The first emblem in Alciati 1531: Sig A8ro, "Paupertatum svmmis ingeniis obesse ne provehantur" ["That poverty is an obstacle to great talents, to stop them advancing, "], see also Whitney 1969: 40–41. Although mentioning the scholar's proverbial poverty as an obstacle, Whitney's verses are more Faustian in its mention of the scholar's "desire" to win "immortal fame" (2) and "will ... mount aloft (7),

<sup>4</sup> Eriksen 1986: 13–25.

<sup>5</sup> If we consider Marlowe's propensity to repeat his own conceits in different texts (cf. Levin 1961: 148–149), it is not inconceivable that he even may have composed his own but no longer extant version of Sonnet 269 to commemorate Sir Philip. As for the unlikeliness that Marlowe was the author of 16 sonnets by in a ms. by "C.M," see Chauduri 1988: 199–216.

<sup>6</sup> Cheney 1997: 11.

dedicatory sonnet to John Florio's *First Fruits* (1591) is the most likely one, but it is neither a Petrarchan sonnet in form nor content.<sup>7</sup>

Petrarch's sonnets were imitated by several generations of Elizabethan poets, between the early formal experimenters Wyatt and Surrey, through Sackville and Gascoigne, to accomplished sonneteers like Sidney, Spenser, Daniel and Shakespeare.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, sonnets did not appear solely in individual collections of poetry, or "sequences," the term derived from George Gascoigne's *terza sequenza* of sonnets in *The Adventures of Master F.J.* (1573). Sonnets also figured as dedications, epitaphs and other types of paratextual materials, or as included in anthologies, in *novelle* such as *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594), and in plays such as *Romeo and Juliet* and *As You Like It*. Of course, Shakespeare is not the first dramatist to incorporate sonnets or sonnet material into plays. His famous contemporary Marlowe did, whose extant sonnets are few and incomplete, but left us no such sequence, unless we accept the probable assumption that his translation of Ovid's *Elegies* is his main contribution to the vogue?<sup>9</sup> In this he followed his friend Thomas Watson in the latter's unorthodox, but at the same time unorthodox, response to Petrarch in his two sonnet sequences.<sup>10</sup>

Paul H. Kocher was the first to point out that Marlowe had integrated sonnets into his drama, when in 1945 he identified a blank verse sonnet embedded in a speech in *Tamburlaine, Part One*, V, ii, 135-91.<sup>11</sup> Then in 1976 James Robinson Howe argued that Marlowe drew on Giordano Bruno's sonnet sequence *De gl'heroici furori* (1585) for its metaphorical mode of speech,<sup>12</sup> and further evidence that Marlowe used the philosopher's sonnet sequence in *Doctor Faustus* appeared in 1987.<sup>13</sup> A third stage in the search for Marlowe the sonneteer was Nicholas Ransom's reasonable proposal that Marlowe is the "Phaeton," who

---

<sup>7</sup> D. Nicholas Ransom, "A Marlowe Sonnet?" in *Publications of the Arkansas Philological Association*, 1979, vol. 5, 1-8.

<sup>8</sup> See e.g. Mortimer 2005 and Kirkpatrick 1995.

<sup>9</sup> Cheney 1997: 331 and Brown 2003: 106-126.

<sup>10</sup> Watson 1582 and 1593.

<sup>11</sup> Kocher 1945:1945.

<sup>12</sup> Robinson Howe 1976.

<sup>13</sup> Eriksen 1987: 59-102. See also Thomas and William Tydeman 2001: 176.

#### 4 Roy Eriksen

contributed a commendatory sonnet to John Florio's *Second Frutes*.<sup>14</sup> In actual fact, Marlowe's concern with the Italian sonnet also extends to Petrarch himself, when the *Canzoniere* furnished metaphors for Tamburlaine's speeches to Zenocrate.<sup>15</sup> Even so, it is surprising in that some of Marlowe's best known lines – the opening lines of the Epilogue in *Doctor Faustus* – emulate the opening of a well-known sonnet by the Italian poet:

Cut is the branch that might haue growne full straight,  
And burned is *Apollo's* Lawrell bough,  
That some time grew within this learned man,  
*Faustus* is gone: (2114–17)

These verses pick up the imagery of employed by Petrarch in *II Canzoniere*:

Rotta è l'alta colonna e 'l verde lauro  
che facean ombra al mio stanco pensiero:  
perduto ho quel che ritrovar non spero,/ ... :<sup>16</sup>

In Robert Durling's translation the lines read:

Broken are the high Column and the green Laurel  
that gave shade to my weary cares;  
I have lost what I do not hope to find again,/ ....

Apart from noting the elegiac tone of voice and the strong emphasis on loss, we recognize in Marlowe's verses reworked versions of Petrarch's striking imagery: the cut branch and the laurel. The "burned ... Lawrell bough" echoes the "verde lauro" that refers to the loss of Laura and, as I shall explain in greater detail below, the "cut branch" echoes the "Rotta ... colonna" [broken column] that refers to the death of Petrarch's patron.

---

<sup>14</sup> See Ransom's proposal (1979: 1–8) that Marlowe is the "Phaeton," who in 1592 contributed a sonnet to Florio's *Second frutes*.

<sup>15</sup> Eriksen 1986: 13–25.

<sup>16</sup> Durling 1981: 442.

However, in Marlowe's text it also marks the loss of hope of redemption, as the branch often expressed hope.<sup>17</sup>

In fact, the laurel *per se* was commonplace for learning and virtue and was used as such in emblems from Alciati onwards,<sup>18</sup> a fact cited by modern editors of *Doctor Faustus*.<sup>19</sup> Earlier critics have argued in favour of another source for the metaphor of the branch, proposing that it derives from Thomas Churchyard's use of a couplet containing tree-metaphors in "The Tragedy of Shore's Wife" in *A Mirroure for Magistrates*:

They brake the bowes and shakte the tree by sleight  
And bent the wand that might haue growne full streight.<sup>20</sup>

Jump notes that the dramatist "evidently allowed his moving line to be suggested ... by [his] minor contemporary" (p. 179). Although Churchyard has the phrase "bent the wand," where Marlowe writes "cut is the branch," it is conceivable that Marlowe echoes the full phrase "that might haue growne full streight" in the Epilogue, but that the similarity ends there. For even though the distinctly tragic mode of the passage in "The Tragedy of Shore's Wife" supports a general link between the two relative clauses, the metaphorical and structural parallels between Sonnet 269 and the Epilogue are far closer and more specific.

Petrarch presents Laura throughout the *Canzoniere* as Daphne who is metamorphosed into a laurel to escape the wanton embraces of Apollo. Still, Sonnet 269 is not only a commemorative sonnet on Petrarch's beloved, the poem also has a political context by being a meditation on the death of his patron. The sonnet does in fact draw on a tradition of

---

<sup>17</sup> I am grateful to Peter Young who pointed out that power is added to Marlowe's lines because in emblems the branch often asserts hope, as the commonplace of new life, as in John 15.1-7; cf. O'Brien 1970: 1-11. Another example is Pericles, Sc. 6, 44ff., where "A withered branch" is Pericles's *impresa* with the motto "In hac spe vivo." See also Wells 2006: 222. In Petrarch, too, the broken laurel signals loss of hope.

<sup>18</sup> Henkel and Schöne 1996: 202-204.

<sup>19</sup> Gill 1990: 87 and Bevington and Rasmussen 1993: 198.

<sup>20</sup> See Campbell 1938: 378; Thaler 1923: 89-92; Martin 1950:182, and Jump 1988: 179.

6 Roy Eriksen

poems lamenting the untimely death of political leaders of great, but unfulfilled, promise.

One such poem that directly influenced Sonnet 269 is the widely used treatise *De poetria nova* (c. 1210) by the Norman grammarian and rhetorician Geoffrey de Vinsauf. In the treatise the author incorporates an elegy on the death of Richard II of England, the “Luctus Ricardi,” in which the murdered king is likened to a broken column, whose fall will cause “Anglia” to mourn:

Iam cito rumpetur speculum, speculatio cuius  
Gloria tanta tibi; sidus patietur eclipsim,  
A quo fulges; nutabit rupta columna,  
Unde trahis vires; ...  
“For soon will the mirror, from which you shine,  
will suffer eclipse; the broken column,  
from which you drew your strength, will totter; ...” [340-343]<sup>21</sup>

de Vinsauf’s striking metaphor of “the broken column” [*rupta columna*] in “Luctus Ricardi” clearly is the source of the “rotta colonna” in Petrarch’s sonnet and one that serves his special case particularly well, for the metaphor of the column [It. *colonna*] points to a member of one the oldest aristocratic families of Rome.<sup>22</sup> The powerful Colonna had held important offices within the Church for centuries and rose to the Holy See when Odo Colonna was elected pope at the Council at Konstanz with the name of Pope Martin V (1417–31). In Sonnet 269, however, the metaphor refers to his earlier relative, Cardinal Giovanni Colonna, whose sudden death in 1348 marking the end of the poet’s hopes for a politically unified Italy.

It was no doubt the popularity among poets of *De poetria nova* and the widespread circulation of Petrarch’s *Il Canzoniere* that caused Sir Thomas Wyatt to reshape the “political” Sonnet 269 so that it became a lament on the death of his own patron, Thomas Cromwell.<sup>23</sup> His motivation being purely political, he consequently leaves out any

---

<sup>21</sup> Gallo 1971: 32-33.

<sup>22</sup>The poet deploys the metaphor at least four times in the *Canzoniere* (10, 266, 268, and 269), most strikingly perhaps in Sonnet 269.

<sup>23</sup> See Muir 1963: 172-210.

mention of Petrarch's favourite metaphor for his beloved Laura, Apollo's "onorata e sacra fronde":

The pillar perish'd is whereto I leant,  
The strongest stay of my unquiet mind ;  
The like of it no man again can find,  
From east to west still seeking though he went,  
To mine unhap. ...<sup>24</sup>

It is not unlikely that Wyatt would have known not only Petrarch but also the "English" origin of the metaphor in the "Luctus Ricardi."

In Sonnet 269 the "verde lauro" is said to have comforted the poet when the loss of his patron frustrated his hope of preferment ("facean ombra al mio stanco pensiero"), a point which would make the parallel with "*Apollo's* Lawrell bough,/ That some time grew within this learned man" more exact. In Marlowe's Epilogue, too, the laurel comes close to being an image of lost spiritual sustenance, in addition to being an emblem of fame, learning and art, alluding to Faustus's scorching mistress by means of the verb "burn."<sup>25</sup> Then, too, the "Lawrell bough" recalls the epithet "coniurer Laureate" which appears in the A-version (l. 276 A).

In addition to these points of resemblance, the two passages share a parallel semantic and syntactic structure which comprises two parallel relative clauses, leading to an acoustically well-balanced verse (2117).<sup>26</sup> The idea of adapting Sonnet 269 to a new poetic context may have been prompted by the fame of Wyatt's successful poem, but we should not

---

<sup>24</sup> Yeowell 1904: 18.

<sup>25</sup> Helen not only "burnt the toplesse Towres of *Ilium*" (l. 1875), she also is the one whom Faustus calls upon to sack Wittenberg (l. 1882), the source of his learning and fame.

<sup>26</sup> Both passages display an inverted past tense in initial position ("rotta è" against "cut is"), while Petrarch's implied *rotto è* [broken is] corresponds syntactically to Marlowe's "burned is." These inverted forms are followed by simple tense forms signifying duration ("facean ombra" as against "some time grew"), which in turn latch on to yet another present perfect tense ("perduto ho"[I have lost] *versus* "is gone") in the lines that follow, the tense alterations being intriguingly close

forget that the poet–dramatist had first hand knowledge of Petrarch.<sup>27</sup> Marlowe seized on the laurel as an emblem of learning, changing the *colonna*-image to accord with the laurel – a change of metaphor possibly in keeping with the imagery in Petrarch's Sonnet 10 (“Gloriosa columna in cui s’ appoggia”), in which Petrarch aligns another member of the family, Stefano Colonna the Elder, with tall trees as he remarks that only Colonna’s exile from Rome cuts, or curtails, (“tronchi”) the poet’s happiness.

Then, too, Sonnet 269 is a lament addressed to Death personified (“Morte;” 5); Petrarch perceives the sudden deaths of his patron and of his idolized mistress as his personal punishment for his own careless living and pride (“viver lieto e gire altero;” 7). He places this punishment within the irrevocable scheme of fate, and he despairs because he knows that there exists no remedy: “Ma se consentimento è di destino,/ che poss’ io più ...” (9–10). The sonnet concludes with a brief meditation on the swiftness with which calamity strikes:

Uom’ perde agevolmente in un mattino  
 quel ch’ n molti anni a gran pena s’ acquista (13-14)  
 (“How easily man loses in one morning  
 what is bought with great pain in many years!”[author’s translation])

Such ideas can serve as a comment on the scholars’ discovery of Faustus in the morning. Although four related images – the cut column, or branch, the laurel, the references to a loss implying death and destiny – appear in both texts in the same order, there is no simple one-to-one relationship between sonnet and epilogue. Only the Epilogue’s striking initial images link it firmly to Petrarch’s highly wrought poem.

As Dino Provenzal has remarked in his edition of *Il Canzoniere*, Petrarch turns his moralizing sonnet monologue into a tangle of artificial similarities (“tutto un intrico di similitudini artificiose”).<sup>28</sup> It has an ‘oblique’ structure where the many similies (1–12) lead to the application in the two last lines. Marlowe who takes his cue from Petrarch’s initial

---

<sup>27</sup> See above at note 4.

<sup>28</sup> Petrarch 1954: 341.



images, joins them together in a new and balanced construction that gives added weight to the paradoxical ideas conveyed.

The first part of that new structure is kept together by two parallel main clauses followed by two parallel relative clauses (2114-2116), and an application in an acoustically chiasmic verse: "*Faustus* is gone, regard his hellish fall" (2117). In the Epilogue's second part he balances this structure against two expanded parallel relative clauses introduced by an anaphoric "whose" (2118, 2120), and in both parts he uses rhetorical repetitions to establish and to cement internal relationships. Like Petrarch, then, he marshalls his rhetorical skills to reinforce the paradoxical and enticing attraction of forbidden knowledge.

On turning to the actual phrasing of ideas in the second half of the Epilogue, it should now come as no surprise that Marlowe here, too, reveals his reading in Petrarch. The poem is Sonnet 307, "I' pensava assai destro esser sul l'ale" ("I thought I was skillful enough in flight") in which the metaphor of the ill-fated branch figures prominently. In fact, some of the lines in the second part of the Epilogue read almost like translations of Sonnet 307, which I here quote in full: another set of verses that metaphorically continue the imagery of Petrarch on the theme of overreaching. The most striking example is, perhaps, Marlowe's warning to "forward wits" not "to practise more then heavenly power permits" (ll. 2120; 2121). The lines are strongly evocative of some verses in Sonnet 307:

I' pensava assai destro esser sul l'ale  
(non per lor forza, ma chi le spiega)  
per gir cantando a quell nodo eguale  
onde Marte m'assolve, Amor mi lega.

Trovaimi a l'opra via più lento et frale  
d'un picciol ramo cui gran fascio piega,  
et dissi: A cader va chi troppo sale,  
né si fa ben per uom quel che 'l ciel nega'.

Mai non poria volar penna d'ingegno,  
non che stil grave o lingua, ove Natura  
volò tessendo il mio dolce ritengo;

## 10 Roy Eriksen

sequilla Amor con sì mirabil cura  
in adorarlo, ch'i' non era degno  
pur de la vista; ma fu mia ventura.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore this happens to be the second sonnet on failed ambition in which the overreacher is compared to a branch. Actually, this ill-fated branch, too, is not allowed to grow full straight (“un picciol *ramo* cui gran fascio piega”), because it is “bent by a great burden”. Interestingly, when we read on in the quatrain we see that the metaphor of the branch is followed by what may be seen as the source for the Epilogue’s concluding words on Faustus:

Whose fiendfull fortune may exhort the wise  
Onely to wonder at vnlawfull things:  
Whose deepnesse doth intice such forward wits  
To practise more then heauenly power permits. (11. 2118-2121).

The warning to “forward wits” not “[t]o practise more then heauenly power permits” closely parallels Petrarch’s verse “né si fa ben da uom quel che ‘l ciel nega” (“nor can a man well do what heaven does not permit”; or to render the line more closely: “as a human [né da uom] you cannot easily do [né fa ben] what heaven forbids”). For as the next line informs us, ‘man’ here refers to a “penna d’ingegno” (literally “feather of

---

<sup>29</sup> In Durling’s translation (1981: 486) this reads:

I thought I was skilful enough in flight (not by my own power, but  
by his who spreads my wings) to sing worthily of that lovely  
knot from which Death looses me, with which Love binds me.

I found myself much more slow and frail in operation than a little  
branch bent by a great burden, and I said. He flies to fall who  
mounts too high, nor can a man well do what the heavens deny him.

Never could any pinion of wit, let alone a heavy style or tongue,  
fly so high as Nature did when she made my sweet impediment;

Love followed Nature with such marvelous care to adorn her  
that I was not worthy even to see her: but my good fortune willed it.

wit”). It is a term that very likely inspired Marlowe’s suggestive metaphor of “forward wits.”

Then, too, the forward, and fallen, wit in the Epilogue of *Doctor Faustus* recalls Icarus in the Prologue, whose “waxen wings did mount about his reach”(B 21), thus the two references to transgressive flying frame the tragedy, as it were. And if we accept the likely identification of Marlowe as Shakespeare’s rival poet, then Shakespeare’s Sonnet 78 may provide indirect confirmation of Marlowe’s translation of Petrarch’s “penna d’ingegno” as “forward wits:” Southampton’s eyes, Shakespeare tells us, “have added feathers to the learned’s wing” (7),<sup>30</sup> so that he would appear to apply Petrarch’s phrase “penna d’ingegno” to the poetry of his Icarus-like rival, or to the self-styled “Phaeton” who authored the sonnet in Florio’s *Second Fruits*.<sup>31</sup> As the probable date of the rival poet sonnet is as early as the autumn of 1592 and the likely date of composition of *Doctor Faustus* is about 1589, the Petrarchan image would provide an interesting context.<sup>32</sup> It may well be that Shakespeare’s phrase reflects a desire to pinpoint his rival’s reshaping of Petrarch’s conceits in *Doctor Faustus*,<sup>33</sup> but that he thereby possibly opened himself to an attack by Robert Greene for sporting borrowed “feathers,”<sup>34</sup> because feathers also were associated with plagiarism.

Although Petrarch and Marlowe make quite plain that there is a limit to transgression, both allow aspiring minds the freedom to speculate about forbidden things as long as they do not attempt to convert theory into practice. Petrarch’s “penna d’ingegno” may therefore soar only in learned writing or speech (“stil grave o lingua”), which is also what he does, whereas Marlowe’s “forward wits” may “onely ... wonder” at the

---

<sup>30</sup> Durling’s rendering “a heavy style or tongue” is infelicitous and obscures the fact that Petrarch refers to written or spoken compositions in the high or learned style.

<sup>31</sup> See above at note 10.

<sup>32</sup> See Jump 1968: 104 and Gill 1971: 389.

<sup>33</sup> Rowse (1981: 173–80) sees Sonnet 78 as one of the sonnets that support the hypothesis that Marlowe was Shakespeare’s rival. See the recent presentation in Wells (2006: 75–195) of Marlowe and Shakespeare as likely associates or friends, also Eriksen 2008: 191–200.

<sup>34</sup> Eriksen 2008:195–97.

deepness of things unlawful. Both in terms of semantics and syntax the relationship of “I’ pensava assai destro esser sul l’ale” and the Epilogue’s final lines is close,<sup>35</sup> suggesting the sonnet context that prompted it. Naturally, Marlowe adds a new and sinister dimension to the feelings of human inadequacy lamented by Petrarch. Petrarch’s persona and Faustus have both been overconfident as regards their ability to their obtain goals, but the difference between the degree of their ambitions reminds us that Marlowe’s magus who wishes to “mount, and ascend to heauen” (2064), is a contemporary of Bruno.<sup>36</sup>

The resulting “petrarchan” Epilogue, therefore, owes its coherence and suggestiveness to Marlowe’s imagination and ability to reshape what he borrowed. The probable echo from *Shore’s Wife* in the Epilogue’s first line may serve to explain why the Italian provenance of its main conceits have escaped notice by critics. The echo of Churchyard and a focus on native antecedents could be said to have blocked further investigation into the matter.

Marlowe was to return to the imagery employed in the *Faustus* Epilogue in another of his lesser known paratexts, one written in 1592 – the text in question being his Latin prose epistle to the Countess of Pembroke prefaced to Thomas Watson’s Latin epic *Amintae gaudia*.<sup>37</sup> Here he addresses the Countess as “laurigera stirpe prognata Delia; Sydnaei vatis Apollinei genuina soror,” which Mark Eccles renders as: “Delia born of a laurel-crowned race, true sister of Sidney, the bard of Apollo.” The phrases “laurigera stirpe” and “vatis Apollinei” call to mind “*Apollo’s* Lawrell bough” which figures so prominently in the Epilogue. Then, too, when Mary Sidney appears as another Laura, “laurigera stripe prognata Delia,” Marlowe’s Latin evokes the opening lines of Sonnet 269, and to readers acquainted with both Sir Philip

---

<sup>35</sup> Again we notice the use of similar constructions (“non che” versus “onely”) and that Petrarch’s “grave” (solemn, learned, deep, etc.) easily could have prompted the word “deepness” in Marlowe’s text.

<sup>36</sup> Incidentally, Bruno, too, drew on Sonnet 269 in much the same manner as Marlowe does to illustrate the misguided quest of his pedant-magus, Manfurio; cf. Angrisani 1976: 43. For other examples of Marlowe’s use of Bruno, see Eriksen 1985a: 463–65, 1985b: 49–74, 1987, and Gatti 1989.

<sup>37</sup> I quote Maclure 1968: 260–64.

almost becomes an English equivalent to Giovanni Colonna, the prematurely deceased statesman and man of letters. In the epistle's combination of metaphors it would seem that Marlowe presents himself as another Petrarch, an Ovidian poet par excellence. This is admittedly speculative, but it is certain that the epistle belongs in a sonnet context, although not that alone, because we here also witness a Marlowe who does his utmost to present himself as a Latin poet.<sup>38</sup>

It is characteristic of this point in his career and life, I think, that the bid for patronage to Mary Sidney, the "Delia" in Samuel Daniel's sonnet sequence, also should include the only direct reference to Marlowe's own sonnets.<sup>39</sup> After having alluded to his Ovidian poetry in the phrase "litorea Myrtus Veneris" ("the seashore myrtle of Venus"), he chooses to refer to another group of poems as "Nymphae Peneiae semper virens coma," that is, as "the Peneian nymph's ever-green (or ever-growing) hair."<sup>40</sup> It is easy to see in these phrases allusions to poetry written in imitation of Petrarch's sonnets to Laura, often described as Daphne or a laurel, or less likely to his own translations of Ovid.<sup>41</sup> This being the case, the Epilogue in *Doctor Faustus* presents itself as the poetic creation in which we get the clearest indication of Marlowe's continued intellectual involvement with Petrarch.

#### *Works Cited*

Alciati, Andreas. 1531. *Emblematum Liber*, Augsburg. Whitney, Geoffrey. 1586. *A Choice of Emblemes*, Leyden.

---

<sup>38</sup> Cheney 1997: 331.

<sup>39</sup> I discuss what could be blank verse versions of two of these sonnets in Eriksen 1986.

<sup>40</sup> I suggest that Marlowe alludes to Mary Sidney in his "Phaeton to his Friend Florio," as well: "So when that all our English wits lay dead (Except the laurel that is evergreen)"(ll. 10–11). The poet and Marlowe's would-be patron here, make an appearance as a wit crowned by laurels; compare the phrases *laurigera stirpe* and of *semper virens coma*.

<sup>41</sup> Brown 2004: 106–126

- Angrisani, Isa Guerrierini (ed.). 1976. Giordano Bruno, *Il Candelaio*. Milano: Rizzoli.
- Bevington, David and Rasmussen, Eric (eds.). 1993. *Christopher Marlowe: Doctor Faustus*. A- and B-texts (1604, 1616), The Revels Plays. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Brown, Georgia E. 2004. "Marlowe's Poems and Classicism," Ed. Patrick Cheney, *The Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe*. 106–126.
- Campbell, Lily B. (ed.). 1938. Thomas Churchyard, "Shore's Wife" (Tragedy 25), 139–40, *The Mirror for Magistrates*, London.
- Chauduri, Sukanta. 1988. "Marlowe, Madrigals, and a New Elizabethan Poet." *Review of English Studies* 39, 199–216.
- Cheney, Patrick. 1997. *Marlowe's Counterfeit Profession. Ovid, Spenser, Counter-Nationhood*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press.
- Durling, Robert M. *Petrarch's Lyric Poems: The Rime sparse and Other Lyrics*. Cambridge, Mass. and London; 1981; Harvard University Press. .
- Eriksen, Roy T. 1987. *The Forme of Faustus Fortunes. A Study of the Tragedie of Doctor Faustus* (1616). Atlantic Highlands, N.J. and Oslo: Humanities Press/Solum.
- Eriksen, Roy. 2008. "Friends or Foes? Marlowe and Shakespeare as Rivals in the Republic of Letters." Ed. Hall Bjørnstad, in *Borrowed Feathers. Plagiarism and the Limits of Imitation in Early Modern Europe*. Oslo: Unipub.
- Eriksen, Roy. 1985a. "Giordano Bruno and Marlowe's Doctor Faustus (B)," *Notes & Queries*, 32. 4 (December), 463–65.
- Eriksen, Roy. 1986. "Marlowe's Petrarch: In Morte di Madonna Laura," *Cahiers Elisabethains*, 26, 13–25.
- Eriksen, Roy. 1985b. "'What Place is This': Time and Place in Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* (B)," *Renaissance Drama*, XVI, 49–74.
- Gallo, Ernest. 1971. *The Poetria Nova and Its Sources in Early Rhetorical Doctrine*. The Hague and Paris: Mouton.
- Gatti, Hillary. 1989, *The Renaissance Drama of Knowledge: Giordano Bruno in England*. London: Routledge.
- Gill, Roma (ed.). 1990. *Christopher Marlowe. The Complete Works. 4 vols., Doctor Faustus*. vol. II. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

- Greg, W.W. (ed.). 1950. *Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, 1604-1616: Parallel Texts*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Henkel, Arthur and Albrecht Schöne. 1967. *Emblemata*. Handbuch zur Sinnenbildkunst des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts (Stuttgart–Wimar: Verlag Metzler, 1967; 1996), cols. 202–204.
- Howe, James Robinson. 1976. *Marlowe, Tamburlaine, and Magic*. Athens, Ohio.
- Kirkpatrick, Robin. 1995. *English and Italian Literature from Dante to Shakespeare: A Study of Source, Analogue and Divergence*, London: Longman.
- Kocher, Paul H. 1945. "A Marlowe Sonnet," *PQ*, XXIV. 4
- Jump, John D. 1968. Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*. London: Methuen.
- Levin, Harry. 1961. *Christopher Marlowe: The Overreacher*. London: Faber.
- Marcazzan, Mario (ed.). 1966. *Petrarca, Francesco. II Canzoniere*. Milano: Mursia,
- Maclure, Millar (ed.). 1968, Christopher Marlowe, *The Poems*, ed., London: Methuen.
- Marlowe, Christopher. 1970. *Doctor Faustus 1604 and 1616*. A Scholar Press Facsimile. Menston: Scholar Press,
- Martin, Betty C. 1950. 'Shore's Wife as a Source of the Epilogue of Doctor Faustus', *Notes & Queries*, 195, 182.
- Mortimer, Anthony. 2005. *Petrarch's Canzoniere and the English Renaissance*, Amsterdam/New York, NY.
- Muir, Kenneth. 1963. *Poems and Letters of Sir Thomas Wyatt*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- O'Brien, Margaret. 1970. "Christian Relief in Doctor Faustus," *ELH* 37, 1–11.
- Ransom, D. Nicholas. 1979. "A Marlowe Sonnet?" *Arkansas Philological Association* 5, 1–8.
- Rowe, A. L. 1981. *Christopher Marlowe: A Biography*. London:
- Wells, Stanley. 2006. *Shakespeare and Co. Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Dekker, Ben Jonson, Thomas Middleton, John Fletcher and the Other Players in His Story*. London: Allen Lane.
- Thaler, Alwin. 1923. "Churchyard and Marlowe," *MLN* 38 (1923). 89–92.
- Thomas, Vivian and Tydeman, William (eds.). 2001. *Christopher Marlowe. The plays and their sources*, London: Routledge.

- Yeowell, James (ed.), 1904. *The Poetical Works of Sir Thomas Wyatt*.  
London: George Bell and Sons.
- Watson, Thomas. 1582. *Hekatompathia*. London.
- Watson, Thomas. 1503. *Tears of Fancie, or Love Disdained*. London.
- Whitney, Geoffrey. 1969[1586]. *A Choice of Emblemes*, Leyden. Rpt.  
Menston: Scolar Press.