Islam, Catholicism and Judaism as Foreign Objects in Christopher Marlowe's Plays

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Abstract

The Elizabethan era was marked by various political, social and religious milestones in the history of England. Christopher Marlowe sought controversy in the subjects of his plays, which many critics have seen as reflecting his atheism. In his treatment of dissemblance and hypocrisy, Marlowe frequently invoked Machiavellianism, going so far as to relate it to Catholicism. He also made many references to Islam and Judaism. This article examines how Marlowe treated these three religions in his plays, particularly The Jew of Malta and Tamburlaine the Great. It analyses them as foreign objects, drawing parallels with Machiavellianism to demonstrate the degree of wickedness that Marlowe ascribes to their respective adherents. The purpose of this study is to shed light on Marlowe's depiction of these three foreign objects, juxtaposing their treatment to explore similarities and differences in how the playwright viewed them and whether this can be related to his purported atheism.

Keywords: Machiavellian, Unity, Atheism, Religion, Anti-Catholic

1 The Jew of Malta

Like many other Elizabethans, Marlowe presents his protagonists and antagonists in a way that reveals their full function to serve either what he believed or what he wanted his audience to see. Importantly, Marlowe was constrained by the norms of a society that had come to resist Catholicism[1] and other external objects to the extent that they disturbed its system.

The first thing to notice in how Marlowe treats these objects via his characters is the ambivalence in their representation. It is not possible to treat the three religions of Christianity, Islam and Judaism equally, as the situation forces a treatment which depicts Judaism as posing the greatest threat to Marlowe's country. In *The Jew of Malta*, he refers to what we designate here as 'foreign objects'. Catholicism is related to Machiavellianism and depicted through Ferneze, while Barabas is the voice of the Jews and Islam is embodied to a lesser degree in the Turkish slave Ithamore, who plays a small part in this triangle of objects. Calymath, the son of the Turkish emperor, also has a role in this triangular representation.

Some critics comment on Barabas by focusing on his reaction to Christians. Deats (1988), in an attempt to illuminate the political and religious dimensions of his contribution, asserts that his 'most obvious role is that of an Antichrist' (p. 28). But the scope is larger than that in Marlowe's treatment of the play and the main Christian character, Ferneze. Furthermore, aside from Deats's elaboration on the Biblical parody, Barabas is an outsider whose Jewishness tempts Marlowe to consider it as an element that works with and against the Elizabethan order. Barabas stands against Ferneze, who is a true representation of the tyrant, taking advantage of the Jews' weakness and wealth. In addition, linking Ferneze with Machiavelli delivers the implication that Catholicism and Machiavellianism are two sides of the same coin. But to what extent does Marlowe bring such foreign objects to the fore and to what degree does he make them loathsome? Among what Deats (1988) calls the three 'inferior objects', Marlowe offers an apparent gradation in his plays in terms of the most hated objects. This categorization can be more or less ambivalent from one play to the other.

[1]Aside from Marlowe's atheism, which is a complex term, this article uses the words 'Christianity' and 'Christians' to refer to Catholics only and not to Protestants. This is to acknowledge the presence of censorship and to stress that although according to many Marlowe was an atheist, his representations concern only Catholics, referred to here as both 'Catholics' and 'Christians'.

Marlowe presents a typical Jew, whose ambivalence in how he acts as a Jew serves Marlowe's drama more than it paints a true picture of a real Jew's life in Marlowe's time. In order to determine the ranking of Judaism as to how hated its adherents were by comparison with the other two objects, Catholicism and Islam, it seems as if the Jews were not considered to pose as great and immediate a threat as the Catholics. Reasons to support this assessment include their minority status and the fact that Edward I had expelled the Jews from England in the thirteenth century.

Opinions to the contrary have, however, been expressed. For example, Kim (2020) considers 'both the Jews and Catholics as a pathogenic threat to Protestant society' (pp. 35-36). Kim is referring to the Babington plot of 1586,which was 'considered a regicidal attempt, wherein Catholics and Jews were allied' (p. 36). In a parallel to the Jew of Malta,

Lord Burghley reported to Francis Walsingham that during the event, one of the regicidal suspects, possibly a Jew, had a 'hooked nose', which is echoed in Barabas's prominent nose and noted by Ithamore, who exclaims, 'I worship your nose' (II, iii,176). It was a common interpretation of privy councils to associate the Catholic plot with a Jewish one. The Jewish and the Catholic issues are interrelated (Kim, 2020, p. 36).

If Marlowe had this plot in mind when writing his play, such references could be considered to reflect to some degree a perception of the Jew as dangerous. Alternatively, it seems that Marlowe may simply have wanted to depict his stereotypical Jew as more interested in money than in politics. However, Marlowe also fluctuates in how he depicts his characters; thus, when Barabas speaks more about his actions and what he did in his life, a parallel is drawn with how evil the Catholics are, or perhaps with how similar they are to the Jews. The fact remains that what unites Barabas as a Jew with the audience as Protestants is that they have a common enemy.

One strong argument for considering that Barabas is presented as being as evil as Ferneze, if not more so, concerns his love of money; thus, Tkacz (1988) raises the issue of usury, albeit stating that Barabas uses it as means of torturing Christians, rather than of acquiring wealth. Barabas's wickedness extends beyond his treatment of Christians, however, as he also plans to betray the Turks when in charge of Malta. Despite being their ally in a form of Islamic-Jewish union, he betrays them and falls because he loves money and – above all –because he trusts his enemy, the Christian Ferneze.

As for Marlowe's choice to alienate Barabas from society, it is not unintentional but certainly conveys more than just stereotypical elements. Let us look at some accounts of the Jews given by Abrahams (1894), who mentions that although the Jews:

[…]came into contact with many classes, and had kindly relations with some, they remained far more alien to the masses of the people around them than even the Normans, in whose train they had come to England. Even the Baron must, a hundred years after the Conquest, have become something of an Englishman. He held an estate, of which the tenants were English; he presided over a court attended by English suitors. […] But the Jews remained during the whole time of their sojourn in England sharply separated from, at any rate, the common people around them by peculiarities of speech, habits and daily life […] (p. 76).

In terms of their potential threat to the state, the Jews were far from causing as much concern as the Catholics. This is certainly reflected on how Marlowe depicts Barabas. However, Marlowe's representation of Barabas exceeds that which is known for the Jews. For example, Barabas's Machiavellianism is a clever invention by Marlowe because it serves his drama to create a weapon in the fight against Catholic oppression. In the end, Marlowe cannot but present the true Machiavellian in the play, namely Ferneze.

Marlowe presents a world where Ferneze is dominant, where all difficulties dissolve when confronted by Ferneze's wickedness, encompassing a much greater greed than that of Barabas. The money he demands from Barabas will help Malta to prosper and to pay off the Turks. More than that, it will make Ferneze stand alone as the wielder of power who exploits Malta and treats her residents as machines to make him money. Furthermore, Ferneze considers Barabas as an object that he owns, commanding him to 'live still; and, if thou canst, get more' (I, ii, 103). In contrast to Ferneze, critical opinion is somewhat ambivalent concerning Barabas's wickedness and purported Machiavellianism. According to Ribner (1954), while 'so many critics' suppose Barabas:

[…] to have been cast in Machiavelli's mold, there is […] little that can be traced to anything in Machiavelli's writings. For the most part his activity involves no political decisions. The one political action he does undertake, however, during his brief rule as Governor of Malta, is in direct contradiction to some of Machiavelli's most often stated maxims. This occurs when Barabas enters into conspiracy with Ferneze, his bitter enemy, in order to overthrow Calymath, the Turkish conqueror of Malta. Barabas here disregards at least two of Machiavelli's precepts.

Not only does Machiavelli warn against alliance with princes who have no power of their own (Discourses, II, xi), but one of his most constant precepts is that a former enemy, or one who has been injured in any way, must never again be trusted (Discourses, III, xvii, etc.). In trusting Ferneze, Barabas, in very un-Machiavellian fashion, invites his own disaster. (pp.352–353).

Marlowe may have wanted to send a message that Machiavellianism is more strongly associated with Catholicism than with any other religion. In this play, it is obvious that the Jew Barabas fails to practice Machiavellian policy, whereas Ferneze masters this art. This is what we stress, generally speaking, when associating Catholicism with Machiavellianism. No matter how evil Barabas may seem, he is more victim than exploiter. When Barabas and Ferneze are judged for the Machiavellianism of the relation between them, Barabas emerges more or less innocent.

In *The Jew of Malta*, Marlowe achieves his aim of exposing the Catholics as the worst of foreign objects. He does this by creating a fellowship of convenience between Barabas and Ithamore. Deats (1988) describes their friendship and cooperation as 'a mirror image of Christ's relationship with his apostles' (p. 29):

Hearing of Abigail's defection to the nunnery, Barabas denounces his 'apostate' daughter, feigning to shift his allegiance to his Turkish slave: 'For I have now no hope but even in thee,/ And on that hope my happiness is built' (III.iv.16–17). He then enacts a charade in which he pretends to adopt Ithamore as his heir, vowing to bequeath to him all his estate:

O trusty Ithamore! no servant, but my friend!
I here adopt thee for mine only heir:
All that I have is thine when I am dead;
And, whilst I live, use half; spend as myself;
Here, take my keys, – I'll give 'em thee anon;
Go buy thee garments; but thou shalt not want:

Even though this cooperation between Barabas and Ithamore seems to represent two religions standing together against Catholic injustice, we cannot ignore the fact that Barabas has manipulated Ithamore, as Deats also suggests. Here, Marlowe emphasizes the earlier suggestion that the Jews tend to alienate themselves from others. Barabas cannot be anyone's friend. Moreover, Marlowe presages Barabas's later betrayal of the Turks. Not only does Barabas make a false promise to Ithamore in declaring him his heir, but the form of his declaration reflects his difficulty in working with others because his only true friend is money. But again, there is a kind of alliance between the two, albeit temporary, against Ferneze.

A Protestant audience, when watching this play, would usually disparage Ithamore no less than they would disparage Barabas. However, because their perception of these two objects as Protestants would differ so markedly from their experience of Catholics, in the extent of direct exposure and contact, this audience would be pleased to witness these two sides scheming against the Christians. Barabas, however, chooses to play a different game that better suits his nature.

In order for Marlowe to paint the Catholics as evil, he must show Ferneze as a cruel, merciless and advantage-seeking ruler who also happens to be Machiavellian enough to achieve his evil goals. For instance, it is necessary for Marlowe to depict him as a tyrant who will simply eradicate anything that is not Christian. Speaking of eradication, because Ferneze is deemed sly, his actions do not necessarily entail destruction. Ferneze's eradication of the Jews is figuratively speaking accomplished by suctioning their money, since itis their lifeblood. This is how Marlowe builds up Ferneze and exposes him as a realistic danger to anything that is not Christian. In that sense, neither Barabas nor – to a less degree –Ithamore is considered a resident of Malta. Since Ithamore is not as useful to Malta as Barabas, Ferneze's target is obviously to deprive Barabas of his money. Ferneze will do everything to practice his power. The two friars are presented as similar to Ferneze in their wickedness. This is another element that Marlowe adds to defame Catholics, depicting them as failing to disguise what Barabas calls their 'malice, falsehood and excessive pride' (I, i, 151).

On the subject of the friars, Marlowe juxtaposes their greed with their attempt to fight each other, thus portraying Catholicism as a corrupted religion. When Barabas tells his daughter that 'religion hides many mischiefs from suspicion' (I, ii, 280-281), he is openly saying that these are not truly religious people but rather are using religion as a dissembling cloak. Furthermore, his house, when turned into a nunnery, is not changed for the better. For Marlowe, the transformation from a Jew's house, which Kim (2020, p. 30) describes as something like a synagogue, is never a

change for the better, nor does it reflect any purity in its placement, for the simple reason that Marlowe represents the two religions as in some way immoral.

The drama evidently displays this change in the function of the house as a move from bad to worse, emphasizing Marlowe's depiction of the two religions, while obviously distinct, as equally vile. As for the two friars, they are 'creations of an English Protestant fantasy, through whom Marlowe questions the system of confession as a way of controlling power' (Kim, 2020, p. 38). Bernardine says:

Know that confession must not be revealed;
The canon law forbids it, and the priest
That makes it known, being degraded first,
Shall be condemned and then sent to the fire.
(III, vi, 33–6)

For Kim (2020), the confession scene

[…] forms the most satirical anti-Catholic slander in the play. Even when Abigail delivers her last confession, expressing worry about her father's role in the murder of Mathias and Lodowick, Bernardine's only concern is that she will die as a virgin having never enjoyed sex (p. 38).

From an ethical point of view, Marlowe highlights the Catholics' intellectual straying from the right path. Their focus, according to him, is more to do with authority and materialism.

Barabas does not learn much from his suffering at the hands of either Ferneze or the friars. While portraying Ferneze as a Machiavellian who happens to be a Catholic and is more powerful than Barabas, Marlowe is realistic in how he attributes Machiavellian features to Barabas; hence, Barabas falls because he lacks tactical and political ability. Among adherents of the three religions, Marlowe presents Catholics as more evil than the rest.

2Tamburlaine the Great

In *Tamburlaine the Great*, aside from the themes of politics and war, critical analysis of Marlowe's elaboration on religion is widely acknowledged. Not only does he explore the East, geographically speaking, through Tamburlaine and oriental culture, but he has been subject to criticism regarding his exploration of the play's themes. Many critics have argued that Marlowe's atheism is apparent in the drama. This section addresses broadly the same question as was asked above about *The Jew of Malta*: how does Marlowe's depiction of Islam compare with or differ from his representations of Judaism and Catholicism?

Although Marlowe's atheism is a tempting subject of critical debate in regard to *Tamburlaine* and while the present exploration of how the three religions are represented in the play will inevitably touch upon it where it is inescapable, this aspect of the discussion will not be pursued deeply. A reading of the play will bring to mind the important theme of unity, which indeed plays a crucial part in determining the path of events.

To begin with, Tamburlaine is an enemy of all religions. If in *The Massacre at Paris* Marlowe enthusiastically depicts Guise in the image of a true Machiavellian, he must also have been enthusiastic about depicting Tamburlaine as an aspiring religion-defying tyrant. As for the proposed theme of unity, there is much that can explain how Marlowe tackles this topic within the framework of the main subject of this article, namely the playwright's depiction of the three religions and the extent to which he challenges his audience with the most hated enemy familiar to Elizabethans in their everyday environment.

Since the play is considered oriental in its themes and setting, there is rich discussion of Islam and Christianity, whereas Judaism is mentioned only a couple of times in the two parts. The Muslims in the play are represented by various ethnic groups such as Turks and Arabians, as well as North African kings. These Muslim groups seek unity to the extent that an alliance is required to stop Tamburlaine, who although a Muslim, is for the purposes of the play a non-religious character. Marlowe goes beyond historical facts to depict him as defiant to God and all religions when he burns the Quran as an act of iconoclasm, thus confirming his status as a nonbeliever and a person without respect for religion:

> When Tamburlaine clearly announces that he is
> […] term'd the scourge and wrath of God,
> The only fear and terror of the world, [who]

Will first subdue the Turk, and then enlarge
Those Christian captives […] (III, iii, 53–56),

There follows a need for unity to face a tyranny that appears heathen. This is where Marlowe implements his representation of the Catholics and how they renege on their promises. A degree of unity among heavenly religions is necessary to thwart earthly heathenism. Is Tamburlaine successful because of his strength, or because of the weakness of his enemies? This question, posed by Box (1992, p. 197) is worth asking because it may be that Marlowe sees the Christians as having neglected an opportunity to overcome Tamburlaine by uniting with their Muslim rivals.

In contrast to the Christians' betrayal of the Muslims discussed below, there is an emphasis on unity among the Muslims which also includes the Jews. Bajazeth says to Tamburlaine:

Now shalt thou feel the force of Turkish arms,

Which lately made all Europe quake for fear.
I have of Turks, Arabians, Moors, and Jews,
Enough to cover all Bithynia' (III, ii, 67–68).

Elsewhere, the King of Jerusalem, for instance, says:

From Palestina and Jerusalem,

Of Hebrews three score thousand fighting men,

Are come, since last we shew'd your majesty'. (III, v, 36–37)

These speeches must denote a kind of unity which has strengthened the Turkish empire. The Jews and Muslims are necessarily together in this against a common enemy. The Christians are represented differently, for even though the role of protagonist in the play is largely assigned to Tamburlaine, the Christians play a part in that Marlowe imputes to them all of the features he wants to expose them as having. In one example, in response to Tamburlaine's ever-strengthening power, the Muslims and Christians agree to an alliance against the aspiring tyrant.

In Act II, scenei, Frederick tries to convince King Sigismund to betray the Turks, in breach of an agreement which had been sealed with an oath considered to have religious force because each side had used the name of its prophet. Marlowe cleverly employs this situation to place the Christians under fire for their attitude. They are depicted as proposing to forswear the truce despite being reminded, after expressing the intention to revoke the oath, that it had been freely made in the name of Jesus to indicate their obligation to respect it. For those who accuse Marlowe of atheism and those who would support his anti-Catholic sentiment, this pronouncement by Gazellus fits well:

Hell and confusion light upon their heads,

That with such treason seek our overthrow,

And care so little for their prophet Christ!

(II, ii, 40–42)

Despite the fact that an alliance was crucial to face the unstoppable Tamburlaine, the Christians, with no justification, decide to abandon their truce and place more importance on revenge for past conflicts. Furthermore, Marlowe's depiction of the Christians as abhorrent and deceitful is evident in Orcanes's condemnation of them:

Traitors, villains, damned Christians!
Have I not here the articles of peace
And solemn covenants we have both confirm'd,
He by his Christ, and I by Mahomet?

(II, ii, 35–38)

Bajazethis justified in declaring to Zabina:

Ah, fair Zabina! we have lost the field;
And never had the Turkish emperor
So great a foil by any foreign foe.
Now will the Christian miscreants be glad,

Ringing with joy their superstitious bells,
And making bonfires for my overthrow:
(III, iii, 311–316)

Marlowe's Protestant audience may or may not receive this expression of disappointment sympathetically, but what counts is how the Christians' corrupted minds have contributed to blinding them to their own best interests. Orcanes's speech about the Christians mirrors a similar speech in *The Jew of Malta*. Orcanes says:

Can there be such deceit in Christians,
Or treason in the fleshly heart of man,
Whose shape is figure of the highest God?
Then, if there be a Christ, as Christians say,
But in their deeds deny him for their Christ,
If he be son to everliving Jove,
And hath the power of his outstretched arm,
If he be jealous of his name and honour
As is our holy prophet Mahomet,
Take here these papers as our sacrifice
And witness of thy servant's perjury!
[He tears to pieces the articles of peace.]

(II, ii, 44–55)

Marlowe is confident in describing the Christians as hateful and the repetition of that context gives credit to this argument. In *The Jew of Malta*, Barabas also says:

For I can see no fruits in all their faith,
But malice, falsehood, and excessive pride,
Which methinks fits not their profession.
(I, I, 150–152)

Deceit and subterfuge are characteristics that Marlowe repeatedly attributes to the Christians, presumably to emphasize the danger in England of secret Catholic plots to commit treason against the queen. Furthermore, he is clever enough to go as far as saying that they have defamed their own religion, in the words of Orcanes as he calls on Jesus to take revenge for what his false followers have done to the Muslims:

Thou, Christ, that art esteem'd omnipotent,
If thou wilt prove thyself a perfect God,
Worthy the worship of all faithful hearts,
Be now reveng'd upon this traitor's soul,
And make the power I have left behind
(Too little to defend our guiltless lives)
Sufficient to discomfit and confound
The trustless force of those false Christians!—
To arms, my lords! on Christ still let us cry:
If there be Christ, we shall have victory.

(III, ii, 66–75)

Would it be possible that Marlowe is saying that Muslims have more respect for Jesus than the Christians themselves? The treason originated with them and they have shown themselves to be wholly untrustworthy. Soon after the treacherous act and the empty promises made in the name of God, the Christians are punished for their false doctrine and for breaking their sacred oath:

Discomfited is all the Christian host,
And God hath thunder'd vengeance from on high,
For my accurs'd and hateful perjury.
O just and dreadful punisher of sin,
Let the dishonour of the pains I feel

In this my mortal well-deserved wound
End all my penance in my sudden death!
And let this death, wherein to sin I die,
Conceive a second life in endless mercy! [Dies.]

(II, iii, 1–9)

Marlowe paints a similarly bitter scene in *The Massacre at Paris*, after the Admiral is killed, where a disagreement arises between two Catholics on how to dispose of his body.

When one suggests that he be burnt as a heretic, the other objects that 'his body will infect the fire, and the fire the air', so that they themselves will be poisoned (Scene XI, 4–5). Similarly, a suggestion that he be thrown into the river is rejected on the grounds that it would 'corrupt the water, and the water the fish, and the fish ourselves when we eate them' (Scene XI, 8–9). Although the body belongs to a Protestant, the people presented as truly repulsive and abhorrent are the Catholics themselves, because this scene is Protestant propaganda, denigrating Catholics for degrading others, including by showing disrespect for a body that deserves a decent burial. This scene is similar to the one in *Tamburlaine the Great* (II, iii, 21–24) where Orcanes wonders whether Sigismund's body should be abandoned to the animals and birds, leaving the wind to express its 'murmurs and hisses for his heinous sin.' If these Christians deserve a better life, it is not clear whether Marlowe ever expresses any respect for them in his representation of their actions.

It is worth remarking that placing a heathen like Tamburlaine in the play allows the audience to see how Marlowe represents Muslims and Christians. On one hand, the historical Tamburlaine was a Muslim and if Marlowe's ignorance gave him scope to add more ideas, he found it dramatically helpful to depict Tamburlaine as defiant and ambiguous. At first he is a heathen, but having him marry a Muslim woman then give his son the Islamic name of Calyphas may reflect Marlowe's little knowledge about him; later, however, his burning of the Quran clearly shows him as a heathen. The action of burning the holy book can be seen as anti-Islamic and anti religious, but critics are divided on the interpretation of his death occurring so soon after this act; many have assumed that this was intended as a sign of God's punishment, while others have perceived a sarcastic tone on the part of Marlowe, the atheist. If Tamburlaine dying shortly after burning the Quran is indeed considered divine intervention, it must be credited more to Islam than to Christianity, because Marlowe never accorded such a privilege to the Catholics in his plays. However, this is not to say that Marlowe represents Islam with sympathy. Kocher (1974, p.90) strangely suggests that 'Marlowe made the illness follow close upon the abjuration because he considered that the time had arrived for ending the play, and wished to compress the remaining events.' Marlowe has often been accused of being antireligious but never of being biased. Here again, he cannot be biased in favor of Islam, but Tamburlaine's end supports the opinion that heavenly punishment is somehow involved. If this means anything, from the perspective of criticism of Marlowe's atheism, it could only mean that while he cares little for Islam, he represents it with less negativity than he accords to Christianity.

Tamburlaine, like Machiavelli, gives Marlowe the opportunity to mock religion and to treat particular religions in a way that reflects his representation. It should be added that the scene where Bajazet is imprisoned in an iron cage is to be seen as degrading and humiliating him by likening him to an animal. This is an example of how Marlowe mocks religions by the use of parallels and figurative implication.

Those critics who assert that Marlowe depicts Islam as a worse religion than Christianity have failed to take account of the full force of his many negative depictions of Christians. Practically and theoretically, Marlowe's representation of Catholics may reflect the greater scope for antireligious implication than that afforded by his attacks on either Islam or Judaism.

3 Conclusion

Notwithstanding the many critics who have accused Marlowe of 'showing contempt for religion' (Slotkin, 2014, p.410), the discussion in this article favors the idea that the playwright is ambivalent in how he treats these three religions as foreign objects. This ambivalence nevertheless leaves the accusations against Marlowe seeming reasonable.

Many have expressed the opinion that Marlowe's plays reveal him simply to be an atheist, but they can be read from a different perspective. It seems more accurate to say that while he fluctuates in the extent to which he treats any religion with disdain, Catholicism seems to receive the largest portion throughout his oeuvre. Factors that justify this include direct contact and the recurrent conspiracies of which Catholics were accused in the Elizabethan era. As noted earlier in Section 2, this article has not principally been concerned with Marlowe's putative atheism, but rather with how he represents Catholicism, Judaism and Islam as foreign objects; his atheism has been discussed only to the extent that this

discussion might cast light on the principal topic of interest. In that vein, Marlowe's alleged atheism can be identified as ambivalent and complex.

Examination of his plays inspires a spectrum of reflections on his treatment of the various religions; if Tamburlaine's death after burning the Quran is seen as God's punishment of a heathen who has disrespected a holy book, then conversely, divine reward should be invoked to explain the ultimate victory over his Catholic enemies of Henry of Navarre, who prays devotedly throughout *The Massacre at Paris*. These are examples of many elements in Marlowe's plays that make it difficult to dismiss him as straight forwardly atheistic.

Muslims and Jews are criticized less harshly than Catholics, to whom Marlowe ascribes Machiavellian wickedness. Again, other critics see Marlowe to be depicting Islam as an evil religion, without considering the extent to which he criticizes Catholicism.

Almost whenever Marlowe invokes Machiavellianism, he imputes it to Catholic protagonists to reflect their cunning and dissemblance. Ceramella (2019) states that Machiavelli was the symbol of the Antichrist; indeed, Marlowe represents the Catholics as both anti-Christian and Machiavellian.

Overall, Marlowe may be seen as anti-Islamic and anti-Jewish, but in an ambivalent way, whereas his anti-Catholicism is undeniable. It seems that Marlowe's writings were governed by the religious and political circumstances of his age.

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