

# *Syr Philip Sidney's Comeuppance: Newman's Own Astrophel and Stella*

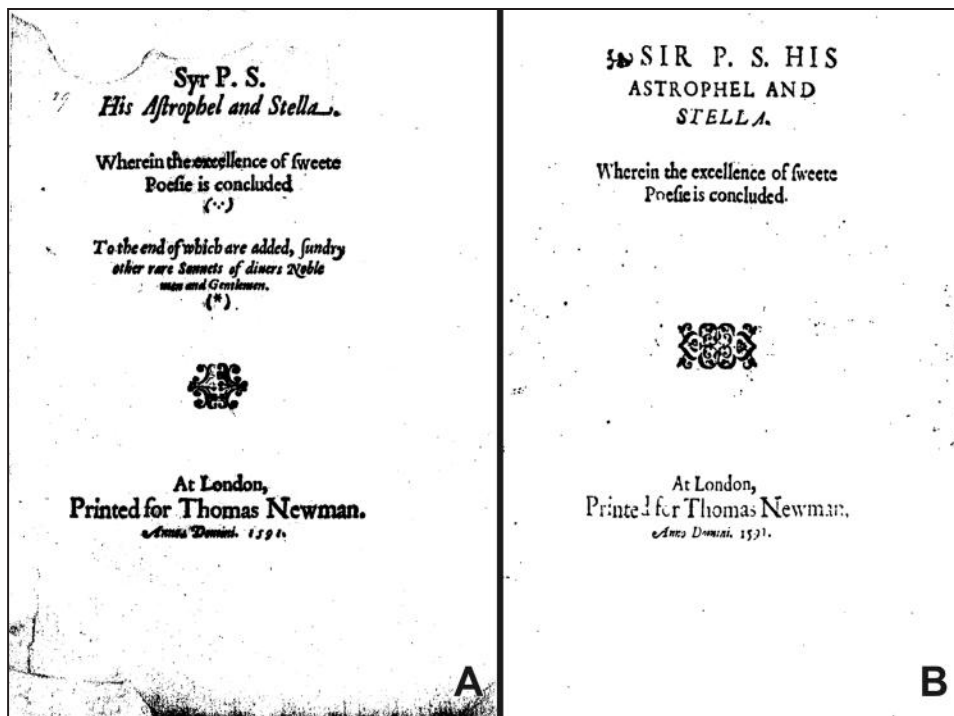
by William S. Niederkorn

*A*strophel and Stella by Philip Sidney was first printed in 1591, a year after publication of his other major literary work, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*. Both works were published posthumously, Sidney having been idolized as a national hero and preeminent writer in the wake of his death in 1586 due to a gunshot wound incurred in a battle outside Zutphen, the Netherlands.

Prefacing the 1591 book, titled *Syr P.S. His Astrophel and Stella*, are a dedicatory letter signed Thomas Newman and a letter to the reader signed Thomas Nashe. They are followed by *Astrophel and Stella* in 107 fourteen-line sonnet stanzas. Next there are ten poems by Sidney that extend the *Astrophel and Stella* theme, called “other Sonnets of variable verse,” none of them in standard sonnet form. Following Sidney’s works are an introductory sonnet and 27 more sonnets by Samuel Daniel all in 14-line stanzas, five cantos signed “Content” that have been attributed in part to Thomas Campion, a poem titled *Migliora Spero* generally acknowledged to be by Fulke Greville, and finally a poem with the heading “*Finis E.O.*” Many of the poems in the book are united by a theme of regrets and frustration in personal relationships.

In this paper three texts—the Newman, the Nashe, and the E.O.—will be discussed in reverse order, in which the findings become increasingly complex.

The author of the poem that has the last word in the book has previously been regarded as anonymous or possibly John Dowland, who set it to music



First four printings of *Astrophel and Stella*: A) 1591, edited, with epistles and other poets' texts; B) late 1591, unedited, only Philip Sidney texts.

published in 1600. Textual analysis in this paper offers evidence that the author is Edward Oxenford, or Edward de Vere, the 17<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford. “*Finis E.O.*” is the ending designation and signature for seven of the eight poems by Oxford in the first edition of the poetry collection *The Paradyse of Daynty Devises* (1576). That “*Finis E.O.*” precedes rather than follows the poem is a typesetting anomaly.

In his letter to readers Thomas Nashe shows himself to be a master of seeming to say one thing and meaning another. His works, with their uniquely

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C) circa 1596-97, text of A, with other poets' texts but no epistles; D) in *The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia* of 1598, mainly text of B.

obfuscatory turns of phrase, are a significant individual contribution to Elizabethan literature. This paper offers evidence that previous Nashe and Sidney scholars have missed, that the letter is a satire on the idolization of Sidney and his sister the Countess of Pembroke, not by attacking them but by extolling them with ridiculously extravagant panegyric.

Thomas Newman is named on title pages as the publisher for whom about 20 books and pamphlets were printed from 1587–1592. Two additional books were printed “for the Widow Newman,” in 1594, the year of Newman’s premature death. Newman’s signature is on dedicatory epistles for three of the books printed for him, counting *Astrophel and Stella*. Textual analysis in this paper provides evidence that Oxford wrote these three letters using the Newman name just as he used the name William Shakespeare for the dedicatory letters to *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. The three letters span Newman’s career, suggesting a relationship with Oxford throughout it.

The books printed for Thomas Newman and Widow Newman include an assortment of literary and didactic works along with political tracts in support

of Church and State. In light of the evidence presented in this paper, these works potentially provide the most detailed understanding to date of Oxford's clandestine publishing activities and help to elucidate his literary interests and political positions.

Several hundred editorial improvements were made to the text of the first edition of *Astrophel and Stella*, which are drolly alluded to in the dedicatory epistle. This paper's findings suggest that Oxford himself may have edited *Astrophel and Stella*, selected the accompanying poems, employed Thomas Nashe to write the epistle to readers, and had Newman publish the book.

The first printing of the book was quickly followed by a second Newman printing dated the same year, completely re-typeset, with all the prefatory material and other writers' poems stripped out, the editing of *Astrophel and Stella* eliminated and Sidney's original text restored. Two more printings in the 1590s repeated the cycle, both typeset anew, first for Matthew Lownes, who bought licensing rights from Newman's widow. His book includes the editing of *Astrophel and Stella* in the first Newman edition as well as all the additional poems, including E.O.'s last word, but not the dedication or letter to readers. The fourth printing of *Astrophel and Stella*, contained in the Countess of Pembroke's 1598 Sidney catalogue, tracks the second Newman printing with the restored text. Curiously, the spelling of "Astrophel" is the same in all four editions, not "Astrophil" as most modern editions style it. An appendix to this paper presents all the substantial changes across the four 1590s texts for the first fifteen sonnets of *Astrophel and Stella* as an aid in showing the pattern of differences and similarities between them and the nature of the editing.

## The Last Word, by E.O.

In the two-stanza poem that ends the book, the poet expresses hopelessness in making up for his "follies past":

If floods of teares could cense my follies past,  
And smokes of sighs might sacrifice for sin,  
If groaning cries might salve my fault at last,  
Or endles mone for error pardon win;  
    Then would I crie, weepe, sigh, and ever mone  
    Mine error, fault, sins, follies past and gone.

I see my hopes must wither in their bud.  
I see my favours are no lasting flowers,  
I see that words will breath no better good  
Than losse of time, and lightning but at howers:  
    Then when I see, then this I say therefore,  
    That favours, hopes, and words, can blinde no more.

The poem is written in *sesta rima*, a form that Oxford had used for a three-stanza poem expressing his fury at Sidney in 1579. Oxford would use the same stanza 199 times in *Venus and Adonis*, for which the form has come to be called the *Venus and Adonis* stanza. He used it on other occasions as well, including one of the poems in *The Paradyse of Daynty Devises*.

The literary world in the Elizabethan court comprised a small coterie of participants; everyone knew everyone else personally. In this small world Oxford had an ongoing rivalry with Sidney in terms of politics and aesthetics. Their mutual antagonism overflowed the bounds of decorum in 1579 when Sidney challenged Oxford to a duel over a minor altercation that occurred on a tennis court. Oxford had dismissed him by calling him “puppy,” which may have been more an affectionate epithet than a heinous insult. Sidney tended to display an angry temper, clearly on display in this case, and Queen Elizabeth forbade the duel. Apparently, Oxford compacted his pent-up anger into a poem of six stanzas of *sesta rima*. It begins, “Feyne would I singe but fury makes me frette, / And rage hath sworne to seke revenge of wronge,” and never lets up. The tennis court incident may also be one of the “follies” Oxford regrets in his last-word poem. That frustration was forever frozen when Sidney was killed in Holland in 1586 and then venerated nationally for his life and art.

Oxford clearly had a need for closure. In 1591 the last-word poem can be seen as an attempt to move toward it by acknowledging the futility of trying to reconcile. E.O.’s follies that provoked the situation cannot be redeemed, but he asserts that he will accept that and move on. The last-word poem may also reflect on errors Oxford committed in his marriage to Anne Cecil, who died in 1588. It does no good to weep, sigh and moan; hopes, favors and words are for naught. All he can do is stop and let his vision clear.

## Listing to Thomas Nashe

Thomas Nashe was a leading satirist who lived only to the age of 33 or 34, but published a considerable oeuvre of distinctive literary merit. At 20 his first published work, *The Anatomy of Absurdity*, was entered into the Stationers’ Register. In a dedicatory letter to its publication in 1589, three years after Sidney’s death, Nashe demonstrated an uproarious ability to disparage Sidney while seeming to praise him.

Speaking of a gathering of “manie extraordinarie Gentlemen, of most excellent parts” at which opinions on the virtues of courtiers were being aired, he wrote that “every man shotte his bolte, but this was the upshot, that England afforded many mediocrities, but never saw anything more singular then worthy Sir *Phillip Sidney*, of whom it might be truely saide, *Arma virumque cano*” (McKerrow, I:7). Sidney and Nashe scholars have taken this to be high praise



by Nashe for Sidney, but for “them that list” it is quite the opposite, that Sidney singularly stands out among England's many mediocrities. This meaning is obfuscated by the use of “worthy” and the first three words of the *Aeneid*, but “worthy” can refer to any attribute, and here the context is mediocrities, while “I sing of arms and men” only adds a military credit and does not necessarily connote virtue.

It is conceivable that Oxford, who may have been one of the “Gentlemen extraordinairie” and recognized Nashe's satiric talent, employed this gifted young writer to compose the letter to readers for *Syr P.S. His Astrophel and Stella*, where Nashe could fully exercise his demonstrated skill.

Sidney, Edward Dyer and Fulke Greville comprised a literary circle that leaned toward moral and righteous concerns, like Gabriel Harvey, Nashe's nemesis. Nashe and Oxford were in the more open-minded camp, avoiding sanctimonious tendencies. They did not represent a clique, but were open to wider collegial associations in the theatrical realm, the ultimate target of the Puritanical faction.

There has been an inconceivable lag in recognizing Nashe's letter to readers of *Astrophel and Stella* for what it is: a brilliant, artful, excoriating satire in the guise of a laudatory foreword. In his major study of Nashe, G.R. Hibbard says that “the preface is devoted to the praise of Sidney and of his sister, the Countess of Pembroke” and dismisses it: “Much of the preface is quite frankly padding, and it is not surprising that when Newman, probably under pressure from the Countess of Pembroke, brought out a second and much improved edition of *Astrophel and Stella* late in 1591, Nashe's contribution was omitted from it” (Hibbard 50). Hibbard misses Nashe's meaning in the *Anatomy of Absurdity* dedication as well: “Sidney was Nashe's hero. He had already praised him in the dedicatory epistle to the *Anatomy of Absurdity*” (id. at 49).

Nashe's preface is headed:

Somewhat to reade for them  
*that list.*

The phrase “for them that list” implies that this message will require careful attention, because those who do not “list” will not get it, a hint that there will be much to read between the lines.

The letter is in prose. The first sentence is a Latin epigraph and a pejorative comment that heralds the arrival of either the poem *Astrophel and Stella* or Philip Sidney, or both, characterized as “in pompe” or pompous.

Tempus adest plausus aurea pompa venit, so ends the  
Sceane of Idiots, and enter *Astrophel* in pompe.

The Latin quotation is from Ovid's *Amores* (3 II 44) and can be translated, "The time has come to applaud the golden parade." The Loeb translation makes this "The time for applause is here—the golden procession is coming." The quotation is from the same Ovid work Oxford used for the epigraph (*Amores* 1 XV 35–36) to *Venus and Adonis*.

In the 84-line elegy from which the *Astrophel and Stella* epigraph derives, Ovid, in the persona of the poem's narrator, is addressing a woman sitting beside him at a horse race at the Circus Maximus whom he is trying to seduce. In Ovid neither the line nor the context ends a "Sceane of Idiots," nor is it followed by an entrance.

The "golden parade" in the context of Sidney's history refers to his dramatic funeral in London in February 1587. With that "Sceane of Idiots" ended, Sidney's contemporaries are left with his presence only in his works, *Astrophel and Stella* being the case in point. In the wake of Sidney's death, his actions in the Netherlands were widely regarded as supremely heroic, but biographies by Katherine Duncan-Jones (1991) and Alan Stewart (2000) offer revisionist assessments. In the events leading up to Sidney's mortal wound at Zutphen, Duncan-Jones says of a scheme of his that utterly failed at Steenberg, "Far from having completed a masterly coup [as he had boasted] 'in the sight of the world', Sidney had accomplished nothing" (Duncan-Jones 287). Citing official reports, Stewart says of another such scheme Sidney instigated at Gravelines, that he "fled 'having left 44 men behind him.' The fate of these men became notorious" (Stewart 305). Stewart notes, "It was left to Greville posthumously to turn the incident into another display of Sidney heroism" (Stewart 306).

The next sentence of Nashe's epistle unfolds in a masterly 125 words:

Gentlemen, that have seene a thousand lines of folly,  
drawn forth *ex uno puncto impudentiae*, & two famous  
Mountains to goe to the conception of one Mouse, that  
have had your eares deafned with the eccho of Fames bra-  
sen towres, when only they have been toucht with a leaden  
pen, that have seene *Pan* sitting in his bower of delights, &  
a number of *Midasses* to admire his miserable hornepipes,  
let not your surfeted sight, new come from such puppetplay,  
think scorne to turn aside into this Theater of pleasure,

The praise for Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* here is decidedly ironic. First, Nashe describes a number of literary offenses familiar to Gentlemen readers he is addressing who enjoyed them: an impudent pen that writes a thousand lines of foolishness, a mouse who has two mountainous works to his credit, a "leaden pen" that deafens their ears by blaring away about what it regards as famous, and a musician considered to be a god but who plays his

pipes miserably and is surrounded by superrich "Midasses," as in a court performance.

On the one hand they may not be presented as references to Sidney and may seem to salute others equally situated in the literary firmament that have paved the way for him. That is what the Gentlemen have been used to, so they should not scorn the material here being set before them, which has all of that but even more intensely. On the other hand the pejorative remarks can be read as allusions to Sidney. He wrote "two famous Mountains" by "one Mouse"—the *Arcadia*, already in print, and *Astrophel and Stella*, which was widely known, having circulated in manuscript. Further, the Gentlemen have been assailed by the deafening echoes of Sidney's trumpeted fame when in fact his pen is leaden. Thus Nashe is pleading with his listeners not to let the fact that they are "surfeted" with Sidney or his circle hold them back from reading what they will find here.

Nashe puts the best perspective on what he is introducing in his conclusion to this idiosyncratic preamble:

for

here you shal find a paper stage streud with pearle, an artificial heav'n to overshadow the faire frame, & christal wals to encounter your curious eyes, while the tragicommodity of loue is performed by starlight.

That is Nashe's blurb for the book, promoting it in the manner of the day, full of promising allurements, though its stage is paper and its heaven is artificial. It is the passage of Nashe's letter most often quoted as praise of *Astrophel and Stella*. "Tragicommodity" seems to imply something overwrought. It is invariably rendered as "tragicomedy" by Sidney editors. Regardless, Nashe's description develops in ways that modify that appraisal until it is no more than a hollow advertisement.

The chiefe Actor here is

*Melpomene*, whose dusky robes dipt in the ynke of teares, as yet seeme to drop when I view them neere.

Melpomene, the muse of tragedy, is named as most characteristic of the chief actor in the forthcoming *Astrophel/Sidney*, whose ink tears fall continuously. *Astrophel and Stella* is a continual account of defeats for *Astrophel*. Duncan-Jones says that *Astrophel and Stella* "plots the speaker's sterile journey into moral and emotional impasse" (Duncan-Jones 239). *Astrophel*, the narrator of the poem, is Sidney entirely. Both Sidney biographers identify the principal characters as Sidney and Penelope Devereux, one of several potential Sidney fiancées, and on that account the poem is "rooted in the years 1582–83" according to Duncan-Jones (230).



The argument  
 cruell chastitie, the Prologue hope, the Epilogue dispaire,  
*videte queso et linguis animisque favete.*

Between hope in a Prologue to Sidney or his poem and despair at the Epilogue is *cruell chastity*, which William Cecil noted in Sidney when he was engaged to his daughter Anne; other potential brides' chances evaporated in Sidney's indifference, as his biographers relate. To that statement Nashe appends an allusive remark in Latin, literally "please see and favor tongues and souls," but idiomatically, "look at this and hold your tongue and thoughts out of reverence," an ironic statement drawn from Ovid's *Fasti* I:71, which itself is a conspicuously flattering work.

Nashe's next sentence needs to be sorted out:

And here, peradventure, my witles youth may be taxt with a margent note of presumption for offering to put up any motion of applause in the behalfe of so excellent a Poet, (the least sillable of whose name sounded in the eares of judgement, is able to give the meanest line he writes a dowry of immortality) yet those that observe how jewels oftentimes com to their hands that know not their value, & that the cockcombes of our days, like *Esops* Cock, had rather have a Barly kernell wrapt up in a Ballet, then they wil dig for the welth of wit in any ground that they know not, I hope wil also hold me excused, though I open the gate to his glory, & invite idle eares to the admiration of his melancholy.

Nashe makes excuses for his efforts to extol Sidney. While Nashe postures as if he is delivering a compliment, his praise is dubious: the parenthetical clause describes "so excellent a Poet" (Sidney) as glorified to the point that judges who dictate values will "give the meanest line he writes a dowry of immortality." The glorification of Sidney, it would seem, is quite out of hand. The rest of the sentence is a series of sarcastic allusions to Sidney and his work, disguised as an apology to the "witles youth" to whom the direct address is reserved. "Ballet" here has the heraldic meaning of a ball on a coat of arms. Nashe is saying that value is accorded to people of position and not those of merit. They prefer something of little or no value that they have in hand to making an effort to explore and discover. Yet Nashe says he will persist with the illusion of glorifying Sidney and expose those who have no clue ("idle eares") to the kind of admiration the reputation of Sidney enjoyed for "his melancholy."

Nashe marks a transition in his epistle with a Latin epigram.

*Quid petitur sacris nisi tantum fama poetis?*

He quotes Ovid (*Ars Amatoria* III 403), "What poet achieves greatness except through his works?" and proceeds to explore this question in regard to Sidney.

Which although it be oftentimes imprisoned in Ladyes  
casks, & the president bookes of such as cannot see without  
another mans spectacles, yet at length it breakes foorth in  
spight of his keepers, and useth some private penne (in  
steed of a picklock) to procure his violent enlargement.

Sidney's works were in the private possession of ladies to whom they were confided, the Countess of Pembroke in particular, Penelope Devereux perhaps, and men who were myopic. Yet, someone inevitably takes up a pen like a tool used to pick a lock and extols Sidney in print, like Greville, to violently enlarge him, which Nashe's "private penne" is doing ironically.

The Sunne for a time, may maske his golden head in a  
cloud: yet in the end, the thicke vaile doth vanish, and his  
embellished blandishment appeares.

Thus begins a paragraph devoted to overpraising Sidney. The Sunne, hidden "in a cloud" then inevitably appearing, is Sidney with "his embellished blandishment," which Nashe has just been excoriating. Nashe here launches a torrent of praise for Sidney. While appearing to praise Sidney and *Astrophel and Stella*, it is actually filled with ironic overstatement.

Long hath *Astro-*  
*phel* (Englands Sunne) withheld the beames of his spirite,  
from the common veiw of our darke sence, and night hath  
hovered over the gardens of the nine Sisters, while *Ignis*  
*fatuus*, and grosse fatty flames (such as commonly arise out  
of Dunghilles) have tooke occasion, in the middest e-  
clipse of his shining perfections, to wander a broade with  
a wispe of paper at their tailes like Hobgoblins, and leade  
men up and downe in a circle of absurditie a whole weeke,  
and never know where they are.

*Astrophel* is Sidney here, not the poem. Since his death Sidney has been unavailable, ensconced in Avalon ("the garden of the nine Sisters"). "The beames of his spirite" and "the middest eclipse of his shining perfections" are ironic overstatement. In the absence of Sidney's light, mirages—*Ignis fatuus* (the will-o'-the-wisp) and worse ("grosse fatty flames")—are all that glow. A parade of scraps of his work or imitations of it by his admirers has resulted in pointless exercises for all concerned.

But now that cloude of  
sorrow is dissolved, which fierie Love exhaled from his  
dewie haire, and affection hath unburthened the labouring  
streames of her wombe, in the lowe cesterne of his graue:  
the night hath resigned her jettie throne unto *Lucifer*, and  
cleere daylight possesseth the skie that was dimmed; wher-  
fore breake of your daunce you Fayries and Elves, and  
from the fieldes with the torne carcasses of your Timbrils,  
for your kingdome is expired.

In elegiac phrasing, Nashe has Sidney's light emerging from a womb in his grave, which he describes as a "lowe cesterne." The party is over for those who have been dancing and playing tambourines all night in celebration.

Put out your rush candles,  
you Poets and Rimers, and bequeath your crazed quater-  
zayns to the Chaunders, for loe, here he cometh that hath  
broek your legs.

Nashe floats the ironic notion that all other "Poets and Rimers" may as well cease their efforts with the return to prominence of Sidney, who made prescriptive pronouncements about literature in *The Defence of Poesy*, a work written in 1579–80, also circulated in manuscript, and still awaiting its first printing in 1591. While conservatively defending poetry approved by Plato and Aristotle, it attacks English plays: "Our tragedies and comedies (not without cause cried out against), observing rules neither of honest civility nor skillful poetry" (Kimbrough 148).

*Apollo* hath resigned his Ivory Harp vnto  
*Astrophel*, & he, like *Mercury*, must lull you a sleep with his  
musicke.

Even the gods must capitulate when *Astrophel*/Sidney is ascendant.

Sleepe *Argus*, sleep Ignorance, sleep Impudence,  
for *Mercury* hath *Io*, & onely *Io Paan* belongeth to *Astro-  
phel*.

Nashe alludes to *Io* in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a much-tormented nymph. *Astrophel*'s song of thanksgiving will put to sleep his listeners among the ancient Greeks who attacked Troy, along with impudence and ignorance personified.

Deare *Astrophel*, that in the ashes of thy Love livest  
againie like the *Phenix*; o might thy bodie (as thy name)  
live againie likewise, here amongst us: but the earth, the

mother of mortalitie, hath snacht thee too soone into her chilled colde armes, and will not let thee by any meanes be drawne from her deadly imbrace; and thy divine Soule, carried on an Angels wings to heauen, is installed in *Hermes* place, sole *prolocutor* to the Gods.

Nashe satirically prays to Astrophel/Sidney, pleading with him to return to life. He depicts to an excessive degree the certainty of Sidney's being no longer "among us," and places him among the gods, in the seat of Mercury. The idea of Sidney as the "sole *prolocutor* to the Gods" may have been consistent with Sidney's expressed opinion of himself, but "them that list" know better.

Therefore mayest  
thou never returne from the Elisian fieldes like *Orpheus*,  
therefore must we ever mourne for our *Orpheus*.

Sidney emphatically must stay put in the realm of the dead, as Nashe ends the long paragraph extoling Sidney, not stopping at projecting him as a god but identifying him with the supreme mythical poet Orpheus as well.

Fayne would a seconde spring of passion heere spende it selfe on his sweet remembrance: but Religion that rebuketh prophane lamentation, drinks in the rivers of those dispaireful teares, which languorous ruth hath outwelled, & bids me looke back to the house of honor, where from one & the selfe same roote of renowne, I shal find many goodly branches derived, & such as with the spreading increase of their vertues, may somewhat overshadow the grieffe of his los.

Nashe will not re-erupt in his "passion" to laud Sidney any further on religious grounds, characterizing any attempt to do so as "profane lamentation" and "rivers of those dispaireful teares." He curtails the flood of his grief, void of energy ("languorous ruth"), and announces his intention to turn to the "spreading increase" of Sidney's living successors' "vertues" for solace.

The exemplar par excellence is Mary, Countess of Pembroke, who a year earlier had published her brother Philip's revised *Arcadia*, under the same title she would use for the Sidney folio, *The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia*.

Amongst the which  
fayre sister of *Phabus*, and eloquent secretary to the Muses, most rare Countesse of *Pembroke* thou art not to be omitted: whom Artes doe adore as a second *Minerva*, and our Poets extoll as the Patronesse of their invention; for in thee, the *Lesbian Sappho* with her lerrick Harpe is disgraced, & the Laurel Garlande which thy Brother so bravely advaunst on his Launce, is still kept greene in the Temple of *Pallas*.

This satiric overappraisal of Mary Sidney rivals Nashe's efforts for her brother with amusing exaggeration. She is equal to Athena, "Patronesse" of poets, but she disgraces Sappho and outdoes her Lesbian skills in keeping fresh the laurels that Philip "advaunst on his Launce," the assonance of which suggests an absurd sexual allusion.

Thou only sacrificest thy  
soule to contemplation, thou only entertainest emptie handed  
*Homer*, & keepest the springs of Castalia from being dryed vp.

The countess is single-mindedly devoted to contemplation, restricting herself to the most revered poet of the ancient world.

Learning, wisdom, beautie, and all other ornaments of Nobilitie whatsoever, seeke to approve themselues in thy sight, and get a further seale of felicity, from the smiles of thy favour:

Every noble virtue "whatsoever" rules out argument. "A further seale of felicity" could mean sealing it off, her smiles thus disbursing an ambiguous distinction.

Nashe inserts a second Latin epigraph, ending the second part of his epistle, another quotation from Ovid, this time from the *Double Heroïdes* (XVI 274).

*O Jove digna viro ni Jove nata fores.*

Perseus Digital Library at Tufts University translates this: "O worthy of the bed of Jove, but that you sprang from himself!" (online). Theoi Classical Texts Library renders it: "O worthy of Jove to husband were you not the child of Jove" (online). It sums up the preceding satirical praise of Countess Mary, rather than reflecting what follows. The last part of Nashe's epistle begins with an apology for the way he has written so far.

I feare I shall be counted a mercenary flatterer, for mixing my thoughts with such figurative admiration, but generall report that surpasseth my praise, condemneeth my rhetoricke of dulnesse for so colde a commendation.

Nashe hints that he is being paid, though if so it is not to flatter but to satirize. He says that his efforts pale in comparison with the "generall report" the Sidneys have received. His "rhetoricke" can in no way compete with what they are used to.

Indeede to say the truth,  
my stile is somewhat heauiue gated, and cannot daunce trip and goe so lively, with oh my love, ah my love, all my loues gone, as other Shepheards that have beene fooles in the Morris time out of minde: nor hath my prose any skill to imitate the Al-

mond leape verse, or sit tabring five yeres together nothing but  
to bee, to hee: on a paper drum.

Here is more of Nashe's self-effacement, diverting suspicions of his double-edged pen. But alleging that he has been outdone by makers of faddish verse and drummers marking the same beat *ad infinitum* is a backhanded concession, making his own effort sound preferable.

Onely I can keepe pace with  
Gravesend barge, and care not if I have water enough, to lande  
my ship of fooles with the Tearme, (the tyde I shoulde say.)

Barges tend to move slowly, but only Nashe can keep up with this one. Gravesend, a port in Kent, has a funeral sound. His introductory effort is carefree.

Now every man is not of that minde, for some to goe the lighter away, will take in their fraught of spangled feathers, golden Peebles, Straw, Reedes, Bulrushes, or anything, and then they beare out their sayles as proudly, as if they were balisted with Bulbief.

Between himself and the rest of the encomium writers who "proudly" parade their inferior literary skills, Nashe draws a line.

Others are so hardly bested for loading, that they are faine to retaile the cinders of *Troy*, and the shivers of broken trunchions, to fill up their boate that else should goe empty: and if they have but a pound weight of good Merchandise, it shall be placed at the poope, or pluckt in a thousande peeces to credit their carriage.

Nashe finds further ways to attack other writers' torrents of praise for Sidney, with the droll delivery of a comedian.

For my part, euery man as he likes, *mens  
cuiusque is est quisque.*

Nashe employs Cicero's often quoted expression (*Republic* VI 26)—"every mind is universal"—to back up his shrug—to each his own.

Tis as good to goe in cut-fingerd Pumps  
as corke shooes, if one wore Cornish diamonds on his toes.

His amusing embellishments work even when his allusions are elusive.

To  
explain it by a more familiar example, an Asse is no great state-  
man in the beastes common-wealth, though he weare his eares



*upsevant muffe*, after the Muscovy fashion, & hange the lip like a Capcase halfe open, or looke as demurely as a sixpenny browne loafe, for he hath some imperfections that do keepe him from the common Council: yet of many, he is deemed a very vertuous member, and one of the honestest sort of men that are; So that our opinion (as *Sextus Empedocus* affirmeth) gives the name of good or ill to every thing.

To whom could this barrage of metaphorical salvos be applied? Sidney, who dressed quite fashionably, was among the gentry, not the nobility, who was generally regarded posthumously as virtuous and honest, but chronically lacked advancement by the Elizabethan court. Seemingly intending to invoke the skeptic philosopher Sextus Empiricus, Nashe spells the name Empedocus. The first three syllables of the name, “Empiri,” acutely observant, become “Empedo,” impeded. Everyone is entitled to contrarian opinions, but Sidney’s letter against the queen’s plan to marry the Duke of Alençon in the 1570s was a *faux pas*.

Out of whose works (latelie translated into English, for the benefit of unlearned writers) a man might collect a whole booke of this argument, which no doubt woulde prove a worthy commonwealth matter, and far better than wits waxe karnell: much good worship have the Author.

Nashe wholeheartedly endorses the skeptic philosopher but expresses trepidation about following him to the point of drawing national attention, as Sidney did.

Such is this golden age wherein we live, and so replenisht with golden Asses of all sortes, that if learning had lost it selfe in a grove of Genealogies, wee neede doe no more but sette an olde goose over halfe a dozen pottle pots, (which are as it were the egges of invention) and wee shall have such a breede of bookes within a little while after, as will fill all the world with the wilde fowle of good wits; I can tell you this is a harder thing then making golde of quicksilver, and will trouble you more then the Morrall of *Aesops* Glow-worme, hath troubled our English Apes, who striving to warme themselues, with the flame of the Philosopher’s stone, have spent all their wealth in buying bellowes to blowe this false fyre.

A grove of Genealogies produced the Sidney line. In a “golden age of Golden Asses,” learning is lost and false gods are popular. To satisfy it, books are bred in a most slovenly manner and writing degenerates. Aesop’s glow-worm at night is nothing. He proves himself a grub in daylight, implying that Sidney has a platform due to his heroic death but fails to deliver when

he is read more clearly. Those who press the case for greatness for him are expending wealth and effort on a worthless idol.

Gentlemen, I feare  
I have too much presumed on your idle leysure, and beene too  
bold, to stand talking all this while in an other mans doore: but  
now I will leave you to survey the pleasures of Paphos, and of-  
fer your smiles on the Aulters of Venus.

Yours in all desire to please,  
Tho: Nashe.

Having fulfilled his impossible mission, Nashe makes a polite and self-effacing exit, leaving his Gentlemen readers with the allurements of “pleasures” in the realm of the goddess of love.

There is far more satiric content in Nashe's letter than these perceptions from over 400 years' distance can elucidate, but that ending appears to be a sly appropriation from *Venus and Adonis*, which concludes with Venus's retreat to Paphos. It suggests that Nashe was privy to *Venus and Adonis* a year before it was printed.

## The Remarkable Thomas Newman

Thomas Newman had a brief career as the recipient or client of printers for 20-odd works on literary, scholarly, and religious subjects between 1587 and 1592. Three works were printed for him in 1587. There is *Amorous Fiammetta* by Boccaccio, translated by B. Giavone, aka Bartholomew Young. Young also translated for other publishers: *The Civile Conversation of M. Stephen Guazzo*, printed in 1586, and most famously *Diana of George of Montemayor*, translated in 1582 and printed in 1598, from which a tale is used for *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

Also in 1587 comes the first political tract printed for Newman, *A short declaration of the ende of traytors* by Richard Crompton, which justifies the execution of Mary Queen of Scots.

The third 1587 title is *The lamentations of Amyntas for the death of Phillis*. It is a translation by Abraham Fraunce of a poem in Latin by Thomas Watson. Three more works authored by Fraunce were printed for Newman in 1588: *Insignium, armorum, emblematum, hieroglyphicorum, et symbolorum*, an in-depth study written in Latin on the arcane subjects listed in the title; *The Arcadian Rhetorike*, a rhetoric manual, and *The lawiers logike*, a didactic work on logic and “the practise of the common lawe” written in English with numerous quotations in Latin and a smattering of Greek. Fraunce is listed in *Palladis Tamia* by Francis Meres as one of the English masters of pastoral poetry, perhaps because of *Amyntas*.

Also in 1588, Newman had printed for himself *Elizabetha triumphans* by James Aske, a political tract on the Catholic challenges to the reign of Queen Elizabeth, her triumph over the Spanish Armada and her visit to English troops in Essex.

More religious-political tracts were printed for Newman in 1589: *A sermon preached at Paules Crosse* by Thomas White, in celebration of the 32<sup>nd</sup> year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, printed in 1589, and *The Portraiture of Hypocrisie* by John Bate, advocating religious rectitude. That year also saw the publication for Newman of *A philosophical treatise concerning the quietnes of the mind*, a translation from Plutarch via a French translation by James Amyor rendered into English by John Clapham.

Between 1589 and 1592 Newman published four works by Robert Greene and one more probably by Green about Richard Tarlton. *Tarltons News out of Purgatorie* is dated 1590, two years after Tarlton's death. The works published under Greene's name were *Ciceronis amor: Tullies love* (1589), *Greenes mourning garment giuen him by repentance at the funerals of love* (1590), *Greenes farewell to folly* (1591), and from 1592, the year Greene died, *Greenes vision written at the instant of his death*. In between these works came *Syr P.S. His Astrophel and Stella* (1591).

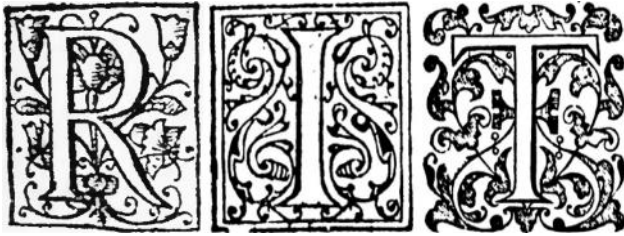
After his death in 1592, Newman's widow, Elyzabeth (Bannte) Newman, whom he left with four children under the age of five, carried on for him and published two works in 1594, *The Patterne of painefull Adventures*, "Gathered into English by Laurence Twine Gentleman" and *The Affectionate Shepheard* by Richard Barnfield, which he dedicated to Penelope (Devereux) Rich, the Stella of *Astrophel and Stella*. *The Patterne of painefull Adventures* was the basis of the Shakespeare play *Pericles*.

The only known writing in Newman's own name besides the dedication for *Syr P.S. His Astrophel and Stella* are two other dedications to books he published. They appear in *Amorous Fiammetta* and *Greenes vision: Written at the instant of his death*. These three dedications, it will be shown, are suffused with aristocratic wit and phrasing reminiscent of the Shakespeare dedications to Henry Wriothesley in *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, linguistic evidence that they were written by Oxford.

On the 1591 *Astrophel and Stella* title page, the line with Newman's name is in the largest type size. The second-largest type is used for the author's name, reduced to "Syr P.S." It is about two points or eight percent smaller than the Newman line, perhaps an unconscious indication of the publisher's priorities. In *The First Publication of Astrophel and Stella: Thomas Newman and the Stationers*, published in 2023 in *Textual Cultures* 16:1, Mark Bland writes, "What is notable about this catalogue is that Newman had never published on his own

account before *Astrophel and Stella*" (online 102). That is, his previous books were all published in partnership with other publishers.

The title page signals that Newman had a special role in the book, one that is curiously described in the dedication. The ornate letter at the beginning of Newman's dedication exhibits traits similar to the ornate letters of the dedications for the two major Shakespeare poems. Below, from left, are the letters from *Venus and Adonis*, *Astrophel and Stella*, and *Lucrece*.



They share typographical characteristics, botanical themes and elaborate filigrees. The ornate letter from *Astrophel and Stella* is boxed just as the *Venus and Adonis* letter, and it is vertically symmetrical like the *Lucrece* letter.

The *Astrophel and Stella* dedicatory epistle begins:

To the worshipfull and his very  
good Freende, Ma. *Frauncis Flower* Es-  
quire, increase of all content.

Frauncis Flower, according to *The History of Parliament*, "was a dependant of (Sir) Christopher Hatton, who obtained for him a monopoly in the printing of Latin, Greek and Hebrew books though, as the Stationers put it, he was 'not one of our company'" (online). To have been trusted with such a position Flower clearly had to have had considerable interest, knowledge and ability in these classical languages, and as such was a person of consequence. He served four terms in Parliament, for Huntingdon in 1584, 1586 and 1589, and for Corfe Castle in 1593. The *History of Parliament* entry describes a range of responsibilities Flower shouldered over the course of his career: "Flower is recorded as sitting on the committee concerning appeals out of ecclesiastical courts (18 Dec. 1584), and in 1593, the subsidy committee (1 Mar.), and committees concerning procedure (30 Mar.) and the navy (6 Apr.)." The last-word poem states, "I see my favours are no lasting flowers." Flowers are not lasting, but as an allusion to friendship with Frauncis Flower, they can be.

Flower in 1591 is chronologically the recipient of the second of the three dedications signed Thomas Newman. The dedicatee preceding him was William Hatton in 1587, for *Amorous Fiammetta*, who also served terms in Parliament. The third and last dedicatee was Nicholas Sanders of Ewell in

1592, for *Greenes vision: Written at the instant of his death*. He would serve three terms in Parliament, the first beginning in 1593. As dedicatees, these three gentlemen are addressed as close friends. In the case of Sanders, that friendship is specifically mentioned in the dedication.

The Flower dedication begins with an elliptical explanation of how the writer came into possession of the *Astrophel and Stella* manuscript.

It was my fortune (right worshipfull) not many daies since, to light upon the famous device of *Astrophel and Stella*, which carrying the generall commendation of all men of judgement, and being reported to be one of the rarest things that ever any Englishman set abroach, I have thought good to publish it under your name, both for I know the excellencie of your worships conceipt, aboue all other to be such, as is onely fit to discerne of all matters of wit, as also for the credite and countenance your patronage may give to such a worke.

The phrasing “carrying the generall commendation of all men of judgement” is a second-hand compliment, and “being reported to be one of the rarest things that ever any Englishman set abroach” savors of ironic overstatement. The unusual word “abroach” is used in the Shakespeare plays *2 Henry IV*, *Richard III*, and *Romeo and Juliet*.

Accept of it I beseech you, as the first fruites of my affection, which desires to approve it selfe in all dutie unto you: and though the Argument perhaps may seeme too light for your grave viewe, yet considering the worthines of the Author, I hope you will entertaine it accordingly.

The phrase “the first fruites of my affection” was rephrased two years later as “the first heire of my invention” in the dedicatory letter to *Venus and Adonis*. The phrase “in all dutie” was employed in the *Venus and Adonis* letter in the complimentary close. Similar forms of address are also employed in the two dedications, “right worshipfull” for *Astrophel and Stella* and “Right Honorable” for *Venus and Adonis*. “The worthiness of the Author” presents the same ambiguity that Nashe employed in reference to “worthy” Sidney in his remarks about England’s many mediocrities in *The Anatomy of Absurdity*.

For my part, I haue beene very carefull in the Printing of it, and where as being spread abroade in written Coppies, it had gathered much corruption by ill Writers: I have used their helpe and advice in correcting & restoring it to his first dignitie, that I knowe were of skill and experience in those matters.

There is the dedication's proud advertisement of the editing *Astrophel and Stella* has received for this printing. Until recently, scholarly opinion of the text of the first 1591 printing of Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* has been negative. The traditional view was eloquently expressed by Mona Wilson in her biography *Sir Philip Sidney* (1932): "Few poets can have been so badly handled on their first appearance. The general aspect of the text suggests that the purveyor of the manuscript was a serving man in the employ of one of Sidney's friends, who had made a scribbled copy, full of constructions and misreadings, from which the printer set up as much as he could decipher, completing the lines with conjectures of his own, and leaving the punctuation to Snug the joiner" (Wilson 168).

The first edition of *Astrophel and Stella* was thwarted for some reason by the authorities. An item was recorded in the Stationers' Register on September 18, 1591, "for carrying of Newman's books to the hall," meaning that they were impounded. A second printing, also dated 1591, quickly superseded the first. Its title page stated that it was "printed for Thomas Newman." From the first printing it contains only the work of Sidney; all the other writers' work was deleted. There is no dedication by Thomas Newman, no letter to the reader by Thomas Nashe, no sonnets by Samuel Daniel or cantos by Thomas Campion (or whoever), no poem by Fulke Greville and definitely no last-word poem by E.O. What's more, the *Astrophel and Stella* text was completely reset and the editing eliminated.

Samuel Daniel, who received his first extensive exposure as a poet in the first Newman edition while he was in Italy, weighed in on the matter when he published *Delia* in 1592 at the age of 30. Of his 28 sonnets printed by Newman, all but a handful of them were included in *Delia*, where he revised them all in varying degrees. In his dedication of the *Delia* pamphlet to "Ladie Mary, Countesse of Pembroke" signed "Samuel Danyell," he complains that he "was betraide by the indiscretion of a greedie Printer, and had some of my secrets bewraide to the world, uncorrected." He could hardly complain against Oxford, for it would have been unseemly or even dangerous for a person of his degree to complain about a noble, but he clearly did not know of the involvement of anyone other than Newman, as he goes on to say, "But this wrong was not onely doone to mee, but to him whose unmatched lines have indured the like misfortune; Ignorance sparing not to commit



sacrilege upon so holy Reliques. Yet *Astrophel*, flying with the wings of his own fame, a higher pitch then the gross-sighted can discern, hath registred his owne name in the Annals of eternitie, and cannot be disgraced, howsoever disguised.”

In his edition of *The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney* (1962), William A. Ringler Jr. considered it probable “that some person of influence had lodged a complaint after a few copies had been sold, that a government order was issued for the suppression of the remainder of the edition” (Ringler 543). The matter came to involve Lord Burghley.

In a painstakingly thorough analysis of manuscript and early print versions of *Astrophel and Stella*, Ringler judges the first printing “a ‘bad quarto’, for its publication was unauthorized and its text is extremely corrupt” (Ringler 544). H.R. Woudhuysen concurs in his *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts 1558–1640* (1996), saying that this “text of Sidney’s work was far from satisfactory” (Woudhuysen 367) and speculating on who was to blame for giving Newman the manuscript of *Astrophel and Stella*.

In 2023, Mark Bland published two papers on *Astrophel and Stella* in *Textual Cultures* 16:1, Indiana University Press (online). In “The First Publication of *Astrophel and Stella*,” he dismisses Ringler’s view that an outcry from an elite faction caused the first 1591 printing to be seized, and argues that the charges were due to licensing issues and protocols of the publishing trade.

In his other paper in *Textual Cultures* 16:1, “Revision in *Astrophel and Stella*: Some Aspects of the Problem,” Bland takes issue with the negative Wilson-Ringler-Woudhuysen view of the first edition text. He praises the editing, saying that “the variants incorporated into the copy total at least six hundred words and occur in every sonnet throughout the text. What is involved is not just a passing few tweaks, but a thorough engagement with everything in *Astrophel and Stella*.” Speculating on who was responsible, he says that “the Italian touches suggest that it was [John] Florio who prepared the copy.”

Oxford was also capable of Italian touches, and as he has the last word in the book, seems more likely than Florio to have been responsible for the editing of Sidney’s poem. He was more than capable, given the poems acknowledged as his during his lifetime, not to mention *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*. If Oxford reworked Sidney’s poem, it would certainly explain the involvement of Lord Burghley, the most likely official to be involved if oversight were required of the activities of his former ward and late daughter Anne’s widower.

Other qualifications Bland attributes to Florio can apply to Oxford: “he had the authority to do so” and “he would have considered himself as someone knowledgeable” of Sidney’s work and was able “to supply the deficiencies therein.” What Bland intuits of the effort that he supposes is Florio’s

resonates brilliantly with the desire for closure that Oxford sought: "What one senses in his work is a conversation with the dead, an awareness of context, an engagement with the text in a very profound manner, and a desire to save the writer from embarrassment—a snip, as it were, in time."

The third 1590s pamphlet of *Astrophel and Stella*, "printed for Matthew Lownes," is undated (Bland dates it 1596–97). It restores the first-edition editing as well as all of the other poets' poems including E.O.'s. It does not, however, include the Newman dedication or Nashe's letter. It was typeset anew, tracking the editing of the first printing with few discrepancies.

The fourth and last 1590s printing was the Sidney catalogue published in 1598 as *The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia*. Its text of *Astrophel and Stella* is 108 sonnets in length, one more than in the three pamphlets, and it closely tracks the second Newman printing. The additional sonnet is No. 37. It is the sonnet that most identifies Penelope Devereux Rich as Stella, repeatedly playing on her married name.

To show a sampling of the four printings' differences, an appendix to this paper catalogues all of the significant changes in the first fifteen sonnets of *Astrophel and Stella*, clearly showing the high degree to which texts of the first Newman and the Lownes printings correlate; a similar correlation is apparent between the second Newman pamphlet and the Countess of Pembroke's 1598 catalogue.

The Newman dedication continues:

And the rather was I moved to sette  
it forth, because I thought it pittie anie thing  
proceeding from so rare a man, shoulde bee  
obscured, or that his fame should not still be  
nourisht in his works, whom the works with  
one united grieffe bewailed.

This "pittie" leads the speaker to rescue the work of "so rare a man" (an ambiguous phrase) from what in his own "ill Coppies" of *Astrophel and Stella* was "obscured."

Thus craving  
pardon for my bold attempt, & desiring the  
continuance of your worshippinges favour unto  
mee, I ende.

Yours alwaies to be  
commaunded.  
*Tho : Newman.*

The affected apologetic tone (“craving pardon for my bold attempt”) is again seen in the *Venus and Adonis* dedication (“I know not how I shall offend”).

\* \* \*

An earlier Epistle Dedicatorie signed Thomas Newman, the first of his three known signed works, appeared in his production of *Amorous Fiammetta* by Boccaccio, translated by Bartholomew Young and published in 1587. The dedicatee, Sir William Hatton, was born in 1565. His father, John Newport of Huntingdon, Warwickshire, died in 1566. His mother, Dorothy Hatton, whose name he used, was the sister of Christopher Hatton, to whom Francis Flower, the dedicatee of *Syr. P.S. His Astrophel and Stella*, was a dependent. “Flower bequeathed him a diamond worth £50,” according to *The History of Parliament* (online). Sir William had constituencies in Parliament in 1586, the year he was knighted, and 1589 for Corfe Castle, which was owned by his uncle Christopher. He was with Philip Sidney at Zutphen and attended his funeral. The flamboyant dedication accorded to Hatton here suggests that he was well regarded by its writer. The Epistle Dedicatorie of *Amorous Fiammetta* contains the kinds of aristocratic witticisms and cadences of the Shakespeare dedications to Southampton.

To the Right worshipfull and ver-  
tuous Gentleman, Sir  
William Hatton Knight.

(•••)



He paltring Poet Cherillus, dedicated his *dauncing poemes to that mighty Monarche Alexander, saying, that he knewe assuredly, if that he woulde not accept them in that they were not pithy, yet he wold not vterly reiect them in that they had a shew of Poetry. Aemilius thinking to gratify that worthy conquerer Caesar, with some curious peece of workmanship, waded so far in the depth of his arte, as straying curtesie with cunning, he skylpt beyond his skill, not beeing able to make it perfect. Who beeing blamed of his freend, for stryving further then his sleeve would stretch, answered: that although arte & skylp were wanting to beautifie the worke, yet hart and wyll did polish that part, which lacke of cunning had left unperfect. Whose answer, as one guilty of a greater cryme, I clayme for a sufficient excuse of my folly, that durst enterprise to stryve beyonde my strength, knowing my selfe unable, both by nature and arte to bring this or any part thereof by mine owne skill to a wyse ende. For if the Foulter is to bee condemned of folly that*

*takes in hand to talke of hunting, then may I wel be dubbed  
a dolte, which beeing vnskeilfull, dare take in hande to de-  
sipher the substaunce of Love, that am but a foole.*

*But as there is no greater cooling carde to a rash wit, then  
want, so there is not a more speedy spurre to a willing mind,  
then the force of duetie, which drove me in a double doubt,  
either to be counted as bold as blinde Bayard, in presuming  
too farre, or to incurre the prejudice of ingratitude, in being  
to slowe: But as wishes are of no value, so his will as vaine  
that covettes to paie his debtes with counterfait coyne, there  
in I finde the fault, and commit the offence. For beeing  
greatly indebted to my honourable good Lord by duety, for  
the first payment I offer although not mine owne labours, to  
you his honours worthy Nephue, this small pamphlet of M.  
John Boccace a famous Poet, and translated by M. Bar-  
tholmewe Young of the middle temple, a peece of worke  
worthy the wearing, in that it sheweth the manner howe to  
eschew deceitfull & wicked love: which considered although  
wisdome willed me to go (non Ultra crepidan) I thought good  
to present this pamphlet under your worships protection: hop-  
ping you will deigne to accept the matter although it be but  
prose, though something unsavery for want of skil, yet accept  
the Authours well meaning for his and my boldnesse, in that  
his skill and my good will is not in the wane, whatsoeuer  
this worke dooth want. The Emperour Trajan never wan-  
ted sutors because so curteously he would heare every mans  
complainte. All that courted Atalanta were hunters, where  
Maecenas, lodgeth schollers will flocke. And your worshippe  
being a worthy fosterer of the learned, hath forced my au-  
thour by your vertue and me by duetie, to offer these his  
fruites at the shrine of your worships curtesie. Beseeching  
the almighty to send you health, wealth and prosperity.*

Your worships to commaund  
in all duety Thomas  
Newman.

Such a literary performance reveals Newman as a writer of exceptional skill. The elaborate introduction of the first paragraph is spent in protesting his lack of skill as a writer while floridly demonstrating it. Not only the affected apologetic tone but also the brash style reflects the Shakespeare dedications to Southampton. The parallel constructions in the second paragraph are masterly and the rhetoric exhibits familiar Shakespeare devices and classical

erudition. The Atalanta story, although not used in *Venus and Adonis*, is the main feature of the telling of their tale in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and the Arthur Golding translation of it. Atalanta is also mentioned in *As You Like It*. Aemilius is a character name in *Titus Andronicus* and Maecenas is in *Julius Caesar*.

The last known signed work of Thomas Newman is his Epistle Dedicatorie to *Greenes vision: Written at the instant of his death*, printed in 1592. The address is to Nicholas Sanders of Ewell. The *History of Parliament* site online spells the surname Saunders, while the *Ewell and Epsom History Explorer* (online) spells it Saunder. The *History of Parliament* website recounts that his father, Nicholas Sanders the elder, “was a friend of Lord Burghley (Sir William Cecil), who ‘brought up’ the young Saunders in his own household, as Saunders himself later recalled.” This relationship assures that Oxford was acquainted with him at his home, in a family context. He was as the dedication says, the dedicator’s “e-speciall good friend” (online). The *Ewell & Epsom History Explorer* website relates him to Lord Burghley, too, to whose “honorable favour, direction and protection” his father did “comend and comitt my said sonne Nicholas” in his will (online).

Nicholas Sanders was born in 1563, his father died in 1587. Both were barristers and longtime members of Parliament for various constituencies. Sanders the younger was knighted in 1603 and “was named to 95 committees in the 1604–10 Parliament, but is known to have made only two or three speeches,” *The History of Parliament* reports. Given his age, Sanders appears to have been part of the Cecil household at the center of the time between when Oxford, who was 13 years his senior, and Southampton, 10 years his junior, were Cecil’s wards. The dedication has all the characteristics of the Shakespeare dedications to Southampton.

To the right worshipfull and his e-  
speciall good friend, M. Nicholas San-  
ders of Ewell Esquier, T. Newman wish-  
eth all felicitie.



ERE I as able as I am willing (Right  
Worshipfull) to shewe my selfe  
thankful for your manie kindnesses  
extended unto me, some more ac-

complisht Dedication then this, should have  
offred it selfe to your judiciall view at this instant.  
It was one of the last workes of a wel known Au-  
thor, therefore I hope it will be more acceptable.  
Manie have published repentaunces under his  
name, but none more unfeigned then this, being

everie word of his owne: his own phrase, his own method. The experience of many vices brought forth this last vision of vertue. I recommend it intirely to your worships even ballancing censure. None have more insight then you into matters of wit. All men of Art acknowledge you to bee an especiall *Mecenas*, and supporter of learning in these her despised latter daies. I am one that have no interest in knowledge, but the inseperate love that I beare to them that professe it: That attendant love on good letters, strives to honor you in whome Art is honoured. I thinke not this pamphlet any way proportionable in woorth with your worshippes patronage: but it is my desire to yeelde some encrease to your fame in anie thing that I shall imprint. Thus wishing to your worshippe that felicitie and contentment, which your owne best governed thoughtes doe aime at, I most humblie take my leaue.

*Your VVorships most bounden*

T. Newman.

Written with the same clear intent that the other two Newman dedicatory letters exhibit, and including a mention of one of the ancient Romans named in the letter accompanying Boccaccio's *Amorous Fiammetta* five years earlier, this letter is embellished to be a straightforward, traditional request for patronage. In that manner it has even more in common with the Shakespeare dedications to Southampton than the other two. Again, there is the apologetic posture and some of the same words and terms: pamphlet, bound, worth.

## Conclusions

What emerges through this exploration of *Syr P.S. His Astrophel and Stella* is a glimpse of poets, satirists, scholars, courtiers, gentry, and nobles interacting with one another in an intensely controlled and competitive industry. Evidence that Oxford wrote the three dedications signed Thomas Newman spanning the six years of Newman's work as a publisher suggests a sustained relationship between Oxford and Newman, which provokes curiosity about whether Oxford selected other works that Newman published. The evidence presented also suggests a close literary association of Oxford with Thomas Nashe as well as to some degree with Robert Greene and Bartholomew Young, and friendships with the dedicatees Frauncis Flower, William Hatton,



and Nicholas Sander. Cool relations with the Countess of Pembroke and Samuel Daniel are also evidenced.

This paper makes a case for the addition of the last-word poem to the works of Edward de Vere. Evidence tends to show the audacity of Oxford in revising Sidney's work and employing Thomas Nashe to advance the satire against Sidney and Countess Mary as far as he could dare. It also rescues Nashe's letter from the dismissive appraisal it has been accorded.

This paper has only begun to explore the vagaries of the four 1590s printings of *Astrophel and Stella*, and much remains to be examined and evaluated. The textual analyses of the three epistles dedicatory, the Thomas Nashe letter to readers that list, and the last-word poem in the first edition are by no means exhaustive and stand to be improved in light of further research. There is more to be explored in the contributions of Samuel Daniel, the poets grouped under the name "Content," and Fulke Greville's *Megliora spero* as well.

The mapping and classifying of editorial changes begun in the appendix is a good start, but it needs to be completed for a thorough grasp of the textual differences in the four 1590s printings of *Astrophel and Stella* and a fuller understanding of the nature of the editor's concerns.

## Appendix

Here, catalogued by stanza and line numbers, are all the significant word changes in the first fifteen sonnets for the four 1590s printings of *Astrophel and Stella*. It can be readily seen how closely the first 1591 Thomas Newman printing (TN1) matches up with the undated Matthew Lownes printing (ML), and how the second 1591 Thomas Newman printing (TN2) mostly aligns with the Countess of Pembroke's 1598 catalogue (CPC). TN1 and ML present the edited version. TN2 and CPC show the restoration of Sidney's original wording.

According to Ringler, three generations of manuscripts are lost, two generations being "a lost transcript (O)" and "Sidney's lost holograph original," the third generation being "one or another of three lost intermediaries (X, Y, or Z)". From these, according to Ringler, the "substantive" surviving manuscripts and prints "descend" (Ringler 447).

This appendix's approach is far simpler but depicts a clear difference between two versions of *Astrophel and Stella*. Juxtaposed here are two versions:

- 1) a judiciously edited poem and
- 2) what is presumably Sidney's original wording.

A further continuation of these juxtapositions, carried through another 15 sonnets, exhibits the same characteristics. A few lines dropped from the first version are restored in the second, including the entire 37th sonnet with its repeated use of "Rich," which gives away the identity of Stella.

Some of the editing shown here substitutes one term for another, such as 1:13, 2:3, 2:7, 4:2, 4:6, 4:10, 6:4, 7:4, 7:8, 7:12, 7:14, 8:5. Other changes are made to smooth out poetic rhythm, such as 3:3-4, 4:4, 8:8, 12:4, 12:6, 12:8, 12:11, 13:1, 15:4, 15:8, and 15:14. At times the editor subtly sharpens the meaning, as in 8:11-12, 9:10, 11:3, and 12:2. Occasionally a more playful or lustful redaction occurs, as in 8:6 and 11:12. In 5:1-8, the first and second quatrains are interchanged to achieve better progression. In 10:5 the editor enhanced the sense to avoid a redundancy.

Countess Mary kept to the task of restoring virtually everything to what Sidney presumably had written, only rarely making her own improvements, as in 12:2, or even making her own word preference, as in 13:14.

- 1:13 — TN1: Byting my tongue and penne, beating my selfe for spite:  
— ML: Byting my tongue and penne, beating my selfe for spite:  
— TN2: Byting my trewand penne, beating my selfe for spite:  
— CPC: Biting my trewand pen, beating my selfe for spite,

- 2:3 — TN1: But knowne, worth did in tract of time proceede,  
 — ML: But knowne, worth did in tract of time proceede,  
 — TN2: But knowne, worth did in mine of time proceede,  
 — CPC: But knowne worth did in mine of time proceed,
- 2:7 — TN1: At length to Loves decrees, I first agreede.  
 — ML: At length to Loves decrees, I first agreede.  
 — TN2: At length to Loves decrees, I forst agreede.  
 — CPC: At length to *Loves* decrees, I forc'd, agreed,
- 3:3-4 — TN1: Or Pinders Apes flaunt in their phrases fine,  
 Enameling their pride with flowers of golde.  
 — ML: Or Pyndars Apes flaunt in their phrases fine,  
 Enameling their pride with flowers of golde.  
 — TN2: Or Pinders Apes flaunt they in phrases fine,  
 Enameling with pyde flowers their thoughts of golde:  
 — CPC: Or Pindares Apes, flaunt they in phrases fine,  
 Enam'ling with pied flowers their thoughts of golde:
- 4:2 — TN1: Thou set'st a bate betweene my love and me:  
 — ML: Thou set'st a bate betweene my love and me,  
 — TN2: Thou set'st a bate betweene my will and wit:  
 — CPC: Thou setst a bate betweene my will and wit,
- 4:4 — TN1: Leave what thou lik'st, and deale thou not with it.  
 — ML: Leave what thou lik'st, and deale thou not with it.  
 — TN2: Leave what thou lik'st not, deale not thou with it.  
 — CPC: Leave what thou likest not, deale not thou with it.
- 4:6 — TN1: Churches and Schooles are for thy seat most fit:  
 — ML: Churches and Schooles are for thy seat most fit:  
 — TN2: Churches or Schooles are for thy seat more fit:  
 — CPC: Churches or Schooles are for thy seate more fit:
- 4:10 — TN1: That little reason that is left in mee,  
 — ML: That little reason that is left in mee.  
 — TN2: The little reason that is left in mee.  
 — CPC: The litle reason that is left in me,

5:1-8 — TN1: It is most true, what wee call *Cupids* dart,  
An Image is, which for our selves we carve:  
And fooles adore, in Temple of our hart,  
Till that good God make church and Churh-men starve.  
It is most true, that eyes are bound to serve  
The inward part: and that the heavenly part  
Ought to be King, from whose rules who doth swerve,  
Rebels to nature, strive for their owne smart.

— ML: It is most true, what wee call *Cupids* dart,  
An Image is, which for our selves we carve:  
And fooles adore, in Temple of our hart,  
Till that good God make church and Churh-men starve.  
It is most true, that eyes are bound to serve  
The inward part: and that the heavenly part  
Ought to be King, from whose rules who doth swerve,  
Rebels to nature, strive for their owne smart.

Interchanged quatrains in TN1 and ML are restored to their original sequence in TN2 and CPC:

— TN2: It is most true, that eyes are found to serve  
The inward light: and that the heavenly part  
Ought to be King, from whose rules who doth swerve,  
Rebels tonature, strive for their owne smart.  
It is most true, what wee call *Cupids* dart,  
An Image is, which for our selves we carve:  
And fooles adore, in Temple of our hart,  
Till that good God make church and Church-men starve.

— CPC: It is most true, that eyes are form'd to serve  
The inward light: and that the heavenly part  
Ought to be king, from whose rules who doth swerve,  
Rebels to Nature, strive for their owne smart.  
It is most true, what wee call *Cupids* dart,  
An image is, which for our selves we carve;  
And, fooles, adore, in temple of our hart,  
Till that good God make church and Churchman starve.

6:4 — TN1: Of lyving deathes deere woundes, faire stormes and flashing fyres.

— ML: Of lyving deaths deere wounds, faire stormes and flashing fyres.

— TN2: Of lyving deathes, deere woundes, faire, stormes, and friesing fyres.

— CPC: Of living deaths, deare wounds, faire stormes & freising fires:

- 7:4 — TN1: Frame daintiest lustre mixte with shaddowes light ?  
 — ML: Frame daintiest lustre mixte with shaddowes light ?  
 — TN2: Frame daintiest lustre mixte of shades & light ?  
 — CPC: Frame daintiest lustre, mixte of shades & light ?
- 7:7-8 — TN1: Least if no vaile these brave beames did disguise,  
 They Sun-like would more dazell than delight.  
 — ML: Least if no vaile these brave beames did disguise,  
 They Sun-like would more dazell than delight.  
 — TN2: Least if no vaile these brave gleames did disguise,  
 They Sun-like should more dazell than delight.  
 — CPC: Least if no vaile these brave gleames did disguise,  
 They sun-like should more dazle then delight.
- 7:12 — TN1: But so and thus, she minding Love should bee  
 — ML: But so and thus, she minding Love should bee  
 — TN2: Both so and thus, she minding Love should bee  
 — CPC: Both so and thus, she minding *Love* should be
- 7:14 — TN1: To honour all their deathes, who for her bleede.  
 — ML: To honour all their deathes, who for her bleede.  
 — TN2: To honour all their deathes, which for her bleede.  
 — CPC: To honor all their deaths, who for her bleed.
- 8:5-6 — TN1: But finding these colde climes, too coldlie him imbrace,  
 Not usde to frozen lippes, he strave to finde some part  
 — ML: But finding these cold climes, too coldlie him imbrace,  
 Not usde to frozen lippes, he strave to finde some part,  
 — TN2: But finding these North climes, too coldlie him imbrace,  
 Not usde to frozen clippes, he strave to finde some part  
 — CPC: But finding these North clymes do coldly him embrace,  
 Not usde to frozen clips, he strave to finde some part
- 8:8 — TN1: At length himselfe he pearch'd in *Stellas* face,  
 — ML: At length himselfe he pearch'd in *Stellas* face,  
 — TN2: At length he preach'd himselfe in *Stellas* joyfull face,  
 — CPC: At length he perch'd himself in *Stellas* joyfull face,
- 8:11-12 — TN1: Effects of livelie heate in nature needes must growe.  
 But she most faire, most colde; made him there take his flight  
 — ML: Effects of livelie heate in nature needes must growe.  
 But she most faire, most colde ; made him there take his flight  
 — TN2: Effects of livelie heate must needes in nature growe.  
 But shee most faire, most cold, made him thence take his flight  
 — CPC: Effects of lively heat, must needs in nature grow.  
 But she most faire, most colde; made him thence take his flight

- 9:10 — TN1: Lookes on the world, and can finde nothing such,  
— ML: Lookes on the world, and can finde nothing such,  
— TN2: Lookes ore the world, and can finde nothing such,  
— CPC: Looks over the world, and can find nothing such,
- 10:4-6 — TN1: Or reach the fruite of Natures chiefest tree ;  
Or seeke heavens course, or heavens unusde to thee:  
Why should'st thou toyle, our thornie grounde to till?  
— ML: Or reach the fruite of Natures chiefest tree ;  
Or seeke heav'ns course, or heav'ns unusde to thee:  
Why should'st thou toyle, our thornie grounde to till?  
— TN2: Or reach the fruite of Natures chiefest tree ;  
Or seeke heavens course, or heavens inside to see:  
Why should'st thou toyle, our thornie soyle to till?  
— CPC: Or reach the fruite of Natures choicest tree,  
Or seeke heav'ns course, or heav'ns inside to see:  
Why should'st thou toyle our thornie soile to till?
- 11:3 — TN1: That when thy heaven to thee his best displaies,  
— ML: That when thy heaven to thee his best displaies,  
— TN2: That when the heaven to thee his best displaies,  
— CPC: That when the heav'n to thee his best displays,
- 11:12 — TN1: And in her brest to peepe, a lowting lyes.  
— ML: And in her brest to peepe, a lowting lyes.  
— TN2: And in her brest bo-peepe or touching lyes,  
— CPC: And in her breast bopeepe or couching lyes,
- 12:2 — TN1: That from her lookes thy dimnesse nowe scapes free:  
— ML: That from her lookes thy dimnesse now scapes free:  
— TN2: That from her lookes thy day-nets nowe scapes free:  
— CPC: That from her lockes, thy daunces none scapes free:
- 12:4 — TN1: That sweet breath maketh oft the flames to rise,  
— ML: That sweet breath maketh oft the flames to rise,  
— TN2: That her sweet breath makes all thy flames t'arise,  
— CPC: That her sweete breath makes oft thy flames to rise,
- 12:6 — TN1: That grace even makes thy gracious wrongs; that she,  
— ML: That grace even makes thy gracious wrongs; that she,  
— TN2: That her grace gracious makes thy wrongs, that she,  
— CPC: That her Grace gracious makes thy wrongs, that she,



- 12:8 — TN1: That her cleere voice, lifteth the Sunne to Skyes.  
 — ML: That her cleere voice, lifteth the Sunne to Skyes.  
 — TN2: That her cleere voice, lifts thy fame to the skyes.  
 — CPC: That her cleere voyce, lifts thy fame to the skies.
- 12:11 — TN1: Cry victory, this happy day is ours:  
 — ML: Cry victory, this happy day is ours:  
 — TN2: Cry victorie, this faire day all is ours:  
 — CPC: Cry, Victorie, this faire day all is ours.
- 13:1 — TN1: *Phoebus* was Judge, twixt Jove and Mars in love,  
 — ML: *Phoebus* was Judge, twixt Jove and Mars in love,  
 — TN2: *Phoebus* was Judge, betweene Jove, Mars, & love,  
 — CPC: *Phoebus* was Judge betweene Jove, Mars, and Love,
- 13:14 — TN1: The first thus macht, were scarcely Gentlemen.  
 — ML: The first thus macht, were scarcely Gentlemen.  
 — TN2: The first thus macht, were scarcely Gentlemen.  
 — CPC: The first, thus matcht, were scantly Gentlemen.
- 14: no substantial changes
- 15:4 — TN1: Neere there about, into your Poems wring.  
 — ML: Neere there about, in to your Poems wring.  
 — TN2: Neere there about, into your Poesie wring.  
 — CPC: Neare thereabouts, into your Poesie wring.
- 15:7–8 — TN1: You that old Petrarchs long deceased woes  
                     With new borne sighs, and wit disguised sing;  
 — ML: You that old Petrarchs long deceased woes  
                     With new borne sighs, and wit disguised sing;  
 — TN2: You that poore Petrarchs long deceased woes  
                     With new borne sighs, & devised wit do sing;  
 — CPC: You that poore Petrarchs long deceased woes  
                     With new-borne sighes and denisend wit do sing;
- 15:14 — TN1: *Stella* behold and then begin to write.  
 — ML: *Stella* behould and then begin to write.  
 — TN2: *Stella* behould and then begin t'endite.  
 — CPC: *Stella* behold, and then begin to endite.

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