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The Westmoreland Text of Donne's First Epithalamium

Celestin J. Walby

Herbert J. C. Grierson has handed down to modern editors of Donne's poems the principle that, in the words of Helen Gardner, "it is safer to base the text on [the 1633 edition] and correct from the manuscripts" than to follow any single extant manuscript as a copy-text.[1] *1633* does have the support of not one or two manuscripts but a good number of them, what Grierson coins a "manuscript tradition."[2] This "tradition" shows *1633* as a *whole* to have better readings against the *whole* of any *single* manuscript in Group I or Group II from which the edition is derived; or even perhaps of any collection as a *whole* that stands outside these two groups.[3] However, the difficulty in the concept of a "manuscript tradition" in support of *1633* is that that concept in itself invites a corrupted text. There are likely more manuscripts copied from each other, or from other sources fairly removed from the original, that share in errors and weak readings than there are manuscript copies close to the original that read against the "tradition." What an editor might be using in adhering to the principle, as stated by Gardner, that "we should, when all three groups agree against *1633*, adopt the manuscript reading" is a "manuscript tradition" of subtle corruptions that have gotten past the scrutiny of obvious errors (*Divine Poems*, p. xcii).[4] Moreover, while *1633* might be a better text as a whole than any single manuscript as a whole, it is not necessarily, nor even probably, the case that a particular poem represented in the 1633 edition is better than the single best representation of that poem in all the manuscripts. Each poem or set of poems comes to a scribe under different favoring circumstances, even different scribes of varying ability might copy poems into the same collection, thereby altering the authority of that particular poem or set of poems within the manuscript itself. A given copy of a poem in a manuscript may be the best representation of that poem in all the sources available, while the collection as a whole may appear to offer a relatively poor representation of the rest of Donne's canon.

The challenge, then, set forth by the textual editors of *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne* is to do what Grierson claims is impossible—to construct a "genealogy" of each poem.[5] To be fair, it is not a strict genealogy that traces each poem back to a collection of Donne's works

prepared for the press by the author or issued by the author's executors, which would amount to *a priori* authority and is likely what Grierson meant by a genealogy that "trace[s] each stream to its fountain-head" (2:cxi). But, based on a collation of as many early artifacts as possible, especially manuscript copies, and on a plausible set of assumptions about how corruptions in manuscript transmission occur, the goal announced by the *Variorum* editors is to construct a genealogy in the form of a schema that reveals the earliest extant recension of the poem and reflects more closely than any other known copy Donne's wording, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.[6]

The study of a collation of all existing copies of Donne's first "Epithalamium," commonly known as "Epithalamion made at Lincoln's Inn," yields just such a desired schema, one that demonstrates that the copy in the Westmoreland manuscript is the least corrupted, earliest extant recension of the poem. [See Appendix II.] The Westmoreland manuscript, preserving copies of Donne's poems in the hand of his close friend Rowland Woodward, is widely recognized for its excellent provenance, but has not been used as a copy-text in any edition of Donne's poems.[7] The Westmoreland copy of Donne's "Epithalamium," however, provides a stronger reading at important points of difference with the 1633 edition. To address the decision not to produce a "critical text," that is, not to emend *1633* with Westmoreland where emending seems necessary, which has been accepted common practice among modern editors, I will argue that two such emended editions, Grierson's and Milgate's, adversely affect the interpretation of the poem. Finally, because the poem appears to date from the same year as Spenser's *Epithalamion* (1595) and has certain elements that strain the epithalamic mode, David Novarr and Heather Dubrow have debated whether the poem is a parody or a serious but failed imitation of Spenser's epithalamion.[8] I suggest here that the Westmoreland text supports an interpretation of parody.

The first objective in constructing a schema is to determine which corruptions each manuscript inherited from its immediate source—the original copied by the scribe. Two categories of changes are especially telling: word omissions and verbal alterations. A scribe would have unknowingly duplicated the omissions and the choice and arrangement of words unique to his original. In the schema, then, there is a correlation between the two categories so that whenever a particular omission or set of omissions occurs within a manuscript, a specific series of verbal alterations also occurs. If a number of manuscripts share in a pattern of these corruptions, then their originals must descend from a single source or progenitor. The assumption is that each scribe could not have come to the same conclusion of which words to omit, replace, and rearrange independently of a common source. The pattern of corruptions shared among the manuscripts is a profile of errors, so to speak, of what the progenitor of their originals must have contained.

The schema of Donne's first "Epithalamium" consists of three strands of manuscripts. Each strand is constructed of the corruptions shared among its members; and, therefore, each strand is also a profile of corruptions contained in the progenitor of those manuscripts. For the sake of brevity and familiarity, I will describe the strand according to Grierson and Gardner's manuscript Groups. Not surprisingly, each strand corresponds to each Group that contains the poem. The advantage, however, in forming a schema of the manuscripts (over merely grouping them) is that the schema places their corruptions within a context of the poem's transmission, pointing to one of the manuscripts as closer to the author's original than the rest.

The first strand (on the left-hand side of the schema by omission of words) contains Group V manuscripts, which omit the word "glad" in line 23. The first strand is divided further into a second substrand that contains Group III manuscripts, omitting, in addition to "glad," "To day" in line 24, "strawd" in line 32 and "To night" in line 60. The third strand (on the right-hand side of the schema) contains Group II manuscripts which omit the exclamation "O" in line 49 and (except for DT1) "diuers" in line 51. The schema according to verbal alterations reveals the same basic structure and the same groups of manuscripts. Group V's omission is always accompanied by changes in lines 26, 47 and 39. Group III's omissions are always accompanied by changes in lines 47, 10, 39, and 46. And Group II's omissions are always accompanied by changes in lines 26, 45, 55, 59 and (except SA1) 42. Westmoreland excluded, then, three progenitors, each standing at the head of a strand, account for all the manuscripts that contain the epithalamion.

The Westmoreland manuscript takes its place on the schema above all the other manuscripts since it makes none of the omissions or verbal alterations found in them. It not only makes none of these errors, but a cross-reference of the strands confirms that it also must be very close to the source of the three progenitors. Since each Group contains corruptions largely its own (that is, no progenitor manuscript influenced the contents of the other two), the progenitors can be said to offer independent testimonies of a more authorial single source according to their line of descent. If we cross-reference the strands and accept the testimony of one of the strands as correct or accept the corroborative testimony of two strands against the one as correct, we find that the resultant reading agrees with Westmoreland.[9] The fact that Westmoreland does not contradict any of the authorial readings that can be inferred from the three strands, and makes none of the errors that proliferate when one scribe copies from another, places it close in transmission to Donne's own holograph.

In contrast to Westmoreland's preeminent position on the schema, the 1633 edition is an amalgamation of Group II and Group III errors. Wesley Milgate notes in his commentary to the "Epithalamion made at Lincolnes Inne" that the 1633 "printer was following his Group II manuscript, which led him

into error in ll. 49, 55, and 59" (p. 109). But what Milgate does not point out is that *1633* avoids Group II errors in lines 42, 45, and 51, and it introduces errors from Group III in lines 23 and 47. Apparently, the editor of *1633* attempted to improve his Group II manuscript with a Group III copy and in at least two obvious cases inserted the latter's substantive errors instead. He correctly changes "satten there" to "fatten thee" in line 42 and "Never" to "Which" in line 45, and he correctly replaces the missing word "diuers" in line 51. But he must have thought for various reasons that line 23 also needed emending and that his Group III copy was correct in omitting "glad." After all, it is a hypermetric line and "glad" must have seemed a superfluous addition in the description of the bride. "So may she fayre, rich, glad, and in nothing lame": if she is fair, rich and in nothing lame, what need is there to mention that she is also glad? Attributing the word and the extra beat in the line to scribal error, he incorrectly followed his Group III copy in omitting "glad." The same need for correction must have seemed apparent in line 47. All of the Group II manuscripts read "prayer" or "prayers": "For the best bride, best worthy of prayer and fame / To day puts on perfection and a womans name." There is some tension in the reading "prayer and fame" because of the apparent contradiction in terms. A bride is either humble, deserving of prayer, or ambitious, deserving of fame, but not both. In agreement with his Group III copy, the editor of *1633* changes his Group II manuscript to read "best worthy of praise and fame." The construction "praise and fame" is the more obvious choice because of the similarity between the two words, which are almost complementary terms. With his Group III copy suggesting alternative readings, the 1633 editor opted to emend his Group II manuscript, accepting the more obvious constructions as authorial.

By incorporating errors from both Group II and Group III, the 1633 text is no closer to the author's intention than any of the three Groups. And it moves even further away from the author's source by punctuating arbitrarily throughout the text. Grierson notes that "compared . . . with the Anniversaries (printed in Donne's lifetime) *1633* shows a fondness for the semicolon, not only within the sentence, but separating sentences, instead of a full stop, when these are closely related in thought to one another" (2:cxxii). A comparison of *1633* with Westmoreland yields the same result. *1633* has thirty semicolons compared to Westmoreland's thirteen. Of those thirteen semicolons in Westmoreland, *1633* changes four of them to commas. Not including the last line of every stanza, Westmoreland has sixteen periods and ten colons, *1633* has none—they are all, except for one missing mark, either semicolons or commas. It appears that the general tendency of the 1633 editor was to dilute what punctuation did exist within his copy, changing periods and colons to semicolons, and semicolons to commas. Clearly, this propensity toward the use of the semicolon and comma cannot possibly be authorial.

With the 1633 edition, then, we are at the mercy of its editor's judgment as to what the poet wrote. The editor corrected some errors but left more uncorrected and introduced two new errors in the process. And the punctuation of *1633* is probably entirely editorial and not authorial at all.

Grierson and Milgate compound the eclecticism of the 1633 edition by choosing to emend *1633* with Westmoreland instead of accepting the manuscript as their copy-text. In their efforts to emend the text, both editors subscribe to two main principles, first espoused by Grierson in his textual introduction, that lead them into questionable practices: 1) Westmoreland's reading will be adopted only after the "manuscript tradition" suggests that *1633* is in error (2:cxvi-cxvii); and 2) the judgment as to the correctness of a reading will be based in part (if not in whole) on its "consistency. . .with the sentiments expressed by the author elsewhere" as well as its "relation to the probable source of the poet's thought," Donne's "scholastic doctrine" (2:cxv-cxvii, note 2). The problem with the first principle is that "the agreement of the manuscripts whether universal or partial" did not always point out the verbal errors of *1633* and thereby prompt Grierson and Milgate to accept Westmoreland's readings (Grierson 2:cxvii). Although it cleared up most of the errors of omission and word order, the "tradition" of manuscripts failed to call the editors' attention to the prayer/praise error in line 47. And since most of the manuscripts' punctuation is "often erratic and chaotic, when it is not omitted altogether," an agreement among the manuscripts is of little help in correcting the edition's punctuation (Grierson 2:cxxiv). The second principle imposes the editors' individual conception of Donne's art on the text. It tendentiously assumes that Donne has a consistency of thought and doctrine that is unmistakable between two or more variant readings that are closely related. In attempting to make an authorial distinction between variant readings on these "internal grounds," especially in punctuation, Grierson and Milgate unnecessarily subject the text to their own personal conceptions of what the poet wrote.

Line 26 in the 1633 text ("Some of these Senators wealths deep oceans") illustrates how Grierson and Milgate's approach adversely affects the interpretation of the poem. While these editors correctly emend "Some," changing it to "Sonns," each is misled in the punctuation by a readiness to apply the "source" of Donne's thought—the 1616 *Sermon Preached at Paul's Cross* . . .— and the "sentiment" of his characteristic pun on "Sonne." Line 26 is one of the opening lines of the stanza addressing the bridegroom's attendants. Grierson's emended text reads:

> And you frolique Patricians,
> Sonns of these Senators wealths deep oceans,
> Ye painted courtiers, barrels of others wits,

> Yee country men, who but your beasts love none,
> Yee of those fellowships whereof hee's one,
> Of study and play made strange Hermaphrodits,
> Here shine; This Bridegroom to the Temple Bring. (ll. 25-31)

The stanza is important to the poem, for it places the marriage within a social and political context, establishing the nature of the relationship between "frolique Patricians" and the bridegroom, on the one hand, and "Daughters of London" and the Bride, on the other hand. Both editors agree that the line contains a double possessive: "Senators' wealths.'" To justify *1633*'s awkward punctuation, or lack of it, Grierson cites the following passage from Donne's *Sermon*: "I spend not this to yourselves, you Senators of London, but as God hath blessed you in your ways, and in your callings, so put your children into ways and courses too. . . . The Fathers' former labours shall not excuse their sons future idleness" (2:98). From this passage Grierson concludes that "the sons of wealthy citizens might grow idle and extravagant; they could not be styled Patricians" (2:98). The "Sonns" in the "Epithalamium" are not the sons of "these Senators" by birth, but "young noblemen . . . willing to be, the sons, by marriage . . . of these Senators, or rather of their money-bags" (2:98). Grierson reads the line as conveying the sentiment that the noblemen exploit the wealthy middle classes; it is only for money that the "young courtiers" would marry the daughters of merchants or other rich citizens not of noble birth. The pun on the word "Sonns," then, is restricted to mean that the bridegroom and his attendants are sons of these senators by marriage only and thereby become "suns which drink up the deep oceans of these Senators' wealth" (2:98). Milgate admits that the construction is "congested syntax," but claims that it is authorial, citing the same 1616 sermon as evidence. For Milgate the groom and his attendants are directly related to the senators, although strictly speaking the relationship is implied. The strange syntax apparently is needed to get the point of the pun across: their fathers' "'oceans' of wealth are . . . sucked up by these . . .'suns' to be poured out in lavish spending" (Milgate, p. 109). Both editors have ensured certain interpretations of an awkward reading that would be, if not for testing its consistency with Donne's alleged thought and doctrine, highly suspect of scribal corruption.

Westmoreland's punctuation, on the other hand, presents a more plausible reading of the line without the need to appeal to sources outside the poem or to claim a parallel between a poem written in 1595 and a sermon preached in 1616. It places a comma between "Sonnes" and "wealths,"[10] thereby making "Sonnes of these Senators" and "wealths deepe Oceans" appositives modifying "frolique Patricians."[11] It is impossible to determine from Grierson's "internal tests" which of the two readings, *1633*'s or Westmoreland's, is authorial. Nothing in the Westmoreland reading contradicts Donne's *Sermon* or his

characteristic pun. The second appositive, "wealths deepe Oceans," glances meaningfully at the "Sonnes" of the first, executing the pun without forcing it and without the awkward syntax. The "frolique Patricians" are suns that suck up their fathers' wealth, as Milgate claims, but they are also deep oceans or bottomless pits into which that wealth is emptied. Westmoreland's punctuation is supported by other terms in the stanza. Like "strange Hermaphroditts" of "study and play" the groom and his attendants have contrary natures as suns and oceans. This set of appositives is one of a series of three sets of appositives that are "hermaphroditic" in nature. "Painted courtiers" are like suns that suck up the wits of others and, parallel to deep oceans that contain wealth, they are "Barrells" of others' wits claimed to be their own. And there is a certain contrary nature about "cuntry*men*" (a sexual oxymoron that itself suggests hermaphroditism) who love only their beasts. Grierson and Milgate's insistence on the "congested syntax" of *1633*'s text to ensure the pun on "Sonnes" is not only unnecessary, but it also diminishes this play on contraries and near contraries within the stanza and throughout the poem.

While textual decisions ought not to be made on critical or aesthetic grounds, those decision inevitably have consequences for criticism. More particularly, the choice of the Westmoreland text of Donne's "Epithalamium" as copy-text helps clarify the critical debate about the poem and its relationship to Spenser's "Epithalamion," which was written in the same year. In his seminal study of 1956 (reprinted in *The Disinterred Muse*) David Novarr argued that Donne's poem is a "mock-epithalamium" performed during "Midsummer revels" at Lincoln's Inn and suggested that the work parodies Spenser's great poem (p. 80), a position subsequently rejected by Heather Dubrow on the grounds that "only one phrase in [Donne's] poem could conceivably be read as stylistically parodic" of Spenser's rich language (p. 137). But Donne clearly knew Spenser's epithalamion, since several lines and tropes of the younger poet's work are traceable to Spenser's poem. A comparison of the two epithalamia reveals that Donne parodies not Spenser's style or language but his ideal of marriage. That is, Donne's poem does not so much parody Spenser's work as satirize the institution that the elder poet celebrates.

Even Dubrow admits the indubitable "mockery" that results when Spenser's "lovely appeal to 'ye merchants daughters'" is converted into Donne's

> Daughters of London, you which bee
> Our golden Mines and furnish'd Treasuree;
> You which are Angels, yet still bring with you
> Thousands of Angels on your marriage dayes. (ll. 13-16)

She claims, however, that "we need not assume that Donne includes this satire on the wealthy middle classes because he is writing a light-hearted

parody . . . . A touch of insecurity about his own social status could well have produced the rude comments that we find" (p. 135). But reference to Spenser's epithalamion yields a better explanation. Addressing the merchants' daughters, Spenser describes his bride's "inward beauty":

> There dwels sweet loue and constant chastity
> Vnspotted fayth and comely womanhed,
> Regard of honour and mild modesty,
> There Vertue raynes as Queene in royal throne,
> And giueth lawes alone.
> The which the base affections doe obay,
> And yeeld theyr seruices vnto her will,
> Ne thought of thing vncomely euer may
> Therto approch to tempt her mind to ill.
> Had ye once seene these her celestial threasures,
> And vnreuealed pleasures,
> Then would ye wonder and her prayses sing,
> That al the woods should answer and your echo ring.[12] (ll. 191-203)

Donne's description of the bridesmaids as "Angels" who bring "Thousands of Angels," or gold coins, on their marriage days is not unrelated to Spenser's poem. Donne purposefully makes his bride and bridesmaids a "furnish'd Treasuree" of a more base and outward nature than Spenser's bride's hidden "celestial threasures."

Unlike Spenser's "handmaydes of the Cyprian Queene" (l. 104), who as they dress the bride "still throw betweene / Some grace to be seene" (ll. 106-7), Donne's bridesmaids "Conceitedly dres" the bride with "fitt place for every flower and Iewell" (ll. 19-20). Thus, Donne's bride does not partake of the "Regard of . . . mild modesty" that characterizes Spenser's bride; rather she is "for love fitt fuell, / As gay as Flora, and as rich as Inde" (ll. 21-22). At the bride's disrobing, Donne continues to play on the "outward" earthly gifts of his bride as opposed to the unseen "heavenly gifts" of Spenser's bride. "Vertue raynes as Queene in royal throne" as part of Spenser's bride's "vnrevealed pleasures," but Donne's bride is encouraged to "disposses/ . . . of these chaines and robes, which were put on / To'adorne the day not thee; for thou alone / Like Vertu and Truthe art best in nakednes" (ll. 76-78). Novarr notes that Donne's reference "to the bride's desire to exchange virginity for womanhood by talking about her preference for 'a mothers rich stile'. . . . seems far removed from the conventionally witty business of indebtedness in the Valentine epithalamion"; the references to money seem "crude and tasteless only in the Lincoln's Inn poem" (pp. 68-69). But what Novarr fails to note is that the crude

exchange of virginity for riches in the Lincoln's Inn epithalamion is probably intended to parody the idealized economics of Spenser's epithalamion, whose bride exchanges virginity for womanhood in order to be blessed with "a large posterity" that up to "haughty pallaces may mount" and for recompense of "theyr glorious merit" inherit not wealth but "heauenly tabernacles . . . / Of blessed Saints" (ll. 417-423).

Donne's references to death expressed in the images of the female organs of the church also disturb Novarr and Dubrow. Donne converts Spenser's "Open the temple gates vnto my love" into a startling description of the gates as a pudendum that leads to both womb and tomb:

> Thy too-leaud gates fayre Temple vnfold
> And these two in thy sacred bosome hold
> Till mistically ioyned but one they bee:
> Then may thy leane and hunger sterved wombe
> Long time expect their bodyes and ther tombe
> Long after ther owne Parents fatten thee. (ll. 37-42)

Novarr observes that "Donne calls the marriage a mystical union, but his words do not communicate a spiritual idea; they undercut it . . . . 'Leane and hunger-starved wombe' outrages us not only because of its implication that the church hungers for the death of the bride and groom, but also because we cannot help applying the words to the bride as well as to the church and cannot help thinking that Donne wants us to do so" (pp. 67-68). In response, Dubrow contends that this aspect of the poem "seem[s] to reflect Donne's idiosyncratic interests and fears. . . . Donne is emphasizing death here because he is obsessed with it, because he sees the skull beneath the skin of even a bride and groom" (pp. 134-35).

But however idiosyncratic Donne's interest in death may be, this passage is not merely a reflection of its author's notorious morbidity. What Donne satirizes in this crucial stanza is a certain deathly aspect to the couple's temporal aspirations in marriage; and the church, by endorsing the marriage, participates in that death. In Spenser's poem there is a plea to Cynthia, who "of wemens labours . . . hast charge," that the bride's "chast wombe" will "informe with timely seed"; and to Juno, "which with awful might / The lawes of wedlock still dost patronize," that the "sweet pleasures of . . . loues delight" will "bring forth the fruitfull progeny, [and] / Send vs the timely fruit of this same night" (ll. 383-404). Donne conflates the roles of these goddesses in charge of marriage rites into the image of the Temple as pudendum and womb. But rather than encouraging fertility, the church gorges on death. Its "leane and

hunger sterved wombe" will be "fattened" by the couple's estate when they die, just as the couple's remains will swell the church's interior when they are entombed. Donne thus switches the roles of the plea. The church takes on female parts wherein the bodies of the couple will "informe" the "leane and hunger sterved wombe" of the church with "timely seed" at their deaths. It is entirely appropriate, then, that the bride is "A pleasing Sacrifice" on "Loves Altar" to be "embowelled" by the "Preist" and the bridegroom (another conflation of roles) since she is the prize to them both (ll. 73-90).

The two Westmoreland readings considered earlier support this interpretation of satire. Westmoreland's description of the bride as "best worthy of prayer and fame" (l. 47) seems more apt than Grierson and Milgate's "praise and fame" since the stanza is addressing the church and its participation in the marriage. Because of its interest in her "fame," the church deems the bride "best worthy of prayer." And Westmoreland's comma in line 26 affects the social and political context of the marriage. It does not force the distinction between the nobility and the wealthy middle classes that Greirson imposes on the text from an analysis of Donne's *Sermon*. The "Sonnes of these Senators" will marry, as the groom is doing, the "Daughters of London," who are the daughters of other senators (l. 13). The senators invest in their daughters, as they do in their sons, making them "Our golden Mines and furnish'd Treasuree" (l. 14). The daughters are their fathers' "furnsih'd Treasuree," since they are given dowries, but they cannot be their fathers' "golden Mines" as well. The dowries make the daughters "golden Mines" to the sons who will marry them. The sons are doing as the fathers have done in the past, and what their sons will do in the future. The bride and her maids, the bridegroom and his attendants are all members of the same class that propagates by intermarriages of power and money.

In summary, the Westmoreland text of Donne's first epithalamium is bibliographically superior to all other early copies of the work, including the 1633 first printing which Grierson, Milgate, and most other modern editors have used as their copy-text. As verified by a collation of the extant artifacts and by the resultant schema, the Westmoreland text preserves the poem in a state closest to the authorial holograph. Not only is the adoption of Westmoreland as copy-text justified by its textual authority, but its adoption also avoids the anachronism of eclecticism inherent in the creation of a "critical text" and the dubious practice of imposing editorial interpretations in the guise of apparently objective principles. Restoration of the epithalamium to the Westmoreland state also clarifies several cruxes in the work, and supports the reading of the poem as parodic or satiric.[13]

University of Missouri

Notes

[1] Gardner, ed., *John Donne: The Divine Poems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), p. xcii. Subsequent quotations from Gardner's introduction will be cited parenthetically in my text.

[2] Grierson, ed., *The Poems of John Donne*, 2 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), 2:c. Subsequent quotations from Grierson's introduction and notes will be cited parenthetically in my text.

[3] Grierson's rationale for placing the manuscripts into Group I and Group II is that "both show that their collectors had a clear idea of what were, and what were not, Donne's poems, and because the general accuracy with which the poems in one of them [Group I] are transcribed" (2:lxxxiii). He establishes that the 1633 edition is based on a manuscript from each group tradition. Group I contains O20 (Bodleian Library, Eng. poet. e.99), B32 (British Library, Harley 4955), and C8 (Leconfield MS); Group II contains B7(British Library, Additional 18647), H4 (Harvard University Library Eng. MS 966.3), CT1 (Cambridge University, Trinity College Library, R. 3. 12) and DT1 (Trinity College Library, Dublin, 877). Grierson identifies a third group of manuscripts and considers it—in Gardner's phrase—to have "preserved earlier versions of poems found in revised form in Groups I and II" (*Divine Poems*, p. lxxii): B13 (British Library, Additional 25707), HH1 (Henry E. Huntington Library, EL 6893), H3 (Harvard University Library, Eng. MS 966.1), NY1 (New York Public Library, Arents Collection, Cat. No. S191), Y3 (Yale University Library, Osborn Collection, b148), H7 (Harvard University Library, Eng. MS 966.6), B46 (British Library, Stowe 961), and W (New York Public Library, Berg Collection, Westmoreland MS).

Of the Group III manuscripts, Gardner in her edition of *John Donne: The Elegies and The Songs and Sonnets* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965) reassigns B, CY, O (a cognate of P, unknown to Grierson) and P to a fifth group. Group V is divided into three basic sub-groups: 1) CY, O, and P agree with the Haselwood-Kingsborough manuscript, second part (Huntington Library MS. HM 198) and differ from the other groups to such a degree that they represent a "fourth tradition" (Gardner labels Westmoreland "Group IV," thereby making this fourth tradition "Group V"); 2) the Bridgewater manuscript as a whole, among other manuscripts, defies classification, but reads with CY, O and P in the elegies and the songs and sonnets; 3) "manuscripts with those of other authors," essentially a group of unclassified miscellanies (*Elegies*, p. lxxvi-lxxxi). Subsequent references to Gardner's edition of *The Elegies and The Songs and Sonnets* will be made parenthetically.

[4] Because of the editorial sophistication of *1633*, incorporating Group I and II traditions, Grierson claims that it would be "rash to prefer [a single manuscript] as a whole to *1633*" and that "if the manuscripts are to help us, it must be by . . . establishing what one might call the agreement of the manuscripts, whether universal or partial, noting in the latter case the comparative value of the groups" (2:cxvi-cxvii). But the stated aim of his edition "to vindicate the text of 1633" puts him in the position of accepting in almost every instance, except the most obvious of errors, the "partial" evidence of Groups I and II (their "comparative value" already decided) over the

"partial" evidence of Group III or of other miscellanies that agree against the majority of manuscripts (1:vii). See also my note 11.

Gardner, agreeing with Grierson's principles, proposes a theory that the progenitor manuscripts behind Group I and Group II are collections of Donne's own manuscripts (*Divine Poems*, pp. lxxxvi, xcii-xciii; see also *Elegies*, pp. lxxxi-lxxxvi). However, Ernest W. Sullivan, II, in his edition of the Dalhousie manuscripts, raises serious doubts about Gardner's theory and suggests "the possibility that... Donne's poems may derive from smaller collections, particularly groups of poems that circulated together, and that the texts of poems in these smaller collections (or even individual poems) of the sort that appear in verse miscellanies might be closer at least chronologically to Donne's originals than are the texts in larger collections" (*The First and Second Dalhousie Manuscripts: Poems and Prose by John Donne and Others* [Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1988], p. 7).

The "superior" evidence of the larger collections may be further skewed by the fact that many of the individual poems of the miscellanies are left unrepresented in the manuscript traditions. For example, Gardner (*Elegies*) and W. Milgate, ed., *John Donne: The Epithalamions, Anniversaries and Epicedes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978) [hereafter cited parenthetically] leave C4 (Hyde), SA1 (Grey), and B19 (West Papers) unclassified. But there is enough evidence, at least as far as Donne's first epithalamium is concerned, to classify C4 as a Group V (closely agreeing with O and P), SA1 as a Group II, and B19 as a Group III, adding testimony to the "partial" or "universal" manuscript evidence.

[5] See Ted-Larry Pebworth, John T. Shawcross, and Ernest W. Sullivan II, "Textual Introduction," *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne*, gen. ed. Gary A. Stringer, 8 vols. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, forthcoming).

[6] On the goals of the Donne Variorum project, see, in addition to the "Textual Introduction" cited in note 5, Ted-Larry Pebworth, "Manuscript Poems and Print Assumptions: Donne and His Modern Editors," *John Donne Journal* 3 (1984): 1-21.

[7] For Westmoreland's provenance and its association with Rowland Woodward, see Grierson (2:lxxxi); Gardner (*Elegies*, p. lxxii, *Divine Poems*, p. lxxviii-lxxxi); and Milgate (p. 1).

[8] For the dating of Donne's poems, see Grierson (2:lxxxi, 91); Gardner (*Divine Poems*, p. lxxix); David Novarr, *The Disinterred Muse: Donne's Texts and Contexts* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), pp. 71-72, 78-84; and Heather Ousby [Dubrow], "Donne's 'Epithalamion made at Lincolnes Inne': An Alternative Interpretation," *Studies in English Literature* 16 (1976): 131- 43. Subsequent references to these works by Novarr and Dubrow will be made parenthetically.

Since completing this essay, two further discussions of Donne's first epithalamion have come to my attention. In *Morning and Panegyric: The Poetics of Pastoral Ceremony* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), Celeste Marguerite Schenk reads the poem as an anti-epithalamion broadly parodic of Spenser's "Epithalamion" (pp.75-79). In her new book, *A Happier Eden: The Politics of Marriage in the Stuart Epithalamion* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), Heather Dubrow slightly revises her earlier stance to admit that Donne's poem "does certainly contain parodic elements" (p. 160).

[9] For example, strand 1 and strand 3 do not omit "to day" (line 24), "stawd" (line 32), or "To night" (line 60), all of which strand 2 omits. Nor do they change "must be

ofte" to "ofte must be" (line 10), "but one they bee" to "both in one they bee" (line 39) or "All wayes, all th'other" to "Alwayes the each other" (line 46), which strand 2 changes. Since strands 1 and 3 can be considered independent of each other, largely based on the fact that strand 1 omits "glad" (line 23) and strand 3 omits "O" (line 49), we can infer from their corroborative testimony that the manuscript closest to Donne's holograph did not make strand 2's corruptions either. If Westmoreland contained these corruptions, its position on the schema as closest to the lost holograph and as a distant progenitor to all the strands would be highly suspect.

Alternatively, since it is easier to understand the mistaken tendency of a scribe to contract double "n" in Sonnes" to "m" in "Some," and not to expand the "m" to double "nn," we can infer that strand 2's testimony of "Sonnes" in line 26 is authoritative against that of strands 1 and 3. And again Westmoreland agrees with the inference.

[10] From this point, all quotations of Donne's first "Epithalamium" are from the Westmoreland text as reproduced in Appendix I.

[11] If there is any place where Grierson should have applied the "partial" agreement of the Group III manuscripts against that of Group II, it is in line 26 of Donne's "Epithalamium." None of the manuscripts correctly read "Sonnes" except Group III and Westmoreland. Although Grierson properly changes the wording of the line to read with the obvious evidence, he insists that "the punctuation of the 1633 edition is supported by almost every MS" (2:98). However, since Grierson is considering manuscript "traditions," the count is actually in favor of Group III: four out of the six Group III manuscripts known to Grierson and the Westmoreland manuscript contain the comma, four out of the four Group II manuscripts known to him support *1633* (Grierson was unaware of C4, H5 and Y3 of Group III and SA1 and WN1 of Group II). And even if Grierson performed a straight count, ignoring the comparative value of the groups, it would still have only been a six to five count in favor of *1633*'s punctuation—hardly "almost every manuscript." In light of Group II's erroneous wording and its very slight favor over Group III's punctuation, it seems highly contrary to the evidence to accept *1633*'s punctuation in line 26 as authorial.

[12] Quotations from Spenser's "Epithalamion" follow the text of *The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition*, ed. Edwin Greenlaw et. al., 10 vols. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1932-49), 10 (1949): 241-51.

[13] For his generous guidance as friend and teacher as well as for his help on this essay, I am grateful to Professor Ted-Larry Pebworth, who introduced me to the *Variorum* project, taught me the complexities of Donne textual editing, and passed on his contagious enthusiasm for the subject. I would also like to thank Professor Claude Summers for his valuable suggestions and encouragement with this paper, as well as for his confidence in and support of all my efforts. Finally, I would like to thank Professor John Shawcross and Professor John Roberts for their comments on this paper.

Appendix I:

Epithalamium.

1. The sun-beames in the East are spred
Leaue leaue fayr bride your solitary bed.
No more shall you returne to it alone.
Itnourseth sadnes, and your bodyes print

Like to a graue the yielding Downe doth dint
You and your other you meete ther anone.
Put forth, put forth that warme balme-breathing thigh
Which when next time you in these sheetes will smother
Ther it must meet an other
Which neuer was, but must be ofte more nigh;
Came glad from thence, go gladder then you came
To day put on perfection and a womans name.

2. Daughters of London, you which bee
Our golden Mines and furnish'd Treasuree;
You which are Angels, yet still bring with you
Thousands of Angels on your mariage dayes
Helpe with your presence and deuise to prayse
These rites which allso vnto you grow due.
Conceitedly dres her, and be assignd
By you fitt place for euery flower and Iewell
Make her for Love fitt fuell,
As gay as Flora, and as rich as Inde,
So may she fayre, rich, glad, and in nothing lame
To day put on perfection and a womans name.

3. And you frolique Patricians
Sonnes of these Senators, wealths deepe Oceans
Yee painted Courtiers, Barrells of others witts
Yee Cuntrymen, who but your Beasts, love none
Yee of those fellowships whereof he'is one
Of study and play made strange Hermaphroditts
Here shine: This bridegroome to the Temple bring.
Lo, in yon path which store of strawd flowers graceth
The sober virgin paceth
Except my sight fayle: t'is no other thing.
Weepe not, nor blush; here is no griefe nor shame
To day put on perfection and a womans name.

4. Thy too-leaud gates fayre Temple vnfold
And these two in thy sacred bosome hold
Till mistically ioynd but one they bee:
Then may thy leane and hunger sterved wombe
Long time expect their bodyes and ther tombe
Long after ther owne Parents fatten thee.
All elder claymes and all cold barrennes
All yielding to new loves, be farr for euer
Which might these two disseuer.
All wayes, all th'other may each one possesse
For the best bride, best worthy of prayer and fame
To day puts on perfection and a womans name.

5. O, Winter dayes bring much delight

Not for themselues, but for they soone bring night.
Other sweetes waight thee, then these diuers meates,
Other disports then dauncing iolityes,
Other love-tricks then glauncing with the eyes
But that the Sun still in our halfe sphears sweates.
He flyes in Winter, but now he stands still.
Yet shadows turne: Noone point he hath attained
His steedes will be restraind
But gallop liuely downe the Westerne hill:
Thou shalt when he hath run the Worlds halfe frame
To night put on perfection and a Womans name.

6. The amorous euening star is rose
Why should not then our amorous star enclose
Herselfe in her wish'd bed: release your strings
Musitians; and Dauncers take some truce
With these your pleasing labors; for great vse
As much weariness as perfection brings.
You, and not only you, but all toyld beasts
Rest duly: at night, all ther toyles are dispenced,
But in ther beds commenced
Are other Labors and more dainty feasts.
Shee goes a Mayd, who least she turne the same
To night put on perfection and a Womans name.

7. Thy Virgins girdle now vnty,
And in thy nuptiall bed, Loves Altar, ly
A pleasing Sacrifice: Now disposses
Thee of these chaines and robes, which were put on
To'adorne the day not thee; for thou alone
Like Vertu and Truthe art best in nakednes.
This bed is only to Virginitee
A graue, but to a better state a Cradle
Till now thou wast but able
To bee, what now thou art: then that by thee
No more be sayd, I maybe, but I ame
To night put on perfection and a womans name.

8. Euen like a faythfull Man content
That this life for a better should be spent
So she a Mothers riche stile doth prefer.
And at the bridegroomes wish'd approch doth ly
Like an appointed Lambe, when tenderly
The Priest comes on his knees to'embowell her.

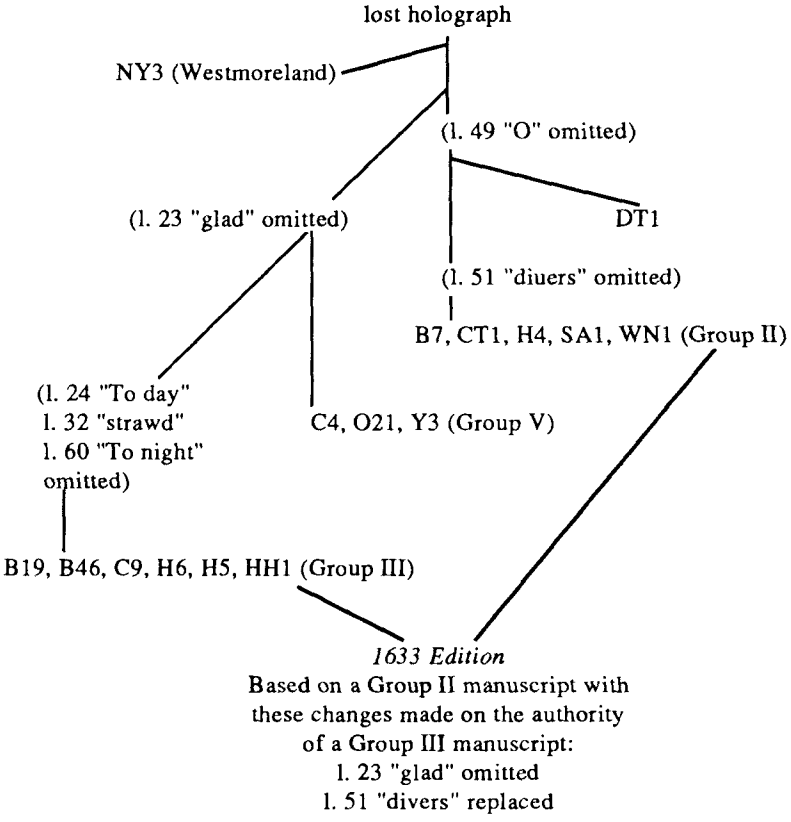
Now sleepe or watche with more ioye: and O Light
Of heauen, to morrow rise thou hott and early:
This Sun will love so dearly
Her rest, that long, long, we shall want her sight;
Wonders are wrought, for she which had no maime 95
To night puts on perfection and a Womans name.

[Based on the Westmoreland manuscript, with abbreviations silently expanded]

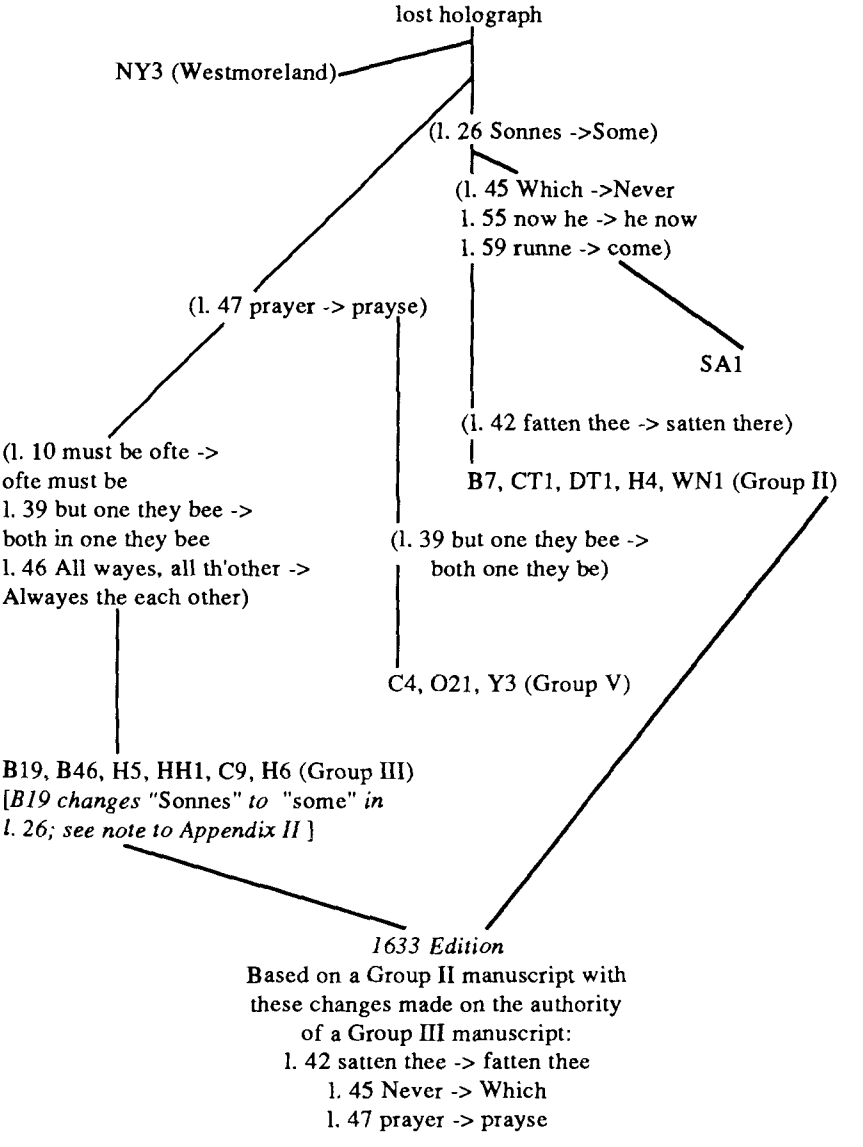
Appendix II:

The schema is illustrated in two diagrams, the first by omission of words, the second by verbal alterations.

SCHEMA BY OMISSION OF WORDS



SCHEMA BY VERBAL ALTERATIONS



SIGLA OF MANUSCRIPT SOURCES WITH THEIR TRADITIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS

B7	British Library Add. 18637 (Denbigh)—Group II
B19	British Library Add. 34744 (West Papers XVIII)—previously unclassified; Group III
B46	British Library Stowe 961—Group III
C4	Cambridge UL Edward Hyde—unclassified [Group V]
C9	Cambridge UL Narcissus Luttrell—Group III
CT1	Cambridge, Trinity College R.3.12 (Puckering)—Group II
DT1	Dublin, Trinity College 877—Group II
H4	Harvard UL Eng. 966.3 (Norton 4503)—Group II
H5	Harvard UL Eng. 966.4 (Dobell)—Group III
H6	Harvard UL Eng. 966.5 (O'Flaherty)—Group III
HH1	Huntington EL 6893 (Bridgewater)—Group III
NY3	New York Public Library Westmoreland—Group IV
O21	Bodleian Library Eng. poet. f.9 (Phillipps)—Group V
SA1	South African Public Library Grey 7 a 29—previously unclassified; Group II
WN1	National Library of Wales Dolau Cothi 6748—Group II
Y3	Yale UL, Osborn Collection b148 (Osborn)—Group V

NOTE TO APPENDIX II:

Some of the substantive variants shown in the schema are not exactly the same as those represented in the manuscripts. Although important to consider individually because they affect the meaning of the poem, the exact form of these variants have been ruled incidental to the schema since they reveal little or nothing essential about the transmission of the poem. The schema shows that none of the Group II manuscripts make the mistake of corrupting "prayer" to "praise," but B7, CT1, SA1 and WN1 make the slight change to "prayers." The corruption WN1 makes in line 42 actually reads "satten these" instead of "satten there." These changes are likely understandable mistakes that come of reading another's handwriting and probably occurred independently of the original.

Likewise, the schema shows that all Group III manuscripts (including the previously unclassified B19) change "but one they be" to "both in one they be," but B46 deviates slightly by dropping the word "both." B46 is still distinguishable from C4, O21, and Y3 ("both one they be") and deserves its place in the schema with Group III, since it retains the basic change that its group makes in line 39 ("in one they be") and agrees with its group at all other points of difference against the rest of the manuscripts.

O21's corruption of "Sonnes" to "some" is actually "Summon" and omitting "of" —making the line read "Summon these Senators." Y3, closely related to O21, also omits "of " in the line, but nonsensically retains the corruption "some." It appears that the scribe of Y3 may have omitted "of" accidentally, and O21, copying from Y3, changes "some" to "Summon" in an attempt to make sense of the line. If this explanation is acceptable, and the obvious correlation between O21 and Y3 suggests

that it is acceptable (O21 and Y3 also make the mistake of omitting l. 42), then the essential corruption of "Sonnes" to "some" still holds, permitting the schema to remain silent as to O21's further corruption of "some" to "Summon."

Since B19 actually changes "Sonnes" to "some" against Group III, its privileged place on this branch of the schema requires some defense. The admitted difficulty of constructing a schema of verbal alterations is determining which variants least likely occurred independently of the original being copied by the scribe. Mistaking double "n" for "m" in "Sonnes" is arguably the kind of variant that could have been made independently with considerable frequency. However, when all of Group II and C4, O21, and Y3 of Group V make the mistake, and all of Group III do not make the mistake, then obviously the odds of it being an independent variant appear greatly reduced (otherwise one would expect a more even spread of its occurrence among the manuscripts). The likelihood of the Sonnes/some pattern being coincidental seems further reduced since "Sonnes" is accompanied by variants in lines 10, 39, and 46 that could not have consistently suggested themselves to each scribe independent of his original, and since "some" is accompanied by the absence of these variants (with the exception of "but" replaced with "both" in l. 39 of the C4, O21, Y3 strain). It is more likely, then, that, B19 independently changes "Sonnes" to "some" against the rest of the manuscripts which remain true to their originals than it is that the varient pattern is an arbitrary one.