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Donne, Henry Wotton, and the Earl of Essex

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John Donne's friendship with Henry Wotton is amply documented by a series of verse and prose letters dating from the late 1590s. Two valuable essays by Ted-Larry Pebworth and Claude J. Summers have contributed much to a "contextual reconstruction" of Donne's correspondence with Wotton.[1] Among important achievements here are successful ordering and dating of several prose and verse letters by both Donne and Wotton; correlation of the letters with successive crises in the career of Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, from 1598 to 1601; and sensitive analysis of the letters as responses to the "climate of censorship and suspicion" that surrounded Tudor courtiers, perhaps more than ever in the last years of Queen Elizabeth's reign.

However, several problems connected to this friendship remain unsolved: the report of Izaak Walton, for example, that Donne and Wotton were close even before the 1590s, having become friends while they both studied at Hart Hall, Oxford. Evidence possibly contradicting Walton's report is one of the letters in the Burley manuscript that, although not mentioned by Summers and Pebworth, may well be the earliest extant letter from Donne to Wotton:

> S^{r}. In this sickly dotage of y^{e} world where vertue languisheth in a banishment I must be glad shee hath found so holesome a dwelling in y^{r} mind y^{t} dares not only harbor her, but avouch it by y^{r} words & deeds. for it is as dangerous to haue vertue in this world as it wilbe to haue wanted it in the next & I am sure to find more sinners in heaven then honest men vpon y^{e} earth. yet S^{r} y^{e} greatest harme y^{t} honesty doth y^{o} is y^{t} it arests my iudgment & suffers it not to go

> forward to consider y^r^ witt yo^r^ learnings & other worthineses. because methinks I haue taken a ritch prize & made a rare discoverie when I haue found an honest man: & therfore whatsoever y^o^ haue more then honesty is the wast & unthriftynes of nature: I know it a fault to commend a thing so much out of fashion as honesty yet since I desire infinitely to contract a frendship w^th^ you (bycause I know how far y^o^ overstripp me in all other vertues) I stand most vpon honesty w^th^ w^ch^ I haue had most acquaintaunce & society. I am best able to keepe wing w^th^ y^o^ in it though y^o^ sore high. I haue now red one letter from y^o^ since I saw y^o^ & by it I see I should haue bee[n] glad of more: when y^o^ think my letter or me worthy of offner salutations, write & when one of y^r^ letters p[er]isheth w^th^out answere & thanks lett me forfeit you. I had almost condemned you of forgetting me but y^o^ are saved by y^r^ booke w^ch^ I will keep till it pleaseth to dispose it otherwise. S^r^ in a long & well studied oration no man shalbee able to commend to you an honester loue then this galloping letter doth: & therfore till y^e^ next commodity of sending let me here kisse y^r^ hand & vow to y^u^ the observaunces of
>
> y^r^ servant & lover.[2]

Simpson attributed this letter to Donne but doubted it could have been written to Wotton, only because it reads, "I desire infinitely to contract a frendship w^th^ you," words incompatible with the notion that their friendship already existed from the 1580s.

Moreover, the letter implies that its addressee and writer have only recently met: "I haue now red one letter from y^o^ since I saw y^o^ & by it I see I should haue bee[n] glad of more: when y^o^ think my letter or me worthy of offner salutations, write & when one of y^r^ letters p[er]isheth w^th^out answere & thanks lett me forfeit you." This mild reproach seems to mean that after their recent meeting, and after the writer's first letter following up the meeting, some considerable period had elapsed before the addressee's answer. The writer's promise for his part to respond promptly to any future letter suggests again the beginning of a correspondence rather than continuation of a long-standing one. However, except for these inconsistencies with the reported friendship at Oxford in the 1580s, there is little if anything to suggest that this letter should not be read as one in the series of letters

Donne wrote to Wotton at about the same time, later transcribed with them into the Burley manuscript.

Indeed, several features of the letter resemble the acknowledged correspondence of Donne and Wotton. This resemblance, together with recent information concerning Donne's early exile, may warrant reconsideration of the notion, accepted by writers since Walton, that Donne and Wotton were close friends at Oxford. As Simpson points out, the letter's references to virtue's rarity in "this sickly dotage of y^{e} world" echo a line of thought often found in Donne's acknowledged letters to Wotton: "Donne refers to the lack of virtue and honesty at court in the same tone which marks the letters we know to have been written during Essex's disgrace."[3] Although (a remarkable defect in Simpson's reasoning) this letter actually makes no specific mention of the Court, it nevertheless could well have been addressed to Wotton by Donne, referring in general terms to the rarity of "vertue in this world." Again, in the letter's repeated usage of the word "honest," it certainly resembles many of Donne's other letters addressed to Wotton. The word "honest" and its cognates occur six times in this letter, and occur another ten times in seven of the letters discussed by Pebworth and Summers. The writer's closing description of his own letter as "this galloping letter" also resembles Donne's tone in acknowledged letters to Wotton (cf. the phrase "this reprobate headlong lettr" in Simpson's letter #8).[4]

But perhaps the most revealing feature of the letter is the writer's mention of the addressee's book: "I had almost condemned you of forgetting me but y^{o} are saved by y^{r} booke w^{ch} I will keep till it pleaseth to dispose it otherwise." Evidently after their recent meeting the writer of this letter received from the addressee a book (probably enclosed with the addressee's delayed response following up their meeting). Conceivably the writer implies merely that the addressee has lent him a book; more likely (given the context suggesting that the book has served as a substitute for more letters), the writer has been reading a book written by the addressee.

Wotton had written (but had not published) a book very likely to have been of particular interest to Donne in the 1590s. *The State of*

Christendom: or, A Most Exact and Curious Discovery of Many Secret Passages, and Hidden Mysteries of the Times, was written in the spring and summer of 1594, just prior to Wotton's return from several years' travel on the continent. This book uses from its opening words a fictional narrative voice, presenting the political views of a languishing, Catholic loyalist, English exile:

> After that I had lived many years in voluntary exile and banishment, and saw the most happy and fortunate success, which it pleased the Almighty to send unto my gracious Soveraign against the malicious and hostile Attempts which the *Spanish* Monarch, both openly and covertly, practised against her sacred Person, and invincible State and Kingdom, I began to despair of my long desired return into my native Countrey. . . .[5]

Among topics discussed in succeeding pages are the pain of religious exile, the horrors of religious war in the Netherlands and France, the immorality of Spanish policy, the comparatively just religious policy of Elizabeth's government, the considerations that had required imprisonment and execution of Mary Stuart, the fairness of penal laws against English Catholics, the sad state of English Catholic fugitives in Europe, and (perhaps most significantly) the wisdom of and need for religious toleration by all parties in the conflict between the religions.

All of these subjects, especially Wotton's daring and unusual advocacy of religious toleration, relate closely to central concerns for Donne and for his family in the decades up to and including the 1590s. Moreover, Wotton handles them in a way obviously calculated to appeal to the loyalist sentiment toward which Donne and other members of his family, unable to embrace the increasingly "Hispaniolated" policies of the Jesuits and other Catholic exiles, had migrated since the 1580s.[6] Conceivably Donne and Wotton, contrary to Walton's report that they had been close friends since Oxford in the 1580s, had instead been drawn together in the 1590s when Donne somehow came to have knowledge of Wotton's book.

2

Logan Pearsall Smith, in an appendix to his edition of Wotton's letters, concludes that Wotton wrote *The State of Christendom* during the spring and summer of 1594, while he was staying at Isaac Casaubon's house in Geneva.[7] Less evident than the authorship and timing of the book is Wotton's purpose in writing it. According to Smith,

> The book was written under an assumed character; Wotton put his own ideas about politics into the form of a treatise, supposed to have been composed by a political fugitive for the purpose of procuring permission to return to England. This innocent disguise gave a certain point and dramatic character to his work. . . .[8]

One may doubt whether the disguise of the narrative voice was merely "innocent" (whatever is meant by the word). Moreover it is unlikely that Wotton's purpose was exhausted in the creation of "point and dramatic character." Politics is undoubtedly at the root of Wotton's enterprise; but what politics, rooted where?

Another feature of the rhetorical stance of Wotton's book should be mentioned here. The voice of the Catholic exile tells us that his discourse on the state of Christendom has been designed to gain his safe return to England. While seeking some opportunity to come home, he had chanced to meet "an honest and kind English Gentleman" who had been traveling in Italy and France, and who requested to receive from the exile his answers to various political questions in a treatise "in praise of my Countrey, and in disgrace of *Spain*; in commendation of my Princess, and in despite of the *Spaniard*." In return for this treatise containing the exile's answers to various questions, the gentleman promises to "purchase your return home with credit and countenance."[9] Thus both the fictional writer of *The State of Christendom* and his fictional primary reader help to focus for other readers a representation of the Catholic loyalist point of view as deserving of acceptance and reintegration into the general English community.

Considering this general premise of Wotton's book we may reasonably connect the book with several projects by different hands between 1594 and 1596, all of them in the service of a broad propaganda campaign designed to appeal to English Catholic fugitives and their supporters or sympathizers at home. One of these was a book by Lewis Lewkenor, whose title fairly indicates its relationship to Wotton's manuscript: *The Estate of English Fugitiues Under the King of Spaine and His Ministers: Containing, Besides, a Discourse of the Sayd Kings Manner of Government, and the Iniustice of Many Late Dishonorable Practises by Him Contriued.* Lewkenor's book had immediate success, going into a second edition within a few months of publication and two more editions before two years elapsed.[10]

Furthermore, in the winter of 1594-95, following Wotton's return to England from Geneva with the manuscript of *The State of Christendom*, and just as he began work as one of the secretaries of the Earl of Essex, he received a presentation copy of a newly published book, Antonio Perez's *Pedaços de historia o Relaçiones, assy llamadas por sus Auctores, los Peregrinos. Retrato al Vivo del Natural di la Fortuna.* Originally published three years earlier in France, this book had been reprinted in London late in 1594 in an expanded edition dedicated by the author to Essex. It is an account of events in Spain that had been an embarrassment to King Philip II, having led to Perez's defection from Spain to France, where he had become a *cause célèbre*, central in the anti-Spanish policy of King Henri IV.

With reference to this book at some point late in 1594 or early in 1595, Wotton added to *The State of Christendom* a *Supplement*, which his fictional author began by explaining:

> After that I had thorowly (as I thought) finished my task, and had discoursed upon every point thereof, ... I hapned upon a Book called *Podaçes de Historia*; that is to say, The Fragments of an History: The which was lately Imprinted and Written (as it is supposed) by *Antonio Peres*, somtimes Secretary unto the King of *Spain*, and now residing in *London*; not as a rebellious Fugitive (as many of our Countrymen live in *Spain*) but as a Gentleman, that thought it better

to forsake his lands and livings, then to live under the tyrannie and injustice of a cruel and ungrateful King.[11]

The Catholic loyalist author goes on in the *Supplement* to analyze Perez's book, first summarizing the events that led to the Spaniard's exile, including his confessed poisoning, at the behest of King Philip, of one John Escobedo, secretary to Don John of Austria; Perez's subsequent arrest and imprisonment by Philip for this crime; his escape from prison at Madrid and flight into Aragon, where his presence precipitated a disastrous rebellion against the King's pretended right to breach the ancient liberties of Aragon and take back his prisoner by force; and finally the flight of Perez into France.

Concerning these events, Wotton's fictional author formulates four questions, which the remainder of his *Supplement* answers at length:

1. *First*, Whether the King commanding *Escovedo* to be murdered in this manner, may not worthily be accompted and called a Murtherer?
2. *Next*, Whether *Antonio Peres* obeying this Commandment, hath not committed as great an offence as the King?
3. *Then*, Whether the King being found a Murtherer, deserveth not to be Deposed or Excommunicated for this Murther, better then the King of *France* did deserve to be deprived of his Life and Crown, for murthering the Duke of Guise?
4. *Lastly*, whether this Excommunication and Deposition may be warranted by the example of other Princes, who having committed the like offences, have endured and undergone the like punishment?[12]

The Catholic exile's remarkable argument concludes that King Philip may well be called a murderer; that his crime outweighs that of Perez; and that the King deserves excommunication and deposition as much as or more than others who have committed similar acts.

At about the same time as Wotton wrote his *Supplement*, an English translation of Perez's *Pedaços de historia* was being prepared by Arthur Atey, another servant of the Earl of Essex. The 1594 Spanish edition of the book could have had only a limited readership in England. Presentation copies had been sent not only to Wotton but to various dignitaries—Essex himself, the dedicatee; Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton; William Cecil, Baron of Burghley; and Sir Robert Sidney; other copies were sent upon request to Lord Mountjoy and Lord Henry Howard. "Besides these courtiers and statesmen, other purchasers were to be found among the clergy, aristocracy, and gentry, and among writers and grammarians."[13] But the great bulk of the edition in Spanish was evidently shipped to the continent for sale in the Netherlands or in Aragon. Atey's translation, on the other hand, was apparently designed, along with Wotton's *Supplement*, to present the case of Antonio Perez to English speaking readers—Protestants, Catholics, and Catholic exiles alike—in a manner that could tend to reunite the splintered English body politic in common cause against the Spanish tyrant.[14]

But one most interesting feature of this campaign, which would have attracted the attention of Donne and many other Catholic sympathizers, was also the probable cause why neither Atey's translation nor Wotton's treatise were published in the 1590s. The argument that King Philip II of Spain deserved to be deposed for having arranged the murder of a Spanish nobleman was both too arresting to English Catholics and too alarming to the English government for either book to be granted license for publication to a very extensive readership in English. Antonio Perez, though he had been received politely and entertained by the Queen at Court, was regarded by Burghley and most of the Privy Council (except Essex) primarily as a Spanish traitor. The example of the traitor Perez was not one the government wished to celebrate, especially in view of a widespread opinion among Catholics and Catholic sympathizers, both in England and abroad, that Queen Elizabeth's government had arranged for the poisoning of both the Earls of Northumberland and Derby within the past decade.[15] If, in discussion of the case of Perez, King Philip could be stigmatized as a

murderer and determined worthy to be deposed for the murder of a nobleman, so could a similar charge be leveled against Queen Elizabeth. The tendency of Perez, and especially of Wotton's book, in this way to advocate limited monarchy and the right to depose monarchs was not a tendency to be tolerated by a politician so committed to absolutism as was Burghley.

Here would lie one of Donne's main interests in Wotton's book: its subversive tendency in relation to the government of England according to Cecilian policies. Essex surely had come to see himself as a challenger to Burghley and also to Burghley's son and designated successor, Sir Robert Cecil. By sponsoring Perez and his book, Essex may have intended to unite various points of view in opposition to the Cecils with a line of propaganda that had the subversive implications Wotton was expressing. In any case these implications would have been a main cause of the Privy Council's ultimate refusal of permission to publish Atey's translation or Wotton's book, and also a main attraction of Donne's attention to the latter.

3

If Donne's friendship with Wotton began with attention to Wotton's *The State of Christendom*, what are we to say about Walton's theory of their friendship at Oxford in the mid-1580s? According to the *Life of Donne*, Donne and Wotton had "a friendship contracted in their Youth";[16] but in discussing Donne's stay at Oxford Walton does not mention this friendship. However, in his *Life of Wotton*, published eleven years later, when discussing Wotton's attendance at Oxford, Walton is much more circumstantial, referring to "a love that was there begun betwixt him and Dr. Donne. . . . The friendship of these two I must not omit to mention, being such a friendship as was generously elemented. . . begun in their Youth, and in an University, and there maintained by correspondent Inclinations and Studies. . . ."[17] Walton, of course, could have no recollection of these developments and told perhaps only what he had heard in conversation with others (as probably did Henry King, who commented similarly—in his dedicatory letter for the first edition of Walton's *Life of Hooker*—that Donne

and Wotton had had "a Friendship begun in Oxford"[18]). The degree of detail supplied by Walton in his *Life of Wotton* may have been less historical than merely rhetorical.

Certainly we know that Walton was at his worst as a historian in narrating the earlier years of Donne's life. On the particular subject in question, the education of Donne and Wotton at Oxford, Walton's unreliability was pointed out as early as the seventeenth century by Anthony à Wood who, in citing Walton's *Life of Wotton*, cautioned against many "mistakes in the said life, especially as to time."[19] Wood pointed out such particular mistakes as Walton's claim that Wotton at age nineteen not only graduated with a bachelor's degree but "proceeded master of arts" from Queen's College, whereas the university records actually provide no evidence that Wotton ever took any degree.[20] Wood may have intended to qualify Walton's version of the friendship between Wotton and Donne: he specifies that Wotton never actually enrolled at Hart Hall, but simply roomed there while briefly remaining a student at the adjoining New College. Wood also comments that Wotton did not long remain even in these rooms, but "soon" went on to Queen's College.[21] Perhaps pointedly, Wood makes no reference here to any supposed friendship between Wotton and Donne. Moreover, in his earlier discussion of Donne at Hart Hall, Wood simply comments laconically that during the same time "sir Hen. Wotton had a chamber there,"[22] a terseness again suggesting Wood's doubt about the close friendship Walton describes with such effusive detail.

All things considered I would suggest that, although Donne and Wotton may have been slightly acquainted during the period when both briefly roomed at Hart Hall, a number of factors may now be seen to have militated against their closer friendship until well into the 1590s. For one thing, Wotton was sixteen in the fall of 1584; Donne was twelve. Adolescents of such different ages were not likely to become close friends. On the other hand, by the mid-1590s their ages did not seem so drastically different, and the lessening of this and other differences made their friendship more feasible.

Another main difference between Donne and Wotton, and a real obstacle to their close friendship at Oxford, was Donne's Catholicism. In October 1584, when Donne enrolled at Hart Hall, he did so as the nephew of a notorious Oxford alumnus, the Jesuit Jasper Heywood, who had been active as a hunted, underground missionary within the university community during the three years just prior to Donne's enrollment. When Donne enrolled, Heywood was known to everyone at the university as a prisoner in the Tower of London under indictment for treason, his show-trial having been interrupted in the spring of 1584 probably because the Privy Council was concerned that oft-repeated dismemberments of traitorous priests were turning into a public relations disaster.

Not that Donne's Catholicism would have rendered him a pariah in Wotton's eyes. Wotton's family were by no means zealous Protestants or eager participants in Tudor reform. His elder half-brother Edward was actually a crypto-Catholic. Since the reign of Henry VIII, scions of the Wotton family, whatever their private religious beliefs, had always held themselves aloof from helping to administer Tudor religious policy. Henry's grandfather, Sir Edward Wotton, had refused an offer to become Henry VIII's Lord Chancellor; his brother Nicholas Wotton had declined a bishopric from Henry VIII and the archbishopric of Canterbury offered him by William Cecil during Elizabeth's reign. And Thomas Wotton, Henry's father, though a Protestant of greater conviction than others in his family (he had actually been persecuted for his beliefs during the reign of Queen Mary), consistently "refused all offers of advancement" from Cecil while quietly but distinctively raising his sons to support the value of toleration in religion.[23] Henry Wotton would certainly not have disdained Donne's friendship at Oxford had the turmoil surrounding Donne permitted them leisure to get to know one another.

But Donne's family life had been dominated and stigmatized by the conflict between the religions. As he himself later pointed out, his family had shown extraordinary commitment and sacrifice in their opposition to Tudor religious reform. Execution, imprisonment, and exile for the sake of their Catholicism had been endured either as

threats or as actual experiences for three generations of Donne's family. The family's continuing resistance to Tudor reform during Donne's adolescence shaped his life in a way that we now can see prevented his contracting a close friendship with Wotton at Oxford.

For one thing, contrary to what Walton tells us about Donne's having spent three years at Hart Hall, Donne's attendance at Oxford was abruptly truncated when he was pulled out of the university after his first term, in the fall of 1584. This extreme measure was dictated by his family's urgent concern that Donne had to be protected against being forced by Oxford magistrates to swear the Oath of Supremacy as the nephew of an imprisoned Jesuit. Donne had lied about his age at enrollment, saying he was eleven; but (as we learn from a letter written by Heywood) the Privy Council had resolved to curb Catholicism at Oxford by requiring the Oath not only of all degree candidates and sixteen-year-olds, but even of suspected students as young as twelve.

Pursuant to arrangements made by his mother and his uncle, in January 1585 Donne departed England for France as a gentleman waiter in the train of Henry Stanley, third Earl of Derby, Ambassador Extraordinary to the Court of the French King. Donne then remained on the continent for more than a year, never returning to Hart Hall.[24] Thus Donne and Wotton could have spent no more than a scant few weeks together at Oxford, perhaps even less time, depending on how soon after enrollment Wotton actually began rooming at Hart Hall instead of New College, and how soon after that he moved on to Queen's.

These considerations accord with the notion that Donne and Wotton, although they may have been acquainted since the 1580s at Oxford, were not close friends until some time after the writing of Simpson's letter #12, in which Donne states that he desires to contract their friendship. Further, mention by Donne in this letter of Wotton's *The State of Christendom* (1594) would suggest a possible part of the motive for Donne's proposed contract with Wotton, since many of the book's political concerns dovetail with those of Donne and his family in these years. Donne could have met Wotton and addressed this letter

to him at some time before securing his own position in Lord Keeper Egerton's household, but after Wotton's service with Essex had begun. This scenario would account for the fact that (unlike later letters from Donne to Wotton) this letter does not mention the writer's having business at Court. This scenario also would be compatible with the two men's having met (or renewed slight acquaintance) not at Oxford but during the Cadiz voyage of 1596. Moreover, as Pebworth and Summers admit, "no correspondence between Donne and Wotton is known to survive" from the period between Oxford and Cadiz. I would argue that this negative is more likely evidence that there was no correspondence than grounds for affirming that "their friendship must have continued."[25]

4

Supposing that Donne and Wotton became friends only following their participation in the Cadiz voyage can help to solve another problem: the controverted question whether Donne, like Wotton, was a supporter of the Earl of Essex. Like many troublesome habits of thought in Donne studies, this theory essentially derives from Walton, who, in his often puzzling account of Donne's early life, states that Donne "waited upon his Lordship" in connection with the Cadiz and Azores voyages.[26] Without evidence beyond Walton's suggestive but misleading phrase, critics and biographers have often supposed that Donne served in the personal retinue of Essex; or that he was attached to the company on board *Due Repulse*, the Earl's flagship. But R. C. Bald, observing the intricately political command structure during both of the voyages, thought it possible that at Cadiz Donne actually served on board Sir Walter Raleigh's flagship; and showed that for part of the Islands expedition Donne served on one of the ships attached to the command of Lord Thomas Howard, but that, for the remainder of the Azores voyage, Donne served again in a squadron under the command of Raleigh.[27] Bald found no evidence that Donne ever served directly under Essex.

While acknowledging that the words "waited upon" cannot be used as evidence Donne was ever attached to Essex's staff, Bald

nonetheless was moved by Walton's language to imagine an episode (similarly imagined earlier by Augustus Jessopp) in which Donne "presented himself" to the Earl and "offered his services," which were accepted by Essex on the recommendation of Henry Wotton or Henry Cuffe.[28] Notwithstanding what may seem conveniently personal links between Donne's military service and his acquaintances at Oxford and Lincoln's Inn, it is unlikely that Essex would have assured gentlemen volunteers of their places by any such procedure as Bald (following Jessopp) here suggests.[29]

In the first place, what Bald imagines would have caused Essex so much public exposure, and consumed so much of his time and energy, as to have left him little room for the more fundamental political, strategic, and logistical preparations attendant on so clandestine and complicated an enterprise as the attack on Cadiz. The Earl's concern about recruitment was real, but his attention focused on writing letters to deputy lieutenants of shires concerning recruitment of masses of soldiers. Recruitment of gentlemen volunteers was not a primary concern. It can hardly have begun before mid-March 1596 and for the most part had to be completed by the end of April so that these petty officers could train with their troops for the greater part of May. Certainly, in the brief time available, Essex would not have allowed his colorful "voluntaries" so to preoccupy him that he would have interviewed them personally, or even reviewed their resumés. He probably had worked hard with his regimental commanders on putting together their staff of colonels; but as for the gentlemen volunteers their number alone, conservatively estimated at around 500, would dictate that responsibility for recruiting them was properly to be delegated down the line of command to senior officers (though certainly not to secretaries such as Wotton and Cuffe). Even the voluntaries of his own regiment would not personally have been interviewed by the Earl himself; and in any case, as Bald has suggested, Donne probably sailed in squadrons commanded by Howard or Raleigh.

Bald couched his speculation with the fanciful thought that "As soon as the news of what was afoot began to spread there was much

excitement among the more high-spirited young men in fashionable circles and in the Inns of Court. They were eager to participate in the adventure, the more because one of the leaders was Essex, whose warm and impetuous personality captured their imagination."[30] There is no evidence for the implausible supposition that Donne's imagination was captured by Essex's personality. Nevertheless, unfortunately, Bald's speculation that Donne "presented himself" to Essex has established in Donne studies an unfounded assumption that Donne was one of the "green headed youths, covered with feathers, gold and silver lace," who flocked to follow Essex's glamorous leadership in the spring of 1596.[31]

On the contrary, as Roger E. Bennett pointed out fifty years ago, "the utmost caution should be employed before inferring, from Walton's obviously erroneous statement, that Donne at any period of his life was merely another of the young men who placed all their hopes in the Earl of Essex." Considering Donne's expressed political sentiments, Bennett argued that he would be more likely to have served under Raleigh than under Essex. By 1596, of course, Raleigh would no longer really have been a useful objective for a young man on the make. He was no longer a leading contender either for political dominance in England or for the Queen's affections. Probably Raleigh and Essex both had already been superseded in both pursuits by Sir Robert Cecil, who had certainly already surpassed Essex politically. Politically, Raleigh really was no longer a player in the same league as either Cecil or Essex; erotically his attraction for the Queen was long at an end. Raleigh's political program at this time was a propaganda effort to persuade the Privy Council, the public, and the Queen that England's advantage lay in the conquest and colonization of Guiana. Bennett proposed that during 1596-97 Donne's political sympathies were with an emerging faction (in opposition to both Cecil and Essex) joining Raleigh and Henry Percy, ninth Earl of Northumberland, both of whom correctly regarded Essex and his faction as a dangerous political meteor.[32]

If then Donne's service at Cadiz and the Azores was motivated not, as Walton suggested, by his intention to "wait upon" Essex but by

entirely different political considerations, we should not simply aggregate his example to the place-seeking of others. While maintaining reservations about Donne's support for Raleigh, I would agree with Bennett that Donne was motivated not by an ambitious hunt for preferment through Essex but by the same political reasons leading other friends of the house of Percy to join the expeditions. Donne's friend Henry Percy, ninth Earl of Northumberland, was not himself personally engaged in any expedition led by Essex; but the activities of his relatives and adherents prove his material interest in these goings on. In the mid-1590s Northumberland, who had long been friendly with Raleigh, began to prepare for the end of Elizabeth's reign by forging with Raleigh a political alliance against both of the more powerful contenders, Essex and Cecil. Thus it happened that William Slingsby of Yorkshire, Northumberland's cousin and author of a narrative of the Cadiz voyage held in the Percy family archives, served at Cadiz as an officer in Raleigh's squadron on board *Mary Rose*, captained by Raleigh's cousin, Sir George Carew. Carew was himself an old friend of the Percy family and a particular friend of the ninth Earl, who was also Donne's friend. All things considered, Donne most likely served under Raleigh with Slingsby on *Mary Rose* at Cadiz. And likely in the following year, having been attached to Howard's squadron for the month of July, Donne sailed in August again under Raleigh with Slingsby and Carew, this time perhaps on *St. Andrew*, one of Raleigh's prizes at Cadiz, captained by Slingsby's younger brother Francis, yet another Percy adherent not really "waiting upon" Essex.[33]

Donne's attitude toward Essex, then, should be understood in the context of Percy interests. Northumberland's own already low opinion of Essex as a creature of Tudor patronage had deteriorated rapidly following his marriage to Essex's sister Dorothy in 1595—a marriage forced on Northumberland by Burghley. Secretly corresponding with King James VI after the death of Essex, Northumberland expressed with repugnance the view that the Earl "would have been a bloody scourge to our nation. Of this I can speak very particularly as one who was as inward with him as any living creature, the first two years I was matched with his sister." Concerning Raleigh,

Northumberland offered James much less alarming advice: "although I know him to be insolent, extremely heated, a man that desires to seem to be able to sway all men's fancies, all men's courses; . . . yet I must needs confess what I know, that there is excellent good parts of nature in him."[34] By this time both Raleigh and Northumberland were preparing their resistance to the singular dominance of Sir Robert Cecil in the next reign, resistance that earned both of them long terms in the Tower, earned Raleigh execution.

5

Fundamental in the definition of Donne's attitudes toward Essex should be the only real evidence we have: what Donne's own writings tell us. When writing about the Earl, as when writing about other features of English politics, Donne's standard practice is suggested by a nudge-and-a-wink request in the letter he wrote from Plymouth during the Islands expedition: "y^{o} will p'done me if I write nothing ernest."[35] For Donne and his correspondent, to commit frank, political opinions to paper was to make oneself unacceptably vulnerable. In his various writings about Essex, therefore, we may expect him to speak with indirection and irony. Nevertheless from these writings emerges an expression of attitudes quite different from those scholars have often presumed were Donne's, and correspondingly in contrast to those surely held by such an adherent of Essex as Wotton was.

Concerning Donne's attitude toward Essex at the time of the voyage to Cadiz, the relevant texts are two Epigrams dealing with events there—"Nave arsa" and "Il Caualliere Gio: Wingefield"—each adapting generic features of Greek proverbial and Roman satirical epigram to produce what M. Thomas Hester has aptly called "lapidary epigrams that commemorate the fate of their subjects," yet remain "balanced by a level of irony" subverting their "apparently encomiastic tenor."[36] The first and more puzzling of these is the grisly "Nave arsa," which focuses laconically on a crucial incident of the opening naval battle that at once decided the success of the English at Cadiz:

> Out of a fyred ship, which by no way
> But drowning could be rescued from the flame,
> Some men leap'd forthe, and ever as they came
> Nere the foes Ships, did by ther Shott decay.
> So all were lost, which in the Ship were found:
> They in the Sea beeing burn't, they in the burnt ship drownd.[37]

Donne has chosen here to commemorate the Spanish "men" who perished under the withering shot fired mainly from *Warspite*, Sir Walter Raleigh's flagship at Cadiz. Bald speculates on the evidence of this poem that Donne may have been aboard *Warspite*; but in any case it is remarkable that Donne's only reference in this poem to English forces terms them "the foes." Given the opportunity to celebrate English heroism encomiastically, Donne's first choice instead is paradoxically to wonder about and to lament, albeit ironically, the deaths of Spaniards.[38]

Even more striking is the fact that Donne's prime focus is directed on an incident in no way reflecting the glory so ardently sought by the Lord General Essex. Without mentioning Essex (or any of the other orgillous worthies who vied for honor at Cadiz), Donne's poem nonetheless soberly witnesses to the fact that the decisive point in the expedition was the pitiless destruction of the Spanish flagship *San Felipe* and her crew by Raleigh's guns, a feat everyone knew had been achieved through Raleigh's battle plan and Raleigh's diplomatic leadership at the crucial point—in short, wholly because of the aggressive seamanship and cunning in human relations of Raleigh. Once the Spanish naval guns had been silenced by Raleigh's audacity, the British landing proceeded relatively smoothly: the Lord General and (a few hours later) his fellow commander, Lord Admiral Charles Howard, Baron of Effingham, went ashore triumphantly. Meanwhile, having made their victory possible, the mere Rear Admiral Raleigh, stretchered after them briefly with the leg wound he had suffered during the fierce engagement in the harbor, soon was returned to recuperate in pain on board ship, unfit to join in the general looting of the city.[39]

The paradoxical interest of Donne's commemorative poem is in its studied refusal to acknowledge any glory for Essex or the English in

their moment of victory. The poem expresses neither praise nor blame even for Raleigh's ruthless valor. Robert V. Young and M. Thomas Hester have convincingly shown that Donne was no admirer of Raleigh. Focusing on Donne's resistance to propaganda supporting Raleigh's schemes for colonizing Virginia and Guiana, Young writes that in some of his Elegies Donne "dismantles the metaphorical structure of various literary celebrations of English explorers and rewrites them as cynically erotic poems of unbridled desire."[40] Hester, noting "Donne's animus for the Protestant Raleigh's re-formation of Roman Catholic legend and doctrine to support England's imperial religion," discerns among the satiric targets of Donne's "Elegie: Going to Bed" Raleigh's and Queen Elizabeth's imperialist naming of Virginia in the 1580s, seductive sexuality articulating the Virgin Queen's cult, in close proximity to the heart of the Established religion.[41] But "Nave arsa" indicates that an animus against Raleigh did not automatically make Donne a partisan of Essex. There seems to be a plague-on-both-your-houses attitude about the Epigram. Then what is the meaning of "Nave arsa," and what would Donne have been doing in Raleigh's squadron or on board Raleigh's flagship?

Clearly, answers to these questions cannot be based on Walton's mere rhetoric about how Donne "waited upon" Essex. There is no substitute for dealing in direct and substantive ways with Donne's expressions of a personal and political character amidst his social situation in the 1590s. In his second Epigram about Cadiz, "Il Caualliere Gio: Wingefield," Donne's chosen subject is again no feat of arms or leadership on the part of Essex, but merely his having commemorated by a funeral monument the single noble casualty during the rout of demoralized Spanish defenders immediately following the landing:

> Beyond th'old Pillers many'haue trauailed
> Towards the Suns cradle, and his throne, and bed.
> A fitter Piller our Earle did bestow
> In that late Iland; for he well did know
> Farther then Wingefield no man dares to go.[42]

Hester has given this Epigram repeated attention and, although his reading of the poem differs from mine to some extent, his general approach seems to me unexceptionable. He shows, on one hand, that "Il Caualliere Gio: Wingefield" might seem to function merely "as an inscription on the valiant colonel's tomb"; but, after closer reading, "the lapidary epigram has become not only a riddle and a joke but also a witty assault fully in the spirit of Martial's comic deflations of his Roman enemies." The main joke and assault Hester mentions is Donne's appropriation of Spain's imperial motto, *Plus Oultra*, often blazoned on banners and other devices representing the Pillars of Hercules. Having participated in the English army's assault on the Spanish city, Donne uses in his last line the phrase "Farther then Wingefield," an additional insult to the Spaniards: "the assaulting epigrammatist now defiantly waves their own banners in their faces." But Donne shows further, in more ways than this, that (as Hester well expresses it) "no metaphor can be subjected to the imperialism of any single hermeneutic."[43]

Donne's polysemous encomium holds also a sting in its tail for the Lord General Essex. The word "piller," as Hester suggests, is a pun in part denoting one who pillages. That is (to paraphrase this level of the poem's meaning): the Spaniards may have gone farther than the looters of the ancient world ("th'old Pillers"), in pillaging the East Indies (the sun's "cradle"), Africa (the sun's "throne"), and also the New World (the sun's "bed"). But Essex, before departing from Cadiz, acknowledged an even "fitter Piller" than the Spaniards could boast, one whose zealous urge to die on a looting expedition had led him to the glory of a supreme sacrifice. (Of such enthusiasm the Earl himself had fallen short: at the wall of the city, where Wingfield had been wounded, Essex had "waited until a sizeable group was on the wall" before he followed them. Then, while more eager looters left the wounded Wingfield behind and jumped over the wall into the city, the Earl "stood irresolutely" until another English contingent had forced open the city gates. Essex headed for the city plaza, but was passed by Wingfield on horseback.[44]) The sting in the tail of the Epigram is applied to English imperialism as well as to Spanish. Again notably slighted in Donne's poem is "our Earle" and his thirst for glory.

6

A year later, Donne's expressed political distaste for Essex did not diminish when he participated in the Azores expedition. As the fleet sailed from Plymouth on 10 July 1597 Donne was embarked not with Essex, but with Lord Thomas Howard's squadron. Within a few days the squadrons of Raleigh and Essex had been scattered by a ferocious storm that lasted more than a week. Raleigh and Essex were both badly mauled by the storm but managed to return most of their squadrons to port. Meanwhile, Donne under Howard's command sailed to the coast of Spain before returning to join Raleigh and Essex at Plymouth on 31 July.

While Howard's squadron and the rest of the fleet were being refitted at Plymouth in the first two weeks of August, Donne wrote a prose letter, another Epigram, and probably two Verse Letters, all reflecting his continuing criticism of Essex and the politics of the expedition. The sarcastic prose letter (Simpson's letter #1, addressee unknown) presents Donne as only too justified in misgivings he has held all along:

> The first act of y^{t} play w^{ch} I sayd I would go over y^{e} water to see is done & yet y^{e} people hisse. how it will end I know not ast ego vicissim risero. it is true y^{t} Jonas was in a whales belly three dayes but hee came not voluntary as I did nor was troubled wth y^{e} stinke of 150 land soldiers.

Donne explains his participation on the Islands expedition as that of a reluctant spectator at a play, a play that is turning out badly. Still (he quotes Horace, *Epodes* 15.24: "*ast ego vicissim risero*") "at least I will have had a laugh." The rueful joke about Jonah deepens the sarcastic tone of the letter, emphasizing Donne's singular conscience among the soldiers of the troop transport. He goes on to satirize not only the troops on board ship but the burghers at Plymouth, the foppery of officers, and the inadequacy of planning for the expedition:

> in one bad bare word y^{e} want is so generall that y^{e} lo: generall wants & till this day wee wanted y^{e} lo: generall: y^{o} will p'done me if I write nothing ernest.[45]

This sour reference to Essex's absence shows that the letter must have been written between 1 and 8 August, just after Donne's return to Plymouth, while Essex and Raleigh were away at Court trying to lobby the Privy Council for permission to sail to the West Indies. Donne may well have known about their agenda; if so he would not have approved of it, as is shown by the work of Young and Hester. But here he declines any "ernest" comment, suggesting that if he were to comment he might say something not merely sarcastic, something that would be dangerous. In any case, Donne's attitude toward Essex is far from indicating that his imagination had yet been captivated by the Earl.

Donne at about this time also wrote "Calez and Guyana," a third Epigram referring to Cadiz, dealing with the unprincipled faltering of Essex in early August 1597. During the refitting of the expedition at Plymouth, Raleigh had finally fired Essex with enthusiasm to sail across the Atlantic and attack the Spanish plate-fleet's ports of embarkation. Essex had agreed to go with Raleigh before the Privy Council and argue the case. On this occasion, Donne evidently addressed "Calez and Guyana" to both Essex and Raleigh:

> If you from spoyle of th'old worlds fardest end
> To the new world your kindled valors bend
> What brave Examples then do prove it trew
> That one things end doth still begine a new.[46]

The words "your kindled valors bend" cannot apply clearly to any other circumstance than Raleigh's having suddenly persuaded Essex in favor of looting Guiana. Pairing Raleigh and Essex as two agents of English imperialism, the poem maintains a critical attitude toward their project. As Hester has suggested, this poem "is more sarcastic than has been supposed." The words "spoyle" and "brave" are ambiguous signifiers, intimating "some 'wise doubt' about the valor of Elizabethan adventurers."[47]

In a verse letter to Rowland Woodward, "If, as mine is, thy life a slumber be," written probably in the second week of August 1597,

during the torturously slow refitting of the fleet after the storm, Donne remarks sardonically that, though Woodward in July retired to the country instead of joining the excitement of the expedition, it is instead Donne who is dying of boredom and has written this poem as a terminal patient writes a will. He envies the prudence of Woodward's "wise melancholy," which led him to decline participation on the voyage. In the second part of the poem it is as if Donne's death has already occurred:

> All newes I thinke sooner reach thee then mee;
> Havens are Heavens, and Ships wing'd Angels be,
> The which both Gospell, and sterne threatnings bring.

That is, to judge from his restricted milieu in Plymouth harbor, and from the menacing sermons preached there by military chaplains, he may as well have gone to heaven. Bald speculated that these sermons may have included propaganda supporting Raleigh's project by arguing "the missionary motive" as one justification for colonizing Guiana.[48] In any case, one piece of news Donne has received, perhaps from the pulpit: that a decision had been taken by the Privy Council to rule out extending the Spanish war to embrace the Guiana project Raleigh and Essex went to Court and pleaded for.

> Guyanaes harvest is nip'd in the spring,
> I feare; And with us (me thinkes) Fate deales so
> As with the Jewes guide God did; he did show
> Him the rich land, but bar'd his entry in,
> Oh, slownes is our punishment and sinne.

Donne's repeated reference in writings of this period to figures of the Hebrew scriptures may reflect some of the other content of sermons preached to the army during its prolonged bivouac at Plymouth. His mimicry here then applies the figure of Moses to Raleigh, whose triumph in persuading Essex had led ultimately to disappointment when the Council decreed that the fleet must continue to focus on objectives in Spain. The ironical reflection of this conceit on the

leadership and political program of Essex is slighting and contemptuous:

> Perchance, these Spanish businesse being done,
> Which as the Earth betweene the Moone and Sun
> Eclipse the light which Guyana would give,
> Our discontinued hopes we shall retrive.[49]

Dull, sublunary policy stands in Donne's mocking star chart between England's hope (symbolized conventionally as the Queen) and the eclipsed sunlight of Raleigh's plans in Guiana.

Presumably during this same period at Plymouth, Donne wrote "The Storme. To Mr. Christopher Brooke." Brooke's friendship with Donne is mainly noted in connection with Donne's later wedding, in December 1601, an event with which the Earl of Northumberland had also some involvement. As a Yorkshireman, Brooke and his family may have had ongoing connections to Percy interests in the North. In any case, Donne sent Brooke his report in verse on the first, abortive episode of the Islands expedition, striking again a satirical, this time rather mock-heroic note:

> England to whom we'owe, what we be, and have,
> Sad that her sonnes did seeke a forraine grave
> (For, Fates, or Fortunes drifts none can soothsay,
> Honour and misery have one face and way.)
> From out her pregnant intrailes sighed a winde.[50]

Donne's attitude is far from the official line; one cannot imagine Wotton writing thus lugubriously about the voyage. In prophetic/satiric tones, Donne tells Brooke that honor and misery are equally likely outcomes of the expedition; it is an ill wind that has blown him out to sea. Donne goes on in facetious accents again to compare himself to Jonah. Like Jonah, reluctant and skeptical, Donne awakened to the fury of a storm. But no one thinks to question him about the cause of the ship's plight. All on board are transfixed with the horror of prospective death borne in on them by the darkness, noise,

and violence of the weather. Donne seems in a black mood about his participation on the voyage.

In "The Calme," the lack of wind at sea becomes a metaphor for the death of all hope, particularly of what has become the main political hope of Raleigh and Essex on this voyage—the hope of looting Guiana. Here "these Spanish businesse" have completely bogged down, literally and figuratively, so that Donne (evidently at this point serving in Raleigh's squadron) compares the expedition's leadership to the raging captive Bajazet or to Samson in defeat. He reviews his motives for coming on the voyages in the first place:

> Whether a rotten state, and hope of gaine,
> Or to disuse me from the queasie paine
> Of being belov'd, and loving, or the thirst
> Of honour, or faire death, out pusht mee first,
> I lose my end.[51]

Nothing in this discussion suggests in any way that Donne sought preferment from or close adherence to Essex. In keeping with the other writings we have been reviewing, "The Calme" seems consistent with the notion that Donne on these expeditions was not serving as a follower of Essex.

Recent discovery by Gary A. Stringer of an unnoticed Donne Epigram provides yet another satirical comment on the Cadiz expedition and its aftermath from a point of view less than sympathetic to Essex. "E. of Nottingham" brackets Essex and the Lord Admiral at Cadiz, Charles Howard, then Baron of Effingham, as undeserving stuffed shirts:

> I *Earle of Nothing=am*, am iustly soe
> for I did nothing all the world doth know
> when braue *Count Essex* landed on the shore
> I landed too, but *Cales* was wonn before.[52]

As in "Calez and Guyana," the polysemous texture of the poem is signalled by the ambiguity of "braue." Here we have Howard's

confession, as one of the two titular leaders of the expedition, that neither he nor Essex should have been given credit for a victory actually attained by Raleigh's military prowess. Written more than a year after the Cadiz expedition (Effingham became Nottingham only after the Islands voyage in the fall of 1597), "E. of Nottingham" takes its epigrammatic bite ostensibly out of the harmless Howard's reputation; but the real target here is "braue *Count Essex*," coupled with another do-nothing, Tudor-created Earl in mutual ingloriousness. Vulnerable to satire such as Donne's, Essex had a notorious penchant for the "silly gallantry" of going ashore first. At Lisbon in 1589 he had been "the first that landed, who by reason the billows were high, waded to the shoulder to come on shore."[53] At Cadiz again the Earl's heroics were somewhat beside the point. Together with his letters of the period, all four of Donne's mocking Epigrams on Cadiz indicate that, whatever his motives and political opinions, Donne did not think of his service on the Cadiz expedition as a matter of "waiting upon" Essex. All the Cadiz and Azores writings pointedly exclude the Earl as a focus of admiration.

Donne's next reference to the Earl is his most explicit estimate, a letter to Henry Wotton written during the Christmas revels of 1599, when Wotton had retired to the country, like many others having ended his association with Essex after the Earl was banished from Court and imprisoned. Donne's remarks, while rather severe, are consistent with his earlier comments to Woodward and others, and now there was no further need for tact or circumspection in handling self-evident truths about the Earl with Wotton or anyone:

> my lo: of Essex & his trayne are no more mist here then the Aungells w^{ch} were cast downe from heaven nor (for anything I see) likelyer to retourne. he withers still in his sicknes & plods on to his end in the same pace where y^{o} left us. The worst accidents of his sicknes are y^{t} he conspires wth it & y^{t} it is not here beleeved. that w^{ch} was sayd of Cato y^{t} his age understood him not I feare may be averted of y^{r} lo: that he vnderstood not his age: for it is a naturall weaknes of innocency. That such men want lockes for themselves & keyse for others.[54]

The saying about Cato is intended as a compliment to Cato; its turning as applied to Essex clearly is no compliment. This assessment of the Earl at Christmas 1599 is pretty much in concert with all Donne's earlier expressions (and with the general verdict of historians). There is no reason to suppose that Donne had ever held any other opinion of Essex.

Donne's final treatment of the Earl came in his "Metempsychosis," whose political context has been well explicated by M. van Wyk Smith. As Smith has shown, two of the satirical beast fables in this poem—the deaths of the whale and of the elephant—are actually comments on the fall of Essex from a political point of view which Smith triangulates in opposition both to the Earl and to Sir Robert Cecil, i. e., precisely from the point of view shared by Northumberland and Raleigh. Thus the whale, like the meteoric favorite Essex, experiences phenomenal growth and influence followed by an equally rapid and unaccountable decline, seemingly a victim of his own success ("Greatnesse a period hath, but hath no station"). He is betrayed by the "Thresher" and the "Sword-fish"—"Two little fishes whom hee never harm'd"—Anthony and Francis Bacon, false followers of Essex who betrayed him in the service of Cecil. And the Cecil-Essex conflict is again figured when the mouse climbs through the elephant's trunk to gnaw at its brain, the puny but dangerous Cecil playing mind-games with the valorous but vulnerable Essex: "Natures great master-peece, an elephant, . . . (Yet nature hath given him no knees to bend)."[55] In each case the Earl is portrayed as a great, hapless victim of his own insensible blundering—in the words of Donne's earlier letter, "he understood not his age."

Donne's references to Essex are uniformly distant and slighting, inconsistent with the notion, entertained by Bald and others, that he was among "the more high-spirited young men in fashionable circles and in the Inns of Court" who eagerly followed Essex because "his warm and impetuous personality captured their imagination."[56] Instead, Donne's references to Essex in the period from 1596 to 1601 are consistently framed in sarcastic tones, and Essex in them does not come off well by comparison to Raleigh, of whom Young and Hester have shown Donne had a low opinion. Donne felt no particular

personal allegiance to Raleigh, even during this brief period. His support of Raleigh was a temporary function of his long-standing friendship with Henry Percy, ninth Earl of Northumberland, an association that (as I have argued elsewhere) derived from his family's links to the ancient Catholic nobility and lasted throughout Donne's life.

Donne's relationship to Essex then was quite different from what has often been assumed. Donne scholars have conceived service under Essex as integral to the general notion that a "desperately ambitious" Donne in the 1590s was above all seeking a place at Court. According to this widespread but unsubstantiated view, through his military service he obtained his position with Lord Keeper Sir Thomas Egerton as no more than "the son of a London Ironmonger, . . . without any advantages of birth, family influence, or wealth"; and his four years in Egerton's employ not only "familiarized him with the ways of the court," but gave him grounds to "hope that by courting the favour of the great he could win a way to a life of public service such as his friend Henry Wotton actually achieved."[57] On the contrary, Donne's attitude toward Essex was not, like Wotton's, that of an outsider seeking entrance to a privileged circle. Like his other political motives and positions, his service under Essex was an outgrowth of his and his family's having been at Court long before Wotton was, and in particular of their long-standing associations with the ancient Catholic nobility, including the house of Percy.

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Notes

[1] Ted-Larry Pebworth and Claude J. Summers, "'Thus Friends Absent Speake': The Exchange of Verse Letters between John Donne and Henry Wotton," *MP* 81 (1984): 361-77; and "Donne's Correspondence with Wotton," *JDJ* 10 (1991): 1-36.

[2] Unsigned, unaddressed, and undated letter, "In this sickly dotage of ye world," printed as letter #12 in Evelyn Simpson, *A Study of the Prose Works of John Donne* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), p. 318. Pebworth and Summers view Simpson's letter #8, which they date in early 1598, as the earliest of Donne's letters to Wotton; "Donne's Correspondence," p. 3.

[3] Simpson, p. 318.

[4] Simpson, pp. 312-13.

[5] Sir Henry Wotton, *The State of Christendom: or, A most Exact and Curious Discovery of many Secret Passages, and Hidden Mysteries of the Times* (London: Humphrey Moseley, 1657), p. 1.

[6] The leadership of the Catholic exiles, especially William Allen and Robert Persons, had through the 1580s been severe on the question of religious toleration in England, looking to a full restoration of Catholicism with the help of Spain. By the mid-1590s, the "Allen-Persons policy of alliance with Spain and the goal of a Catholic prince had failed"; Thomas H. Clancy, *Papist Pamphleters: the Allen-Persons Party and the Political Thought of the Counter-Reformation in England, 1572-1615* (Chicago: Loyola Univ. Press, 1964), p. 155. William Allen died in 1594; after nine years based in Spain, in 1597 Persons moved to Rome. These developments and related tendencies of Catholic opinion in England are illuminated in the context presented by Arnold Pritchard, *Catholic Loyalism in Elizabethan England* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1979), esp. Chap. 3, "Loyalist Sentiment before 1595," pp. 37-72.

[7] Wotton's authorship is argued by Smith primarily on the ground that the book was completed just as Wotton entered the service of the Earl of Essex and has an appended *Supplement* justifying the career of Essex's protégé at the Court of Queen Elizabeth, Antonio Perez, concerning whom more below. Smith's dating of the book depends on numerous references that demonstrate its contemporaneity with events between the summer of 1594 and the winter of 1594-95; Logan Pearsall Smith, *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1904), 456-58. But see also Gustav Ungerer, *A Spaniard in Elizabethan England: The Correspondence of Antonio Perez's Exile*, 2 vols. (London: Tamesis Books, 1974), 2: 322: "Smith has made use of the *Supplement* to ascribe the writing of *The State of Christendom* to 1594. But in doing so he has not raised the point that the *Supplement* was written in 1595, after Wotton had returned from his Grand Tour, whereas *The State of Christendom* was begun abroad and was probably finished in the house of Isaac Casaubon in Geneva."

[8] Smith, *Life and Letters*, 2: 459.

[9] Wotton, *State of Christendom*, pp. 1-3.

[10] Lewkenor was a Catholic loyalist cultivated by Burghley; see P. W. Hasler, *The House of Commons, 1558-1603*, 3 vols. (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1981), 2: 474. I also rely, here and in the following paragraphs, on the discussion by Ungerer, 2: 249-53.

[11] Henry Wotton, *A Supplement to the History of the State of Christendom* (London: Humphrey Moseley, 1657), p. 1.

[12] Wotton, *Supplement*, p. 4.

[13] Ungerer, 2: 249-50.

[14] Also related to publications involving Perez and to Lewkenor's book was Thomas Wright's 1595 pamphlet on whether it would be right for English Catholics to defend the Queen against Spanish forces; see Pritchard, pp. 61-67.

[15] In Northumberland's case, the poisoning was not fatal, but he was subsequently shot under suspicious circumstances, casting in doubt the Privy Council's claim that he had committed suicide. On reaction to the death of Northumberland, including the attempt to poison him while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London, see my *John Donne and the Ancient Catholic Nobility* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1995), pp. 157-59; on reactions to Derby's poisoning, see Christopher Devlin, *Hamlet's Divinity and Other Essays* (Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), pp. 109-112.

[16] Izaak Walton, *The Lives of John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Richard Hooker, George Herbert and Robert Sanderson* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1956), p. 20.

[17] Walton, p. 106. The earlier passage on Oxford in the *Life of Donne* is on p. 24.

[18] Walton, p. 15. King apparently had no independent knowledge of the friendship at Oxford and merely repeated what he had read in Walton's *Life of Wotton*. Walton's arrangement of a meeting between King and Wotton to discuss Donne's life was prevented by Wotton's death in 1639; see Wotton to Izaak Walton, [April 1639], in Smith, *Life and Letters*, 2: 404-405. Apparently Wotton and King had not previously met; see also Margaret Crum, ed., *The Poems of Henry King* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 18.

[19] Anthony à Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses...*, 4 vols, ed. Philip Bliss (London: F.C. & J. Rivington, 1813-200), 2: 644.

[20] Wood, 2: 643-44: "... whether he was admitted, or did determine, or took any other degree, it doth not appear in any of the university registers, which I have exactly searched, and the more for this reason, because the author of his life saith, that at 19 years of age he proceeded master of arts." According to David Novarr, Wood's own "insistence on the verification of facts had caused him to become disgruntled with Walton's lack of accuracy in the Life of Wotton, and this probably explains his reserved praise of Walton as a biographer"; *The Making of Walton's "Lives"* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1958), pp. 6-7.

[21] Wood, 2: 644.

[22] Wood, 2: 502.

[23] Smith, *Life and Letters*, 1: 1-2.

[24] On these events, including Heywood's letter about Catholicism at Oxford, see my *John Donne and the Ancient Catholic Nobility*, pp. 131-34.

[25] Pebworth and Summers, "'Thus Friends Absent Speake,'" p. 365.

[26] Walton, p. 26.

[27] Bald, *John Donne: a Life*, pp. 88-90, shrewdly citing Donne's statements, in a letter written from Plymouth in early August 1597, that he had the previous month spent twenty days at sea in bad weather and in the company of 150 soldiers, and had seen the coast of Spain. These specifics mean that Donne must have sailed on board one of eight troop transports in Howard's squadron when the fleet left Plymouth on 10 July 1597; and therefore subsequently had weathered the storm that had sent both the squadrons of Essex and Raleigh back to port within nine days. After Howard's squadron too returned at the end of July, nearly all of the land troops were dismissed by Essex; thus Donne's troop transport was to be left behind when the fleet, reorganized as a purely naval force, set sail again on 17 August. At this point Donne embarked again in Raleigh's squadron. He must have been in Raleigh's squadron during the dead calm at sea on 9 and 10 September, as is shown (Bald again astutely pointed out) by lines 9-10 and 21 of "The Calme," which must refer to the efforts of Raleigh's squadron to rendezvous with Essex off Flores.

Incidentally, this means that Donne can have spent very little time in Wotton's company on either of the voyages, since Wotton undoubtedly sailed with Essex.

[28] Ibid., p. 80: "access to the Lord General would not have been difficult for him. His old friend of Oxford days, Henry Wotton, was now one of Essex's secretaries; and Henry Cuffe, his chief secretary, had a brother at Lincoln's Inn whom Donne must have known. Donne's services were accepted, and he was assured of a place in the expedition." Jessopp, in *John Donne, Sometime Dean of St. Paul's* (London: Methuen, 1897), had earlier expressed the fantasy in even more chivalrous terms: "Knights and gentlemen, with their followers amounting to nine hundred in number, were glad to serve as volunteers, and among the first who offered himself was young Donne." Jessopp was not permitted by his publisher to cite the sources of his information, but it is doubtful he had any beyond Walton for this bit.

[29] On the Cadiz expedition generally and on recruitment of gentlemen volunteers in particular, I follow the account in C. G. Cruikshank, *Elizabeth's Army*, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966), p. 25 and esp. p. 252-79.

[30] Bald, *John Donne: a Life*, p. 80. Bald, like Jessopp, unquestioningly accepted that Walton knew what he was talking about, and that Donne probably sought preferment through Essex. Bald never drew from this assumption the outrageous conclusions that some others have erected on his false foundation. Consider, for example, the grossly exaggerated cartoon drawn by John Carey.

According to the cocksure Carey, Donne "secured a personal introduction to the Earl," probably through Wotton: "If he could once earn Essex's notice, there was no knowing what he mightn't aspire to." Ultimately "the voyage served Donne's purposes of self-advancement well enough" because on it he met Thomas Egerton the younger. "This was the breakthrough Donne had been waiting for." There is no evidence for "this"; *John Donne: Life, Mind and Art* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1981), 64, 65, and 69.

[31] See, for example, Carey, p. 64; Pebworth and Summers, "'Thus Friends Absent Speake,' p. 365; and the related discussion in Arthur F. Marotti, *John Donne, Coterie Poet* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), pp. 97, 116, and 119-25.

The "green headed youths" were caricatured in Sir Anthony Standen's letter to Francis Bacon, 30 May 1596; Thomas Birch, *Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, 2 vols. (London: A. Millar, 1754), 2: 15.

[32] R. E. Bennett, "John Donne and the Earl of Essex," *MLQ* 3 (1942): 603-604. Bald should have credited Bennett as the first to notice Donne's service under Lord Thomas Howard during the Islands expedition. Bennett also deserves credit for being first to realize the possible political significance of Donne's relationship to the ninth Earl of Northumberland, who is best known to Donne scholars for breaking the news of Donne's wedding to his outraged father-in-law, Sir George More (ibid., p. 604). Cf. David Norbrook, "The Monarchy of Wit and the Republic of Letters: Donne's Politics," in *Soliciting Interpretation: Literary Theory and Seventeenth-Century English Poetry*, ed. Elizabeth D. Harvey and Katherine E. Maus (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 12: "Donne kept a certain distance from the Essex circle, in which militant Protestant views were dominant, and he had connections with Essex's rivals Ralegh and Northumberland."

[33] Edward Barrington de Fonblanque, *Annals of the House of Percy*, 2 vols. (London: Richard Clay and Sons, 1887), 2: 194; and Julian S. Corbett, ed., "Relation of the Voyage to Cadiz, 1596. By Sir William Slingsby," *Publications of the Navy Record Society*, 20 (1902): 23-92.

[34] The complete passage, perhaps damning Raleigh too with faint praise, is quoted by Fonblanque, 2: 235-36.

[35] Unsigned, unaddressed letter of August 1597, "The first act of yt play"; Simpson's letter #1, pp. 303-304. This letter has up to now been recognized as Donne's earliest surviving prose letter, but see part 1 above.

[36] M. Thomas Hester, "Donne's Epigrams: A Little World Made Cunningly," in *The Eagle and the Dove: Reassessing John Donne* (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1986), pp. 81ff. Headings and texts of Donne's Epigrams quoted here are those supplied by Gary A. Stringer *et al.*, *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne*, vol. 8 (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 1995), in the "Intermediate Sequence" of the Epigrams.

[37] *Donne Variorum*, 8: 7.

[38] Donne's words in "Nave Arsa" should be compared to Raleigh's own less ironical if more eloquent description of the battle, quoted in part by Carey, who goes on tendentiously to argue that Raleigh's words show "superior humanity"; according to Carey, "Donne treats the slaughter as a joke: the pretext for a smart paradox. There is no pity in his lines" (pp. 94-95).

[39] For a balanced version of Raleigh's initiatives and frustrating infirmity at Cadiz, see Cruikshank, pp. 266-70. The partisanship of eyewitness supporters and opponents of Essex has sometimes tinged the unwitting accounts of other modern scholars.

Raleigh's handling of the volatile Essex is perceptively implied by Sir Anthony Standen (supposedly an adherent of Essex) to Francis Bacon, 30 May 1596, from Plymouth harbor just as the expedition was to set sail: "Sir Walter Ralegh's carriage to my lord of Essex is with the cunningest respect and deepest humility, that ever I saw or have trowed"; Birch, 2: 14.

Raleigh's perceived merit in the naval battle was clear, even to a definite Essex adherent, Sir George Gifford, who wrote to Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, 5 July 1596: "The forts from the town plied their ordnance, and their ships at anchor defended and offended to the uttermost of their powers. But our General resolutely went on, and noble Sir Walter Rawly led, who by his valour, judgment and wisdom showed that day, won throughout the army great praise, love and honour; though he bought it with some small hurt that he received in the fight"; H.M.C. *Salisbury*, 13: 578.

If Donne sailed not aboard *Warspite* but, as I am inclined to think, with Slingsby and Carew aboard *Mary Rose*, he would have had an excellent view of the destruction of *San Felipe*. In this engagement, *Warspite* was closely followed by four ships, one of them *Mary Rose*; see Julian Corbett, *The Successors of Drake* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1900), p. 80.

[40] Robert V. Young, "'O my America, my new-found-land': Pornography and Imperial Politics in Donne's *Elegies*," *South Central Review* 4 (1987): 37.

[41] M. Thomas Hester, "Donne's (Re)Annunciation of the Virgin(ia Colony) in Elegy XIX," *South Cental Review* 4 (1987): 64.

[42] *Donne Variorum*, 8: 8. Sir John Wingfield had led the initial English attack on the city, during which he was wounded by a retreating Spaniard. Undaunted, Wingfield mounted a horse and rode on to the city plaza, where he presented the most outstanding target for Spanish musketry. He was shot in the head even as the looting began. Wingfield "had been suffering from some trouble or mental depression that had taken from him the wish to live. In telling Cecil of his death Standen said, 'He thereby was rid of a mighty discontentment which all the way had much affrighted him, and one day he told me he had rather leave his life here than again to carry it into England'"; Corbett, p. 97.

[43] Hester, "Donne's Epigrams," pp. 81 and 84. See also Hester's "*Genera mixta* in Donne's 'Sir John Wingfield,' *ELN* 16 (1979): 202-206, though I differ

with Hester's reading that the poem expresses "unqualified praise of Wingfield" or support of Essex.

According to Carey, "Donne, angling for Essex's notice, penned an enthusiastic epigram on Wingfield's heroism and the honour 'our Earle' had done him" (p. 66). He presents no evidence of "angling."

[44] Cruikshank, pp. 274-75; and Corbett, p. 97.

[45] Simpson, pp. 303-304.

[46] *Donne Variorum*, 8: 7.

[47] Hester, "Donne's Epigrams," p. 80. See also Hester's "Donne's (Re)Annunciation," pp. 53-54. I follow Hester in his insight that the poem is satiric, though I do not agree with his suggestion that the poem may somehow reflect Donne's "attempts to side with Essex in the continuous struggle for royal favor." On Raleigh's bending Essex's mind, see Corbett, p. 181.

[48] R. C. Bald, "Donne's Early Verse Letters," *HLQ* (1952): 287-88.

[49] "To Mr. *R.W.*," *The Complete Poetry of John Donne*, ed. John T. Shawcross (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1967), p. 205. Whereas Bald sees the poem as referring to Donne's own disappointment over the Council's decision, I tend instead to agree with Hester, that Donne's irony "reflects on the doubtful 'Vertue'" of the project; cf. Bald, "Early Verse Letters," p. 288 and *John Donne: a Life*, p. 89; and Hester, "Donne's Epigrams," p. 88.

[50] "To Mr. *R. W.*," Shawcross, p. 189.

[51] "The Calme," Shawcross, pp. 191-93.

[52] Gary A. Stringer, "Donne's Epigram on the Earl of Nottingham," *JDJ* 10 (1991): 71-74.

[53] Eyewitness account quoted by A. L. Rowse, *The Expansion of Elizabethan England* (London: Macmillan, 1955), p. 287. Rowse adds: "It must have spoiled a splendid suit."

[54] Unsigned, unaddressed letter of December 1599, "That loue wch went wth you"; Simpson's letter #6, p. 310. Concerning this passage, Pebworth and Summers write that "Donne thus is able to blame Essex for his own disgrace, but at the same time attribute it to the corruption of the times, a diagnosis likely to be acceptable to Wotton"; "Donne's Correspondence," p. 24.

[55] Shawcross, pp. 322-24. Cf. M. van Wyk Smith, "John Donne's *Metempsychosis*," *RES* 24 (1973): 145-50; and also my "Donne's *Ignatius His Conclave* and Other Libels on Robert Cecil, *JDJ* 6 (1987): 165.

[56] Bald, *John Donne: a Life*, p. 80.

[57] Bald, *John Donne: a Life*, p. 125.