

Introduction: The First Sustained Example of Men and Women Writing Together in the English Tradition

1. Textual Introduction and Editorial Principles

Overview

Despite growing scholarly interest in the Devonshire Manuscript (BL MS Add. 17492), a verse miscellany belonging to the 1530s and early 1540s, there have been no authoritative critical editions published to date.¹ Earlier scholarship privileged the Devonshire Manuscript (conventionally referred to as sigil D in most scholarly apparatus) in relation to the canon of Sir Thomas Wyatt, since 129 of the 185 items of verse (complete poems and fragments) contained in the miscellany have been attributed to him. These verses, in turn, have been transcribed and published by Agnes K. Foxwell, Kenneth Muir, and Patricia Thomson in their respective editions of Wyatt's poetry.² As Arthur F. Marotti argues, however, the "author-centered focus" of these editions "distorts [the] character" of the Devonshire Manuscript in two ways: "First, it unjustifiably draws the work of other writers into the

¹ Following Peter Beal's definition of a verse miscellany as "a manuscript, a compilation of predominantly verse texts, or extracts from verse texts, by different authors and usually gleaned from different sources" in *A Dictionary of English Manuscript Terminology, 1450–2000* (London: Oxford UP, 2008), 429. Beal lists the Devonshire Manuscript as a pertinent example of a verse miscellany in Beal, *Dictionary*, 430. Of note, Elizabeth Heale's modernized-spelling edition, *The Devonshire Manuscript of Courtly Verse: A Woman's Book*, was published by Iter in 2012.

² Agnes K. Foxwell, ed., *The Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt* (London: U of London P, 1913); Kenneth Muir, ed. *Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949); Muir and Patricia Thomson, eds., *Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt* (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1969); hereafter referred to as sigla F, M, and M & T, respectively. Many of the remaining poems, unattributed to Wyatt, have been transcribed and published in Muir, "Unpublished Poems in the Devonshire Manuscript," *Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society* 6 (1947): 253–82, hereafter referred to as sigil MU. George Frederick Nott's important early two-volume edition, *The Works of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, and of Sir Thomas Wyatt, the Elder* (London: T. Bensley, 1815), hereafter sigil N, does not include diplomatic transcriptions of verses in D. The numerous errors in transcription made in these earlier publications are discussed in the Textual Introduction and are glossed in the critical apparatus.

Wyatt canon, and, second, it prevents an appreciation of the collection as a document illustrating some of the uses of lyric verse within an actual social environment.”³

The Devonshire Manuscript is much more than an important witness in the Wyatt canon; it is also, in the estimation of Colin Burrow, “the richest surviving record of early Tudor poetry and of the literary activities of 16th-century women.”⁴ The present edition seeks to publish the contents of the manuscript in their entirety, to move beyond the limitations of an author-centered focus on Wyatt’s contributions in isolation, and to concentrate on the social, literary, and historical contexts in which the volume is situated as a unified whole. In keeping with this mandate, we have also developed a Wikibook edition available at http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/The_Devonshire_Manuscript. In doing so, we are mindful of Marotti’s assertion that “literary production, reproduction, and reception are all socially mediated, the resulting texts demanding attention in their own right and not just as legitimate or illegitimate variants from authorial archetypes.”⁵ A concomitant aim of the present and Wikibook editions, therefore, is to preserve the socially mediated textual and extra-textual elements of the manuscript that have been elided in previous transcriptions. These “paratexts” make significant contributions to the meaning and appreciation of the manuscript miscellany and its constituent parts: annotations, glosses, names, ciphers, and various jottings; the telling proximity of one work and another; significant gatherings of materials; illustrations entered into the manuscript alongside the text; and so forth.⁶ To accomplish these goals, the present edition has been prepared as a diplomatic transcription of the Devonshire Manuscript with extensive scholarly apparatus.

³ Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1995), 40. Nott’s misguided statement, that the manuscript “contains Wyatt’s pieces almost exclusively” (N, II: vii), or Muir’s comment, “it is not always easy to decide whether a poem [in the manuscript] is written by a successful imitator or by Wyatt himself in an uninspired mood” (MU, 253), are characteristic of the sort of dismissive author-centric views taken to task by Marotti.

⁴ Colin Burrow, “How to Twist a Knife,” *London Review of Books* 31.8 (2009): 3, 5.

⁵ Marotti, *Manuscript*, 212.

⁶ We have interpreted “paratext” broadly, as articulated in Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997).

A Note on this Edition

The social edition brings communities together to engage in conversation around a text formed and reformed through an ongoing, iterative, public editorial process. Ray Siemens has called for scholars “to extend our understanding of the scholarly edition in light of new models of edition production that embrace social networking and its commensurate tools... [to develop] the social edition as an extension of the traditions in which it is situated and which it has the potential to inform productively.”⁷ Bringing practice to theory, we have modeled the social edition, working as a team to extend scholarly best practice and open-access methodology to collaborative technologically mediated scholarly editing in Web 2.0 environments.⁸ We have chosen to build an edition on Wikibooks, alongside (and with help from) the dedicated Wikibooks community. Wikibooks is a Wikimedia project that continues the aim of Wikipedia; namely, to encourage, develop, and disseminate knowledge in the public sphere. Our goal, through community engagement via Wikibooks, Twitter, blogs, and a Drupal-based social media space (Iter), is to use existing social media tools to change the role of the scholarly editor from the sole authority on the text to a facilitator who brings traditional and citizen scholars into collaboration through ongoing editorial conversation.

Textual Introduction

The Devonshire Manuscript was maintained as an “informal volume”⁹ or “courtly anthology”¹⁰ most likely circulated amongst a coterie of friends for private use. This small paper volume, bound in quarto, retains its

⁷ Raymond G. Siemens, Meagan Timney, Cara Leitch, Corina Koolen, Alex Garnett, with the ETCL, INKE, and PKP Research Groups. “Toward Modeling the Social Edition: An Approach to Understanding the Electronic Scholarly Edition in the Context of New and Emerging Social Media,” *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 27.4 (2012): 447.

⁸ Our team is the Devonshire MS Editorial Group: Barbara Bond, Terra Dickson, Johanne Paquette, Jonathan Podracky, Ingrid Weber, Cara Leitch, Melanie Chernyk, Brett D. Hirsch, Daniel Powell, Alyssa Anne McLeod, Alyssa Arbuckle, Jonathan Gibson, Chris Gaudet, Eric Haswell, Arianna Ciula, Daniel Starza-Smith, James Cummings with Martin Holmes, Greg Newton, Paul Remley, Erik Kwakkel, and Aimie Shirkie.

⁹ Paul Remley, “Mary Shelton and Her Tudor Literary Milieu,” in *Rethinking the Henrician Era: Essays on Early Tudor Texts and Contexts*, ed. Peter C. Herman (Urbana, U of Illinois P, 1994), 48.

¹⁰ Raymond Southall, *The Courtly Maker: An Essay on the Poetry of Wyatt and His Contemporaries* (London: Blackwell, 1964), 15.

original London binding—an embossed leather capstan design—that dates its production between 1525 and 1559. Internal evidence narrows the dates of composition slightly. The contents of the manuscript suggest that the most intense period of writing and circulation was during the 1530s. The front and back covers are stamped “M.F.” and “S.E.,” respectively. In its current state the manuscript contains 114 of its original leaves. Nearly half of these 114 leaves remain blank, with fragments of what may have served as flyleaves mounted on endpapers (fols. 1 and 94) added after its acquisition by the British Museum in the mid-nineteenth century. The only visible foliation (fols. 1–96), entered in pencil, was presumably added by the British Museum. There is evidence of a rough repair and rebinding at this time. Although many editors and commentators have relied upon this modern foliation, it was only entered on pages containing text and is therefore an unreliable and inaccurate representation of the manuscript’s physical state.

Transcription

The transcription for this present edition is based on examination of both the original document and a microfilm of the Devonshire Manuscript provided by the British Library. Members of the Devonshire MS Editorial Group prepared and transcribed (in a blind process) two paper copies from the microfilm. The transcribers collated the two paper copies manually as collation proved unfeasible by electronic means. The resultant rough transcription was resolved as far as possible using expanded paper prints and enlarged images. Remaining areas of uncertainty were resolved with manual reference to the original document itself, housed at the British Library. This final, collated transcription forms the basis for the current edition.

The present edition follows Helen Baron’s attribution of hands in the Devonshire Manuscript. Where the transcribers differ from her attribution, the project’s identification is noted in the underlying TEI markup.¹¹ Of the roughly twenty hands, some are even and regular while others are idiosyncratic and irregular. Historically, the exceptional difficulty of transcribing the Devonshire Manuscript has impeded widespread research on the text. Approximately 140 entries are copies of extant or contemporary works (129 attributed or attributable to Wyatt) and bear the signs of copying. The majority of the pieces may reflect the work of local amanuenses and secretaries with little professional regard for the expected standards of a presentation-copy

¹¹ Available at http://hcmc.uvic.ca/~etcl/Devonshire_Manuscript_poems.zip.

manuscript. A full half of the manuscript's scribes (Hands 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, and MF) dedicate themselves to copying extant pieces; another five (Hands 1.1, 2, 7, TH2, and MD) enter a mix of extant material and material that seems to be unique to the manuscript. The remaining five (Hands 12, 13, HS, MS, and TH1) solely enter original materials. The work of the ten hands entering potentially original material to the manuscript amounts to forty-five pieces (fifteen identified and/or attributed, thirty not).

The abundant scribal interaction within the text contributes to the difficulty of attribution. For instance, Douglas's rendition of Wyatt's "to my meshap alas I ffynd" has had "In the name of god amen" added to its beginning (42r) and Shelton comments on Douglas's poem "the sueden ghance ded mak me mves" (67v) with "hape have bedden / my happe a vaning," while an annotator adds a stylized monogram with her own initials ("S" overwriting the middle descenders of a capital "M"). In addition to the above examples, there are other instances of playful interactions between the scribes. Several poems are entered as answers to other poems, as when H8 enters Wyatt's "Patiens for my devise" (71r) and adds an explicit link to the earlier entry, "Pacyence tho I have not" (13v), transcribed by H2. H8 writes "to her that saide this patiens was not for her but that the contrarye of myne was most metiste for her porposse" (71r). Evidently, H8 teasingly pays homage to a woman's point of view about patience with a poem about the hardships of being unfaithful.

Punctuation and Scribal Marks

As far as is possible, this edition is intended to be a diplomatic one; as a result, there is a strong orientation towards the physical appearance of each page, including recordings of indentations, centering, brackets, and spaces.¹² The Devonshire MS Editorial Group has retained and selectively displayed all omissions, truncations, and deletions in the original, as described below. Possibly erroneous, idiosyncratic, or easily misunderstood text is italicized. The regularized version of the italicized text is provided alongside in brackets,

¹² Critiquing the "synchronic" presentation of the material and intellectual content of manuscript miscellanies in many scholarly editions, Jonathan Gibson maintains that miscellanies are "texts in process [rather] than unified works of art" in "Synchrony and Process: Editing Manuscript Miscellanies," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 52.1 (2012): 86. He proposes that critical editions of manuscript miscellanies present a series of different versions of the manuscript that reflect its chronological development, as opposed to a "seriatim" copying of the manuscript in its current, supposedly complete state.

within the text of the poem. We have assigned each poem a title based on the incipit that appears at the top of the poem; these titles do not appear in the Devonshire Manuscript itself.

Although minimal, punctuation in the copy-text is retained. Most often, a virgule is the only punctuation used. In the present edition, half-virgules are not distinguished from full virgules. Carets (denoting a correction inserted by a scribe and often in superscript) are included and inverse carets are marked with an editorial note. The type of script is assumed to be Tudor secretary, unless otherwise noted. The symbol that denotes “and” in the early Tudor secretary hand is normalized as an ampersand.¹³ The transcription distinguishes between the individual scribe’s use of the letters “u” and “v,” “i” and “j,” and “vv” and “w.” Unusual usages are noted; for instance the appearance of a majuscule ‘s’ where miniscule is expected or the initial ‘s’ in terminal position. Ligatures, dropped “r,” long “s,” or situations where lines are placed over words or letter combinations are not marked. Ink color is not necessarily recorded, nor is the use of a pencil or charcoal.

Elided letters, wordforms, brevigraphs, and contractions, as well as scribal marks or superscripted characters that indicate letters have been omitted, or are understood to be standard abbreviations for the time, are expanded and italicized in the text. Corresponding paleographic markers, which can be cross-referenced with the paleographic features in the Wikibook edition, are provided within the text. Until entities to describe the forms of brevigraphs are designated, or a full description is possible in Unicode, the Renaissance Electronic Text (RET) codes have been used to describe the abbreviation. They are robust, descriptive, based on scholarly evidence, and easily available and understood. It has been necessary to extend and adapt those codes after due consideration of scribal preferences, consultation with respected authorities on early handwriting, and examination of the context in which a scribe uses a particular abbreviation.¹⁴ Scribes often use the same form to indicate one of several possible meanings; therefore, the expanded form is based on a study of the context. Following each poem, editorial notes further describe especially unusual scribal usages. All extant variants between witnesses have also been catalogued and listed in the notes following each poem.

¹³ Petti calls this symbol a Tironian nota “et” in Anthony G. Petti, *English Literary Hands from Chaucer to Dryden* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1977), 23.

¹⁴ Scholarship consulted includes Petti, *English Literary Hands*, and Adriano Cappelli, *Dizionario di abbreviature latine ed italiane* (Mailand: Hoepli, 1990).

British Library stamps are not recorded. The numbering system presumably applied by the library staff, which appears as a nineteenth century inked arabic numeral on the upper right corner of the recto side of many leaves, is used. Another numbering system is visible in some places, but it is not recorded at this time. The British Library numbering system is used as the basis to identify each side of each leaf. The numbers for the verso side of each leaf are derived with reference to the recto designation. The library did not number leaves whereon no writing appears. Therefore, in this edition, the Devonshire MS Editorial Group applied a number by reference to the number on the recto leaf preceding the unnumbered leaves. Blank pages are noted with a decimal indicating their position relative to the last preceding folio bearing the British Library numerals (i.e., the four blank pages following fol. 57 are marked 57.1r, 57.1v, 57.2r, and 57.2v).

Overwritten text, or text rendered with a “cross-out” —a pen stroke or strokes that have been applied over text crosswise or slantwise— has been struck through with a line in this edition. Square brackets mark gaps in the text when the letters enter the spine of the book or are otherwise indecipherable. Deleted lines and false starts have not been given line numbers. References to forms of the text found in contemporary witnesses follow each poem, with only the relevant poems included. In the case of significant difference between the Devonshire Manuscript and particular witnesses, the relevant line from the Devonshire Manuscript is reproduced. Capitalization, abbreviations, deletions, and annotations are recorded.

2. The Works of the Devonshire Manuscript

Of its 194 items, a figure that includes all creative textual works—complete poems, verse fragments and excerpts from longer works, anagrams, and other ephemeral jottings—the manuscript collection consists of short courtly verses by Sir Thomas Wyatt (129 items, sixty-six of which are unique to the manuscript) and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (one item); verses attributed to Lady Margaret Douglas (two items), Richard Hattfield (two items), Mary Fitzroy (née Howard) (one item), Lord Thomas Howard (three items), Sir Edmund Knyvett (two items), Sir Anthony Lee (one item [“A. I.” has three items]), and Henry Stewart, Lord Darnley (one item); transcribed portions of medieval verse by Geoffrey Chaucer (eleven items), Thomas Hoccleve (three items), and Richard Roos (two items); transcriptions of the work of others or original works by prominent court figures such as Mary Shelton,

Lady Margaret Douglas, Mary (Howard) Fitzroy, Lord Thomas Howard, and perhaps Queen Anne Boleyn; and some thirty unidentified or unattributed pieces.¹⁵

As Marotti notes, courtly manuscript miscellanies and poetic anthologies “represent the meeting ground of literary production and social practices.”¹⁶ The Devonshire Manuscript contains many pertinent examples of Marotti’s assertion, especially in the form of epistolary verse and scribal annotation. The most widely documented instance is the sequence of epistolary love-poetry exchanged between Lady Margaret Douglas and Lord Thomas Howard, presumably composed while the couple was incarcerated for their clandestine betrothal.¹⁷ The exchange takes place over a series of poems (fols. 26r–29v) assumed to be in sequence and entered by the same hand (TH2).¹⁸ The first

¹⁵ Scholars have only cautiously asserted an approximate number of items preserved in D: “The number of poems in the manuscript can only be given as approximately 184” in Raymond Southall, “The Devonshire Manuscript Collection of Early Tudor Poetry, 1532–41,” *Review of English Studies* 15 (1946): 143; “The manuscript preserves about 185 items of verse, but it is impossible to obtain an exact figure as many of these are fragments, medieval extracts or the like, and others are divided up differently by various editors” in Remley, “Mary Shelton,” 47. Ethel Seaton identified the medieval origin of the Richard Roos texts in “The Devonshire Manuscript and its Medieval Fragments,” *Review of English Studies* 7 (1956): 55–56. Richard Harrier first noted the use of William Thynne’s 1532 edition of Chaucer as the source for that poet’s verse in D in “A Printed Source for the ‘Devonshire Manuscript,’” *Review of English Studies* 11 (1960): 54. Southall suggested Anne Boleyn’s contributions in “Devonshire Manuscript Collection,” 143; see the biographical entry on Boleyn for a more detailed discussion of her involvement with the manuscript. The most recent examination of the hands in D is that of Helen Baron, especially Table 1 in “Mary (Howard) Fitzroy’s Hand in the Devonshire Manuscript,” *Review of English Studies* 45 (1994): 318–35. See also the earlier findings in Edward A. Bond, “Wyatt’s Poems,” *Athenaeum* 27 (1871): 654–55. The present edition follows Baron’s findings, confirmed by independent investigation, as outlined in the Textual Introduction. In the Wikibook edition, see Contributors to the Devonshire Manuscript (http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/The_Devonshire_Manuscript/Biographies) for brief biographies of each of the identified hands and authors.

¹⁶ Marotti, *Manuscript*, 212.

¹⁷ Bond first noted the relevance of the Howard-Douglas affair to this sequence in D in Bond, “Wyatt’s Poems,” 654–55.

¹⁸ It is unclear whether the hand belongs to Howard, since no independent examples of his hand have survived. Bond argues that Howard entered the series of poems into the volume during his imprisonment in the Tower in Bond, “Wyatt’s Poems,” 655. The

verse begins with Howard lamenting, “Alas that euer prison stronge / sholde such too louers seperate” (fol. 26r, ll. 5–6). The poem immediately following, thought to be Douglas’ reply, also makes reference to the lovers’ imprisonment and separation: “the one off us from the other they do absent” (fol. 26v, l. 9).¹⁹ Howard then promises his “worldly tresor” that “My loue truly shall not decay / for thretnyng nor for punysment” (fol. 27r, ll. 15–16). The form of this “punysment” is captivity, which Howard likens to that of “a hawke” in a “mue” (fol. 27r, l. 27). A hawk is kept in a mew or moulting-cage while it sheds its feathers.²⁰ The image is optimistic, as it suggests that the lovers’ imprisonment and vulnerability is a temporary time of transformation and renewal; the sixteenth-century encyclopedia *Batman vppon Bartholome* held that hawks were mewed “that they may be discharged of olde fethers and hard, and be so renewed in fairnesse of youth.”²¹

In the following poem, Howard identifies his secret betrothal to Douglas as the source of the couple’s current woes—“alas me thynke the[y] do me

alternative theory, that the epistolary verses were collected and entered into D as a group later, is proposed and dismissed by Baron, “Mary (Howard) Fitzroy’s Hand,” 327.

¹⁹ Scholars have traditionally followed Bond’s earlier assertion that the name “margrt” is scrawled at the end of the poem (fol. 26v), perhaps attributing authorship: Baron, “Mary (Howard) Fitzroy’s Hand,” 332; Harrier, “Printed Source,” 25; Elizabeth Heale, *Wyatt, Surrey and Early Tudor Poetry* (Longman Medieval and Renaissance Library, London: Longman, 1998), 42. Independent examination of the manuscript suggests that the “scrawl” is only partially legible, with only the letter forms “ma”, “r”, and “h” clearly identifiable. As such, it may refer either to Mar[y] H[oward] or to Mar[garet] H[oward], the latter symbolically adopting her husband’s surname following their betrothal. An entry found on the flyleaf (fol. 1r) is similarly unclear: in faint ink, “margeret how” is possibly inscribed (Baron, “Mary (Howard) Fitzroy’s Hand,” 331; Bond, “Wyatt’s Poems,” 655); however, Remley has argued that the “hurried and surreptitious mark” was in fact made by Mary Shelton, reading it as “Mary Sh—lt—” in Remley, “Mary Shelton,” 54.

²⁰ *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, n.2, “mew,” <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/117750> (accessed 23 January 2013).

²¹ Steven Batman, *Batman vppon Bartholome, his booke De Proprietatibus rerum, newly corrected, enlarged, and ammended*, trans. John Trevisa (London, 1582), fol. 178r. In *The New World of English Words: or, a General Dictionary* (London: E. Tyler, 1658), fol. 2C4v, Phillips notes, “[a] Mue for Hawks” is “a kind of cage or aviary where Hawks are kept when they change their feathers” and “comes from the French word Muer, to change.”

wronge / That they wold haue me to resyne / my tytly tytly wych ys good
and stronge / that I am yowrs and yow ar myne” (fol. 27v, ll. 9–12)—and that
this punishment is designed to compel him to “swere / your company for to
forsake” (fol. 27v, ll. 13–14). As the next verse makes clear, the faithful lover
remains steadfast in his devotion: “The[y] wyll me hyr for to deny / whom I
wyll loue moste hartely / vntyll I dye” (fol. 28r, ll. 9–12). The poem immedi-
ately following, presumably composed by Douglas, is written as a response
to the “great paynes he [Lord Thomas] suffereth for my sake / contynnually
both nyght and day” (fol. 28v, ll. 5–6), promising to reward his sufferings
with eternal love in terms that poetically echo his earlier sentiments: “from
me hys loue wyll not decay” (fol. 28v, l. 8).

As the sequence progresses, the hopeful tone of the earlier verses—the pro-
testations of unerring commitment and unwavering love, the casting of the
lovers’ imprisonment as temporary and a time of renewal—is gradually over-
taken by more pessimistic sentiments. The gift of love exchanged between
the lovers is no longer described as eternal, but “for terme off lyfe” (fol. 29r,
l. 22), and explicit allusions to death and despair become more frequent. Con-
sider the closing lines of the final poem in the sequence:

but whan ye comen by my sepulture
remembre that yowr felowe resteth there
for I louyd eke though I vnworthy were (fol. 30r, ll. 5–7)

Remley suggests that this pastiche of lines from Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*
“recast[s] an excerpt from the lament of Troilus on the impending departure
of Criseyde” and is “meant to serve as Howard’s epitaph.”²² Other images are
more ambiguous in the final poems of the sequence. For instance, those who
interfere (“bate or stryfe”) with the lovers’ marriage (“ower louyng bandys”)
are wished to be on “goodwyn sandys” (fol. 29r, ll. 25–27), a large sand shoal
off the coast of Kent, famous as a site of shipwrecks. To “set up shop on Good-
win Sands” was proverbial for hopeless endeavor and running aground.²³
The allusion is clearly designed to express Howard’s desire to thwart efforts
to hinder his relationship, but there is a cruel irony in the desperation of the
proverb since it may be read as a projection of his own hopelessness.

²² Remley, “Mary Shelton,” 52.

²³ See Morris Palmer Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1950), S393, and W. G. Smith and F. P. Wilson, *Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), S393. John Heywood’s *Prouerbes* is usually cited as the earliest usage in print.

An association between these poems and Douglas and Howard can be facilely inferred on the basis of “the insertion of names and initials and the close fit of the biographical detail.”²⁴ Regardless, to interpret these poems as actual love letters or as evidence of sincere feeling is, as Catherine Bates argues, “to assume the position of the state interrogator who could claim, on the basis of such actions or words, to understand exactly what they signified” and to know “the contents of the heart.”²⁵ Moreover, Bates asks,

Is it not preferable in literary historical terms, and closer to the spirit of Renaissance Court practice, to suspend judgment, to delay pronouncing the fatal “meaning,” and to sustain the play of enigmatic signification, since to do this leaves open the whole range of possibilities that such play-acting allows for: namely, that Thomas Howard and Margaret Douglas dramatized themselves as tragic lovers (or were so dramatized by their friends) either because such role-play did indeed correspond to their inner feelings, or because it allowed them to dissemble feelings that were quite different, or because the whole thing was a joke or game in which no feelings were involved at all, or because it provided an idealized model for feelings to which they aspired?²⁶

In addition to the composition of epistolary verse, contributors to the manuscript interacted with one another through scribal annotation. Occasionally, these marginal responses appear quite personal in nature. For example, the text of the poem “Suffryng in sorow in hope to attayn” (fols. 6v–7r) is annotated in the left margin. A hand identified as Lady Margaret Douglas’ writes “fforget thys,” to which a hand identified as Mary Shelton’s responds, “yt ys wor[t]hy” (fol. 6v). The poem is written in a male voice appealing for the love of a lady. “Suffryng in sorow” and “desyryng in fere,” the poet pleads for his unnamed addressee to “ease me off my payn” (fol. 6v, ll. 1–2, 4). While its authorship remains hotly debated, the acrostic of the verse suggests that Shelton is the intended recipient—the first letter of its seven stanzas spells out “SHELTVN.”²⁷ The scribal annotations, which may only refer to the

²⁴ Heale, “Women and the Courtly Love Lyric: The Devonshire MS (BL Additional 17492),” *The Modern Language Review* 90 (1995): 305.

²⁵ Catherine Bates, “Wyatt, Surrey, and the Henrician Court,” in *Early Modern English Poetry: A Critical Companion*, ed. Patrick Cheney, Andrew Hadfield, and Garrett A. Sullivan (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007), 41.

²⁶ Bates, “Wyatt, Surrey,” 40–41.

²⁷ The poem is entered in D by an unidentified hand (H2), and is also preserved in

quality of the verse, might therefore take on a more profound and personal meaning, as Douglas recommends rejecting the poem and its suit (“fforget thys”), but Shelton contradicts this advice with “yt ys wor[t]hy.” At the end of the poem, Shelton adds a comment that has been variously transcribed as “ondesyard sarwes / reqwer no hyar,” “ondesyrid favours / deserv no hyer,” or perhaps “ondesyard fansies / requier no hyar.”²⁸ The transcription poses an interesting editorial crux: “sarwes” might be read as “service” or “sorrows.”²⁹ Likewise, “hyar” may be read as “hire” or “ear.” As S. P. Zitner argues, “Whether Mary Shelton was saying that undesired service (attention) required no hire or that undesired sorrows required no ear, the response is pretty much the same in tone and substance.”³⁰ While this comment may be a “remarkable example of an overtly critical rejoinder to a courtly lyric” written in the spirit described by Zitner, Remley argues that “it seems equally probable that her words are meant ironically,” that they offer a “private recognition of the absurd spectacle of a man determined to get his way

the Blage Manuscript (Trinity College, Dublin, MS 160, fol. 159r). Modern editors of Wyatt’s poems commonly attribute the poem to him (F, I: 257–58; M, 96–97; M & T, 176–77; N, II: 590; R, 268–69). However, this attribution has not been universally accepted: Harrier argues that the poem “must be excluded from the Wyatt canon” since it “may be by Thomas Clere” in Harrier, “Printed Source,” 41, 45, and Joost Daalder silently excludes the poem from his edition, *Collected Poems* (London: Oxford UP, 1975). Julia Boffey has argued the author is Shelton, mistaking Shelton’s signed comment at the end of the poem as an attribution in “Women Authors and Women’s Literacy in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-century England,” in *Women and Literature in Britain 1150–1500*, ed. Carol M. Meale (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), 173. See also the discussion in Harold A. Mason, *Humanism and Poetry in the Early Tudor Period: An Essay* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 126.

²⁸ The first transcription as per Baron, “Mary (Howard) Fitzroy’s Hand,” 331; Remley gives “ondesyerd” in Remley, “Mary Shelton,” 50. The second as per F, I:258. The third as per Heale, “Women and the Courtly Love Lyric,” 301. Heale also gives “ondesiard fansies / requier no hiar” in *Wyatt, Surrey and Early Tudor Poetry*, 43, and “ondesyred fansies / require no hyar” in “‘Desiring Women Writing’: Female Voices and Courtly ‘Balets’ in Some Early Tudor Manuscript Albums,” in *Early Modern Women’s Manuscript Writing: Selected Papers from the Trinity/Trent Colloquium*, ed. Victoria E. Burke, Jonathan Gibson, and Elizabeth Clarke (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 21.

²⁹ “Searwes” (device) is also possible, but unlikely. Alternatively rendering the word as “fansies” or “favours” is less problematic, but equally less probable.

³⁰ S.P. Zitner, “Truth and Mourning in a Sonnet by Surrey,” *English Literary History* 50.3 (1983): 513.

through protestations of extreme humility.”³¹ Similarly, Heale contends such “unsympathetic replies may be part of the conventional exchange of courtly verse” and might be offered in jest, as “such jesting offered some opportunities for female subject positions that seem to have appealed to the women using the manuscript.”³² Although the precise intentions behind Shelton’s annotations and commentary remain obscure, their potential importance to the meaning and interpretation of the verse cannot be disputed.

Another example of this kind of social interaction is found in the scribal annotations attached to the text of a short verse, “The pleasaunt beat of swet Delyte” (fol. 66r). The poem, entered by an ornate and unidentified hand (H13), closes with the lines “whereas wysdome the soft Iudge doth Raign / prove wyt avoyedes all Daunger breiding pain” (ll. 5–6). Over the word “Daunger,” a hand identified as Douglas’ has written “doutt” or “doute.” As with the previous example, the intentions behind the annotation are unclear: if it is meant as a correction, why has the word “Daunger” not been struck out? An alternative explanation might be that the intention is to draw attention to the word “Daunger” by leaving it visible and labeling its appropriateness or sentiment as doubtful. The instances of scribal annotation and exchanges of epistolary verse detailed above are representative samples of the kinds of social interaction found throughout the Devonshire Manuscript. In addition to examining the volume as “a medium of social intercourse,” other aspects of the Devonshire Manuscript—its multi-layered and multi-authored composition, its early history and transmission, the ways in which its contents engage with and comment directly on contemporary political and social issues—invite further investigation.

3. *Public and Private, Personal and Communal*

In 1641, Richard Brathwaite considered the relative absence of literary works by women in the following terms:

These [women writers] desired to doe well, and not to be applauded; to advance vertues, and not to have their names recorded: nor their amiable features with glorious Frontispices impaled. To improve goodnesse by humility, was their highest pitch of glory. This their sundry excellent fancies confirmed; their elegant labours discovered; whereof though many have

³¹ Zitner, “Truth and Mourning,” 50.

³² Heale, “Desiring Women Writing,” 21.

suffered Oblivion through the injury of time, and want of that incomparable helpe of the Presse, the benefit whereof wee enjoy.³³

According to Brathwaite, the paucity of available literary works by women was the result of a number of social and cultural constraints. In contrast to the “masculine” pursuit of literary fame, women were encouraged to practice the “feminine” virtues of modesty and humility. Moreover, access to technologies of writing and publication was strictly regulated in gendered terms—as Jennifer Summit maintains, “while the printing press [brought] men’s works to public attention, it [denied] the same service to women, consigning them instead to the textual obscurity and fragility of the manuscript.”³⁴ Although Brathwaite’s comments were published almost a century after the compilation of the Devonshire Manuscript, they do highlight a number of pertinent issues for further consideration: the question of text and authorship, the status of women in the production and circulation of literary works, and the material conditions of manuscript and print in early modern England. Recent scholarship has radically challenged the traditionally held notions of what constitutes a “text” and an “author.” The editorial theories championed by D. F. McKenzie and Jerome McGann expanded the notion of textual production beyond a simple consideration of authorial intention. For McGann, these “nonauthorial textual determinants” should be considered alongside authorial intention to include in our critical gaze “other persons or groups involved in the initial process of production,” the “phases or stages in the initial production process,” and the “materials, means, and modes in the initial productive process.”³⁵ The program advocated by McKenzie as “the sociology of texts” further extended this concept of textual production by arguing for the significance of the material form of a text and its ability to affect the text’s meaning.³⁶

³³ Harold Love and Arthur F. Marotti, “Manuscript Transmission and Circulation,” in *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature*, ed. David Loewenstein and Janel Mueller (Cambridge, England: Cambridge UP, 2002), 63.

³⁴ Jennifer Summit, *Lost Property: The Woman Writer and English Literary History, 1380–1589* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2000), 2.

³⁵ Jerome McGann, “The Monks and Giants: Textual and Bibliographical Studies and the Interpretation of Literary Works,” in *The Beauty of Inflections: Literary Investigations in Historical Method and Theory* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988), 79, 82. See also McGann’s earlier study, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1983).

³⁶ D.F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (London: British Library, 1986).

These theories of textual production spurred critics to reevaluate the notion of authorship in order to account for nonauthorial (but nevertheless significant) contributors and collaborators to any given text. It became readily apparent that the modern notion of authorship, with its sense of ownership of and singular control, was anachronistic and particularly unhelpful when dealing with literature of earlier periods. Leah S. Marcus, for example, advocates a process of “unediting”—a systematic exposition of the various layers of editorial mediation of any given Renaissance text.³⁷ Critics have also explored the notion of collaborative authorship, especially in relation to Renaissance drama, since the authority of any given play is dispersed amongst an infinite number of collaborations—between author(s) and actor(s), text(s) and performance(s)—and agents involved in processes of mediation, such as revision, adaptation, publication, and preservation.³⁸

At the same time, the work of feminist literary critics and historians to rediscover texts by women and revise the canon of Western literature has also exposed the role of gender in the material and institutional conditions of textual production.³⁹ To effectively investigate the role of women in the

³⁷ Leah S. Marcus, *Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton* (New York: Routledge, 1996). On “unediting” as the rejection of critical editions in preference to the unmediated study of originals or facsimiles, see Randall McLeod, “Un-Editing Shakespeare,” *Sub-Stance* 33–34 (1982): 26–55.

³⁸ Representative studies include: Margreta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass, “The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 44 (1993): 255–83; David Scott Kastan, “Shakespeare After Theory,” *Textus* 9.2 (1997): 357–74; David Scott Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001); Sonia Massai, *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007); Jeffrey Masten, *Textual Intercourse: Collaboration, Authorship, and Sexualities in Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997); Jeffrey Masten, “More or Less: Editing the Collaborative,” *Shakespeare Studies* 29 (2001): 109–31; Stephen Orgel, “What is a Text?,” *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* 24 (1984): 3–6; Stephen Orgel, “Acting Scripts, Performing Texts,” in *Crisis in Editing: Texts of the English Renaissance*, ed. Randall McLeod (New York: AMS, 1994), 251–94; and W. B. Worthen, *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997). See also the many useful essays in John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan, eds., *A New History of Early English Drama* (New York: Columbia UP, 1997).

³⁹ Representative studies include Elaine V. Beilin, *Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987); Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Writing Women’s Literary History* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1993); Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1999); Bar-

production and circulation of literary works, Margaret J. M. Ezell has persuasively proposed that the definition of “authorship” needs to be reexamined and broadened:

We need to think about not only women who wrote and published and got paid for doing so, but also about women who wrote and circulated text socially, women who compiled volumes and managed the preservation and transmission of texts by themselves and by others, women who patronized and supported other writers through their writings, and even those early modern women who owned books and who interwove their own writing into others’ texts.⁴⁰

bara K. Lewalski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1993); Kim Walker, *Women Writers of the English Renaissance* (New York: Twayne, 1996); and Wendy Wall, *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1993). See also the following representative essay collections: Anne M. Haselkorn and Betty S. Travitsky, eds., *The Renaissance Englishwoman in Print: Counterbalancing the Canon* (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1990); Margaret P. Hannay, ed., *Silent but for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works* (Kent: Kent State UP, 1985); Susanne Woods and Margaret P. Hannay, eds., *Teaching Tudor and Stuart Women Writers* (New York: MLA, 2000); Helen Wilcox, ed., *Women and Literature in Britain, 1500–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996); Mary E. Burke, Jane Donawerth, Linda L. Dove, and Karen Nelson, eds., *Women, Writing, and the Reproduction of Culture in Tudor and Stuart Britain* (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 2000). Notable editions of early modern women’s writing include Jane Stevenson and Peter Davidson, eds., *Early Modern Women Poets: An Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001); Paul Salzman, ed., *Early Modern Women’s Writing: An Anthology, 1560–1700* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000); Betty S. Travitsky and Anne Lake Prescott, eds., *Female and Male Voices in Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia UP, 2000); Germaine Greer, Susan Hastings, Jeslyn Medoff, and Melinda Sansone, eds., *Kissing the Rod: An Anthology of Seventeenth Century Women’s Verse* (London: Virago, 1988); Suzanne Trill, Kate Chedzoy, and Melanie Osborne, eds., “Lay By Your Needles Ladies, Take the Pen”: *Writing Women in England, 1500–1700* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1997); Betty S. Travitsky, ed., *The Paradise of Women: Writings by Englishwomen of the Renaissance* (Westport: Greenwood, 1980); Helen Ostovich, Elizabeth Sauer, and Melissa Smith, eds., *Reading Early Modern Women: An Anthology of Texts in Manuscript and Print, 1550–1700* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Marion Wynne-Davies, ed., *Women Poets of the Renaissance* (London: Dent, 1998); and Randall Martin, ed., *Women Writers in Renaissance England* (New York: Longman, 1997). On women as readers, see Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, and Literacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005).

⁴⁰ Ezell, “Women and Writing,” in *A Companion to Early Modern Women’s Writing*, ed.

“Compilation,” Elizabeth Clarke notes, “rather than authorship of the writing in a document,” was the “dominant literary activity among women who could read and write” in the early modern period.⁴¹ This is certainly true in the case of the Devonshire Manuscript, where women were, for the most part, directly responsible for the compilation of the predominantly male-authored contents of the anthology.⁴² Compilation, like any of the other “nonauthorial” textual determinants described above, is an act of mediation: the selection of verses to be recorded, the manner in which they were entered, and their relative position to one another all contribute to the meaning of the texts, both individually and as a collection. Verses entered into the manuscript may have been selected on the basis of their popularity at court—perhaps accounting for the disproportionate number of Wyatt poems represented—or for more personal reasons; other verses, as recent scholarship has drawn attention to, were not simply selected and copied, but adapted and altered to suit specific purposes.

A pertinent example comes from a series of Middle English verse fragments copied into the Devonshire Manuscript on fols. 89v–92r. These fragments were extracted from Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde* and other works attributed to Hoccleve and Roos, all ultimately derived from Thynne’s 1532 edition of Chaucer’s *Workes*. The inclusion of the Chaucer excerpts prompted John E. Stevens to suggest that these verses were intended for performance at court;⁴³ however, critics have more recently argued that the fragments represent more than simple “remnants of some kind of courtly game or amusement.”⁴⁴ Heale explains, “many of these stanzas utter with an unusual forcefulness a woman’s view of the dangers and doubleness of male rhetoric,” and may “have been chosen because they give, in forthright fashion, a view of women’s reputations and emotions as vulnerable and easily abused in matters of love.”⁴⁵ For example, one of the fragments entered into the manuscript is from Thomas Hoccleve’s *Letter of Cupid*, his Chaucerian-verse

Anita Pacheco (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 79.

⁴¹ Elizabeth Clarke, “Women’s Manuscript Miscellanies in Early Modern England,” in *Teaching Tudor and Stuart Women Writers*, ed. Susanne Woods and Margaret P. Hannay (New York: MLA, 2000), 53.

⁴² That is, out of the manuscript’s 194 textual items, 129 are verses attributed to Thomas Wyatt.

⁴³ John Stevens, *Music & Poetry in the Early Tudor Court* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1961), 188.

⁴⁴ Remley, “Mary Shelton,” 55.

⁴⁵ Heale, “Women and the Courtly Love Lyric,” 306.

rendering of Christine de Pisan's original French, which pointedly illustrates "the ease with which the pity and kindness [a] woman may show in response to pleading [...] can be turned to her shame":⁴⁶

ys thys afayre avaunte / ys thys honor
 a man hymselfe accuse thus and diffame
 ys yt good to confesse hymself a traytour
 and bryng a woman to sclaudrous name
 and tell how he her body hath don shame
 no worshyppe may he thus to hym conquer
 but great dysclaunder vnto hym and her

To her nay / yet was yt no reprefe
 for all for vertue was that she wrowght
 but he that brwed hath all thys myschefe
 that spake so fayre / & falsely inward thought
 hys be the sclawnder as yt by reason ought
 and vnto her thanke perpatuel
 that in suche a nede helpe can so well
 (fol. 89v)

On the next leaf, an excerpt from the Chaucerian poem *Remedy of Love* has been altered to cast women in a more positive light. Where the original has the misogynistic "the cursydness yet and disceyte of women" (fol. 336v), the Devonshire Manuscript has "the faythfulnes yet and prayse of women," rendering the complete stanza as follows:

yff all the erthe were parchment scrybable
 spedye for the hande / and all maner wode
 were hewed and proporcyoned to pennes able
 al water ynke / in damme or in flode
 euery man beyng a parfyte scribe & goode
 the faythfulnes yet and prayse of women
 cowde not be shewyd by the meane off penne
 (fol. 90r)

Remley contests that the selection and careful alteration of these medieval fragments in the Devonshire Manuscript allowed their copyist (whom he asserts is Mary Shelton) to "find a voice for her indignation at the treatment

⁴⁶ Heale, "Women and the Courtly Love Lyric," 306.

of women of her time by hypocritical lovers” and that the presence of such alterations suggests that the entries “should not be dismissed as mechanical exercises in transcription punctuated by a few haphazard scrawls,” but rather understood as “a deliberate attempt to recast poetry written by others as a new and proprietary sort of literary text.”⁴⁷ Heale, however, suggests that while “it would be nice to be able to claim that these stanzas were copied by a woman,” that “it is entirely possible that they were noted and copied out by Lord Thomas Howard or by another man,” possibly “to amuse and please their female acquaintances, or as a source for poems of their own.”⁴⁸ Moreover, Heale argues that the question is better reframed: “in a system of manuscript copying, appropriation, and adaptation, the question is perhaps less of the name or gender of an originating author,” and more one “of the kinds of voices and gestures the available discourses make possible to copiers and readers of both sexes.”⁴⁹

In addition to the aforementioned selection and alteration of verses, the proximity of one poem to another is often significant. The epistolary love-poetry exchanged between Douglas and Howard, collected and entered as a sequence in the manuscript, has been discussed in some detail above. Another example of the potential importance of physical proximity between entries in the manuscript is the poem “My ferefull hope from me ys fledd” (fol. 7v), signed “fynys quod n[o]b[od]y,” which is answered by the poem immediately following on the facing leaf, “Yowre ferefull hope cannot prevayle” (fol. 8r), which is in turn signed “fynys quod s[omebody].” While this kind of playful imitation and formal echoing does not rely on the relative proximity of the poems in the manuscript, the effect is immediately apparent and more visually striking when the poems are placed, as they are, on facing leaves.

The teasing blend of jest and earnestness in this pair of poems—whose authorship remains unattributed—points to the role of much of the content in the manuscript as participating in the courtly “game of love.”⁵⁰ The Dev-

⁴⁷ Remley, “Mary Shelton,” 56, 42. While Remley argues that Shelton is the copyist of these medieval fragments, the present edition instead concurs with Baron’s findings that the verses were entered by hand TH2, not MS. See the Textual Introduction for a discussion of these and other discrepancies.

⁴⁸ Heale, “Women and the Courtly Love Lyric,” 307.

⁴⁹ Heale, “Women and the Courtly Love Lyric,” 307.

⁵⁰ Stevens, *Music & Poetry*, 154–202. See also Roger Boase, *The Origin and Meaning of Courtly Love: A Critical Study of European Scholarship* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1977); David Burnley, *Courtliness and Literature in Medieval England* (New York: Long-

onshire Manuscript was composed entirely by figures associated with the Tudor court, an environment where, as Lawrence Stone has argued, “well-born young persons of both sexes were thrown together away from parental supervision in a situation of considerable freedom as they performed their duties as courtiers, ladies and gentlemen in waiting, tutors and governesses to the children.” Moreover, these aristocratic youths “had a great deal of leisure, and in the enclosed hot-house atmosphere of these great houses, love intrigues flourished as nowhere else.”⁵¹

Rather than “a monolithic set of regulations for love affairs” and “a code of behavior solemnly and universally observed,” the “game of love” is a modern term to describe the diverse range of “courtly styles, idioms, and conventions” available “to be read in a range of literal, playful, and ironic ways, depending on the context.”⁵² Since it facilitated the expression of love in a formal and refined manner, poetry, in particular the lyric form, was the field on which much of the courtly “game of love” was played:

Poetry *mattered* to the Courtier ... Poetry was an instrument of social converse and entertainment, sometimes in the form of a masque, sometimes the subject of an informal parlour game or competition of wit. Poetry could be used as a compliment or comment on virtually every happening in life, from birth to death, from the presentation of a gift to the launching of a war; it was the agent of flattery, ego titillation, love-making, condolence. Poetry was the medium of the communication of experience, the means for the resolution of personal syntheses and the expression of personal analyses. (emphasis original)⁵³

Julia Boffey proposes that since the Devonshire Manuscript was “passed around” among the “men and women whose amorous relationships in ‘real life’ are partially documented ... it is hardly surprising that they chose for the

man, 1998); and Bernard O’Donoghue, *The Courtly Love Tradition* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1982).

⁵¹ Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500–1800* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 103–4.

⁵² Barry A. Windeatt, ed., “Introduction,” in *Troilus and Criseyde* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998), xxiiiin13.

⁵³ J.W. Saunders, “From Manuscript to Print: A Note on the Circulation of Poetic MSS in the Sixteenth Century,” *Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society* 7.5 (1951): 509.