

# The New Criterion

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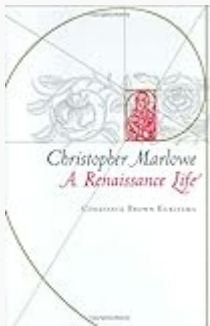
## Beyond morality

by Paul Dean

A review of *Christopher Marlowe: A Renaissance Life* by Constance Brown Kuriyama

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### BOOKS IN THIS ARTICLE



Constance Brown Kuriyama

*Christopher Marlowe: A Renaissance Life*

Cornell University Press, 288 pages, \$39.95

Christopher Marlowe's life lasted for twenty-nine years and three months, that is, about 10,670 days, and more attention has been paid to the last day of it, Wednesday, May 30, 1593, than to any other. On that day Marlowe, who had been summoned before the Privy Council ten days earlier for reasons that remain obscure, was stabbed in a Deptford tavern by Ingram Frizer after a dispute over the bill for their food and drink. Frizer and the other diners, Nicholas Skeres and Robert Poley, were on the fringes of government espionage, as Marlowe himself had been. A coroner's inquest found that Frizer had acted in self-defense, and the matter was dropped. This has led to suspicion that Marlowe's death was a political assassination, a case made most elaborately by Charles Nicholl. Nicholl's *The Reckoning: The Murder of Christopher Marlowe* (1992) argued that Marlowe was killed on the orders of the Earl of...

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