Erroneous Donne: the author, his scribe, their text and its first readers.

This chapter is about the usefulness of error to editors, because errors leave traces of the processes by which texts were produced and of the people who produced them. To describe a text as erroneous seems to suggest that it is bad: the opposite of an "accurate" one. But as editors we cannot assume that our author got everything right, or that their intentions are clear. Rather, many editorial decisions involve complicated exercises of judgement about whether something does or does not constitute an error, and about whose error it might be (scribe or compositor or author).[1] For editors stuck in the mire of such decision making, error can be a frustration, a hindrance in the process of creating a single text. But as Alice Leonard's essay on Thomas Browne reminds us, there are times when our interpretative work requires us to engage with the "messiness of error directly".[2] It is through error that we can catch glimpses of the steps taken in the text's production. In cases where the textual evidence points to the author as the maker of the mistake, error can act like a window onto the process of composition. Where a scribe is the most likely source of an error, we can see through their errors something of the path that the text has taken. In this essay we want to pause the editing process before errors are relegated to the textual apparatus or the explanatory notes and instead view error as an opportunity for interpretation, a moment when a text's layers of composition and copying become more visible. Focusing on Donne's sermons, we will be treating the finished sermon, in manuscript or print, as a palimpsest in which errors allow us to read back to Donne's commonplace book from the manuscript sermon-book he gave to the scribe for copying, and from there to the printed text that we produce. And by making these layers of the text visible, we will also consider how error can allow us to catch sight of the human relationships that brought those texts together.

The Unfortunate Scribe

Each of the one hundred and sixty extant sermons by John Donne had been on an extended and complex textual journey before it reached the hands of its first reader.[3] Because the

[1] See Emma Rhatigan, "Margins of Error: Performance, Text, and the Editing of Early Modern Sermons", *The Library* 21 (2020): 423-444.
[2] Alice Leonard, "Reading Imperfection", [this volume] p. 1.
[3] For a useful overview of this process, see Mary Morrissey, "Sermon-Notes and Seventeenth-Century Manuscript Communities", *Huntington Library Quarterly* 80 (2017): 295-98. See also Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and Their Audiences, 1590-1640* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 131-35.

purpose of the sermon was to show what guidance the Bible offered on the subject it addressed, Donne's work on a sermon began with what modern literary scholars might call a "close analysis" of his biblical text: he would break the passage up, considering its meanings phrase by phrase, or sometimes word by word. The elements of this close analysis, and the divisions made to the text, became the core of the oration: those divisions then acted as the headings that Donne used to guide his congregation through the sermon, explicating the doctrine by phrase or verse and then explaining its "use" to his auditory. (Izaak Walton tells us about this process when he explains that Donne began by "casting his Sermon into a forme, and his Text into divisions".[4]) Under each of his divisions, Donne would support his interpretation by drawing on further biblical proof-texts and authorities such as the Church Fathers. Because the medium for the sermon was speech, the full text of the sermon did not usually precede its delivery. The divisions, with the notes and observations gathered under the appropriate headings, would be written (perhaps in abbreviated form) and carried into the pulpit. But in some cases many years passed before Donne wrote out his full text in continuous prose and with marginal notes.[5] Some of these full text copies circulated in manuscript sermon-books; some of those manuscript sermon-books became the printer's copy-text for quarto editions produced under Donne's supervision; many more would be the basis for the printed text found in one of the three posthumous folios. But one sermon, a sermon preached at Lincoln's Inn, was never printed in the seventeenth century and reached modern editors only through manuscript copies.

There are four manuscript copies of this sermon on Psalm 38: 9 extant: they are found in the *Dobell*, *Merton*, *Lothian* and *Dowden* manuscripts.[6] None are in Donne's hand or corrected by Donne, and all are replete with error. This sermon thus provides a useful example of the challenges an editor faces when deciding which of the numerous variants between different witnesses should be designated "error". At one extreme, some errors render the text nonsensical; for example, where *Merton* has "ages" instead of "bodyes" (in a phrase that in *Dobell* correctly runs "a murraine, a feaver ouerthrew our bodyes or our estates").[7] In

[4] Izaak Walton, *The Life of John Donne* (London, 1658), 86-7.
[5] A few preachers wrote their sermons out in full and brought these scripts into the pulpit. Lancelot Andrewes is a famous example. This was not, however, standard practice. See Mary Morrissey, *Politics and the Paul's Cross Sermons, 1558-1642* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 36-7 and *Lancelot Andrewes: Selected Sermons & Lectures*, ed. Peter McCullough (Oxford University Press, 2005), li-lii.
[6] Sermon number 6 in vol. 2 of *The Sermons of John Donne*, ed. George Potter and Evelyn Simpson, 10 vols (University of California Press, 1953-62). The sermon is extant in Houghton Library, Harvard University MS Eng 966.4 (*Dobell*), fols. 2r-8v. Bodleian Library MS Eng.th.e.102, 151-81 (*Dowden*); National Library of Scotland, MS 5767, fols. 51r-56v (*Lothian*); Bodleian Library MS Eng.Th.c.71, fols. 95r-101v (*Merton*).
[7] *Merton*, fol. 96r, *Sermons*, ed. Potter and Simpson, 2:147.

some cases, a scribe is clearly flummoxed by his copy, as when the *Merton* scribe notes "*Here was a greeke Sentence*".[8] These are what textual scholars term "manifest" or "indicative" errors: the most plausible explanation is the scribe making a mistake rather than the author writing nonsense. For example, we can be reasonably sure that Donne wrote that the Church Fathers "scarce excuse any suite at Lawe from sinne", rather than "scarce execute anye suite at law from Sinne" in a passage that considers the injunction in 1 Cor. 6: 7 against lawsuits.[9] But in many cases an editor is presented with variant readings where both alternatives make sense. Either the variants involve very small differences in diction, for example "mine" for "my", or they present the reader with a different but equally possible meaning, for example where *Dobell* reads "why rather sustayne ye not harme?", but the other manuscripts read "why rather suffer yee not harme?".[10] If we had only one manuscript witness, we might not recognize there was any error here. But having multiple witnesses extant, we can try to reconstruct the relationships between the manuscripts, and therefore determine which variant is probably "error".[11] Working with multiple witnesses means such "hidden" errors can be brought to light. Ironically, more manuscript witnesses means more errors are made visible, but those multiple witnesses also allow us to determine what the more correct reading should be.

The process of editing is ideally one whereby all errors, major or minor, manifest or covert, uncontroversial or debated, are eliminated from the text and relegated to the textual apparatus.[12] But here we consider what can be gained by spending some time with these errors before they are consigned to the bottom of the page. And the sermon on Psalm 39. 9 offers as an example an unusually extended, "manifest" error. Approximately three quarters of the way through the sermon, two of the four manuscript copies, *Dowden* and *Lothian*, misplace a passage of approximately five hundred words. Evidently, a leaf became misplaced in the copy of the sermon from which the *Dowden* and *Lothian* manuscripts would descend. This accident left the scribe of that ancestor of *Dowden* and *Lothian* with the unfortunate task of making sense of a peculiarly confused text.

[8] *Merton*, fol. 96v.
[9] *Dobell*, fol. 5v, *Merton*, fol. 99r, *Sermons*, ed. Potter and Simpson, 2:154.
[10] *Dobell*, fol.5v, *Dowden*, 167, Lothian, fol. 54r, Merton, fol. 99r. See *Sermons*, ed. Potter and Simpson, 2:154.
[11] For a discussion of this process and the challenges which it can present, see Rhatigan, "Margins of Error".
[12] Some editors have explored the possibilities of hypertext in order to produce a critical edition that does not privilege the authority of any one witness or document. See, for example, Jerome McGann, *Radiant Textuality: Literature After the World Wide Web* (Palgrave, 2001). However, if an editor is to produce a single text in a print edition, then any variants judged to be error must be consigned to the textual apparatus.

Crucially, this scribe (whose version of the text would pass to the scribes of the *Dowden* and *Lothian* manuscripts: let us call him the Unfortunate Scribe), only emerges into view when he falls into error. Not only his labor, but his very identity can only be viewed at the points at which the text he copied differs from other copies. But what do these moments of error reveal? We know the text in *Lothian* was transcribed on September 11, 1624, thus no more than eight years after Donne first preached the sermon.[13] *Dowden* may be a much later witness.[14] However, while potentially chronologically distant, the *Dowden* and *Lothian* versions are textually closely connected. In addition to the misplaced sheet, these two manuscripts share seventy manifest errors and numerous variant readings not seen in other witnesses. This constitutes strong evidence that they stem from a shared hypothetical ancestor (or ancestors). We cannot determine whether the Unfortunate Scribe who first encountered the misplaced sheet was responsible for any of the other errors shared by *Dowden* and *Lothian*, though it does at least seem likely. And we can deduce some facts about his identity. We know he was not Donne or a scribe working under Donne's supervision (otherwise such a grave error would no doubt have been discovered and corrected). And we also know he was copying Donne's sermon soon after its delivery in the pulpit, certainly before 1624. It thus seems likely that the Unfortunate Scribe or the person who commissioned his work were connected with Donne or moving in the same social or professional circles.

Our anonymous Unfortunate Scribe was probably not only one of the earliest transcribers of Donne's sermon, but also one of its earliest readers. And examining his encounter with his confused copy text sheds light both on how Donne's manuscript sermons were copied and circulated, and on how they were read and understood. The sermon on Psalm 38: 9 is constructed in three parts: first, a discussion of the "place" of v. 8 in the psalm, specifically a discussion of why God does not respond to David's prayer immediately; secondly, a discussion of the "generall doctrine" which can be drawn out of the verse, that God both sees and foresees all things; and then in the third part Donne breaks down the verse word by word.[15] The misplaced sheet includes text from the third part, where Donne is speaking to the words "my groaning is not hid from thee". The Unfortunate Scribe's difficulties would have started at the point at which the misplaced sheet was extracted. Here

[13] The sermon is not dated, but its attribution to Lincoln's Inn (in all four witnesses) means it cannot have been preached earlier than 1616, when Donne was appointed Reader in Divinity.
[14] Both hands found in the manuscript use a round hand script, the first with a very few features of secretary hand.
[15] Donne considers man's desires ("desideria"), man's groaning ("gemitus"), the fact that both these desires and groans belonged to David, they were "his" ("sua"), that they were before God ("ante te"), that they must not be hid ("non absconditus"), but they are only laid open to and before God ("ante te" and "tibi domine").

Donne is exhorting his congregation not to hide their groans and desires. The text should read:

> We must hide neither; but anatomize our soule in both, and find euery sinnewe, and fiber, euery lineament and ligament of this body of sinne, and then euery breath of that newe spirit, euery drop of that newe bloud that must restore and repayre vs. Study all the history, and wayt all the progresse of the holy ghost in thy selfe.[16]

With the misplaced sheet removed, however, the Unfortunate Scribe would have encountered text that read:

> We must hide neither; but anatomize our soule in both, and find euery sinnewe, and fiber, euery lineament and ligament of this body of sinne, and then euery breath of that newe spirit, euery drop of that newe bloud that must restore and repayre vs. Study all the history, and wayt out of the presence of god, by puttinge himselfe into the presence of his minister.[17]

With about five hundred words extracted, Donne's prose no longer makes sense; "Study all the history, and wayt out of the presence of god" is nonsense, even allowing for seventeenth-century grammar and syntax. Still, another scribe might have let the words stand.[18] The Unfortunate Scribe was, however, more conscientious. He was also resourceful - and no doubt pushed for time - because in order to make his text make better sense he simply removed the "of", writing "Study all the history, and wayt out the presence of god". "Wayt" could carry the sense of to "watch . . . observe constantly" or "consider attentively" so to "wayt" the presence of God is a reasonable synonym for the previous clause where the congregation was told to "study the history of god".[19]

However, this fix only really works on the level of the individual clause. "Study all the history, and wayt out the presence of god" makes sense; "Study all the history, and wayt out the presence of god, by puttinge himselfe into the presence of his minister" does not. Who is the "himselfe"? Surely to correct the complete sentence the Unfortunate Scribe needed to change "himselfe" to "yourself"? Such a crux is worth pausing over because it

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[16] *The Oxford Edition of the Sermons of John Donne* [hereafter *OESJD*], *Volume IV: Sermons Preached at the Inns of* Court, ed. Emma Rhatigan, Sermon 8, *forthcoming.* See *Sermons*, ed. Potter and Simpson, 2:159.
[17] This is my reconstruction of the text the scribe would have encountered. For the version then copied by the scribe of *Dowden*, see *Dowden*, 164.
[18] The scribe of *Merton*, for example, was quite happy to leave the reader with prose which is far more confused, as when he copied "when the sinner is dead by thie true repentance" instead of "when the sinne is dead by true repentance"; *Merton*, fol. 99v, *Dobell*, fol. 6r. See *Sermons*, ed. Potter and Simpson, 2:155.
[19] *Oxford English Dictionary* [hereafter *OED*], s.v. "wait, v.[1]", last modified September 2023, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1168865181.

raises important questions about what types of syntactical confusion early readers may have been willing, or not willing, to tolerate. Here the Unfortunate Scribe seems to have been ready and able to correct what appeared to him as a small, local error, but, understandably, the process of copying did not allow him the space or time to extend this editing work to the longer sentence.

A similar pattern occurs later in the sermon when the Unfortunate Scribe reached the point where the misplaced sheet was erroneously inserted. Donne is in his peroration, applying the verse to Christ, and the correct text reads:

> To end all; he proposed all ante patrem, but ante patrem Dominum, to his Father soe, as his Father had a Church vpon earth, and therefore, though there were a newe church to be erected by him, yet he yeilded all obedience to that which was formerly erected.[20]

But with the misplaced sheet inserted in the middle the Unfortunate Scribe encountered:

> To end all; hee propos'd all ante patrem, but ante patrem Dominum, to his Father soe, as his Father had a Church vpon earth, and therfore, though all the progresse of the holy ghost in thy selfe, take not the grace of god, or the mercie of god as a medall, or a wedge of gold to be layd vp . . . Let noe man thinke himself there were a newe church to be erected by him, yet he yeilded all obedience to that which was formerly erected.[21]

Unhappy with the phrase "therefore, though all the progresse of the holy ghost in thy selfe" the Unfortunate Scribe changed "though" to "through" to produce "therefore, through all the progresse of the holy ghost in thy selfe." But as before, this works only as a local fix. "Through all the progresse of the holy ghost" makes sense as a fragmentary clause, but it cannot logically follow on from "and therefore" and does not provide a meaningful conclusion to the sentence as a whole. Then, at the end of the inserted text, the Unfortunate Scribe lets the phrase "Let noe man thinke himself there were a newe church to be erected by him, yet he yeilded all obedience to that which was formerly erected" stand, despite the resulting ambiguity surrounding the "he" in the second clause. In the confused text, the implication is that "he" is the "noe man" who is warned against erecting a new church, but it

[20] *OESJD IV: Sermons Preached at the Inns of* Court, ed. Emma Rhatigan, Sermon 8, *forthcoming.* See *Sermons*, ed. Potter and Simpson, 2:163.
[21] This is my reconstruction of the text the scribe would have encountered. For the version then copied by the scribe of *Dowden*, see *Dowden*, 178-180.

then becomes entirely nonsensical for "noe man" to yield obedience to the church "formerly erected".

As a reader, the Unfortunate Scribe is a very particular case, since he was both reading and writing (and no doubt doing both under time pressure). The copy of the sermon in *Dowden*, however, reveals evidence of another reader who apparently did not query the confused text. This later reader has annotated the sermon with underlining, additional punctuation, deletions, and supplemented readings, perhaps with a view to re-delivering the sermon himself.[22] Despite this careful attention to the text, however, this reader makes no interventions at the moments of syntactic confusion where the misplaced sheet is extracted or inserted. Crucial here, is the fact that this later reader of the *Dowden* manuscript had no other copies of the sermon to compare their copy with: there was no printed text of this sermon until Evelyn Simpson included it in *A Study of the Prose Works of John Donne* in 1924. Consequently, the *Dowden* annotator was unable to identify these moments in the text as "error" or detect the presence of the Unfortunate Scribe.[23] Indeed, even Evelyn Simpson did not emend the text. For her first edition she only had access to one manuscript witness (*Dowden*), and, as a result, did not realize there was a misplaced passage of text.[24] It is only from the vantage point of working with multiple copies that we get access to the varieties of errors across the different witnesses, which in turn provide us with a clearer sense of the sermon's transmission and the previous editing work of our Unfortunate Scribe.

Reading through error, we have the privilege of seeing one of Donne's earliest readers seeking to make sense of his text. But this process might also invite us to reflect on our reading. Donne's syntax can be very knotty. For an example we need only turn to the lines immediately after the misplaced sheet is inserted in *Dowden* and *Lothian*. Here we read:

> and therefore, though there were a newe church to be erected by him, yet he yeilded all obedience to that which was formerly erected; In that he was circumcised and presented; and in that his Mother was purified accordinge to the Lawe. and in that he sent his owne disciples to be instructed by the scribes and Pharises, And to conclude, all Refractory persons, by his example: in that church he honoured with

[22] This second reader uses a late seventeenth-century round hand script, and they are also responsible for the copy of the last sermon in the volume, which is not by Donne and is closer to late seventeenth-century sermons in its style, construction, and length.

[23] Like the reader of Swift's *Tale of a Tub*, we may suspect an error, but we cannot identify an "obvious solution" without "multiple editions … on hand to compare": Katie Lanning, "Reading 'Rotennness': Jonathan Swift and Textual Error" [This volume], p. 6.

[24] Evelyn Simpson, *Study of the Prose Works of John Donne* (Oxford University Press, 1924), appendix A. By the second edition, Simpson had accessed other witnesses, but she did not reprint her edition: 2nd ed., (1948), vi.

> his presence the feast of the dedicacion, which was an Anniversary feast, and a feast not of divine Institucion, but ordained by the church.[25]

As it stands, the meaning appears to be that Christ honored the "Refractory persons" with his presence at the feast of the dedication. But that makes no sense. Why would Christ seek to "honour" "Refractory persons"? It seems more likely that Donne is using the verb "conclude" in relation to the "Refractory persons" and doing so with the sense of "To overcome in argument; to confute, 'shut up'; to convince".[26] Hence Christ is convincing "Refractory persons," presumably those who resisted the authority of the church, to institute an anniversary feast by attending the feast of the dedication in person. However, for that meaning to stand, the editor must remove the punctuation after "conclude". But while justifiable in terms of making sense of the text, such a decision would be editorial "intervention" rather than "correction". With no disparity between the manuscripts – all four witnesses include punctuation after "conclude" – there is no clear evidence of error and no alternative "correct" reading. Without error to guide her, the Unfortunate Editor is left without a clear understanding of the text's transmission, and therefore has fewer means to make sense of the text.

The missing commonplace books

Once the editor has established the text of a sermon, she must then provide annotations to explain to the reader where Donne sourced the biblical references and quotations from the Church Fathers, classical authors, magisterial Reformers, and contemporary writers that pepper his sermons. Some of these quotations are accurate in the sermon and therefore easy to trace; some are half-submerged, citations of an idea rather than exact quotations of a phrase or sentence. And sometimes the quotations and the citations are wrong, and the editor must try to find what Donne meant to cite. But these errors are also instructive: by tracing the quotations in his sermons, we can see when Donne worked closely with a printed text, and when the errors in his quotations and citations strongly suggest that he was working from his own abridgements and notes. These are the moments when error is an interpretative opportunity. By attempting to reconstruct how the error came about, we can glimpse

[25] *OESJD IV: Sermons Preached at the Inns of* Court, ed. Emma Rhatigan, Sermon 8, *forthcoming*. See *Sermons*, ed. Potter and Simpson, 2:163.
[26] *OED*, s.v. "conclude, v.", last modified September 2023, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/6005886898.

something of the missing notebooks filled with his reading of 1400 authors that Izaak Walton claimed Donne made.[27]

The fact that we can reconstruct something of Donne's reading from his misquotations and mis-citations is not a new discovery. Don Cameron Allen noticed back in 1941 that Donne's mistaken citations could be a clue to his method of composition, noticing where Donne had grouped examples together from notes taken from primary sources and from early modern compilations.[28] In what follows, we will consider some of the more intriguing errors in what was probably Donne's most politically important sermon: delivered in 1622 on James I's *Directions for Preachers* at St Paul's Cross in London. It was also Donne's first printed sermon, and it went through three issues in that year. In one passage, Donne argues forcefully that frequent preaching had always been encouraged by the Church Fathers: a point of obvious significance in a sermon that defended restrictions on the subject matter and frequency of sermons. The passage is a dense series of citations: seven different sources quoted within ten lines, all mentioning the obligation to preach when needed. Three of these are mis-citations:

> … for so Saint *Ambrose* preached his Sermon *de sancto Latrone,* of the good Thiefe*, Hesterno die*, yesterday I told you etc. So Saint *Augustin* preached his Sermon upon *All Saints day:* And so did Saint *Bernard his twelfth Sermon* upon the *Psalm: Qui habitat*. Now, though I preachd but lately before; and now, though I had but late warning to preach now; So S. *Basil* preached his 2. *Sermon* upon the *Hexameron,* the sixe daies worke, when he had but that Morning for Meditation: and more then so, in his 2. *Sermon de Baptismo;* for, it seemes he preached that without any premeditation *Prout suggerit spiritus sanctus*.[29]

The sermon on the good thief that begins *"Hesterno die*" is actually by Maximus of Turin. The 1555 Froben edition of Ambrose's works included Maximus' sermons, and this may be where the misattribution arose. Donne had misattributed the quotation in a sermon preached at Whitehall in February 1618.[30] The citation of Augustine's sermon "upon *All Saints day*" is an error: there is a sermon on All Saint's Day attributed to Augustine (but the attribution was

[27] Walton, *Life*, 88.
[28] Don Cameron Allen, "Donne's Suicides," *Modern Language Notes* 56 (1941): 129-133.
[29] *A Sermon ... Preached at the Cross the 15th of September, 1622,* in *Sermons*, ed. Potter and Simpson, 4:195-6.
[30] Maximus of Turin, *De sancto latrone*, I, *Homilia LI* (*PL* 57:343-347), which opens "Quoniam hesterno die de latrone fecimus mentionem" ("since we made mention of the thief yesterday"): Donne misattributes the quotation to St Bernard of Clairvaux in *Sermons*, ed. Potter and Simpson, 1:260; see also *OESJD 1: Sermons Preached at the Jacobean Courts*, ed. Peter McCullough (Oxford University Press, 2015): 65, see nn.

already considered dubious in the 1576 Plantin edition); however, it does not mention a sermon preached on the previous day. More likely is Sermon 321, a very short Easter sermon that opens "diximus quidem hesterno die" ("we spoke indeed yesterday") and quotes Psalm 115: 15 ("Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints").[31] Donne may have confused this quotation with the occasion of the sermon. And lastly, the reference to St Basil's two sermons on baptism: Basil's homily, often called the *Exhortation to Baptism*, is not in two parts. *De baptismo libri duo* is a doubtful attribution to Basil, but may be what Donne meant; however, it has no reference to relying on the Holy Spirit.[32] Donne's error on this last point makes his source difficult to trace, but the pattern of mis-citations and misattributions all point to a commonplace book entry on preaching at short notice or with little preparation.

One of the conclusions that we can draw from the pattern of error in Donne's citations is that he did some of his reading well in advance of his writing, and that he used his commonplace books to supply quotations and citations. We have known from a long time that young scholars were encouraged to keep commonplace books and "florilegia" for future use; in editing Donne's errors, we see this commonplacing culture at work. Donne could draw on years of reading when composing each sermon. This also means that for some sermons, he was using material that he read before his ordination. We have much evidence in Donne's sermons about his reading, but the errors in his citation make us more aware that this reading happened over many years.

There is another error in the *Directions* sermon that points us beyond Donne's reading to his scholarly networks. He writes:

> When some *Articles* concerning the falling away from Justifying grace, and other poynts that beat upon that haunt, had been ventilated, in Conventicles, and in Pulpits too, and Preaching on both sides past, and that some persons of great place and estimation in our *Church*, together with him who was the greatest of all, amongst our Clergy, had upon mature deliberation established a resolution what should bee thought, and taught, held and preached in those poynts, and had thereupon sent down that resolution to be published in the Universitie,

[31] *PL* 38:1443.

[32] Basil's *Exhortation to Baptism* is Homily XIII (*PG* 31:423-44); *De baptismo libri duo* (*PG* 31:1513-1628) is a doubtful attribution; book 2 doesn't make reference to *ex tempore* delivery. The same 1618 court sermon which misattributed the Maximus quotation to Bernard repeats a similar phrase as a citation from Basil *de baptismo*: "Loquemur prout Sermo nobis dabitur in apertione oris", which Donne translates "I intend to speak so, as the Holy Ghost shall give me utterance for the present". See *Sermons*, ed. Potter and Simpson, 1: 261. Apart from the references to Acts 2:4 and Ephesians 6:19, the quotation has not been traced.

> not vulgarly neither, to the people, but in a Sermon, *Ad Clerum* onely, yet her *Majestie* being informed thereof, declared her displeasure so, as that, scarse any houres before the Sermon was to have been, there was a Countermaund, and Inhibition to the Preacher for medling with any of those poynts.[33]

The reference to "*Articles* concerning the falling away from Justifying grace" means this can only refer to the Lambeth Articles, which were framed by Archbishop of Canterbury John Whitgift ("him who was the greatest of all, amongst our Clergy") from a draft supplied by William Whitaker, Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge.[34] But Donne's account does not tally with modern historians' understanding of the events of 1595. Whether we call Donne's deviations "errors" raises historiographical questions: our historical narratives are all built on incomplete information. There is still much debate about the Lambeth Articles, partly because of gaps in the sources. Sir Robert Cecil wrote to Whitgift in December 1595 telling him to suspend the articles, but there was no formal suspension by the archbishop; other sources on the queen's displeasure are later and second-hand.[35] While modern scholars have access to private correspondence (such as Cecil's letter) that Donne did not see, Donne may have access to sources that we lack. Tracing the deviations between our accounts of the Lambeth Articles and Donne's invites us to consider Donne's access to information not extant now.

Printed accounts of the Lambeth Articles did exist when Donne preached in 1622, and he may have consulted them when composing his sermon; these sources were already shaped by the doctrinal disputes between Calvinists and Arminians in the Netherlands and England, and their "errors" (compared to modern historians' understanding of these events) might indicate which printed accounts, if any, Donne used. Antonius Thysius presented the Counter-Remonstrant (i.e. Calvinist) view in an anthology printed in 1613.[36] This was answered by the Remonstrant Joannis Corvinus' *Responsio ad Ioannis Bogermanni* in 1614.[37]

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[33] *Sermons*, ed. Potter and Simpson, 4:200.
[34] On the complex history of the Lambeth articles, see H.C. Porter, *Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge* (Cambridge University Press, 1958), 364-75; Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (Cambridge University Press, 1982), 218-26; Nicholas Tyacke, "The Rise of Arminianism Reconsidered," *Past and Present* 115 (1987): 201-16 at 204-5.
[35] Nicholas Tyacke, "The Lambeth Articles (1595) and the Doctrinal Stance of the Church of England," *English Historical Review* 137 (2022): 1102.
[36] Antonius Thysius' anthology *Brevis et dilucida explicatio ... de electione ... Nec non Lambethani Articuli, seu assertiones Orthodoxae, cum Anglicana confessione, & Patrem ...* (Amsterdam, 1613). A very brief account of the controversy is given in the preface (sigs A4r-A6v), but no mention is made of the suppression of the articles.
[37] Joannis Corvinus *Responsio ad Ioannis Bogermanni*, 2 vols, (Leiden, 1614-16), vol. 2, sigs 4B2v-4B4v. A version of this account was printed (titled "*historia*") in *Articuli Lambethani* (London, 1651), sigs A2r-A5v.

Corvinus includes a longer "narrative" of the events in the second volume (1616), and in this version, William Cecil tells the queen about the articles and she summons Archbishop Whitgift; the queen tells Whitgift that he was perilously close to a *praemunire* in attempting to frame the Church's doctrine without her authorization. Historians reject this account of a direct confrontation with the queen (which would make Sir Robert's Cecil's letter redundant).[38] So Donne's "error" (from our perspective) could have come from Corvinus' printed narrative. Corvinus' narrative was based on a manuscript report written in England sometime between 1605 and 1614. One of the most likely sources of this report, Debora Shuger shows, is John Overall, who was a friend and correspondent of Hugo Grotius since 1613. Overall became dean of St Paul's in 1602 and served there until 1614.[39] Could Donne have known this account of events directly through John Overall rather than through the printed narrative of 1616? [40] There is one other error in Donne's account: that the Articles were to be promulgated in a sermon *ad clerum*. None of the surviving sources say this, but it is possible that Donne was confusing reports that Whitaker preached *about* these questions with a sermon designed to promulgate them: such confusion would be more understandable if it arose from remembered conversations from years before.[41]

We know that Donne worked for some time with Thomas Morton, then dean of Gloucester, in the years before *Pseudo-Martyr* was published.[42] We also know that Morton and John Overall were collaborators on the work that preoccupied Morton in those years: the largest work of anti-Catholic polemic of the mid-Jacobean years, published in 1609 as the *Catholike Appeale*. This was published under Morton's name, but it was "intended by [Archbishop] Bancroft to be the work of a panel of divines ... with Overall reportedly a

[38] See Elizabeth Gilliam and W. J. Tighe, "To 'Run with the Time' Archbishop Whitgift, the Lambeth Articles, and the Politics ofTheological Ambiguity in Late Elizabethan England" *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 23.2 (1992), 325-340, p. 326.
[39] *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v. "Overall, John (bap. 1561, d. 1619), bishop of Norwich" by Nicholas W. S. Cranfield last modified 23 September 2004, https:doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/20964.
[40] Debora Shugar, "The Mysteries of the Lambeth Article," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 68 (2017): 310-319.
[41] Nicholas Tyacke argues that Donne gave a "garbled memory" of the volume, printed in 1599 but then recalled, that included a life of Whitaker (which printed the articles) and a copy of Whitaker's last sermon: "The Lambeth Articles (1595) and the Doctrinal Stance of the Church of England": 1102. I suggest that Donne's connection with Overall offers a different possibility for Donne's error that that doesn't require Donne to have seen the recalled edition of William Whitaker's *Praelectiones ... de Ecclesia* (Cambridge, 1599).
[42] *Ignatius His Conclave*, ed. T. S. Healy (Oxford University Press, 1969), appendix C; See R.C. Bald, *John Donne: A Life* (Oxford University Press, 1970), 210-2. Bald is otherwise skeptical that Donne "served his apprenticeship in the study of controversial literature while assisting Dr Thomas Morton", as Geoffrey Keynes put it (*A Bibliography of Dr John Donne* (Cambridge University Press, 1958), 3), but Bald's argument rests on the idea that Donne would have been a formal employee of Morton's.

significant contributor", according to Anthony Milton.[43] Indeed, Morton's biographer tells us that Morton worked on the book "in his private Library in the Deanery house of St. *Pauls London,* where he then resided, *Dr. Overall* his reverend friend being Deane there".[44] There is good reason for thinking that Donne's reading for Morton overlapped with his reading for *Pseudo-martyr*.[45] Donne's copy of Bellarmine's *Disputationes de Controversiis Christianae Fidei* is extant, and Margaret Hobbs' examination confirms that it is the copy Donne used when writing *Pseudo-martyr*.[46] This is of interest because Izaak Walton claims that Donne showed his annotated copy of Bellarmine to the dean of Gloucester, Morton's position in 1606.[47] It is noteworthy that Donne's *Conclave Ignati* was entered into the Stationers' Register in January 1611 as having been licensed "under thandes of Doctor Moreton, Doctor Mokett".[48] Morton was not a regular licenser and so this is more telling of Donne's relationship with him than scholars have realized.[49] Although not formally in Morton's service, Donne was serving the same function as a bishop's chaplain or an aristocrat's secretary; these were posts for young men who did the reading that their employers or patrons did not have time to do.[50] Donne read the books that Morton needed to have checked, and he kept notes for himself too. Donne did not lose social status because he was not a salaried employee, but he did accept gifts of money from Morton. (Baddeley reports this as an example of Donne's wit: Bishop Morton gave him "a good quantity of Gold" saying "Here Mr. Donne, take this, Gold is restorative: He presently answered, Sir, I doubt I shall never restore it back again: and I am assured that he never did."[51])

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[43] Anthony Milton, "Anglicanism by Stealth: The Career and Influence of John Overall", *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England*, ed. Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake (Boydell, 2006), 159-176 at 162. Morton says that the work was intended by the archbishop to be the work of "a certaine number of divines" *A Catholike Appeale,* sig. A3v.

[44] Richard Baddeley, *The Life of Dr. Thomas Morton, late Bishop of Duresme* (York, 1699), 35-6.

[45] Walton makes the claim that *Pseudo-Martyr* was written in six weeks: *Life*, 38. In the "Advertisement to the Reader", Donne says that he had been "willing to give the Booke a hasty dispatch": John Donne, *Pseudo-Martyr*, ed. Anthony Raspa (McGill University Press, 1993), 9. Bald thinks it "would not have been impossible provided that Donne had already organized his notes and references": Bald, *John Donne,* 221.

[46] Margaret Hobbs, "'To a Most Dear Friend' – Donne's Bellarmine," *Review of English Studies*, NS 32 (1981): 425-6.

[47] Walton's claim that Donne annotated Bellarmine while a student at Lincoln's Inn (Walton, *Life*, 11-12) led Bald to misidentify the dean of Gloucester concerned as Anthony Rudd.

[48] Edward Arber, *Transcript of the Register of the Stationers' Company*, 3:204r.

[49] Sebastiaan Verweij, "Sermon Notes from John Donne in the Manuscripts of Francis Russell, Fourth Earl of Bedford", *English Literature Renaissance* 46 (2016): 278-313; Angus Vine, "His Lordships First, and Last, CHAPLAINE: William Rawley and Francis Bacon", in *Chaplains in Early Modern England* ed. Hugh Adlington, Tom Lockwood, and Gillian Wright (Manchester University Press, 2016), 123-40.

[50] See Mary Morrissey, "Episcopal chaplains and control of the media, 1586–1642," in *Chaplains in Early Modern England*, 64-82.

[51] Baddeley, *The Life of Dr. Thomas Morton,* 102-3.

And at this point we might speculate: as Donne was working with Morton on material for *The Catholike Appeale* and on *Pseudo-martyr* he may have found himself in the company of John Overall, who also worked on the *Appeale* while the book was being completed in his deanery. Documents about the Lambeth Articles, or conversations over the events that preceded Overall's appointment to St Paul's, may have been communicated to Donne. Putting Donne in this network of scholars may explain how he had access to the many books that he references in his sermons: Walton's 1400 authors "abridged and analysed". The problem of how to access the kinds of books needed for these works was a concern for all those who were engaged in religious controversies and was an important motivation for Thomas James, the Bodleian's first librarian. James corresponded with many of the other important book owners of his day and was involved in the setting up of Chelsea College, James I's college of controversial divinity whose initial fellows included Morton and Overall.[52] If we think of Donne as part of this network around Morton, Overall, and James - people who were compiling and sifting sources, and reading in history, law, patristics and divinity for the purpose of defending the English Church in international controversy - we can understand how he would have access to so many scholarly resources that he did not own. Not unlike the Brownes of Troutbeck, Donne's life and books were "in dialogue with" his family, friends, and patrons.[53]

Editing with Error

Donne was not a particularly error-prone scholar, and most of the scribes who worked on the sermon manuscripts extant were professionals who produced good quality copies of long and intricate prose works. But the surviving copies of Donne's sermons contain errors and for this we can be grateful, because those errors create moments when we can ask questions about how these complex texts came to be written. Donne had to draw on years of reading to produce sermons like this; his contemporaries did the same. And all of these men relied on their personal networks to gain access to the books they needed; they took notes when they had a book to hand, because (even if they had access to it on another occasion) they might not have time to read it through again. And when Donne produced works of his own, he

[52] D. E. Kennedy, "King James' College of Controversial Divinity at Chelsea," in *Grounds of Controversy*, ed. D. E. Kennedy, Diana Roberton, and Alexandra Walsham (University of Melbourne, 1989), 101-4.
[53] Abigail Williams, "Ordinary or extraordinary? The reading practices of Ben Browne of Troutbeck" [This volume], p. 7.

employed scribes to make copies that he could gift to those in his scholarly network - men like the Unfortunate Scribe who had to make sense of a misplaced leaf in a sermon on a knotted pastoral question. Through Donne's errors, we can reconstruct his reading, his working methods, and the community that supported his work. Although an editor may, ultimately, have to reject some readings as "errors", it is for these reasons still imperative that errors are recorded in a textual apparatus or discussed in an explanatory note. Such paratextual spaces allow editors to curate these erroneous moments of interpretive possibility, while offering the reader a single, readable text.