Attending to Early Modern Women 2012

Title: FORM AND COMMUNITY

Organizers:
Constance M. Furey, Associate Professor Department of Religious Studies, Indiana University
Sonia Velázquez, PhD Candidate, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Princeton University

Description:
Drawing upon texts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries from Spain and England, and the disciplines of Religious Studies, Medieval Studies, and Literature, this workshop takes up the question of how religious genres might enable us to rethink the ways that women authors situate themselves in and through texts, in relation to other readers and writers. More specifically, we aim to examine the ways in which devotional writing by women complicates assumptions about originality and individuality on the one hand, and about the nature of collaborative work and community, on the other. It thereby addresses two of the conference topics: Communities, by asking how authorial self-presentation and its participation in recognized genres such as the consolatory treatise and devotional poetry gives rise to or precludes forms of intimacy, and Exchanges, as we try to understand the circulation and displacement of tropes, ideas and traditions that take place when women write within the conventions of a genre.

Workshop Plan and Questions
The primary readings serve to inspire a thought-provoking conversation about authorship, textual modes of exchange, and community formation, precisely because in them the poetic voice we attribute to specific early modern women shows no impulse to disentangle itself from the knot of identities, voices, and selves imbricated in writing.

We ask our participants to consider the following questions in advance of the workshop:

- How would you describe the authorial voice in this text? The relationship between voice and genre (consolatory writing and devotional poetry)?
- How does the invocation of and appeal to God in these texts affect what can be said about authorship? Originality? Collaboration?
- What sorts of relationships does the author create and/or preclude through adherence to traditional forms and genres in these texts? How might these relationships best be described?

- How are authorship and community expressed in a range of early modern and medieval texts? How does our understanding of these terms shape the reception of work written by women? How does genre make a difference in how authorship is figured and what kinds of community does it suppose?
This treatise is called *Grove of the Infirm,* which Teresa de Cartagena composed, being afflicted with grave ailments and, in particular, having lost completely her sense of hearing. And she wrote this work in praise of God and for her own spiritual consolation and that of all those who suffer illness so that, forsaken of their physical health, they may place their desire in God who is true Health.

Long ago, virtuous lady, the cloud of temporal and human sadness covered the borders of my life and with a thick whirlwind of anguished sufferings carried me off to an island called “Oprobrium hominum et abiecio plebis” where I have lived for so many years—if life this can be called—without ever seeing anyone to direct my steps onto the road of peace or show me a path whereby I could arrive to any community of pleasures. Thus in this exile and shadowy banishment, feeling myself more in a sepulcher than a dwelling, it pleased the mercy of the Most High to illuminate me with the light of His compassionate grace so that I might place my name in the register of those about whom it is written: “The people that walked in darkness, have seen a great light: to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death, light is risen” [Isaiah 9:2].
And with my understanding enlightened and the cloud of my heavy sadness dispelled by this true Light that illuminates everyone who comes into this world,⁵ I saw that this island, indeed, was a good and healthful dwelling place for me. And although this island cannot be populated with residents—for you will find few people or none willing to dwell here since it is so sterile of temporal pleasures and dry of vainglorious and the fount of human honors is far away indeed—it can be populated with groves of good counsel and spiritual consolation so that my painful isolation from worldly conversations is converted into the companionship and familiarity of good customs.⁶

And since my suffering is of such a treacherous nature that it prevents me from hearing good as well as bad counsel, it is necessary that my consoling counsels be able to bring me to the cloister of their gracious and holy wisdom without shouting into my deaf ears; for this, I must recur to my books which have wondrous graftings from healthful groves.⁷ And since the lowliness and grossness of my womanly mind do not allow me to rise higher, aspiring to the nobility and sanctity of the very virtuous king and prophet David, I begin to look in his most devout songbook⁸ called the Psalter for some good consolations. And I found more there than I sought, for I looked for consolation and found admonishment; I sought counsel and found without doubt so much good advice that were I to live by it, I would fill my solitude with a gracious grove under whose shade my body could rest and my spirit receive a healthful breeze.

And since not all these consolations will fit on my small plate, I will omit some which are nevertheless profitable and more than good, and take some for the beginning of the meal and others for during the meal, and I will reserve some for after the meal;⁹ and I intend to make use of only those counsels that aid most the purpose of my suffering and the growth of my devotion and spiritual consolation. And although my tongue is not eloquent and my sense is ill prepared, I am writing this treatise to avoid succumbing to these two dangers, solitude and idleness; and since I cannot rid myself of solitude, I want to drive idleness away so that it cannot join with solitude, for this would be a dangerous marriage. And if my hand could thus drive off solitude from my right side and idleness from my left, do not doubt that it would ever tire from this travail; for according to the nature of my suffering, if you look closely, you will see me more alone in the company of many than when I retreat to my cell all by myself.

This is the reason why: when I am alone, I am accompanied by myself and by this poor sense I have, but when I find myself in the company of others, I am completely forsaken, for I cannot profit from the joy of companionship nor from the speech of those around me nor from myself. My sense escapes me, for it is too busy feeling the inordinate pain that I feel when my reason abandons me with the reasonable torment it endures. My discretion is slight, but even if it were great, it would have more than enough to do to move human restlessness to patience. And where hearing fails, what good is speech? One is left dead and completely isolated. Thus, for these reasons, and because my experience lends them credence, you can well believe how very lonely I am; and since I cannot rid myself of this unseeming and lasting loneliness, I want to combat my idleness by busying myself with this little treatise, which one might well say is neither good nor even ordinary, but rather completely bad.

However, since it is written for a good purpose, a greater good consequently may ensue. And because of my good intention, may our sovereign Lord, who judges intentions rather than works,¹⁰ find my writing,¹¹ which seems vexing and reprehensible to some people, pleasing and acceptable to His merciful eyes. And with this desire and directing my purpose only to Him, I have cared less to attend to the polish of my words than to declare the reality of my truth; and it does not please me so much to be diligent in investigating or searching for graceful eloquence as to be desirous of revealing to those who want to know what is revealed in me, so that as I know it, all may know it. And as I give thanks to the fare, that is, some word of God, taste it and you will be refreshed by it. And drink from the wine cellar His wine of spiritual happiness... (Libro de consolaciones, 586).


⁵ See John 1:9: "That was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world."

⁶ In his consolation for solitude, Pedro de Luna recommends seeking company in good thoughts, in good books, and in conversation with God: "Thus, the wise man is never alone; for he always has near him good thoughts. And he has books full of good examples... And if he has no one to speak with, he speaks with God, considering himself to live with his company" (Libro de consolaciones, 583).

⁷ Pedro de Luna also refers to the garden landscape of Holy Scriptures: "And St. Bernard says, "Truly religion is a pleasure with the green meadows of Holy Scripture and a delightful fountain of flowing water which love derives from the delights of Holy Scriptures..." (Libro de consolaciones, 592).

⁸ Here Teresa uses the term cancionero to describe the Psalter; cancioneros are fifteenth-century collections of courtly verse.

⁹ Teresa presents the many examples of good counsel found in Psalms as dishes in a meal; because they are so numerous, they will be served at different intervals. The idea of God's words as spiritually nourishing food is also found in Pedro de Luna: "And if you find a sweet..." (Libro de consolaciones, 586).

¹⁰ See Proverbs 21:2: "Every way of a man seemeth right to himself: but the Lord weigheth the hearts"; and Luke 16:15: "And he said to them: 'You are they who justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is high to men, is an abomination before God.' " See also 1 Kings 16:7.

¹¹ Teresa refers here either to the act of writing or to the product of that act, her treatise.
sovereign Lord, let all give thanks and praise to Him to whom all praise should be given. And while I wish to please Him alone in all my acts, let whoever so desires judge if these are bad or good. For I, bereft of human praises and unworthy of them, here end this prologue and begin this slight and defective work, and I take the following words as its foundation: "In camo et freno maxillae eorum constrinje qui non approximant ad te" [Psalm 31:9].

When I look at my suffering in temporal terms, it seems very painful and anguished, but when I turn my thought from these concerns, drawing it unto my breast, and I see the solitude that my suffering imposes, separating me from worldly transactions, I call it a kind solitude, a blessed solitude, a solitude that isolates me from dangerous sins and surrounds me with sure blessings, a solitude that removes me from things harmful and dangerous to both my body and soul.

And it appears that what has happened to me is like what we see happen when many speak in a mad rush, and it seems they hear voices from far away. And they make a sign with their hand to be still and listen, and they fall silent in order to better distinguish the voices that seem to answer from far away. And there are some, foolishly unaware that it may be to their advantage to be silent and listen, who keep on gabbing. But if among them is a discreet man who knows that those voices are worthwhile to hear, he makes a sign with his finger to his lips, and thus lets them know that it behooves them to be quiet, and then their foolish persistence ceases completely. And although it is hard, they maintain silence, above all if he who makes these signs is someone whom they must fear and obey. From this it follows that they listen by force to what they did not want to hear willingly.

And thus ensnared in the confusion of worldly chatter, with my understanding disordered and bound up in worldly cares, I could not hear the voices of holy doctrine that Scriptures teach us. But merciful God, who was with me in this din and with discreet observation saw my perdition and knew how important it was to my health to have the chatter cease so that I would better understand what was necessary for my salvation, signaled me with His hand to be quiet. And one may well say that this suffering is given to me by His hand. And even our customary way of speaking demonstrates that this is true, for when we see someone afflicted with great pain or suffering, we exhort him to have patience, saying, "Have patience, since our Lord gave this suffering to you. And why must you be sad since this is from the hand of God? etc." Thus the hand of God signaled me to be quiet and cease worldly chatter. And I, silenced by force, did not willingly listen to what I should hear; rather, burdened by my foolishness, I struggled to further my own harm. And merciful God added a second sign with His finger to His lips, clearly indicating that it is not His will that I speak of things of this world but that I be completely silent.

And it seems clear enough that this sign was made to me by the divine hand when my suffering is increased to such a degree that, even though I want to speak, I cannot, and even though people may wish to speak to me, they cannot. I know well that one could say that my suffering prevents me from hearing but not from speaking, for my tongue is free from affliction. To this I respond, "What is the principal reason why we have been given language and speech?" I truly believe the principal reason to be the one that we exercise least, which is to praise and bless God. However, aside from this, who doubts that speech was and is given to us in order to ask questions and to be answered? And it even seems to me, if I understand it correctly, that the Prophet tells us so when he says, "Ask thy father, and he will declare to thee: thy elders and they will tell thee" [Deuteronomy 32:7]. And it is clear that speech and language are given to us, in addition to the principal reason, which, I have said, is to praise and bless God, in order to ask questions and to be answered, since there would be no usefulness or profit if each person were to converse only with himself; for such a thing would seem more the act of a madman than of a person with common sense. So with reason I am angered when people beg me and say, "Go to so-and-so; for they want to see you and even though you cannot hear them, they will hear you." And while I understand that this is said in good friendship and innocence without any malice, nevertheless it still annoys me, knowing as I do that speech is pointless without hearing, like faith without works. For just as faith without works is dead and leads to greater pain than profit, so speech without hearing is worth nothing and only increases one's torment.

Thus language by itself is only valuable in two ways: one is to praise and bless God, the other to preach to the people; for these two things one can do without any reply. But in all other actions, to be able to speak without hearing is as pointless as hearing well and not being able to speak. For in these instances the purpose of hearing and speaking has been eliminated. For he who does not hear, how can he respond? And he who

12 Psalm 31:9: "With bit and bridle bind fast their jaws, who come not near unto thee."
13 Compare the beginning of Pedro de Luna's consolation for deafness: "Likewise, do not be upset if perchance you are deaf, for thus you are spared the occasion of hearing vain words and evils harmful to you" (Libro de consolaciones, 600).
14 Compare James 2:26: "For even as the body without the spirit is dead; so also faith without works is dead."
expects no response, how can he ask? Such a person, if he were discreet, would keep his silence. And since God has placed such cloisters on my hearing, it is clear that with equal seriousness he prohibits my speech; thus with his second sign of his finger to his lips our sovereign Lord commands me to keep silent, showing me clearly by increasing my suffering that it is his will that I avoid any worldly chatter and maintain complete silence in order to better understand what with the din of worldly distractions I would not be able to hear.

For without doubt man’s understanding deserts him when he is too preoccupied with worldly things, and he is better able to withdraw into himself when he separates himself from these things. When someone is very engrossed in something, we say that he is lost in thought; however, to recover best one’s scattered understanding and concentration, it is necessary to impose silence on everything else. Silence has already been imposed on me by the hand of God, who commands me to be quiet, and my foolish persistence has been checked with that finger that I now understand, showing me openly that he behoves me to be totally silent, to cut myself off completely from worldly chatter and desires; for it would be of little profit to separate myself from these worldly things if my desire and care were still involved with them. For any involvement would produce so much noise that I could not understand the voices; in order to hear them, I am commanded to maintain such an extreme silence.

Thus we see happen sometimes in conversations between people that although the speaker is very careful and diligent in what he says and those who are listening are silent, if the listener’s thoughts and attention are preoccupied with things other than the conversation directed to him, no matter how much the speaker rants and raves, the listener will understand nothing of what he is told. Then the speaker says, “You, friend, are not here; come to your senses or rather return to yourself.” Likewise, not only is it necessary for us to remove ourselves from worldly chatter and conversations, imposing total silence, we must also remove our desire and care; and it is imperative that we withdraw ourselves and our will completely if we want to listen without hindrance or noise to what is so fitting to our health.

Oh wondrous charity of my sovereign Lord! You show me such manifest signs so that I may listen to what is necessary to my health, for not only have you removed my hearing and speaking from worldly conversations but, with the merciful hand of His divine grace, you have removed completely my desire, which used to cause me so much trouble! Oh beneficial sign that confirms and sustains previous signs! My desire now conforms with my suffering and my longing is thus reconciled to my affliction, so that I no longer wish to hear nor can people speak to me nor do I want them to speak to me. What I used to call my crucifixion, I now call my resurrection. Now are my two enemies reconciled, my desire and my suffering. Oh merciful Lord, you have directed my desires along another path, smoother and straighter than I deserved! Oh, change imposed by the right hand of our Redeemer most high, you so manifestly display the grandeur of your mercy! For you not only cut me off from the dangerous mob of worldly distractions but you have removed from me my desire agonizing but undying, your mercy sparing me a lengthy battle between those two enemies, which are my wanting and my not being able. And I, who up until now desired but was not able to spend my time in worldly conversations, am no longer able nor inclined to have the power to fulfill such a harmful desire.

Certainly these words thanking God for having removed all my obstacles and hindrances should be a very helpful example for others. I am already cut off from human voices, for my ears cannot hear; my gossiping tongue is already silenced, since because of my deafness it cannot speak.

My desire, thus withdrawn, is set less in temporal things than in my health, and what I cannot hear does not weigh upon me as much as what I have heard in offense to God. And I would have willingly endured this suffering from birth, so that no words that may have offended or disserved God could ever enter the cloisters of my ears. Oh Lord, I long to listen to and hear the sweetness of your voice! For without doubt I can say, “For thy voice is sweet, and thy face comely” [Canticle of Canticles 2:14d].

And with the abovementioned silence, straining the ear of my understanding — since that of my body helps me not — I seem to hear spiritually these words resound: “Listen, O daughter, and behold, and incline thy ear: forget thy people and the house of thy father” [Psalm 44:11; my

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15 Carmen Marimón Llorca (Prosistas castellanas medievales [Alicante: Caja de Ahorros].

16 As Teresa subsequently notes (49, 79, 80), God’s right hand is associated with mercy, justice, and salvation, and his left hand with sin, punishment, and damnation.

17 Compare: “Do not be sad if you have lost or are cut off from the pleasing conversation of those whom you loved, and have come to a solitude where you must be silent; for if you want to be strong in your religion, your strength must be in hope and silence, because he who is distanced from the speech of men is close to God. . . . And often the man who loves silence converses with God . . .” (Libro de consolaciones, 587). Pedro de Luna then recommends the reading of holy books in silence with divine company.

18 Pedro de Luna also speaks of spiritual hearing: “Likewise, by being deaf, you will hear better through the ears of your soul the words God speaks within you . . .” (Libro de consolaciones, 600).
translation]. And the initial words that warn me again and again to hear and to ponder and to listen intently lead me to understand that the subsequent words about forgetting my people and the house of my father have another meaning than what is literally represented. Since, however, in order to understand it literally, one admonishment would have been sufficient, the reiterated command to hear, to observe, and to listen intently indicates to me that I should examine with great care not only what these words say but also the meaning that they convey.

However, let us consider first what is said literally in order to know better its meaning, for it says, “Forget thy people and the house of thy father.” And it does not directly command us to forget our father, but rather his house. Now clearly this does not refer to his material house, since that makes no sense, but rather to his family. And our everyday speech confirms this, for when we say, “So-and-so has a very great house,” we do not refer to the buildings or the size of his dwelling, large or small, but to his family and the number of his people. Now if we are commanded to forget our father’s house, then it follows that we are commanded to forget and even abhor our father, since whoever truly loves his father not only could not forget his house, that is, his household of servants and relatives, but would love them, I believe, out of respect for his father. Therefore, in order to be able to forget his house, it is necessary to first forget and even abhor our father.

Now it is clear that these words must have another more reasonable and healthful meaning, since for us to forget in this way our people and the house of our father seemingly contradicts God’s commandment to honor our father; for we cannot honor someone we do not love. Conversely, when we do not honor someone, it is a sign that we do not love him, even though sometimes honor and reverence are given in this world without love, as when we say, “One kisses those hands he wishes to see cut off.”19 But such things have nothing to do with the divine command to honor our father, since we honor and revere our parents in one way and our lords in quite another; for we honor our parents with filial love and willing obedience and we honor our lords with worldly ceremony marked by acts of courtesy and correctness rather than by heartfelt love. And so the commandment that states “Honour thy father” [Exodus 20:12] does not say “Honour thy governors, counts, and dukes.” This indicates that the honor and reverence that we rightfully give to our father surely must proceed from great love; and even his very name demon-

19 “Manos besa hombre que querría verlas cortadas” (Spanish proverb). See Gonzalo Correas, Vocabulario de refranes y frases proverbiales (Madrid: Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos, 1924), 191.

strates this, for in saying “Father” it seems as if a deeply felt love revives and quickens in our will. So since we are commanded to honor, it is evident that we are commanded to love, for otherwise the honor or service we do to our father would be feigned and cunning. Now, how could we be commanded to forget someone whom we are commanded to honor and love? For he who loves well, never forgets.20 Therefore, it seems clear enough, because of the repeated forewarning of the initial words which so diligently admonish me to hear and ponder and listen intently, as well as the reasons mentioned above, that this command and counsel to forget my people and the house of my father has another meaning.

And straining the ear of my understanding as much as my rude and gross judgement allows, I interpret “people” to mean a mob of temporal and human lusts. And just as in a town or multitude of people one finds diverse lineages and conditions, so there is great diversity in human desires: some covet honor and fame, others riches, others to work for the glory of this world, and others to repose in that glory. And if I had to describe all the types of temporal and vain desires, I do not doubt that their number would equal the twelve tribes of Israel.

But let us leave aside their diversity to speak of the war these lusts wage in the land where they dwell. I say that just as in the city a great noise is produced if some of the people rise up in revolt, and if all the people revolt, the city is in great danger and in mortal combat; so any temporal lust that rises up against our soul produces a great noise in the city of our conscience, and if all this accursed population of desires rises up against our soul, it is in great danger of perdition.21 And we may well call human lusts “people,” for just as the more people multiply, the more they populate and fill a city, so the more temporal lusts multiply in our will, the more full the city of our conscience is of harmful dwellers and so crammed that if a good neighbor wants to come dwell there, he will find no lodging, especially if he is someone who the evil people fear will overwhelm them.

Since the virtues are of such great estate and power that they can overwhelm and overpower the vices, these wicked people that have filled the city of our conscience do not allow them to cross over the threshold,

20 “Bien ama quien nunca olvida” (Spanish proverb); see Correas, Vocabulario, 82.

21 Hutton (35) traces the graphic image of a city in revolt to the anti-Jewish uprisings during the fifteenth century; Deyermond specifically points to the anti-converso rebellion in Toledo in 1449, shortly before the composition of Grove, when the Jewish problem became the converso problem. Here the traditional Christian image of the city as a secure place under God’s rule (Augustine’s Civitas Dei) is transformed into the dangerous and vulnerable “city of our conscience” (Deyermond, “El convento de dolencias,” 26-27).
lest they take over the captive city. And we may well call captive a conscience that is full of sins, for just as a captive is held in captivity against his will, so our conscience has been taken captive by these perverse people. Since we cannot commit sin nor even think of sin without our conscience rebuking and accusing us, clearly it is not pleased by sin and is thus forcibly inhabited by its population or, rather, its desolators, the vices. Who is there who does not consider the warning to forget and abandon all these enemy people to be healthy advice?

I come now to the second part of my admonishment, that I forget the house of my father. I interpret this house to mean human inclination, which houses the father and desire and habit of sinning; for just as the father is the beginning and engenderer of his children, so bad desire is the beginning and engenderer of sins. And we can apply the Prophet’s words “He hath conceived sorrow, [and hath brought forth iniquity]” [Job 15:35] to this abominable father when he consents to sin with deliberate intention and commits sin for the sake of evil. Thus it is healthy advice and a valuable warning to me to forget my people, who are the temporal lusts and the mob of vain cares in the house of my father, which is human inclination, where the desire and habit of sinning dwell, because, in my view, here sin has its home. For as great as the desire to sin may be, if it does not take refuge in human inclination, it could not have such a great house. And a very grand house, indeed, it has founded, and one very costly to our spiritual commerce, for with its relatives and followers it has a greater clan than a marquis and has become, because of our iniquity, the father of our wicked life.

And who could hear with the ears of his soul such healthy advice if his physical ears were filled with the noise of human voices? Oh merciful Lord, how immeasurable is your sovereign goodness! Oh how incomprehensible are your judgments, how inscrutable your ways! For you not only receive those who approach you and save those who walk along the path of salvation, but even those who withdraw from you and freely go towards their own perdition, you constrain with merciful bonds and bring them by force to their everlasting salvation! For indeed I can repeat, and even take as my own, David’s most gracious and truthful song, which I cited as the beginning and foundation of this simple treatise: “With bit and bridle bind fast their jaws, who come not near unto thee and want to approach thee.”

To better appreciate how this biblical authority suits my purpose, we must consider that a bit and a bridle are designed for dumb animals who lack reason so that with these bindings they may be brought almost by force to a place that suits them and pleases their master; thus they are guided by their bit and constrained by their bridle. And just as, for the reasons stated above, this bit and bridle are placed in the mouth and on the neck of irrational animals, so for similar reasons another bit and bridle are provided for rational animals. The bit is our reason and the bridle our temperament and discretion. For reason guides us toward all that is good and fitting for our temporal good and our spiritual well-being in the service of our Lord, and temperament and discretion constrain us to curb the disordered appetites of our human weakness.

And while every rational animal has in its power and desire these two tools to control itself, we see in observing their actions that not all employ them equally, for we see some sin licentiously, and others live virtuously and honestly, and others halfway, neither very dissolute in some things nor very perfect in others. Although we see these differences in their deeds, certainly their humanity is the same; for both the most righteous person as well as the greatest sinner, and both the moderate person as well as the dissolute, human inclination invites them all equally to sin. The most virtuous and honest person we can find can be strongly tempted and assailed by any sin the greatest sinner can commit.

Now clearly the reason why some consent and others resist is because those who live virtuously avail themselves of the bridle of temperance and discretion and employ their reason, while the others do not. And we can call the house of the former well ordered, for he who should command commands and he who should serve obeys, for reason rules and commands its subject, which is sensuality, and the latter obeys and serves reason. It is not necessary to bridle these people since their own discretion restrains them and separates them from vice. From this it follows that the man who does not know nor wants to know how to use his bit and bridle is an irrational animal since he does not exercise reason, for the proper use of reason is to admonish and constrain us to desire good and avoid evil. Therefore, it seems that whoever abandons good and

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22 Pedro de Luna makes a similar distinction between spiritual and physical hearing: “Of this our Lord says: ‘The deaf shall hear and the blind see,’ which can be understood spiritually to mean that those who are physically deaf shall hear with the ears of their soul” (Libro de consolaciones, 600).

23 See Romans 11:33: “O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgements, and how inscrutable his ways!” (my translation).

24 Teresa rewrites the biblical quote by appending “and want to approach thee”; compare 26.

25 Pedro de Luna also discusses the well-ordered soul: “thus the kingdom of the soul is well ordered when well counseled: when reason counsels well, the will rightly obeys and our physical senses obey our will; and it is virtue in our soul that imposes this good ordering, for virtue enlightens our reason and raises up our will to the eternal kingdom from its servitude to sin” (Libro de consolaciones, 595).
follows evil has forsaken reason, or reason has forsaken him. Accordingly, it is more than right that, like a dumb animal, he be provided with another bridle.

Now you will see how the biblical authority cited above—“With bit and bridle [bind fast their jaws!]”—applies directly to me; and so that you may see more clearly this correspondence between us, I will state, inasmuch as my simplicity allows, how these verses relate to my poor and simple treatise. I say and affirm that with bit and bridle my sovereign Lord constrained the jaws of my vanities to benefit my spiritual well-being. Now, let me explain for those who have never suffered affliction—since those who have, already know from their own experience—how ailments can be called bit and bridle.

A good and lasting ailment is a bridle to humble the proud neck and a bit to constrain desires dangerous and injurious to the soul. We see an example of this in everyday life when a sick man dares not to eat all foods and even with less harmful foods he does not eat as much as he wants. If an ailment thus resists and curbs physical acts, imagine how it affects spiritual acts; for if our discretion imposes rules on eating to preserve our temporal health, it is a greater discretion of more lasting benefit to impose rules on our deeds to safeguard our spiritual health. While it is true that it is fitting and healthy for everyone to adhere to a strict diet during a harmful meal of sins, there is no doubt that reason more openly influences the infirm than the healthy. For although it is good for everyone to avoid harmful foods, certainly the invalid is more strictly constrained to avoid them than a healthy person. Likewise, a sick person will abstain with more rigor and necessity from foods harmful to his soul—from sins—than a healthy person.

Oh, the meaning is quite clear! What excessive negligence it would be for the sick to ignore spiritual matters! First, because the ailing person is so imprisoned in his suffering, he cannot avail himself or others of temporal or corporeal things. Second, and more to the point, because the sick person already appears to have one foot in the grave, even though sometimes it happens that the healthy person more promptly departs this miserable life than the sick person, for we see some people with great ailments live many years, and others, flourishing in good health, we have seen depart in a flash. Here let those blessed with physical health beware, lest the dream of their invulnerability deceive them in such a way that an accelerated and unavoidable death catches them napping. But I should not have omitted myself in addressing only those blessed with good health, for although my withered health exempts me from their number, the slumber of my sins lulls me as asleep as anyone else. For this reason, I mean to say let them and us beware—the sick as well as the healthy—so that this departure called death not catch us sleeping; rather, may it please our sovereign Lord that He may find us vigilant in virtuous works, so that these divine words may apply to us: “Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh, shall find watching” [Luke 12:37].

And leaving this aside, since it is far from my purpose and remote from my task, for those reasons stated above and for many more that I refrain from saying, these ailments and physical sufferings can and should be called bit and bridle. And how much more this applies to my own particular suffering that invests all its force in removing me from one thing and drawing me towards another, so that, in spite of myself, I have to want what my suffering wants, and my suffering always rejects what I want. For if I want to hear, my affliction does not allow it; and if I want to speak, it signals me with its hand and clearly indicates that its intention is to prohibit what I want and make me want what I do not want. What I do want is to involve myself in worldly activities, and what I do not want is solitude or isolation from them. Well, if I examine my suffering, its intention is better than mine, for it wants my salvation, and I want my perdition; it wants to withdraw me from dangers, and I want to cast myself into them.

My suffering’s intention is much better than mine. I am coming to know its goodwill, for it labors not so much to torment me as to save me, nor so much to make me suffer as to make me worthy. And if it makes me experience great pain, it does so desiring my salvation. Therefore, I praise greatly its good desire and repudiate my own rebelliousness, worthy of total repudiation, for I have fought long and hard against its merciful persistence. It is now time that I let it achieve completely its virtuous end, full of spiritual benefit because the Lord gave this suffering to me. Oh bit and bridle of my healthful suffering! If so far you have been dragging me badly behind you, now I want to willingly follow you! And since you pursue me, I want to place my dwelling where you guide me. How beneficial it is to me to be bound by these sufferings that cause my indomitable persistence to be conquered by His divine mercy! So, because I did not want to draw near to God, the jaws of my vain desires have been constrained with a bit and bridle.

How can one call vain desires jaws? Consider that what the Prophet called jaws, we call face or countenance, and even this same Prophet

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26 I have altered the order of sentences here to follow a more logical sequence; in the manuscript, “What excessive negligence . . .” is interpolated between the first and second reasons.

27 The Latin maxilla, “jaws,” becomes maxillo, “jaws or cheeks,” in Old Spanish. Teresa’s
Wonder at the Works of God (Admiración operum Dey)

Here begins a brief treatise which can be fittingly called Wonder at the Works of God. Teresa de Cartagena, a nun of the order of ..., composed it at the petition and request of Señora Juana de Mendoza, wife of Señor Gómez Manrique.

I remember, virtuous lady, that I offered to write at your discretion. If I have delayed so long in committing this to paper, you should not marvel, for one’s will is very inhibited when one’s physical disposition not only does not co-operate but even impedes and contradicts it. If you consider, virtuous lady, the illnesses and physical sufferings that I have continually for companions, you will readily acknowledge that they are real obstacles to the intentions of my will and to my understanding, which, fatigued and disturbed at present with memories and emotions and constrained by its own need, draws unto itself the deliberations and inner desires of my will. And my understanding so detains and delays my will in the execution of its deeds that its own intellectual efforts are weakened by my physical hardships. Yet, even with all this, the debt I promised you would already be paid were my solitude content with only my physical suffering and not assail me with a secret and dangerous army full of inner conflicts and spiritual dangers, with a mob of vain and inconstant thoughts that, like a host of armed soldiers, besiege my anguished soul on every flank.

And what can my weak womanly understanding do when it sees itself caught in so many dangerous snares? For it has enough work to defend itself from what is clearly evil, and its powers are too weak to recognize as bad what our adversary offers under the guise of good; so that unless sovereign Virtue strengthens and illuminates it, my understanding has no power or health at all. Thus, very discreet lady, may you perceive the diversity and intensity of these hidden spiritual scandals, along with others of equal quality and quantity that your prudence can well under-

stand, which with their great strength have broken down the walls of my weak judgement like a flood of water and have removed completely everything that my understanding had prepared to write down.

And my memory tells me only the matter about which I thought to write; and since the foundation was left unbuilt, the edifice itself is not as good as should be presented to your discretion, but rather slight and weak as one might expect from my poor faculty. For since a bad tree, according to a saying of the supreme Truth, cannot bring forth good fruit, what good words or devout works can you expect of a woman so inflamed in her body and so wounded in her spirit? But I shall lift up my eyes to the mountains, whence comes my help, so that He who gives strength to the weak and understanding to the lowly may open the ark of His divine generosity, scattering His abundant grace over this dry and sterile land, so that a sinful woman removed from virtue may know how to form her words in praise and glory of the most Holy and Lord of virtues. And to return to the purpose and reason for my writing, its cause is as follows.

Many times, virtuous lady, I have been informed that some prudent men and also discreet women have marveled at a treatise that, with divine grace directing my weak womanly understanding, was written by my hand. And since it is a brief work of little substance, I am amazed, for it is hard to believe that prudent men would marvel so at such an insignificant thing. But if their wonder is certain, my offense is clear, since apparently their awe does not result from the merits of my text but from the defects of its author; as we see from experience when someone of simple and crude understanding says something meaningful, we marvel not because the saying itself is worthy of awe but because the person is so reprobate and held in such low esteem that we do not expect anything good from him. And for this reason when it happens through God’s mercy

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1 *Admiración* means “wonder, awe” as well as “admiration, respect”; on the title as a purposeful composite of Spanish and Latin, see 131 n. 33.
2 Teresa’s religious order was omitted – intentionally or accidentally – by the copyist. Gómez Manrique (1412-90) was a leading political figure and protector of conversos in Toledo, a major poet at the courts of Juan II and Enrique IV, and author of religious dramas. His wife, Doña Juana de Mendoza (d. 1498), was the daughter of Diego Hurtado de Mendoza and Teresa de Guzmán and lady-in-waiting to the infanta Isabel, princess of Portugal.
3 Compare *Grove* (31) for similar images of violence assailing one’s soul; there, a railing of the people against “the city of our conscience.”
4 Compare Teresa’s earlier reference to Grove as a “slight and defective work” (26).
5 Compare Matthew 7:17: “Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit.”
6 Teresa here is apparently quoting the objections of her detractors.
7 See Psalm 120:1: “I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains, from whence help shall come to me.”
8 The imagery recalls the opening of *Grove* where Teresa is exiled to the allegorical island, “sterile of temporal pleasures and dry of vainglories” (24). The intertextual network of images underscores the continuity between the two works; in effect, *Wonder* is a gloss as well as a defense of the earlier treatise. The image of the “ark of God’s divine generosity” is repeated toward the end of her defense (see 111).
9 So begins Teresa’s unwavering insistence that *Grove* is a product of her own writing enlightened by God’s grace, a theme reiterated throughout her defense.
that such simple and crude people say or do certain things, although these may not be entirely good but even rather ordinary, we marvel a great deal for the reasons stated above.

And in this same way, I certainly believe, prudent men have marveled at the treatise I wrote, not because there was anything very good or worthy of wonder in it, but because of me and my justly deserved adversities and increased suffering; they cry out against me and call upon everyone to marvel, saying, “How can there be any good in a person afflicted with so many misfortunes?” And from this it follows that if a womanly text of little substance is worthy of reprehension among common men, with greater reason it would inspire consternation in exceptional and great men, for not without cause does the prudent man marvel when he sees that a fool can speak. And although it is said that their wonder is flattering, to me it seems offensive and clear that they offer me scathing insults and not empty praise; yet although insults cannot hurt me or vain praise benefit me, I do not want to usurp another’s glory nor ignore my own offense.

However, there is something else I must not permit, for truth does not allow it: apparently not only do prudent men marvel at my treatise but some cannot believe that, indeed, I could do any good at all; and while my worthiness is even less than they presume, greater blessings are found in God’s mercy. And because they tell me, virtuous lady, that this abovementioned sheaf of rough draft papers has come to the attention of Señor Gómez Manrique and yourself, I do not know if these same doubts surrounding my treatise have occurred to you. And since good works are known to sovereign Truth as true and certain, I have not objected very much when in the judgement of human beings my work is held as doubtful, although this can ruin the substance of my writing and undermines greatly the benefit and grace that God wrought for me. Therefore, to the honor and glory of our sovereign and generous Lord whose mercy fills the earth, I, a small piece of dirt, dare to present to your great judgement these insignificant thoughts of mine.

10 Teresa’s strategy here is an application of the concept of voluntary humility she discusses in Grove; that is, “for man to despise himself more and esteem and value himself less than his detractors do” (69). One of the spiritual advantages of voluntary humility, she notes, is that the contempt of others does not provoke one to anger.

11 It is not clear if this sheaf of papers refers to a copy of Teresa’s Grove, “written by my hand,” or if her detractors actually registered their objections in writing; if the “above-mentioned” sheaf refers to Teresa’s own rough copy, then perhaps it was circulated to “virtuosa señora” before a formal copy could be made.

12 See Psalm 32:5: “He loveth mercy and judgment; the earth is full of the mercy of the Lord.”

13 Compare: “Miraculum grande factum est, dilectissimi, ut de quinque panibus et duobis piscibus saturarentur quinque hominum millia, et residua fragmentorum implerent duodecim cophinos. Grande miraculum: sed non multum mirabimur factum, si attendamus the cause of our wonder is not because some of God’s works are less worthy of awe than others, but because those that we see every day we accept as the natural course of things, and those which rarely or never happen cause us wonder because they are not common or customary in this world. But if we lift up our understanding to contemplate or consider well God’s works, we shall find that those we see occur daily in the natural course of things are no less marvelous or worthy of admiration than those that happen rarely or at great intervals of time.

Thus, returning to my purpose, I think, most virtuous lady, that the reason that men marvel that a woman has written a treatise is because this is not customary in the female condition but only in the male. For men have had the practice of writing books and learning and applying their
learning since such ancient times that apparently this is assumed to be the natural course of things, and therefore no one wonders. But since women have not had this custom nor have acquired learning, and since their understanding is not as perfect as men’s, it is considered a marvel. Yet it is no greater marvel nor less easy for God’s omnipotence to do one more than the other, for He who could infuse the understanding of men with knowledge can thus infuse the understanding of women, even though our understanding may be imperfect or not as able or sufficient to receive and retain knowledge as that of males. For God’s divine greatness can readily repair this imperfection and small insufficiency and even remove it completely and give perfection and ability to female understanding just as to male, for the sufficiency that men have they did not acquire on their own but because God gave it to them. Of this the Apostle says, “Not that we are sufficient of anything of ourselves, as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is from God” [2 Corinthians 3:5]. For if the sufficiency of men comes from God and God gives to each one according to the measure of His gift, why should we women not receive the same when He judges it necessary and appropriate?

And you should consider, my great lady, that God created human nature, although He Himself was not human. Well, He who made such a great thing from nothing, can He not do anything in His creation? This most powerful Creator made the male sex first and the female second and adjunct to the male. And if He gave certain pre-eminences to the male more than to the female, I truly believe that He did not do this because He wanted to confer more grace on one condition than the other, but rather for a very secret purpose that He alone knows. Of this St. Jerome says in his sermon on the Assumption of our Lady, “Our Lord is such and so great and immense and good that He alone knows Himself or He alone understands”, as if to say openly that our Lord’s omnipotence and magnificence are so great, and His divine and marvelous secrets so profound, and His holy works so abundant and beneficial, that He alone distinguishes their number and nature, He alone knows.

Nevertheless, leaving aside these hidden and divine secrets which surpass our human understanding, I ask what is the greatest pre-eminence that God gave to men more than to women, and my simplicity tells me that among all the pre-eminences that God gave the male sex rather than the female, this, in my view, is the principal one: that males are strong and valiant and of great spirit and daring and of more perfect and sound understanding, and women, to the contrary, are weak and cowardly, faint hearted and fearful. For we see that a man awaits a brave bull with greater daring and strength than a woman would await a mouse that may pass by her skirts. And likewise, if we women see an unsheathed sword, although we know that it can do us no harm at all, we are naturally so fearful that in merely seeing it we are afraid. Yet men have no fear of using a sword and even of receiving on their bodies cruel and strong blows from its blade.

And God made these differences and oppositions in one and the same human nature for whatever unique purpose and marvelous secret that He alone knows. I, in my simplicity, daresay that our heavenly Father did this so that each would be the preservation and adjunct of the other, for everything that the Lord created and made over the face of the earth He furnished and equipped with marvelous preparations and provisions. And if you observe well the plants and trees, you will see how their outer bark or cortex is very robust and strong and resistant to the weather, to tempest and water and ice, and heat and cold. They are made in such a way that their firm and resilient bark protects the inner core or medulla enclosed within. And thus in this order the one works for the other, for the strength and hardness of the bark protects and preserves the medulla by resisting on the outside the inclemencies of the weather. The medulla, encased because it is weak and delicate, works inwardly and gives power and vigor to the bark; and thus the one preserves and helps the other and gives us each year the diversity and abundance of fruits that we see.

And in this same way, I believe, our sovereign and powerful Lord wants these two opposites in human nature to operate: the masculine condition, strong and valiant, and the feminine, weak and delicate. For men with their strength and spirit and sufficiency of intellect preserve and protect things on the outside, thus procuring and dealing and winning fortune’s goods, like ruling and governing and defending their country and lands from enemies, and all the other things required for the protection and benefit of the republic and consequently of its individual properties and persons; for this, it is fitting and necessary that males be robust and valiant, of great spirit and even of great and very elevated understanding. And women, weak and timid and not able to withstand the great labors and dangers that the procurement and government and defense of the abovementioned things require, encased or enclosed in their homes give

16 It has been impossible to identify this quote; Hutton notes (98), nevertheless, that there are many spurious sermons on the Assumption of the Virgin attributed to St. Jerome and possibly Teresa refers here to one of them.

17 Teresa applies allegorical conventions – inner versus outer; medulla versus cortex – to her discussion of gender, subtly and subversively privileging woman by associating her with the inner medulla. In allegory, the outer cortex is identified with the lower material and literal meaning while the inner medulla is associated with the higher spiritual and figurative truth.
And like the gadding woman,42 compelled to return home by the coming of night, who arrives so restless and unaccustomed to work that the little time she has left she cannot employ to her benefit or to the advantage of her house, so our understanding, as our senses withdraw from their labors at nightfall and worldly dealings and outside contact are silenced, is compelled by necessity to retire to its proper home, which is the secret meditation and soliloquy of its inward thought. But it returns so altered, so restless from the idleness of the day, that it cannot take advantage of the quiet of the night and attend to anything to benefit itself or its badly run house and estate, which is our spiritual health. In order for understanding to attend to its own well-being in repose and wisdom and to the advantage of its household, which is the health of its spirit, it is necessary that it be calm and remain in its dwelling. And as soon as it returns to its senses, it will attend more carefully and profitably to its proper duty, which is to know God and recognize His blessings and know the defects and faults of the soul and how it is prostrate and fallen in the cave of its sins because of its great neglect.

Oh what sublime wisdom it is to know God and what true prudence to know and recognize His blessings! And what a healthful and beneficial science it is for us to know ourselves and our own defects and faults! For perfect charity is engendered in the soul from the true knowledge of God, and heartfelt gratitude is engendered in the soul from the recognition of God's blessings, and comprehension and humility are engendered in the soul from the acknowledgement of one's own defects and faults. And this is the proper role of the three powers of our soul, especially of our understanding, for when it dedicates itself completely to work inside its house in this holy exercise and proper occupation, immediately memory and will join it, and all three powers of the soul will work together and strive to recover their proper title, namely, to be true powers of the soul in deed as they are in name; for they are called powers of the soul so that with these three powers—understanding, memory, and will—our soul is raised on high and strives against human weakness to reach and obtain the true Good for which it was created.

But when understanding, memory, and will abandon their cell and dissipate themselves in material and vain things, they may be called weaknesses, not powers, of the soul, for they become stupefied and gross, and our soul grows weak because of their absence and neglect. And thus when they withdraw from worldly occupations, they become more solicitous and diligent in their proper spiritual duties. When understanding, memory, and will unite and dedicate themselves to this good and worthy enterprise, our sovereign Lord does not deny us His holy grace; rather, He observes with eyes of paternal love and true charity the wants of His children exiled in this vale of misery and tears. And when He sees the insufficiency and limited capacity of our human understanding that cannot ascend to where our soul aspires, without delay He opens the door of His sacred ark and from the sovereign fount of His great mercy sprinkles marvelous dewdrops over the earth ready to receive it, by which I refer to the disposition of all human creatures to receive spiritual blessings.43

For when the Prophet and saintly King David says, “God is wonderful in his saints” [Psalm 67:36], it is clear that he was and is one of the saints, and having himself felt divine magnificence, he wonders at how marvelous God is to His saints. Nevertheless, if we sinners want to speak according to what we ourselves feel about the magnificence of God’s blessings, we can well say, “God is wonderful in his sinners”44; for even though we are sinners, we are His, and if because of our sinfulness we are to be cast away from Him, the sovereign Truth would not have said, “I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, [more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance]” [Luke 15:7]. And if we want to know how wonderful God is with His sinners, let us consider with what patience He sustains us, with what solicitude He keeps us, with what long-suffering He awaits us, with what charity He corrects us, with what mercy He consoles us, with what graciousness He visits us, with what generosity He provides for us, with what intimacy He teaches us. How wonderful God is to His saints, for He gives them virtue and fortitude; and how wonderful God is to His sinners, for He shows us mercy and grace.

And God shows mercy and grace to us sinners when He scourges and corrects us in this present life, for this is a time of mercy and grace, and that which awaits us is a time of judgement and justice. For He who exercises justice during a time of mercy indicates that at the time of justice He will exercise mercy, and thus God’s mercy and grace show sinners

42 Pedro de Luna compares carnality to a gadding woman: “[Flesh] is that talkative, roaming, restless woman, adorned to deceive souls, that Solomon spied from his window” (Libro de consolaciones, 599). Compare Proverbs 7:10-12: “Not bearing to be quiet, not able to abide still at home, now abroad, now in the streets, now lying in wait near the corner.” In line with Teresa’s avoidance of sexual overtones (see 130 n. 32), she suppresses reference to the overt sexuality of the biblical figure: “And behold a woman meeteth him in harlot’s attire prepared to deceive souls; talkative and wandering” (Proverbs 7:10). For background, see Carla Casagrande’s discussion of women wanderers in “The Protected Woman,” in A History of Women in the West, II: Silences of the Middle Ages, ed. Christiane Klapisch-Zuber (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992), 84–86.

43 See 87 n. 8.
how to escape future ire, namely, the rigor of the Last Judgement. And let us acknowledge His mercy in deeming us worthy of forewarning and correcting in this present life, and His grace in illuminating our understanding so that we may know and recognize His blessing, and let us turn to God, for He is gracious and merciful. And the trials, afflictions, and calamities that God inflicts on sinners, although these may seem from the outside to be the rigors of justice, inwardly they shout words of mercy and charity and admonish us as with a human tongue, saying, “Be converted to the Lord with all your heart.” And thus God is wonderful with His saints, for He gives them virtue and fortitude, and He is wonderful with His sinners, for He gives us mercy and grace to sustain and endure and our misfortunes to recognize His great blessings. And in order to know and praise and recount this to the people, whoever has a devout desire and a pressing thirst to learn and acquire healthful learning, let him come to God’s school of patience and He will receive the Lord, Bread of life and of understanding, and He will give him to drink the water of healthful knowledge, and he will joyfully get water from the wells of our Savior. And they will say on that day, “Confess to the Lord and invoke His holy name, quod est beneditum in saecula saeculorum. Amen.”

Thanks be to God forever and ever.

44 Compare Joel 2:13: “And turn to the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, patient and rich in mercy, and ready to repent of the evil.”

45 Compare Joel 2:12: “Now therefore sayeth the Lord: ‘Be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning.’”

46 Teresa’s final image celebrates the sufferer’s admission to the supper of the Lamb to partake of the bread of life and understanding and the water of healthful knowledge.

47 “[His name] that is blessed forever and ever”; compare Psalm 144:21: “My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord: and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever; yea, for ever and ever.”

Interpretive Essay

From Anxiety of Authorship to Admira~ción: Autobiography, Authorship, and Authorization in the Works of Teresa de Cartagena

The term “anxiety of authorship” was coined by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar and applied to nineteenth-century women writers in their now classic feminist study, The Madwoman in the Attic. Like most women in patriarchal society — in the fifteenth as well as the nineteenth century — the woman writer experiences her gender as a painful obstacle or debilitating inadequacy. Indeed, the situation of those nineteenth-century women writers Gilbert and Gubar examine offers many direct parallels with Teresa’s and is crucial to understanding her position as author and subject of her text.

Thus the loneliness of the female artist, her feelings of alienation from male predecessors coupled with her need for sisterly precursors and successors, her urgent sense of her need for a female audience together with her fear of the antagonism of male readers, her culturally conditioned timidity about self-dramatization, her dread of patriarchal authority of art, her anxiety about the impropriety of female invention — all these phenomena of “inferiorization” mark the woman writer’s struggle for artistic self-definition and differentiate her efforts at self-creation from those of her male counterpart.

Applying this paradigm to Teresa: the loneliness of being a female artist would only be exacerbated by her deafness; with regard to attendant alienation from male predecessors and need for sisterly precursors and successors, Teresa’s deafness cut her off from the oral female subculture (women’s songs/ proverbs, convent chatter) and thrust her into the dominant culture of male letters. Her urgent need for a female audience (Teresa directs both her texts to an inscribed reader, “virtuosa señora,” presumably Juana de Mendoza) together with her fear of the antagonism of male

1 I have retained admiración in the title here because of its ambiguity: admiración means “wonder, awe, incredulity, surprise” but also “admiration, respect.”

Literary Context

The biblical Psalms, a traditional part of Judaeo-Christian private and public worship, took on new resonance in the Reformation through their translation into the vernacular and their use in congregational singing. Some Psalms in English had circulated in manuscript Books of Hours during the second half of the fourteenth century, demonstrating the influence of the Wyclif translation, but the ‘Constitution of Clarendon’ (1408) ordered that ‘no one shall in the future translate on his own authority any text of the holy scripture into the English tongue’. The injunction was effectively enforced until Tyndale’s publication of the New Testament in English on the Continent, begun at Cologne in 1525 and completed at Worms in 1526.

Vernacular Psalms also reached England through the Continent. Martin Luther advocated the use of vernacular songs for worship in his Formula missae et communionis pro Ecclesia Wittenbergensi (Wittenberg, 1523) and later that year told his friend Georg Spalatin that ‘I intend to make German [vernacular] Psalms for the people, i.e., spiritual songs so that the Word of God even by means of song may live among the people. Everywhere we are looking for poets.’ Luther himself wrote metrical Psalms in German, as did Johann Agricola; these early Psalms were printed on broadsides for congregational singing and were collected by a printer in Nuremberg in 1524 as the first Reformation hymnbook. Subsequent vernacular Psalms in German, French, Italian, and Dutch are intimately connected to the ninety English versions published in the sixteenth century, because of the movement of Protestant exiles between England and the Continent.\(^1\)

Martin Bucer, the Strasbourg Reformer, is a central figure. The first English Psalter in print was George Joye's translation of Bucer's 1529 Latin text, published under the pseudonym Aretius Felinus in Antwerp in 1530. Bucer, a strong advocate for congregational Psalm-singing, later served as Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge during Edward's reign and influenced the 1552 Book of Common Prayer as well as the form of worship used in Strasbourg and in Geneva. The connections continue in that while Bucer was pastor of St Thomas' Church in Strasbourg, Miles Coverdale sought safety there (1540); Coverdale's translation of the Psalms was later printed with the Book of Common Prayer, and he is said to have helped with the translation of the Genevan Bible of 1560. During this same period Bucer invited John Calvin to live with him and to become the pastor of the French exiles there (1538–41). When Calvin found his Strasbourg congregation singing the German Psalms, he sought to give them a Psalter in their own language—a project that eventually produced the French-Genevan metrical Psalter, Les Psalms de David mis en rime Francoise by Clément Marot and Théodore de Bèze (1564), the primary literary model for the Sidney Psalms, as for other metrical versions such as the Psalmes di David by Philip Sidney's friend and correspondent François Perrot, which was published with the music of the Psalmes (1581; complete edition 1603). The revised Anglo-Genevan Psalter familiarly known as 'Sternehold and Hopkins' or the Old Version was also produced by this community of exiles, who believed that 'there are no songes more meete, than the psalmes of the Prophete David, which the holy ghost hath franeed to the same use, and commended to the churche, as containeing the effect of the whole scriptures'.

When the Marian exiles returned to England under Elizabeth, they brought with them the Continental custom of singing Psalms. On 27 September 1559 the first known singing of metrical Psalms 'after Geneva fashion' took place at the 5 a.m. prayer service at St Antholin's Church in London. By 1560 the custom was so well established that John Jewel wrote to Peter Martyr on 5 March that 'You may now sometimes see at Paul's Cross, after the service, six thousand persons, old and young, of both sexes, all singing together and praising God'. Once churches throughout England had adopted the custom, these Psalms became part of the popular culture. Coverdale wanted carters and ploughmen to whistle 'psalms, hymnes, and such godly songs as David is occupied withal' and women to sing them as they spin, instead of 'hey nony nony, hey truly luly, and such like phantasies'. Apparently they did, for by 1579 Anthony Gilby was concerned that Psalms were being sung more 'for fashion sake, then for good devotion and with understanding'.

Catholics also sang the Marot/Bèze Psalms, but as French Catholic attempts to parody or to suppress the Psalms demonstrate, such Psalm-singing became increasingly partisan. As George Wither records, Catholics 'have of late years disapproved the translation of these Psalms into the vulgar tongues, and scoffed at the singing of them in the reformed Churches' and 'in scorn term'd them Geneva Jigs, and Beza's Ballads'. When Protestants were persecuted, 'the Psalmists' words seem to have come almost automatically to their lips', serving both as 'battle hymns' in the Continental religious wars

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4 The Psalter of David in English purely and faithfully translated after the text of scline ('Argentine') [Antwerp], 1550), STC 2370.

5 See Prescott, French Poets, 15–17; and England, 23–27. For listing of verse forms from the Psalms used in the Sidney Psalms, see England, Appendix B, and Rashwell (Ph.D. diss.), 550.

6 The forms of prayers and ministration of the sacraments, etc. used in the English congregation at Geneva: and approved, by Jean Calvin (Geneva, 1556), STC 15661, sig. B2. For an account of the gradual collection of the Psalms by 'Thomas Sternebolde and others' and Whittingham's revisions to make the verse closer to the Hebrew, see Leaver, 'Ghostly Psalms', 241–56 and particularly the genealogical chart on 253. The Old Version was so called after the appearance of A New Version of the Psalms of David, Fitted to the Tunes Used in Churches, by N. Tate and N. Brady (1560), Wing B2659.

7 Leaver, 'Ghostly Psalms', 240–1, quoting from The Zurich Letters, Comprising the Correspondence of Several English Bishops and Others, with some of the Helvetian Reformers, during ... the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, ed. Hastings Robinson (Cambridge: Parker Society, 1847), 1. 71.

8 Miles Coverdale, Remains of Myles Coverdale, ed. George Pearson (Cambridge: Parker Society, 1840), 337. Cf. the subtitle of The Whole Booke of Psalms ... Very meete to be used of all sortes of people privately for their solace and comfort: laying apart all swayled Sonnes and Ballads, which tende only to the nourishing of yce, and corrupting of youth (1562), STC 2432.

9 Anthony Gilby, 'The Epistle to the Reader', in Théodore de Bèze, The Psalms of David, truly opened and explained by Paraphrases, according to the right sense of every Psalm (1586), STC 2023, sig. B6.


11 George Wither, A Preparation to the Psalter (1610), STC 29514, sigs. B7–B8. By attributing power to poetry in Sidneian terms, Wither claims that they 'feare the operation of the divine word expressed in Numbers' through 'our versified Psalms', because 'there lurks in Poey an enchanting sweetnese, that steals into the hearts of men before they be aware'. On Catholic repudiation of Marot's Psalms, see Prescott, French Poets, 29–34.
and as personal consolation in times of persecution. For example, when Adam de Sequart, emissary of Cardinal de Bourbon, Archbishop of Rouen, was sent to Dieppe in 1550 to suppress the Protestants, 2,000 of them stood by his door singing Morat’s Psalms in protest. A similar crowd of Psalm singers who marched to St Giles’ Church in Edinburgh so terrified Esme Stuart, Duke of Lennox, that he fled in terror. Marching into battle, the Huguenots sang Psalm 68, ‘Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered.’ The direct application of Psalms to their own situation can be seen in the use of the popular Psalm 124 (‘If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say’) to the arrival of the Prince de Condé in Orleans, when the Huguenots changed the refrain to ‘now may Orleans say’.13

Even reciting vernacular Psalms could become a political statement. For example, the recitation of Psalm 51, a standard part of the execution ritual, took on dramatic importance when the prisoner spoke in English instead of Latin.14 Foxe recounts that when Dr Rowland Taylor began to recite the Psalm in English the sheriff struck him, ‘Ye knave’, said he, ‘speak Latin, I will make thee.’ Foxe’s account of Lady Jane Grey’s death also emphasizes her use of the vernacular.15 Waiting execution, she recited ‘the Psalm of ‘Miserere mei Deus’ in English, in most devout manner throughout to the end’. Emphasizing her belief in the priesthood of all believers, Lady Jane ignored the Catholic priest and asked the crowd, ‘assist me with your prayers’.16

Psalms were also considered particularly appropriate for private meditation. As the oft-reprinted comments of Athanasius direct, readers should apply the Psalms to their own condition because ‘It is easy... for every man to finde out in the Psalmes, the motion and state of his owne soule’.17 As Matthew Parker said in his Prefatory ‘Of the vertue of Psalms’:

13 Ibid., 42–53.
16 See Sidney accounts for 1573, De L’Isle MS U1475 A4/3.
17 Foxe, Actes and Monuments, VI. 700.
18 The Whole Booke of Psalms, sig a97. See also St Athanasius, as translated by Matthew Parker, The Whole psalter translated into English Metre, which containeth an hundred and fifty Psalms (1581), STC 2729, sig. C1.

John Calvin demonstrated just how personal that application could become in the lengthy address ‘to the godly Readers’ that prefaced his commentaries on the Psalms. Believing that his interpretation gained resonance because his situation paralleled the Psalmist’s, he explains that ‘it availed me not a little that I had abidden the same things that [David] bewaileth or much like, at the handes of the householde enemies of the Churche’. Others felt drawn to the Psalms because of tribulation. Psalm meditation became almost de rigueur for sixteenth-century prisoners, particularly those who believed that they were persecuted for their religious beliefs. Sir Thomas More, Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, Queen Mary Stuart, John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, and his brother Robert, later Earl of Leicester, are just a few of those who translated appropriate Psalms of penitence, or, in the case of the Dudleys, prayers for vengeance against their enemies.

Translations and meditations on the penitential Psalms were frequently published, such as those by George Gascoigne, Thomas Potter, William Hunnis, and most notably Thomas Wyatt’s reworking of Aretino’s Sette Salmi della Penitentia di David. Wyatt stresses ‘inwardness’ when he speaks of ‘Inward Sion, the Sion of the ghost’ and of the ‘heart’s Jerusalem’. Pembroke was probably familiar with some of these versions. She did know the 26 sonnets on Psalm 51 composed by Anne Lok, because she quotes Lok’s phrase ‘O god, god of my
Psalm translation provided more scope for independent statement than other scriptural translation, because the ambiguous ‘I’ of the Psalms leaves a space for the reader to insert a personal voice. ‘David’s infolded voices express Christ and ourselves as well as his own circumstance’, as Anne Prescott reminds us. Equally important is the complexity of the nested speakers. Translators usually speak in two voices, their own and that of the original author, but the divinely inspired Psalms are a special case. Anthony Gilby, referring to his English translation of Béze’s commentaries on the Psalms, made the sequence clear. Béze, he says, has written ‘a briefe and a plaine declaration of the meaning of the holy Ghost, who did endite the Psalms, and set them forth by his secretaries, David and others’. That is, the Psalms he is presenting have four authors, in descending order from God, through David, to Béze, and then to Gilby himself. A similar pattern is seen in John Donne’s poem ‘Upon the translation of the Psalms by Sir Philip Sydney, and the Countesse of Pembroke his Sister’. Saying that they make ‘one John Baptists holy voice’, he calls the brother and sister ‘this Moses and this Miriam’ and portrays them as divinely inspired in their Psalms, if at two removes:

The songs are these, which heavens high holy Muse
Whisper’d to David, David to the Jewes:
And Davids successors, in holy zeale,
In formes of joy and art doe re-reveade
To us...  

That is, God speaks to David, who records God’s words for the Jews; the Sidneys, who have become ‘Davids successors’, then ‘re-reveale’ those words to us in English. Pembroke also speaks through another authorizing voice in addition to those of God and David, as Elaine Beilin and Gary Waller remind us—that of her brother Philip, who had not only begun to paraphrase the Psalms, but had praised them as the highest form of poetry, ‘they that did imitate the unconceivable excellencies of God’.

The Sidneian Psalms, based on sophisticated Continental literary models, were a conscious attempt to ‘better grace’ those Psalms than ‘what the vulgar form’d’, Pembroke’s harsh, if accurate, assessment of the thumping metres of the Sternhold and Hopkins Psalter decreed for public singing by King Edward. In dedicating the Psalms to Elizabeth, Pembroke says that David would not be displeased by the Sidneian version, ‘Oft having worse, without repining wore’ (‘Even now that Care’, 32). Her contemporaries agreed with her assessment. Thomas Moffet, for example, says that her ‘pen divine and consecrated health’ (51. 40) and adapts her phrase ‘filthie fault’ (51. 9). Pembroke would undoubtedly have been familiar with Psalm paraphrases by other women. Lady Elizabeth Fane’s meditations on twenty-one Psalms, published by Robert Crowley in 1550 (no longer extant), were available to her, and there were additional models in the Psalms attributed to Anne Askew and to Queen Elizabeth by John Bale, and women’s prayers based on Psalms in Thomas Bentley’s The Monument of Matrones, including those by Lady Elizabeth Tyrwhit. Undoubtedly many others, like Pembroke herself, wrote but did not print Psalm meditations. As Sidney said, the Psalms are appropriate for all persons in all occasions. ‘Used with the fruit of comfort by some, when, in sorrowful pangs of their death-bringing sins, they find the consolation of the never-leaving goodness’, they also may ‘be used by whosoever will follow St. James’s counsel in singing Psalms when they are merry’.

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Queen Elizabeth, trans. Margaret of Angoulême, A godly meditatyon of the christen soule (1543), STC 17320, sig. A7r–8: The first examination of Anne Askew, lately Martyred in Smythfeld, by the Romyshe popes upholders, with the Elucydacyon of Johan Bale (Wesel, 1546), STC 846, sig. 4F7–8. Bale apparently translated at least Psalm 13 himself. See King, Reformation, 219; Zim, Psalms, 221. Thomas Bentley, The Monument of Matrones: containing seven several Lamps of Virginitie (1592), STC 1929–3. Psalm paraphrases in Bentley’s compilation are listed in Zim, Psalms, 244–5.

Odes in imitation of the seven penitential Psalms in seven several kinde of verse by Elizabeth Grymemeston, for example, were published after her death by her husband in his Miscellanes (1604), STC 12407.

Sidney, Miscellaneous Prose, 80.


Beilin, Redeeming Eve, 148–9; Waller, 'The Countess of Pembroke and Gendered Reading', in Renaissance Englishwoman, 339.

Sidney, Miscellaneous Prose, 80.

Early version of 'To the Angell Spirit of Sir Philip Sidney' as printed in The Whole Works of Samuel Daniel (1623), II, 11. See [Variant] text. The revised version in the Tirrall MS is far more tactful.
Psalms, ‘From wronging verse did Royall Singer raise’.32 Donne agreed, asking with patriotic concern if ‘our Church’ should sing ‘More hoarse, more harsh than any other’.33 Prior to the Sidneys, he says, Continental versions shamed those in English; the Psalms were ‘So well attyr’d abroad, so ill at home’ (38). Donne quotes from Psalm 97.1 to show the patriotic contribution of the Sidneys:

And who that Psalm, Now let the Iles rejoyer,
Have both translated, and apply’d it too,
Both told us what, and taught us how to doe.
They shew us Ilanders our joy, our King,
They tell us why, and teach us how to sing. (18-22)

Parallel to the tradition of Psalm singing and meditation was scholarly prose translation and commentary in Latin and in the vernacular. Such application of Greek and Hebrew scholarship to the scriptures became increasingly Protestant, because the Catholic Church chose the Latin Vulgate as the authoritative text. To promote Protestant scholarship, Francis I founded the Collège de Paris as a trilingual college, emphasizing the study of the three scholarly languages of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; the noted Hebraist Varablus taught there. Trilingual studies flourished in Wittenburg and Geneva, as well as in France and England. These studies produced more accurate vernacular translations of the Bible. Unlike Coverdale, Tyndale based his translation of the Pentateuch (1530) on the Hebrew text. In one of his final letters, he asks that he might have his Hebrew Bible, grammar, and dictionary to continue work even as he awaits execution.34

Translation as a literary form presents significant challenges, particularly when one is presenting a sacred text. As George Wither noted in his Schollers Purgatory, ‘the Translater [of the scriptures] is...bound, not only to the sence (according to the liberty used in other Translations), but to the very words, or words of the same power with those used in our allowed Interpretations.’35 Pembroke’s own attitude toward Psalm paraphrase is reflected in her rendering of the Psalmist’s prayer, ‘That in Thy lawes I may Thy Scholar be’ (Variant Psalm 119H.32). She consulted the best translations and commentaries available to her, but she maintained a critical attitude toward these sources, which frequently disagreed with each other.36

Her interpretation is based on standard Protestant texts: the Coverdale Psalter, already beloved in the Book of Common Prayer, the Geneva Bible with the notes of 1560; and the commentaries of Calvin and of Beze (in Latin and in the English translation of Anthony Gilby). Because she so frequently gives composite readings of these texts, she must have worked with them open before her. Occasionally she will echo other biblical translations, such as that by Bucer, the Tyndale/Coverdale Bible published by John Rogers under the pseudonym of Thomas Matthew, the Bishops Bible, and the Taverner Bible. Wording or repeated rhymes indicate that she also used or recalled other metrical Psalms, particularly those of Matthew Parker, but also those of Robert Crowley, Sternhold and Hopkins, George Gascoigne, and Anne Lok. Metaphors, interpretation, and wording indicate that she also consulted such additional sources as the commentaries of Victorinus Strigelius, Franciscus Vatablus, George Buchanan, and Immanuel Tremellius.

Much of her phrasing is adapted directly from her biblical sources, of course, like the opening of Psalm 45, ‘My hart endites an argument of worth’, from the Psalter (v. 1): ‘My hart is enditing of a good matter’. More typically, she will restate biblical phrases. For example, she adapts a sentence from the Geneva Bible, ‘thou hast made us to drinke the wine of giddines’ (60: 3), into a doublet, ‘dull horror was our drink, | we drinking giddy grew’ (60: 11-12); and she restates the biblical phrase, the wicked ‘shall laugh him to scorn’ (Psalter 52: 7), as the descriptive ‘laughing shoote at thee’ (52: 23-4). Often she incorporates notes from the Geneva Bible into her text, as the inexpressibility topos in 104.7 or the angels in 89.19-20. Sometimes she echoes the wording of other biblical translations, such as Bucer, ‘joye, heardsman’ (80.1), ‘shine’ (80.2), ‘anguishes’ (120.1), ‘closeth’ (125.7); and the Bishops’ Bible, ‘A Vine thou didst translate’ (86.17).

Pembroke relied primarily on scholarly translations and commentaries, but she occasionally does echo other metrical versions of the

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32 Moffet, Silkwormes, sig. G1.
33 Donne, ‘Upon the translation’, ll. 43-4.
35 Wither, Schollers Purgatory (1624), STC 25919, sig. C2.
36 On the sources for the Sidneian Psalms, see Sidney, Poems, 505-9; Sidney, Psalms, pp. 10-11; Waller, Mary Sidney, 184-90, Zimm, Psalms, 152-70; England, 30-54, 101-10; Richard Todd, ‘So Well Atty’d Abroad’: A Background to the Sidney-Pembroke Psalter and Its Implications for the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric, Texas Studies in Literature and Language 29 (Spring 1987), 74-93.
not retain the marks he uses to key a passage in the main text to the corresponding passage in the margin because such marks have significance only in the context of the manuscript. The relatively late date of G and M (and sometimes C) is indicated partly by their use of the apostrophe, not just to indicate an elided 'e', but to signal the possessive form of nouns, as in the clear examples of 'The simple's surest guard' (Ps. 116. 13, MSS M, C) and 'His Sacred Name's eternal praise' (Ps. 145. 62, MSS M, G). The manuscripts of the σ group (H, Q, E) frequently double consonants and regularly have, for instance, 'holly(e)' or 'hollic' for 'holy'; the forms with double consonants are not normally reported. MS D invariably has 'wer' for 'were' and 'neclegt' for 'neglect'; the former variation is not noted in the apparatus, and the latter is cited only at Ps. 82. 6, where MS O is corrected in such a way as to suggest that θ may have had 'neclegt'. The eccentric spellings of MS J and routine scribal corrections in other manuscripts are reported selectively, as stated in 'Editorial Procedure'. In the case of the alternative Psalms, however, variations in the witnesses have been more fully reported because there is less certainty about the reliability of the copy-texts for those paraphrases than for the ones in MS A.

Deus auribus
Psalm 44.

Lorde, our fathers true relation
often made, hath made us knowe,
howe thy pow'r in each occasion
thou of old for them did'st showe.
howe thy hand the Pagan foe
rooting hence, thie folke implanting,
leavelesse made that branch to grow,
this to spring, noe verdure wanting.

Never could their sword procure them
Conquest of the promis'd land:
never could their force assure them
when theie did in danger stand.
Noe, it was thie arme, thie hand,
Noe, it was thie favors treasure
spent upon thy loved band,
loved, whie? for thie wise pleasure.

Unto thee stand I subjected,
I that did of Jacob spring:
bidd then that I bee protected,

thou that art my god, my king.

by thar succour thou didst bring,
wee their pride that us assailed,
downe did tread, and back did fling,
in thie name confus'd and quailed.

For my trust was not reposed
in my owne, though strongest, bowe:
nor my scabberb held enclosed

that, whence should my safety flowe.

Psalm 44. Incipit and Psalm 44: written in gold in the small space at the top off Ps. 39. Lacking in I.
Variant in B.
Incipit: om. C, Q
4 showe.] = K, X; ~: G, M
hence] out E
folke] folkes Q
7 branch]
plant J
never] n added in different hand and ink in A
11 added in darker
ink in A; om. F
20 mye] myne K, x though,] thought, H, E
25 nor] n added in different hand and ink in A; or F, J
enclosed] unenclosed C, G, M
Psalmes 44

thou, O god, from every foe
did'st us shild, our haters shaming:

But aloofe thou now dost hover,
grieving us with all disgrace:
hast resign'd and given over
in our Campe thy Captaines place.

By them all that dwell about us,
tos'd wee flie as balls of scorne;
all our neighbours laugh, and flout us,
Men by thee in shame forlorne.

Soe rebuke before mee goeth,
as my self doe daily goe:
Soe Confusion on mee groweth,
that my face I blush to show.

Surelie lord, this daily mutther
for thie sake wee thus sustaine:
for thy sake esteem'd no further
then as sheepe, that must be slaine.

Heavie griefe our soule abaseth,
prostrate it on dust doth lie:
earth our bodie fast embraceth,
nothing can the Claspe untie.

by reviling slaundring foe
inly wounded thus I languish:
wreakfull spight with outward blow
anguish adds to inward anguish.

All, this all on us hath lighted,
yet to thee our love doth last:
as wee weare, wee are delighted
still to hold thie cov'nant fast.

If our god wee had forsaken,
or forgott what hee assign'd:
if our selves wee had betaken
Godds to serve of other kind.

Surelie lord, this daily murther
for thie sake wee thus sustaine:
for thy sake esteem'd no further
then as sheepe, that must be slaine.

Heavie griefe our soule abaseth,
prostrate it on dust doth lie:
earth our bodie fast embraceth,
nothing can the Claspe untie.
Psalms 44-45

rise, and us with helpe supplie:
lord, in mercie soe esteeme us,
that wee maie the mercie trie,
Mercie maie from thrall redeeme us.

Eruclavit cor meum.
Psalm 45.

My harte endites an argument of worth,
the praise of him that doth the Scepter swaie:
My tongue the pen to paynt his praises forth,
shall write as swift, as swiftest writer maie.
then to the king these are the wordes I saie:
faire art thou then sonnes of mortall race:
because high god hath blessed thee for ay,
thie lipps, as springs, doe flowe with speaking grace.

This honors sword gird to this mightie side,
O thou that dost all things in might excell:
with glorie prosper, on with triumph ride:
since justice, truth, and meeknes with thee dwell.
soe that right hande of thine shall teaching tell
such things to thee, as well maie terror bring,
and terror such, as never erst befell
to mortall mindes at sight of mortall king.
Sharpe are thie shaftes to clive their hartes in twaine
whose heads doe cast theh Conquestes to withstand:
good cause to make the meaner people faine
with willing hartes to undergo thie hand:

Psalm 45

Incipit and Psal: 45 written in darker ink than the text (here and through c. Ps. 138).
Lacking in B has verse numbers 1-17 by lines 1, 6, 9, 11, 17, 21, 25, 29, 33, 37, 41, 45, 49, 53.
57, 59, 63.
Incipit: om. Q

2 that) who B
3 paynt] aynst over erasure in A
4 shall] added in different ink in A
5 doe flowe with speaking grace] doe flowe with speaking grace K; doe speake with flowing grace G
10 O] B, K, χ; om. F, ȝ; A has + in left margin probably to note originally missing O which is added in ink not gold
13 teaching] teachings Q
15,and] (~ N, C, An Q befell,) ~ N, C
17 clive cleave B, K, χ
18 heads] held K, χ
Conquestes] conquest B, N
19 faine frigh B
20 hartes] parts N hanc] bande F Q

Psalm 45

thie throne 0 god doth never-falling stand:
thie Scepter ensigne of thie kingly might,
to righteounes is linckt with such a band,
that righteous hand still holds thie Scepter right.

Justice in love, in hate thou holdest wrong,
this makes that god; who soe doth hate and love:
Glad-making oile, that oile on thee hath fong,
which thee exaltes thine equalls farre above.
the fragrant riches of Sabean grove
Mirrh, Aloes, Casia, all thie robes doe smell:
when thou from Iovrie pallace dost remove
thie breathing odors all thie traine excell.

Daughters of kings among thie courtlie band,
by honoring thee of thee doe honor hold:
On thie right side thie dearest queene doth stand
richlie araid in cloth of Ophir gold
O daughter hearce what nowe to thee is told:
marke what thou hearst, and what thou markst obey
forgett to keepe in memorie enrold
the house, and folk, where first thou sawst the daie.

Soe in the king, thie king, a decre delight
thie beautie shall both breed, and bredd maintaine:
for onlie hee on thee hath lordlie right,
him onlie thou with awe must entertaine.
then unto thee both Tirus shall bee faine
presents present, and richest nations moe,
with humble sute thie Roiall grace to gaine,
to thee shall doe such homage as they owe.

This Queene that can a king hir father call,
doeth only shee in upper garment shine?
Naie under clothes, and what shee weareth all,
gold is the stuffe the fashion arte divine,

Psalm 45

incipit: Eructavit cor meum.
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the praise of him that doth the Scepter swaie:
My tongue the pen to paynt his praises forth,
shall write as swift, as swiftest writer maie.
then to the king these are the wordes I saie:
faire art thou then sonnes of mortall race:
because high god hath blessed thee for ay,
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O thou that dost all things in might excell:
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since justice, truth, and meeknes with thee dwell.
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when thou from Iovrie pallace dost remove
thie breathing odors all thie traine excell.

Daughters of kings among thie courtlie band,
by honoring thee of thee doe honor hold:
On thie right side thie dearest queene doth stand
richlie araid in cloth of Ophir gold
O daughter hearce what nowe to thee is told:
marke what thou hearst, and what thou markst obey
forgett to keepe in memorie enrold
the house, and folk, where first thou sawst the daie.

Soe in the king, thie king, a decre delight
thie beautie shall both breed, and bredd maintaine:
for onlie hee on thee hath lordlie right,
him onlie thou with awe must entertaine.
then unto thee both Tirus shall bee faine
presents present, and richest nations moe,
with humble sute thie Roiall grace to gaine,
to thee shall doe such homage as they owe.

This Queene that can a king hir father call,
doeth only shee in upper garment shine?
Naie under clothes, and what shee weareth all,
gold is the stuffe the fashion arte divine,
[Dedicatory Poem in the Tixall Manuscript of the Psalms]

To the Angell spirit of the most excellent
Sir Phillip Sidney

To thee pure sprite, to thee alone's addres't
this coupled worke, by double int'rest thine:
First rais'de by thy blest hand, and what is mine
inspir'd by thee, thy secrett power imprest.
So dar'd my Muse with thine it selfe combine,
Thy lightning beames give lustre to the rest,
That heavens King may daigne his owne transform'd
in substance no, but superficill tire
by thee put on; to praise, not to aspire
To, those high Tons, so in themselves adorn'd,
which Angells sing in their celestiall Quire,
and all of tongues with soule and voice admire
Theise sacred Hymmes thy Kinglie Prophet form'd.

Oh, had that soule which honor brought to rest
too soone not left and reft the world of all
what man could showe, which wee perfection call
This halfe maim'd peece had sorted with the best.
Deepe wounds enlarg'd, long festred in their gall
fresh bleeding smart; not eie but hart teares fall.
Ah memorie what needs this new arrest?
Yet here behold, (oh wert thou to behold!)
this finish't now, thy matchlesse Muse begunne,
the rest but peec't, as left by thee undone.
Pardon (oh blest soule) presumption too too bold:
if love and zeal such error ill=become
'tis zealous love, Love which hath never done,
Nor can enough in world of words unfold.

'To the Angell Spirit'

Poem lacking in A. This version preserved only in J, the copy-text. Lines 3 and 5 not indented, line 4 indented in stanza 1 in J.

27 'tis ti's J 28 words] I erased after r
30 no further] no further J 33 due tributes] due tributes J 34 in mee.] im mee. J
As goodly buildings to some glorious ende
   cut of by fate, before the Graces hadde
   each wondrous part in all their beauties cladde,
Yet so much done, as Art could not amende;
   So thy rare workes to which no witt can adde,
   in all mens eies, which are not blindly madde,
Beyonde compare above all praise, extende.

Immortall Monuments of thy faire fame,
   though not compleat, nor in the reach of thought,
   howe on that passing peecce time would have wrought
Had Heav’n so spar’d the life of life to frame
   the rest? But ah! such losse hath this world ought
can equall it? or which like greevance brought?
Yet there will live thy ever praised name.

To which theise dearest offrings of my hart
   dissolv’d to Inke, while penmans impressions move
the bleeding veines of never dying love:
I render here: these wounding lynes of smart
   sadd Characters indeed of simple love
not Art nor skill which abler wits doe prove,
Of my full soule receive the meanest part.

Receive theise Hynnes, theise obsequies receive;
   if any marke of thy sweet sprite appeare,
   well are they borne, no title else shall beare.
I can no more: Deare Soule I take my leave;
   Sorrowe still strives, would mount thy highest sphere
presuming so just cause might meet thee there,
Oh happie chaunge! could I so take my leave.

By the Sister of that
   Incomparable Sidney

To the Angell Spirit of the most excellent,
Sir Phillip Sidney.

[Variant]

To the pure Spirit, to thee alone addrest
Is this joynt worke, by double intrist thine,
Thine by his owne, and what is done of mine
Inspir’d by thee, thy secret powre improt.
My Muse with thine, it selfe dar’d to combine
As mortall staffe with that which is divine:
Let thy faire beames give luster to the rest.

That Israels King may daygne his owne transform’d
In substance no, but superficiall tire:
And English guis’d in some sort may aspire
To better grace thee what the vulgar form’d:
His sacred Tones, age, after age admire
Nations grow great in pride, and pure desire
So to excell in holy rites perform’d.

O had that soule which honour brought to rest
To soone not leaft, and reaft the world of all.
What man could shew, which we perfection call,
This precious peecce had sorted with the best.
But ah! wide festred wounds that never shall
Nor must be clos’d, unto fresh bleeding fall,
Ah memory, what needs this new arrist.

Yet blessed griefe, that sweetnes can impart
Since thou art blest. Wrongly do I complaine,
What ever weights my heavy thoughts sustaine
Deere feele my soule for thee. I know my part
Nor be my weaknes to thy rites a staine
Rites to aright, life, bloud would not refraine:
Assist me then, that life what thine did part.

Time may bring forth, what time hath yet suppress
In whom, thy losse hath layd to utter wast
The wracke of time, untimely all defac’t,
Remaying as the tombe of life disceast:
Where, in my heart the highest roome thou hast
There, truly there, thy earthly being is plac't
Triumph of death: in life how more then blest.

Behold, O that thou were now to behold,
This finish'd long perfections part begun
The rest but peic'd, as left by thee undone,
Pardon blest soule, presumption overbold:
If love and zeale hath to this error run
Tis zealous love, love that hath never dun,
Nor can enough, though justly here controul'd.

But since it hath no other scope to go,
Nor other purpose but to honour thee,
That thine may shine, where all the graces be;
And that my thoughts (like smallest streames that flow,
Pay to their sea, their tributary fee)
Do strive, yet have no meanes to quit nor free,
That mighty debt of infinitis I owe
To thy great worth which time to times inroule
Wonder of men, sole borne, soule of thy kind
Compleat in all, but heavenly was thy mind,
For wisdome, goodnes, sweetnes, fairest soule:
To good to wish, to faire for earth, refin'd
For Heaven, where all true glory rests confin'd;
And where but there no life without controule.

O when from this accompt, this cast-up somme,
This reckning made the Audit of my woo,
Sometime of rase my swelling passions know,
How work my thoughts, my sense, is striken dombe
That would the more then words could ever shew;
Which all fall short. Who knew thee best do know
There lives no wit that may thy prayer become.

And rest faire momuments of thy faire fame,
Though not complete. Nor can we reach, in thought,
What on that goody pece, time would have wrought.

'To the Angell Spirit' [Variant]
39 presumption] presumption 1623 49 owe,.] ~ 1623

'Angell Spirit': Variant: Text

Had divers so spar'd that life (but life) to frame
The rest: alas such losse the world hath nought
Can equall it, nor O more grievance brought,
Yet what remains must ever crowne thy name.

Receive these Hims, these obsequies receive,
(If any marke of thy secret spirit thou beare)
Made only thine, and no name els must wear.
I can no more deare soule, I take my leave,
My sorrow strives to mount the highest Sphere.
A MEDITATION OF A PENTENT SINNER: WRITTEN IN MANER OF A Paraphrase upon the 51. Psalme of David.

I have added this meditation following unto the end of this boke, not as parcell of maister Calvines worke, but for that it well agreeth with the same argument, and was delivered me by my frend with whom I knew I might be so bolde to use and publishe it as pleased me.

The preface, expressing the passioned minde of the penitent sinner.

[1] The hainous gylt of my forsaken ghost
So threatens, alas, unto my febled sprite
Deserved death, and (that me greveth most)
Still stand so fixt before my deseld sight
The lothesome filthe of my distained life,
The mighty wrath of myne offended Lorde,
My Lord whos wrath is sharper than the knife,
And deper woundes than dobleedged sworde,
That, as the dimmed and fordulled eyen
Full fraught with teares and more and more opprest
With growing streames of the distilled bryne
Sent from the fornace of a grefefull brest,
Can not enjoy the comfort of the light,
Nor finde the waye wherin to walle aright:

[2] So I blinde wretch, whome Gods enflamed ire
With pearcing stroke hath throwne unto the ground,
Amidde my sinnes still groveling in the myre,
Finde not the way that other oft have found,
Whome cherefull glimse of gods abounding grace
Hath ofte releved and oft with shyning light
Hath brought to joy out of the ugglye place,
Where I in darke of everlasting night
Bewayle my woefull and unhappy case,
And fret my dyeng soule with gnawing paine.
Yet blinde, alas, I groape about for grace.

[3] But mercy while I sound with shreking crye
For graunt of grace and pardon while I pray,
Even then despair before my ruthefull eye
Spredes forth my sinne and shame, and semes to say:
In vaine thou brayest forth thy bootlesse noyse
To him for mercy, O refused wight,
That heares not the forsaken sinners voice.
Thy reproubat and foreordeined sprite,
For damned vessell of his heavie wrath,
(As selfe witnes of thy beknownyung hart,
And secrete gilt of thine owne conscience saith)
Of his swete promises can claime no part:
But thee, cautif, deserved curse doeth draw
To hell, by justice, for offended law.

[4] This horror when my trembling soule doth heare,
When markes and tokens of the reproubate,
My growing sinnes, of grace my senslesse cheare,
Enforce the profe of everlastyng hate,
That I conceive the heavens king to beare
Against my sinfull and forsaken ghost:
As in the throte of hell, I quake for feare,
And then in present perill to be lost
(Although by conscience wanteth to replye,
But with remorse enforcing myne offence,
Doth argue vaine my not availyng crye)
With woefull sighes and bitter penitence
To him from whom the endlesse mercy flowes
I cry for mercy to releve my woes.

[5] And then not daring with presuming eye
Once to beholde the angry heavens face,
From troubled sprite I send confused crye,
To crave the crummes of all sufficing grace.
With foltring knee I falling to the ground,
Bendyng my yelding handes to heavens throne,
Poure forth my piteous plaint with woefull sound,
With smoking sighs, and oft repeated groane,
Before the Lord, the Lord, whom synner I,
I cursed wretch, I have offended so,
That dreeyling, in his wreekfull wrath to dye,
And damned downe to depth of hell to go,
Thus tost with panges and passions of despeepe,
Thus crave I mercy with repentant chere.

A Meditation of a penitent sinner, upon the 51.
Psalm.

[1]
Have mercy, God, for thy great mercies sake.
O God: my God, unto my shame I say,
Beynge fled from thee, so as I dreed to take
Thy name in wretched mouth, and feare to pray
Or ask the mercy that I have abuse.
But, God of mercy, let me come to thee:
Not for justice, that justly am accusde,
Which selfe word Justice so amaseth me,
That scarce I dare thy mercy sound againe.
But mercie, Lord, yet suffer me to crave.
Mercie is thine: Let me not crye in vaine,
Thy great mercie for my great fault to have.
Have mercie, God, pitie my penitence
With greater mercie than my great offence.

[2]
My many sinnes in number are encreast,
With weight wherof in sea of depe despeire
My sinking soule is now so sore opprest,
That now in peril and in present feare,
I crye: sustaine me, Lord, and Lord I pray,
With endlesse number of thy mercies take
The endlesse number of my sinnes away.
So by thy mercie, for thy mercies sake,
Rue on me, Lord, releve me with thy grace.
My sinne is cause that I so nede to have
Thy mercies ayde in my so woefull case:
My synne is cause that scarce I dare to crave
Thy mercie manyfold, whiche onely may
Releve my soule, and take my sinnes away.

Have mercie
upon me
to God
after thy great
mercie
And according
unto the
multitude of
thy mercies
do away myne
offences.

[3]
So foule is sinne and lothesome in thy sighte,
So foule with sinne I see my selfe to be,
That till from sinne I may be washed white,
So foule I dare not, Lord, approche to thee.
Ofe hath thy mercie washed me before,
Thou madest me clean: but I am foule againe.
Yet wash me Lord againe, and wash me more.
Wash me, O Lord, and do away the staine
Of uggly sinnes that in my soule appere.
Let flow thy plentuous streams of clesing grace.
Wash me againe, yea wash me every where,
Bothe leprous bodie and defiled face.
Yea wash me all, for I am all uncleane,
And from my sin, Lord, cleanse me ones againe.

For I knowledge
my wickednes, and
my sinne is ever before me.

[4]
Have mercie, Lord, have mercie: for I know
How muche I nede thy mercie in this case.
The horror of my gilt doth dayly growe,
And growing weares my feble hope of grace.
I fele and suffer in my thralled brest
Secret remorse and gnawing of my hart.
I fele my sinne, my sinne that hath opprest
My soule with sorrow and surmouning smart.
Drawe me to mercie: for so oft as I
Presume to mercy to direct my sight,
My Chaos and my heape of sinne doth
What ever way I gaze about for grace,
My filth and fault are ever before
And all uncleane, and
My sinne

[5]
Grant thou me mercy, Lord: thee thee alone
I have offended, and offendying thee,
For mercy loe, how I do lye and groane.
Thou with allpiercing eye beheldest me,
Without that regard that sinned in thy sight.
Beholde againe, how now my spirite it rues,
And wailes the tym, when I with foule delight
Thy swete forbearing mercy did abase,
My cruell conscience with sharped knife
Doth splat my ripped hert, and layes abrode
The lothesome secretes of my filthy life,