

# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

## ORIGIN AND PLAN OF THE EDITION

Modern interest in Donne's poetry is amply demonstrated by the appearance of some fourteen major editions of the whole or of parts of the canon in the twentieth century and by the flood of critical and scholarly commentary catalogued in various periodic checklists (including the annual bibliographies published by the Modern Language Association of America, *Studies in Philology*, and the Modern Humanities Research Association) and in a number of specialized reference works. Among these are the four editions of Geoffrey Keynes, *Bibliography of the Works of Dr. John Donne*; Theodore Spencer and Mark Van Doren, *Studies in Metaphysical Poetry: Two Essays and a Bibliography*; Lloyd E. Berry, *A Bibliography of Studies in Metaphysical Poetry, 1939–60*; John R. Roberts, *John Donne: An Annotated Bibliography of Modern Criticism, 1912–67*; A. J. Smith, *John Donne: the Critical Heritage*; and John R. Roberts, *John Donne: An Annotated Bibliography of Modern Criticism, 1968–1978*. In response to the accumulated bulk and the continuing vitality of the critical activity reflected in these works and to a growing conviction within the community of Donne scholars that Donne's text needed to be reedited—a conviction strongly buttressed by the publication in 1980 of Peter Beal's *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, which identified important manuscript material that none of Donne's editors had ever incorporated—the project to produce this variorum edition was conceived.

After considerable prior discussion about the feasibility and usefulness of such a work, the effort was formally organized in the fall of 1981 when a group of scholars was invited to meet on the Gulf Park campus of the University of Southern Mississippi to define the nature of the task and outline procedures for carrying it out. At that meeting Gary A. Stringer of the University of Southern Mississippi was designated General Editor, and an advisory board comprising the following members was established: William B. Hunter, Jr., University of Houston (Emeritus); Albert C. Labriola, Duquesne University; Paul A. Parrish, Texas A&M University; Ted-Larry Pebworth, University of Michigan-Dearborn; John R. Roberts, University of Missouri; John T. Shawcross, University of Kentucky; and Ernest W. Sullivan, II, Texas Tech University. Later this group was expanded to include M. Thomas Hester, North Carolina State University, and C. A. Patrides, University of Michigan, who sat on the Advisory Board until his death in 1986. In response to evolving organizational and individual

purposes, the makeup of the Advisory Board has inevitably changed over the years, but it has been an abiding principle that members would not only help to steer the project, but also actively engage in the editorial work; and the respective contributions of Advisory Board members are noted in the various volumes of the edition, along with those of the other scholars who have participated in various ways. The project has also received widespread support from other individuals and institutions throughout the academic community and from a number of foundations and granting agencies. The contributions of all these supporters are gratefully and specifically acknowledged in the pages of the various volumes.

In accordance with the traditional ways of grouping Donne's works, the edition is organized into volumes, some of multiple parts, as follows:

- Volume 1: General Commentary: the Historical Reception of Donne's Poetry  
from the Beginnings to the Present  
General Textual Introduction and Appendices
- Volume 2: Elegies
- Volume 3: Satyres, Metempsychosis
- Volume 4: Songs and Sonets
- Volume 5: Verse Letters
- Volume 6: Anniversaries, Epicedes and Obsequies
- Volume 7: Divine Poems
- Volume 8: Epigrams, Epithalamions, Epitaphs, Inscriptions, Miscellaneous Poems

As this outline indicates, all volumes except the first contain texts and commentary for a set of generically or thematically related poems, and the volumes are numbered in a rough approximation of the order in which the poems were composed. Although this system of numbering may entail a certain amount of bibliographical confusion while the edition is in progress, we trust that upon completion of the entire project this method of ordering the parts will appear rational to bibliographers and critics alike.

## THE COMMENTARY

### **Purpose and Scope**

Although the material here presented will undoubtedly lend itself to other uses as well, our fundamental motive in compiling this variorum commentary is to facilitate further understanding of Donne's poems by situating them squarely within the tradition of critical and scholarly discussion that has grown up around them from the poet's own time to the present. This purpose, in turn, has required that we identify and examine all items that properly belong within that tradition. As existing bibliographical aids indicate, the body of commentary on Donne is not only vast, but widely scattered. In his 458-page synopsis of comments on Donne in the Critical Heritage series, for instance, A. J. Smith locates and excerpts 222 items published between 1598 and 1889; and John R. Roberts, in his bibliographies of twentieth-century criticism, lists



and annotates well over 2,400 items written on Donne between 1912 and 1978, the second of these registering a trend that now sees the publication of approximately 100 books, articles, and notes on Donne every year. In addition to sheer bulk, as suggested above, the corpus of Donne commentary exhibits two further features that make it difficult to master: much of the material, both that identified in existing bibliographies and that which we have discovered, is dispersed throughout the pages of obscure or inaccessible editions and periodicals, and a good bit of it is written in foreign languages. The result of these circumstances is that scholarly or critical works of our own time frequently fail to align themselves distinctly within the critical tradition, and the continuing interpretive enterprise is marked by repetition and fragmentation.

There has been no previous attempt of this kind. None of the existing editions marshals more than a minute part of the available material, and the bibliographical volumes produced by Smith and Roberts have neither the scope nor the design of a variorum commentary, in addition to leaving entirely uncovered the periods 1890–1911 and 1979–present.<sup>1</sup> This variorum commentary, therefore, will fill a conspicuous gap in the field of Donne studies. In the effort to meet this need, we have defined our task in the broadest chronological and geographical terms. Although bibliographical considerations have dictated that we attempt coverage in each volume only to within three years of the completion of the typescript—and sometimes the gap between cut-off and publication dates is even greater—we have otherwise sought to bring together and synthesize all relevant items from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries, and we have included material written not only in English, but also in French, German, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Polish, Czech, and Japanese. Displaying the poems against this evolving, variegated background of critical discourse will, we believe, not only enable a better appreciation of individual works and of Donne's overall poetic achievement, but also provide materials toward an enhanced understanding of the aesthetic and intellectual history of the modern period. In short, the material here gathered will point the way to further research in a number of areas and facilitate the ongoing critical dialogue.

An undertaking like this, of course, is by its very nature conservative, bespeaking respect not only for what Donne has left us, but also for the contributions of those prior critics who have made possible our present understanding. Like those of contemporary critics, of course, the judgments of previous commentators are inevitably conditioned by cultural and personal assumptions about what poetry is (or should be), about how it functions in the world, and about the nature of criticism itself; and the validity of such assumptions tends to appear self-evident to those who hold them, with the frequent result that they are never explicitly stated. While the clarification of such preconceptions is itself a legitimate scholarly aim, we have not attempted in these pages to interpret the criticism nor to examine the various epistemological constructs that have shaped it, but have chosen rather to let each item of commentary speak for itself as best it can in the reduced form that it must necessarily take in these

<sup>1</sup>Since this introduction was first written, Catherine Phillips has extended Smith's work in *John Donne II: The Critical Heritage* (1996), which adds items up through 1923; and Roberts's *John Donne: An Annotated Bibliography of Modern Criticism, 1979–1995* appeared in 2004.

volumes. We recognize, of course, that no summary, however carefully prepared, can fully replace the original upon which it is based; indeed, the longer and more complex a given argument is, the less satisfactorily it submits to condensation. The compilation of commentary here offered is thus intended as a guide to, not as a substitute for, the primary works of scholarship that make up the tradition.

### **Editorial Stance**

In attempting this consolidation of the critical heritage we have striven for both completeness and objectivity. Within the historical and linguistic limits noted above, we have sought to gather all published items of commentary and to represent each as accurately and extensively as our format permits. We have, furthermore, presented all these materials without interjecting editorial opinion on their validity or ultimate significance, though we have reduced redundancy in the presentation by fully reporting ideas only upon their first appearance, in some cases briefly tracing the progress of a given observation or line of argument by means of a system of internal cross-referencing. We have added neither glosses nor more general interpretations of our own, and have restricted instances of editorial intrusion (denoted by the abbreviation *ed.* in the text) to the correction of obvious factual error.

### **Organization of the Material within Volumes**

As is customary in a variorum commentary, all material included here is organized chronologically and, when necessary within a given year, alphabetically by author's surname; and each item is aligned as precisely as possible with whichever aspects of the poetry it bears on. Thus, as noted above, Volume 1 traces in general terms the reception of Donne's poetry over the centuries, while the remaining volumes focus on individual genres and groups of poems. We have arranged the commentary in each genre-based volume along a continuum of particularity, beginning with the most general and proceeding to commentary on subsets of poems (where appropriate), commentary on particular poems, and line-by-line notes and glosses.<sup>2</sup> The material at all levels except glosses, moreover, is further organized into topical subunits whenever a common theme or critical concern runs through a number of items. In cases where an individual item of commentary depends specifically upon a previous version of Donne's text, we have included the relevant readings from that version.

### **Style of Presentation**

We have attempted to present the commentary as efficiently and readably as possible. At all levels of organization above Notes and Glosses, the material is invariably summarized in narrative form, as the user is guided through the content by the editor's controlling voice, and the normal conventions of interpreting prose summary apply. In Notes and Glosses, however, which derive variously both from

<sup>2</sup>In glosses keyed to specific lines or words, of course, commentators frequently annotate items in surrounding lines as well, and it is not always possible to subdivide such manifold glosses into their component elements without destroying the author's sense. Especially in Notes and Glosses sections of the commentary, therefore, users are advised to examine each entry in the context of those that come before and after in order to ensure full coverage of what has been reported about a particular point.



specific observations abstracted from longer discursive comments and from the brief, telegraphic annotations often employed by editors, we have alternated between the narrative and the dramatic styles as necessary in an attempt to present each bit of material as economically as possible (though we have not intermixed the two modes within the entry for a single author). Following any lemma in the Notes and Glosses, therefore, one commentator's remarks may be rendered dramatically, as though the original author were speaking in his or her own voice, while those of the next may be paraphrased in the editor's voice. The dramatic mode, whether or not any words or phrases in the entry appear in quotation marks, is signaled mechanically by a colon after the bibliographical citation in parentheses, the narrative mode by the absence of a colon. Editorial insertions thus appear in brackets in the dramatic mode and in parentheses in the narrative mode.

### **Bibliographical Conventions in the Commentary**

Works mentioned in the Commentary are cited parenthetically by author and date, and these citations are keyed to a master list of Works Cited in each volume. Since the commentary throughout the *Variorum* is ordered according to a multi-leveled taxonomic system, the author index included in each volume, used in conjunction with the master list of works cited, will provide the further information needed to index the content of the volume.<sup>3</sup> We have used standard nonverbal symbols and short forms of reference insofar as possible, and have derived common scholarly abbreviations, including those for such items as the titles of Shakespeare's plays and books of the Bible, from the current *MLA Style Manual*. For titles of current journals we have used the abbreviations given in the *MLA International Bibliography*, and for early books we have appropriated the short forms of reference standardized by Pollard and Redgrave and by Wing in the *STC*. Lists of abbreviated references to all works cited in the commentary and to Donne's poems and prose works are provided in each volume, and we have standardized all citations of Donne's prose works in the commentary in accordance with the editions specified in the list of Short Forms. Unless otherwise indicated, cross-references pertain to the section of commentary within which they appear.

## THE TEXT

### **Materials and Theory**

Ideally stated, the goal of our work on the text is to recover and present exactly what Donne wrote. It is important, however, that we be clear about certain practical and theoretical limits that are imposed upon this goal by the available materials. Apart from about forty prose letters and certain occasional jottings, four inscriptions in the books of friends or acquaintances, and an epitaph on his wife, only a single poem—a verse epistle addressed to the Lady Carey and Mrs. Essex Riche—is known

<sup>3</sup>Beginning with our volume on Donne's elegies in 2000, we have added two further indexes: (1) an index of writers and historical figures mentioned in the commentary and (2) an index of all references to Donne's works in the commentary.



to survive in Donne's hand. Of the relatively few poems published before his death in 1631, only for the Anniversaries, in the edition of 1612, and in the first Latin and English editions of *Ignatius* is there any evidence to suggest that the author may have proofread and corrected copy. The remainder of the poems survive only in nonauthorial copies (which amount to well over 5,000 separate transcriptions of individual poems), at indeterminate degrees of remove from holograph and therefore of indeterminate authority. During and immediately following Donne's lifetime these poems, circulating individually or in groups of various sizes and composition, were copied into diaries, commonplace books, miscellanies, and poetic collections that form several distinct strands of scribal transmission; and these strands, in ways impossible to determine exactly, lie behind the print tradition that begins for most of the poems with the publication in 1633 of *Poems, by J. D. with Elegies on the Authors Death* and continues in six additional seventeenth-century collected editions and issues.

The almost total absence of holograph materials or of authorially approved printings renders impossible any attempt to locate textual authority in the author's intentions, as that concept is generally applied in scholarly editing. Indeed, the only "intention" Donne seems to have had for most of his poems in this regard was that they *not be printed at all*. Commenting on the publication of the Anniversaries in a letter to George Garrard from Paris on April 14, 1612, Donne wrote, "I . . . do not pardon my self" for having "descended to print any thing in verse" (*Letters* 238), and when in 1614 he thought himself "brought to a necessity of printing" (*Letters* 196) the poems as a "valediction to the world" before taking holy orders (a necessity he apparently escaped), he sought to borrow from his friend Henry Goodyer an "old book" (*Letters* 197) containing copies of them, thus suggesting that—at least for some of the poems—he had failed even to retain manuscript copies for his own use or reference.

If virtually none of them bears the author's imprimatur, the surviving materials for constructing a text of Donne's poems are nonetheless numerous and diverse. In addition to the seven collected printings issued between 1633 and 1669, they include 239 manuscript sources (nearly 100 of which have been unknown to any of Donne's previous editors); 3 inscriptions on monuments; over 200 seventeenth-century books that collectively contain over 700 copies of individual Donne poems or excerpts (approximately 500 of which have been unknown to Donne's previous editors); and over 20 historically significant editions of all or of parts of the canon from the eighteenth century to the present. No one would argue, of course, that all of this material is equally valuable for establishing the text, but all of it, including both corrected and uncorrected states of the seventeenth-century editions (among which we have identified many previously unrecorded press variants), is part of the bibliographical tradition that provides what we currently know of Donne's poems and their textual history. A full description of these textual artifacts and the relations among them is provided in volume 1 of the edition.

The nature of the material described above severely complicates the question of textual authority—not only with respect to the presentation of the individual poems, but also in the matters of how to order the poems within an edition and, to a lesser extent, what works to admit to the canon. No scribal artifact and no pre-twentieth-century edition includes the full complement of what are now generally recognized



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as authentic poems. While it preserves a general continuity in the texts of individual poems, the tradition represented by the seventeenth-century collected editions shows a gradual expansion and, especially in 1635, rearrangement of the canon, as printers sought to publish increasingly comprehensive and generically rationalized editions; and not until Grosart's edition of 1872–73 do we find a modern editor basing his work extensively on manuscript sources rather than on the print tradition. From Grierson (1912) onward, most of Donne's twentieth-century editors have adopted as copy-text for each poem an early seventeenth-century printing, sometimes emending its details (especially verbal variants) toward manuscript readings, and virtually all modern editions order their contents according to the broad generic divisions introduced in the edition of 1635.

As noted above, we also have adopted the traditional generic divisions as an ordering principle. We have not, however, necessarily followed the majority practice of locating primary textual authority for each poem in an early printing, and we have not practiced the eclecticism that has frequently accompanied such a choice. In accordance with the considerations outlined below, we have selected copy-texts variously from among all the available artifacts, and we have presented them with a minimum of editorial intervention. Both practices require explanation.

We have chosen manuscript copy-texts for many of the poems simply because they seem in fact and in theory more likely to represent the lost originals accurately than do the early printings. As noted above, the exact textual genesis of the early collected editions cannot be ascertained. Although individual poems in some of these editions may have been set from holograph, it is extremely unlikely that even the printer in 1633 possessed authorial copies of more than a few of the poems—and perhaps of none at all. Given the occasional composition, the piecemeal distribution, and the wide circulation of the poems in manuscript—and especially the author's apparent failure to maintain a comprehensive personal archive—it is very hard to imagine that an extensive holograph collection of Donne's poems ever existed, even in the seventeenth century. Indeed, the phrasing of Donne's request for Goodyer's "old book" may suggest that the author himself expected to retrieve transcriptions rather than original copies. Most probable is that the original holographs gradually dropped out of circulation as the poems made the rounds of transmission, and there is thus the virtual certainty that even the earliest editions were set from derivative manuscript collections very much like those that survive.

Whatever their origins, moreover, comparison of the early printings with the surviving scribal manuscripts—or even with the extant holograph verse letter—shows clearly that as texts underwent translation from manuscript to print in the publishing house, they not only suffered some measure of verbal corruption, but also were subjected to institutional conventions of punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and so forth—even in instances when the printer may have been setting from holographs. In thus reflecting the intersection of private scribal or authorial practices with the social norms of commercial printing, the printed text inevitably became a

collaborative product that differed in a number of important ways from what Donne had originally set down.<sup>4</sup>

The data clearly show, of course, that the poems were similarly vulnerable to change in the course of scribal transmission. Undoubtedly, many scribes automatically restyled the poems to accord with their own habits of formatting, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; and some no doubt made conscious verbal “improvements.” As they transcribed poems into private collections for their own use or that of patrons, however, the early copyists did not necessarily share the printer’s programmatic determination to groom the text into a publicly negotiable, regularized form; and most of the substantive changes they introduced into the text are more likely attributable to carelessness, ignorance, and the general entropy of the transmissional system.

Most of the manuscripts antedate the printed editions, of course, and thus are chronologically closer to the hand of the author. A number of factors, however, seriously restrict any attempt to determine their dates of compilation and thus to construct a comprehensive genealogy of manuscripts. For one thing, many of the manuscripts cannot be dated except in very approximate terms; moreover, an indeterminate number of manuscripts are evidently missing. The greatest limitation on developing a reliable stemma of manuscripts, however, is that virtually all the major manuscript collections, like the printed editions, are composite artifacts containing texts of individual poems drawn from multiple sources, and a given manuscript may thus preserve an early state of one text and a late state of another side by side. In some cases, of course, particular features of content, format, and scribal style point to family relationships among manuscripts and sometimes even reveal direct lines of descent within families. Generally speaking, however, the effort to locate textual authority in a genealogy of manuscripts is doomed to fail.

Given the situation described above, the only remaining alternative is to approach Donne’s text on a poem-by-poem basis, examining all copies of each poem and determining insofar as possible its individual history of transmission. As with whole manuscripts, the possibility of missing copies and the intractability of the surviving evidence also make it impossible to construct a complete genealogy for many of the poems. With varying degrees of precision, however, it is possible to identify patterns of variation that lead back to the least corrupted surviving version(s) of a poem and to chart the transmission of its text in a schema of textual relationships. As this procedure implies, of course, the effort to recover Donne’s poems necessarily rests partly in the editor’s evaluation of the relative semiological integrity of the surviving copies of individual poems. Once this determination has been made, the question then becomes one of how those individual copies shall be edited.

As noted above, most of Donne’s twentieth-century editors have created synthetic or eclectic texts, adopting a seventeenth-century printing of each poem as copy-text and generally following that printing’s accidentals, while sometimes emending its substantives toward manuscript readings. There are, however, a number of problems with this approach. A major one, in our view, as Charles Moorman has argued in

<sup>4</sup>Between the holograph of the 63-line verse letter and the text printed in 1633, for instance, there are 56 differences in punctuation, 63 differences in capitalization, 120 differences in spelling, and 3 differences in wording.



discussing a similar case, is that the practice involves the highly questionable assumption that any modern editor—even one very sensitive, learned, and wise—can reach back over hundreds of years and somehow ascertain what must have been in Donne's mind, root out instances of corruption, and synthetically reconstruct a text reflecting what he actually wrote. Indeed, as Fredson Bowers has pointed out, Greg's rationale of copy-text, the classic formulation of the synthetic principle, was intended to apply in cases in which the variant forms of a work could be assumed to form a single ancestral sequence reaching back to the author's holographs. Clearly, in the case of Donne, whose poems survive in many genealogical strands of indeterminate proximity to each other and to the manuscript originals, an eclectic approach that privileges the early printings offers only a qualified hope of recovering the author's exact words—and even less of recovering his accidentals. Additionally, of course, in cases where an author has revised a work (as Donne did in some instances), an eclectic approach entails the risk of conflating earlier and later states of the text.

Any editor of Donne must, of course, exercise judgment; but there are legitimate differences of opinion about where, how often, and especially at what stage of the editorial process that judgment can most defensibly be exercised. In light of the circumstances described above, we have attempted to identify—by combining bibliographical analysis with such logical criteria as completeness and general semantic coherence—the earliest, least corrupted state of each poem from among the surviving seventeenth-century artifacts or, in the case of poems surviving in multiple authorial versions, the least corrupted state of each version; and once that judgment has been reached, we have edited the text in the conservative manner explained below. The theory underlying our work is thus fundamentally historicist, but balanced by a respect for what we have called the semiological integrity of the individual poem as preserved in an early artifact. We recognize that, except by extreme good fortune, we are not likely to present any nonholographic poem exactly as Donne wrote it, but this approach does allow us to present a text of every poem essentially free of conjecture and anachronistic intervention.

This, then, is the sense in which we mean that we have sought to recover and present exactly what Donne wrote. Our text is a representation of the poem that stands in a metonymic relationship to the lost original, different both in that it may not have the exact wording and pointing of that original and—for texts based on manuscript originals—in that it will be a print exemplum of the copy from which it derives. It is, however, a text that somebody in Donne's own time—the one who had the copy closest to his hand and transcribed it most accurately, if we are lucky—set down as what the author had written. Because it provides an illuminating background for our work and because it is a legitimate scholarly concern in its own right, we have further undertaken to outline the textual history of each poem as fully and as accurately as possible.

### **Procedures for Choosing and Emending Copy-text**

To the ends specified above we have adopted the following procedures for choosing and emending copy-texts and constructing the textual apparatus. First, since most of the texts survive only in nonauthorial copies, we have necessarily examined every

surviving seventeenth-century manuscript and multiple copies of seventeenth-century printings.<sup>5</sup> In order to do this, we have entered the texts of all manuscript and early print copies of the poems into computer files and compared the files for each poem by means of the Donne Variorum Collation Program.<sup>6</sup> On the basis of these collations, we have constructed for each poem a schema of textual relationships that accounts, insofar as the evidence permits, for all permutations of the texts in the early artifacts. In order to corroborate the evidence of this analysis, as suggested above, we have independently assessed the evidentiary value of each artifact by determining insofar as possible its date, provenance, and process of compilation and by evaluating all this bibliographical detail in the context of what is known about manuscript transcription and practices of typesetting in the late sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries. The copy-text finally chosen is what seems to be the earliest, least-corrupted state of the text as preserved in the best witness among the artifacts in which it appears. Having made this identification, we have corrected obvious errors in the copy-text, emended punctuation when absolutely necessary to prevent misreading, and applied certain print conventions to manuscript copy-texts, but we have not conflated readings from multiple sources. In cases where one or more artifacts preserve a poem in a state so extensively revised or changed as to constitute a new version, we present the successive versions in full and, whenever it seems useful to do so, provide a separate historical collation for each.

In accordance with our determination to represent the copy-text authentically and accurately, we have retained in the *Variorum* texts a number of seventeenth-century orthographical and typographical features and, except for the silent changes specified below, have noted in the apparatus accompanying each poem all emendations to the copy-text. The *Variorum* texts preserve the distinct forms of “i” and “j” and “u” and “v,” the ligatured vowels “æ” and “oe,” and the fonts of words as they appear in the copy-text. We have, however, expanded brevigraphs, regularized “VV” to “W” and “ff” to “F,” and imposed on manuscript copy-texts such print conventions as the consistent capitalization of the first word of each line of poetry. All such emendations, as well as the few editorial corrections deemed necessary, are noted in the lists of emendations. Our only silent emendations of the copy-text are typographical and affect neither spelling nor meaning: we have reduced the long “j” to “s,” separated such ornamental ligatured consonants as “st” and “ct,” and regularized inconsistencies of font and the spacing of punctuation.

Because Donne’s syntax is often knotty, punctuation itself is frequently interpretive. Recognizing this, we have emended the punctuation of the copy-text very

<sup>5</sup>When a seventeenth-century printing is used as copy-text, we have collated at least five copies (or all copies, if fewer than five copies survive); when the copy-text is a manuscript, we have collated at least three copies of all seventeenth-century printings of the poems, except that we have generally collated only one copy if a print source contains only an excerpt from a poem.

<sup>6</sup>We have verified all data files used in the preparation of these texts against original sources, and have compared multiple copies of printed artifacts not only by sight, but also, when it has been possible to bring the requisite materials together, by means of the Lindstrand Comparator or the Hinman Collator. At all stages of transcription and data entry, at least three editors have proofread the work independently, resolving any problems or differences of interpretation in conference. At each stage of production we have taken similar care to verify the accuracy of both text and apparatus.



conservatively, and this principle has resulted in an actual, though not a theoretical, inconsistency. Since printers of the earlier seventeenth century tended to punctuate heavily and grammatically, while many scribes of that period punctuated lightly and rhetorically (sometimes even to the point of regarding the line end as sufficient punctuation in itself), the *Variorum* texts based on printed copy-texts and those based on manuscript copy-texts show markedly different degrees of punctuation. But we think it better to present texts that, in each case, accurately reflect a bibliographically defensible choice of copy-text than to impose consistency of punctuation and with it the possibility of editorial interpretation. Variant seventeenth-century pointing that may affect the sense of a given passage is recorded in the historical collation.

### Introductions and Apparatuses

Each poem is provided with a brief textual introduction, and groups of related poems are introduced collectively when it is useful to do so. The introduction to each poem briefly locates the poem in the context of Donne's life or poetic development (when possible) and outlines the seventeenth-century textual history of the poem by grouping the artifacts into families and describing insofar as possible the relationships of those families, as well as noting readings of particular bibliographical or critical interest. It then sketches the treatment of the poem by modern editors and briefly discusses the choice and emendation of the copy-text.

For complete textual information on any poem, of course, readers must consult both the textual introductions and the various parts of the textual apparatus. As suggested above, the textual apparatus may include data drawn from five different classes of material: (1) manuscripts, (2) independent seventeenth-century editions of Donne's poetical works (including seventeenth-century editions of the Anniversaries and collected editions or issues), (3) uncollected seventeenth-century printings of individual poems and excerpts of two or more lines, (4) modern first printings of individual poems, and (5) selected modern editions of Donne's poetical works. In general, the apparatus lists the sigla of source materials in the demonstrable or probable order of the transmission of the text, ordering items within classes alphabetically or numerically as appropriate.

The following categories of information are included in the textual apparatus for each poem, except that in cases where there is nothing to report, the category is omitted:

1. Copy-text and Sources Collated. Lists by sigla the copy-text and the copies and excerpts collated, specifying the folio or page numbers on which the poem or excerpt appears in each artifact, and, in the case of deliberate excerpts, which lines are excerpted.
2. Emendations of the Copy-text. Specifies differences between the copy-text and the *Variorum* text.
3. Historical Collation.
  - a. Format. Details noteworthy features of the artifacts or transcriptions, including typefaces, paragraphing, patterns of indentation (though not occasional deviations) in stanzaic verse, scribal eccentricities, lines missing in damaged artifacts, and other information affecting text or indicating authorship or provenance.

- b. Headings. Lists variant headings (not called “titles,” since their authority is uncertain) in seventeenth-century artifacts.
  - c. Line-by-line collation. Lists all substantive and selected semisubstantive variants (specified below) in seventeenth-century sources, as well as any omissions of words or lines in copies intended to be complete.
  - d. Subscriptions. Lists all subscriptions in seventeenth-century artifacts.
4. Verbal Variants in Selected Modern Editions. Lists verbal variants in twenty-three historically or bibliographically significant editions from the eighteenth century to the present.
  5. Stemma or Schema of Textual Relationships. Charts in schematic form the genealogy of each poem and the relationships of the textual artifacts, denoting definite lines of transmission with arrows, definite associations and family linkages with solid lines, and conjectural lines of relationship with dotted lines.
  6. Analyses of Early Printed Copies. Lists copies collated, describes the physical makeup of each, and details press variants.

### Reportage of Variants

We have tried to make the list of variants useful to many kinds of readers, from textual scholars and literary historians to critics and metricians. In order to do so, we have reported the following kinds of substantive and semisubstantive variants:

1. All verbal variants in seventeenth-century artifacts, including variant spellings that may be read as different words in context.
2. All nonverbal substantive variants from all seventeenth-century sources, including differences in punctuation that materially affect meaning.<sup>7</sup>
3. All semisubstantive variants from all seventeenth-century sources that may affect either meaning or meter. Included in this category are the capitalization of such words as “Fate,” “Nature,” and “Heaven”; elided and nonelided vowels and marks of syncope that may affect the number of syllables in a line and therefore meter; and variants of spelling that, in context, may suggest different words or orthographic puns.
4. Variants that illuminate a poem’s textual history. This is the broadest and most discretionary category, but an important one nonetheless in that the details it includes clarify the transmission and history of the text. Under this heading are reported verbal variants in modern editions, which are listed separately at the end of the historical collation for each poem.

In reporting the kinds of variants here specified, we intend to provide users with

<sup>7</sup>Lists in the historical collations do not record inconsequential variants of punctuation—such as commas separating items in simple compound constructions; neither do they record the absence of nonsubstantive punctuation in corollary copies in cases where the copy-text contains the punctuation necessary for understanding.



the data necessary to reconstruct in all essential respects any version of the text of any poem.<sup>8</sup>

### Bibliographical Conventions in the Apparatus

The format for entries in the Historical Collation generally follows standard practices of bibliographical notation. Each word or item in the *Variorum* text for which variant readings are reported is presented as a lemma to the left of a right bracket (lemma]) and followed by the variant and a list of sigla for the sources in which the variant appears. Multiple variants and sigla for a given item are presented seriatim and separated by semicolons. When a variant appears in a great number of sources across the spectrum of family groups (and thus conveys no genealogical information about the texts), these sources are collectively denoted by the symbol  $\Sigma$ , and the sigla for artifacts containing the lemmatic reading are listed immediately after the bracket. In the Historical Collation for *ElPerf* 5, for example, the first item appears as follows:

I,] B32 C2 C8 DT1 H4 NY3 O20 SN4 A–G; ~^ G.

This entry indicates that the sources B32 through G give the lemmatic reading (“I,”), while the variant (“I” without the following comma) appears in all other sources.

As is shown in the preceding example, a swung dash (~) is used after the bracket to stand for a word in the lemma, and a caret (^) preceding or following a word or swung dash to the right of the bracket indicates omitted punctuation. When the lemma is a single word and only variants of punctuation are to be reported, the swung dash will thus appear in combination with marks of punctuation and/or carets. For lemmas consisting of multiple words, individual swung dashes are used to the right of the bracket to represent corresponding words in the lemma when the multiword variant can be accurately and economically reported by so doing. Depending on the details of the individual instance, therefore, variants to a multiword lemma may be reported either as a series of swung dashes interspersed with appropriate carets or marks of punctuation or as a combination of words, swung dashes, and punctuation marks. In the Historical Collation for *ElAut*, for instance, the first item reported for line 15 appears as follows:

Yet lyes not Loue] And her inshrined CE1; And (heare inshrined)  
O34; ~ is ~ ~ P4; ~ lyeth ~ ~ WN3.

This entry indicates that CE1 and O34 substitute three (differently punctuated) words of their own for those of the lemma, while P4 and WN3 match the lemma except that they substitute respectively “is” and “lyeth” for “lyes.” Similarly, the collation for *ElAut* 16 includes the following entry:

like an] ~ to ~ B25 C9 CE1 DT2 F3 H6 TM1 Y3; ~ ~ old C4;

<sup>8</sup>It should be noted that obvious errors in printed editions, such as “effential” for “essential” and “Bedded” for “Bedded,” are not reported in the historical collations except when they result in verbal variants, such as the erroneous “patts” for “parts” (1621 ed. of *SecAn* 233) and the erroneous “close-weaning” for “close-weaving” (1611–25 eds. of *FirAn* 153) or later become the source of error, such as the misprint “ealth” for “health” (1625 ed. of *FirAn* 91M), which leads to the mistaken emendation “earth” in the subsequent edition of 1633. It should further be noted that in the case of severely damaged or mutilated manuscripts (always so designated in the Format section of the Historical Collation), only fully discernible variants and features that aid in the filiation of manuscripts are reported; no attempt is made to itemize each missing word or feature.

~ a chast F4 NP1; ~ as ~ H8 HH5 Y2 35; as to ~ O21; (as to ~ O34;  
~ a sworne O36.

This entry indicates that the sources B25 through Y3 read “like to an”; that C4 reads “like an old”; that F4 and NP1 read “like a chast”; that H8 through 35 read “like as an”; that O21 reads “as to an”; that O34 matches O21, except that it gives a left parenthesis before “as”; and that O36 reads “like a sworne.” As these examples show, the swung dash is used only when the lemma and the variant are essentially isomorphic and the correspondences between their respective parts are clear; when this correlation is not clear, multiword verbal variants are written out in full.

It should be noted that the swung dash does not imply exact identity of spelling, capitalization, or font between the word it represents and the corresponding word in the lemma (although the two may in fact be identical), but only that the two are forms of the same word. For example, the final word of line 8 in “*ELEGIE on the untimely Death of the incomparable Prince, HENRY*” reads as follows in the artifacts: “*Circumference:*” in 12a–j; “*Circumference.*” in B14, C9, H3, and H6; “*Circumference*” in DT1; “*Cyrcumference*” in H4; “*circumference.*” in O29, WN1, and A; and “*circumference:*” in B through G. Since differences of spelling, font, and capitalization are not substantive in this case and are thus not reported, these variants are collapsed into the following synthetic entry in the historical collation:

*Circumference:*] ~. B14 C9 H3 H6 O29 WN1 A; ~^ DT1 H4.

When the artifacts generally agree in a lengthy variation, but contain minor differences that need to be reported, we have minimized clutter in the apparatus by recording such subvariations parenthetically immediately after the siglum of the source from which they derive. For example, 13a and 13b preserve the variant readings “Wheres now the” and “Where’s now the” in the first half of *FirAn* 127. These variant readings, which differ only in the use of the apostrophe, are reported in the historical collation as follows:

Where is this] Wheres now the 13a 13b(Where’s).

In cases where a reading right of the bracket expresses as a single, synthetic entry variations of spelling, font, or capitalization that do not affect meaning or meter (and thus are not reported explicitly), the accidentals of any word that may appear in the entry are those of the artifact reported first in the sequence unless otherwise indicated.

Hyphenated constructions within the body of variant readings sometimes pose particular difficulties of representation. Any hyphenated compound in the reading text for which variants must be reported invariably appears in the textual apparatus as a single-item lemma; but hyphenated constructions that appear as variants to non-hyphenated collocations in the reading text may be divided at the hyphen in order to promote clarity in the Historical Collation. In a simple sequence of discrete words, for instance, the *Variorum* text reads *ElPerf* 31 as “The grimm eight foot high Iron bound Seruing man.” Such a diverse array of hyphenated forms appears among the corollary texts of this line, however, that to keep all such compounds together in the list of variants would require establishing a single lemma comprising every word in the line except “The.” In order to avoid the plethora of multiword variants that would thus be produced in the apparatus, we have divided the line into a number of



simpler lemmas and broken compound variants at appropriate points of hyphenation. For instance, the first textual note to the line reads thus:

grimm] ~- B28 B32 B47 C2 C8 CE1 H3 H5 H7 H8 NY1 O16 O20  
O21 O34 OC1 SP1 VA2 WN1 A-G.

This entry indicates that while the copy-text gives no hyphen between “grimm” and the following word, the sources B28 through G all read “grimm” and the following word as a hyphenated compound. Unless otherwise noted, the appearance of a hyphen after any variant word in the apparatus thus signals the connection of that word to the one that follows in the source.

As noted above, the Stemma or Schema of Textual Relationships accompanying each poem is designed to outline in broad terms what can be determined of the poem’s genealogy. When the evidence is sufficient, we present a traditional stemma outlining in skeletal form the step-by-step transmissional history of the text; in other cases we provide a schema that displays, within the context of full lines, the variants that permit separation of the artifacts into family groups. Accidentals in lines selected for the schema are those of a representative member of the family, and the defining variants are shown in boldface type. Significant intra-family variations are reported parenthetically at the end of each line. Detail reported in the schema is necessarily limited; information enabling the establishment of further genealogical links among copies of the text can be derived from the Historical Collation.

The Editors

