

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

There is some urgency for the publication of a scholarly edition of poems by William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke (1580–1630). Even aside from the high quality of a number of his poems, the fact that Pembroke wrote any poetry at all is worth remarking. Pembroke was a pivotal figure in the thriving Stuart literary culture. He befriended musicians and writers, including Ben Jonson, to whom he gave an annual gift of £20 to buy books.¹ While we cannot know if he was in fact the “Mr. W. H.” of Shakespeare’s sonnets, he is one of the two leading contenders.² Moreover, his identity as one of the two “incomparable brethren” to whom Shakespeare’s first folio was dedicated clearly attests to his vital engagement with contemporary theater.³ The son to Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of

¹ Ian Donaldson, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 238; his relationship with Pembroke is discussed on 79, 212, 266–69, 290–93, 320, 330, 429. The numerous dedications he received as a wealthy earl have, however, somewhat exaggerated his reputation as a patron, as discussed in Mary Ellen Lamb, “Literary Coterie of Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, and William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke,” *Re-Evaluating the Literary Coterie, 1580–1830: From Sidney to Blackwoods*, ed. Will Bowers and Hannah Crummé (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 15–34.

² Richard Dutton observes that the scholarly opinion has shifted from Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton to Pembroke: “*Shake-speares Sonnets*, Shakespeare’s Sonnets, and Shakespearean Biography,” *A Companion to Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, ed. Michael Schoenfeldt (Blackwell, 2007), 121–36, esp. 122; see also Peter Holland, “William Shakespeare,” *ODNB*; Katherine Duncan-Jones, “Introduction,” *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (London: T. Nelson, 1997), 55–69; and Colin Burrow, ed., *Shakespeare. The Complete Sonnets and Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 100–101. One of the best discussions of Pembroke as “Mr. W.H.” is John Briley, “William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke” (Ph.D. Diss, University of Birmingham, 1961), 881–902.

³ John Heminges and Henry Condell, “To the Most Noble and Incomparable Paire of Brethren,” in *The First Folio of Shakespeare: The Norton Facsimile* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968), A2. In addition to his close relationship with Ben Jonson, who dedicated to him his *Sejanus* (1603) and *Cataline* (1611), Pembroke’s duties as Lord Chamberlain (1615–1626) included arrangements for masques, plays, and musical events, as well as licensing theaters (Victor Stater, “William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke,” *ODNB*). Pembroke’s involvement was personal. His grief over the death of his “old acquaintance” the actor Richard Burbage prevented him from attending a play presented by the King’s Men at court (BL Egerton MS 2592, f.102).

Pembroke, and nephew to Sir Philip Sidney, he was a contributing member of the highly literary Sidney family. His cousin Mary Wroth, who bore him two children, represented his avatar Amphilanthus as an excellent poet in her topical romance *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania* and as the object of her sonnet sequence "Pamphilia to Amphilanthus."⁴ Finally, Pembroke's political prominence lends his writings additional significance. He served as Lord Chamberlain under James and Charles, and later as Lord Steward under Charles; he was a member of the Privy Council under both kings. He was elected Chancellor of Oxford University. He exerted substantial influence in Parliament, both in the House of Lords and the House of Commons.⁵

Although the poems of such a significant figure would seem to be of inherent interest, most discussions dedicated to Pembroke himself mention his verse only in passing.⁶ Brian O'Farrell's extensive biography of Pembroke devotes only a few pages to his verse.⁷ In his entry for the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Victor Stater expertly details Pembroke's role as patron and as courtier, but his only remark on his poems is that "Herbert composed poetry—which remained unpublished until after his death." A recent surge of attention to Pembroke's verse has occurred, however, in reference to his relationship, literary as well as sexual, with his cousin Mary Wroth, who has come into her own as a celebrated writer. In the most thorough published discussion of Pembroke's poetry to date, Gary Waller ably analyzes poems by Pembroke and Wroth in terms

⁴ Margaret Hannay, *Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 194–95, 252; Ilona Bell, "Introduction," Mary Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus in Manuscript and Print*, ed. Ilona Bell with Steven May (Toronto: Iter Press and Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2017), 38–44; Gary Waller, *The Sidney Family Romance: Mary Wroth, William Herbert, and the Early Modern Construction of Gender* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), *passim*; Jennifer Lee Carrell, "A Pack of Lies in a Looking Glass: Mary Wroth's *Urania* and the Magic Mirror of Romance," *SEL* 34.1 (1994): 79–107. His paternity of Mary Wroth's children was early identified by Josephine Roberts, "The Biographical Problem of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 1 (1982): 43–52.

⁵ Brian O'Farrell, *Shakespeare's Patron, William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke* (London: Continuum, 2011), 113–28, 159–171; Victor Stater, "William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke," *ODNB*.

⁶ An exception is Gary Waller's outstanding chapter on Pembroke's poetry in *The Sidney Family Romance*, 158–89. See also Mary Ellen Lamb, "The Poetry of William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke," *Ashgate Research Companion for the Sidneys*, Vol. 2: *Literature*, ed. Margaret Hannay, Michael Brennan, and Mary Ellen Lamb (Burlington: Ashgate, 2015), 269–81; Mary Ellen Lamb, "Can you suspect a change in me?: Poems by Mary Wroth and William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke," *Re-Reading Mary Wroth*, ed. Katherine Larson and Naomi Miller with Andrew Strychariski (New York: Palgrave, 2015), 53–68; and Mary Ellen Lamb, "'Love is not love': Pembroke, the Inns of Court, and Shakespeare's Sonnet 116," *SQ* 70 (2020): 101–28.

⁷ Brian O'Farrell, *Shakespeare's Patron*, 28–33, 41.

of a general “system of class and gendered assumptions” associating the pair in the shared values of the Sidney-Herbert coterie.⁸ Ilona Bell’s recent edition of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* describes how the Folger manuscript of Wroth’s poems “explores the joys and complications of a passionate, clandestine love affair” with Pembroke.⁹

This relative neglect of Pembroke’s poetry (except in relationship to Wroth’s) is due largely to the absence of an authorized edition. In 1660 John Donne the younger edited a volume entitled *Poems Written by the Rt. Hon. William Earl of Pembroke Lord Steward of His Majesties Household, whereof many are answered by Sir Benjamin Ruddier, Knight, with several Distinct Poems; written by them Occasionally and Apart*. A number of poems in Donne’s edition labeled “P” (Pembroke) and “R” (Rudyard) were clearly written by other poets; and Donne’s inaccuracies caused erroneous attributions of poems to enter the Pembroke canon with editions by Sir S. Egerton Brydges in 1817 and J.A. Manning in 1841.¹⁰ In 1959 Gaby Onderwyzer’s presentation of a selection of facsimiles from Donne’s 1660 edition in his *William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke: Poems (1660)* has become the version cited by most scholars.¹¹ A number of Onderwyzer’s selections have now been attributed to other poets; and these inadvertent errors have compromised recent discussions of Pembroke’s verse.¹² A number of these misattributions have been corrected in an unpublished edition of Pembroke’s poems by Robert Krueger as a B.Litt. dissertation for Oxford University in 1961, which also includes poems ascribed to Pembroke in manuscripts.¹³

⁸ Waller, *The Sidney Family Romance*, 161.

⁹ Bell, “Introduction,” Mary Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, 1. For other discussions of Pembroke in terms of Wroth, see William Kennedy, *Sites of Petrarchism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 161, 170–71, 194, 196–97, 236–38, and Lamb, ““Can you suspect a change in me?”” 53–68.

¹⁰ *Poems of William Herbert . . . and Sir Benjamin Rudyard*, ed. Sir Egerton Brydges (London: Bensley, 1817) and *Memoirs of Sir Benjamin Rudyard, Knt containing his Speeches and Poems*, ed. J.A. Manning (London: T & W Boone, 1841).

¹¹ *William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke: Poems (1660)*, ed. Gaby Onderwyzer, Augustan Reprint Society, #79 (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1959).

¹² Misattributed poems include “Do not reject those titles of your due” and “Oh do not tax me with a brutish love” by Dudley Lord North, “If that you needs must go” by Michael Drayton, “Blind beauty! If it be a loss” by John Grange, “So glides along the wanton brook” by Henry Reynolds, “Why should passion lead thee blind” by Walton Poole, “The purest piece of nature is my choice” by Robert Cleark. Discussions compromised by Onderwyzer’s edition include Josephine Roberts, ed., Mary Wroth, *Poems* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1983), 131, 180; Kennedy, *Sites of Petrarchism*, 236–38; Hannay, *Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth*, 196.

¹³ Robert Krueger, “The Poems of William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke,” B.Litt. diss., Oxford University, 1961; [http://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid%](http://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid%20)

In the absence of a holograph collection or authorized volume printed during his lifetime, the attribution of Pembroke's poetry remains a problem that cannot be entirely resolved. Only one poem, an epitaph to Robert Cecil, exists in Pembroke's handwriting. Such attribution issues are not unique to Pembroke's poems. Editors of poems by John Donne have confronted similar problems for, except for *The Anniversaries*, Donne never sought to see his poems in print.¹⁴ Like Donne, Pembroke did not compose his poems for a general audience. For Pembroke, the ability to write poetry demonstrated an elite accomplishment befitting his rank and especially his identity as a Sidney-Herbert. Without aspirations to be regarded as a professional poet, he remained an amateur, a classification that in no way denigrates his skill.¹⁵ He did not gather his poetry together for publication or distribute it in any purposive way. As primarily "one-offs," written for a specific occasion and often to a specific reader, Pembroke's poems resembled Donne's occasional poems, described by Larry Pebworth as ephemeral performances: once the occasion had passed, there was no further reason for them to exist, at least not in the mind of their author.¹⁶ In their occasional nature, Pembroke's poems are characteristic of much contemporary manuscript verse.¹⁷ Consequently, the preservation of a number of Pembroke's poems depended on readers who copied them into miscellanies and songbooks, only a small proportion of which have survived.¹⁸

3A21334c91-6e00-4a19-a71c-83e80d752e83/datastreams/THESIS01. Krueger's edition is based in part on M.A. Beese, "A Critical Edition of the Poems Printed by John Donne the younger in 1660, as Written by William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, and Sir Benjamin Ruddier," B.Litt. diss., Oxford University, 1935.

¹⁴ Gary Stringer, "The Composition and Dissemination of Donne's Writings," in *Oxford Handbook of John Donne*, ed. Jeanne Shami, M. Thomas Hester, and Dennis Flynn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 20.

¹⁵ "Amateur" as distinct from "professional" in Richard Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton and the Literary System* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), 25–35. See also Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 2–4, 253.

¹⁶ Ted-Larry Pebworth, "John Donne, Coterie Poetry, and the Text as Performance," *SEL* 29.1 (1989), 65.

¹⁷ Arthur F. Marotti, "The Occasional Character of Renaissance Lyric Verse," in *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric*, 2–10; Arthur F. Marotti, "The Social Context and Nature of Donne's Writing: Occasional Verse and Letters," in *The Cambridge Companion to John Donne*, ed. Achsah Guibbory (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 35–48. See also Margaret Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 38.

¹⁸ See H. R. Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts 1558–1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 157; Steven May, "The Future of Manuscript Studies in Early Modern Poetry," *Shakespeare Studies* 32 (2004), 59. Woudhuysen and May disagree on how much has been lost.

The poems that survived in printed form in the younger John Donne's edition of 1660 create their own kind of dilemma for editors. Because of its numerous misattributions, it would be quite possible to dismiss Donne's edition entirely and to present only those poems reliably ascribed to Pembroke in other texts: manuscripts for the most part and a contemporary printed edition, Henry Lawes' *Ayres and Dialogues* of 1653. An edition limited to these poems would include his epitaph for Salisbury (#1); his lyric exchange and his longer debate poems with Rudyerd (#2–5); "Canst thou love me and yet doubt" (#6), "Soul's joy when I am gone" (#7), and "Had I loved but at that rate" (#8). These first eight poems represent, in a sense, an edition-within-an-edition designed to satisfy readers whose desires for a virtually secured canon of Pembroke's poems are undeniably legitimate. While we have seriously considered issuing only this more limited edition of eight poems, we decided after much consideration also to offer readers additional poems attributed to Pembroke in manuscript, as well as some poems from the earlier sections of Donne's 1660 edition.

It is important to convey a realistic understanding of what is possible in the production of an edition of Pembroke's poems. Given the absence of an authorized manuscript or printed text during Pembroke's lifetime, any claim for absolute certainty in attributions of poems to Pembroke is necessarily disingenuous. Even manuscript ascriptions independent from Donne's edition are not entirely reliable. As Henry Woudhuysen has observed, a copyist's attribution might sometimes be only "an educated guess" or "wishful thinking" creating value for a poem by naming a celebrity author.¹⁹ Lara Crowley and Scott Nixon have, however, ably defended the accuracy of ascriptions in some manuscripts.²⁰ Since manuscript attributions provide the basis for this edition's inclusion of poems #9–10, a short discussion may be useful in understanding levels of credibility possible for attributions based on ascriptions.

A large and ornate subscription "W: P:" appears at the bottom of the final page of British Library, Add. MS 18647 (AD), on which #9 ("Had shee a glass and feared the fire") and #10 ("My dead and buried love is resin againe") are inscribed. The subscription "Pembrocke" below #9 in O1 bears out a reading of "W: P:" as referring to "William, earl of Pembroke." Dated by *CELM* from the 1620s to 1630s, AD was owned by William and then Basil Feilding, the first and second Earls of Denbigh. AD is composed entirely of writings by John Donne except for this final page which, copied in a different hand, may have been inscribed at a later time. Does the presence of John Donne the younger as chaplain

¹⁹ Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts 1558–1640*, 160.

²⁰ Lara Crowley, "Attribution and Anonymity: Donne, Raleigh, and Fletcher in British Library, Stowe MS 962," in *Manuscript Miscellanies in Early Modern England*, ed. Joshua Eckhardt and Daniel Starza Smith (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 133–150; she cites Scott Nixon, "A Reading of Thomas Carew in Manuscript," unpublished D.Phil. dissertation (St. John's College, Oxford, 1996).

to the second Earl, with whom he was associated at least by 1644,²¹ increase the reliability of this subscription? Poems #9 and #10 apparently travelled together, also appearing (although without attribution) on the same page in T2 with another poem #16 evidently by Pembroke.²² T2 was compiled in the 1620s from versions originating in the network of the Earls of Essex, who would have known the Sidney-Herberts.²³ The provenance of O1, compiled by one William Elyott, a nephew of Simonds d'Ewes, around 1640 to 1655, shows no connection with the Sidney-Herberts or with the Earls of Denbigh and Essex. Yet O1 remains vitally important for its subscription "Pembroke," and also for its title, "When my Carliles Chamber was on fire," referring to Pembroke's renowned cousin Lucy Percy Hay, who became Countess of Carlisle in 1622. These three manuscripts (AD, O1, T2) provide links that, when taken together, enable a reasonable attribution of #9 and #10 to Pembroke. Without discernable connections between their compilers or the networks within which they circulated however, a straightforward proof is not possible.

Attribution problems become even more complicated with Donne's 1660 edition. Yet a close examination of Donne's edition provides reasons to refrain from a wholesale dismissal of all of his attributions to Pembroke. As discussed further in Appendix B, the quality of the texts in the first portion of this edition (B1r-C3v), as compared with their manuscript versions, supports Donne's claim for access to a manuscript of Pembroke's poems preserved by his close friend the Countess of Devonshire, as asserted in his dedicatory letter addressed to her. He placed these reliable poems at the front of his edition in what we are calling section one.²⁴ Since Donne dedicated his edition to the Countess of Devonshire, it seems probable that she provided poems she thought were written by her close friend Pembroke, but was Pembroke himself her actual source? Might a manuscript given by Pembroke also have included, as was common in those days, unattributed poems by other authors whom he particularly admired?

The second portion of PR (C4r-E4v) furthers Donne's claim in his prefatory letter to the readers that he received lyrics by Pembroke from the musician Henry Lawes, and possibly from Nicholas Lanier as well. While no Pembroke lyrics are currently extant in settings by Lanier, Lawes' holograph manuscript AL includes four lyrics also present in section two; Lawes' printed collection (*Ayres*

²¹ Joanne Woolway Grenfell, "John Donne, the younger" (1604–1662/3), *ODNB*.

²² See commentary to poem #16.

²³ Ernest W. Sullivan II, ed., *The First and Second Dalhousie Manuscripts, Poems and Prose by John Donne and Others, a Facsimile Edition* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1988), 4–5.

²⁴ These three divisions in the 1660 edition were observed by Robert Krueger, xxxiv, lii; our own investigations are in agreement. We do not accept, however, Krueger's claim that the middle section of 1660 also derives from a manuscript provided by the Countess of Devonshire.

and *Dialogues* [1653]) contains another. Did Lawes and/or Lanier also provide any of the other poems whose metrics and imagery also lend themselves to musical settings? Since lyrics set to music are seldom attributed, there is no way to be completely sure which poems, if any, Lawes may have sent to Donne. Since Lawes did not ascribe lyrics in his holograph manuscript, does his possession of poems printed in Donne's edition verify without doubt that they were written by Pembroke? Do we know if Donne received other lyrics from Lawes or Nicholas Lanier? Or was he just filling in his volume with poems by other poets? This issue becomes especially difficult since five of the poems Donne ascribes to "P" in section two can be shown to have been written by other authors.²⁵

By the time Donne was compiling the final portion of this edition (F1r-I3v), it appears that he was running out of needed material to fill out the volume; for he began attributing to "P" and "R" in an apparently random fashion to contemporary favorites by Henry King, William Strode, and Thomas Carew. Of the twenty-six poems marked "P" in section three, sixteen can be shown to have been composed by other poets. None is attributed to Pembroke elsewhere.

We submit these questions in order to be transparent about what this edition can and cannot accomplish. Just as we recognize the agency of early modern readers in the "Readings" included in the commentaries, we also acknowledge the agency of our modern readers, and we welcome opinions at variance with our own as an inevitable and acceptable result of our decision to produce an edition that includes poems from Donne's miscellany, rather than limiting the edition to eight poems, or indeed our decision to produce an edition of Pembroke's poems, so fraught with attribution problems, at all.²⁶

The challenges confronting us as editors of Pembroke's poems are not ours alone. Puzzles in attribution have recently become the focus of Shakespeare's plays, as demonstrated by the much-disputed decisions in the *New Oxford Shakespeare* and its *New Oxford Shakespeare: Authorship Companion* to attribute *Arden of Faversham* to Shakespeare and scenes from the *Henry VI* plays to Christopher Marlowe.²⁷ Unlike Shakespeare, Pembroke did not leave behind sufficient writings to enable a computer analysis of datasets of words and word sequences. Perhaps it is just as well. The larger issue raised by the *New Oxford Shakespeare* concerns attribution itself. The certainty imparted by authorized editions may not be entirely appropriate for editions of works for some early modern writers, especially those who did not gather their works together during their lifetimes.

²⁵ These authors are identified in Appendix B.

²⁶ See Harold Love, *Attributing Authorship: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

²⁷ *The New Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, gen. ed. Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus, Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); *The New Oxford Shakespeare Authorship Companion*, ed. Gary Taylor, Gabriel Egan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

Since much of Pembroke's poetry was composed for social occasions as interpersonal communications to a specific reader or readers, this biographical account is designed primarily to provide some insights into Pembroke's several social worlds which affected his poetry rather than a complete record of his life.¹ This narrative describes five contexts influencing his poetry:

1. the Herbert estate of Wilton, where his identity as a Sidney was formed among writers gathered by his mother the Countess of Pembroke to memorialize his uncle Philip Sidney who died fighting for the Protestant cause in the Netherlands,
2. the urbane society of London, where he began his literary dialogue with Benjamin Rudyerd, influenced by the *mores* of the Inns of Court,
3. amatory relationships with women, especially his cousin Mary Wroth, for whom he wrote poetry of seduction and apology,
4. musical performance which inspired the form and content of lyrics, some of which appeared in settings by the composer Henry Lawes, and
5. political involvement leading to his epitaph for Robert Cecil and later political as well as literary activity with his cousins the Countess of Bedford and the Countess of Carlisle in their common project of promoting the cause of the Protestant Palatinate.

1) Lord Herbert, before He Became the Third Earl of Pembroke

Born on 8 April 1580 to Mary Sidney Herbert and Henry Herbert, second Earl of Pembroke, William Herbert became part of a kinship network of writers: his uncle Philip Sidney; his mother Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke; his uncle Robert Sidney; and his cousin Mary Sidney Wroth. For the Sidney-Herbert family, literary activities were inextricably also political. Political aspects of Philip Sidney's *Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* have been ably identified,² and

¹ Readers are referred to longer and more detailed biographies by O'Farrell, Briley, and for a more psychoanalytic approach, Gary Waller, *The Sidney Family Romance*, 52–93. For more information on Pembroke's connections with early modern drama, see Briley.

² For example, Blair Worden, *The Sound of Virtue: Philip Sidney's Arcadia and Elizabethan Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

after his death in 1586 fighting on behalf of the Protestants in the Netherlands, the Sidney-Herberts remained committed, in their actions and often in their writings, to military intervention for the Protestant cause on the Continent.³ The importance of such activities to his familial identity would have become quite evident to William Herbert as a boy growing up at the family estate at Wilton where, after Philip's death, the Countess of Pembroke gathered a group of writers, some drawn from her resident staff and some brought in from outside Wilton, primarily to promote her brother's projects and protégés.⁴ William Herbert's tutor, Hugh Sanford, worked closely with the Countess to produce an authoritative edition of her brother Philip's romance, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*. At age thirteen when the romance was published, William Herbert would have been fully aware of the significance to the family of his uncle's romance.⁵ In his book *Nobilis, or a View of the Life and Death of a Sidney* completed at Wilton in 1593, the family physician Thomas Moffett emphatically stressed the importance of his uncle Philip as a model of piety and military commitment for Lord Herbert to follow.⁶ In the early 1590s at Wilton William Herbert would have frequently encountered the poet Samuel Daniel, who may have also served as his tutor, as well as the poets Abraham Fraunce and Nicholas Breton.⁷ By the time Herbert left for New College, Oxford in 1593, the writing of poetry would have seemed a familiar and highly significant activity.

This period was no doubt influential for William Herbert's relationships with female romantic and/or sexual partners. After leaving Oxford about 1595, he was presented with several marriage proposals that failed to materialize. Marriage negotiations with the family of Elizabeth Carey, daughter of George Carey and Elizabeth (the future Lord and Lady Hunsdon) proceeded well in secret meetings between the two in October 1595, but were broken off by 22

³ See, for example, Michael Brennan, *The Sidneys of Penshurst and the Monarchy, 1500–1700* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2006), 93–143, *passim*.

⁴ The activities of these writers at Wilton are discussed in more detail in Lamb, "Literary Coteries," 15–34.

⁵ The importance of this edition and its role as a response to Greville's 1590 edition is ably discussed by Joel B. Davis, "Multiple *Arcadias* and the Literary Quarrel between Fulke Greville and the Countess of Pembroke," *Studies in Philology* 101.4 (2004): 401–30 and in his *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia and the Invention of English Literature* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 160–2.

⁶ Thomas Moffett, *Nobilis or A View of the Life and Death of a Sidney*, ed. Virgil B. Heltzel and Hoyt H. Hudson (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1940), English translation 95. *Nobilis* was the original title for this work, which was written in Latin.

⁷ The probable employment of Daniel as Herbert's tutor is described in Michael G. Brennan, *Literary Patronage in the English Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 1988), 75; Lamb, "Literary Coteries," 20–1.

November “by his not liking.”⁸ Two years later a proposed marriage to Bridget Vere, Burghley’s granddaughter, also ended, ostensibly over a financial disagreement between Burghley and William’s father.⁹ Lord Herbert seems to have been one of a number of suitors for the hand of Elizabeth Cecil, widow of William Hatton, before she married Sir Edward Coke.¹⁰ On 20 September 1599 Rowland Whyte, secretary to Sir Robert Sidney, expressed his opinion that Charles Howard, Earl of Nottingham would be pleased to match Herbert to his niece; by 16 August 1600, this possibility had fallen through. Whyte concluded that he could not “find any disposition in the gallant young lord to marry.”¹¹

It was during this time that Herbert began his career at court. He visited court with his father in October 1595, and was at court intermittently in 1597, 1599, and much of 1600.¹² Herbert’s success at court was vitally important to the welfare of the Sidney-Herbert family, and Whyte followed his progress in some detail. It apparently was off to a slow start. In September, 1599 Whyte described him as a “continual courtier” but “much blamed for his cold and weak manner of pursuing her Majesty’s favor,” further asserting that “there is want of spirit and courage laid to his charge, that he is a melancholy young man.”¹³ By October it seemed that the situation was somewhat improved; and by November Whyte’s report was rosy indeed: Lord Herbert had become “very well beloved here of all,” especially Robert Cecil.¹⁴ The queen had even displayed her favor by granting him an hour’s private conference before he left court at the end of November.¹⁵ Whyte’s enthusiastic appraisal continued the following March, when he wrote to Herbert’s uncle that he “shall have great comfort by him, and I believe that he will prove a great man in court. He is very well beloved and truly deserves it.”¹⁶

But then, unfortunately, disaster struck. At the wedding of his cousin Henry Herbert, son of the Earl of Worcester, to Lady Anne Russell on 14 June 1600, William Herbert met Mary Fitton, one of Queen Elizabeth’s maids of honor,

⁸ Discussed by Rowland Whyte in letters to Robert Sidney: 15 Oct. and 22 Nov. 1595 in *The Letters of Rowland Whyte (1595–1608)*, ed. Michael G. Brennan, Margaret P. Hannay, and Noel Kinnamon (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2013), 62, 89; discussed in more detail by Briley, 256–63.

⁹ *Letters of Rowland Whyte*, 13 Oct., 22 Oct., 20 Dec. 1597, pp. 254, 259, 271; Briley, 288–95.

¹⁰ Briley, 302–3; John Chamberlain, *Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. Norman Egbert McClure (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1939), 1: 54 (November 1598).

¹¹ Whyte, 13 Sept. 1599, 20 Sept. and 16 Aug. 1600, pp. 333, 339, 522.

¹² Whyte, 25 Oct. 1595, p. 68; 8 Sept. 1599, p. 328; Briley 898 and his appendix “Diary of Locations.”

¹³ Whyte, 8 Sept. 1599, p. 328, 11 Sept. 1599, pp. 331–32.

¹⁴ Whyte, 6 Oct. 1599, p. 350; 8 Oct. 1599, p. 356; 29 Nov. 1599, p. 381.

¹⁵ Whyte, 29 Nov., p. 381.

¹⁶ Whyte, 22 March 1599/1600, p. 451.

who was performing in a “memorable masque.”¹⁷ Not long thereafter Herbert and Fitton began a sexual relationship that led to her pregnancy. In February 1601 Herbert acknowledged paternity for the baby, which was stillborn in March, but adamantly refused the queen’s insistence that he marry Mary. Since the queen was responsible for the welfare of Mary Fitton as her maid of honor, this situation ended Herbert’s hopes for any career he might pursue in Queen Elizabeth’s court. Incensed, Queen Elizabeth committed him to the Fleet where he was confined from 25 March to 26 April and dismissed from court afterwards.¹⁸ He did not take this dismissal well. His letter to Cecil of 19 June from Baynards Castle, the Herbert residence in London, is redolent with self-pity for his separation from the queen whose “incomparable beauty” he flatters shamelessly:

For do you account him a freeman that is restrained from coming where he most desires to be, and debarred from enjoying that comfort in respect of which all other earthly joys seems miseries, though he have a whole world else to walk in? In this vile case am I, whose miserable fortune it is to be banished from the sight of her, in whose favour the balance consisted of my misery or happiness, and whose incomparable beauty was the only sun of my little world, that alone had power to give it life and heat. Now judge you whether this be a bondage or no. For mine own part, I protest I think my fortune as slavish as any man’s that lives fettered in a galley.¹⁹

In his letter to Cecil of 26 August from Wilton, Herbert again expressed a keen wish to return to the court: “If the Queen continue her displeasure a little longer, undoubtedly I shall turn clown, for justice of peace I can by no means frame unto, and one of the two a man that lives in the country must needs be.”²⁰ Despite his efforts, Herbert was not to be admitted to the queen’s court for the short remainder of her reign.

2) The Third Earl of Pembroke and His Lyric Debate with Benjamin Rudyerd

With his father’s death on 19 January 1601, Herbert became the third Earl of Pembroke. He took his place in the House of Lords on 27 October and continued there until its dissolution on 19 December.²¹ This was the beginning of his

¹⁷ Whyte, 14 June 1600, p. 498.

¹⁸ *CSP Domestic*, 1601–3, 19, discussed by Briley, 394.

¹⁹ <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-cecil-papers/vol11>: Calendar of Cecil Papers held in Hatfield House, ed. Dyfnallt Owen, 86.108.

²⁰ <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-cecil-papers/vol11>, 87.141.

²¹ *Lords Journal*, 2: 227–58.