

Introduction

The Other Voice

In the Devonshire Manuscript of early Tudor verse (British Library, MS Additional 17492), the experiences of a group of elite women associated with the court of Henry VIII speak to us with astonishing freshness and distinctiveness despite the distance of centuries and the unfamiliarity of the literary and social conventions within which they wrote and lived. Although most of the poetry it contains was written and no doubt copied by men, the manuscript was a women's book. It was owned by Mary (Howard) Fitzroy (ca.1519–1555?) and subsequently by her friend Lady Margaret Douglas (1515–1578). Douglas's hand and that of another friend and fellow courtier, Mary Shelton (ca.1513–1571), are frequently evident in the manuscript, copying, annotating, commenting, and, most remarkably, entering their own compositions. The Devonshire Manuscript has long been celebrated for preserving many early Tudor courtly poems, particularly those of Sir Thomas Wyatt, an important Henrician poet. But it is just as remarkable for the precious insights it yields into women's active participation in the production and circulation of verse in the period, not merely as the idealized addressees of courtly verse but also as active readers and responders, collectors, copyists, and contributors.

For students interested in understanding women's participation in the cultural and literary life of the Tudor elite, the value of the manuscript is greatly increased by its singularity. Few manuscripts of verse from the period survive, and among those that do, the Devonshire Manuscript is unique for the richness and variety of the evidence it provides of women's active involvement.¹ For the women associated

1. John Stevens, in *Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Court* (London: Methuen and Co., 1961), provides a dated but nevertheless valuable account of early Tudor manuscripts of verse and their social context. His book includes editions of three manuscripts, and Appendix C provides a useful list of others. The most comprehensive list of early Tudor manuscripts of verse appears in William A. Ringler Jr., *Bibliography and Index of English Verse in Manuscript, 1501–1558* (London: Mansell, 1992). The "Findern Manuscript," which belongs to the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries and seems to have been produced in a provincial household, also contains fascinating evidence of women's participation in the circu-

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with the manuscript, poetry clearly played a central role in honing their courtly skills, articulating their aspirations, and providing pleasure and, at times, solace. That the part of the female courtier was a difficult one, requiring considerable wit and tact, is suggested in Baldassare Castiglione's account of the arts of courting in *The Courtier*, first published in Italian in 1528.² He describes how female courtiers were expected to stimulate and manage the evening pastimes at the Renaissance court of Urbino. Castiglione's account is an idealized one, but it is at least suggestive of women's role in the aristocratic and courtly milieu in which the Devonshire Manuscript was produced. Glamorous as it might be, this role was clearly fraught with personal and social dangers. Castiglione's character Count Giuliano warns the female courtier that "she must observe a certain difficult mean, composed as it were of contrasting qualities, and take care not to stray beyond certain fixed limits."³

The Devonshire Manuscript has long been known to scholars of Tudor literature, but its significance as a testimony of the central role women played in the practice of courtly verse has only recently been recognized. Since the nineteenth century, the manuscript has been valued mainly as a source for the work of Sir Thomas Wyatt and for the insights it provides into the social context in which he and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, produced their poetry.⁴ In this schol-

lation and possibly composition of courtly verse; see Elizabeth Hanson-Smith, "A Woman's View of Courtly Love: The Findern Anthology; Cambridge University Library, MS Ff.16," *Journal of Women's Studies in Literature* 1 (1979): 179–94.

2. An English translation by Sir Thomas Hoby, *The Book of the Courtier*, was published in 1561, but Castiglione's book was known in England before that date.

3. Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. George Bull, 2nd ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 212. This comment is quoted by Ann Rosalind Jones in her very valuable discussion of the female courtier's role: "Nets and Bridles: Early Modern Conduct Books and Sixteenth Century Women's Lyrics," in *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays on Literature and the History of Sexuality*, eds. Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse (London: Methuen, 1987), 39–72 (43).

4. G. F. Nott first printed poems from the manuscript, which had only recently been discovered in the Duke of Devonshire's library at Chatsworth House, in *The Works of the Earl of Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt* (1815-16; repr., New York: AMS Press, 1965), vol. 2. Many of the poems in the manuscript were included in editions of the work of Sir Thomas Wyatt from the nineteenth century onward. Kenneth Muir and Patricia Thomson, in their edition of *The*

arship, women were cast into somewhat stereotyped roles as powerful and unreliable mistresses or as a silent audience for gifted males.⁵ Only with the secure identification of the handwriting of some of the female hands has a more accurate and detailed assessment of women's contributions to the manuscript become possible.⁶

Women's active participation in the development of the courtly lyric, as writers and adapters, as well as copyists and collectors, significantly alters our perception of the gendered nature of the writing and circulation of such verse. The poetry of the 1530s and 40s would exert a formative influence on the later Elizabethan lyric, primarily through Richard Tottel's printed miscellany of verse of the period, *The Songes and Sonettes, Written by the Ryght Honorable Lorde Henry Howard late Earle of Surrey, and Other*, first printed in 1557 and reprinted at least nine times by the 1580s (*Tottel's Miscellany*). George Puttenham, writing in 1589, hailed the Henrician generation of poets as a "new company of courtly makers [poets]" who reformed "our English meeter [versification] and stile."⁷ But that tradition, as mediated

Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1969), include most of the Devonshire poems but in a form that ignores their context in the manuscript. Even Helen Baron's ground-breaking analysis in "Mary (Howard) Fitzroy's Hand in the Devonshire Manuscript," *Review of English Studies* 179 (1994): 318–35, focuses on identifying a reliable version of Surrey's "O happy dames." For a fuller discussion of the history of scholarship on the manuscript, see pages 30–33 below.

5. See particularly Raymond Southall's use of the manuscript in *The Courtly Maker: An Essay on the Poetry of Wyatt and his Contemporaries* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964), chap. 2, and W. A. Sessions' account of the genesis of the manuscript in the circle surrounding the poet Earl of Surrey in *Henry Howard: The Poet Earl of Surrey; A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 176–77. While Southall's analysis is based on some erroneous interpretations of entries and tends to read all the poetry as biographical to some degree, it is an important discussion of the manuscript as a source for understanding the social and political context of the verse of the period.

6. Baron, "Mary (Howard) Fitzroy's Hand," was first responsible for systematically identifying the hands of Mary Fitzroy, Margaret Douglas, and Mary Shelton. I independently came to some of the same conclusions as Baron in "Women and the Courtly Love Lyric: The Devonshire MS (BL Additional 17492)," *Modern Language Review* 90 (1995): 296–313.

7. George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, 1569, facsimile edition (Menstone, Yorks.: The Scholar Press, 1968), 48. When quoting from early sources other than the Devonshire Manuscript, I have not modernized the spelling. However, obscure words are glossed, in square brackets, within the quotation.

through printed collections of verse throughout the sixteenth century, is almost exclusively male. With very rare exceptions, it was the work of male poets that was printed, and the printed volumes were, explicitly or implicitly, most often addressed to male readers.⁸ The centrality of women to the genre, as participants, recipients, and contributors, was almost entirely erased. This erasure continued into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with the predominant modern emphasis on creating definitive editions of the authorial texts of male poets. Thus the verse was removed yet farther from the social milieu in which it was produced and in which, as the Devonshire Manuscript shows us, women were in fact central and active participants.

*Pastime in the Queen's Chamber:
The Background of the Manuscript*

From a twenty-first-century perspective, women's central role in courtly pastime and the verse that was its major currency may seem to confirm the kind of domestic and decorative roles for women that the Other Voice Series seeks to challenge. But such a view is anachronistic. As Castiglione made clear in his depiction of the court of Urbino, women had an important role in European courts and noble houses, where talented and ambitious men and women spent long hours waiting on the whims of their powerful masters and mistresses. The court of Henry VIII's second wife, Queen Anne Boleyn, who had herself been educated at two of the most sophisticated courts of Europe—namely, that of Margaret of Austria in the Netherlands and that of Queen Claude in France—must have borne some resemblance to Castiglione's idealized court.⁹ In such an environment, success, for both women and men, might depend on the judicious display of wit and

8. *Tottel's Miscellany* was, for example, addressed implicitly to male ("learned") readers by the printer; see Hyder Edward Rollins, ed., *Tottel's Miscellany* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1965), vol.1, 2. Wendy Wall has explored the homosocial function of printed sonnet sequences in *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), chap.1.

9. For Anne Boleyn's early career, see Eric Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 18–33. On Margaret of Austria's court, see Ghislane de Boom, *Marguerite d'Auriche-Savoie* (Paris: Librairie E. Droz, 1935), 121–28.

courtly accomplishments. Just as crucially, the management of entertainment and maintenance of decorum often devolved on the skills and tact of courtly women.¹⁰

One of the stock themes of sophisticated courtly pastime in mixed company was courtly love and its expression through courtly verse and “balets,” song-like verses often sung to existing song or dance tunes.¹¹ The young women of the court must expect to be addressed and courted, often in verse, as the adored mistresses of male courtiers who in return might ask for signs of favor. Such courting belonged to a game designed to refine and codify the social interaction of leisured men and women, “a specialized aspect of the principle of acquiring credit by ‘exposing merit to view’ which dominated the social life of the court.”¹² The women who collected and used the verse in the Devonshire Manuscript first met and spent time together as very young ladies-in-waiting at the court of Anne Boleyn. In 1533, Margaret Fitzroy was fourteen; Margaret Douglas, nineteen; and Mary Shelton, in her early twenties. Anne Boleyn’s court gave the women plenty of experience of high-spirited courting. The vice-chamberlain, Sir Edward Baynton, reported to the queen’s brother soon after Anne Boleyn’s coronation: “as for pastime in the queen’s chamber, [there] was never more. If any of you that be now departed have any ladies that ye thought favored you and somewhat would mourn at parting of their servants, I can no whit perceive the same by their dancing and pastime they do use here.”¹³ At this court, the pastime consisted

10. The use of verse by powerful women to manage their courts and courtiers is well exemplified by both Margaret of Austria and Elizabeth I. On Elizabeth I, see Susan Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), esp. 107–14, and Elizabeth’s own poems in Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, ed. Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), esp. 299–309.

11. Stevens, *Music and Poetry*, 120–21.

12. Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 126. For the importance of amorous courting as an aspect of the courtier’s business and social courtship more generally, see Stevens, *Music and Poetry*, 154–56, and Catherine Bates, *The Rhetoric of Courtship in Elizabethan Language and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), esp. chap. 2.

13. *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII, 1509–1547* (London: HMSO, 1882), vol. 6, item 613. See also *State Papers Online*, Gale, Cengage Learning, 2011,

not only of dancing, but also of joking, singing, and composing verse. Nevertheless it was a court that also demonstrated in extreme form the dangers the arts of courting might pose. While much of the poetry in the Devonshire Manuscript was probably copied into it after the disastrous collapse of Anne Boleyn's court, the events that led to that crisis provide the most vivid context possible for the women's use of the album.

In May 1536, Anne Boleyn was accused of committing adultery with five courtiers, among them her brother, the Earl of Rochford.¹⁴ The poet Sir Thomas Wyatt was also under suspicion and imprisoned in the Tower of London, although he was never charged with adultery. The trial of Anne Boleyn and her supposed lovers was constructed entirely out of inferences and innuendo derived from the charged discourse of courtly love and the games that served as pastime in the queen's chamber; "all the evidence was of bawdry and lechery," according to one unsympathetic judge at the trial.¹⁵ Separate incidents in which the queen rebuked two courtiers, Sir Henry Norris and Sir Francis Weston, for flirting with Mistress Shelton (perhaps Mary Shelton or, possibly, a sister) as a cover for their supposed preference for herself, provides glimpses of the pastime, and perhaps of the increasing hysteria with which it was played as Anne Boleyn lost her power with the king in the early months of 1536. Another of the accused in the queen's court was a musician, Mark Smeton, who used to play instruments and sing in her chamber. Even the apparently innocent activity of dancing with male courtiers seems to have acquired a sinister innuendo. In the eyes of those unsympathetic or even hostile to the queen, the language of gallant courting could easily be interpreted as bawdry or even as treason. Anne Boleyn's chaplain, William Latymer, was at pains to present Anne's attitude to such pastimes rather differently when he assured her daughter Elizabeth that she

s.v. "Sir Edw. Baynton to Lord Rochford," (Gale manuscript document no. MC4301480652), accessed July 27, 2011. The letter is dated June 9, 1533.

14. For accounts of Anne Boleyn's fall and trial, see Ives, *Life and Death*, esp. chaps. 22 and 23, and Retha M. Warnicke, *The Rise and Fall of Anne Boleyn*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 211–29. I take the details in my account below from these studies.

15. Quoted by Ives, *Life and Death*, 345.

admonished her ladies that “they shoulde not consume the [time] in vayne toyes [frivolities] and poetically fanses” and gave commands that “all tryfels and wanton poesies should be eschued upon her pleasure.”¹⁶ Mary Shelton figures in Latymer’s report as the lady in waiting who received a particular rebuke for having written “ydill [idle] poesies” in her prayer book.¹⁷ That Anne Boleyn did in fact enjoy the lively wit and verse of her courtiers is suggested by a brave punning joke she made when told that her supposed “lovers,” had been brought into the Tower of London without servants to see to their needs. Playing on the similarity of the words “balets” (verses) and “pallets” (beds), she commented that they “might make balettes well now, bot ther is non bot [Roche]forde can do it.” Here she is referring to her brother’s reputation as a poet. The wife of her warder replied, “Master Wyett [can],” and Anne Boleyn agreed.¹⁸

The Devonshire Manuscript contains clear evidence of the pleasure some of Boleyn’s ladies took in “poetically fanses” and of the ways in which they used and contributed to the courtly verse they collected. Some of the poems reveal their taste for witty, sardonic verse, not all of it in praise of women: misogynist poems appear alongside those in women’s defense. Other poems reflect the women’s passionate identification with some of the ideals of courtly love and the difficulty of maintaining that “certain difficult mean” described by Castiglione’s Count Giuliano. One remarkable series of poems bears witness to the fact that it was not only in the queen’s chamber that pastime threatened to get out of hand. In the aftermath of the execution of Anne Boleyn, a secret betrothal was discovered between Lady Margaret Douglas and Lord Thomas Howard, uncle of Mary Fitzroy, Duchess of Richmond. On this occasion the pastime had dangerously strayed “beyond [the] certain fixed limits” that Count Giuliano prescribed for the female courtier, and as a result both lovers were thrown into the Tower of London (this liaison and its aftermath are discussed below). The disastrous events of 1536 provides the necessary perspective for

16. Maria Dowling, ed., *William Latymer’s Chronicklle of Anne Bulleyne, Camden Miscellany*, 39 (1990): 23–65 (62).

17. Dowling, *William Latymer*, 62–63.

18. *Letters and Papers*, vol. 10, item 798. The incident is cited in Kenneth Muir, *Life and Letters of Sir Thomas Wyatt* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1963), 29–30.

modern readers to understand the anguish to which a number of poems in the manuscript refer and to appreciate the vulnerability and danger that could follow from the spirited pleasantries and wit expected of female courtiers.

The Devonshire Manuscript and Its Female Users

The Devonshire Manuscript consisted originally of a quarto-size album of blank pages.¹⁹ Poems, sometimes singly, sometimes in groups, were copied into the album by various hands over a period of at least ten years between the mid-1530s and the mid-1540s. The poems were not always (and perhaps not even often) entered sequentially; indeed, some poems on later pages were almost certainly entered before poems on earlier pages. The chronologically latest poem (i.e., poem 82) entered in the manuscript appears near the middle and probably dates from the early 1560s. Written by Margaret Douglas's eldest son, Henry Stewart, Lord Darnley, the poem may have been addressed to his future wife, Mary, Queen of Scots. As I have noted above, most of the copyists were men, and some were no doubt friends of the women who owned and used the manuscript. One or two others may have been professional secretaries. The handwriting of all three women associated with the manuscript shows that they were relatively untrained both in letter formation and spelling.²⁰ However much the women enjoyed reading, memorizing, and perhaps singing the poems, it seems probable that they found copying them out a more arduous task.²¹

19. A quarto-sized book was produced by folding the papermaker's large sheet in four to make eight pages. It is half the size of a folio. The term "album" is used to describe a book of originally blank pages in which poems or other matter could be entered.

20. Identification of the handwriting of Margaret Douglas and Mary Fitzroy is based on extant letters in their hands. Baron, "Mary (Howard) Fitzroy's Hand," 318, lists specimens of Mary Fitzroy's handwriting. Margaret Douglas's entries may be compared to a letter in her hand in British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian F xiii, fol.134b, probably written in 1536; see *State Papers Online*, Gale, Cengage Learning, 2011, s.v. "Margaret Dowglas to [Cromwell]" (Gale manuscript document no. MC4301980305), accessed June 17, 2011. Identification of Mary Shelton's handwriting is based on entries she signed in the manuscript.

21. On the varying levels of female literacy drawn from the evidence of letters, see James Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006),

Table of Hands in the Devonshire Manuscript

The following table closely follows and is indebted to Table 1 in Baron (see Abbreviations, page 49), 329–33. In one or two minor cases, I disagree with Baron’s differentiation of hands and have signaled my disagreement in my notes to each hand. I also draw on the discussion of hands in Harrier (see Abbreviations), 23–54. In the following table, the numbers listed after the copyists’ names refer to poem numbers in my edition.

Identifiable Women’s Hands

Lady Margaret Douglas (MD)	corrections to 2–3, 59–66, 83, 86, 88, 95, 99, 101, 105, 175
Mary Shelton (MSh)	37, 87, 92, 100, 102, 106, doggerel on page 163
Mary Fitzroy, Duchess of Richmond	81

Written marginal annotations (for example, the frequently used “and this”) are mainly in the hand of MD. There are occasional annotations in MSh’s hand. A footnote indicates the writer of each annotation where the hand can be identified.

Hands Associated with the Poems of Lord Thomas Howard

Baron used the symbols TH1 and TH2 to designate the handwriting of two groups of poems associated with Lord Thomas Howard. The two handwritings are strikingly similar, and TH1 may be, as Baron, 331, suggests, a “cursive” (i.e., a rapidly written and joined up) version of TH2. Because no surviving, independent example of Thomas Howard’s handwriting has been found, attempts to identify these hands as Thomas Howard’s rest on internal evidence (see my discussion, pages 13–14 above).

TH1	67–70	Baron, 326–27, 331, suggests that this may be Lord Thomas Howard’s “cursive” hand.
TH2	41–48, 91, 176a–j, scribed phrases on page 162	Baron, 326–27, 332, tentatively ascribes this hand to Howard because most of the poems (41–48) are evidently by him.

Other Hands

Henry Stewart, Lord Darnley	82	
Hand 1	1–3, 5–7, 85, 98 (2 and 3 have corrections by MD)	“By no means a professional hand and makes frequent errors” (Harrier, 26). An “immature hand” (Baron, 329).
Hand 2	4, 8–34	“A legible and consistent secretary hand but not of professional refinement” (Harrier, 38). Hand 2 interrupts a sequence in hand 1 (poem 4), and hand 1 corrects hand 2 (poem 20).
Hand 3	35, 38–40	An “ornate hand” (Harrier, 45). Baron, 330, points out that the poems copied by this hand are carefully written on ruled pages. The copyist makes a false start in poem 35 before writing the poem out more fully as poem 38.

Hand 4	49–58	Harrier, 48, notes a close relationship between this copyist and the work of hand 3, “picking up where hand [3] had left off and adding additional poems.” He also suggests that poems 38 (in hand 3) and 52 (in hand 4) came from a common source. “A mature cursive” (Baron, 330).
Hand 5	72	“A mature cursive” (Baron, 330). See note to hand 10 below.
Hand 6	73–80	“A mature cursive” (Baron, 330).
Hand 7	84, 89, 90, 93, 94, 96, 97	This copyist has entered poems on every second page (i.e., on the “verso” of each leaf from 58v–63v, see pages 148–57). Other copyists (hand 1, MD, MSh, TH2) have added poems in the spaces left by this hand.
	103, scribbled phrases on pages 163–64	Baron, 330, thinks these verses and phrases might be in “a hasty version” of hand 7. This seems to me plausible.
Hand 8	107–166, 168– 172	“A rapid professional cursive” (Baron, 331). This copyist enters the longest series of poems, including a large group of poems by Sir Thomas Wyatt.
	167	This appears to be an italic version of hand 8 (compare Harrier, 52). Baron, 331, considers 167 to be in a new hand, which she names “Hand 9.” (see below).

Hand 9	173, 174	<p>Baron, 331, considers these poems to be in hand 8, but I, following Harrier, 54, consider them to be in a new hand.</p> <p>Note that Baron used the designation “Hand 9” to describe poem 167, which, following Harrier, I consider to be written in hand 8.</p>
Hand 10	35 (ascription), 36	Baron, 332, very plausibly suggests that this may be a “playful” version of hand 5.
Hand 11	71	Only one poem is copied in this hand. Baron describes it as “very untidy” (Baron, 332).
Hand 12	95a	Breaks off mid-line after writing out the beginning of poem 95. “An ill-formed hand” (Baron, 332).
Hand 13	104	Copies only this poem and its associated mottos. “An uneven hand with excessive flourishes” (Baron, 333).

2.⁵ O cruel causer of undeserved change, [2v]
by great desire unconstantly to range,⁶
is this your way for proof of steadfastness?
Perdie, I know, the thing was not so strange,
by former proof, too much my faithfulness.⁷ 5
What needeth then such colored doubleness?

I have wailed thus, weeping in nightly pain,
in sobs and sighs, alas, and all in vain,
in inward plaint and heart's woeful torment;
and yet, alas, lo, cruelty and disdain 10
have set at naught a faithful true intent,
and price hath privilege truth to present.⁸

But though I starve⁹ and to my death still mourn,
and piecemeal in pieces though I be torn,
and though I die, yielding my wearied ghost, 15
shall never thing again make me return.
I quit th'enterprise of that that I have lost
to whomsoever list for to proffer most.

5. Poem 2: hand 1. The last four words of line 17 have been corrected by MD. These are the last three stanzas of "Alas the grief" by Wyatt, also found in E and B.

6. Lines 1–2: O cruel mistress, the causer of a change undeserved by me and which is caused by your lust and inconstancy,

7. Lines 4–5: By heaven, I know already—it was easy enough to see from your previous behavior—that I was over-faithful.

8. money dictates what is taken as the truth. E has "prevent."

9. waste away

6 3.¹⁰ My heart I gave thee not to do it pain, [3r]
 but to preserve, it was to thee taken.
 I served thee not to be forsaken
 but that I should be rewarded again.
 I was content thy slave to remain 5
 but not to be paid under such fashion.
 Now, since in thee is no manner of reason,
 displease thee not though I do refrain;
 insatiate of my woe and my¹¹ desire, 9
 [...]¹²
 Farewell, I say, parting from the fire.
 For he that believes bearing in hand,¹³
 ploughs in the water and sows in the sand.¹⁴

7 4.¹⁵ My pen take pain a little space [3v]
 to follow that which doth me chase
 and hath in hold my heart so sore,
 but when thou hast this brought to pass,
 my pen, I prithee, write no more. 5

Remember oft thou hast me eased
 and all my pains full well appeased,
 but now I know, unknown before,

10. Poem 3: hand 1. Hand 1 begins the sonnet, and MD takes over in the middle of line 8. Another version, also incomplete, is poem 141 in D. By Wyatt. Also in E, AH, and Tottel. For sources in two poems, “El cor ti diedi” and “La donna di natura,” by Serafino Aquilano, a late-fifteenth-century Italian poet, see M&T, 279–80.

11. Other versions have “thy.”

12. Other versions of this sonnet include two lines (10 and 11) at this point: “assured by craft to excuse thy fault. / But since it please thee to feign a default.” D leaves no gap for the missing lines.

13. For he that believes the false promises of others,

14. Proverbial: Tilley, S184 and S87; *ODEP*, 757.

15. Poem 4: hand 2. Also in *Court of Venus*.

for where I trust I am deceived.
And yet, my pen, thou canst no more. 10

A time thou haddest, as other have,
to write which way my hope to crave;
that time is past. Withdraw, therefore,
since we do lose that other save.
As good leave off and write no more. 15

In worth¹⁶ to use another way,
not as we would but as we may.
For once,¹⁷ my loss is past restore
and my desire is my decay.
My pen yet write a little more. 20

To love in vain, whoever shall,
of worldly pain it passeth all,
as in like case I find. Wherefore
to hold so fast and yet to fall?
Alas, my pen, now write no more. 25

Since thou hast taken pain this space
to follow that which doth me chase
and hath in hold my heart so sore,
now hast thou brought my mind to pass,¹⁸
my pen, I prithee, write no more. 30

finis¹⁹

16. “[Take] in worth,” i.e., Be content or reconciled to

17. For once and all,

18. to move onward,

19. Throughout the manuscript, this Latin word (meaning “end”) is conventionally used to indicate that a poem is complete.

5. ²⁰	At last withdraw your cruelty or let me die at once. It is too much extremity, devised for the nonce ²² to hold me thus alive in pain still for to drive. ²³ What may I more sustain, alas, that die would fain ²⁴ and cannot die for pain?	and this ²¹ [4r]
	For to the flame wherewith ye burn my thought and my desire, when into ashes it should turn my heart by fervent fire, ye send a stormy rain that doth it quench again, and makes mine eyes express the tears that do redress ²⁵ my life in wretchedness.	5 10 15
	Then when these should have drowned and overwhelmed my heart, the heat doth them confound, renewing all my smart. Then doth [the] flame increase, my torment cannot cease, my woe doth then revive, and I remain alive with death still for to strive.	[4v] 20 25

20. Poem 5: hand 1. Also in B. For a source in the poetry of Pietro Bembo, a sixteenth-century Italian poet and humanist, see M&T, 391–92.

21. Annotation by MD.

22. expressly

23. to rush or be impelled onward. B has “strive.”

24. desire to die. In D “sustain” (line 7) is misplaced to the beginning of line 8.

25. restore

But if that ye²⁶ would have my death
and that ye would none other,
shortly then for to spend my breath²⁷ 30
withdraw the one or t'other.
For this your cruelty
doth let it self, doubtless,
and it is reason why:²⁸
no man alive, nor I, 35
of double death can die.

6.²⁹ To wet your eye withouten tear, [5r]
and in good health to feign disease
that you thereby mine eye might blear³⁰
therewith your other friends to please;
and though ye think ye need not fear, 5
yet so ye cannot me appease,
but, as ye list, feign, flatter, or gloze,³¹
ye shall not win if I do lose.

Prate and paint and spare not,
ye know I can me wreak,³² 10
and if so be ye care not,
be sure I do not reck,³³
and though ye swear it were not,
I can both swear and speak:

26. D has "he."

27. consume my breath, i.e., kill me. D has "spein."

28. Lines 32–34: your cruelty undoubtedly hinders its own ends, and for this reason:

29. Poem 6: hand 1. Also in B.

30. blind or deceive

31. deceive,

32. avenge myself. D has "work," clearly an error.

33. care,

By God and by this cross, 15
 if I have the mock, ye shall have the loss.

[5v is blank.]

¶ 7.³⁴ I love loved and so doth she, [6r]
 and yet in love we suffer still;
 the cause is strange, as seemeth me,
 to love so well³⁵ and want our will.

O deadly yea! O grievous smart! 5
 Worse than refuse, unhappy gain!
 I love! Whoever played this part
 to love so well and live in pain?

Was ever heart so well agreed,
 since love was love, as I do trow,³⁶ 10
 that in their love so evil did speed:
 to love so well and live in woe?

This mourn we both and hath done long
 with woeful plaint and careful voice.
 Alas, alas, it is a grievous wrong 15
 to love so well and not rejoice.

And here an end of all our moan.
 With sighing oft³⁷ my breath is scant
 since, of mishap, ours is alone:³⁸
 to love so well and it to want. 20

34. Poem 7: hand 1.

35. Here and in the refrain throughout, D has "will."

36. as I suppose,

37. D has "of."

38. ours is a unique misfortune:

But they that causer is of this,
of all our cares God send them part
that they may know what grief it is
to love so well and live in smart.

amen³⁹

8.⁴⁰ Suffering in sorrow in hope to attain, [6v]
forget this desiring in fear and dare not complain,
it is worthy⁴¹ true of belief in whom is all my trust,

do thou apply to ease me of my pain,
else thus to serve and suffer still I must. 5

Hope is my hold, yet in despair to speak
I drive from time to time, and doth not reck⁴²
how long to live thus after love's lust,
in study still of that I dare not break;⁴³
wherefore to serve and suffer still I must. 10

Encrease⁴⁴ of care I find both day and night.
I hate that was sometime all my delight.
The cause thereof ye know I have discussed,
and yet to refrain it passeth my might;
wherefore to serve and suffer still I must. 15

Love who so list, at length he shall well say
to love and live in fear it is no play.

39. Written by MD, who uses a form of lead marker or pencil, as she does for poem 86.

40. Poem 8: hand 2. Also in B. The poem is an acrostic, with the first letter of each stanza together spelling SHELTON.

41. The annotation "forget this" is written by MD; "it is worthy" is a response written by MSh.

42. I put off speaking, and do not take care

43. ever thinking of that about which I dare not speak openly;

44. Increase. I retain the original spelling to preserve the acrostic.

Record that knoweth and if this be not just:⁴⁵
 that where as love doth lead there is no way
 but serve and suffer ever still he must. 20

Then for to live with loss of liberty [7r]
 at last perchance shall be his remedy,
 and for his truth, requit⁴⁶ with false mistrust.
 Who would not rue to see how wrongfully
 thus for to serve and suffer still he must? 25

Untrue by trust oftymes hath me betrayed,
 misusing my hope, still to be delayed.
 Fortune, always I have thee found unjust,
 and so with like reward now am I paid:
 that is, to serve and suffer still I must. 30

Never to cease nor yet like to attain
 as long as I in fear dare not complain.
 True of belief hath always been my trust
 and, till she knoweth the cause of all my pain,
 content to serve and suffer still I must. 35

Finis 6

undesired service
 require[s] no hire
 Mary Mary Shelton⁴⁷

45. Let whoever has experience put on record that the following is just:

46. rewarded

47. Annotation by MSh. The original gives a flavor of MSh's spelling: "ondesyrid sarwes reqwer no hyar" (your service was undesired by me and deserves no reward). "Sarwes" may possibly be a spelling of "sorrows," agreeing with the plural form of the verb "require." However, MSh habitually uses a "w" for a "v," and MD uses the spelling "sarwes" for "service" in poem 64, line 17. Harrier, 23, suggests that the repetition of the first name "indicates that the writer later realized another Mary (Mary Howard [Fitzroy], Duchess of Richmond) was also identified with the book."