

Notes on an Important Volume of Donne's Poetry and Prose

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A privately owned volume, which binds together exempla of John Donne's 1633 *Poems*, with a poetic manuscript, and the 1633 *Juvenilia* (first edition), with a prose manuscript, is incompletely and erroneously described in Peter Beal's update of "More Donne Manuscripts," *John Donne Journal* 6 (1987), 215. Beal had not seen the volume and was relying on reportage for this citation. The volume, owned by Abel E. Berland, Chicago, has been graciously made available to me for examination and collation, and I thank Mr. Berland most sincerely for his generosity. The volume is now being included in the textual information of the *Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), general editor Gary Stringer and textual editors Ted-Larry Pebworth, John T. Shawcross, and Ernest W. Sullivan II. The volume was purchased from the Dean and Chapter's Library, Norwich Cathedral. It was exhibited at the Grolier Club, New York City, on 15 February through 12 April 1972, and is #25 in *A Catalogue of the Four Hundredth Anniversary Exhibition of First and Early Editions of the Works of John Donne*. (The description is inadequate, noting only the manuscript of the prose.) It was again on exhibit at the Grolier Club on 22 January 1975 through 30 March 1975, and is #11 in *'This powerfull rime': A Selection from the Library of Abel E. Berland* (again noting only the manuscript of prose).

The contents are:

- a. *Poems*, 1633, with fifteen emendations and additions to nine poems ("Metempsychosis," "Elegie III" ["Although thy hand and faith"], "The Storme," "The Canonization," "A Funerall Elegie," "The Relique," "The Dampe," "Satyre IV"). Particularily important are the additions in Satires 2 and 4, which fill out the dashes of the censored material. Most of the emendations correct errors in 1633, altered in other editions or agreeing with manuscript evidence.
- b. a manuscript of "Poems of J.D. not printed"; six quarto leaves (twelve pages), ruled in red with blocked margins. The poems transcribed, all of course

canonical, are five elegies ("Loves Progress," ["On his Mistris"], ["The Bracelet"], ["Loves Warre"], ["Going to Bed"]) and "Lecture Upon a Shadow," covering pp. [1-9v] with pp. [10-12v] blank. The elegies are those censored from the Group I MSS used as one of the copy-texts for the 1633 edition when its publication was licensed. The lyric appears in all known Group I MSS, and was apparently inadvertently omitted in the copy-text or by the compositor. The texts in this manuscript show affinities with texts in the Stephens MS, Eng. MS 966.6 (Norton MS 4500), owned by Harvard University Library; however, the congruency between 1633 omissions and Group I MSS and this manuscript obviate an easy solution as to its manuscript source. The Stephens MS records various noncanonical poems, thus suggesting that this transcription was not a result of a collation with that manuscript, and that the transcriber was aware of what was and what was not canonical.

- c. an exemplum of *Juvenilia*, 1633, Edition 1, with emendations.
- d. a manuscript of "Problems, &c of J.D. not printed" (eight problems, "The True Character of a Dunce," and "An Essay on Valour"): six quarto leaves (twelve pages), ruled in red with blocked margins. Seven problems are numbered "XI" through "XVII," continuing the numbering of the ten problems in 1633; and "I." These correspond to Problems XIII, V, XVIII, IV, III, I, XVI, and IX in Peters' edition,¹ and cover pp. [1]-[4v]. The two further prose essays are on pp. [5]-[9r], with [9v]-[12v], blank. The first seven problems and the two further pieces were all published in the third edition of 1652 (*Paradoxes, Problems, Essayes, Characters*) with the same numbering; the problem numbered "I" (that is, IX) was separated from the others because it supplies ll. 1-19 (through "equivalent") which were omitted in 1633, where ll. 19 ("As Nature")-38 were published as Problem I. Lines 1-19 are given in the second edition of 1633. The Stephens MS has all eight problems as well as "The True Character of a Dunce" and is one of only two known manuscripts to include "An Essay on Valour."

The two separate but linked manuscript gatherings are in the same professional scribal hand, dated by Beal ca. 1630s. Clearly the earliest date for transcription is 1633 after the publication of the *Poems* and *Juvenilia*, but because ll. 1-19 of Problem I (that is, IX) are supplied, the suggestion arises that the transcription occurred before the second edition of *Juvenilia* in 1633, which includes those lines. Some kind of relationship between the prose manuscript and the 1652 edition is also suggested because of the numbering of the problems; it may have been a source of the copy-text used for 1652 or related to the manuscript that became a source. What may further be significant about this manuscript are implications of its

inclusions and exclusions, in view of Peters' *Dubia*. All eight problems recorded in the Berland manuscript are accepted as canonical. But the alleged *dubia* need comment: Paradox I (that is, XI) in the 1633 exemplum has no indication of its being noncanonical; Paradox XII is found only in 1652 and its lack of inclusion in this manuscript suggests that it is indeed noncanonical; "The Description of a Scot at first sight" is also not included here although it does appear in the Stephens MS and others, again suggesting that it is not canonical; "The True Character of a Dunce," since it is included, acquires additional weight as being canonical; "An Essay of Valour," since it also is included, also acquires additional weight as being canonical; and "Newes from the very Country," not being included, may thus not be canonical. Surely the canonicity of the alterations to the exempla and of the poems and problems in the two manuscripts gatherings point to canonicity for "The True Character of a Dunce" and "An Essay of Valour."

It should also be recorded that there are notes in a later, different hand indicating publication of Elegy 2 ("On his Mistris"), Elegy 3 ("The Braclet"), and "Lecture upon the Shadow" in "the 8th Edition," that is, 1635. Elegies 1, 4, and 5 were not printed until later. And on π , just before "Metempsychosis" in the 1633 exemplum, in a later eighteenth-century hand, there is a transcription of the poem by John Brown (1715-66), first published in Robert Dodsley's *A Collection of Poems by Several Hands* (1748), III, 333:

[An] Essay on Satire [Occasioned by the Death of Mr Pope]

'Twas then plain Donne in honest vengeance rose,
His wit refulgent, tho' his rhyme was prose:
He 'midst an age of puns and pedants wrote
With genuine sense, and *Roman* strength of thought.

A. J. Smith includes Brown's poem in *John Donne: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 202.

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Note

¹Reference and line citation are to the edition of *John Donne. Paradoxes and Problems*, ed. Helen Peters (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980). Her unfortunate re-numbering of the essays is indicated here parenthetically.