

# *Revision in Astrophel and Stella*

## Some Aspects of the Problem

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### ABSTRACT

*In his edition of the Poems of Sir Philip Sidney, William Ringler proposed that all the known manuscripts and early printed editions of Astrophel and Stella descended from a single source that was subject to various states of textual corruption in their transmission. This article proposes that instead of a unitary source, Sidney worked through various states of the text as the sequence evolved, and that the textual history reflects the genesis and evolution of Sidney at work, dividing the z tradition into two distinct parts. Further, it examines in detail the nature and character of the adjustments made to the z<sup>2</sup> tradition when the copy was prepared for the press, and what it might indicate about the third party that did this.*

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IN 1999, MICHAEL SAENGER RAISED THE ISSUE OF WHETHER *ASTROPHEL and Stella* had been revised by Sir Philip Sidney, setting forth a variety of examples that suggested authorial insight rather than scribal or compositor error. His argument was based on a comparison of the two quarto editions published by Thomas Newman in 1591, and the folio text of William Ponsonby from 1598. What Saenger had not been able to compare were the two manuscripts of the z and y traditions, or the Bright manuscript from the x tradition, that would have further refined his argument.<sup>1</sup> The other issue that Saenger did not raise was whether a third party may have modified the copy for the first Newman edition (STC 22536; hereafter, Q1),

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1. British Library Additional MS 61822, ff.91<sup>r</sup>–103<sup>r</sup> (L A61822; z tradition, 100 sonnets, no songs), Edinburgh University Library MS De.5.96 (E<sup>2</sup> De.5.96; y tradition, 91 sonnets and x songs), British Library Additional MS 15232, ff.21<sup>r</sup>–30<sup>v</sup> & 32<sup>r</sup>–34<sup>r</sup> (L A15232; x tradition, first 20 sonnets, song 8 only). Two texts linked to the z tradition occur in the Arundel-Harington manuscript; see HUGHEY 1960, I: 116–17, II: 74–76 [71, song x] and I: 254–55, II: 352–55 [223, sonnet 1]), with sonnet 18 present in Harington's translation of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (STC 746, L4<sup>v</sup>; 1591), and sonnet 75 copied by him in York Minster MS XVI.L.6, p. 200. For more on these matters, see also WOULDHUYSEN 1986, 388–92 and footnote 15.

creating variants independent of those by Sidney. What follows is a fresh investigation of the manuscript and printed sources of *Astrophel and Stella* that maps the transformation of the text through its stages of revision and transmission, with a focus on the z tradition and its variant witnesses.

When Ringler edited Sidney, he selected his copytext and listed the principal variants but his approach was not exhaustive. For its time, and given his working assumptions, that method was sufficient, if not ideal. His edition was, nevertheless, viewed as having brought clarity to the history of the various texts and witnesses, although it meant that Ringler dismissed what a detailed study would have revealed to him. Authors revise, Sidney revised — as Woudhuysen has put it, Sidney “was an inveterate reviser”: those interested in the texts know this from the complicated transmission history of the *Arcadia*;<sup>2</sup> yet *Astrophel and Stella* has been treated as if Sidney began at sonnet 1, ended at sonnet 108 and, while he was writing, varied the text with eleven songs, starting after sonnet 64. This was, in his landmark edition of the poems, the position that Ringler adopted, predicating his view by analogy between Sidney’s practices in the *Old Arcadia* and the variants found in the z tradition:

The only certain examples we have of Sidney’s methods of revision are in the poems of the *Old Arcadia*. There, though he occasionally changes words or phrases, which are the only kinds of variants we find in Z, he more often rewrote whole stanzas or added or substituted whole lines, a type of variant never occurring in Z.

(1962, 454)

This last statement has, at best, a somewhat narrow perspective for, given the technical limitation of the sonnet to fourteen lines, the only way in which Sidney could rewrite whole stanzas is either to add or replace sonnets in the sequence, or to make structural changes to their order — given there are only eleven songs. Even so, to claim that such changes are “a type of variant never occurring” is factually not true unless one begins with the premise that any difference found in the z tradition must *a priori* be the consequence of corruption. The z-group Houghton manuscript, for instance, contains only one hundred sonnets and no songs: hence, the question arises as to what this might indicate about its origins and Sidney’s methods of composition — a subject for later discussion. Nevertheless, having created a circular theory of the evidence, Ringler then proceeded with a number of non-sequiturs:

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2. See WOULDHUYSEN 1999, 211; and for the *Arcadia*, see 299–355.

I therefore conclude that the verbal variants in Z result entirely from scribal corruption, and if the verbal variants are corruptions, the omissions and changes of order in the sonnets must likewise be scribal and not authorial. Z must then be a corrupt descendant of O and Sidney must have produced only a single version of *Astrophil and Stella* which he subsequently never revised.

(1962, 455)

As Saenger observed, “this does not make sense” (1999, 419). Beyond the “if” upon which the claim about variants hangs, or the uses of “entirely” and “corruption” that Ringler applies to the z tradition, and the “if *a* then *b*” construction that implies a necessary connection where there is none, these statements, neither separately nor cumulatively, demonstrate that “Sidney must have produced only a single version” of the poems. First, and most obviously, if *any* variant can be explained as being other than the result of “corruption”, then the entire premise of the thesis is invalidated. Second, the use of “omissions” precludes consideration of there being earlier and later states. Third, Ringler also surmised that Sidney had “kept his miscellaneous songs and sonnets in a portfolio on unbound separate sheets of paper that could easily be disarranged” (1962, 435) — a claim similar to the comment made by Sidney about the *Arcadia*, it “being done in loose sheetes of paper” that were sent to his sister “as fast as they were done”.<sup>3</sup> These statements, if true, equally make it plausible that *Astrophel and Stella* was first written and kept on separate sheets, and then organized into smaller groups, before being re-organized into its present order with a final minor adjustment; and by related implication, it means that the initial writing of the sonnets was not necessarily sequential. Last, the claim that z was a version that Sidney “subsequently never revised” is entirely contingent on the cumulative freight of the previous assertions, none of which stand by themselves. Even more problematic, as will be seen, is that the z tradition descends not from one original source, but two (these will later be referred to as z<sup>1</sup> and z<sup>2</sup>).<sup>4</sup>

In treating *Astrophel and Stella* as the product of a single predetermined creative impulse, Ringler was very much beholden to the arguments

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3. See also Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia* (STC 22539–39a; 1590), A3<sup>v</sup>; and WOU DHUYSEN 1995, 303–06.

4. In his absurd account of the transmission of *Astrophel and Stella*, Kuin (1998, 177) noticed that there were two states of the z tradition, although this is for reasons other than he suggests.

of Greg and Pollard about ideal copy, final authorial intention, and the ubiquity of piracy as a source of corruption in print. On the one hand, this meant that he took Greg's argument in *The Calculus of Variants* (1927) as an understood given, and formed his stemma accordingly; on the other, it simplified having to account for revision and creative complexity in the composition of the sequence and the evolution of Sidney's thought.<sup>5</sup> In addition, Ringler bought into the Collier-Pollard account of the "piracy" of the first quarto without subjecting that narrative to rigorous scrutiny — indeed he amplified it with a series of new claims that cannot be justified on closer examination.<sup>6</sup>

If, instead of the single creative impulse model, Ringler had explored the premise that the witnesses represent different stages in the evolution of the text, then his textual diagram would not have been x, y, and z as three descending traditions from a single source, with x given primacy; but rather a genetic development proceeding loose papers > z<sup>1</sup> > z<sup>2</sup> > y > x as a horizontal sequence, x being the last state of Sidney's revisions and the loose papers and z texts as the earliest surviving witnesses — a view that, in turn, would have necessitated a reconsideration of the events surrounding the first publication of the poems, and a more nuanced reading of Sidney at work. This discussion, therefore, is based on a word-by-word analysis of every variant across every witness to the text of *Astrophel and Stella*.<sup>7</sup>

Such has been the reverence accorded Ringler's edition that it has proved extraordinarily difficult for later scholars to look at the textual and historical evidence anew from first principles.<sup>8</sup> Hence, the focus of much of the subsequent discussion has been around who may have supplied the copy for the first publication of the sequence rather than the texts and their variants. In the most significant reconsideration of the Sidneian manuscript evidence since Ringler and the respective *Arcadia* editions of Robertson and Stretkowicz,<sup>9</sup> Woudhuysen surveyed the source documents, manuscript and printed, and what could be established about their history. However, little about this work was textual. When it came to *Astrophel and Stella*, Woudhuysen redrew the stemma in a more traditional manner, but otherwise concentrated on the issues surrounding the publication of Q1

5. See GREG 1927 and 1950–51; and MAXWELL 1966, 374–91.

6. See BLAND 2023, page refs, in this issue.

7. Using digital copies, the variants were recorded in columns on a layout of A3 in 8-point type.

8. Davis (2011, 80), for instance, predicates his entire discussion upon Ringler's textual reconstruction: "the starting place must be Ringler's stemma".

9. See ROBERTSON 1973 and STRETKOWICZ 1987.

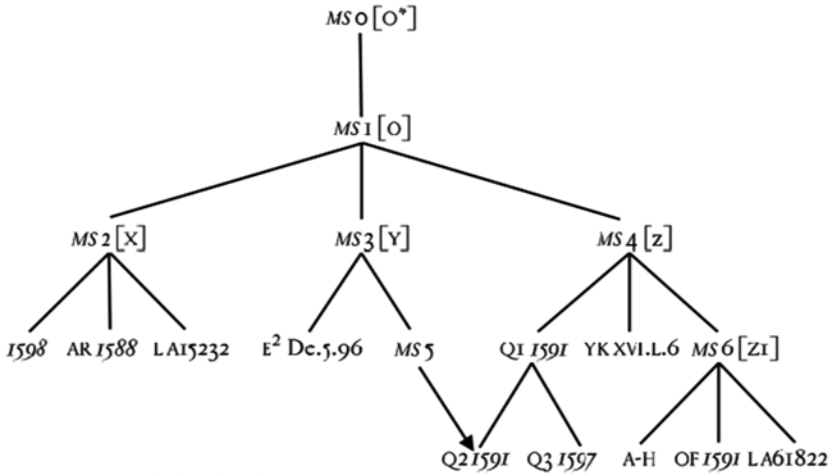


Figure 1. *Astrophel and Stella*, modified stemma per Woudhuysen.

rather than the textual evidence and what the variants might reveal about Sidney's stages of composition.<sup>10</sup>

Before turning to the textual variants, it may help to repeat the textual history of *Astrophel and Stella* as proposed by Woudhuysen (see Fig. 1, above), without Ringler's elongated line to the z manuscripts, but with some other witnesses included. The hypothesis begins with MS 0, which represents Sidney's original working papers. From that source descends a single finished manuscript (MS 1) that was then copied three times (MS 2 or x, 3 or y, and 4 or z), giving rise to the separate traditions: the x tradition includes the 1598 "authorized" text printed with the third edition of the *Arcadia*, the quotations by Abraham Fraunce in the *Arcadian Rhetorike* (AR 1588), and the Bright manuscript (L A15232);<sup>11</sup> the y tradition consists of the Dymoke manuscript that passed to William Drummond (E<sup>2</sup> De.5.96), and another (MS 5) that was used to correct the first printed edition (Q1) in order to create the second edition (Q2); whilst the z tradition includes the copies made by Sir John Harington of Kelston (YK XVII.L.6, A-H, OF 1591), the Houghton manuscript of his neighbour William Briton (L A61822),<sup>12</sup>

10. See RINGLER 1962, 455; see also WOULDHUYSEN 1995, 366.

11. STC 22536 (Q1, 1591); 22537 (Q2, 1591); 22541 (1598), 2X2<sup>r</sup>–3B3<sup>r</sup>; STC 11338 (1588); British Library Additional MS 15232, ff.21<sup>r</sup>–30<sup>v</sup> & 32<sup>r</sup>–34<sup>r</sup>; for y and z, see footnote 2, above.

12. Woudhuysen (1995, 347) erroneously states that the sequence was "copied in a clear and fairly fluent secretary hand" by William's father, John Briton, who died in 1587. Ringler (1962, 541) clearly (and correctly) identified the hand as that

and, via another route, the first edition of 1591 (Q1), and Lownes edition of 1597 (Q3).

Even with the inclusion of the York transcript of sonnet 75 (YK LV.L.6), sonnet 18 cited in Harington's translation of *Orlando Furioso* (OF 1591), and the Lownes edition of 1597 (Q3), this diagram is neither complete nor correct — as the history of Song x (“O deare life”) reveals. Its first eighteen lines were set in William Byrd's *Songs of sundrie natures* in 1589 and copied in British Library Add MS 15118;<sup>13</sup> whilst a 30-line version, without lines 25–42, was printed in the two Newman quartos of 1591, the 1597 Lownes reprint, and set in Robert Dowland's *A musicall banquet*.<sup>14</sup> The complete 48-line version occurs in both the Arundel-Harington and Dymoke manuscripts (the latter without line 44 owing to eye-skip), and in 1598; whilst a 42-line text, without lines 37–42, in Bodleian Library Rawlinson Poetry MS 85 is attributed to “Britton”.<sup>15</sup> Other songs have similar manuscript histories.

With Song x, the stemmatic line for the Arundel-Harington manuscript conflates the source for the song with that of the first sonnet of *Astrophel and Stella*, which has a separate textual history. This is because, as a manuscript, Arundel-Harington was copied from separates and booklets in circulation as they came to hand — hence why the transcriptions vary between the Haringtons, father and son, and those associated with them.<sup>16</sup> Unlike the main Sidney manuscripts that were created at a single point in time from a single source, each poem is a record of a specific moment in the manuscript's evolution independent of the whole document. The Houghton manuscript, in contrast, which does not contain the songs, speaks of a specific moment in the genesis of *Astrophel and Stella* as a collection. This is demonstrable.

Song x, numbered by Hughey as 71 in the Arundel-Harington sequence, was copied as part of a small group of poems that follow an anonymous translation of Petrarch's forty-eighth canzone at 64. The first two items (65

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of William and the transcription as having taken place “probably between 1594 and 1596”. See also British Library Additional MS 61822\*, f.7<sup>r</sup>).

13. William Byrd, *Songs of sundrie natures* (STC 4256; 1589), F4<sup>v</sup>; British Library Add MS 15118, f.8<sup>r</sup>.

14. Robert Dowland, *A musicall banquet* (STC 7099; 1610), D1<sup>v</sup>–2<sup>r</sup>. The song is clearly identified as by Sidney on D1<sup>v</sup>; the attribution “*D'incerto*” on M1<sup>v</sup> is with respect to the tune, not the lyrics.

15. Bodleian Library, Oxford, Rawlinson Poetry MS 85, ff.107<sup>v</sup>–08<sup>r</sup>; see also BOWEN 1895, 118–23.

16. See HUGHEY 1960: I. 27–36.

and 66) consist of a 36-line religious poem that she suggested may be by Edmund Campion, and a 180-line epitaph written following his execution: these must have originally formed a separate, possibly a folded folio sheet, that was copied by the younger Harington c.1582–83. The next item (67) consists of a two stanza 24-line poem from Book III Chapter 15 of the *Arcadia*, followed by another 24-line song associated with the first Earl of Essex the night before he died (68), then a ninety-line poetic tale of around the same date associated with Fulke Greville (69), a thirty-line anonymous song (70) and, finally, a full-text version of Song x (71). This material, copied by the younger Harington, would have fitted a folded quarto sheet.<sup>17</sup>

It might be argued that the Arundel-Harington witness to Song x is an exception — a one-off instance where a poem would later be revised and incorporated into *Astrophel and Stella*. Two points need to be made in that regard. First, to establish that it was a one-off instance a thorough study of the variants has to be undertaken to establish that fact — otherwise the argument is just a form of special pleading based upon intellectual laziness. Second, if it is not the only example of an early version of a text, then there is more than one example of revision, requiring a thorough study of the variants to be undertaken. Ringler’s “no revision” model was motivated by the awareness in a pre-digital era of the work that would be involved, of his choice of copy-text, his living in another country with all that entailed, and the hope that he was not wrong. His argument was of its time and served his turn. Woudhuysen knew that Sidney revised, that he was an “inveterate reviser”, and accepted Ringler’s “no revision” model without qualification. This is why the textual history of the first sonnet also matters.

Song x was copied c.1583. In contrast, the first sonnet of *Astrophel and Stella* is found much later in the Arundel-Harington manuscript at 223 in the sequence. It follows Sir John Harington’s translation of “Ovids confession”, written c.1593, with a leaf removed between that and the sonnet. The rest of the leaf on which the Sidney text is found is blank apart from the addition of seven lines in a later hand on the verso. The following leaf then begins with Sir Walter Raleigh’s epitaph on Sidney first published in 1593.<sup>18</sup> As Hughey suggests, the blank space indicates that

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17. It would have been copied as 67 (l.1<sup>v</sup>), 68 (l.1<sup>v</sup>), 69 (ll.2<sup>r</sup>–3<sup>r</sup>), 70 (l.3<sup>v</sup>), and 71 (l.4<sup>r-v</sup>): see HUGHEY 1960: I. 30, 105–17, II: 56–76. The suggestion by her that 70 was by Sir John Harington seems unlikely. Between I: 30 and II: 74 she changed her mind about Harington as the copyist of Song x, describing it later as “less carefully written than usual”.

18. See HUGHEY 1960: I: 32–33, 254–55, II: 351–52 and 355–56.

Harington may have first intended to transcribe more material, but that he then changed his mind. As the text shares the same reading in line 11 as the Houghton manuscript, the source copy for both is likely to have been the same. Quite why Harington started to transcribe *Astrophel and Stella*, some two years after its appearance in print is less evident as he must have either made or had a complete copy of his source, or at least had access to it, by the time that *Orlando Furioso* was at the press in early 1591 when he printed the eighteenth sonnet.<sup>19</sup> What the transcript confirms is that he possessed a copy of the poems c.1593, or approximately two years before his neighbor created the Houghton manuscript.<sup>20</sup> That source did not contain the songs.<sup>21</sup>

As witnesses, the Arundel-Harington manuscript has the first sonnet with the remainder of the page and its verso blank, apart from a later addition; and the Houghton manuscript has one hundred sonnets and ends on the recto, with the verso blank and then four leaves removed. We can be reasonably certain that these four leaves involved something other than the songs, as the length of that text — if copied as Britton transcribed the text he did copy — would have required eleven pages, or six leaves.<sup>22</sup> Further, there is no evidence that Britton did anything else other than copy

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19. Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso in English heroic verse* (STC 746; 1591: L4<sup>v</sup>); the forme would have been printed at least five months before the publication of *Astrophel and Stella*, or no later than April 1591; see BLAND 2023, 116–19.

20. Ringler (1962, 541) stated that Britton made the copy “probably between 1594 and 1596” based on internal evidence but without reference to the Arundel-Harrington manuscript; in his notes now kept with the Houghton manuscript he wrote that Harington “came into possession of a probably complete manuscript of Sidney’s *Astrophel and Stella*, from which he transcribed one song and one sonnet into his commonplace book, and quoted another sonnet in the notes to his translation of Ariosto; and that in or before 1596 Harington’s fellow-townsmen, William Britton, transcribed one hundred sonnets from the same manuscript into his commonplace book, which is now the Houghton manuscript” (British Library Add MS 61822\*, f.7<sup>r</sup>).

21. Drawing upon the conclusions he had made (cited in the previous footnote), Ringler stated that “At least as early as 1591 Harington owned or had access to an apparently complete manuscript” (1962, 541).

22. Ringler (1962, 541) notes the four stubs of the removed leaves between folios 103 and 104. Woudhuysen stated both that it “has not been noted before that a very large number of leaves have been removed from the manuscript” and that “No leaves are missing from the portion of the manuscript which contains *Astrophil and Stella*” (1995, 347) without noticing the leaves removed that follow.

out what was before him — a matter that will be discussed further. The inference, therefore, is that what Harington gained access to was a working document, or copy of it, of *Astrophel and Stella* during its composition that had yet to include some material — even if Sidney had written some of the songs while working on the *Arcadia*, as Ringler acknowledged of Song v.<sup>23</sup> This is why it is significant that Song x circulated as a part of a booklet, because it indicates a prior history to the composition of the sequence. With its corrupt and imperfect cognate Bodleian Rawlinson Poetry MS 85, Song x is also textually divergent from all but one other witness to the text.

First, let it be said that the omission of three stanzas of the text of Song x from the Newman edition of *Astrophel and Stella* was the result of an error in printing off the inner forme of sheet K that required the workmen setting up sheet I to omit three pages of text. To hide this, both Song viii and Song x retained their final stanza to provide closure to the text.<sup>24</sup> As a result, only the setting by Byrd is without these lines. For the other witnesses, the differences between the Arundel-Harington and Rawlinson Poetry texts and the rest may be easily set forth (as the second and third printed quartos are reprints, they will be omitted from the discussion that follows).<sup>25</sup> Compare, to begin with, line 44, which was omitted in the Dymoke manuscript:

AH:	yowr delyghts my payns increafe
o RP85:	These delights my paynes increafe,
Q1:	Your delights my woes increafe,
1598:	Thy delights my woes increafe,

What this reveals is a two-stage revision to the line; first, when he added the songs to *Astrophel and Stella* at the  $z^2$  stage, Sidney replaced “payns” with “woes”; later he then replaced “Your” with “Thy” — the reading “These” being a corruption.<sup>26</sup> If there is room for doubt whether such readings might constitute revision, that issue is resolved by lines 46–47, which show a clear division between the two states:

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23. See RINGLER 1962, xlv.

24. See BLAND 2023.

25. For those interested in the music, the recent recording by Robin Blaze and Concordia of the William Byrd setting neither reflects what Byrd set, nor the Newman or Ponsonby texts, but rather omits stanza 3 and adds stanzas 5 and 8: see BYRD 2004.

26. For an extended survey and discussion of the causes of variants and the difference between variants and acts of revision see BLAND 2010, 149–82.

- AH:           whearfore thoughts com fleepe w<sup>th</sup> me,  
                  till yee may awaked bee
- o RP85:       Thoughte therefore come fleepe with me  
                  Until thou maist awaked be
- q1:            Thinke no more, but die in mee,  
                  Till thou fhalt receiued bee,
- E<sup>2</sup> De.5.96:   Thincke no more but dye in me  
                  Till thou fhalt reuiued bee
- 1598:         Thinke no more but die in me,  
                  Till thou shalt reuiued be,

Putting aside the theologically interesting reading “receiued” in q1, and whether it is a transcription error, an intermediate state, or a third-party alteration of the kind to which the discussion will later turn, the difference between the Arundel-Harington and Rawlinson texts as compared to the others is one that cannot be casually dismissed as a misreading of the source document, nor is there any evidence of the full text circulating in memorial form via a musical setting. This is why the placement of the text in the Arundel-Harington manuscript is crucial, for the evidence points to it being copied c.1583, or close to the point of origin of the text, from a booklet that brought together material associated with the Essex-Sidney circle in the late 1570s and early 1580s.<sup>27</sup> The scale and nature of the variation between this source and that of q1 and later witnesses is such that the revision constitutes a creative rewriting of the lines, and one that achieves greater simplicity of expression. Consequently, if we accept that Sidney revised lines 46–47, then there is every reason to believe that he revised line 44 as well.

The crucial issue in these two examples is that the text of q1, the first Newman edition that is accepted as descending from the z tradition, differs from the Arundel-Harington texts and agrees with the Dymoke manuscript from the y tradition and the Ponsonby folio edition of 1598 from the x tradition. As such, the Arundel-Harington manuscript had to have had a separate line of descent from the source that supplied Newman the copy for q1. There is clear evidence, as well, that Song x existed at the time that the underlying source (z<sup>1</sup>) that was later copied as the Houghton

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27. The subsequent attribution of the later copy of the text in Rawlinson Poetry MS 85 to “Britton” has long mistakenly been read as being to Nicholas Breton rather than Harington’s neighbor. The misidentification began with Bowen (1895, 123) and was most recently repeated by Woudhuysen (1995, 262).

manuscript was created: that is, that although it was not included in the sonnet sequence at the time, Song x was nevertheless extant. Further, the Harington readings in Song x and the first sonnet cannot be a later revision than the Q1 source and, therefore, they must be earlier versions of the lines that Sidney later revised. This is exactly what Ringler denied.

As well as the evidence of revision in Song x, there is also a clear link between the Arundel-Harington miscellany and the one text it preserves in common with the Houghton manuscript, that is the first sonnet. The crucial variant occurs at line 11 of the text:

AH:           And others sute still seemd, but strawngers in my way  
L A61822:    and others fute ffill feemd but ffrange<sup>fs</sup> in my way  
Q1:           And others feete, ffill feem'de but ftraungers in my way,  
E<sup>2</sup> De.5.96:   And others ffeet ffill feem'd but ftrayngers in my waye  
L A15232:    and others feet still seemd but strangers in my way  
1598:        And others feete ffill feem'd but frangers in my way.

The variant readings of “fute” and “feete” cannot be explained as being derived from a confusion between “ee” and “u” in either secretary script or italic; both spatially and formatively they are sufficiently distinct as to stretch such a claim beyond the bounds of the plausible. Further, such differences in the texts of the Houghton manuscript and Q1, where the latter agrees with the  $\gamma$  and  $x$  traditions, recur in a manner that suggests acts of revision.

It is not only a matter of changes to the text that distinguish the Houghton manuscript and Q1 from each other: the single biggest difference between them is structural. The order of the sonnets in Q1 is the same as the “best” text of 1598 except that it does not include sonnet 37, sonnets 55 and 56 are in reverse order, and the songs are placed separately at the end with the omissions that have already been noticed. In contrast, the text of the Houghton manuscript is organized as three separate groups of sonnets that are “out of sequence”, with sonnets 55 and 56 also switched in their placement. It does not include eight of the sonnets, including 24, 35, and 37 (the “rich” poems), or any of the songs. The groups are as follows:

GROUP A:     sonnets 1, 6–8, 10, 22, 31–32, 34, 38, 44, 47.  
GROUP B:     sonnets 3–4, 49–54, 56, 55, 57–108, 2, 5.  
GROUP C:     sonnets 9, 11–21, 23, 26–27, 29–30, 33, 36, 39, 41–43, 48.  
NOT PRESENT: sonnets 24, 25, 28, 35, 37, 40, 45, 46; songs.

The implication arising from this pattern of organization is that the underlying document that gave rise to the Houghton manuscript consisted of three separate groups of papers.<sup>28</sup> If we assume that one poem was written on each page (for reasons that will be discussed later), then the first group consisted of six leaves, or a standard folio quire. The second group consists of two poems, a run of sixty in sequence, and then two other poems connected to the two at the start — or a leaf, five quires of six leaves, then a leaf — the two end leaves serving as a wrapper. The third group consists of twenty-four poems, or two quires of six leaves. The middle group formation indicates that sonnets 3–4 with 2 and 5 formed a single sheet wrapper around the five main quires of group B, with the inner pages copied before and the outer pages afterwards. Surrounding this central textual unit, a single quire was placed before, and two quires appended after it (12, 60 within 4, 24).

Such a reconstruction indicates that while the latter part of *Astrophel and Stella* was written, excepting the songs, as a single continuous sequence, the composition and organization of the other sonnets was more irregular. Further, it suggests that Sidney first wrote small groups of poems and then, having developed his initial ideas, wrote the latter part of the sequence. Next, he reorganized the initial section before adding the key sonnets and filling in other gaps, giving the whole an order, and finally added the songs, first at the end and then later placed through the sequence with missing words and lines filled in. That looks far more like the natural working method of an author shaping a work as it moves towards completion.

The pattern of groups A and C require some further comment, for the three quires, as they came to be written, do not look like an intended sequence, but rather a scribal copy made from loose authorial papers, probably on Sidney's behalf — that is, they were copied to provide a working document of some kind, not a finished draft to preserve or circulate. If that is true, then the material in Group B must be a scribal copy as well. There are at least two reasons why Sidney may have wished for such copies to be made, first to ensure against accidents and loss, and second to read as a fresh copy for any revisions he wished to make. Woudhuysen has extensively made the point that such a working practice was also the most likely method by which the two versions of the *Arcadia* were composed and, as he has commented, citing Ringler, it “would not have been unusual for writers of Sidney's social position” to do so.<sup>29</sup> Ringler, in turn, gave several

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28. Davis (2011, 85–87) assumes the order is owing to eccentric transcription habits.

29. See WOULDHUYSEN 1995, 103–05; 303–16.

other contemporary examples of gentleman authors who “usually had a fair copy made by a secretary, and then probably threw the original rough draft away”.<sup>30</sup> Another example of this practice can be traced to a first draft of a sonnet written by King James in his execrable hand with Scottish spelling being then transcribed in a fair secretarial hand with English spelling that was subsequently corrected by the king.<sup>31</sup>

One of the flaws in the traditional account of the *Astrophel and Stella* and its textual history has been the way in which the received assumptions about the sequence have made it easy to glide over or dismiss differences between the extant witnesses as corruption without giving them due consideration as to what each state might reveal. With the Houghton manuscript, Ringler made the very specific claim that “Britton removed all clues to Stella’s identity by omitting sonnets 24, 35, and 37, and obscured the love story by omitting the songs and jumbling the order of the remaining sonnets”.<sup>32</sup> This is a rather extraordinary statement, giving both agency and knowledge to a minor member of the gentry about the private life of Sidney and Penelope Rich as if it was the common gossip of the realm. It was not, nor would Britton have had either the motive to excise or the means to gain access to such details; and even if by some chance he did, there would scarce have been reason for him to censor his own private transcript and to remove more text than just the three sonnets with the references to “rich”, or for him to change the order or the poems that he copied. Woudhuysen, in turn, while acknowledging that the poems were “not in the same order as any of the printed editions”, muted Ringler’s claim without disputing it, stating that Britton transcribed “all he intended to or could copy into the manuscript”.<sup>33</sup>

Now, if either Britton or Harington had shuffled, or jumbled, the order of the poems, whether by intent or accident, we might expect some traces to remain as a natural consequence of belonging to a group of disassembled sheets or leaves that had been written on both sides of the paper. For the sake of it as an example, imagine that one of them had dropped the first part of the manuscript on the floor and that in picking up the sheets or leaves they then attempted to put things back together again as best they

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30. See RINGLER 1962, xlv: the claim that the originals were then thrown away is without evidence.

31. Illustrated with discussion in BLAND 2010, 155–59.

32. See RINGLER 1962, 542. Group A has hexameter, light/dark, night/sleep, and self-dialogue poems; Group C the Anacreontic and life at Court verse: see also DAVIS 2011, 86.

33. WOULDHUYSEN 1995, 347.

could. If MS 1 had been a complete version as Sidney intended (which is what the Ringler-Woudhuysen stemma proposes), then there would be no logical reason for the poems to have been re-sorted in the manner that they were then copied, for even as separated leaves sonnet 2 would have been on the verso of sonnet 1, and so on. In the first group of sonnets, only sonnets 7 and 8, and then 31 and 32 have that relationship. Further, among the eight sonnets not found in the manuscript, only sonnets 45 and 46 are sequential. Hence, there are no signs that the order was the result of a random accident, nor does the order show any signs (apart from the wrapper leaf of sonnets 2–5) of having been copied from one side of the sheet and then the other.

Such details matter. If the state of the Houghton manuscript cannot be explained through a random accident that led to a reorganization of the poems, then either someone chose to re-order and exclude material with a specific purpose in mind prior to Britton making his copy, and further to compile that manuscript in such a way as to give rise not just to the order but the underlying structure it has, or else the order speaks of a different state of the underlying papers at another moment in time before they were formally organized in the sequence we now associate with the work. As Britton's probable source was Harington, one would have to argue that either Harington or, in turn, his source, deliberately altered the first part of Sidney's papers while largely keeping the latter part intact. The problem with this approach is that it not only becomes an endless search for a culprit without a cause, or motive, at each step back one moves closer to that culprit being none other than Sidney — *Astrophel and Stella* not having a wide social circulation. Now if the *reductio ad absurdum* argument has led back to Sidney as the cause of the difference in order, then we are dealing with an authorial source for the state of the text — so unless one wishes to posit that Houghton is a late revision in which Sidney removed and re-ordered material (with all that would imply about the entire textual tradition), then it must be an earlier draft. That being so, the absence of the eight sonnets and the songs cannot be taken as an act of omission on the part of Britton or his source.

To clarify further the status of the Houghton manuscript, it is worth considering what else it might reveal about its origins. It is beyond the scope of the present article to engage in a full spelling analysis of the manuscript; however, a couple of details may be noted. Sidney, who wrote a fine italic hand, uses medial “y”, terminal “-i”, a double terminal “tt”, and was prone to omit terminal “-e” (as in “fayth”, “wai”, “putt”, and “som”); he also used short-s at the beginning of words and so writes “som”, not

“fom” — another reason why, when copied from autograph, “sute” would not have been confused with “feete”, as discussed above.<sup>34</sup> Harington, on the other hand, wrote a mixed secretary-italic hand using both medial and terminal “y”, with terminal “e” present when it is optional (“feete”, “agoe”) and, more idiosyncratically, he had a tendency to use doubled medial consonants (“battell”, “pollyticke”) as well as the terminal form.<sup>35</sup> If Britton accurately reflects his source, then it is far more likely that he worked from a copy that Harington had made rather than directly from a Sidney autograph, for the spelling variants in the Houghton manuscript are broadly consistent with such Harington practices as the use of a doubled medial consonant, whilst lacking the more distinctive separable features of Sidney’s hand.

Given that the Houghton manuscript represents the earliest state of the sequence as it has come down to us — that is, z<sup>1</sup> — then its near relative, Q1 (the first Newman edition), must derive from the next state of the underlying papers (z<sup>2</sup>) with all but sonnet 37 written, the order of the sonnets having been determined (except for 55 and 56 which remained the other way around), and the placement of the songs yet to be decided. As such, it represents the penultimate state of organization for the sequence with most of the major decisions having been made. It seems likely that, at this stage, Sidney had another transcript or two made, again for preservation and that he might be able to read the text through for a detailed revision. As with the source transcript that underlay the Houghton manuscript, a witness to this state appears to have been passed to a third party. These scribal copies appear to be the manuscripts that were given as gifts: they can only have been given to the closest of Sidney’s friends, most probably his “Mates in Mirth” Sir Edward Dyer and Fulke Greville.<sup>36</sup>

As Saenger has shown, many of the differences between Q1 and 1598 represent more than substitutions, or possible mis-readings of a source.<sup>37</sup> Now, there are readings where the Houghton manuscript agrees with the x and y traditions and Q1 is variant — to those readings the discussion will later turn. There are readings where Q1 agrees with the x and y traditions that reveal the Houghton manuscript either to be in error, or the earliest state of the text. There are, however, readings where the Houghton

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34. Ringler (1962, lxiv–lv) provides a more extensive list of spelling variants; however, as with his other textual work, this requires close re-examination.

35. As a sample, these comments are based on Harington’s autograph manuscript of *Orlando Furioso*: British Library, London, Additional MS 18920.

36. For Sidney’s will, see DUNCAN-JONES and VAN DORSTEN 1973, 143–52.

37. SAENGER 1999, 422–33.

manuscript and Q1 agree against the readings of the x and y traditions. It is those variants that Ringler grouped together as defining the z tradition as well as being evidence of its corrupt origin. However, once it is understood that the Houghton manuscript and Q1 derive from different sources, and different states of the text as it was being written, then any agreement between them cannot be corrupt, as Sidney would have had to replicate the error for it to be extant in both states. The z agreements are, in other words, authorial.

We can watch the process of revision at work and the way in which one small shift in word association leads Sidney to recast sonnet 56, lines 5–8 (sonnet 55 in the z traditions). The sonnet starts as an attack on the “schoole of Patience” that would have him be absent from Stella. In the z texts, Sidney sees “each” of the virtues in Stella’s face and then, when revising, word associates “each” to “teach” — that Stella’s face is a moral lesson. That insight then required that the lines be recast to accommodate the shift in meaning as the changes between the Houghton manuscript and 1598 show:

L A61822: when I might read thefe letters fayr of bliffe  
                   w<sup>th</sup>in her face ech virtue I could brooke  
                   from what the ledden counfells that I tooke  
                   as of a freend w<sup>ch</sup> ment not far amyffe

1598:       When I might reade thofe letters faire of bliffe,  
                   Which in her face teach vertue, I could brooke,  
                   Somewhat thy lead’n counfels, which I tooke,  
                   As of a friend that meant not much amiffe:

Now, the shift in register is about how Astrophel responds, not having seen Stella for a week, to the counsels of Patience, compared to what he would learn from Stella by being in her presence. In the first, it is her virtue, located within her face or look, that would better convey a message well-meant if not the most welcome; in the second, her face is the virtuous letter that teaches and implicitly upbraids him better than the leaden counsels of Patience whose kind intentions are well-meant if unwelcome. In the first, that correction is “not far amyffe” — in other words, even if Stella discomforts Astrophel by what she has to say, he knows that she means well. In the second, the sight of Stella makes the pedantry of Patience “not much amiffe”, that is bearable if tedious. The shifts in meaning that these changes register are thoughtful and sharpen the palpable hit: Astrophel is

conscious of what Stella's corrective would mean but irked even more by counsels of Patience who would have him remove from her presence.

If we dig a little deeper, we can see how Q1 agrees with the Houghton manuscript except with the revision of "far" to "much" in line 8, and that the Dymoke text agrees with 1598 without the punctuation, but with some extra capitalization. In addition, Q2 shows the corrector at work trying to fix the z<sup>2</sup> text in accordance with a copy of  $\Upsilon$  but leaving some traces of Q1.

Q1:           VVhen I might reade theſe Letters fayre of bliffe,  
                VVithin *her* face each vertue I could brooke,  
                From what the leaden counfels that I tooke:  
                As of a freende which meant not much amiffe.

Q2:           When I might reade thoſe Letters faire of bliffe,  
                Which in *her* face teach vertue, I could brooke,  
                Somewhat thy leaden counfels which I tooke:  
                As of a freend that meant not much amiffe.

ε<sup>2</sup> De.5.96: When I might reade thoſe *letteres* fayre of Bliffe  
                W<sup>ch</sup> in *her* fface teache Vertue I could brooke  
                Somewhat thy leaden councells w<sup>ch</sup> I tooke  
                As of a friend that meant not muc<sup>h</sup>e amiffe

There can be no doubt that as Sidney reworked the lines the language both gained in clarity and improved in sense, but that is exactly what one would expect of a writer working carefully through a technical problem. What Ringler resisted was the practicality of Sidney niggling at the detail, making cumulative small adjustments, that bring a thought into a sharper focus. Understood not as evidence of corruption but as witnesses to the creative process, the variants acquire purpose and meaning both for the literary insights they offer and the editorial role they serve.

Unlike songs and poems that can be expanded or shortened by the stanza, any revisions to the sonnets required precise adjustments to the text; a sonnet is a zero-sum game: fourteen lines, 140 syllables at ten per line, a fixed pattern of rhyme, and a carefully balanced internal music and structure; and while Sidney wrote in alexandrines and tried out Greek meters based on vowel lengths, those technicalities were even more demanding of his skill not less. When writing like this, if one element slips out of sequence, the whole falls apart; if one line is forced, the whole feels false. Revision is the linguistic equivalent of reworking a piece of jewelry,

and as easy to botch by making the wrong decision. Such adjustments are not, to be fair, always easy to follow, but the textual detail they generate is a necessary part of the discussion if we are to understand the evolution of the manuscripts, as well as being able to distinguish between revisions and remnants of serial composition by Sidney, and the involvement of others.<sup>38</sup>

Two further examples may serve to describe the kinds of variants found in the Houghton manuscript. In sonnet 27, Astrophel describes his silence, and the assumptions others make of his intentions, confusing ambition for pride. In the second line, his “darke abtracted guife” makes him:

L A61822: feeme moft alone in darkeft company  
 Q1: Seeme moft alone in greateft company,  
 Q2: Seeme moft alone in greateft company,  
 E<sup>2</sup> De.5.96: Seeme moft alone in greateft Company  
 1598: Seeme moft alone in greateft companie:

Either “darkeft” is a word substitution, or “greateft” is a revision.<sup>39</sup> In the previous line, the presence of “darke” is suggestive of word association, but equally this is something Sidney could have done, realized his slip, and fixed early on. Whilst the cause might be debated, many early variants are of this kind as can be seen from the third line of sonnet 59. Astrophel is complaining that Stella prefers her dog to him, and that in comparison:

L A61822: yf he wayt well I never thenc will move  
 Q1: If he waite well, I neuer thence would moue;  
 Q2: If he waite well, I neuer thence would moue;  
 E<sup>2</sup> De.5.96: yf he wayte well, I never thence would move  
 1598: If he waite well, I neuer thence would moue:

Here, all the witnesses, including Q1, are in agreement except for the Houghton manuscript. The variant “will” is a definite assertion, the common reading “would” makes it conditional. Again, unless one is going to propose that the Houghton manuscript is a radical late recasting of Sidney’s text, then the direction of the revision is clear. The reading “would” makes for a more nuanced statement: it is a logical second thought that refines an idea. Further it is far less likely that a scribe misread “would” as “will”, or actively changed the emphasis on this one occasion only: if

38. The phrase “serial composition” is from LOVE 1993, 53.

39. See also SAENGER 1999, 436–38.

that were the case, one would expect to see a pattern of similar misreadings that pointed to a careless scribe.

There are, of course, other examples of Sidney at work, recasting a line and thought to gain in clarity and sense, that are spread throughout *Astrophel and Stella*. For instance, in the fourth line of sonnet 65, the z traditions agree in two readings that were subsequently revised. In the first version Astrophel admits that he is unable to value the “good turnes” that ought to bind Love to him. The revision shifts the language from accounting, or adding up, to retelling others and, thus, the valuation from being his assessment, to that of all who understand the favor rendered to Love:

L A61822 as I may well accowmpt but cannot pryze  
Q1: As I may well account, but cannot prife.  
Q2: As I may well recount, but none can prife.  
E<sup>2</sup> De.5.96: As I may well recompt but none can pryze  
1598: As I may well recount, but none can prize:

These changes are not of the kind caused by transmission error, as studies of the recension of variants demonstrates.<sup>40</sup> Most transcription variants tend to be mechanical and do not involve a recasting of the entire thought unless memory is involved — a cause normally associated with music. Hence, if one were to follow Ringler’s reconstruction and assume that both the Houghton manuscript and Q1 are corrupt texts, then certain assumptions follow. One might allow, to begin, that “account” is a plausible error for “recount”, but that does not then explain why an early scribe (that is one working in the 1580s) would alter “none can” to “cannot” — a conscious revision that shifts the entire onus of responsibility. Further, even if it might be allowed that one scribe did this, the fact that the Houghton manuscript and Q1 descend from separate states of the underlying papers means that two scribes, independent of one another, would have had to have made not one, but the same two changes at the same point in the text, corrupting separate lines of descent. This is not a casual matter: co-incidences can occur, but rarely twice so close together. So, either we have an extraordinary moment of dual random association, or we accept

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40. See DEARING 1974, 44–53; LOVE 1993, 313–56; BLAND 2010, 159–77. For other examples of stemmatics, as well as the ongoing work of the Donne *Variorum*, see also BLAND 2005; 2013B; 2021.

that the witnesses represent early states of an evolving text, and that the readings are authorial.

The response of Ringler, one suspects, would have been that there were not two sources, but one.<sup>41</sup> The basis for his argument is that the Houghton manuscript ( $z^1$ ) leaves spaces where four words are omitted in sonnets 79, 87, 94, and 99, and for which  $q1$  ( $z^2$ ) has variants from the  $x$  and  $y$  traditions that “could not derive by any stretch of transcriptional probability from the correct readings” — why will be discussed later.<sup>42</sup> In addition, sonnet 44 is without line 12 in both witnesses, and the same is true for sonnet 85, lines 13–14; meanwhile, sonnet 80 is without the final couplet in the Houghton manuscript whereas  $q1$  is completely variant from the  $q2$  and 1598 texts — the Dymoke manuscript being deficient at this point. Before going further, it should be noted that, apart from sonnet 44, all these lacunæ occur towards the end of *Astrophel and Stella*. Again, that is of some importance.

Whilst Ringler’s observation that the lacunæ in the underlying source are the cause of subsequent textual variance is correct, the assumption that the *Astrophel and Stella* had to be finished when a working copy was made is not. If that were true, “Scribe A” would have had to have made transcription errors as well as other deliberate textual changes and ellipses to what became Ringler’s  $z$  manuscript. That copy ought to have been, according to his reconstruction, a complete text. This version would then have been copied at least once more, with minor but separate variants, by A or another. One of these copies would have then passed to “Scribe B”, who decided to cut eight sonnets, all the songs, and re-order the text before passing that version to Harington, who then passed this copy onto his neighbor — unless, as Ringler did, one blames Britton for deleting a significant body of text. The other transcript would have passed to “Scribe C” who, in turn, deleted sonnet 37, moved all the songs to the end, and rewrote lines of text before providing Newman his copy. Each of these intermediaries, per Ringler, did more than make mistakes as they copied, they made active decisions to alter what had been left in a complete and final state by Sidney, and did so on a scale that implies an utter and total disregard for the source to which they were privileged to have access. In other words, they all acted as if they were the author.

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41. See RINGLER 1990, 135: “the construction of the text . . . I think will stand; at least no one has called my stemma into question”.

42. RINGLER 1962, 452.

One author, sculpting an extended sequence of verse into its final form, is to be expected; a second hand with the expertise, means, motive, and opportunity to make textual changes might be explained if the evidence warrants — at that point one reaches the limits of reasonable conjecture. To imply that other random actors served as agents of subsequent authorial intervention rather than mechanical corruption stretches credulity. Rather the issue is what happened following the making of the  $z^1$  source that gave rise to the Houghton manuscript; and both the nature of the  $z^2$  revision and how that was transformed into Q1. There are two separate issues to be untangled: what Sidney did as a means of consolidating his work while still in the process of composition, and what happened to the  $z^2$  version as it made its way towards publication in print. What Sidney did was creative and structural in purpose; what happened to this version afterwards was textual. In Ringler's reconstruction, these issues are conflated.<sup>43</sup>

One of the problems with standard textual reconstructions is that they are static: there is state A and state B, but very little recognition of process, which is frequently described as a matter of descent not evolution. Accounts that engage with the idea of an author working through states and stages of a text, on the other hand, tend to create snapshots of the means by and through which a text came to be. In some respects, genetic textual editing is the logical outcome of this approach.<sup>44</sup> Yet even the more dynamic accounts that recognize the creative layers of revision and re-organization, describe those transformations a little like stills from a film. The result is not just that the creative process gets lost, and with it the sense of a text as being malleable and mutable, it turns the study of transmission into a textual cul-de-sac with responsibility parceled out and lines of authority neatly established. Art withers before the uncreating word.

The truth, of course, is infinitely messier. From the moment that Sidney first jotted down a line of verse, he was creating texts that he would expand, mine, and refashion. Whether we call these notes his working materials or, to use an old-fashioned phrase, his papers, it was in a near constant state of flux and expansion, with any part of it available for him to use as he wished. Further, he might well leave gaps in what he wrote where the right word, phrase, or line, had yet to settle into place. As copies were made,

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43. The source of Ringler's assumptions about textual transmission and scribal practices is clearly derived from the conjectures of Alfred Pollard; see POLLARD 1917, n.b. 27–30. For a useful introduction to the subject see LOVE 1993.

44. Much of the discussion of genetic editing has focused on modern literature. For a starting point, see GABLER 2016.

they too became part of his papers. The process of writing, the activity and technical virtuosity that it required, allowed him to explore, as Ringler put it, “a succession of scenes that illustrate emotional attitudes” in which “mere fact was made subservient to the requirements of art”.<sup>45</sup> The moment when a sonnet or song was written, and the incorporation of it into a sequence, was not necessarily synchronized or linear. As Woudhuysen noticed, the first version of one sonnet was written on a flyleaf of a book.<sup>46</sup> *Astrophel and Stella* was composed of short texts, capable of being written and woven together in any number of ways and this occurred in the process of composition.

The starting point for what Sidney did with his papers has to begin with the structure that underpins the Houghton manuscript: a quire of twelve poems at the front, five quires with the last sixty poems in a run contained by a single sheet wrapper, and two quires with two dozen poems at the back. Of this material, the run of sonnets 49 to 108 was complete apart from some unresolved words and lines, and the order of 55 and 56. Before Sidney worked on the remaining sonnets, this other part of *Astrophel and Stella* was presumably removed and put to one side. Sidney then had forty poems before him: sonnets 1, 6–8, 10, 22, 31–32, 34, 38, 44, 47, 2–5, 9, 11–21, 23, 26–27, 29–30, 33, 36, 39, 41–43, and 48; he had eight poems left to write that would become sonnets 24, 25, 28, 35, 37, 40, 45, and 46. Quite how he went about this is entirely a matter of conjecture. The order of the first twenty-three poems may have been easy to resolve as eighteen were in three sequences, leaving all but the last page of the first two quires complete. The hard work would have been in composing and ordering what remained, including the key sonnets 24, 35, and 37. Of these, sonnet 24 would have ended the second quire, and 37 begun the fourth, making them potentially the last pages to be filled in of all. What matters is that, apart from sonnet 37 and line 12 of 44, this section was then finished, and its order determined.

The second step that Sidney took at this stage was to add the songs to the sequence. Rather than disturb the material of the latter part as it had been organized, he made a collection of lyrics and appended it at the end. In doing this, he appears to have reached back into his papers and, as well as writing new material, repurposed songs that he had written at an earlier point in time. Ringler noticed that Song v “was probably originally written as part of the ‘hasty Revenge’ (OA 74. 66) that Philisides said he took

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45. RINGLER 1962, xlix and 447.

46. See WOULDHUYSEN 1986, 388–92.

‘when Mira first disdained him’” in the *Old Arcadia*, and he noted specific allusions to another song in that sequence as its point of reference. This, and what he termed the “clumsy joinery” of Songs IV–VIII, led him to state that:

A possible explanation of these inconsistencies is that Sidney first began to write about Astrophil’s love for Stella in a set of detached songs in the new trochaic metres he had recently been experimenting with in the *Certain Sonnets*, and that not until after he had written the songs did he think of writing the sonnets and of combining them with the songs in a single sequence.

(1962, xlv–vi)

This, of course, would explain why the songs were first appended after the sonnets before being integrated within them. Further, Ringler then added in a footnote that “at least one of the iambic and four of the trochaic songs were given early and separate manuscript circulation (none of these reveals the identity of Stella)”. The aside, reduced to parentheses in a footnote, is a rather more important matter than its casual removal to that position implies, for it may equally indicate that “Stella” as a name had yet to emerge as the idea and identity upon which the entire sequence would develop. Nor is it obvious that when he wrote the songs and first sonnets that Sidney necessarily thought of the two activities as connected. What this might suggest is that Sidney wrote Songs IV–VI and VIII–XI, and perhaps a few of the sonnets, before putting them aside and working on the sequence.

One of the privileges of being an author is that ideas can be sketched out or written up and then used later or discarded as the creative impulse gives a work its shape. The decision to exclude or remove part of a text is one that editors and readers resist, seeking meaning in how that excluded dimension might deepen an understanding of what the author did. The telling detail is that Sidney may well have not included some of the material he had written. As Robertson noticed upon the publication of Hughey’s edition of the Arundel-Harington manuscript, there is at least one other song characteristic of Sidney that was not part of *Astrophel and Stella*.<sup>47</sup> “Blush, Phœbus, blush” (what might be termed Song III.a) occurs at 188 in

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47. See ROBERTSON 1962, 403–06. Robertson’s summary fails to mention that 187 is in both the hand of Harington and the second scribe. The full sequence extends from 187 to 200 and is then followed by the sonnets of Henry Constable.

the Arundel-Harington manuscript and is the second poem of a sequence of fourteen begun by the younger Harington but primarily written in a second hand.<sup>48</sup> The material in this group was put together from booklets and separates in circulation, including two of the *Certain Sonnets* and a song from the *Old Arcadia* as well as material by Dyer, the Earl of Oxford, and Sir Henry Lee, that was transcribed c.1591–92.<sup>49</sup> If “Blush Phœbus, blush” is by Sidney, it indicates that when he added the songs to *Astrophel and Stella*, he also excluded material written earlier, as well as then adding four other poems that could have been written at any moment up to that point.<sup>50</sup>

There is every reason to think that *Astrophel and Stella* must have begun as loose sheets that were organized into groups as composition progressed, then into a sequence of sonnets, and later as a collection with the songs inserted at various points within the whole. That being so, it would have been inevitable that Sidney revised parts of the text as the sequence took shape, and that he then revised the whole once he had a fresh copy before him that may well have been prepared, as Woudhuysen has suggested for the *Arcadia*, by a trusted scribe. If more than one copy was made then, in Woudhuysen’s words, “inconsistency in revision may well have followed”.<sup>51</sup>

The reconstruction that is being posited here is that Sidney, having had a transcript prepared that became the source for the Houghton manuscript, turned his focus to sonnets 1–48 and the songs, leaving sonnets 49–108 as they were except for a light revision — hence why the lacunæ in this part of the papers is common to both that manuscript and Q1. It would appear as well that when the next copy of the papers was made, he had yet to write sonnet 37 and the line wanting in sonnet 44, as well as the omissions in sonnets 49–108. It was this state of z<sup>2</sup> that made its way towards becoming Q1. Meanwhile, having created an almost complete text, Sidney could then

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48. See HUGHEY 1960, I: 236–44 and II: 303–27.

49. Item 200 is the prayer “Piæ, potenti, fœlicissimæ virgini” that was hung from an eglantine tree at the Accession Day Tilt on 17 November 1590. Hughey’s statement that “In all probability Sir John Harington saw the pageant . . . and made his copy of this prayer at the time” [327] is belied by the presence of the song (“His golden locks time hath to silver turned”) that precedes it in the manuscript; see HUGHEY 1960, 322–27.

50. One implication of this reconstruction is that it becomes possible to date the composition of Songs VIII and IX to May 1582, not 1583 — a timeframe that Ringler had balked at, commenting that “Sidney was composing a poem, not a calendar” (1962, 439).

51. WOULDHUYSEN 1995, 105–09 and 316; see also LOVE 1993, 53–56.

go on and both fill any gaps and reorganize the text by reversing the order of 55 and 56 and placing the songs within the sequence. Once that was done, he could give the text a further revision. It is that process that would give rise to first  $\gamma$  and then, with a final revision,  $x$ . The reason why Sidney left gaps as he worked may well have been a simple one: he was working at speed, in a sustained manner, often writing a sonnet or song a day.<sup>52</sup> Rather than dwell on cruces in the text, he moved on knowing they would be fixed in revision. No longer in need of  $z^2$ , he could either put it to one side, or give it to a friend. Who the recipient was will be discussed in due course.

The crucial issue, at this stage, is that the imperfect  $z^2$  text was the source of the copy that was supplied to Newman for  $q1$ . The printing of that by John Charlewood, and what occurred during the setting of it is discussed in the third article in this constellation.<sup>53</sup> A few examples, therefore, may serve to illustrate the nature of matters arising at the press, as these need to be distinguished from the manuscript variants. First, lines 8–9 of sonnet 30 appear to have been struck from the copy by the cleric who allowed it for the press. Second, the omission of line 8 from sonnet 19 was owing to an error in the setting of the marked-up copy, and of line 9 from sonnet 63 owing to insufficient line space on inner E. No doubt these “slips” served to confirm to Ringler that the source of  $q1$  was extremely corrupt; however, what becomes evident when looking at the page is that the compositors were fitting the text to the forme, and as they were printing out of sequence — for line 8 of sonnet 19, the compositor of outer B assumed it had been already printed as the first line of outer C and set the catchword accordingly. Charlewood’s compositors were not the first or last to adjust their copy, however much modern editors might regard their actions as delinquent. It is likely that neither Newman nor Charlewood knew that the workmen had done this, unless and until it was pointed out to them.

As with any text being set for the first time, the copy for  $q1$ , from which the compositors worked, was manuscript. In sonnet 54, line 11, the 1598 text reads “But you faire maides, at length this true shall find;”. The text of Houghton is broadly the same with the spelling “yow” perhaps a clue as to what happened. In  $q1$ , the text reads “But how faire Maides, . . .”. What this establishes is that the copy from which  $q1$  was set was either in a mixed hand with secretary features, or in secretary hand, for the  $y/h$  confusion

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52. Ringler (1962, xliv and 439–40) suggested the summer of 1582. The dating is now widely accepted.

53. BLAND 2023.

depends on the secretary form of “h” with its descender looping below the line. It is exactly the same kind of error that led to the confusion of “houres” and “yeares” in the text of Q1 *King Lear*.<sup>54</sup> A similar palaeographical slip is likely to have been responsible for the Q1 reading “frife”, in sonnet 56, line 11, where both Houghton and 1598 read “ftuffe” and, as Saenger noticed, in sonnet 23, line 12, “f” and “c” were misread in a manner indicative of a secretary hand source.<sup>55</sup> Meanwhile, in sonnet 55, line 5, a letter dropped from the register while setting may well explain the difference between the reading ‘ftayd/ftaid,’ in Houghton and 1598, and that of ‘faid’, in Q1.

Woudhuysen has noticed another compositor error that, most likely, was the result of the wrong type being present in an upper-case sort-box. In sonnet 92, line 3, Q1 reads (in all copies) “Or do you the *Caconians* imitate;”. As he has pointed out ‘*Caconians*’ is an error for ‘*Laconians*’, that is, Spartans.<sup>56</sup> At this level, the error is clearly a printing-house slip, and one most probably caused by a C dropped in the L box during an earlier distribution. That it was not corrected indicates that proof was not read against copy but rather straight from the revise as was a common practice. As for the reading itself, that will be returned to later in the article.

Despite the lamentations of Ringler, Charlewood’s compositors were, in the main, true to their copy and competent in their work.<sup>57</sup> A collation of the three extant copies indicates that revises were corrected before printing began and that care was taken with presswork. The existence of two separate paper issues confirms that while there was haste, there was also forethought.<sup>58</sup> As well as *Astrophel and Stella* for Newman, Charlewood printed for Daniel’s publisher Simon Waterson and his brother-in-law, William Ponsonby. Books such as *The . . . historie of Palmendos* and the first edition of Daniel’s *Delia* amply demonstrate the standards that were possible when haste was made more slowly.<sup>59</sup> Such details matter because, while there were slips and lines omitted in *Astrophel and Stella*, it would be wrong to claim that Newman and Charlewood were acting in anything other than good faith. They had every reason to believe that the copy of text they had was authentic and from a reputable source. It was only after

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54. See BLAND 2010, 161–62; see also footnote 41, above for further discussion on the causes of variants.

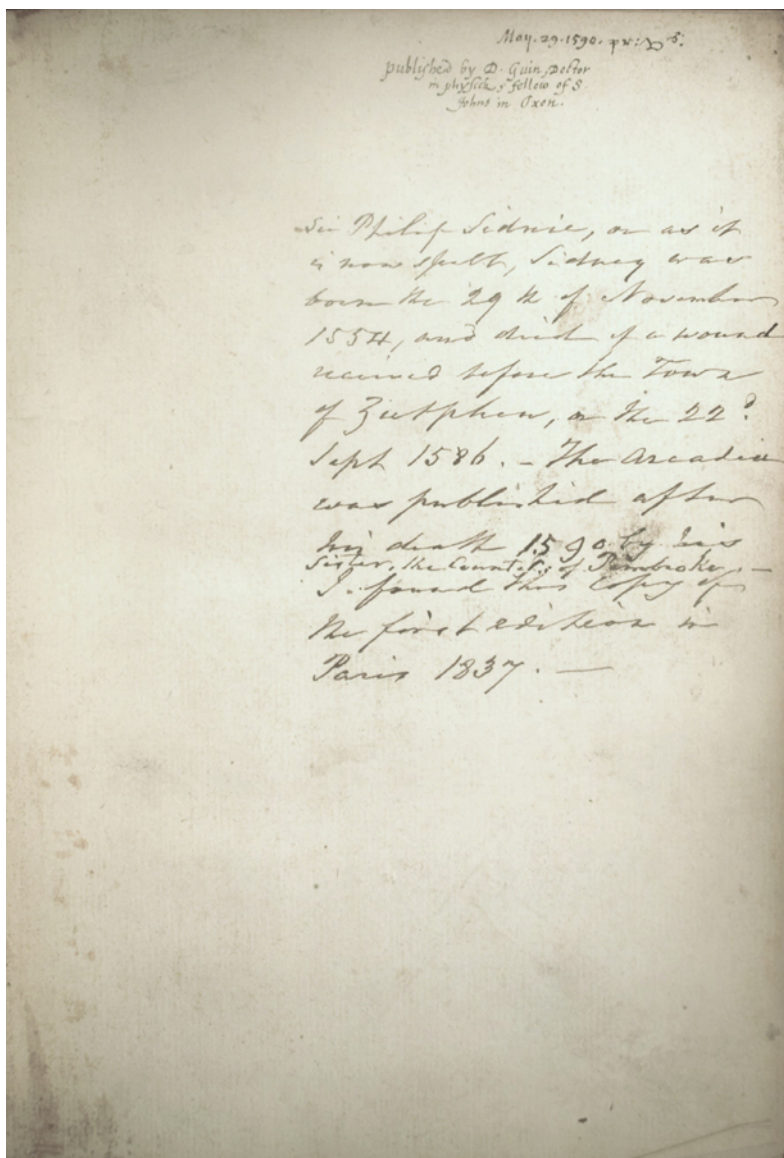
55. See SAENGER 1999, 426; sonnet 26 involves a separate issue discussed below.

56. See WOULDHUYSEN 1995, 383.

57. For Charlewood, see PROVVIDERA 2002. Her account repeats standard tropes about printing.

58. For further details, see BLAND 2023.

59. STC 18064 (1589), 6243.2 (1592).



**Figure 2.** Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia* (STC 22xxx; 1590): Huntington Library, San Marino CA, RB 69441, flyleaf. The top note, dated 29 May 1590, records a purchase price of 5s and that it was “published by D. Guin, Doctor in physick fellow of S. Johns in Oxon”. The second note records that the copy was acquired (by E. D. Church) in Paris in 1837. Another copy in the Russian State Library (shelfmark: London Ponsonby 1590 4<sup>o</sup>) is in original limp vellum with yapp edges, all edges gilt, with the contemporary signature of “Henry Russell”.

Q1 had been printed that they must have discovered the limitations of their copy — and the workmen.

The recipient of the source z<sup>2</sup> copy must have been well-aware of the lacunæ and other issues arising when working with the papers of Sidney. Newman confirmed this.<sup>60</sup> As Woudhuysen has acknowledged, a less than finished copy must have confronted the first editors of the *Arcadia* that required the input of not only Fulke Greville, but also John Florio and Matthew Gwinne who first had to prepare the *Arcadia* for the press in 1587–1588, and then see it through the printing-house of John Windet at the Cross Keys between September 1588 and May 1590.<sup>61</sup> On one surviving copy, an educated and elegant italic hand who clearly knew of Gwinne’s role and fellowship, recorded those details on the flyleaf of a copy now at the Huntington Library (see Fig. 2, above). The efforts of the *Arcadia* editors were subsequently disparaged by Hugh Sanford, whom Florio later ridiculed as (amongst other epithets) Huff Snuffe, Hugh Sot, and Hodge Sowgelder. Five years later, in cooler terms, Florio gave a frank insight into the state of Sidney’s papers as the editors had encountered them and what he thought of Sanford’s efforts to replace their work: “though it were much easier to mend out of an originall and well corrected copie, than to make vp so much out of a most corrupt, yet see we more marring that was well, then mending what was amisse.”<sup>62</sup>

Sanford had, in Florio’s view, “marred what was well”, that is altered the text without authority, rather than “mending what was amisse” — an insight that speaks of familiarity with Sidney’s manuscripts. There is no pretense here that the papers that gave rise to the 1590 *Arcadia* were flawless, or that they were what Florio terms an “originall and well corrected copie” — the language, by the by, of someone familiar with practices where scribal copies were prepared under instruction from autograph for authorial correction; rather, the words used to describe the materials that he had worked with, whether authorial or scribal, were “most corrupt” — that is with lacunæ and changes of intent that had not been fully reconciled with the rest of the work, and therefore in need of editorial reconstruction. Florio’s complaint was not that his work had been replaced (however much

60. STC 22536 (1591), A2<sup>v</sup>: this is expanded upon later in the article.

61. WOULDHUYSEN 1995, 227–29 & 314 [303–56]; BLAND 2013a, 151–92 [167–69].

62. Michel de Montaigne, *The essayes* (STC 18041; 1603), R3<sup>r</sup>; for the epithets, see John Florio, *A worlde of wordes* (STC 18098; 1598), a5<sup>v</sup>. CHAUDHURI notes that while the arrangement of the eclogues in the 1590 *Arcadia* involves “a certain amount of conjecture and patchwork”, it has “much more authorial sanction behind it than has been generally granted” (1984, 202).

that irked him), but that Sanford had altered what he knew to be the words of Sidney.

Now if the papers that Greville possessed of the *Arcadia* were “most corrupt” — that is imperfect and unfinished, with gaps and inconsistencies that required an editor’s eye and discrimination — there is every reason to believe that the copy of *Astrophel and Stella* supplied to Newman may have evolved from working papers of a similar condition. At this point, we might consider whether such a source document may have had annotations by Sidney with passing thoughts and revisions that he either abandoned or superseded. We might go one step further: the source for Harington’s text was likely to be Sir Edward Dyer; the source for the  $\gamma$  text is known to have been Sir Edward Dymoke. Fulke Greville was the source of the 1590 *Arcadia*. If the source for  $z^2$  was a copy belonging to Greville, then it may also have had marginalia by him — but that is to anticipate matters.

There are three main kinds of variants that are unique to the  $z^2$  source for Q1. The first differences are those that supply obvious omissions, including missing words and even a couplet, but not all — and not, it might be noted, an entire sonnet. The next variants involve either an adjustment to the scansion, or an attempt to “untangle” what was perceived as an awkward expression and potentially faulty transcription of the original. These shade into a third group of more interesting readings: they are either the remnants of alternate ideas by Sidney that survived via the  $z^2$  source, or else involve changes that an intermediary assumed were closer to Sidney’s underlying intention and interests. The changes, in other words, assume a familiarity with Sidney, his knowledge of Italian culture, and his encounter with Giordano Bruno. As Davis has also observed, in a curious plural, “many emendations . . . were made by competent versifiers familiar with Petrarchan conventions” (2011, 91). That narrows the field of who might be involved.

The first and most obvious problem facing the person who was given or who made a  $z^2$  transcript was the omissions and lacunae in the copy. In sonnet 80, for instance, there was an attempt to supply the missing final couplet. Taking a cue from the repetition of “mouth” in lines nine and ten, the opening “Sweet swelling lip” of line one, and the opening words of both the previous and the next sonnet (“Sweet kisse;,” “O kisse;”), the guess was that the rhyme to match “flatterie is” in the closing line would be “kisse” (and not blisse, hisse, a/misse, pisse, or this). With the rhyme to match “renew” the solution was not as easy with “true” selected out of at least twenty possible options, rather than “you”. In making that choice, options such as due, few, hue, and rue could have been as easily plausible as

“you”, and the penultimate rhyme was not as important as the closing word. What the attempt to replace the lines could not capture was the thought, because to do so would have required apprehension of the reversal of role and decorum implicit in what Sidney wrote:

- q1:     Wherefore to trie if that I faid be true,  
           How can I better proue then with a kiffe?  
 1598:   Without how farre this praife is fhort of you,  
           Sweet lip, you teach my mouth with one fweet kiffe.

The lines could not differ more. What q1 records is the chaste kiss of convention in which the speaker situates the trial and proof of what he has said in its consummation through his will; whereas, in 1598, the kiss is something that replaces both speech and silence, teaching the true use of the lip and mouth that Astrophel would praise, ending with an act of surrender and submission by him to her will and her lesson — “you teach my mouth”.

This is a pivotal moment in the text: that such lines would be written late and carefully wrought reflects their strategic placement at the point where the text is about to break into song — like a painter adding the last touches of light to a portrait. The reason that the alternate closure is not by Sidney is not only that it is formulaic, but that the same attempt was not made for sonnet 85.<sup>63</sup> For sonnet 80, written in the eight and six Petrarchan manner, there were enough clues to enable a guess at what the lines might have involved. For the single words omitted in sonnets 79, 87, 94, and 99, a similar attempt could be made.<sup>64</sup> For sonnet 85, written in the English manner with a closing couplet, there was no possibility that the rhyme, or the sense of the lines could be recovered. If it were Sidney, that would not have mattered.

The next stage at which the intermediary became involved was in trying to clarify what must have seemed textually awkward or corrupt lines, that may well have niggled Sidney. In the third sonnet (“Let daintie wits crie”), Saenger thought the fourth line might involve a revision,<sup>65</sup> but the

63. Davis (2011, 87–90) fails to note the absence of the lines.

64. The missing words are: 79.12, L A61822 a [space], q1 a pledge of, q2 a ftage of, E<sup>2</sup> De.5.96 [not present] 1598 ofstage of [sic]; 87.4, by [space], by *Stellaes*, by Yron, by yron, by iron; 94.3, that [space], that euen mine, that inbent, that inbent, that inbent; 99.11, the [space], the heauen, the heauen, the flower, the floure.

65. SAENGER 1999, 424–25.

manuscripts make clear that it was, rather, a third-party intervention. It can be seen in what follows that Newman corrected Q2 from a copy of the  $\gamma$  manuscript and that, minor variants aside, the texts of the  $\gamma$  and  $x$  traditions agree. Here the “daintie wits . . . flaunt . . . phrases fine”:

- Q1:            Enameling their pride with flowers of golde.  
L A61822:    enam'ling their pyde flowrs their thoughts w<sup>th</sup> gold  
Q2:            Enamling with pyde flowers their thoughts of gold:  
E<sup>2</sup> De.5.96:   Enamling w<sup>t</sup> pyede flowres theyr thoughtes of Goulde  
L A15232:    enamling w<sup>th</sup> pied flowres their thoughts of gould.  
1598:         Enam'ling with pied flowers their thoughts of gold:

Ringler's note treats the lines as a moment of Sidneian literary criticism and an allusion to Ronsard and the *Pléiade*, and in so doing narrows its focus. Saenger notes a parallel with the fable of the jay and the peacock from Aesop.<sup>66</sup> The crux, however, starts with “pied” — a word that Ringler did not gloss. It has two meanings, and both are pertinent: variegated in color, or black and white, like a magpie; and jumbled, as in “pied type”, when a setting was dropped from a forme and the sorts mixed in confusion, like the filling of a pie. If  $z^2$  read as the Houghton manuscript, then after “flowrs” there ought to have been a comma, given that “their” is repeated twice in the line — “their pied flowers, their thoughts with gold”. The criticism of the “daintie wits” combines accusations of effeteness, of the delusion that a garden of jumbled sententiae will create a new golden literary age, of borrowed plumage, and of self-important pomposity driven by the lure of money. The art is corrupt, and enameled, that is not only of the surface and painted, but baked with a hardened shell — like the crust of a pie.<sup>67</sup>

What Ringler and Saenger saw in these lines was a literary allusion; what the alternate reading highlights is the moral dimension of pride, vanity, and avarice. Hence the motive for changing the text. Without a comma in the  $z^2$  source, the line would have lacked clarity. It was probably this that led to an assumption that “pyde” was an error for “pryde” and, therefore, that either “flowrs” or “thoughts” had to be a mistake and perhaps a duplication caused by revision. The removal of “their thoughts”, however, left the scansion a syllable short, and so the contraction in “Enam[e]ling”

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66. See RINGLER 1962, 460; see also SAENGER 1999, 424.

67. In suggesting the analogy with gilding, Saenger (1999, 425), misses the point of why the reading is “pied”.

was expanded to restore the pentameter. The result is perfectly logical — if revealing of the assumptions being made about the nature of the source document, which must have been a scribal draft or copy because if it was in Sidney’s hand then the issue of there being an error in the source ought not to have arisen.

Further, if the intermediary felt there was a textual problem to resolve in the sonnet, Sidney was not entirely happy with the z<sup>1</sup> version of line 4 either, but whereas the intermediary simplified the line to clarify it, in the  $\gamma$  and x witnesses, Sidney reworked the line and fused the two parts together to create a more compressed and elegant take on the idea. As with sonnet 80, the difference between the second person and Sidney is between someone attempting to resolve a perceived issue while overthinking the problem, and a creative resolution that improves on an idea — the difference, in practice, between an editor and an author.

Understanding the motive behind the corrections is crucial because not all examples of variant readings are easy to distinguish as to their cause, at least in all details. Sonnet 56 (z55) has already been pointed up as an example of how Sidney revised his text. What complicates the issue, when working through the sonnet, is separating out authorial revisions from scribal noise and the interventions of the z<sup>2</sup> intermediary. Take, for instance, line 3 where Astrophel exclaims against Patience:

- Q1 & Q3:     What, a whole weeke, and get not halfe a looke?  
 L A61822:    what a whole weeke w<sup>th</sup>owt a peece of looke  
 Q2:            What, a whole weeke, without one peece of looke?  
 E<sup>2</sup> De.5.96:   what a whole weeke w<sup>t</sup>out one peece of looke?  
 1598:         What, a whole weeke without one peece of looke,

Whether the Houghton reading “a peece” for “one peece” is a scribal error or a genuine variant is, at best, unclear: it could be either. The issue is more with the phrase “peece of looke” itself as “peece” is usually associated with a state, sense, or object — a piece of a logician, music, or cake — whilst “looke” would be expected to have an ablative association, as in “at Stella”. The usual phrase is “half a glance”, but that would have required a matching rhyme like “chance” (and if this were Sidney that would not be a difficulty), so “get not halfe a looke” was a compromise that adjusted the text without altering the sense. Such light touches were evidently considered to be within reason as, in effect, a kind of gloss — and it is in keeping with the kind of “conjecture and patchwork” that Chaudhuri (1984, 202) noticed in the treatment of the eclogues in the 1590 *Arcadia*.

The implicit justification for such a change is that it fixed something Sidney had overlooked — that the manner in which it was done is of the same character as the adjustments made to the eclogues by the 1590 editorial team is a not insignificant indication of its origin.

Once the pattern of patchwork is recognized, it becomes simpler to spot the variants that might involve the second hand. Rather than the replacement of “whole stanzas” that Ringler claimed was typical of Sidney, the text needs to be deconstructed line by line to understand what happened word by word, separating the revisions by Sidney from the interventions by the intermediary and the errors of the compositors. Hence, in the second line of sonnet 38 Sleep comes:

- Q1:           To clofe mine eyes, and that my troubled thought  
L A61822:   to clofe myne eyes and that vnbytted thowght  
Q2:           To clofe mine eyes, and the vnbitted thought  
E<sup>2</sup> De.5.96:  To hache myne Eyes, And that vnbytted thought  
1598:        To hatch mine eyes, and that vnbitted thought

The problem word for the intermediary was “vnbitted”; the revision made by Sidney was to replace “clofe” with “hatch”. It is worth going through this in detail. The first version, found in the Houghton manuscript makes perfect sense: Sleep, with its heavy wings, closes the eyes of Astrophel and leaves his thoughts “vnbitted”, like a horse without the physical and conscious restraint — the bit in his mouth — controlling him, to stray from reason and self-discipline to fancy and error, and so fall upon the image of Stella in his dream. When Sidney undertook the revisions for the  $\gamma$  text, he altered “close” to “hatch”. The refinement combines the meaning “to engrave or draw lines to produce shading” with “to inlay or overlay”, “to plot or devise”, “to bring into existence”, and also “a small opening or portal through which objects pass” — all nuances being pertinent here: Sleep shades his eyes, etches them together, and inlays them with a plot to bring into existence the image of Stella, wrought by Love, who appears through the opening of his unbitted thought, and whom he then hears sing. None of this it might be added is explained in Ringler’s commentary (1962, 473) where “hatch” is simply glossed with the Q1 reading “close”, without further comment or acknowledgment of his debt to the line of descent he criticized so harshly.

As “clofe” appears in both the  $z^1$  and  $z^2$  witnesses, the reading must have been present in the underlying papers before it was revised. The

direction of the thought that led to “hatch” is, therefore, back from “vnbitted” through word association, giving another shade to the meaning of that word as the “blinker” of a horse.<sup>68</sup> Hatch was also most frequently used at the time as a nautical term being the lid over an entrance to the lower decks of a ship — and by extension, here, the mental portal through which the imagination descends into the subconscious world of dreams. It is a particularly intelligent and elegant revision in which the compression of thought and proliferation of meaning is a moment of intuitive genius.

Further, sonnet 38 shares affinities with the opening of Book 1, chapter 12 of the *Arcadia*, where Palladius, having unbridled, or unbitted, his horse lies down to rest and then sees the Amazon who sings.<sup>69</sup> While there are important differences (Palladius does not sleep, and the Amazon is revealed as Pyrocles dressed as a woman), there are significant parallels. The poem in *Astrophel and Stella* explores how dreams impact the subconscious mind fixated on a dominant Stella, with the fallen Philip (the lover of horses) as Astrophel set free from constraint and control.

The dream is not, in other words, a real event but a motif of Sidney’s imaginative vocabulary. The important difference is that in the *Arcadia*, Palladius and his horse are separate beings, in *Astrophel and Stella* man and horse have become one. To later eyes, this motif of Sidney’s thought is obvious from the famous opening to *The Defence of Poesie*, but for a contemporary who had yet to read that work, and who was trying to repair what he knew to be an imperfect manuscript source, “vnbitted” must have seemed like a clear transcription error that could not be resolved: the dignity of man aspired to the grace of God, not the life of a beast, however noble — even in one’s dreams. Hence the variant is a gloss, “troubled”, that removes the implication latent in the text of *Astrophel* as a man-horse, to which is then added the possessive “my” to preserve the scansion.

Like the “pyde/pryde” variant, the revision of “vnbitted” is suggestive of a scholar’s tendency to overthink the problem and miss the more obvious reasons for why it might not be one at all — perceptive and thoughtful as such engagements with the text might be. This is an important trait in the Q1 variants, and one far removed from Ringler’s account of them. It

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68. The earliest reference traced to “blinkers”, as an equine term, is Edward Rainbowe, *A sermon preached at the funeral of the Right Honorable Anne, Countess of Pembroke, Dorset, and Montgomery* (Wing R142; 1677), F2<sup>v</sup>. This is a century earlier than recorded by the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

69. Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia* (STC 22539–39a; 1590), H2<sup>r</sup>–3<sup>r</sup>.

is evident that the person concerned is aware that their copy is imperfect and, at the same time, knows that the work is too important to be lost to posterity.

A similar situation to those noticed above occurs in sonnet 47. Astrophel begins in defiance: having betrayed his liberty and become a branded slave burnt by Stella's eyes; he is, by line 7, in want of "alms" for his devotion:

- Q1:           Who for long faith some gentle pittie craue,  
L A61822:   who for long faith the daylie help I craue  
Q2:           Who for long faith the daily helpe I craue,  
E<sup>2</sup> De.5.96:   Who for long ffaythe thoughe dayly help I craue  
1598:        Who for long faith, tho dayly helpe I craue,

Now, either in the z<sup>2</sup> state Sidney flirted with the idea of "gentle pittie", where the man seeks relief of his suffering from the "beloved", and then reverted to his original intention; or one accepts the common reading of the other witnesses (that record a state of emotional indigence) as authorial, and that Q1 involves an attempt by another to mend the text. Here, the common reading "dayly helpe" is a genuine assessment of Astrophel's situation, however much it may irk him; whereas the idea of "gentle pittie" is entirely antithetical to the masculine spirit of the rest of the poem. It is exactly the lack of independent dignity that Sidney locates in the need for daily help and alms, and so being reduced to the threadbare hunger of pleading, that leads Astrophel to assert the *vir* in virtue in line nine: "Vertue awake, Beautie but beautie is". Sonnet 47 starts out as a poem of masculine defiance in the face of rejection until the moment that Stella appears in line twelve — "foft, but here fhe comes, . . .". It is not the beauty of Stella that then overwhelms Astrophel, but rather her virtue as *Arete*, her goodness, that reduces him to silence. In trying to free Astrophel from his raw expression of need, the variant imposes a mannered courtliness that, as before, overthinks and, to some extent, sanitizes the text.

Two more examples will serve to add some nuance to the question of what might be authorial and what might involve another hand. While the spirit of some variants, such as "gentle pittie", seem clearly antithetical to Sidney's purpose, others might be genuine variants that have found their way into Q1 through the source copy. A particularly interesting instance occurs in the penultimate line of sonnet 26 where Astrophel declares he is guided by the stars of Stella's eyes:

- Q1 & Q3: Who oft bewraies my after following cafe,  
 L A61822: who oft foreeye my after folowing cafe  
 Q2: Who oft forefee my after following cafe,  
 E<sup>2</sup> De.5.96: Who oft fore-iudge my after following race  
 1598: Who oft fore-iudge my after-following race,

It can be seen from the  $\gamma$  and  $x$  readings that Sidney genuinely did change the word used for the rhyme.<sup>70</sup> This is also one of those rare moments that Q2 generates a reading that is slightly more problematic than it first appears. The Houghton manuscript reading “foreeye” is a neologism that was then revised; Q1 reads “bewraies”, which is altogether different. The problem is what happened next. Either “forefee” is an alternate  $\gamma$  variant that was in the manuscript supplied to Newman (a problem in itself as it suggests either two states of  $\gamma$  or a transcription error in one of the witnesses), or Newman was provided with the copy behind the transcript that served for Q1 as well as a copy of the  $\gamma$  text when he made his revisions to Q2. That is, he attempted to adjudicate the text of Q2 between three witnesses — the  $z^2$  source or transcript, Q1, and a copy of  $\gamma$ .

In revising the text of Q2, Newman clearly realized that “bewraies” required emendation. One possibility is that if he received the  $z_2$  source, it may have contained both revisions and annotations. This is opaque but of some consequence. If “bewraies” was part of the source document then it could be something written by Sidney, or perhaps by Greville at an early stage. What seems clear is that by the time he engaged in the  $\gamma$  revision, Sidney settled on “fore-iudge”, so that ought to have been the  $\gamma$  copy reading for Q2, not “forefee”. In the other changes that he made to Q2, Newman did not depart from his copy so it is unlikely that he did so here.

As for “bewraies”, there is no possibility that it involves any form of paleographical confusion. Whatever its origins, it is a genuine variant. It is a word that, at the time, was coming into fashion and then went into decline after 1610, with “bewray” and its cognates occurring eleven times in the 1590 *Arcadia*.<sup>71</sup> To bewray is to reveal, divulge, betray or expose someone or something, particularly a secret. The shift from “foreeye” or “forefee” where

70. Saenger (1999, 426) suggested that the Q1 variant “bewraies” was owing to a misreading of secretary hand.

71. A text search of Early English Books Online (EEBO) records the incidence of “bewray” and its cognates in books published by decade as: 1560–69, 110; 1570s, 211; 1580s, 325; 1590s, 386; 1600s, 471; 1610s, 401; 1620s, 337; 1630s, 296. The word, or its cognates, occurs in *Arcadia* I.10 (G2<sup>v</sup>), I.14 (twice, I8<sup>r-v</sup>), I.16 (K5<sup>r</sup>), I.17 (L1<sup>v</sup>), II.15 (Y8<sup>r</sup>), II.29 (2G7<sup>r</sup>), III.7 (three occurrences, 2M2<sup>r-v</sup>), and III.14 (argument, 2Q5<sup>r</sup>).

Stella's eyes watch and look on but do not act, to "bewraies" where the true motive of the secret is exposed, to "fore-iudge" where what is hidden is not only known and the motive divulged but its outcome determined, shows an intensification of the way in which Stella's eyes control Astrophel's destiny that makes "bewraies" an entirely plausible Sidneian reading. In this case, a second hand is a possible but not a necessary explanation.

Something similar, involving an annotation on the z2 source manuscript, may have happened with sonnet 92, line three. The compositor error where *Caconian* was set for *Laconian* aside, the use of "Laconian" is a genuine alternative for "Spartan" — with a slight complication:

Q1:           Or do you the *Caconians* imitate,  
 L A61822:    or do you cutted Sparta imitate  
 Q2:           Or do you cutted Spartanes imitate,  
 E<sup>2</sup> De.5.96:   Or doe yow cutted Spartans imitate  
 1598:         Or do you cutted Spartanes imitate,

In the 1590 *Arcadia*, Laconia is mentioned twenty-two times, Laconian is used five times, Spartan(s) twice, and Sparta is not mentioned at all.<sup>72</sup> The alternative "*Laconians*" is, therefore, quite in keeping with Sidney's own practices — and yet "cutted Spartanes" resonates with meaning. Perhaps "*Laconians*" was a marginal query in the z<sup>2</sup> source document that became incorporated into the transcript for the q1 copy as a correction. Whatever the cause, the distinction is one of honor: the Spartans were reduced to being Laconians (a broader term) after their defeat in battle. With "cutted", Ringler (1962, 487) glossed the word as "concise, laconic" (the last a rather circular definition) rather than "curt", but this is only part of what Sidney meant. Like "hatch" earlier, "cutted" carries layers of meaning. The Spartans as a warrior caste viewed their battle scars as a sign of honor, beauty, and masculine virtue. They were "cutted" not just in speech, but in the flesh. If the q1 reading is not Sidney, or a marginal note, then "*Laconians*" is, once again, someone overthinking the text — this time with an awareness that it was the preferred usage in the *Arcadia*.

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72. Laconia occurs at I.2 (twice, B6<sup>r</sup>; once, B6<sup>v</sup>; twice, B7<sup>r</sup>; once, B8<sup>r</sup>), I.5 (D4<sup>v</sup>, D7<sup>v</sup>), I.6 (D8<sup>v</sup>, E4<sup>v</sup>), I.10 (twice, G1<sup>r</sup>), I.12 (H1<sup>v</sup>), I.15 (twice, K2<sup>r</sup>; once K3<sup>r</sup>), I.16 (K5<sup>r</sup>, K5<sup>v</sup>), II.3 (P6<sup>r</sup>, P6<sup>v</sup>), II.24 (2E3<sup>v</sup>), and II.29 (2G8<sup>v</sup>); Laconian(s) at I.5 (D7<sup>v</sup>), I.7 (twice, E6<sup>r</sup>), I.16 (K4<sup>r</sup>), and II.26 (2F2<sup>v</sup>); Spartane at I.7 (E6<sup>r</sup>), and Spartans at I.12 (H1<sup>v</sup>).

The examples so far describe an intermediary intensely engaged with the detail of the text, reading Sidney with thoughtful and scholarly care. They reveal an intention to present *Astrophel and Stella* in the best possible light, even at the expense of the text at hand — because that person is concerned about Sidney’s public and printed impression. That kind of behavior is normally associated with someone who knew the author and was trusted to prepare their work for posterity. It is here that certain word substitutions become telling, and while the final three examples may be dealt with at less length, they are important for what they reveal.

In Sonnet 7, the play of ideas begins with Nature making the eyes of Stella a work of art in the way that their blackness holds the light and ultimately Love within them. Describing the work of Nature as “painter like”, Astrophel wonders why she might:

- Q1:           Frame daintieft luftre mixte with fhaddowes light?  
 L A61822:   frame dayntieft <omitted> mixt of shade and light  
 Q2:           Frame daintieft luftre mixte of fhades and light?  
 E2 De.5.96: fframe dayntyeft luftre mixt of fhades and light  
 L A15232:   fram daintieft lustre mixt of shades and light?  
 1598:       Frame daintieft luftre, mixt of fhades and light?

Apart from the scribal omission of “lustre” in the Houghton manuscript, all the witnesses apart from Q1 agree on the text. This is not a line Sidney sought to revise. What the Q1 variant seeks to clarify is the idea of *chiaroscuro*, a recent development in the history of art whose chief early exponent was Tintoretto. Hence, if this is not Sidney creating a variant that he then rejected, it is someone in late sixteenth-century London who is aware of recent developments in Italian art and culture, and who is trying to describe the idea with a greater exactness — as a scholar might.

In a similar manner the third line of sonnet 22 that describes the sun as:

- Q1:           Hauing no maske of Clowdes before his face,  
 L A61822:   having no fkarfe of clowds before his face  
 Q2:           Hauing no maske of Clowdes before his face,  
 E2 De.5.96: Having no Scarfe of clowdes before his face  
 1598:       Hauing no scarfe of clowds before his face,

This is a variant that Newman did not seek to correct when revising Q2. Yet, as Saenger observed, they “are both common words unlikely to be confused with each other” (1999, 425). A scarf is something one wears in a colder

climate to keep the neck and lower face warm. The point of the simile is that covered by clouds the warmth of the sun disappears and, hence, the scarf of clouds protects the sun from the cold. A mask is a disguise, something that prevents a person being truly seen. More particularly, masks were then associated with and worn during the Venetian carnival. It is, in other words, another kind of Italian variant that either Sidney flirted with and rejected, or that someone who thought more like an Italian believed better expressed Sidney's intention. As with the other variants, it shows someone deeply engaged with the text, wishing to present Sidney in the best possible light.

The urge to go beyond fixing problematic readings and improve the text surfaces again in the third line of sonnet 32, addressed to Morpheus who is:

- Q1:           A Prophet oft of hidden myfterie;  
L A61822:    a proffitt oft and oft an hiftery  
Q2:           A Prophet oft, and oft an Hiftorie,  
E<sup>2</sup> De.5.96:   A Prophet oft and oft an Hiftorye  
1598:        A Prophet oft, and oft an hiftorie,

As an epithet, "hidden mysteries" first started to come into vogue in the 1580s, occurring three times before its use in Q1. The most recent was Calvin's *The commentaries . . . vpon the Acts of the Apostles*. Its use over the next thirty years was almost wholly religious.<sup>73</sup> Here, however, the hidden mystery is the world of dreams in which Stella is brought to life. The religious inflection is an interesting one, but there is also the sense that this is arcane and private knowledge. It is a particularly intelligent variant that also changes the rhyme. It may be a variant that Sidney contemplated and then discarded, or it is someone with an acute sense of its relevance.

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73. The first traced usage is in William Fulke's, *A sermon preached . . . within the Tower of London* (STC 11455; 1581), C2<sup>v</sup>. It was subsequently used, prior to *Astrophel and Stella*, in Stephen Batman's edition of Bartholomæus Anglicus, *Batman vppon Bartholeme his booke De Proprietatibus Rerum* (STC 1538; 1582), B2<sup>v</sup>; and, Jean Calvin, *The commentaries . . . vpon the Acts of the Apostles* (STC 4398; 1585), B5<sup>r</sup> (three times, entire text checked). Subsequent usage over the next two decades was almost entirely religious, with the exceptions of Abraham Fraunce, *The third part of the Countesse of Pembrokes Yuychurch* (STC 11341; 1592), B2<sup>r</sup>, who uses it as an ingratiating form of flattery to compliment those of elevated understanding (i.e. the Countess of Pembroke); and Samuel Daniel, *The Queenes Arcadia* (STC 6262; 1606), A2<sup>r</sup>, who uses it a political sense.

It is quite possible that as Sidney set about revising and finishing the last details of *Astrophel and Stella* that he passed a copy of the  $z^2$  state to one of his “Mates in mirth”. Given that the association of Harington and Dyer may explain  $z^1$ , the recipient of the  $z^2$  version may well have been Greville, who wrote most of his own parallel sequence *Cælica* at much the same time as when Sidney was at work on *Astrophel and Stella*.<sup>74</sup> As Greville was the source of the text for the 1590 *Arcadia*, and as Woudhuysen has noted with respect to that edition, Greville received his papers directly from Sidney, there is reason to believe that if he was given a copy of the *Arcadia* that he could have been given a copy of *Astrophel and Stella*.<sup>75</sup> Further, there was one person in 1580s England who was particularly interested in the idea of hidden mysteries, of arcane and other esoteric thought — the Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno. In *The Ash Wednesday Supper* he recounted explaining his cosmology to Sidney and Greville, via Florio and in the presence of Matthew Gwinne.<sup>76</sup> What is being suggested here is that Greville gave access to his copy of *Astrophel and Stella* to his editorial team while they were preparing the *Arcadia* for the press, and that either that witness, or a copy of it was taken and then later revised and emended for the press.

It is not possible to calculate exactly how many alterations were made to the Q1 copy as the control witness, the Houghton manuscript, is without eight of the sonnets and the songs, including the highly variant sonnet 45.<sup>77</sup> That said, the variants incorporated into the copy total at least six hundred words and occur in every sonnet throughout the text. What is involved is not just a passing few tweaks, but a thorough engagement with everything in *Astrophel and Stella*. Some of the variants may derive from Sidney, or from annotations by Greville, yet all of them were incorporated into the final copy for Newman by someone. What must be true is that the final decision had to have been made by the person who supplied the copy to Newman and who possessed the instincts that have been described above.

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74. Wilkes suggests that Greville wrote at least as far as sonnet 84 in the sequence during the early 1580s; see WILKES 1959, 491–92, 502–03; 2006, 295, 302–03, 307–09; and 2008, I: 41–46. See also ALEXANDER 2012.

75. WOULDHUYSEN 1995, 225–30, 306, 310–15.

76. The familiarity of Greville, Florio, and Gwinne was recounted by Giordano Bruno in 1584; see BRUNO 2018, 57 and 83. That year, Ash Wednesday fell upon 15 February (n.s.).

77. See SAENGER 1999, 432–36.

It is one thing to supply the copy of *Astrophel and Stella* to a Stationer. It is quite another to prepare the text and make changes at the level of detail outlined here. It demonstrates a profound editorial engagement with the text and a desire to think about the full implications of what Sidney had written. Even if some individual variants may be open to debate as to their origins, with allowance being made that some traces of rejected variants by Sidney or suggestions by Greville remain, the pattern is consistent, and the changes made all point in one specific direction. Far from removing text from his copy, the editor sought to mend the text and fill the gaps he could.

As the following article demonstrates, the person who made the final decision as to what the copy for Newman would be was John Florio.<sup>78</sup> Florio and Gwinne were Oxford scholars with whom Greville had had a long association and who were entrusted by him with Sidney's texts.<sup>79</sup> For Florio, editing Sidney was something of which he had previous experience and he must have felt that he had the authority to do so. Perhaps as importantly, he would have considered himself as someone knowledgeable about the state of Sidney's literary remains, and as being authorized by Greville to supply the deficiencies therein. One might suppose that Gwinne may have been involved in at least some of those decisions, but the Italian touches suggest that it was Florio who prepared the copy.

Florio's intervention into the textual history of *Astrophel and Stella* is a salutary reminder that early modern notions of authenticity were radically different from more recent editorial practices. Many an editor has, of course, taken far greater liberties with a text than fixing a line, or a word or two; and whatever we may now think of Q1 as the outcome of Florio's work, the intent was clearly one of trying to present the text in its best light given the manuscript at hand. What Florio supplied was an almost complete state of Sidney's sequence before it underwent a major revision. That he felt passionately about his attempt to repair what was, from his perspective, a flawed masterpiece is evident from his outburst against Sanford. What one senses in his work is a conversation with the dead, an awareness of context, an engagement with the text in a very profound manner, and a desire to save the writer from embarrassment — a snip, as it were, in time.

The concern of the present article has been to reconsider the witnesses of *Astrophel and Stella* as the by-products of process not descent, to separate the z tradition into two states, and to explain how and why one of those states was transformed into the text of Q1. As with any such reconstruction,

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78. See PITCHER 2023, 46–91.

79. See WOODHUYSEN 1995, 227.

a certain amount of hypothesis and conjecture is involved. The difference with Ringler's reconstruction is that it accounts for all the stages of the evidence and does not explain the z tradition as involving separate acts of random and irrational textual violence that he could not properly explain. Rather, it starts from the premise that what we have is an insight into Sidney's working methods and into the evolution of the text as he turned it into a finished work of art. That is a far more constructive and interesting way to view the evidence that offers a deeper appreciation of the texts and the possibilities for a scholarly edition.

Woudhuysen has stated that he does not believe a new edition would radically affect the text of *Astrophel and Stella* — perhaps not, although it might lead to closer analysis of some of the variants and of potential flaws in 1598 as the copytext. What the approach outlined would do is change in important ways our understanding of the textual evidence and how it is presented, of Sidney at work, of how the history of the composition and transmission of the text is explained, and of how the commentary is prepared — and it would force a reconsideration of the exegesis of the text through the elucidation of textual cruces, and require a far more subtle reading of the poems than Ringler, or more recently Duncan-Jones, have offered.<sup>80</sup> It would require that scholars look again at Sidney anew.

The argument put forward in these pages is that we need to rethink the history of *Astrophel and Stella* from first principles. Ringler's achievement was groundbreaking and considerable, but his insistence on a unitary line of descent was profoundly flawed. The basis of this discussion is that Sidney revised and, therefore, the history of the text is primarily horizontal in its composition. It is time to move on from old assumptions: instead of seeing corruption, the witnesses need to be sifted again. Saenger was right, if not in detail, in principle: Sidney did revise *Astrophel and Stella*.

London

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80. See WOULDHUYSEN 2012, 117–25 [124]; and DUNCAN-JONES 2008. The Duncan-Jones edition is based upon Ringler's text and commentary.

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