

IBN ARABSHAH: THE UNACKNOWLEDGED DEBT OF CHRISTOPHER

MARLOWE'S *TAMBURLAINE*

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University of Nebraska, 2011

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This thesis suggests strong relations between Marlowe's *Tamburlaine I & II* and Ibn Arabshah's 1436 account of Tamerlane's Life (*'Ajaib al-maqdur fi nawa'ib Timur: The Wonders of Destiny Concerning the Calamities Wrought by Tamerlane*), clarifies controversial issues, and explains previously baffling allusions editors have pondered long. In general, the thesis enriches our understanding of Marlowe's wide ranging sources, implies a critique of western-biased source scholarship, and opens possibilities to re-evaluate eastern contributions to the Renaissance in general. The first chapter highlights some well-recognized events in the play and in historical sources (the caging of Bayazid and ill-treatment of his wife, the trampling of children-virgins under the hooves of cavalry), and some obscure and never before identified incidents in historical records (gold underwater and the Christians of Georgia). The second chapter treats the —scene of death in Marlowe's play and in Ibn Arabshah's account; the third addresses the importance of astrology, especially stellar and planetary conjunctions in both works. The fourth proposes a source for Zenocrate stronger than any of those advanced so far.