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How to cite

AULD, Aleida. Biographical reconfigurations of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* : John Benson, Charles Gildon, and the Catullan Epigram. In: Shakespeare, 2022, vol. 18, n° 2, p. 197–222. doi: 10.1080/17450918.2021.1973079

This publication URL: https://archive-ouverte.unige.ch/unige:161344

Publication DOI: 10.1080/17450918.2021.1973079

Biographical Reconfigurations of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*: John Benson, Charles Gildon, and the Catullan Epigram

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Abstract: For certain scholars, it is Edmond Malone's edition of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* and the modern editorial tradition that followed which forged a crucial link between the author's life and work. This article refines that idea by focusing on John Benson's "second edition" of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, entitled *Poems* (1640), and its early editorial tradition. It argues that early editors and publishers of the *Sonnets* restricted, manipulated, and exploited its biographical potential. This engagement came to a head in the early eighteenth century when Charles Gildon became the first editor to articulate an explicit biographical approach to the *Sonnets* (albeit Benson's version). Gildon considered the Benson sonnets to be mostly epigrams, which gave his biographical approach distinctive features, heretofore unrecognised, such as heightened miscellaneity and internal fragmentation, and associations with the ancient writer Catullus. This earlier version of the biographical approach, long eclipsed by that of Malone, still holds valuable insight for readers of the *Sonnets* today.

Keywords: biography, epigram, editorial tradition, John Benson, Charles Gildon, Shakespeare's *Sonnets*

Funding details: This work was supported in part by the Swiss National Science Foundation under Grant 174792.

Biographical Reconfigurations of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*: John Benson, Charles Gildon, and the Catullan Epigram

In the early editorial history of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, three editions loom large: the first edition, which included 154 sonnets and *A Lover's Complaint*, published by Thomas Thorpe in 1609; the "second edition", which transformed and augmented the *Sonnets* into a collection of *Poems*, published by John Benson in 1640; and two "modern" editions by Edmond Malone, who restored the original version of the *Sonnets*, in 1780 and 1790. Besides rare exceptions in 1711 and 1766, it was Benson's altered version of the *Sonnets* (the "Benson sonnets") that editors and publishers regularly reproduced in editions of Shakespeare's poems between the 1609 *Sonnets* and Malone's editions in the late eighteenth century.

For certain scholars, it is Malone's editions and the modern editorial tradition that followed which forged a crucial link between Shakespeare's *Sonnets* and his life. Such a view is based both on the perceived lack of biographical potential of Benson's version and on the nature of Malone's edition. The belief that the Benson sonnets are fashioned as typical and generic lyrics treating traditional poetic subjects is the current scholarly consensus (see, for example, Marotti, "Literary Property" 161; Schiffer 17; Shrank 278). Notably, Margreta de Grazia has argued that "The identification [of Shakespeare with the lyric speaker] would have been incompatible with the 1640 edition's presentation of its contents as typical and representative amorous circumstances" (*Shakespeare Verbatim* 164). Yet de Grazia also goes further by arguing that Malone invented a biographical approach to the *Sonnets* when he rejected the Benson sonnets and recovered the original 1609 version. Malone introduced an editorial apparatus that presented a sequence in two parts: the first "one hundred and twenty six" sonnets were addressed to a "person, whoever he was", and the "remaining twenty-

eight" to "a lady" (*Plays and Poems*, vol. 10, [190]). It was "Malone's apparatus", according to de Grazia, "that made the Sonnets *Shakespeare's*, both by situating them in the context of his works, themselves enmeshed with the life, and by drawing out allusions that made them singularly and uniquely his" (*Shakespeare Verbatim* 173; see also de Grazia, "Locating and Dislocating" and "The First Reader"; Rollins, ed., *The Sonnets*, vol. 2, 29; Pooler, ed., xv). In this version of the argument, the impersonality of the Benson sonnets throws into relief Malone's innovative biographical approach via his "modern" editorial apparatus.

There are two main problems with considering Benson's edition purely impersonal and with locating the biographical approach exclusively in Malone's edition. First, the Benson sonnets could not have been strictly impersonal, given that they prompted the first explicit references to Shakespeare's mistress as the addressee of the *Sonnets*, in particular by eighteenth-century editors. Second, to identify the biographical approach as Malone's editorial invention is to diminish the biographical resonance of the original publication of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* in 1609. As Michael Schoenfeldt has written, the *Sonnets* are surrounded with "veils of inscrutability that have stirred the curiosity of readers since their initial publication" (125). More generally, biographical insinuations and suspicion toward them were integral to the Petrarchan tradition that underlay English sonnet sequences (see Mortimer 24-26, 32; Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica* 76-77). Malone's modern apparatus was not a prior condition for biographical readings but rather a new way of presenting a specific biographical approach editorially.

The focus of this article is Benson's edition of Shakespeare's *Poems* (1640) and the ensuing editorial tradition. I argue that early editors and publishers of the *Sonnets* restricted, manipulated, and exploited its biographical potential. Benson's edition of Shakespeare's *Poems*, I suggest, reshaped but did not eradicate this potential. Then in the early eighteenth century, Charles Gildon became the first editor to articulate an explicit biographical approach

to the *Sonnets* (albeit Benson's version). Gildon considered the Benson sonnets to be mostly epigrams, which gave his biographical approach distinctive features, heretofore unrecognised, such as heightened miscellaneity and internal fragmentation, and associations with the ancient writer Catullus. What my examination of Benson's edition and the early editorial tradition of the *Sonnets* ultimately suggests is that editors and publishers have always felt compelled to respond to the biographical gestures of the *Sonnets*. The variety of their responses, in turn, testifies to the *Sonnets*' biographical malleability.

Reconfiguring Shakespeare's *Sonnets*: John Benson's edition of Shakespeare's *Poems* (1640)

The "second edition" of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, entitled, *POEMS: WRITTEN BY Wil. Shakespeare. Gent.* (1640), included 108 poems by, or supposedly by, Shakespeare from six different sources.[1] It also featured three elegies on Shakespeare by other authors, and an additional section of poems by other authors (see Acker, "John Benson's 1640 *Poems*" 97-98). The majority of the Shakespeare texts in the edition, however, came from two publications: the 1609 *Sonnets* and the 1612 *The Passionate Pilgrim*. The *Sonnets* was written by and had been ascribed to Shakespeare; *The Passionate Pilgrim* had been ascribed to Shakespeare, but only five out of its twenty-nine poems were actually written by him (to the best of our knowledge). These two texts were treated differently in *Poems*: whereas Benson reproduced *The Passionate Pilgrim* with limited change, he or someone he hired rearranged and selectively grouped 144 of the original 154 sonnets into seventy-two poems ranging from fourteen to seventy lines.[2] Eight sonnets were dropped entirely (18, 19, 43, 56, 75, 76, 96, and 126), and two more (138 and 144) were reproduced from *The Passionate Pilgrim* rather than the *Sonnets*. Benson also added titles and "made about seventy verbal

changes to the text, some of which introduced new errors, and others of which may have been emendations" (Burrow, "Editing the Sonnets" 148-49). These verbal changes affected the gender of select nouns and pronouns, an issue which I address below.

One of the primary motivations for Benson's changes to the *Sonnets* may have been to pass it off as new material (see Edmondson and Wells 118-19, Blakemore Evans, ed., 266), and as I suggest below, he largely succeeded. However he also seems to have been motivated to modify the personal implications of the *Sonnets*. According to Cathy Shrank, "Rather than representing the sincere outpourings of a consistent voice, the poems in Benson's arrangement seem to offer different poetic perspectives, and invite a non-autobiographical mode of reading similar to that which has been brought to collections such as Jonson's Forrest" (278). Moreover, de Grazia has noted "the considerable literary and semantic sophistication" of Benson's titles, which she describes as "impersonal" ("The First Reader" 96, 101). Yet I would suggest that Benson's rearrangement and titles, and his transformation of the *Sonnets* more generally, attempted to neutralise the biographical implications of poems explicitly directed toward a male, but not to eliminate the biographical implications entirely. By forming a collection of poems rather than reproducing a sequence of sonnets, Benson's edition ruptured narratives that might be found otherwise. It was, however, still possible to read some of them, set apart in a loose comparatively personal section, as if the speaker were Shakespeare himself, and as if the addressee were a real-life person.

Benson's strategy to limit biographical potential in the *Poems* to a personal section involved introducing new titles and paratextual elements, as well as rearranging the text itself. Indeed, the titles often fail to refer to a specific person or to specify gender. They foreground abstract nouns like "belief", "temptation", "vow", and "exchange" with an insistent neutrality that Jean-Christophe Mayer has suggested could frustrate readers (412). But I would suggest that there are two exceptions to the idea that these titles are strictly

impersonal. First, there are three poems that highlight the theme of friendship: "The benefit of Friendship" (Sonnets 30-32, Benson poem 24), "Friendly concord" (*The Passionate Pilgrim* poem 8, Benson poem 25), and "Two faithfull friends" (Sonnets 46-47, Benson poem 41).[3] The introduction of the discourse of friendship among poems with otherwise impersonal titles arguably diffused the potential romantic or sexual connotations of these three poems and those that surrounded them. Paul Hammond, for example, points out that titles like "The benefit of Friendship" "serve to define and contain the otherwise fluid meanings of the words 'friend', 'love', and 'lover' which occur in Sonnets 30-2" (102; see also Smith 249). Second, among the reconfigured sonnets (as opposed to the final mythological and narrative poems, and miscellaneous lyrics), there is a section of poems that tend to have more personal titles, in the sense that they refer to people, albeit often with indefinite articles (e.g. "A Lovers" rather than "The Lovers"). It is notable that the friendship poems and this "personal section" do not overlap, and that personal titles outside this section are exceptional.

I suggest that this loose personal section retained a degree of biographical potential that implicated Shakespeare himself and a female addressee. It arguably covers twenty-five poems, beginning with "In prayse of his Love" (Sonnets 82-85, Benson poem 56) and concluding with "His heart wounded by her eye" (Sonnets 137, 139-40, Benson poem 80) (see Appendix 1).[4] The section is made up of fifty-three sonnets, forty of which are associated with the young man in Malone's paradigm. When specified, the titles of these poems always imply or accommodate a male lover and a female beloved, as in "Complaint for his Loves absence" and "Selfe flattery of her beautie" (Sonnets 97-99, Benson poem 61; Sonnets 113-115, Benson poem 67). Male pronouns can be found within these poems, but they may almost always be understood to refer to the speaker himself or to personifications of objects and animals, rather than to a male addressee or referent.[5]

Benson gave this section a more consistent, and consistently personal, voice than elsewhere in the collection. He did this by placing almost all twenty-nine poems from *The Passionate Pilgrim* either before or after the personal section, but rarely within it. Poems from *The Passionate Pilgrim* are introduced early in the collection (initially as Benson poems 12, 13, and 14), and then distributed throughout the collection. These poems tend to feel different from the *Sonnets* (even the reconfigured sonnets by Benson), since they are formally varied, and sometimes involve explicitly fictional characters like Cytherea/Venus, Adonis, a "silly damsell", and an "Englishman". They thus disrupt the sense of a consistent speaker or addressee/referent. Of the twenty-nine poems from *The Passionate Pilgrim*, only one is included within the personal section that I have identified; eighteen are included prior to it, and the others—Thomas Heywood's translations of Ovid's narrative poems, plus a version of poem 19—come after it, along with additional poems from a variety of sources. Although it has been suggested that uncalculated distribution was responsible for this arrangement (see Alden 22, 28-29), the placement of *The Passionate Pilgrim* poems reinforces the sense that the editor treated a section of the collection, Benson poems 56 to 80, differently than the rest, arguably endowing it with a more personal effect.

Benson's paratexts further reshaped, rather than eliminated, the connection between the author and his *Poems*. Benson replaced the original title ("*SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS*") with a new title ("*POEMS: WRITTEN BY WIL. SHAKESPEARE. Gent.*"). What is more, the original mysterious dedication by "T. T." (Thomas Thorpe) was supplanted by an address "To the Reader" signed "I. B." (John Benson). Therein, Benson presented "some excellent and sweetely composed Poems, of Master *William Shakespeare*, Which in themselves appeare of the same purity, the Author himselfe then living avouched" (Shakespeare, *Poems* *2r, italics inversed). The assertion seems to be that the moral standing of the author supports the purity of his poems. Although there is no reference to an extra-fictional person or people

for whom the poems were written, the poems are not a purely fictional product of the author, but rather a partially moral product that reflects a certain biographical connection between the author and his text.

The idea that Benson both preserved and contained a biographical approach to the Benson sonnets illuminates two scholarly debates. First, there has been some disagreement over whether Benson tried to suppress the male addressee or referent, particularly through verbal changes to the text. The editor of the 1944 variorum edition of the *Sonnets*, Hyder Edward Rollins, noted three verbal changes upon which he made the assertion that "the man friend was in many cases disguised as a woman" (vol. 2, 20, 29; see also Pooler, ed., viii-ix, Lee 56). Several decades later, de Grazia countered that Rollins had overstated the case, since the gender alterations were limited to those three instances. She provocatively argued that the real "scandal" was not the desire for the male youth but rather the darkness of the lady (de Grazia, "The Scandal"; see also Matz). In fact, there are five changes to three Benson poems which introduce either a new pronoun that switches the gender from male to female, or a new noun that tends to be associated with females.[6] If we consider that two of these three poems are found in the personal section, and the third poem is found after the personal section, then a possible motivation emerges for Benson's limited changes. He seems to have been specifically concerned with the gender implications of the personal section, but not necessarily concerned otherwise. Perhaps when reading the 1609 *Sonnets*, Benson sensed a female addressee/referent from as early as sonnet 68, after which he tended to assume a heteronormative relationship, and so "did not scruple to alter them [Sonnets 101, 104, and 108] rather than impair the unity of that portion of the collection", as Raymond Macdonald Alden argued as early as 1916 (25). Gendered pronouns and nouns mattered more in this specific section than elsewhere because, I have suggested, it carried greater personal implications.

Second, in a related issue, scholars have questioned why Benson made these gendered changes to nouns and pronouns, but also relocated certain sonnets with highly visible male addressees/referents from the middle of the *Sonnets* to the start of the *Poems*. In other words, Benson seemingly suppressed and foregrounded the male addressee. De Grazia attempted to resolve this issue by arguing that Benson did not suppress the male addressee at all ("The Scandal" 35; see also Roberts 167). Indeed, several of the initial poems in Benson's collection include an explicitly male addressee/referent, such as "Ah wherefore with infection should he live" (from "The glory of beautie", Sonnets 67-69, Benson poem 1), and "His beautie shall in these blacke lines be seene" (from "Injurious Time", Sonnets 60, 63-66, Benson poem 2) (Burrow, "Editing the Sonnets" 149). The fact that Benson did not here follow the order of the sequence of the *Sonnets*, yet he tended to do so elsewhere, suggests there is some rationale behind this rearrangement. If we recognise the construction of a personal section with a heteronormative relationship that starts at or around Benson poem 56, then Benson might have wanted to keep poems with obvious male referents/addressees distant from it (see also Alden 28). In fact, it appears he went out of his way to do so.

Benson's edition of Shakespeare's poems, like Malone's edition, was based on the 1609 *Sonnets*. The editions, however, were very different, the one rearranging and merging individual sonnets, the other preserving the arrangement and form of the 1609 *Sonnets*. I have argued that Benson's edition anticipated that of Malone by offering an early biographical approach to a version of the *Sonnets* that might be understood to start with generic, impersonal poems, and to include a loose personal section. Nonetheless, evidence that this approach was recognised in the seventeenth century is limited. The most persuasive evidence for the biographical potential of Benson's edition, and its failure to confine that potential, is found in the early editorial tradition that followed.

Charles Gildon and the biographical approach to the *Sonnets* in the early eighteenth century

In the early eighteenth century, two editions of Shakespeare's poems that included a version of the *Sonnets* were published. *A Collection of Poems*, published by Bernard Lintott and edited by him or someone he hired, did not include the *Sonnets* in the initial publication in July 1709; it was reissued with a new second volume containing the 1609 *Sonnets* in March 1711. The poetic *Works*, edited by Charles Gildon and published by Edmund Curll and Egbert Sanger in September 1709, included the narrative poems and the Benson sonnets.[7] Both editions—that is, Gildon/Curll/Sanger's 1709 edition and Lintott's expanded 1711 edition—presented these poems as either addressing or referring to Shakespeare's mistress. Thus, contrary to what has been previously argued, the Benson sonnets were not incompatible with a biographical approach, and Malone did not invent the biographical approach.

Gildon's and Lintott's assertions, I will show, were responses to the publishing context at the start of the eighteenth century, as well as to the specific features of the Benson sonnets and the 1609 *Sonnets*. Gildon's edition, based on the Benson sonnets, merits particular attention, since it became the first edition to make explicit the biographical approach, and the one that became central to the early editorial tradition. What scholarship has overlooked thus far are the distinctive features of Gildon's approach in the early eighteenth century vis-à-vis that of Malone in the late eighteenth century. The earlier approach was based on a collection of epigrams rather than a sequence of sonnets, and helped to associate Shakespeare with ancient and modern writers.

Nicholas Rowe's edition of Shakespeare's dramatic *Works* provided the initial context for reading Shakespeare's poems with biography in mind. Among Rowe's several

innovations was the introduction of a biographical essay, "Some Account of the Life, *&c.* of Mr. *William Shakespear*", which collected "for the first time much surviving oral and documentary evidence" to present "a proper biography that would be reprinted in every subsequent edition of Shakespeare's works for a century" (Taylor 75). Biography and Shakespeare's writing remain mostly separate in Rowe's "Account", with the exception of the poet's character: "The Character of the Man is best seen in his Writings" (Rowe, ed., vol. 1, XXXVII). In addition, Rowe referred to the Benson sonnets, the only version he seems to have known about: "There is a Book of Poems, publish'd in 1640, under the Name of Mr. *William Shakespear*, but as I have but very lately seen it, without an Opportunity of making any Judgment upon it, I won't pretend to determine, whether it be his or no" (XL). On this indeterminate note, Rowe concluded his "Account".

Gildon's edition of Shakespeare's poems, published later that year, was prepared with Rowe's "Account" in mind: the introduction of Shakespeare's mistress satisfied growing hunger for details about Shakespeare's life and countered Rowe's inconclusive assessment of the authority of the Benson sonnets. Gildon was working from the assumption that Shakespeare's "Book of Poems"—that is, the Benson sonnets—had not been published in any way prior to 1640. He must have taken this idea from Benson's address "To the Reader", in which it was stated that the poems "had not the fortune by reason of their Infancie in his death", that is, Shakespeare's death in 1616, "to have the due accomodatio[n] of proportionable glory, with the rest of his everliving Workes", that is, the First and Second Folios in 1623 and 1632 (Shakespeare, *Poems* *2r, italics inversed). In his early eighteenth-century edition, Gildon accepted the idea that Shakespeare's poems were first published by Benson in 1640. However, he then found himself in the position of needing to refute the objection raised by some that "if these Poems [the Benson sonnets] had been Genuine, they had been publish'd in the Life time of the Author and by himself, but coming out almost

thirty Years after his Death [i.e. 1640] there is great Reason to suspect that they are not Genuine" (*Works* 447). Gildon's solution was to invent a mistress: "Besides these Poems being most to his Mistress it is not at all unlikely, that she kept them by her till they fell into her Executors Hands or some Friend, who would not let them be any longer conceal'd" (*Works* 447). The assumed belatedness of the poems' publication in 1640 (~30 years after Shakespeare's death in 1616) is thus explained by means of their supposed biographical circumstances.

Lintott's edition of Shakespeare's poems was also prepared with Rowe's biographical account in mind. When it was initially published in one volume (without the *Sonnets*, prior to the rival edition by Gildon), the writer of the "Advertisement", probably Lintott himself, referred to Rowe's recent account of Shakespeare's life (albeit not by name), and offered one supposed contribution to Shakespeare's biography: "That most learned Prince, and great Patron of Learning, King *James* the First, was pleas'd with his own Hand to write an amicable Letter to Mr *Shakespeare*" (Shakespeare, *A Collection of Poems* A2v). When Lintott published the second volume of his edition, the *Sonnets*, in 1711, he continued to cater to readers' interest in Shakespeare's life while making up for his own edition's initial incompleteness and responding to accusations of inaccuracy.

One of Lintott's key tactics was to mimic features of the rival edition by Gildon. He reissued volume one, originally titled *A Collection of Poems*, with a new volume of the 1609 *Sonnets*. The new two-volume set was titled, *A Collection of Poems, In Two Volumes; Being all the Miscellanies of Mr.* William Shakespeare*, which were Publish'd by himself in the Year 1609. and now correctly Printed from those Editions*. This title was modelled on the third part of Gildon's edition—"His Miscellany Poems"—but went further by insisting on comprehensiveness—"Being all the Miscellanies" (see Figure 1). Moreover, Lintott responded to charges of inaccuracy levelled at him in Gildon's rival edition (see Gildon's

comments in *Works* 449) by claiming his texts were "now correctly Printed", and by (ironically) adding unauthorised details. Whereas the poems or poetic collections in Lintott's 1709 edition were variously dated (1630, 1632, 1599, and 1599, respectively), reflecting the specific editions that Lintott had been able to obtain, the poems or poetic collections in the reissued volume were uniformly dated 1609. Lintott believed that a retroactive construction of a volume of "complete poems" published during Shakespeare's lifetime appeared more legitimate than individual poetry pamphlets variously dated and published both during his life and after his death.[8]

Following Gildon's lead, Lintott also introduced a mistress in the description of the contents of his two-volume edition. This feature seems to have been an attempt to profit from the success of Gildon's biographical approach. For the sake of clarity, I again quote the title, but this time include part of the description: "*A Collection of Poems, In Two Volumes; Being all the Miscellanies of Mr.* William Shakespeare [...] *The Second Volume Contains One Hundred and Fifty Four Sonnets, all of them in Praise of his Mistress II. A Lover's Complaint of his Angry Mistress*". The antecedent for "*his Mistress*" is "*Mr.* William Shakespeare", and so implicates the author; the antecedent for "*his Angry Mistress*" is the generic lover of "*A Lover's Complaint*". Both titles are bizarre, given the explicitly male pronouns in parts of the 1609 *Sonnets*, and the explicitly female character whose complaint resounds in "A Lover's Complaint". It is the reference to Shakespeare's mistress in particular that registers the keen interest in Shakespeare's life. As Paul D. Cannan has stated, Gildon "inaugurated the biographical connection between the speaker of the Sonnets and Shakespeare himself", and Lintott "saw the appeal of such a connection" ("The 1709/11 Editions" 181-82). I have further argued that the interest that Rowe generated in Shakespeare's life combined with a need to legitimise the poems to produce the first explicit references to a mistress in the context of the Benson sonnets and 1609 *Sonnets*.

[Insert Figure 1—see below]

It was, however, Gildon's edition of the Benson sonnets that became part of the main editorial tradition. Its biographical approach was coloured by the fact that Gildon did not consider these poems sonnets at all. In his paratextual essay "Remarks on The Poems", Gildon described them as "generally Epigrams, and those perfect in their kind [...] he has something Pastoral in some, Elegaic in others, Lyric in others, and Epigrammatic in most" (*Works* 457-58). Gildon specified what he meant, writing an epigram is "*a short Copy of Verses, with Beauty and Point treating of one only thing, and concluding with a more beautiful Point*", and "*a short and simple Poem, deducing something of some one Thing, Person and Fact*" (462).[9] He went on to comment on various aspects of the epigram, including brevity, beauty, and point. "Some say it [the epigram] must not exceed two Lines", stated Gildon, but those of Catullus had "sometimes [...] above fifty Verses", and those of Martial regularly stop at five or six distichs. "But since *Catullus* has by all been prefer'd to the Later [sic], we have no Reason to prefer the Practice of *Martial* to his". Brevity is accomplished by not aiming "at many Things in the whole Epigram" and then expressing "even that little as concisely as possible, and in such Words, that to extend it into more wou'd enervate, and lose the Force and Strength of the Thought, and the Point or Acumen". Beauty, in turn, is "an exact and harmonious Formation of the whole, and the apt Agreement of all the Parts of the Poem from the Beginning to the End, with a certain sort of Sweetness, as of a natural Colour without any Fucus [cosmetic for skin] on the one Hand, and yet without any thing low and mean on the other". Point is found "chiefly in the Conclusion by ending with something unexpected, or biting". Gildon concluded that "All things are the allow'd Subject of the Epigram; as long as they are treated of with Brevity, Point, and Beauty", and then observed, "How far *Shakespear* has excell'd in this Way" (462-63).

The role of the epigram in Shakespeare's *Sonnets* has been a fruitful line of critical inquiry in recent decades.[10] Although scholars have taken note of the epigram in Gildon's edition (e.g. Baker 155-56; de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim* 164-65), the implications of this term has never been explored at length, and I would suggest there are several reasons why. It has been held that the sonnet and epigram were basically equivalent at this time, and so Gildon's "epigram" was a terminological rather than conceptual change (see Rollins, ed., *The Sonnets*, vol. 2, 332-33). Indeed, Gildon wrote that "*Petrarch* had a little infected his [Shakespeare's] way of thinking" in the Benson sonnets, and referred to "*Longaviles* good Epigram" in the poetic works (*Works* 450, 311). On these occasions, Gildon associated the epigram with Petrarch's love poetry and applied the term "epigram" to a fourteen-line sonnet. When Gildon did employ the term "sonnet" —"his *Venus* and *Adonis*, his *Tarquin* and *Lucrece*, and several *Epigrams* and *Sonnets*" (*Works* 448)—he might have been referring to the songs from Shakespeare's plays included in the Benson sonnets. Moreover, Gildon's label was surely a product of the time, since literary theorists then and now have perceived that the epigram overwhelmed other genres (Boileau B5r-6r; Fowler 196). Since the "sonnet" was not widely known—a contemporary editor, John Hughes, described it as "a Species of Poetry so entirely disus'd, that it seems to be scarce known among us at this time" (vol. 1, cviii)—Gildon may have opted for a more recognisable genre, the "epigram". Additionally, since Gildon worked with Benson's edition of Shakespeare's *Poems*, he might not have recognised the fourteen-line sonnet at all. In Benson's edition, many of the original sonnets appear as longer poems, and the word "sonnet" or "sonnets" occurs just twice (Shakespeare, *Poems* H1r, L4r). It has thus been suggested that Benson presented Shakespeare's sonnets as Jonsonian epigrams, which Gildon then made explicit (Baker 155-56). In sum, Gildon used the term "epigram" for the fourteen-line sonnet at times, and he might have had his audience

in mind when he chose to describe the Benson sonnets as "epigrams", or he might not have recognised the Benson sonnets as sonnets.

Nonetheless, I would argue that the idea of the epigram differentiates Gildon's biographical approach to the *Sonnets* in the early editorial tradition from that of Malone in the modern tradition in three key ways. First, Gildon's biographical approach applied to a fragmented collection of epigrams, instead of a numbered, potentially narrativised, sequence of sonnets. On the main title-page, Gildon described the Benson sonnets as "His Miscellany Poems". The new title conveyed miscellaneous variety along with a heightened connection to the author via the genitive title. To help readers navigate this variety, Gildon added an index that facilitated "dipping and skipping" across the collection, a type of reading associated with miscellanies and anthologies (Benedict 17). Readers were thus invited to focus on the content of individual poems (and perhaps those in close proximity), rather than reading through the collection in a linear fashion. The collection was various and personal, but not particularly cohesive.

The epigram itself also reinforced the fragmentation of the collection. Each epigram could be understood to have two parts, "the expressing or reciting the Subject, and the Conclusion" ([Gildon, ed.], *Works* 462). In Gildon's poetic *Works*, these two parts were marked typographically. Like Benson's edition, the rhyming couplet at the end of each "stanza" was indented; unlike Benson's edition, a space was inserted between "stanzas" (see Figure 2). While this layout reinstituted the fourteen-line sonnet form, it also encouraged readers to see the two-part structure that Gildon associated with the epigram. In other words, Gildon's edition of the Benson sonnets insisted on the relative independence of each poem in the collection, and it also fragmented poems internally. Gildon's biographical approach thus emerged in a miscellaneous context that undermined coherence and narrative.

[Insert Figure 2—see below]

Second, Gildon's biographical approach relied on a classical genre, the epigram, rather than a Renaissance genre, the sonnet. The epigram opened up Shakespeare and the Benson sonnets to a new set of classical associations, in particular with Catullus, that conferred learnedness and stature.[11] In Shakespeare's dramatic *Works* (1709), Nicholas Rowe had claimed that Shakespeare "had no knowledge of the Writings of the Antient Poets, not only from this Reason [i.e. his withdrawal from school], but from his Works themselves, where we find no traces of any thing that looks like an Imitation of 'em" (vol. 1, III). In Shakespeare's poetic *Works*, Gildon countered this argument, perhaps as a result of the influence of Benson's edition of Shakespeare's *Poems* (Baker 164-65). He did so, as noted above, by associating the Benson sonnets with the Catullan model of the epigram: "But since *Catullus* has by all been prefer'd to the Later [sic], we have no Reason to prefer the Practice of *Martial* to his" (462).[12] In addition, he compiled an eight-page list of "References to the *Classic Authors*, &c", which listed "Latin Poets on the Topics [...] remark'd in *Shakespear*". In his editorial remarks, Gildon argued that "this Controversy [of] *Shakespear*'s total Ignorance of the Latin will be no longer on Foot when we come to his Poems where there are several Translations of *Ovid*'s *Metamorphosis*, and his *Epistles*" (*Works* 301), undoubtedly referring to Heywood's translations of Ovid from *The Heroides*, *The Art of Love*, and *The Remedies for Love* (rather than *Metamorphoses*), which had been included among Shakespeare's poems. Although Gildon's argument was partially based on non-Shakespearean poems, he was ultimately correct—Shakespeare was far more learned than Jonson's early comment about Shakespeare's "*small* Latine, *and lesse* Greeke" had led Rowe and others to believe (Shakespeare, *Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* πA4r). Overall, then, Gildon presented Shakespeare's epigrams to his mistress in a learned literary tradition.[13]

Moreover, the Catullan epigram was compatible with the possibility of a set of real-life characters in the Benson sonnets. Although some people in Gildon's time likely

considered Lesbia a generic and impersonal mistress, publications like *The Adventures of Catullus, and History of His Amours with Lesbia* (1707)—translated from Jean de La Chapelle's *Les amours de Catulle* (1680)—insisted on the at least partial biographical truth behind Catullus's love poetry to Lesbia (A5v-6r, A7r). Gildon's association of the biographically resonant Catullan epigram and Shakespeare may thus be seen as complementing an early seventeenth-century comparison of Shakespeare and Catullus on the basis of their epyllia (see Ingleby, vol. 1, 27), and as anticipating later comparisons on the basis of their love lyrics and mistresses. Hugh Macnaghten in *The Story of Catullus* (1899) made the first explicit parallel between Shakespeare's Dark Lady and Catullus's Lesbia (27-33). Later, W. H. Auden referenced Catullus when discussing the relationship between Shakespeare's life and works, which is "at one and the same time too self-evident to require comment—every work of art is, in one sense, a self-disclosure—and too complicated ever to unravel" (xviii). Auden also evoked Catullus to highlight the achievement of Shakespeare's "Dark Lady" sonnets: "No other poet, not even Catullus, has described the anguish, self-contempt, and rage produced by this unfortunate condition so well as Shakespeare in some of these sonnets" (xxxiv). In the early eighteenth century, Gildon thus initiated a way of comparing Shakespeare and Catullus on the basis of their "epigrams" and, potentially, their non-fictional mistresses, that holds relevance to more recent criticism (see additional comparisons in Blevins 39-62 and Bagg).

Third, the idea of the epigram informs Gildon's conception of a biographical collection of love poems, which facilitated comparisons with another great writer of a potentially biographical collection of love poems, Abraham Cowley. Although Gildon himself invoked Cowley in discussions of the epigram—for example in *A Grammar of the English Tongue* (1712) (140) and *The Complete Art of Poetry* (1718) (vol. 1, 149)—the primary connection between Shakespeare and Cowley in Shakespeare's poetic *Works* was as

writers of love poetry in general.[14] Gildon presented Cowley's *Mistress* as a collection of love poems that threw into relief the achievement of Shakespeare's own collection *despite* the latter's epigrammatic tendencies: "yet who ever can admire Mr *Cowley*'s Mistress, has a thousand Times more Cause of Admiration of our *Shakespear* in his Love Verses, because he has sometimes such touches of Nature as will make Amends for those Points, those *Epigrammatic Acumina*, which are not or ever can be the Product of a Soul truly touch'd with the Passion of Love" (*Works* 450). These comments were reproduced in subsequent editions of Shakespeare's poetic *Works* edited by George Sewell. In addition, Sewell himself engaged with the biographical implications of love poetry, describing Shakespeare's occasional poems (i.e. the Benson sonnets) as early works, since a "young Muse must have a Mistress to play off the beginnings of Fancy, nothing being so apt to raise and elevate the Soul to a pitch of Poetry, as the Passion of Love" (ix). According to Sewell, "*Spenser*, *Cowley*, and many others paid their First-fruits of Poetry to a real, or an imaginary Lady" (ix). Sewell's response to the biographical implications of these poems is ambivalent: he raised the possibility of a biographical or of a fictional mistress without excluding either. Nonetheless, in Sewell's preface, and specifically in his comments on the relationship between Shakespeare and Spenser, Jane Kingsley-Smith locates "one of the earliest recorded attempts to read the lyric poems as autobiography" (105). In the early eighteenth century, then, Gildon and others promoted the idea that Shakespeare and Cowley wrote comparable collections of love poems—involving, at least in Shakespeare's case, epigrams—with possible real-life mistresses.

Gildon's edition of the Benson sonnets, with its distinctive biographical approach, produced two of the earliest inquiries by readers about the relationship of the Benson sonnets to Shakespeare's life. The first response by William Oldys (1696-1761), recorded in Malone's ground-breaking editions in 1780 and 1790, is well-known but misunderstood.

Malone quoted Oldys in a note to two lines from Sonnet 93, "So shall I live, supposing thou art true, / Like a deceived husband":

> Mr. Oldys observes in one of his manuscripts, that this and the preceding Sonnet [i.e. Sonnets 92 and 93] "*seem to have been addressed by Shakespeare to his beautiful wife on some suspicion of her infidelity*". He must have read our author's poems with but little attention; otherwise he would have seen that these, as well as all the preceding Sonnets, and many of those that follow, are not addressed to a female. (*Supplement* 653; see also Malone, ed., *The Plays and Poems*, vol. 10, 265)

The unnamed manuscript that Malone referred to is British Library Add MSS 22595, part of "GERARD LANGBAINE'S Account of the English Dramatic Poets, Oxf. 1691", interleaved with manuscript notes of William Oldys and Thomas Percy that have been transcribed from "Mr Oldys's own Copy" by George Steevens.[15] In fact, Malone's note distorted Oldys's comment, which in the original manuscript reads: "Shakespeare's Poem called A Lovers Affection seems to be written to his beautiful wife under some Rumour of Inconstancy" (British Library, Add MSS 22595, 9). In other words, Oldys did not comment on Sonnets 92 and 93, but on "A Lovers affection though his Love prove unconstant" (Sonnets 92-95, Benson poem 60), which appears in what I have described as the personal section of the Benson sonnets. The same manuscript shows that Oldys was familiar with editions by Gildon, Sewell, and at least the first volume of Lintott's edition, and was aware of the existence of the 1609 *Sonnets*.[16] His comments referred, however, to the Benson sonnets.[17] They must have been written before Oldys died in 1761, perhaps in the 1730s.[18] Oldys's manuscript thus records an important instance of the biographical approach to the Benson sonnets at least nineteen years before Malone's *Supplement*. It dispels the idea that readers could not identify Shakespeare with the speaker of the Benson sonnets.

The second response belongs to an anonymous reader of Shakespeare's poetic *Works* edited by Sewell (1725), now held by the Folger Shakespeare Library (PR2752 1725 copy 13 v.7 Sh.Col.). The reader attempted to connect the poems to their extra-fictional context, queried whether the addressee was male or female, and conflated Shakespeare and his

speaker. For example, next to "Love's Cruelty" (Sonnets 1-3, Benson poem 6), the annotator wrote, "appears addressed to some male friend", and beside the following poem, "Youthful Glory" (Sonnets 13-15, Benson poem 7), the same person observed, "Seems addressed to a female". The annotator thereafter vainly grasped for consistency. Alongside "Love's Relief" (Sonnets 33-35, Benson poem 34), the person asked, "Is this to his Wife? It seems in the same strain as the one Page 203". Nonetheless, next to the poem on page 203, "Loss and Gain" (Sonnets 41-42, Benson poem 28), the annotator wrote, "Seems addressed to some male Friend". Elsewhere the person reiterated the question of whether a certain poem related to his (i.e. Shakespeare's) wife, with the assumption that the speaker was Shakespeare himself.[19] The idea that Shakespeare is synonymous with the speaker also underlies an annotation on "My Life hath in this Line some Interest", in the poem "A Valediction" (Sonnets 71-72, 74, Benson poem 52), which the annotator clarified, "The dramatic line, I suppose he means", thus associating the "Line" with Shakespeare's identity as a playwright.

I have been unable to identify the author of these annotations or date them precisely.[20] It seems very likely, however, that they were written prior to or without awareness of Malone's editions of the *Sonnets*—the person's tentative questioning of gender throughout the collection shares nothing with Malone's categorical division of the *Sonnets* into two parts based on gender.[21] This annotator, whoever he or she was, had a literary sensibility and antiquarian interests, and was well-read. The person showed, for example, familiarity with Shakespeare's *oeuvre*, and with the lesser-known genre of the masque, a spectacular form of courtly entertainment. Next to "Why should this Desart be", it is written, "Is not this in As you like it" (which in fact, it is), and next to "Let the Bird of lowest lay", there is an annotation, "Seems composed as a part of some mask. Composed on the death of some married pair without issue". The person also demonstrated an openness to interpretative possibility, listing, for example, three possible meanings next to the second stanza (i.e.

Sonnet 110) of "A Lover's Excuse for his long Absence" (Sonnet 109, 110, Benson poem 65). The person further shrewdly noted that "A Lover's Complaint" "Seems unfinished"—in fact, the poem never returns to the frame story with which it begins. The annotations in this 1725 edition thus show, first, a reader of the Benson sonnets seeking connections between Shakespeare and his speaker, and second, an inquiry into the number and gender of the addressee(s). The comments in the 1725 edition were made independently of, and in all probability prior to, Malone's editions of 1780 and 1790. The early editorial tradition of the poems, based on Gildon's engagement with the Benson sonnets, offered an explicit and distinctive biographical approach to which two eighteenth-century readers responded.

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This article began with a contradiction that has lurked in our collective responses to the reception of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. On the one hand, Benson's reconfigured version has largely been considered generic and impersonal; on the other, it is in response to this version that "editors and anthologists [prior to Malone] had happily assigned most, if not all, of the Sonnets to a mistress" (Kingsley-Smith 123; see also de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim* 155n.). In this article, I have attempted to reconcile these views. I have argued that a biographical approach to the *Sonnets* runs throughout the early editorial tradition based on the Benson sonnets. Although Benson circumscribed the biographical approach, the evidence suggests that he did not eliminate it altogether: it surfaced explicitly in the subsequent edition by Gildon. It is more accurate, then, to think about how editors engaged with the biographical approach, rather than whether they did so. Malone did not invent the biographical approach to the *Sonnets*, but rather presented a new version of it.

My account demonstrates the editorial tendency to disambiguate the *Sonnets*. As different as Benson's and Malone's editions were, they both tried to clarify gender. Benson, I have suggested, implied a shift at or around poem 56 (Sonnet 82); Malone imposed a division

at Sonnet 126. The idea that the *Sonnets* begins by addressing a male and turns toward a female was embedded in Benson's edition in the seventeenth century before this division was honed by Malone in the eighteenth century. A similar point is made by Robert Matz, who detected a shift in the Benson sonnets from poem 59, and affirmed that "interest in the gender division of the sonnets does not begin with Malone" (485, 487).

At the same time, Benson's edition reveals that gender in the *Sonnets* is far less stable than Malone's clear-cut division and the modern editorial tradition would suggest. With few direct changes to the poems themselves, Benson was able to convey a heteronormative relationship in a more personal section of the collection, and subsequent editors described these poems as being mostly written to Shakespeare's mistress. Sidney Lee has noted as much, remarking, "it is surprising how rare is any alteration of this kind necessary in order to adapt the sonnets to a woman's fascinations" (57).[22] More recently, Heather Dubrow has insisted on the indeterminacy of the direction of address in certain sonnets and the multiplicity of interpretative options. In considering the editorial tendency to categorise and delimit, then, the ambiguity of the *Sonnets* has paradoxically become clearer.

The current editorial approach tends to favour ambiguity and multiplicity, suggestiveness over explicitness. As John Roe has noted, the "practice of proposing identities for the young man has generally lapsed" (91 n. 5). This emergent editorial tradition together with the traditions based on Benson and Malone demonstrate the ability of the *Sonnets* to absorb and entertain a variety of biographical approaches. The *Sonnets* appears to be specific and elusive; it elicits explicit correspondence and inconclusive possibilities. The biographical approaches across editorial traditions thus ultimately illuminate the biographical malleability of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* itself.

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Appendix 1

John Benson's Edition of Shakespeare's *Poems* (1640)

Shading designates titles prior to Benson poem 91 that involve a person or people. These poems tend to be concentrated in a "personal section" from Benson poem 56 to 80. Benson poem 91 initiates a section of narrative and mythological poems as well as miscellaneous lyrics which are altogether less personal, regardless of whether or not their titles involve a person or people. The translations of Benson's Latin titles are from de Grazia, "First Reader".

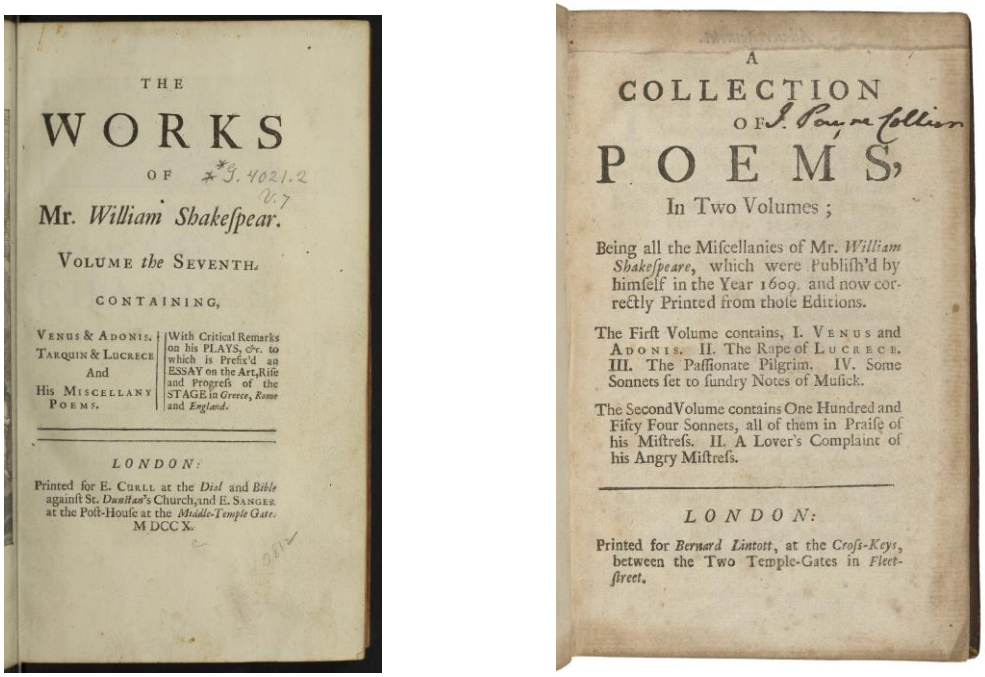
Position in 1640 *Poems*	**Title in 1640 *Poems***	**Place in 1609 *Sonnets* or other source**	**First Line in 1640 *Poems***
1	The glory of beautie.	67, 68, 69	AH wherefore with infection should he live,
2	Injurious Time.	60, 63, 64, 65, 66	LIke as the waves make towards the pibled shore,
3	True Admiration.	53, 54	WHat is your substance, whereof are you made,
4	The force of love.	57, 58	BEing your slave what should I doe but tend,
5	The beautie of Nature.	59	IF there be nothing new, but that which is,
6	Loves crueltie.	1, 2, 3	FRom fairest creatures we desire increase,
7	Youthfull glory.	13, 14, 15	O That you were your selfe, but love you are
8	Good Admonition.	16, 17	BUt wherefore doe not you a mightier way
9	Quicke prevention.	7	LOe in the Orient when the gracious light,
10	Magazine of beautie.	4, 5, 6	UNthriftie lovelinesse why dost thou spend,
11	An invitation to Marriage.	8, 9, 10, 11, 12	MUsick to heare, why hear'st thou musick sadly,
12	False beleefe.	[PP 1, a version of sonnet 138]	WHen my Love sweares that she is made of truth,
13	A Temptation.	[PP 2, a version of 144]	TWo loves I have, of Comfort, and Despaire,
14	Fast and loose.	[PP 3, also in LLL]	DId not the heavenly Rhetoricke of thine eye,
15	True content.	21	SO is it not with me as with that Muse,
16	A bashfull Lover.	23	AS an unperfect actor on the stage,
17	Strong conceite.	22	MY glasse shall not perswade me I am old,
18	A sweet provocation.	[PP 4]	SWeet Cytheria, sitting by a Brooke,
19	A constant vow.	[PP 5, also in LLL]	IF love make me forsworne how shall I sweare to love?
20	The Exchange.	20	A Womans face with natures owne hand painted,
21	A disconsolation.	27, 28, 29	WEary with toyle, I haste me to my bed,
22	Cruell Deceit.	[PP 6]	SCarse had the Sunne dride up the deawy morne,
23	The unconstant Lover.	[PP 7]	FAire is my love, but not so faire as fickle,
24	The benefit of Friendship.	30, 31, 32	WHen to the Sessions of sweet silent thought,
25	Friendly concord.	[PP 8]	IF Musicke and sweet Poetrie agree,
26	Inhumanitie.	[PP 9]	FAire was the morne, when the faire Queene of Love,
27	A congratulation.	38, 39, 40	HOw can my Muse want subject to invent
28	Losse and gaine.	41, 42	THose pretty wrongs that libertie commits,
29	Foolish disdaine.	[PP 11]	VEnus with Adonis sitting by her,
30	Ancient Antipothy.	[PP 12]	CRabbed age and youth cannot live together,
31	Beauties valuation.	[PP 13]	BEautie is but a vaine and doubtfull good,
32	Melancholy thoughts.	44, 45	IF the dull substance of my flesh were thought,
33	Loves Losse.	[PP 10]	SWeet Rose, faire flower, untimely pluckt, soone vaded,
34	Loves Releefe.	33, 34, 35	FUll many a glorious morning have I seene,
35	Unanimitie.	36, 37	LEt me confesse that we two must be twaine,
36	Loath to depart.	[PP 14]	GOod night, good rest, ah neither be my share,
37	A Master-peece.	24	MIne eye hath play'd the Painter and hath steeld,
38	Happinesse in content.	25	LEt those who are in favour with their stars,
39	A dutifull Message.	26	LOrd of my love, to whom in vassalage
40	Goe and come quickly.	50, 51	HOw heavie doe I journey on the way,
41	Two faithfull friends.	46, 47	MIne eye and heart are at a mortall warre,
42	Carlesse neglect.	48	HOw carefull was I when I tooke my way,
43	Stoute resolution.	49	AGainst that time (if ever that time come)
44	A Duell.	[PP 15]	IT was a Lordings daughter,
45	Love-sicke.	[PP 16, also in LLL]	ON a day (alacke the day)
46	Loves labour lost.	[PP 17]	MY flocks feede not my Ewes breed not,
47	Wholesome counsell.	[PP 18]	WHen as thine eye hath chose the Dame,
48	Sat fuisse. ['To have sufficed']	62	SInne of selfe-love possesseth all mine eye,
49	A living monument.	55	NOt marble, nor the guilded monument,
50	Familiaritie breeds contempt.	52	SO am I as the rich whose blessed key,
51	Patiens Armatus. ['The sufferer in arms']	61	IS it thy will, thy Image should keepe open

Appendix 1 (Continued)

Position in 1640 *Poems*	**Title in 1640 *Poems***	**Place in 1609 *Sonnets* or other source**	**First Line in 1640 *Poems***
52	A Valediction.	71, 72, 74	NO longer mourne for me when I am dead,
53	Nil magnis Invidia. ['Envy is nothing to the great']	70	THat thou art blam'd shall not be thy defect,
54	Love-sicke.	80, 81	O How I faint when I of you doe write,
55	The Picture of true love.	116	LEt me not to the marriage of true mindes
56	In prayse of his Love.	82, 83, 84, 85	I Grant thou wert not married to my Muse,
57	A Resignation.	86, 87	WAs it the proud full saile of his great verse,
58	Sympathizing love.	[PP 20]	AS it fell upon a Day,
59	A request to his scornefull Love.	88, 89, 90, 91	WHen thou shalt be dispos'd to set me light,
60	A Lovers affection though his Love prove unconstant.	92, 93, 94, 95	BUt do thy worst to steale thy selfe away,
61	Complaint for his Loves absence.	97, 98, 99	HOw like a Winter hath my absence beene
62	An invocation to his Muse	100, 101	WHere art thou Muse that thou forgest so long,
63	Constant affection.	104, 105, 106	TO me faire love you never can be old,
64	Amazement.	102, 103	MY love is strengthned though more weake in seeming
65	A Lovers excuse for his long absence.	109, 110	O Never say that I was false of heart,
66	A complaint.	111, 112	O For my sake doe you wish fortune chide,
67	Selfe flattery of her beautie.	113, 114, 115	SInce I left you, mine eye is in my minde,
68	Tryall of loves constancy.	117, 118, 119	ACcuse me thus, that I have scanted all,
69	A good construction of his Loves unkindenesse.	120	THat you were once unkind befriends me now,
70	Errour in opinion.	121	TIs better to be vile then vile esteemed,
71	Upon the receit of a Table Booke from his Mistris.	122	THy guift, thy tables, are within my braine
72	A Vow.	123	NO! Time, thou shalt not boast that I doe change,
73	Loves safetie.	124	IF my deare love were but the child of state,
74	An intreatie for her acceptance.	125	WEr't ought to me I bore the canopy,
75	Upon her playing on the Virginalls.	128	HOw oft when thou thy musicke musicke playst,
76	Immoderate Lust.	129	TH'expence of Spirit in a waste of shame
77	In prayse of her beautie though black.	127, 130, 131, 132	IN the old age black was not counted faire,
78	Unkinde Abuse.	133, 134	BE shrew that heart that makes my heart to groan
79	A Love-Suite.	135, 136	WHo ever hath her wish, thou hast thy Will,
80	His heart wounded by her eye.	137, 139, 140	THou blinde foole love, what dost thou to mine eyes,
81	A Protestation.	141, 142	IN faith I doe not love thee with mine eyes,
82	An Allusion.	143	LOe as a carefull huswife runnes to catch.
83	Life and death.	145	THose lips that Loves owne hand did make,
84	A Consideration of death.	146	POore soule, the center of my sinfull earth,
85	Immoderate Passion.	147	MY love is as a feaver longing still,
86	Loves powerfull subtilty.	148, 149, 150	O Me! what eyes hath love put in my head,
87	Retaliation.	78, 79	SO oft have I invok'd thee for my Muse,
88	Sunne Set.	73, 77	THat time of yeare thou maist in mee behold,
89	A monument to Fame.	107, 108	NOt mine owne feares, nor the propheticke soule,
90	Perjurie.	151, 152	LOve is too young to know what conscience is,

Position in 1640 *Poems*	Title in 1640 *Poems*	Place in 1609 *Sonnets* or other source	First Line in 1640 *Poems*
91	The Tale of Cephalus and Procris.	[PP 25, also in TB]	BEneath Hymetus hill well cloath'd with flowers,
92	Cupids Treacherie.	153, 154	CUpid laid by his brand and fell asleepe,
93	That Menelaus was cause of his owne wrongs.	[PP 23, also in TB]	WHen Menelaus from his house is gone,
94	And in another place somewhat resembling this.	[PP 24, also in TB]	Orestes liked, but not loved deerely
95	Mars and Venus.	[PP 26, also in TB]	THis Tale is blaz'd through heaven, how once unware
96	The History how the Mynotaure was begot.	[PP 27, also in TB]	IDa of Caedars, and tall Trees stand full,
97	This Mynotaure [...]	[PP 28, also in TB]	WHen Dedalus the laborinth had built,
98	Achilles his concealement of his Sex [...]	[PP 29, also in TB]	NOw from another World doth saile with joy,
99	A Lovers Complaint.	[after sonnets]	FRom off a hill whose concave wombe reworded,
100	The amorous Epistle of Paris to Hellen.	[PP 21, also in TB]	HEalth unto Laedaes daughter Priams sonne,
101	Hellen to Paris.	[PP 22, also in TB]	NO sooner came mine eye unto the sight,
102	The Passionate Shepheard to his Love.	[EH + PP 19]	LIve with me and be my Love,
103	The Nimphs reply to the Shepheard.	[EH + PP 19]	IF that the world and Love were young,
104	Another of the same Nature.	[EH]	COme live with me and be my deare,
105	[no title]	[from a lost manuscript]	TAke, O take those lippes away,
106	[no title]	[LM]	LEt the bird of lowest lay
107	Threnes	[LM]	BEauty, Truth, and Raritie,
108	[no title]	[AYLI, from FF]	WHy should this Desart be,
109	An Epitaph on the admirable Dramaticke Poet […]	[SF]	What neede my Shakespeare for his honoured bones,
110	On the death of William Shakespeare […]	[JD]	REnowned Spenser lie a thought more nigh
111	An Elegie on the death […]	[unknown]	I Dare not doe thy Memory that wrong,

Abbreviations: PP is *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1612); LLL is *Love's Labour's Lost* (1598); TB *Troia Britannica* (1609); EM is *England's Helicon* (1600); LM is *Love's Martyr* (1601); AYLI is *As You Like It*; FF is Shakespeare's First Folio (1623); SF is Shakespeare's Second Folio (1632); JD is John Donne's *Poems* (1633).



THE
WORKS
OF
Mr. *William Shakeſpear.*
VOLUME *the* SEVENTH.
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VENUS & ADONIS. | With Critical Remarks
TARQUIN & LUCRECE | on his PLAYS, &c. to
And | which is Prefix'd an
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| and *England*.
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M DCC X.

A
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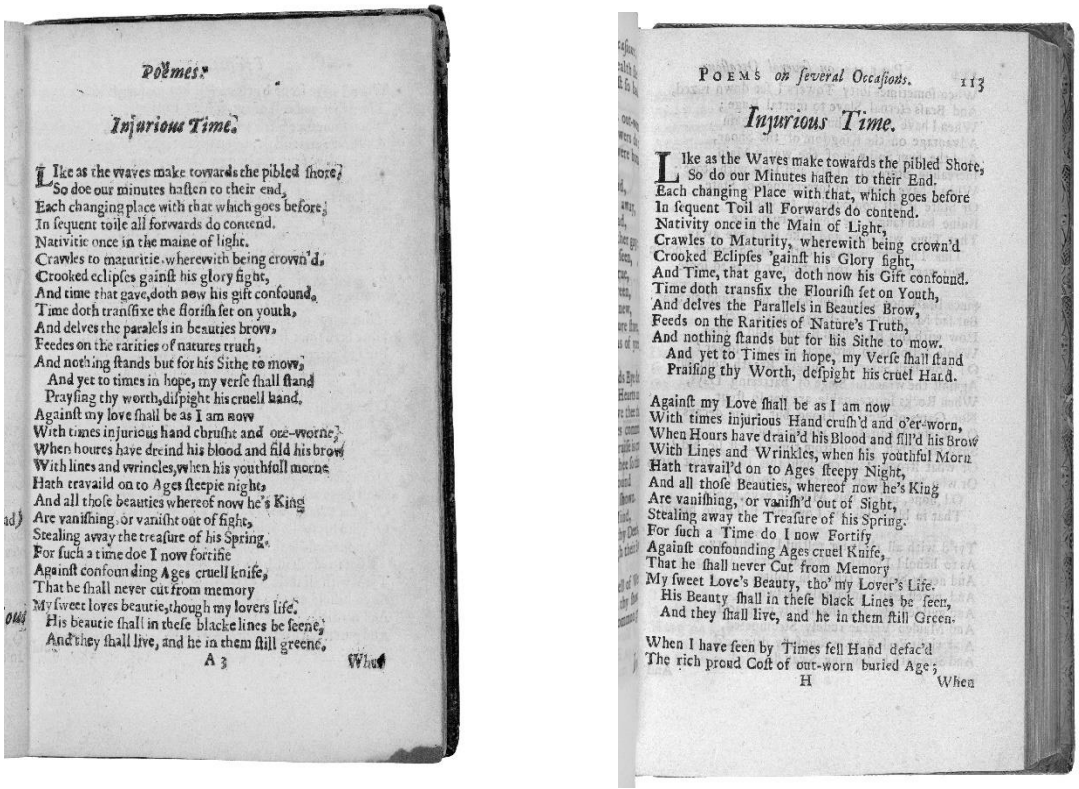
Figure 1



Poëmes.

Injurious Time.

LIke as the waves make towards the pibled ſhore,
So doe our minutes haſten to their end,
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In ſequent toile all forwards do contend.
Nativitie once in the maine of light,
Crawles to maturitie, wherewith being crown'd,
Crooked eclipſes gainſt his glory fight,
And time that gave, doth now his gift confound.
Time doth tranſfixe the floriſh ſet on youth,
And delves the paralels in beauties brow,
Feedes on the rarities of natures truth,
And nothing ſtands but for his Sithe to mow.
And yet to times in hope, my verſe ſhall ſtand
Praiſing thy worth, diſpight his cruell hand.
Againſt my love ſhall be as I am now
With times injurious hand chruſht and ore-worne,
When houres have dreind his blood and fild his brow
With lines and wrincles, when his youthfull morne
Hath travaild on to Ages ſteepie night,
And all thoſe beauties whereof now he's King
Are vaniſhing, or vaniſht out of ſight,
Stealing away the treaſure of his Spring.
For ſuch a time doe I now fortifie
Againſt confounding Ages cruell knife,
That he ſhall never cut from memory
My ſweet loves beautie, though my lovers life.
His beautie ſhall in theſe blacke lines be ſeene,
And they ſhall live, and he in them ſtill greene.

A 3 Whe

POEMS *on ſeveral Occaſions.* 113

Injurious Time.

LIke as the Waves make towards the pibled Shore,
So do our Minutes haſten to their End.
Each changing Place with that, which goes before
In ſequent Toil all Forwards do contend.
Nativity once in the Main of Light,
Crawles to Maturity, wherewith being crown'd
Crooked Eclipſes 'gainſt his Glory fight,
And Time, that gave, doth now his Gift confound.
Time doth transfix the Flouriſh ſet on Youth,
And delves the Parallels in Beauties Brow,
Feeds on the Rarities of Nature's Truth,
And nothing ſtands but for his Sithe to mow.
And yet to Times in hope, my Verſe ſhall ſtand
Praiſing thy Worth, deſpight his cruel Hand.

Againſt my Love ſhall be as I am now
With times injurious Hand cruſh'd and o'er-worn,
When Hours have drain'd his Blood and fill'd his Brow
With Lines and Wrinkles, when his youthful Morn
Hath travail'd on to Ages ſteepy Night,
And all thoſe Beauties, whereof now he's King
Are vaniſhing, or vaniſh'd out of Sight,
Stealing away the Treaſure of his Spring.
For ſuch a Time do I now Fortify
Againſt confounding Ages cruel Knife,
That he ſhall never Cut from Memory
My ſweet Love's Beauty, tho' my Lover's Life.
His Beauty ſhall in theſe black Lines be ſeen,
And they ſhall live, and he in them ſtill Green.

When I have ſeen by Times fell Hand defac'd
The rich proud Coſt of out-worn buried Age;

H When

Figure 2

Captions:

Figure 1: Title-pages of Shakespeare's poetic *Works* (17[09]), edited by Charles Gildon (left); and of Shakespeare's *A Collection of Poems* ([1711]), published by Bernard Lintott (right). G.4021.2.7, Rare Books & Manuscripts Department, Boston Public Library, public domain; PR2841.A12c copy 2 Sh.Col. Used by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Figure 2 : "Injurious Time" in Shakespeare's *Poems* (1640), published by John Benson (left); and in Shakespeare's poetic *Works* (17[09]), edited by Charles Gildon (right). STC 22344 copy 1 and PR2752 1709a copy 5 v.7 Sh.Col. Used by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

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[1] The sources for poems purported to be by Shakespeare are (in chronological order): *England's Helicon* (1600); Robert Chester's *Love's Martyr* (1601, reissued 1611); Shakespeare's *Sonnets* (1609); *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1612); the First Folio (1623); and a lost (manuscript?) source (for "Take, O take those lips away", see Taylor and Jowett, Appendix IV). My tally of 108 Shakespeare poems counts "Let the bird of loudest lay" as two poems, since that is how it was presented by Benson; Rollins's tally of 107 counts it as one poem (*The Poems* 605-606).

[2] In the absence of further information and for the sake of convenience, I attribute these editorial changes to Benson, who signed the letter "To the Reader" with his initials ("I. B.").

[3] For the sake of clarity, I number these poems according to their place in the collection.

[4] Similar shifts are detect by Robert Matz and Acker—from Benson poem 59 (Sonnets 88-91) to 90 (Sonnets 151-52), and from Benson poem 48 (Sonnet 62) to 89 (Sonnets 107, 108), respectively (Matz 487; Acker, *First Readers* 89).

[5] An exception is "A God in love", in Sonnet 110, part of "A Lovers excuse for his long absence" (Benson poem 65) (noted by Matz 488).

[6] The changes are "him" to "her" (Sonnet 101.11); "him" to "her" and "he" to "she" (101.14); "friend" to "love" (104.1); and "boy" to "love" (108.5). They are found in "An invocation to his Muse" (Sonnets 100, 101, Benson poem 62), "Constant affection" (Sonnets 104, 105, 106, Benson poem 63), and "A monument to Fame" (Sonnets 107, 108, Benson poem 89).

[7] See advertisements in *The Post Man and the Historical Account* 1759 (12-14 July 1709); *The Post Boy* 2466 (1-3 March 1711); *The Tatler* 63 (1-3 September 1709).

[8] Advertisements for the edition as late as 1722 suggest as much: "Poems, *published by Shakespear in his Life Time* [...] Printed for Bernard Lintott, at the Cross-Keys between the Temple Gates" (*The London Journal* 133 (10 February 1722), emphasis added).

[9] The first definition seems to come from François Vavasseur's *De epigrammate liber et epigrammatum libri tres* (1672), 21-22; the second definition from Julius Caesar Scaliger's *Poetices libri septem* (1561). Compare Gildon's second definition with the translation of Scaliger in Swann 123.

[10] Apparently unaware of Gildon's label, Rosalie Littell Colie argued that Shakespeare's distinct achievement in the *Sonnets* was the astute interplay of sonnet and epigram (*Shakespeare's Living Art* 68-134). Her insight has been affirmed or developed by Fowler 184; Vendler 25; Marotti, "Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences" 413; Peterson. To my knowledge, the only scholar to connect Colie's observation and Gildon's edition is Duncan-Jones, ed., 102-103.

[11] In passing, I note that I have not found any comments by Gildon on the notorious obscenity of the Catullan epigram in eighteenth-century England (see Swann 148).

[12] Gildon expressed a similar preference for the Catullan model in *The Complete Art of Poetry* (1718), vol. 1, 148-49, 165, but he recommended Martial's model in *A Grammar of the English Tongue* (1712), 139-140. On Gildon's authorship of the portion on the epigram in *A Grammar*, see Buschmann-Göbels 82-85.

[13] For more on the debate between Rowe and Gildon over Shakespeare's learning, see Cannan, "Early Shakespeare Criticism" 44-46. Cannan does not explicitly cite the role of the epigram.

[14] The publication *Martial Reviv'd* (1722) also connects Shakespeare, Cowley, and the epigram by mentioning both authors in a list of celebrated English poets who "have been exceedingly fond of their Epigrammatical Compositions" ([A3r], italics inversed).

[15] It seems that the antiquarian and biographer Thomas Birch bought a copy of Langbaine's *Account* with Oldys's notes at an auction, and then lent it to the editor and writer, Thomas Percy, who added his own notes. George Steevens's transcription of Oldys's and Percy's notes with Langbaine's *Account* was sold by auction in 1800 to "Richardson the bookseller" (British Library, Add MS 22592, 2, 4).

[16] Oldys listed "Poems by Gildon 8°—1710" and "Poems by Sewell 4°—[1725]" (British Library, Add MSS 22595, 25), and referred to details from those publications (9, 14, 19). He also referred to the "Preface to Lintots Edition of his Poems" (8), and listed "Shakespeare's Sonnets never before imprinted: published by T. T. his bookseller printed by G. Eld. 4.° 1609" (23).

[17] In addition to "A Lovers Affection", Oldys discussed "Friendly Concord" (*The Passionate Pilgrim* poem 8, Benson poem 25): "Shakespeare was deeply delighted with the singing of Dowland the Lutanist, but Spenser's deep conceits he thought surpassed all others. See his Sonnets *The friendly Concord*" (British Library, Add MSS 22595, 9).

[18] At one point, Oldys provided an overview of the publication of Shakespeare's poems, and noted that he had informed Theobald of two alternative attributions: "His Sonnets were the next tho they all remained unpublished years after they were written. In these Poems The Passionate Shepherd to his Love and the Nymph's answer are those ascribed by Isaac Walton to Kit Marlow and S^{r}. Walter Raleigh, of which I inform'd M^{r} Theobald" (British Library, Add MSS 22595, 19). Oldys might have informed Theobald because he knew the latter was preparing an edition of Shakespeare's poems in 1733-34 (see Rollins, ed., *The Poems* 461). This suggests that Oldys read the poems in detail in the 1730s, or at least before Theobald died in 1744.

[19] See queries beside the following poems in Folger Shakespeare Library, PR2752 1725 copy 13 v. 7 Sh. Col.: "Careless Neglect" (Sonnet 48, Benson poem 42), "Patiens Armatus" (Sonnet 61, Benson poem 51), "A Resignation" (Sonnets 86-87, Benson poem 57), "A Lover's Affection, tho' his Love prove Unconstant" (Sonnets 92-95, Benson poem 60), and "Perjury" (Sonnets 151-52, Benson poem 90).

[20] As noted in the Folger catalogue, a portion of the fly-leaf has been torn away, possibly with the name of the former owner. Based on the gold-tooled armorial stamp on the front cover – a row of three roses above a group of three owls around a chevron – I have been able to identify its original author as Nathaniel Oldham (flourished 1728 to c. 1747), who possessed several similarly bound books. I have not found any reason to attribute the annotations to Oldham, and I have been unable to trace the subsequent owner(s) of the book. It is not listed in *A catalogue of the entire collections of prints, books of prints, and drawings, of Nathaniel Oldham* [London, 1747], uniquely held by the British Museum Department of Prints and Drawings, shelf number Sc.A.1.3 (9). To identify Oldham's stamp, see Morris and Oldfield. For Oldham's biography, see Wroth, rev. Postle.

[21] On the issue of the annotator's familiarity with Malone's edition, I hold a different position than Acker, *First Readers* 193.

[22] The term "fascinations" may refer to the woman's ability to transfix the speaker ("fascination, *n.*", number 3, in *OED*).