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Article:

Shrank, C. (2009) Reading Shakespeare's sonnets: John Benson and the 1640 poems. Shakespeare, 5 (3). 271 - 291 . ISSN 1745-0918

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17450910903138054>

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Reading Shakespeare's Sonnets: John Benson and the 1640 Poems

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[Printed in Shakespeare, 5:3 (2009), 271-291; URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17450910903138054>]

John Benson's 1640 edition of Shakespeare's Poems has found little critical favour in the centuries since its production.¹ Benson reorders the sonnets (merging many into longer poems), adds descriptive titles, and publishes them alongside other poems – some of which are not by Shakespeare – from sources such as *The Passionate Pilgrime* and *Englands Helicon*.² The work also includes an appendix of poems 'By other Gentlemen', such as Ben Jonson, John Milton, Francis Beaumont and Robert Herrick. The resulting volume is variously described as 'mutilated', 'corrupt' or 'deformed', and its editor is denounced as an 'unscrupulous liar' (for producing an unauthorised, 'pirated' edition of 'no independent value'), or castigated for committing 'a series of unforgivable injuries' upon the text – not least among these the imposition of the 'jejune' or 'trivial' titles on Shakespeare's rearranged sonnets. Indeed, these two crimes are interlinked: the rearrangement and titles are seen as means by which Benson attempted to hoodwink both the public and the Stationers' Company into believing his product was previously unpublished.³

The assault on Benson began within decades of his publication. Abraham Cowley almost certainly had Benson in his sights in 1656 when he castigated

the unworthy avarice of some Stationers, who are content to diminish the value of the Author, so they may encrease the price of the Book; and like Vintners with sophisticate mixtures, spoil the whole vessel of wine to make it yield more profit.⁴

As he explains, 'This has been the case with Shakespear, Fletcher, Johnson, and many others; part of whose Poems I should take the boldness to prune and lop away, if the care of replanting them in print did belong to me'. Cowley's attack on Benson is not disinterested, however: it is used to justify the

¹ Poems: Written by Wil. Shakespeare. Gent (London: Thomas Cotes for John Benson, 1640).

² An analysis of the contents of the 1640 Poems appears in the appendix.

³ Robert Crosman, 'Making Love out of Nothing at All: The Issue of Sexuality in Shakespeare's Procreation Sonnets', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 41.4 (1990), 470-488 (at 482); Donald W. Foster, 'Master W.H. RIP', *PMLA*, 102.1 (1987), 42-54 (at 50); Giles Dawson, *Four Centuries of Shakespeare Publication* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Libraries, 1964), p. 9; Carl Atkins, 'The Importance of Compositorial Error and Variation to the Emendation of Shakespeare's Texts: A Bibliographic Analysis of Benson's 1640 Text of Shakespeare's Sonnets' (2007), 306-39 (at 307); Raymond MacDonald Alden, 'The 1640 Text of Shakespeare's Sonnets', *Modern Philology*, 14.1 (1916), 17-30 (at 30); Martin Seymour-Smith, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Poetry* (London: Greenwich Exchange); John Kerrigan, *Sonnets and a Lover's Complaint* (London: Penguin,), p. 46; Hallett Smith, "'No Cloudy Stuffe to Puzzell Intellect": A Testimonial Misapplied to Shakespeare', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 1.1 (1950), 18-21 (at 21); Peter Holland, 'Shakespeare, William (1564-1616)', <http://www.oxforddnb.com> (accessed 30.3.2009).

⁴ Abraham Cowley, *Poems* (London: Humphrey Moseley, 1656), sigs a1^v-a2^f.

publication of his own verses, ‘not as a thing that I approved of in itself, but as a lesser evil, which I chose rather than to stay till it were done for me by some body else, either surreptitiously before, or avowedly after my death’ (sig. a2^r). So too for modern critics Benson has served as something of a strawman: someone to knock down in order to justify one’s own agenda. Most usually, in recent decades, Benson has figured as the *bete noire* of those scholars seeking to reclaim the homoeroticism of Shakespeare’s sonnets, a campaign which often begins by deriding Benson for being the first in a long line of editors who were apparently troubled by the traces of same-sex desire in the Sonnets and who consequently sought to obscure it.⁵

Work by Josephine Waters Bennett, Carl D. Atkins and Margreta de Grazia has gone some way to clearing Benson on some of these charges. Bennett’s 1968 article is a careful rebuttal of the accusations of piracy. She produces evidence which indicates that Benson’s edition was unlikely to have been printed surreptitiously, not least the fact that he acquired copyright for the fifteen poems included in the appendix to the 1640 edition; their entry in the Stationers Register – which entitles them ‘An Addition of some excellent Poems to Shakespeares Poems’ – draws attention to, rather than disguises, their intended publication alongside verses by Shakespeare.⁶ Bennett also draws attention to the significance of Thomas Cotes as Benson’s printer: as ‘printer of the second Folio (1632) of Shakespeare’s plays, and part owner of copyrights to many of them’, he ‘not only had a financial interest in Shakespeare, but he was one of the most substantial printers of the day’.⁷ Bennett accordingly argues that Cotes had much to lose, and little to gain, from illicit publications. More recently, Atkins has shown the care taken with text.⁸ He notes, for example, that ‘almost all of the twenty-seven obvious misprints contained in the 144 sonnets copied from the [1609] Quarto’ have been corrected, including dropped letters, or single-letter substitutions; some ‘more subtle errors’ (such as the replacement of ‘their’ for ‘thy’, or the singular ‘eye’ when ‘eyes’ is needed) are also picked up and altered.⁹ As Atkins observes, ‘the ability to detect another’s errors is no protection against the production of news ones’, and Benson’s text is by no means faultless. Nonetheless, the attempt to rectify obvious slips in the copy-text does show signs of careful reading, endorsing

⁵ See, for example, Paul Hammond, ‘Friends or Lovers? Sensitivity to Homosexual Implications in Adaptations of Shakespeare, 1640-1701’, in *Texts and Cultural Change in Early Modern England*, ed. by Cedric C. Brown and Arthur F. Marotti (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 225-47; Bruce R. Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cultural Poetics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 270.

⁶ Josephine Waters Bennett, ‘Benson’s Alleged Piracy of Shakespeare’s Sonnets and of some of Jonson’s Works’, *Studies in Bibliography*, 21 (1968), 235-48 (at 237).

⁷ *Ibid.*, 241.

⁸ Atkins does not acknowledge Bennett’s essay and therefore recycles received (mis?)truths about the piratical nature of Benson’s venture.

⁹ Atkins, ‘The Importance of Compositorial Error’, 308.

Bennett's picture of Benson as someone who was capable of going to 'considerable trouble and expense to produce a good text'.¹⁰

De Grazia too scotches myths about the 1640 edition, sentiments rehashed – often, it seems, without proper consideration of Benson's text – since Hyder E. Rollins first denounced Benson for systematically effacing the male gender of the beloved by changing male pronouns to female, and by using the titles he added to reframe the addressee of the first 126 sonnets as female. As De Grazia points out, 'of the seventy-five titles Benson assigned to Shakespeare's Sonnets, only three of them direct sonnets from the first group of the 1609 Sonnets (sonnets 1-126) to a woman'.¹¹ Similarly, 'Rollins gives three examples [of pronominal changes] as if there were countless others, but three is all there are and those three appear to have been made to avoid solecism rather than homoeroticism'.¹² There is, in other words, no sustained or concerted attempt to disguise the male identity of the 'friend' of the Sonnets: 'it is not Shakespeare's text, then, that has been falsified by Benson but rather Benson's edition that has been falsified by the modern tradition'.¹³ And here it is important to observe that Benson's edition opens with a sequence (Sonnets 67-69) which makes absolutely no attempt to disguise its celebration of a male beauty: 'Ah wherefore with infection should he live,' asks the opening line. Likewise, no veil is drawn over the male identity of the 'master-mistress', a sonnet ('the most indecent of the lot', according to Rollins) which appalled critics such as George Steevens and has led to some extraordinary attempts to 'save' Shakespeare from the apparent 'shame' of homoeroticism, including Martin Friedman's endeavours to argue that – far from resulting from Shakespeare's sexuality – the 'bawdy equivocation' of Sonnet 20 results from later readers' failure to recognise imagery drawn from the game of bowls and from archery ('prick shooting').¹⁴

¹⁰ Bennett is here discussing Benson's text of Jonson's *The Gypsies Metamorphosed*, issued in 1640 with Jonson's translation of Horace's *Art of Poetry*, 'With other Workes of the Author, never Printed before'; she compares Benson's text favourably with the 'execrable' version put out by Thomas Walkley, Benson's rival for the rights to publish Jonson's unpublished works (Bennett, 'Benson's Alleged Piracy', 245).

¹¹ Margreta De Grazia, 'The Scandal of Shakespeare's Sonnets', in James Schiffer (ed.), *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (New York: Garland, 2000), pp. 89-112 (at 89). The sonnets in question are 113-5, 122, 125. See Appendix for the table showing Benson's groupings and reordering of Shakespeare's sonnets. De Grazia also discusses Benson in her monograph, *Shakespeare Verbatim* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 163-73.

¹² De Grazia, 'The Scandal of Shakespeare's Sonnets', p. 90. The alterations are confined to one sonnet (Sonnet 101). De Grazia also justifies the alteration of 'fair friend' to 'fair love' in Sonnet 104 and the substitution of 'love' for 'boy' in Sonnet 108 on the grounds of Benson's desire for consistency: Sonnet 104 is grouped with Sonnet 105 which twice mentions 'my love'; without the alteration, Sonnet 108 would be anomalous in being the only sonnet to address a 'boy' (as distinct from a male friend).

¹³ De Grazia, 'The Scandal of Shakespeare's Sonnets' p. 90.

¹⁴ William Shakespeare, *The Sonnets*, ed. by Hyder E. Rollins, New Variorum edition (London: J. B. Lippincott, 1944), 2 vols, I, 54, Martin B. Friedman, 'Shakespeare's "Master Mistris": Image and Tone in Sonnet 20', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 22.2 (1971), 189-91 (at 190). Steevens' reaction ('an equal mixture of disgust and indignation') is cited by Edward Malone in order to rebut it (William Shakespeare, *The Plays and Poems*, ed. by Edward Malone (London: H. Baldwin, 1790), 10 vols, X, 207).

Yet these defenders of Benson have not yet taken his text seriously in and of itself. Bennett, for all her vindication of the stationer's integrity, readily validates 'any amount of [aesthetic] indignation at what Benson did to Shakespeare's sonnets', through his 'elaborate (if mistaken) rearrangement'.¹⁵ Nor is Atkins' painstaking account of compositorial errors in the 1609 and 1640 texts designed to rehabilitate Benson as an editor: Atkins' recognition of Benson's talents is at best grudging. Rather, Atkins' intention is to prove how 'familiarity with the techniques of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century compositors, and the errors to which they were prone' – knowledge to which careful study of Benson's edition can contribute – 'will place an editor in a better position to decide when and how to emend Shakespeare's texts'.¹⁶ We should read Benson, in other words, so that we can learn how to we might produce an 'ideal', perfect Shakespearean text. Even De Grazia's robust defence of Benson from his misreaders transpires to be a digression, 'dwelled on [...] only parenthetically to set the factual record straight', a preamble to the main argument in which she seeks to uncover the real 'scandal' of Shakespeare's Sonnets, namely 'Shakespeare's gynerastic longings for a black mistress'.¹⁷ This current essay, in contrast, is an endeavour to read Benson's edition without prejudice. What I hope to reveal is that, if we do so, it offers one of the earliest critical and imaginative responses that we have to a work which otherwise has left scant imprint on the literature of seventeenth-century England: Shakespeare's sonnets have garnered few contemporary allusions or notable marginalia in the twelve known copies of the 1609 Quarto.¹⁸ Can we really, then, ignore a source which constitutes a response to this otherwise overlooked work? I begin my rehabilitation of Benson as a reader of Shakespeare by looking at his activities as a stationer and his portfolio of publications.

Benson was admitted to the Stationers' Company in June 1631.¹⁹ The English Short Title Catalogue lists twenty-five separate titles under his name, produced between 1635 and 1643.²⁰ Until 1640, these titles were more or less evenly divided between literary works and devotional/ecclesiastical texts; from 1641 onwards, political titles came to dominate (unsurprisingly, considering the build-up to the Civil War). 1640, the year of Benson's edition of Shakespeare's Poems, represents the peak in Benson's extant output (six titles remain for that year); it also marks Benson's most concentrated period of literary output (four titles): besides Shakespeare's Poems, these others are Ben Jonson's Execration against Vulcan, Jonson's translation of Horace's Art of Poetry and miscellaneous other

¹⁵ Bennett, 'Benson's Alleged Piracy', 236, 248.

¹⁶ Atkins, 'Importance of Compositorial Error', 318.

¹⁷ De Grazia, 'The Scandal of Shakespeare's Sonnets', p. 106.

¹⁸ <http://estc.bl.uk> (accessed 23 March 2009).

¹⁹ Edward Arber (ed.), *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554-1640 A.D.* (London: privately printed, 1875-1896), 5 vols, III, 686.

²⁰ <http://estc.bl.uk>. I have counted separate imprints of a work as one title (Benson had second editions – or separate issues – produced of five works in total: Virgilio Malvezzi's *Romulus and Tarquin* (1637, 1638); Anon, *The golden meane* (1638); John Webster's *Dutchesse of Malfy* (1640); *His Maiesties Declaration to all his loving sbjects* (1642); *A treatie of peace, concluded the 29. of September* (1642).

short works, and John Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*.²¹ Benson thus issued the *Poems* at a time when he was pouring his energies into procuring literary texts. When he tells us in the preface that he has been 'somewhat sollicitus to bring this [book] forth to the perfect view of all men', we should not necessarily dismiss this. Publishers are not inevitably the unscrupulous profiteers that Cowley – to exonerate his own self-publication – makes them out to be. As Humphrey Moseley explains in his preface to John Milton's *Poems* in 1645,

It is not any private respect of gain, Gentle Reader, for the slightest Pamphlet is now adayes more vendible then the Works of learnedst men; but it is the love I have to our own Language that hath made me diligent to collect, and set forth such Peeeces both in Prose and Vers, as may renew the wonted honour and esteem of our English tongue.²²

Whilst obviously this disavowal of profit is somewhat disingenuous (of course Moseley's actions are not completely philanthropic), there is some truth to his insistence that editions can be produced with an eye to their national benefit. Moseley is, in some ways, acting like a seventeenth-century Richard Tottel by making available texts hitherto inaccessible to the general reader. As Tottel writes in his address to the reader at the start of *Songes and Sonettes* (1557), his aim is 'to publishe, to the honor of the Englishe tong, and for profite of the studious of Englishe eloquence, those workes, which the vngentle horder vp of such treasure, haue hitherto enuied thee'.²³ This same motive can be ascribed to Benson: if only some of the poems in the volume had hitherto been restricted to manuscript (none of the poems in the 'Additions' section had been printed previously), nonetheless it is also true to say that the verses in the main volume had been overlooked.²⁴ Benson is consequently bringing them back to light, and – despite his subsequent reputation – Benson never claims that the poems have not previously been published. There are no statements that the works are 'never before imprinted' (as on the title-pages to Thomas Thorpe's 1609 Quarto or Benson's 1640 edition of Jonson's translation of Horace's *Art of Poetry*). Rather, the poems are said not 'to have the due accomodation of proportionable glory, with the rest of his everliving Workes' (sig. *2^r). And this much is true: Benson's two main copy-texts, the 1609 *Sonnets* and 1612 edition of *The Passionate Pilgrime*, had both been out of print for decades.²⁵ Benson states his desire 'to be serviceable for the continuance of glory to the deserved Author in these his Poems' (sig. *2^v) by adding to Shakespeare's reputation as a non-dramatic, as well as a dramatic, poet. The fact that Shakespeare needs this fillip is signalled by the fact that the commendatory verses puffing Shakespeare that are included in Benson's volume all

²¹ The 'Addition' was registered on 4 November 1639; the title-page carries the date 1640.

²² John Milton, *Poems of Mr. John Milton* (London: Ruth Raworth for Humphrey Moseley), sigs a3^r-a3^v.

²³ Henry Howard et al., *Songes and sonettes* (London: Richard Tottel, 1557), sig. A1^v.

²⁴ Details of the previously unprinted poems appear in the appendix.

²⁵ Alden, 'The 1640 Text' proves conclusively that Benson took his copy from these printed sources rather than a lost manuscript.

focus on his work for the stage: he is the ‘rare Tragedian Shakespeare’, ‘the admirable Dramaticke Poet’, whose death has left the stage ‘widowed’.²⁶ Leonard Digges’ posthumously published prefatory poem strikes a similar note: throughout its 68 lines, Shakespeare’s achievements are framed as dramatic, the appreciation of his admirers termed as ‘applause’.²⁷

The 1640 Poems, then, is an exercise in canon-building. In Sasha Roberts’ words (in a rare piece which takes a benign view of the volume and its editor), it ‘is an important document in the institutionalisation of Shakespeare and in the transmission and reception of Shakespeare’s works in the seventeenth century’.²⁸ Here again there are echoes with Tottel. Not only does Benson gather poems by miscellaneous authors under the figurehead of one author (Shakespeare to Tottel’s Henry Howard), it also shares with *Songes and Sonettes* a certain nostalgia, as it prints the works of an older generation, many of whom are now dead, including Digges, author of the prefatory verse praising Shakespeare. It also includes William Basse’s elegy, composed in 1616, which celebrates Edmund Spenser (that archetypal Elizabethan) and the long-dead Francis Beaumont as the benchmarks of poetic excellence whom Shakespeare excels. Yet there are signs that Benson’s work seeks to update its potentially old-fashioned content.

David Baker has written one of the few articles which approach the 1640 text on its own terms (Roberts’ chapter just cited being another). Instead of castigating Benson for ‘packaging’ Shakespeare’s poetry as he does, it explores the ‘guise’ in which the Poems ‘enter[ed] the public domain’.²⁹ Baker argues that the 1640 edition ‘is a publication in the “cavalier mode” and that it survived in the period between 1640 and 1660 as a cavalier volume’.³⁰ By ‘Cavalier’, Baker means a poetic mode which emulates the works of Jonson. The bulk of his essay is devoted to showing how Shakespeare’s poems were remodelled into a more Jonsonian mould. Baker draws attention to the ‘display of Jonsonian laurels’ in William Marshall’s portrait of Shakespeare which appears at the start of the volume, echoing pictures of Jonson which appeared in other works sold by Benson (although interestingly, Shakespeare clutches a laurel sprig, rather than wearing them – as Jonson does – as a crown).³¹ He also notes Benson’s promotion of Shakespeare as a gentleman keeping company (through the ‘Addition’) with Cavalier poets such as Richard Herrick, and the presentation of

²⁶ W. B. ‘On the death of William Shakespeare’, J. M. ‘An Epitaph on the admirable Dramaticke Poet, William Shakespeare’, ‘An Elegie on the death of that famous Writer and Actor, M. William Shakespeare’, sigs K8^r-K8^v.

²⁷ Leonard Digges, ‘Vpon Master William Shakespeare’, Shakespeare, Poems, sigs *3^r-*4^r (at sig. *4^r).

²⁸ Sasha Roberts, *Reading Shakespeare’s Poems in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 158.

²⁹ David Baker, ‘Cavalier Shakespeare: The 1640 Poems of John Benson’, *Studies in Philology*, 95.2 (1998), 152-73 (at 152).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 153.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 160-1.

Shakespeare as an erudite poet (for example, through John Warren's prefatory poem 'Of William Shakespeare', which celebrates Shakespeare's poem and audience as 'learned').³²

Some of Benson's moves are undoubtedly classicizing, for example the inclusion of the umlaut in the running header 'Poëms', or the juxtaposition of 'The Lovers Complaint' with mythologically-inspired verses from England's Helicon. Through the mise-en-page, 'The Lovers Complaint' is also made to resemble an Ovidian complaint (such as that of Thomas Heywood's 'Hellen to Paris', which follows it). The stanza breaks are removed so that it too resembles a long, narrative poem in the style of a miniature epic. Yet the volume is not quite as 'Jonsonian' as Baker suggests. Digges' prefatory poem, for instance, is pitched against Jonson from the outset. Its opening statement, 'Poets are borne not made' (sig. *3^r), is a direct riposte to a line from Jonson's commendatory poem in the First Folio of Shakespeare's Works (1623), which declared that 'a good *Poet's* made, as well as borne'.³³ Digges' assertion of the artlessness of Shakespeare's writing ('Art without Art unpareld as yet', sig. *3^r) flatly contradicts Jonson's opinion that 'he/ Who casts to write a liuing line, must sweat,/ [...] and strike the second heat/ Vpon the Muses anuile' (sig. A4^v). And Jonson's careful craft further provides the antithesis to Shakespeare's natural genius: as Digges sneers, his 'tedious (though well laboured) Catilines' fail to please an audience 'ravish'd' with delight at Shakespeare's 'Brutus and Cassius'; 'Sejanus too was irksome' for an audience eager for 'Honest Iago, or the jealous Moore' (sig. *3^v). Nevertheless, Baker's conception of the 1640 Poems as a work which is moulded by, and for, the tastes of its time is a useful way of approaching the volume, and a method with which this essay concurs (even as it demurs over the Jonsonian nature of Benson's edition).

Benson's volume can be seen as one of a group of posthumously published poetic collections – by Francis Beaumont, Thomas Carew, and Thomas Randolph – produced in the years leading up to and including 1640.³⁴ All these collections, entitled Poems, celebrate the elevated status of their authors on the title-page, be it as 'Gent' (Beaumont), 'Esquire' (Carew), or 'Master of Arts' (Randolph). Benson's volume follows suit. The title-page names 'Wil. Shakespeare. Gent'; this social status is also marked by his appearance as 'Master William Shakespeare' in the address to the reader and the title to Digges' eulogy. Benson's address 'To the Reader' also hints at an equivalence between the status of author and reader: the 'gentle straines' that Master Shakespeare 'Gent' produces are suited to a leisurely kind of reading – to 'recreate and not perplexe your braine' (sig. *2^v) – only available to

³² Ibid., 165; Shakespeare, Poems, sig. *4^v.

³³ Ben Jonson, 'To the memory of my beloued, the Author Mr. William Shakespeare', in Shakespeare, Mr. William Shakespeares comedies, histories, & tragedies (London: Isaac Jaggard and Edward Blount, 1623), sig. A4^v.

³⁴ <http://estc.bl.uk>. I have omitted Michael Drayton from this list, as the 1637 collection is another edition of collections published in his lifetime from 1605 (though these too denote his social status, as 'Esquire', on their title-pages).

those of a similar social situation, namely the gentlemen whose status (as Thomas Smith put it circa 1564) was defined and assured by the fact that they could ‘live idly’, without the need for manual labour.³⁵

The edition is also insistent on its designation as a book of ‘Poems’. The title appears, in large capitals, no less than four times before we get one line of Shakespeare’s verse. It appears on the opening title-page (‘**POEMS: | WRITTEN | BY | WIL. SHAKESPEARE. |** Gent’, sig. *1^r); again in the title to Digges’ commendatory poem (‘**Vpon Master WILLIAM | SHAKESPEARE, the | Deceased Authour, and his | P O E M S’,** sig. *3^r); on a second internal title-page (sig. A1^r), virtually duplicating the first (bar the omission of the date, 1640); and in a final title above the first poem (**P O E M S | BY | WILL. SHAKESPEARE |** Gent.’, sig. A2^r). ‘Poëms’ (or ‘Poëmes’) also forms the running head through the volume.

That such an emphasis is placed on the generic category ‘Poems’ may have something to do with the diminished status of sonnets in the thirty years since the 1609 Sonnets (although – as Colin Burrow has shown – sonnet sequences were rather outmoded even then).³⁶ Certainly, there is marked tailing off in the use of the word ‘sonnet’ on title-pages from the 1610s. The term does appear occasionally on larger collections (for example, as one of a number of genres advertised on the title-page of Beaumont’s *Poems* in 1640, or Francis Quarles’ *Divine Poems*, in editions from 1630 onwards). Nevertheless, its most frequent use by the 1630s is in its loose sense of a ‘short poem’ to describe broadside ballads, such as *A yong-mans most earnest affection to his Sweetheart, Exprest in a dainty Courtly Sonnet* (c. 1630), George Withers’ *An excellent sonnet: or the Swaines complaint* (1633), and *The Lovers delight: or, A plesant Pastorall Sonnet* (1640?).³⁷ Set to popular tunes, these ‘sonnets’ are fairly conventional love ditties (recycling clichés such as birds singing, or spring-time settings) or titillating tales of true love abused and absolved, as in *A very excellent Sonnet of the most Fair Lady Constance of Cleueland, and her disloyal Knight* (c.1630), in which the masochistically faithful and self-sacrificing Lady Constance is saved at the last minute from the scaffold. In the light of this demotic vein of sonneteering, it is noteworthy that of the ten sonnets that Milton includes in his 1645 *Poems*, five are in Italian, and that these Italian sonnets are front-loaded, appearing towards the start of that section (numbers II-VI), as if the rehabilitation of the fourteen-line form needs to be achieved

³⁵ Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum*, ed. by Mary Dewar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 71.

³⁶ Colin Burrow, ‘Introduction’, in William Shakespeare, *Complete Sonnets and Poems*, ed. by Colin Burrow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 91n. See also Cathy Shrank, ‘The Politics of Shakespeare’s Sonnets’, in David Armitage and Simon Fitzmaurice (eds), *Shakespeare’s Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

³⁷ ‘sonnet, n.’, OED, sense 2, <http://dictionary.oed.com> (accessed 23 March 2009).

through a return to its original language (an ability to compose poetry in that tongue being further used a sign of the poet's learning, distinguishing him quite clearly from mere balladeers).

Benson, then, does not promote Shakespeare's sonnets as 'sonnets' in the 1640 edition. His downplaying of the genre in the choice of title is enhanced by his practice of grouping between two and five individual sonnets together, so that they form a longer poem. He does not totally efface the presence of sonnets, however. Benson prints 146 of Shakespeare's 154 sonnets.³⁸ Of these, 31 remain as fourteen-line poems;³⁹ the layout of the remainder, gathered into longer poems, makes no attempt to conceal their original fourteen-line structure, indenting each final couplet. Rollins' assessment of Benson's arrangement of the sonnets is characteristically dismissive (typical of both Rollins' treatment of Benson and of Benson's usual treatment at the hands of literary critics): 'What Benson did [...] was to jumble together in a new, unauthorized, and deceptive order all but eight of the sonnets [...] with the L[overs] C[omplaint], the entire contents of the 1612 P[assionat] P[ilgrim], the P[hoenix] & T[urtle], and various poems by miscellaneous authors'.⁴⁰ The grouping is not quite so unthinking, so much of a 'jumble', as Rollins would have it. More often than not, the sonnets which Benson draws together under a single title do have a unity of theme, for example, Sonnets 127 and 130-32, grouped under the title 'In prayse of her beautie though black' (sig. E8^r). Sonnets 128 (in which the poet-lover envies the instrument the woman plays) and 129 (in which the poet-lover is filled with post-coital self-disgust) are quite logically omitted from this sequence. Similarly, Sonnets 57 and 58, paired under the heading 'The force of love' (sig. A4^v), both open with the motif of slavery. Sonnet 59 follows in Benson's version, but as a separate poem (entitled 'The beautie of Nature'), no doubt because it does not deploy this image, meditating instead on the relationship between now and 'former dayes', and the difficulties of 'labouring for invention' (sig. A5^r).

Admittedly, the groupings do not always work in their entirety: Sonnets 38-40 are assembled under the heading 'A congratulation' (sig. B7^r), a trio followed by sonnets 41-42 ('Losse and gaine', sig. B8^r). Sonnet 40 actually fits better with the pair that follows than with the sonnets with which it has been joined. The first two sonnets (38 and 39) dwell on the process of poetic composition, inspired by – but also inadequate of – the beloved. Sonnet 40, however, lacks this poetic self-consciousness, addressing instead the careless greed and cruelty of the beloved, a theme shared by Sonnets 41 and 42 in the poem that follows, in which the poet-lover details his betrayal by both friend and mistress.

³⁸ Sonnets 18, 19, 43, 56, 75, 76, 96 and 126 are missing. Alden proposes various theories for these omissions: that Benson 'intentionally' omitted sonnets deemed imperfect (i.e. Sonnets 126 – with in place of the expected final two lines we have parentheses – and 96, which repeats the final couplet from Sonnet 36); and that the other sonnets are omitted accidentally, perhaps due to the copies of the 1609 quarto being used as copy-text having been 'clipped for reprinting' ('The 1640 Text', 29).

³⁹ This figure includes Sonnets 138 and 144, the copy-text for which is the 1612 edition of *The Passionate Pilgrime*.

⁴⁰ Rollins (ed.), *Sonnets*, II, 20.

Likewise, Sonnets 60 and 63-66 are grouped under the title 'Injurious Time' (sig. A3^f). The omission of Sonnets 61 and 62 from this sequence is comprehensible: neither of them scrutinize the crushing power of time and the poet-lover's defiant attempts to withstand its destruction through poetry. But neither does Sonnet 66 (the concluding poem in this mini-sequence), which rather expresses a world-weariness and evokes the lover – not as something that must be preserved from 'the wrackfull siedge of battring dayes' (sig. A3^v) – but as the only force that ties the poet-lover to this life ('Save that to dye, I leave my love alone', sig. A4^f). The linking of Sonnet 66 to the end of the sequence possibly arises from a misreading of the deictic in its opening line, 'Tyr'd with all these for restfull death I cry' (sig. A3^v, italics added). 'These', however, does not point backwards to the preceding poems, but forwards, to the anaphoric dystopia that follows ('And needie Nothing trimd in jollitie,/ And purest faith unhappily foresworne, / And gilded honour shamefully misplast').

More generally, though, there is an appropriateness identifiable in Benson's groupings. He uses the arrangements, for example, to foreground a sense of progression present in the 1609 edition. This latent narrative is compounded by isolating the sonnets into a mini-sequence, demarcated by the bounds of the poem that Benson has created (Benson's reordering is rarely radical, certainly within individual 'poems', which tend to follow the order of the 1609 text). So, for example, we have the opening poem, 'The glory of beautie' (sig. A2^f), combining Sonnets 67-69. The first sonnet celebrates the excessive beauty of the youth as one that is almost too exquisite to exist ('Why should he live, now nature bankrout is'). The second continues this vein, by portraying the youth's beauty as a relic of an older, purer time ('Thus is his cheeke the map of daies out worne,/ When beauty liv'd and dy'd as flowers do now', sig. A2^v). In the third sonnet, though, there is a turn (almost like a swift reversal of a final couplet): the youth's beauty transpires to be only skin-deep, his 'faire flower' tainted by 'the ranke smell of weeds'. In retrospect the title, 'The glory of beautie', is ironised by this final twist; an added bite is then given by the juxtaposition of this sequence (in which superficial beauty is the defining, and ultimately only, virtue of the youth) with the next, 'Injurious Time', in which readers are reminded that nothing – except perhaps poetry – survives its ravages: 'And all those beauties whereof now he's King/ Are vanishing, or vanisht out of sight' (sig. A3^f).

That there is some underlying plan to Benson's rearrangement of the 1609 Sonnets – some point, beyond disguising his piracy, as Rollins would have it⁴¹ – is indicated by the fact that in drawing together material from different sources, Benson does not do the obvious thing, that is, taking the texts first from one volume, and then the next, and so on. Rather, he intersperses them, juxtaposing texts from the 1609 Quarto with verses taken from *The Passionate Pilgrim*, *Englands Helicon*, and other

⁴¹ 'The omission of the word sonnets and the puzzling dedication to Mr. W. H., as well as the rearrangement of the sonnets and the P. P. poems, was a deliberate, and evidently a successful, attempt to deceive readers and to hide the theft', Rollins (ed.), *Sonnets*, II, 22.

sources. His treatment of Shakespeare's sonnets is also markedly different from the way he deals with poems from these other collections. It is only the order of the 1609 Sonnets that he chooses to rearrange: excerpts from other anthologies follow the order in which they originally appeared. And it is only poems from the 1609 Sonnets that Benson runs together: those from the other collections are left as discrete poems, including fourteen-line sonnets. In other words, it is only poems from the 1609 Quarto that Benson regards as being potential building blocks in a larger narrative; and it is only those poems whose original ordering he seeks to disrupt. Benson can thus be seen to respond to an ambiguity in the 1609 edition, as to whether it is a sequence, telling a story – as Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* (1591) or Edmund Spenser's *Amoretti* (1595) do more clearly – or whether it is a miscellany, with a narrative which is, at best, only sporadically discernible. Benson accommodates, but also limits, both possibilities: he establishes some poems as a narrative by drawing them together as a sequence. But at the same time, he also segregates them from other poems, so that there is no impulse to read sequentially across the volume. There is consequently not the same temptation to read every lady as the same dark, unfaithful lady; every friend or young man as the same alluring, treacherously beautiful companion. The poems seem less like the outpourings of a consistent voice than literary exercises (like the poems in Jonson's *Forrest*, which – like the 1640 Poems – also resituate songs from plays alongside lyric verses). The potentially autobiographical allure of the sonnets is further diminished by the omission of Thomas Thorpe's dedication, with its tantalising, gossipy use of initials (alluding to the shadowy Master W. H.). Benson's volume is, instead, a miscellany, a generic sense enhanced by the varied lengths – and sources – of the poems included.

Acknowledging the fact that the 1640 Poems is designed as a miscellany also explains Benson's use of his much-maligned titles – a feature of English printed, and manuscript, miscellanies from Tottel's *Songes and Sonettes* onwards.⁴² Yet Benson's headings are not as gauche as Edward Malone et alia would have it. (When Malone called Benson's titles 'fantastick', he was not using the word as a compliment.⁴³) As the earlier discussion of the potential irony of the heading 'The glory of beautie' suggests, Benson's titles are capable of showing a subtlety and sensitivity that few critics have allowed. Sonnets 4-6, for example, appear in the 1640 edition under the title 'Magazine of beautie' (sig. A7^r), a heading which reflects the storehouse imagery that runs through those verses, where 'summers distillation' is 'left/ A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass' and the youth is invited to 'Make sweet some viall' (sig. A8^r). The title 'Loves Releefe' (Sonnets 33-35, sig. C2^r) encompasses both the relief of the poet-lover, restored to favour in the second sonnet ('that through the cloude thou breake,/ To dry the raine on my storme-beaten face', sig. C2^v) and the relief of the repentant beloved,

⁴² Peter Beal lists nineteen seventeenth-century manuscripts which include copies of Shakespeare's sonnets; fifteen of these show a similar use of descriptive titles. Beal, *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, vol. 1, 1450-1625, Part 2, Douglas-Wyatt (London: Mansell, 1980), pp. 452-4.

⁴³ Shakespeare, *Plays and Poems*, ed. by Malone, X, 193.

initially upbraided in the middle sonnet ('nor can thy shame give physicke to my griefe'), before being assured in the final sonnet 'No more be greev'd at that which thou hast done'. The heading thus allows for a narrative progression within the grouping. By the time the poet-lover is self-abatingly making himself 'an accessor' to his own (likely to-be-repeated) humiliation, however, the word 'releefe' also carries with it some of its meaning as a 'formal act of feudal tenure made by a vassal to his lord'.⁴⁴ Burrow categorises Benson's titles as 'a kind that makes them appear to resemble Cavalier epistles to a mistress'.⁴⁵ They are, I think, more objective than this allows. As Roberts has shown, Benson's headings – particularly those given to some of the Dark Lady sequences ('Immoderate Lust', sig. E7^r, and 'Immoderate Passion', sig. F4^r) – 'explicitly invit[e] the reader to adopt a critical stance towards the speaker whose "judgement... is tied" and whose "heart and eyes have erred"'.⁴⁶ The use of titles here evidences a moral reading of the poems: the poet-lover's reaction is deemed excessive and improper. There is thus an ironic or judgemental distance between the editor (who is providing the title) and the poet-lover. That same detachment is found in other titles, such as 'A good construction of his Loves unkindnesse' (Sonnet 120, sig. E5^v), which exposes the strain with which the sonneteer labours to find comfort in the 'sorrow' resulting from mutual 'transgression[s]'. In a similar vein, we have 'Error in opinion' (sig. E6^r), which begs the question as to whose view is misconceived: the amoral speaker, who considers it 'better to be vile then vile esteemed', or the naive and virtuous, whose attitude needs correcting?

The titles in the 1640 Poems consequently offer a record of how someone has read – and how contemporary readers were being invited to read – the verses beneath. The 1640 edition is also the main means by which his sonnets were disseminated in the seventeenth century. The ESTC lists 33 copies of the Poems (ten in the Folger Shakespeare Library alone), as compared to twelve copies of the two imprints of the 1609 Sonnets (to be sold by either William Apsley or John Wright). Of course, this only indicates survival rates (and as an octavo, the Poems were more likely to be bound than a quarto – the format of the Sonnets – and so they fare better on this front).⁴⁷ Nonetheless, the extant copies of the Poems leave more traces of readers' reactions to the sonnets than do the 1609 quartos, which are frustratingly devoid of marginalia. Roberts, for example, has analysed annotations in two of the Folger copies of Benson's volume, which show seventeenth-century readers 'responding creatively to the text in front of them'.⁴⁸ The 1640 Poems consequently gives us a valuable insight into the reception of Shakespeare's sonnets. To date, however, scholarly scrutiny of the various copies of Benson's edition has been scant, because critics have failed to recognise its worth. But the 1640

⁴⁴ 'Relief²', sense 1b, OED.

⁴⁵ Colin Burrow, 'Life and Work in Shakespeare's Poems', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 97 (1998), 15-50 (at 18).

⁴⁶ Roberts, *Reading Shakespeare's Poems*, pp. 165-7.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

text is not only important for what it can tell us about the readers who jotted in its margins, or who provided their own, alternative titles: Benson's edition is itself a reading of Shakespeare's sonnets.

Appendix: Contents of the 1640 Poems, and their sources

Number only = Shakes-peares Sonnets (1609)

EH = Englands Helicon (1600, 1614)

LLL = *Love's Labours Lost* (1598)

LM = Loves Martyr (1603, 1611)

PP = *Passionate Pilgrime* (1612)

TB = *Troia Britannica* (1609)

Position in 1640 Poems	Location elsewhere	First line	Benson's title	Author, if not Shakespeare
1	67	Ah wherefore with infection should he live	The glory of beautie.	
	68	Thus in his cheeke the map of daies out-worne		
	69	Those parts of thee that the worlds eye doth view		
2	60	Like as the waves make towards the pibled shore	Injurious Time.	
	63	Against my love shall be as I am now		
	64	When I have seene by times fell hand defaced		
	65	Since brasse, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundlesse sea		
	66	Tyr'd with all these for restfull death I cry		
3	53	What is your substance, whereof are you made	True Admiration	
	54	O how much more doth beautie beautiful seeme		
4	57	Being your slave what should I doe but tend	The force of love.	
	58	That God forbid, that made me first your slave		
5	59	If there be nothing new, but that which is	The beautie of Nature.	
6	1	From fairest creatures we desire increase	Loves crueltie.	
	2	When fortie Winters shall besiege thy brow		
	3	Looke in thy glasse and tell the face thou vewest		
7	13	O That you were your selfe, but love you are	Youthfull glory.	
	14	Not from the stars doe I my judgement plucke		
	15	When I consider every thing that growes		
8	16	But wherefore doe not you a mightier way	Good Admonition.	
	17	Who will beleeeve my verse in time to come		
9	7	Loe in the Orient when the gracious light	Quicke prevention.	
10	4	Unthrifitie lovelinesse why dost thou spend	Magazine of beautie.	
	5	Those howres that with gentle worke did frame		
	6	Then let not winters wragged hand deface		
11	8	Musick to heare, why hear'st thou musick sadly	An invitation to Marriage.	
	9	Is it for feare to wet a widdowes eye		
	10	For shame deny that thou bear'st love to any		
	11	As fast as thou shalt wane so fast thou grow'st		

	12	When I doe count the clock that tells the time		
12	138	When my Love swears that she is made of truth	False beleefe.	
	PP 1			
13	144	Two loves I have, of Comfort, and Despaire	A Temptation.	
	PP 2			
14	PP 3; also LLL, 4.3	Did not the Heavenly Rhetoricke of thine eye	Fast and loose.	
15	21	So is it not with me as with that Muse	True content.	
16	23	As an unperfect actor on the stage	A bashfull Lover.	
17	22	My glasse shall not perswade me I am old	Strong conceite.	
18	PP 4	Sweet Cytheria, sitting by a Brooke	A sweet provocation.	?Bartholomew Griffin
19	PP 5; also LLL, 4.2	If love make me forsworne, how shall I sweare to love?	A constant vow.	
20	20	A Womans face with natures owne hande painted	The Exchange.	
21	27	Weary with toyle, I haste me to my bed	A disconsolation.	
	28	How can I then returne in happy plight		
	29	When in disgrace with Fortune and mens eyes		
22	PP 6	Scarce had the Sunned ride up the deawy morne	Cruell Deceit.	Probably Griffin
23	PP 7	Faire is my love, but no so faire as fickle	The unconstant Lover.	Uncertain
24	30	When to the Sessions of sweet silent thought	The benefit of Friendship.	
	31	Thy bosome is indeared with all hearts		
	32	If thou survive my well contented day		
25	PP 8	If Musicke and sweet Poetrie agree	Friendly concord.	Richard Barnfield
26	PP 9	Faire was the morne, when the faire Queen of Love	Inhumanitie.	Uncertain
27	38	How can my Muse want subject to invent	A congratulation.	
	39	Oh how thy worth with manners may I sing		
	40	Take all my loves, my love, yea take them all		
28	41	Those pretty wrongs that libertie commits	Losse and gaine.	
	42	That thou hast her is not all my grieve		
29	PP 11	Venus with Adonis sitting by her	Foolish disdain.	Griffin
30	PP 12	Crabbed age and youth cannot live together	Ancient Antipathy.	Uncertain
31	PP 13	Beautie is a vaine but doubtfull good	Beauties valuation.	Uncertain
32	44	If the dull substance of my flesh were thought	Melancholy thoughts.	
	45	The other two, slight ayre, and purging fire		
33	PP 10	Sweet Rose, faire flower, untimely pluckt, soone vaded	Loves Losse.	Uncertain
34	33	Full many a glorious morning have I seene	Loves Releefe.	
	34	Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day		
	35	No more be greev'd at that which thou hast done		
35	36	Let me confesse that we two must be twaine	Unanimitie	
	37	As a decrepit father takes delight		
36	PP 14	Good night, good rest, ah neither be my share	Loath to depart.	Uncertain
37	46	Mine eye hath play'd the Painter and hath steeld	A Master-peece	
38	25	Let those who are in favour with their stars	Happinesse in content.	
39	26	Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage	A dutifull Message.	

40	50	How heavie doe I journey on the way	Goe and come quickly.	
	51	Thus can my love excuse the slow offence		
41	46	Mine eye and heart are at a mortall warre	Two faithfull friends.	
	47	Betwixt mine eye and heart a league is tooke		
42	48	How carefull was I when I tooke my way	Carelesse neglect	
43	49	Against that time (if ever that time come)	Stoute resolution	
44	PP 15	It was a Lordings daughter	A Duell.	
45	PP 16; also LLL, 4.3	On a day (alacke the day)	Love-sicke.	
46	PP 17	My flocks feede not, my Ewes breed not	Loves labour lost.	Uncertain
47	PP 18	When as thine eye hath chose the Dame	Wholesome counsel.	Uncertain
48	62	Sinne of self-love possesseth all mine eye	Sat fuisse.	
49	55	Not marble, nor the guilded monument	A living monument.	
50	52	So am I as the rich whose blessed key	Familiaritie breeds contempt.	
51	61	Is it thy will, thy Image should keepe open	Patiens Armatus.	
52	71	No longer mourne for me when I am dead	A Valediction.	
	72	O Least the world should taske you to recite		
	73	But be contented when that fell arrest		
53	70	That thou art blam'd shall not be thy defect'	Nil magnis Invidia.	
54	80	O How I faint when I of you doe write	Love-sicke.	
	81	Or shall I live your Epitaph to make		
55	116	Let me not to the marriage of true mindes	The Picture of true love.	
56	82	I Grant thou were not married to my Muse	In prayse of his Love.	
	83	I never saw that you did painting need		
	84	Who is it that sayes most, which can say more		
	85	My tongue tide Muse in manners holds her still		
57	86	Was it the proud full saile of his great verse	A Resignation.	
	87	Farewell thou art too deare for my possessing		
58	PP 20	As it fell upon a Day	Sympathizing love.	Barnfield
59	88	When thou shalt be dispos'd to set me light	A request to his scornfull Love.	
	89	Say that thou didst forsake me for some fault		
	90	Then hate me when thou wilt, if ever, now		
	91	Some glory in their birth, some in their skill		
60	92	But do they worst to steale thy selfe away	A Lovers affection though his Love prove unconstant.	
	93	So shall I live, supposing thou art true		
	94	They that have power to hurt, and will doe none		
	95	How sweete and lovely, dost thou make the shame		
61	97	How like a Winter hath my absence beene	Complaint for his Loves absence.	
	98	From you have I beene absent in the spring		
	99	The forward violet thus did I chide		
62	100	Where are thou Muse that thou forgetst so long	An invocation to his Muse.	
	101	Oh truant Muse what shall be thy amends		
63	104	To me my faire love you never can be old	Constant affection.	

	105	Let not my love be cal'd Idolatrie		
	106	When in the Chronicle of wasted time		
64	102	My love is strengthened though more weake in seeming	Amazement.	
	103	Alack what povertie my Muse brings forth		
65	109	O Never say that I was false of heart	A Lovers excuse for his long absence.	
	110	Alas 'tis true, I have gone here and there		
66	111	O For my sake doe you wish [sic] fortune chide	A complaint.	
	112	Your love and pittie doth th'impression fill		
67	113	Since I left you, mine eye is in my minde	Selfe flattery of her beautie.	
	114	Or whether doth my minde being crown'd with you		
	115	Those lines that I b[e]fore have writ doe lie		
68	117	Accuse me thus, that I have scanted all	Tryall of loves constancy.	
	118	Like as to make our appetites more keene		
	119	What potions have I drunke of Syren teares		
69	120	That you were once unkind befriends me now	A good construction of his Loves unkindnesse.	
70	121	Tis better to be vile than vile esteemed	Error in opinion.	
71	122	Thy guise, thy tables, are within my braine	Upon the receipt of a Table Booke from his Mistris	
72	123	No! Time, thou shalt not boast that I doe change	A Vow.	
73	124	If my deare love were but the child of state	Loves safetie.	
74	125	Wer't ought to me I bore the canopy	An intreatie for her acceptance.	
75	128	How oft when thou thy musicke musicke playst	Upon her playing on the Virginalls.	
76	129	Th'expence of Spirit in a waste of shame	Immoderate Lust.	
77	127	In old age black was not counted faire	In prayse of her beautie though black.	
	130	My Mistresse eyes are nothing like the Sunne		
	131	Thou art a tiranous, so as thou art		
	132	Thine eyes I love, and they as pittying me		
78	133	Be shrew that heart that makes my heart to groan	Unkinde abuse.	
	134	So now I have confest that he is thine		
79	135	Who ever hath her wish, thou hast thy will	A Love-Suite.	
	136	If thy soule checke thee that I come so neere		
80	137	Thou blinde foole love, what dost thou to mine eyes	His heart wounded by her eye.	
	139	O call not me to justifie the wrong		
	140	Be wise as thou art cruell, doe not presse		
81	141	In faith I doe not love thee with mine eye	A Protestation.	
	142	Love is my sinne, and my deare vertue hate		
82	143	Loe as a carefull huswife runnes to catch	An Allusion.	
83	145	Those lips that Loves owne hand did make	Life and death.	
84	146	Poore soule, the center of my sinfull earth	A Consideration of death.	
85	147	My love is as a feaver longing still	Immoderate Passion.	

86	148	O Me! What eyes hath love put in my head	Loves powerfull subtilty	
	149	Canst thou O cruell, say I love thee not		
	150	Oh from what power hast thou this powrefull might		
87	78	So oft have I invok'd thee for my Muse	Retaliation.	
	79	Whilst I alone did call upon thy aide		
88	75	That time of yeare thou maist in mee behold	Sunne set.	
	77	Thy glasse will shew thee how they beauties were		
89	107	Not mine owne feares, nor the propheticke soule	A monument to Fame.	
	108	What's in the braine that inke may character		
90	151	Love is too young to know what conscience is	Perjurie.	
	152	In loving thee thou know'st I am forsworne		
91	TB	Beneath Hymetus hill well cloath'd with flowers	The Tale of Cephalus and Procris.	
92	153	Cupid laid by his brand and fell asleepe	Cupids Treacherie.	
	154	The little Love-God lying once a sleepe		
93	TB	When Menelaus from his house is gone	That Menelaus was cause of his owne wrongs.	Thomas Heywood
94	TB	Orestes liked, but no loved deerely	And in another place somewhat resembling this.	Heywood
95	TB	This Tale is blaz'd through heaven, howe once unware	Mars and Venus.	Heywood
96	TB	Ida of Caedars, and tall Trees stand full	The History how the Mynotaure was begot.	Heywood
97	TB	When Dedalus the laborinth had built	This Mynotaure, when hee came to growth, was incloased in the Laborinth, which was made by the curious Arts-master Dedalus, whose tale likewise we thus pursue.	Heywood
98	TB	Now from another World doth saile with joy	Achilles his concealement of his sex in the Court of Lycomedes.	Heywood
99		From off a hill whose concave wombe reworded	A Lovers Complaint.	
100	TB	No sooner came mine eye unto the sight	Hellen to Paris.	Heywood
101	EH (shorter version: PP 19)	Live with me and be my Love	The Passionate Shepheard to his Love.	Christopher Marlowe
102	EH (shorter version; PP 19)	If that the world and Love were young	The Nimphs reply to the Shepheard.	Uncertain
103	EH	Come live with me and be my deare	Another of the same Nature	Uncertain ('Ignoto')
104	Bloody Brother (1 st stanza appears in Measure for Measure, 4.1)	Take, O those lippes away	no title	John Fletcher
105	LM	Let the bird of lowest [sic] lay	no title	
106	LM	Beauty, Truth, and Raritie	Threnes. [Appears as separate poem to 'Let the bird of lowest lay']	
107	As You Like It, 3.2	Why should this Desart be	no title	
108	2 nd Folio (1632), prefatory material	What needed my Shakespeare for his honoured bones	An Epitaph on the admirable Dramaticke Poet, William Shakespeare.	John Milton (I.M)
109	Various MSS; John Donne's Poems (1633)	Renowned Spenser lie a thought more nigh	On the death of William Shakespeare, who died in Aprill, Anno Dom. 1616.	William Basse (W.B.)
110	Unknown	I Dare not doe thy Memory that wrong	An Elegie on the death of that famous Writer and Actor, M.	Uncertain

		William Shakspeare.	
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‘An Addition of some Excellent Poems, to those precedent, of Renowned Shakespeare, By other Gentlemen’; none of these poems appear in print before the 1640 Poems.⁴⁹

Position	First line	Title	Author and other location
1	Sitting, and ready to be drawne	His Mistresse Drawne.	Ben Jonson, Underwood (1640-1)
2	Paintery y'are come, but may be gone	Her minde.	Jonson, Underwood
3	The Sunne which doth the greatest comfort bring	To Ben. Johnson	Francis Beaumont (not printed before 1640)
4	Come then, and like two Doves of silver wings	His Mistris Shade.	Robert Herrick, Hesperides (1648)
5	I'th nonnage of a Winters day	Lavinia walking in a frosty Morning.	?Milton (not printed until 1823, The Cambridge Tart)
6	I Sent a Sigh unto my Mistresse Eare	A Sigh sent to his Mistresse	Unknown
7	Come you swarmes of thoughts, and bring	An Allegorical allusion of melancholy thoughts to Bees.	I.G.
8	Aske me why I send you here	The Primrose.	Herrick, Hesperides
9	Goe thou gentle whispering winde	A Sigh.	Thomas Carew, Poems (1640)
10	Stay lusty blood, where canst thou seeke	A Blush.	William Strode (printed in Westminster Drollery, 1671)
11	When Orpheus sweetlydid complaine	Orpheus Lute.	Strode (printed in Parnassus Biceps, 1656)
12	Am I dispis'd because you say	no title	Herrick, Hesperides
13	Sure 'twas the Spring went by, for th' earth did waste	Upon a Gentlewoman walking on the Grasse.	Unknown
14	Farewell (faire Saint) may not the Seas or winde	On his Love going to Sea	?Carew (printed in miscellaneous poems appended to Richard Fanshawe's Pastor Fido, 1648)
15	Aske me no more where Jove bestowes	no title	Carew, Poems

⁴⁹ Indices to Seventeenth-Century Poetry has been used to locate a number of these poems (<http://ett.arts.uwo.ca/poemindx/site/mstrindex.html>, accessed 3 April 2009).