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Speaking Pictures:

The Sacramental Vision

of Philip Sidney

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Speaking Pictures:

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of Philip Sidney

by

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Speaking Pictures: The Sacramental Vision of Philip Sidney

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This dissertation examines some of the Catholic ideas and people found in the life and writings of Philip Sidney. Due to Sidney's aggressive advocacy of a pro-Protestant English foreign policy during the 1570s and 1580s, and to the anti-Catholic biases of many British and American academics in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, previous studies have almost unanimously approached Sidney from an exclusively Protestant angle. This Sidney is the hero of English Protestant nationalism, the perfect poet-knight. The Sidney that emerges from the present study is much less unified: thoroughly anti-papal and anti-Spanish in his politics but warmly Catholic in his apparent metaphysical convictions. Catholic theology and devotional traditions were far from dead in Sidney's England, and he was far from hostile toward them. By recovering Sidney's engagement with Catholicism, from his consistent generosity to individual Catholics to the numerous sympathetic allusions to Catholic tradition in all his major works, this dissertation provides a new yet historically grounded way of reading Sidney. It also encourages a broader understanding of confessional diversity in the Elizabethan period.

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Abbreviations

AS	*Astrophil and Stella*
Catechismus	Catholic Church. *Catechismvs, ex decreto Concilii Tridentini, ad parochos, Pii Qvinti Pont. Max. ivssv editvs*. Rome: Paulus Manutius, 1566.
CCC	Catholic Church. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1994. This is the first major revision of the catechism since 1566.
MP	Duncan-Jones and Van Dorsten, eds. *The Miscellaneous Prose of Sir Philip Sidney*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973
NA	Sidney, Philip. *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The New Arcadia)*. Ed. Victor Skretkowicz. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.
OA	Sidney, Philip. *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The Old Arcadia)*. Ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones. The World's Classics. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
RC	Catholic Church. *The Roman Catechism: Translated and Annotated in Accord with Vatican II and Post-Conciliar Documents and the New Code of Canon Law*. Trans. Robert I. Bradley and Eugene Kevane. Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1985. A translation of the 1566 *Catechismus*, at times rather loose but mostly faithful to the general sense of the Latin.
STC	Pollard, A. W., et al. *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad 1475-1640*. Second ed. Vol. 2. London: The Bibliographical Society, 1976.

Introduction

At the end of *The Lady of May*, Philip Sidney describes his uncle, Robert Dudley, as if he were the champion in England of all things Catholic. He is:

> foully commaculated with the papistical enormity, *o heu Aedipus Aecastor*. The *bonus vir* is a huge *catholicam*, wherewith my conscience being replenished, could no longer refrain it from you, *proba dominus doctor, probo inveni*. I have found *unum par*, a pair, *papisticorum bedorus*, of Papistian beads, *cum quis*, with the which, *omnium dierum*, every day, next after his *pater noster* he *semper* suits 'and Elizabeth', as many lines as there be beads on this string. (*MP* 31)

Worship of Elizabeth as a new Virgin Mary may have been, as Alan Hager suggests, an ironic "cure" for recusancy (Hager "Rhomboid" 495), and was no doubt meant to provoke laughter in the audience at Wanstead. But when one of Sidney's Arcadian heroes prays kneeling to an image of "the lady of us all," should that too be taken as ironic? Are all of Sidney's references to Catholic devotional practice similarly ironic? Is it possible to tell?

In this dissertation I argue that what appears as irony in *The Lady of May* was, at some level, taken seriously by its author. Although Sidney was a committed Protestant on the international stage, his writings nevertheless manifest a Catholic sacramental worldview, one in which physical reality is seen as the normal means for the communication of spiritual gifts and graces. In Catholic thought these physical means belong to two categories: sacraments and sacramentals. The sacraments are those ceremonies of the Church instituted by Christ as "the proper channels through which the

efficacy of Christ's Passion flows into the soul."[1] Sacramentals consist of the whole panoply of external aids to worship and devotion that characterize Roman Catholic devotional life. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains that sacramentals "signify effects, particularly of a spiritual nature, which are obtained through the intercession of the Church." Sacramentals include objects such as Leicester's "Papistian beads," actions "such as the laying on of hands, the sign of the cross, or the sprinkling of holy water," and other examples too numerous to list here. Indeed, the *CCC* acknowledges that "There is scarcely any proper use of material things which cannot be thus directed toward the sanctification of men and the praise of God" (*CCC* 1667-70). As I will show in Chapter 3, many of the actions of the heroes of the *Arcadia* may well also be understood as sacramentals.

By contrast, the sacramental mentality in Protestantism was greatly diminished or lacking altogether. Sacramentals, for instance, were deemed superstitious and a species of idolatry; the Elizabethan government's persecution of English Catholics included the banning of such objects. Cuthbert Maine, Challoner reports, was arrested with "an *Agnus Dei* case about his neck" and this was added to the other charges against him (Challoner 8).[2] As for the sacraments themselves, Protestants reduced their number from seven to

[1] Catholic Church, *Roman Catechism* 152. "Virtutem enim, quæ ex passione Christi manat, hocest gratiam, quam ille nobis in ara crucis meruit, per sacramenta, quasi per alueum que~dam, in nos ipsos deriuare oportet" (Catholic Church, *Catechismvs*, p. 89-90).

[2] *Agnus dei*: "A sacramental consisting of a small disc of wax stamped with a figure of a lamb representing our Lord as victim. They are solemnly blessed by the pope on the Wednesday of Holy Week in the first and every seventh year of his pontificate. The making of any other agnus deis than these is strictly forbidden. In the prayers of blessing,

two—Baptism and the Eucharist—and taught not that they were channels of grace, but effective reminders of God's promises.

A brief treatise on the Lord's Supper, possibly by Emery Tilney,[3] explains that the sacraments are useful for moving one's faith, and to this faith are attributed the spiritual gifts concomitant with the sacramental reception. A sacrament "is an outwarde sensible signe / whereby God declareth and testifyeth vnto the worthey receyuers thereof / his good mynde / beneuolence and fauour vnto vs: whereby also he sustayneth and helpeth ye weaknes of our faith." The sacraments "feed our exteriour senses" in order "to moue / monisshe / and to counforte vs inwardly" (Tilney, n.p.). These basic points—that the sacraments are aids to faith and reminders of God's promises—are taken up again and again, by Catholics no less than by Protestants. The Catechism of Pius V (also known as the Catechism of the Council of Trent), for instance, explains that one of the reasons Christ instituted sacraments was because "in this weakness of ours, we yield only a reluctant assent to the reality of things promised us" (152). Therefore God reassures us with signs. But in Catholic teaching, the reassurance of human weakness is a lower-order reason for the sacraments' existence. A Catholic sacrament "signifies and causes grace in

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the dangers of fire, flood and storm, plague, and of child-birth are referred to. They are often worn around the neck, and in the reign of Queen Elizabeth were among the things specially forbidden to be brought into England" (Attwater 13).

[3] *Early English Books Online* attributes this treatise (*STC* 24078) to Edmund Tilney (1535/6-1610), courtier and Master of the Revels from 1578. The *STC* itself, however, attributes item 24078 to Emery Tilney. Emery was a cousin of Edmund and "a poor scholar of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge" (Lee). Both *EEBO* and the *STC* guess at 1550 as the date of publication. This contradicts the information found at the end of the *EEBO* facsimile of the work, made from the Folger Shakespeare Library copy, which reads: "At Grunning. M.CCCCC.XLI. Apryle xxvii."

the soul" (*Roman Catechism* 213). A Protestant sacrament merely signifies: John Ponet, bishop of Winchester, teaches that Christ gave his people the sacraments so that "by them he might put vs in remembrance of his benefits," and these benefits become active "when we beleue" (Ponet 48v, 51r). In a catechism by William Perkins, we find this exchange: "Q. What is a Sacrament? A. A *signe* to present a *seale* to confirme, an *instrument* to conuey Christ and all his benefits to them that do beleeue in him" (Perkins 32). As "instruments" that "convey Christ" to the believer, these only appear to agree with the Catholic view, as they are "instruments" in the same sense that a certified letter is an instrument: the sacraments "giue euery receiuer to vnderstand" (35) that Christ has made a covenant with him or her. They are, as Perkins indicates, like a seal on a letter. In Calvin's view also, that is what sacraments are like: they are "nothing in themselves, just as seals of a diploma or a public deed are nothing in themselves, and would be affixed to no purpose if nothing was written on the parchment" (R. Wallace 135; *Institutes* 4.14.4). Sidney's close friend Philip du Plessis-Mornay rounds out this brief review of Protestant understandings of sacramental efficacy: Sacraments are "earnest pence and palpable pledges of the certaintie of his promises, testimonies of his faithfulnes, and remedies of their distrust and diffidencie" (Mornay 393), but they do not effect grace as in the Catholic understanding of them.

Protestant practice also reflects its nonsacramental outlook. The gradual purging of the baptismal rite of its many ceremonial and physical concomitants stands as one example of the Protestant rejection of Catholic sacramental mentality. Exsufflations (blowing on the eyes), exorcisms, chrismations—all were jettisoned, across all Protestant

denominations, as having no Scriptural warrant and as distracting the faithful, who might pay more attention to the external form of the baptism than to its significance. Moreover, the idea that baptism confers regenerative grace was "rejected categorically by Calvinists as well as most other Protestants" (Sproul 76). Lutherans were among those who did not reject it; Luther insisted that baptism was "not plain water but has God's Word in it and with it; and this transforms such water into a soul bath and into a bath of rejuvenation."[4] Also unlike other Protestant sects, Lutherans retained the Catholic practice of baptismal exorcisms, though not without some dissention, until "well into the late seventeenth century, when many Lutherans began to omit it" (Spinks [2] 22). Philip Melanchthon and his followers, known as Philippists, omitted the exorcisms, causing the Gnesio or True Lutherans to accuse them of being crypto-Calvinists (*ibid.*). This is important to mention, because one of the most exhaustive studies of Sidney's religion aligns him squarely with Philippism on all issues (i.e., Stillman 2008). Reality is never that uncomplicated, however, and while Sidney's views on the will in the *Defence of Poesy* carry a strong synergistic or semi-Pelagian tone, thus aligning him with Melanchthon (who held a synergistic view of the will), it is probable that Sidney's openness to the role of physical objects in affecting the spirit would indicate his openness also to the proliferation of external ceremonies and objects in the Catholic (and to a lesser extent, Lutheran) sacramental rites, which would put him at odds with Melanchthon (at least so far as baptismal exorcisms were concerned). The rejection of a sacramental worldview has also tended to ensure that Protestants have, according to their own assessment, produced little

[4] From a sermon on John 1:32-4, quoted in Spinks [2] 8.

in the way of great art. Donald T. Williams, in an article on why modern Evangelicals have made no literary mark comparable to their contemporaries from "liturgical churches," reports that he has "searched the current popular Evangelical systematic theologies [. . .] in vain for a definition of art. For us, it does not seem to be a theological topos" (Williams).

As will be seen in the following chapters, Sidney puts great stock in the power of vivid images and physical objects to effect changes in one's inner landscape. The skeptical reader may wonder how much this interest in the physical and in vivid images is simply a reflection of larger, non-sacramental Renaissance tendencies. After all, Debora Shuger (*Sacred Rhetoric* ch. 5) has shown that virtually all the rhetorics of the sixteenth century favor vivid verbal images because of their Aristotelian epistemological and psychological foundation: the imagination mediates between the senses and reason, and between the senses and will. In addition, Walter Ong has argued that the Renaissance experienced a "visualist drive" that was "marked by an increased sensitivity to space and a growing sophistication in ways of dealing with quantity and extension" (Ong 227). S. K. Heninger's work on Sidney has also recognized "the new reality of physical phenomena" ("Speaking Pictures" 8), a view rooted in Aristotle's *Poetics*, which may also lessen Sidney's claim to uniqueness amongst his Protestant confreres. But Sidney frequently enough imbues these commonplaces—*enargeia* and delight in physical descriptions—with specifically Catholic overtones that it is possible to recognize and at times impossible to deny a sympathy and possibly a nostalgia for the lost world of Catholic tradition.

While the various churches' rhetoricians agreed on the effectiveness and licitness of vivid verbal images, they parted ways when the question touched on actual physical embodiment of spiritual truths. The contrasting views are encapsulated in the translations and commentaries on a single passage from the Psalms:

Geneva	Douay
The mountaine of God (is like) the mountaine of Bashán: (it is) an high Mountaine, (as) mount Bashán. (Psalm 68:15)	The mountane of God a fat mountane. A mountane crudded as cheese, a fatte mountane[.] (Psalm 67:16-17)
Commentary: Zion the church of God doeth excell all wordely (sic) things, not in pompe, and outwarde shewe, but by the inwarde grace of God.	*Commentary:* The Church of God is visible, and durable like to a mountane. *a* Combined, or ioyned together, as when milke is turned into curde, and so into cheese. *b* fructful, enriched by spiritual giftes of the Holie Ghost.

The Protestant translation is not only immaterial but anti-materialist in its emphases, while the Catholic translation sounds like a Christmas feast. The Geneva Bible invites one to close one's eyes and contemplate God's goodness; the Douay wants one's faith to be fortified by the sight of the Church in all its reassuring solidity. Liturgical practice follows lines roughly parallel to the ones laid out here: whereas the Reformed tradition is known for its whitewashed churches and the exclusive attention given to the sense of hearing (via the dominance of the sermon), Catholic liturgical development looked to Scriptural support in communicating through all of the senses, so that by the eighth

century, "standard liturgical practice [had] learned to address even the sense of smell" through the use of incense.[5]

To speak of anything concerning Sidney's precise religious beliefs is difficult, simply due to the fact that "by a strange and disappointing perverseness, those who lived with him, and were the companions of his daily pursuits, have left scarcely any record of his private life" (Pears lvi). From Fulke Greville (ca. 1612) to Alan Stewart (2000), biographers have naturally tended to devote the greatest space to his involvement in international politics, for the simple reason that this is by far the best-documented aspect of Sidney's life. We have hundreds of letters to and from Sidney that discuss matters of state; by contrast, the surviving letters are virtually silent on the subject of Sidney's spirituality. We have only a handful of documented occasions where his foot even crossed the doorstep of a church, and it is not clear that he ever saw the three parish churches whose incomes he collected.[6]

Many biographers emphasize Sidney's Protestantism, even if almost none of them make any effort to define it beyond general references to a belief in God and support for traditional morality. Few writers indeed, however, emphasize, let alone acknowledge anything Catholic about him.[7] Given Sidney's social position, he would have been under great pressure to at least appear to conform to what was expected of him. Those who did

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[5] Pelikan, *Imago Dei* 109. See Exodus 30:8, Isaiah 6:1, 4; Revelation 8:3-5.
[6] Malcolm Wallace notes that "We shall probably not be far wrong in assuming that throughout his life Philip Sidney's slender purse was chiefly replenished with moneys derived from his various benefices" (34).
[7] Duncan-Jones is the leading scholar to have emphasized Sidney's warm relations with Catholics.

not conform to the state religion ran the risk of fines, imprisonment, and diminished hopes of a career in government service. Given such powerful disincentives, it is no wonder that someone in Sidney's position never openly joined the Catholic Church, even if he had been inclined to. However, Protestant England was still in its infancy, with nearly a thousand years of continuous Catholic culture behind it. It is probable that Sidney felt the powerful gravitational pull of the old faith—if so, he was not alone, nor has that force ever completely died out in Great Britain. The religious landscape in the English sixteenth century was anything but stable. Many Catholics expected or hoped for a Catholic restoration. Their faithfulness, especially in the relatively mild decades preceding the severer anti-recusant legislation of the 1580s, as also in the atmosphere of hope created by later possibilities that the tide might turn once again in their favor (as in 1588 and 1605), meant that many of Sidney's relatives were of the old faith.

Moreover, Sidney would have had different reasons at different times of his life for affecting Catholic doctrine and culture—whether through family influence, educational experiences, or as a means of registering discontent with the status quo in his later years.[8] Given his lack of opportunities for government service, he would have had ample reason for discontent. It is more than probable that, longing to support the establishment but rendered resentful of it through repeated thwartings, and affected by the turbulent mixture of religious innovation and long-held tradition then present in

[8] John Bossy writes of the tie between Catholicism and social discontentment: the Earl of Oxford and his friends "had about them a certain sense of 'outness', and shared a resentment against the successful Elizabethan families which was at least partly responsible for their conversion" ("English Catholics" 2).

England, he privately held a variety of theological positions which did not necessarily mirror the tenets expected of his public persona. Indeed there is no shortage of examples of prominent Elizabethans holding "unexpected" views. And, as I will show, numerous facts about his life complicate the notion that Sidney fits easily into any one of the standard confessional categories.

That Sidney was friendly to Catholics and to their religion will become apparent through the following chapters. But sometimes what seems self-evident to readers in one era will be all but invisible to readers in another. Perhaps the Catholic side of Sidney was simply not seen, because not imaginable, by earlier critics. Perhaps Sidney's Catholic connections, like Donne's, have been "brushed under the rug as something not quite suitable to be spoken about" (Low 99). But the time seems ripe for a reassessment of the "representative Elizabethan," and of our own assumptions about religious attitudes in Sidney's England. As we explore his sacramental attitudes and Catholic connections, we may recall Thomas Moffet's exhortation to the young William Herbert: "let us see, let us touch, let us taste our Philip: let us enter into the embrace and caresses of his piety" (Moffet 70). In light of the pan-sensory grounding of the sacramental worldview, these words have broader implications than their author perhaps realized.

Outline of the Dissertation

The dissertation begins with an inquiry into the nature of Sidney's friendships with English Catholic expatriates in Venice circa 1574, with the main focus on his cousin Richard Shelley. By tracing the known facts about the three Richard Shelleys known to

have been related to Philip Sidney, I correct the work of many scholars who have misidentified this man. To Katherine Duncan-Jones's correct identification of Richard Shelley I add information from the letters of Hubert Languet and Sir Richard Shelley. Sidney's extended family counted many of the most prominent Catholic families in England amongst its members, and differences in religion seem in most cases not to have dampened family loyalties. This is a different picture than one gets from reading many biographies of Sidney, where he is presented as militantly anti-Catholic and his Catholic connections are never mentioned.

In the second chapter I compare Sidney's theory of poetry's power to move readers with theories of sacramental efficacy. I close the chapter by comparing two recent monographs that use Sidney's *Defence* to arrive at an understanding of Sidney's religious affinities. The first reading is by the cultural materialist scholar Alan Sinfield, and the second from Robert Stillman, who is explicitly opposed to Sinfield's approach. Yet, interestingly, the nature of Sidney's Protestantism is such that both critics rely on the same fundamental assumption: that Sidney was not interested in theological disputes. As I try to show in this chapter, lack of an argumentative nature does not preclude one's having an opinion. Sidney's theory of poems as "speaking pictures" shares certain significant characteristics with sacramental theory, which are also speaking pictures of a kind (since a sacrament is by definition a nonverbal sign conjoined to a verbal formula). This sacramental approach opens a new entry into Sidney's poetic theory and lends support to the theory, occasionally articulated but more often implicit, that his Protestantism was primarily political and ethical.

Chapter 3 moves from the theory of the *Defence* to its practical manifestation in the *Arcadias*. Assessments of religion in the *Arcadias* have followed three main approaches, focusing on religion in its political, anthropological, and polemical / theological aspects. While the political and anthropological approaches see religion as a servant to these disciplines rather than engaging it on its own terms, the polemical approach has tried to show that Sidney used these fictions to agitate for Protestant reform. This has not proven very fruitful, however, due to the failure of its main critical exponent (Barbara Brumbaugh) to consider that for every passage that will bear a putative anti-Catholic interpretation, there are one or more contrary passages that seem to demonstrate a fondness for Catholicism. Indeed, many people in the sixteenth century, as also today, held many views not officially sanctioned by their church of membership, and any criticism of Sidney's works that forgets this is doomed to failure. In other words, Sidney's religious vision is too broad to be contained within a narrow denominational framework. In the *Old Arcadia* Sidney shows his characters engaging in a number of activities reminiscent of Catholic devotion. The *New Arcadia* extends the sacramental outlook of its predecessor by treating questions of art and beauty.

Chapter 4 discusses *Astrophil and Stella* from the perspective of what has been called biblical or Augustinian poetics. This methodology may seem alien to many readers today, but in Sidney's time the approaches I take in this chapter would have seemed quite natural. Since the Romantic period poetry has been seen as a vehicle for the free expression of the author's emotions. Emotional intensity and spontaneity were, however, at best secondary considerations for the Renaissance poet. Didacticism, by contrast, was

primary. Sidney declared "learning" as the purpose of poetry, and learning's ultimate goal was "to lead and draw us to as high a perfection as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clayey lodgings, can be capable of" (*MP* 82). Where then is the moral lesson in a work so full of adultery and idolatry as *Astrophil and Stella*? An Augustinian poetics assumes first that any early modern work that contemporaries considered worthy of the reading does contain a morally upbuilding purpose. Second, it assumes that this purpose will not necessarily be self-evident to readers who focus upon the literal, discursive meaning of the text only. It would be misleading to say that much twentieth-century criticism of *AS* has been simplistically literal, but insofar as it has dwelled upon merely the narrative progression of Astrophil's passion, this is a fair statement.

Penetrating the meaning of a work involves not only the consideration of narrative progression, but also of significant nonlinear or spatial elements. Two such elements are allusions and form. Allusions, when recognized by the reader, provide a broader context for passages and larger works, while form is arguably fundamental for the understanding of an author like Sidney: in the *Defence of Poesy* he specifies that the poet's skill stands in "that *idea* or fore-conceit of the work, and not in the work itself" (*MP* 79). Renaissance authors built their poems with a keen eye to measure and number and weight (Wisdom 11:20). Examples of numerically and proportionally significant form are too numerous to list, but range from at least the mid-Tudor poets whom Sidney imitates,[9] on through

[9] See Germaine Warkentin, who points out that Elizabethan authors of "gentleman's miscellanies" (Turbervile, Googe, Gascoigne) balance the firm architectural control of their collections against their protagonists' moral disorder as "part of the poet's assertion of the intelligibility of the cosmos" (25). Warkentin concludes—wrongly, in my

Milton. Engagement with these "limina" (to borrow a term from Shawcross) is part of the recovery of what John Shawcross calls "the author's text" (see Shawcross chapter 1)—meaning lies partly in a reader's response to a text, but as Shawcross insists that response is managed to some degree by the author's intentions. An awareness of allusion, form, genre, and other "liminal" factors helps to prevent misreading, and also to open up the work on multiple levels of meaning. I favor such an approach because it attempts to encounter works on their own terms and in light of their own times and original audiences. My own modern notions, on the other hand, are inadequate to judge the literature of the sixteenth century due to the vast differences between the assumptions each period takes as normative.[10]

In the first half of the chapter, I consider several biblical allusions in the poems and conclude that Sidney was open to the same kind of moral reform of poetry espoused by Robert Southwell, the Jesuit poet martyred in 1595. This continues my revisionist assessment of Sidney, since he and Southwell have almost always been considered poetic opposites, just as Sidney has usually been considered fundamentally anti-Catholic. In the chapter's second half, I review and contribute to spatial and arithmological analyses of the sequence. Sidney apparently constructs his poetic work on a cosmological model

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opinion—that in *Astrophil and Stella* Sidney contrasts Astrophil's moral disorder with the orderly form of the sequence in order to show an opposite vision, "one which ruptures the firmly conceived moral universe [. . .] and plunges poet and reader into the conditional and problematic" (30). This seems unlikely in that it directly contradicts Sidney's claims in the *Defence* for the moral use of poetry.

[10] In addition to Shawcross, other scholars pursuing a biblical or Augustinian poetics in some form include Carol V. Kaske, Thomas P. Roche, Alastair Fowler, and Kate Gartner Frost, for which authors' works please consult this dissertation's bibliography.

derived from Plato's *Timaeus* and basic geometrical formulas. I suggest that the motivations behind such structural choices indicate a way of thinking similar to that of Catholic sacramental theology.

The final chapter compares the Sidney translation of the Psalms to several contemporary English translations and finds that in several instances where these other translations agree in a reference to inwardness or spirituality, Sidney and his sister (his co-author in this work) introduce instead a reference to physicality, the body, or vision. Again, this is significant in light of sacramental differences between Catholics and Protestants, and shows Sidney and his sister thinking in explicitly Catholic Eucharistic terms.

Quotations from Sidney's poems are taken from Ringler's edition of 1962. I have taken biblical quotations generally from the modern edition of the King James Bible, though where the Geneva Bible is pertinent I use that edition.

Chapter 1:

Philip Sidney's Extended Family and the Catholic Petition of 1585

Writing from Venice on April 15, 1574, Philip Sidney tells Hubert Languet, his Huguenot mentor then residing in Vienna, that he will be sending him "two noble Englishmen" with letters of introduction:

> The one, whom I especially commend to you, is master Robert Corbett, my very greatest friend, a man of high birth, [. . .]. He is of the right side in religion, and not unpractised in the art of war; he speaks only Italian. The other is Master Richard Shelley, my cousin, as also is Corbett, but nearer to me in blood as the other in friendship; he is a man of erudition, knows well Greek and Latin and Italian, and has some slight acquaintance with French; but he is sadly addicted to Popery; when they reach you, if you please you will learn their names from themselves. (Pears 50-51)

Here we have a Protestant hawk whose only languages are English and Italian, and a Papist bookworm with little French, travelling from Venice to Vienna and carrying letters of recommendation from their cousin, son of a Lord Deputy of Ireland and nephew of Elizabeth's favorite earl. These two may seem complete, even comic, opposites. But in fact, they are a microcosm—as is Philip himself—of Sidney's extended family: honoring the kinship tie, however faint, without respect to religious affiliation.

I want to emphasize the mixed nature of Sidney's extended family in order to contribute to the reevaluation of Sidney's relationship to Catholics and Catholicism. Sidney's energetic Protestant activism and fatal wound received in battle against Catholic forces have tended to foster assumptions that he was anti-Catholic in all respects. One finds this attitude in early biographers such as Fox Bourne, Symonds, and Addleshaw.

Some authors over the last century have acknowledged Sidney's personal generosity toward individual Catholics while nevertheless stressing his implacable opposition to Catholicism as a doctrinal system and political force.[1] Yet the fact of the broad religious diversity within Sidney's own family has not been sufficiently acknowledged. He was surrounded by—and later, chose to associate with—relatives professing every manner of Christian belief, and with every possible degree of intensity. In this he was likely no different than most Protestants of his generation, given the still early stage of the Reformation in England. Large families and the tendency amongst the aristocracy to intermarry ensured that many people in Sidney's circle were related to each other within very few steps.

While it is understandable that Sidney's Protestant hagiographers would omit material not conducive to their project, very few scholarly biographers and critics have acknowledged the extensive Catholic web he was enmeshed in through blood and friendship. His intense and unmixed Protestantism, by contrast, has been a virtually constant refrain. They begin with Hubert Languet's admonitions that Sidney not visit Rome: one who professes the *puriorem religionem* and yet ventures into the lands of those hostile to his religion, is no less culpable than a virgin who attempts to pass through an enemy camp.[2] Fulke Greville said that he "made the religion he professed the firm basis of his life," and that his "heart and tongue went both one way" (Gouws 22; Greville 41). Nearly four hundred years later, but in continuity with these earlier writers, Alan

[1] Wallace, *Life* 178-79; Stillman, *Philip Sidney* 156.
[2] Letter 36 from Languet to Sidney, 2 July 1574; Dalrymple 94.

Sinfield concluded that "All that we know of Sidney's friends and political interests indicates that we should place him on [. . .] the puritan wing of the Elizabethan church" ("Sidney and Du Bartas" 35). Such descriptions of Sidney as unambiguously Protestant are legion. More balanced accounts have acknowledged the generally political nature of Sidney's Protestantism (Worden[3]) or investigated his dealings with expatriate English Catholics during his European travels (Duncan-Jones; Stewart[4]). Katherine Duncan-Jones was the first to dwell at any length Sidney's Catholic connections,[5] and her research and speculations have been supplemented and strengthened by recent research, which shows that the scribal communities responsible for copying and circulating Sidney's works were strongly recusant in their composition (Woudhuysen; Kilroy).

The accumulating weight of Sidney's Catholic connections calls for a reevaluation of England's poet-hero and the ways he dealt with "the opposition,"

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[3] "The emphasis of the 'religion he professed' was ethical (and [. . .] political) rather than theological. [. . .] His Protestantism, as far as we can see, carries light credal baggage" (Worden 32).

[4] Sinfield repeats his assertion in *Literature in Protestant England 1560-160* (23); Andrew Weiner, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Protestantism* (1978) also argues for a strictly Calvinist Sidney. More recent adherents of this approach include Barbara Brumbaugh, "Cecropia" (1998). Going against this grain is, most notably, Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet* (1991); Alan Stewart, *Philip Sidney: A Double Life* (2000), provides additional evidence for the extent of Sidney's dealings with Catholics. Robert E. Stillman, in "Deadly Stinging Adders" (2002) and *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism* (2008), rejects Calvinism in favor of Philippism as the proper religious context in which to interpret Sidney's writings. Marvin Hunt, "Consorting With Catholics" (1992), is a restrained endorsement of Duncan-Jones but a firm condemnation of the "suppression" (27) by many scholars, Weiner in particular, of Sidney's acceptance of Catholics as true Christians.

[5] In addition to Duncan-Jones's biography, see her essay on "Sir Philip Sidney's Debt To Edmund Campion," in *The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Campion and the Early English Jesuits*, 85-102.

especially when they were blood relations. Relatives who may not have gone to church together did not therefore turn their backs on each other in other matters—quite the opposite, if Sidney's family situation is at all representative. Indeed, he found himself in the difficult position of trying (and failing) to secure his own advancement in a Protestant court while juggling his obligations toward family and friends of both faiths.

Which brings us back to Corbett and Shelley. They both had Sidney's support, despite Shelley's "popery." Here, as elsewhere in his letters, one should beware of taking Sidney too literally: he almost certainly tailors his comments on Catholicism to his audience's biases—as well as to those of any government spies who may have been reading his mail. Likewise, the claim that Corbett knew "only Italian"—at age 32 in 1574—is not easily reconciled with a contemporary description of him, which testifies that by his death a mere nine years later "he could speak perfectly sundry foreign languages by reason of his long absence in his youth out of England in foreign countries" (Hasler 1.656). Languet would have discovered immediately that Corbett knew more than the Italian—the language of Languet's least-favorite country—claimed for him by Sidney. The descriptions of Shelley and Corbett seem best interpreted as part truth and part wit—Sidney pretending to foist upon Languet two guests from a Huguenot's nightmare: he will be able to speak only with the papist, while his coreligionist gapes uncomprehendingly, waiting for someone to start speaking Italian or English.

The two cousins reached Vienna, and Corbett struck up a correspondence with Languet. Corbett had served as MP for Shropshire in 1563 and would die of plague in 1583, aged 41 years (Hasler 1.656). Shelley's history is less certain, varying according to

which authors are consulted. This confusion is due to the fact that there were numerous Catholic Richard Shelleys who were related to Philip Sidney, and because no one since Lord Burghley has constructed or published a detailed account of the exact relationship between the Shelley and Sidney families.[6] Sorting out these Richard Shelleys not only positively identifies the cousin mentioned in Sidney's letter, but also brings an awareness of Sidney's ties to the Richard Shelley who, along with his accomplices, was involved in the Catholic petition of 1585 (to be discussed below).

Some of Sidney's biographers do not know of, or care to mention, the Richard Shelley named in Sidney's letter to Languet. These include Fox Bourne (1862), Symonds (1886), Addleshaw (1909), Denkinger (1931), and Boas (1955). Drinkwater (1910) does not mention Shelley, either, but, contributing to the maintenance of the Sidney legend—mandatory for virtually all writers up to, and after, his time—he does make the undocumented claim that in Venice Sidney met Tintoretto (18).

Wallace (1915) appears to be the first to identify Shelley as "his cousin Shelley, the English prior of Malta" (141, n. 2). This is Sir Richard Shelley (c. 1513-1587), the last Grand Prior of the Knights-Hospitallers; he becomes the person most often cited as the Shelley referred to in Sidney's letter. We find him named as Sidney's cousin in Bill (1938, p. 123) but also in his entry in the *ODNB* (Mullett), and in the biographies written by Katherine Duncan-Jones (1991, p. 55) and Alan Stewart (2000, p. 121). (Duncan-Jones later revised her position, as we will see.) Oddly, from Wallace onward, no one

[6] The exception being the not uncommon but not very illuminating descriptions, usually not in much detail, of the line of descent from Philip Sidney's family to Percy-Bysshe Shelley.

deems it necessary to work out the implications of the claim, posited by the *Catholic Encyclopedia* in 1912, that Sir Richard had with him in Venice a nephew of the same name (Wainewright). Nor does anyone stop to ask why Sir Richard—correspondent of Philip II and Lord Burghley, Grand Prior of his order, 61 years old and with more than 30 years of diplomatic experience—would have needed a letter of introduction from 19-year-old Philip. Nor does anyone consider Languet's description of Master Richard during his near-death illness: Corbett had written to Languet informing him that Shelley was "at the point of death"; Languet admits to Philip that "it seems a case which calls for compassion, that he should be snatched from his country in the very flower of life" (Pears 84). Sir Richard Shelly was five years older than Languet himself, so it is absurd to think that he would have described him as "in the very flower of life," even as a joke. (Languet's wit does not seem to have operated in that vein.) For the more recent of Sidney's biographers simply to claim that "Master Richard" is in fact "Sir Richard," the Grand Prior, is odd for the additional reason that Mona Wilson (1931) distinguishes between Richard and *Sir* Richard on the basis of their 1571 testimony before a papal commission on the excommunication of Elizabeth (55). John Buxton (1954) also notes the existence of two distinct Richard Shelleys, but his reference to Sir Richard as "uncle to Sidney's *friend* of the same name" (72, my italics) suggests that he reads "cousin" "as a term of intimacy, friendship, or familiarity" (*OED* 5) rather than as indicating a blood relation.

Sir Richard the Grand Prior thus seems a bad candidate for the "Master Richard" mentioned by Sidney. Neither can we settle on Richard Shelley of Patcham, a Protestant

who served as a J.P. in the 1580s (Manning 273, n. 12). A slightly more attractive possibility, advanced by the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1912) and by Osborn in a footnote in *Young Philip Sidney* (1972), is Richard Shelley of Warminghurst.[7] His unique identifying characteristic lies in his having personally delivered a Catholic petition to Queen Elizabeth as she was walking in her park at Greenwich. This was in March 1584/5, in the wake of Parliamentary action to legislate severer measures against Catholics. For his efforts Shelley was rewarded with immediate imprisonment in the Marshalsea, repeated interrogations by the Privy Council, and, sometime around May 1585, death in prison (Manning).

Shelley of Warminghurst was a noted recusant, as were many others in his immediate and extended family.[8] Strype lists "Rich. Shelley, late of Worminghurst, gent." as one of three Shelleys suspected by Bishop Curteys in 1576 not to have taken the oath affirming the queen's supremacy (II.ii.22). His brother-in-law frequently hid priests in his home during periods of high pursuivant activity (Manning 267). His brother would die at Tyburn in 1588 for harboring a priest; he is now known to the Catholic Church as Venerable Edward Shelley (Pollen 287).[9]

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[7] Identifiable as "of Warminghurst" thanks to Manning's researches. Warminghurst is approximately 14 miles south of the Sidney estate at Penshurst, and 20 miles northeast of Brighton.

[8] Petti prints a "list of Catholic exiles" from January 1577, which includes several Shelleys: Thomas Shelley of Southampton, James Shelley of Sussex, and the most famous of the Elizabethan Shelleys, Sir Richard Shelley of Middlesex, described as "miles, unus confratrum nuper hospitalis Sancti Johannis Jerusalem" (Petti 2).

[9] The Shelley family, already tied to the Sidneys in the sixteenth century, would renew those ties again in the eighteenth: if we follow the descendants of Richard of Warminghurst's half-brother Henry, nine generations later we meet Percy-Bysshe

Was Shelley of Warminghurst Sidney's cousin mentioned in the letter? According to Osborn's excerpts from Languet's letters, Corbett and Shelley took their time travelling to Vienna, and Languet later made fun of Shelley's near-fatal bout with diarrhea—Shelley was so worried he called for a Jesuit for spiritual comfort, and made out his will (Osborn 203, 221). The illness is mentioned again in a letter from Corbett (reported at second-hand by Languet, who had opened Sidney's mail) (229). Osborn concludes that "Shelley somehow managed to recover," but adds in a footnote that "In 1585 he was in a different kind of trouble" (225)—i.e., with the Privy Council, over the Catholic petition. But four clues indicate that Shelley of Warminghurst is not the Shelley of the 1574 letters, and that Osborn's Shelley is a conflation of two men from different branches of the same family.

First, Richard Shelley of Warminghurst seems to have been quite a bit older than Philip, while the Shelley of Sidney's and Languet's letters seems to have been about the same age. Roger B. Manning notes that Richard of Warminghurst had served as administrator of his father's will in 1561 (266). Assuming he was at least 20 years old at that time, he would have been something like 15 years older than Sidney, older even than Corbett. But Languet's description of Shelley as "in the very flower of life" does not suggest someone in his mid-thirties. Estimated life expectancy in this era was 38 years (Hasler 1.11); by that age Henry Sidney was suffering from gallstones (Collins 94; Brennan, *Sidney Chronology* 22). Languet's description also calls to mind a naïf who

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Shelley, whose great grandmother was Elizabeth Sidney, niece of the last Earl of Leicester.

thinks he will save some money and perhaps get some exercise by riding on horseback from Vienna to Prague, rather than hire a carriage; someone without much practical experience of travel, since "their servant had loaded his horse with too heavy a pack" (Osborn 220).

Second, it is very unlikely that Richard Shelley of Warminghurst was in Venice in 1574. "In June of 1574 the churchwardens of Kirdford reported that he had been living in that parish with his family for two years, but had never come to church or received communion" (Manning 266). Since Sidney's letter dates from April of 1574, Shelley of Warminghurst has an alibi. (Unfortunately for him, alibis for church attendance were against the law.)

Third, as noted by the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Mona Wilson, and John Buxton, the two Richard Shelleys in Venice were uncle and nephew. Sir Richard Shelley and Richard Shelley of Warminghurst, however, were first cousins. In the looser usage of the sixteenth century, "cousin" could be used in the now-obsolete sense of "a collateral relative more distant than a brother or sister; a kinsman or kinswoman, a relative; formerly very frequently applied to a nephew or niece" (*OED*). In legal contexts, such as the execution of wills, "cousin" could apply as well to older relatives who were in the place of next of kin. But Sir Richard himself refers to "my nephew, Richard Shelley" in a letter to Burghley from Venice, May 1575 (Shelley 8). The blanket term "cousin" sometimes covered the more specific "nephew," but not *vice versa*.[10] Sir Richard's father

[10] Sir Richard addresses himself to Lord Burghley as "Your unfayned Frende, and lovying Coosyne of St. Johns" (Shelley 5), possibly because he may have attended

was Sir William Shelley (1478/9-1549), whose brother Edward Shelley of Warminghurst was father to Richard of Warminghurst. This means that Richard of Warminghurst was not his nephew, and therefore not the individual whom Sidney mentions as having been in Venice.

The fourth and strongest reason for ruling out Richard of Warminghurst as the Shelley of Sidney and Languet's correspondence, is that this latter Shelley was dead by May 1575, making it impossible that he could have died in prison ten years later. We learn this from the same letter from Sir Richard to Lord Burghley of May 1575, one of a series dating from the 1560s to the 1580s in which Sir Richard offers repeated assurances of his loyalty to Queen Elizabeth, and insists that his long sojourn abroad was in no way due to a dislike of the Queen or of his home country. Rather, seeing "fancy" move the people against Catholicism so that even the Queen's own private crucifix, "the abridgement of all Christian fayth," was "broken to peeces and burned in bonnfiers," he decided to delay his return until his religion was more "seasonable" (Shelley 7, 5). (No doubt Sidney's Catholic relatives, perhaps under less suspicion than Sir Richard by virtue of not having spent several years abroad, also counted on the pendulum to swing back toward the traditional religion.) As part of his campaign to win the Queen's trust, he had sent various gifts, including (in 1565) "a barrell of *Azucar rosado in conserva*, verie coole and laxatyve, to bee used every morning, fresh and fasting" (4). Ten years later he had sent "my nephew, Richard Shelley [. . .] homeward with full instructions, to have

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Burghley's alma mater of St. John's College, Cambridge, or perhaps because his association with the Knights-Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem rendered him "cousin-like" to the St. John's alumnus to whom he was writing.

enformed the Cownsell in this behalf"—i.e. to give an account of Sir Richard's activities abroad. But nephew Shelley never made it to England. Indeed, the very letter (from Venice, May 1575) in which he is mentioned was written because the nephew was "dead by the waye" (8) and therefore could not present Sir Richard's case for him. Shelley's demise seems to have been known to the Italian poet Cesare Pavese, whose letters to Philip of November 1575 and January 1576 pay their respects to Philip "and to Master Corbett" (Osborn 387, 407), but do not mention Shelley. Corbett was probably not with Sidney at the time, having been sent to the Spanish governor of the Netherlands in October 1575 (Hasler 1.656), but was one of many English travellers to have befriended Pavese in Venice.[11] Certainly Shelley, whose uncle Sir Richard was living in exile in Venice, would also have been numbered among Pavese's religiously diverse group of acquaintances. Shelley's death, however, seems to have been missed by Osborn, who, a few lines after asserting that "Shelley somehow managed to recover," quotes from a letter that hints strongly at Shelley's demise. Languet tells Sidney, "In his letter, Corbett shows that he is very much troubled in spirit, and no wonder! He consults me about his plans and asks whether, after the loss of his friend, he should continue his projected journey" (Osborn 225).[12]

This nephew of the Grand Prior seems the best candidate for the Shelley whom Sidney praised to Languet. Duncan-Jones seems to have realized this as well, between

[11] These include George Lewknor, possibly "a Catholic and an intimate of Lord Windsor" as well as a travelling companion of Robert Persons in 1574 (Osborn 386).
[12] Pears' translation gives "*when* he has lost his companion" rather than "after" (84, my italics).

her 1991 biography of Sidney, in which she refers merely to "Sir Richard Shelley," and her 1999 essay on "Sidney's Debt to Edmund Campion," in which she calls him "Sidney's kinsman Richard Shelley, nephew of the titular Grand Prior of the Knights of St John" (90). But all three Richard Shelleys were related to Philip Sidney. Sir Richard's great grandmother was Mary Sidney, born 1428 at Penshurst, though a stronger tie exists through Philip's aunt Anne, who married to Sir William Fitzwilliam of Gainspark (1526-1599). Sir Richard was brother-in-law to Sir William's half-sister Mary Fitzwilliam. In other words, Sir Richard was half-brother-in-law to Sidney's uncle. Richard of Warminghurst, as noted above, was Sir Richard's cousin, which would put him slightly farther away from Sidney on the family tree than Master Richard Shelley. None of these, though, was Sidney's first cousin properly speaking.

The unfortunate nephew was one of the many children of John Shelley and Mary Fitzwilliam. John's brother was Sir Richard the Grand Prior, and Mary was the older half-sister to Sir William Fitzwilliam of Gainspark (1526-1599), husband of Sidney's aunt Anne (Henry Sidney's sister). In other words, Sidney and nephew Shelley shared an uncle and aunt in Sir William Fitzwilliam and Anne Sidney. Fitzwilliam was serving as Lord Deputy of Ireland while Sidney was on his continental travels. No doubt Henry Sidney's family ties to Fitzwilliam, and his tenure in Ireland as Fitzwilliam's immediate predecessor and successor in the Lord Deputyship, made Sir William and his Shelley relatives well known to all of the Sidneys. In letters Henry Sidney routinely refers to "my brother [i.e., brother-in-law] Fitzwilliam." We know that Shelley was in Venice to bring his uncle's *apologia* back to the Privy Council; undoubtedly he drew on his family

connection with Sidney to connect himself to people like Languet, who, through his own connections, could make his journey easier and safer.

In addition to the Sidney connection via the Fitzwilliam family, nephew Rhichard Shelley was also related to Philip through connections with the Dudleys. Mary Fitzwilliam, after being widowed by John Shelley, took as her second husband Sir John Guildford. Guildford was cousin to Philip's maternal grandmother, Jane Dudley. Additionally, Richard Shelley's sister Elizabeth married Sir John Guildford's son, Sir Thomas Guildford, who was first cousin to Philip's mother, Mary Dudley Sidney. Thus Mary Fitzwilliam, mother of Richard Shelley, was Philip Sidney's great-aunt, and Elizabeth Shelley, sister of Richard Shelley, was married to Philip's first cousin, once removed. As son and daughter of Elizabeth's great aunt, Richard and Elizabeth Shelley were themselves Philip's first cousins, once removed. Incidentally, the marriage between Elizabeth Shelley and Sir Thomas Guildford made Thomas's father his wife's step-father, and Elizabeth's mother her husband's step-mother. No wonder "cousin" enjoyed such liberal usage in the sixteenth century.

Lest we forget about Robert Corbett: recall that Sidney claimed him as a cousin also.[13] His great-great-great grandmother was Elizabeth Belknap (d. 1470), who was the aunt of nephew Shelley's paternal grandmother, Alice Belknap (d. 1536). This puts him at some considerable distance from Sidney; and while there may be a connection I have overlooked, Sidney does acknowledge in his letter to Languet that Richard Shelley is

[13] Alan Stewart calls Corbett "a friend from his Shrewsbury days" (120) but Philip calls him his cousin.

much closer to him in blood, while Robert Corbett is closer to him in friendship. Interestingly, Corbett was also the fourth cousin of Penelope and Dorothy Devereaux, who would become Sidney's step-cousins upon the marriage of his uncle Robert Dudley to their mother, Lettice Knollys Devereaux, and would later become the aunt (Penelope) and mother-in-law (Dorothy) to Sidney's posthumous nephew Robert Sidney (1595-1677). Awareness of such a web of relations as the one surrounding Sidney makes it difficult to see the people of this time as starkly divided by religion. Differences did exist, but the common ground between Catholics and Protestants was extensive, and rooted in blood relations.

Extensive intermarriage may be seen as a strategy for obtaining political stability, and was probably consciously understood as such by Sidney. For in the *Arcadia* no less than in Sidney's own experience, everyone is related to everyone else (at least among the ruling class). Victor Skretkowicz notes that whenever Musidorus and Pyrocles arrive on the scene of "civil rancour" preceding alterations in forms of governments, the new government they help install is always "a newly established exemplar of the author's personal ideal, responsible monarchy, supported wherever possible by blood ties" ("Chivalry in the *Arcadia*" 166-67). Moreover, "The princes' thinking is moulded by that of their own parents, whose cross-marrying affords them a prime example of the international political stability resulting from the virtuous pursuit of this deliberate expansionism" (170).

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Philip Sidney was surrounded by intertwining and religiously eclectic family

lines, which produced Catholic exiles and Tyburn martyrs as well an Anglican bishop.[14] For Edward Shelley was not his only near relative to die at Tyburn: Sir Henry Sidney's older sister Mary married William Dormer (1512?-1575), whose mother's maiden name was Jane Newdigate (1496-1571). Jane had 16 siblings, including two Knights of St. John, two nuns (at Syon and Holywell), and a brother named Sebastian Newdigate (1500-1535).[15] After his wife died, Sebastian became a monk and was one of the 18 Carthusians put to death by Henry VIII for refusing the Oath of Supremacy. The Newdigate family was noted for its piety, and Sebastian's martyrdom seems to have reinforced the family's strong attachment to Catholicism (Bainbridge).

Into this conservative family Philip's aunt Mary wed. Among the children born to Mary and William Dormer (prior to Mary's premature death around 1550) were Jane (1538-1612) and Robert. Jane—Philip's first cousin—married Gómez Suárez de Figueroa, and in time became the Duchess of Feria, a rallying point for English Catholic exiles, and an incessant agitator on behalf of Mary Queen of Scots. She is unique insofar as her marriage to Suárez "was the only high-ranking union between English and Spanish courtiers to result from the brief reign of Philip II in England" (Rodriguez-Salgado).[16] Her uncle was Sir Henry Sidney. Possibly as a result of this connection, and, more

[14] I.e., James Montagu (1568-1618), Bishop of Winchester, was the grandson of Philip's aunt Lucy Sidney Harrington.
[15] Since 1970 known as St. Sebastian Newdigate, having been canonized as one of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales.
[16] Another of Philip Sidney's cousins also married into a Spanish family: Margaret Harrington, third daughter of James Harrington and Henry Sidney's sister Lucy. She married "Don *Benito Hispano*, of the Family of the Duke of *Fantasgo*, in *Spain*" (Collins 79).

importantly, his active maintenance of it, Sir Henry was later thought to harbor Catholic sympathies. "The papal nuncio [of Gregory XIII] believed, wrongly, that she [Jane Dormer] had a secret understanding with her uncle Sir Henry Sidney for him to defect from his command of Elizabeth's troops in Ireland and help fitz Maurice's invasion in 1579" (*ibid.*). That Henry would have been thought sympathetic to plans of a Catholic invasion as late as 1579 seems incredible, but in August 1580 Walsingham warns and chastises Henry for having neglected for over a year his commission against Welsh recusants (Collins 276 [mis-cited in Brennan (*Sidney Chronology* 78) as Collins, I.76]; Duncan-Jones 189). While he may not have countenanced an invasion, he was nonetheless not quick to prosecute recusants.

William Dormer's second wife (and thus Sidney's aunt by marriage, and step-mother to his cousins) was Dorothy Catesby, later Lady Pelham (d. 1613) (Hanley). I would call her a distant relative of Gunpowder Plot conspirator Robert Catesby, though by early modern standards they were probably fairly close: Dorothy was the fourth cousin of Robert's grandfather. Yet a parallel branch of the Catesby family established a closer connection to the Sidneys through Elizabeth Bray.[17] The first of Bray's four husbands was Sir Ralph Verney (1509-1546), with whom she had eight sons and two daughters. One of their sons was Sir Edmund Verney (1535-1599), who is probably referred to in a letter from Sir Henry Sidney. Sir Henry recommends one "Mr. *Verney*" to the Duke of Feria (husband of Jane Dormer) in hopes of aiding Verney's travel to Catholic Naples (30

[17] Bray's grandfather was Sir Reginald Bray, who "was said to have found the crown in a bush after the battle of Bosworth, and set it on 'Richmond's' head" (Verney 50).

April 1568; Collins 34). By this time, Verney had become a distant relation to the Sidneys, since his mother Elizabeth Bray's second marriage had been to Sir Richard Catesby (1505/6-1554), the great-grandfather of the conspirator Robert Catesby. Through Richard Catesby Elizabeth Bray became a kinswoman of Dorothy Catesby, and, by extension, the Dormers and Sidneys. In his letter recommending Verney to the Duke of Feria Henry shows nothing but love and loyalty: "I wolde be gladde to showe some greater Argument of my Loue and Dewtie towardes you, then by often writing," and signs off as "*Your Graces Vncle to comaunde*" (Collins 34). Although he does not identify Verney as a distant kinsman to Feria (and he may not have had to), this is clearly a case of family members helping each other, even if not all of them were "of the right side in religion."[18]

Dorothy Catesby's daughter by William Dormer was Mary Dormer (c. 1555-1637), who was half-sister to Jane, Duchess of Feria and also to a son from William's first marriage, Sir Robert Dormer (1551-1616). The Dormer half-siblings (Mary and Robert) married a son and daughter of Sir Anthony Browne, Viscount Montagu (1528-1592), who were themselves born of different mothers. These were Anthony Browne

[18] Sir Edmund Verney seems to have had Protestant convictions and was "one of five captains who were to command the musters of the county" of Hertfordshire against the Spanish Armada (Verney I.58). Even so, nineteenth-century renovations at the Verneys' house at Claydon revealed, behind the central chimney, a priest-hole able to hide ten men (Verney I.3). The *Memoirs* of the Verney family do not say who built it, but the house had been in the family since before the Reformation. Adrian Tinniswood asserts that a later Verney essentially rebuilt the entire house: the old Claydon was "completely swept away [. . .] in the eighteenth century" (Tinniswood 304). Whatever the precise origin of the priest-hole, the presence of this very recusant architectural feature strongly indicates that at some point one of the Verneys (or perhaps one of the Giffards, who leased Claydon for the better part of a century, ending in 1620 [*ibid.* 33]) was Catholic.

(1552-1592) and Elizabeth Browne (d. after Sep. 1623). Elizabeth's full brother George Browne married Mary Tyrwhitt. These prominent Catholic families are never mentioned in biographies of Sidney, but they were closely related to him and should not be lost sight of amidst his relationships with influential Protestants such as Walsingham and Leicester. And with this conjunction of Catesbys, Brownes, and Tyrwhitts we must bring Richard Shelley of Warminghurst back into the story.

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Recall that Shelley died in prison after presenting a Catholic petition to the queen. The men associated with the petition, drawn up in response to the February 1585 bill against Jesuits, were "a group of Catholic gentlemen, led by William Lord Vaux, Sir John Arundell, Sir Thomas Tresham, and Sir William Catesby" (Manning 265). Under interrogation by the Privy Council, March 17, 1584/5, Shelley added to this list of petition organizers William Tyrwhitt (brother-in-law to George Browne), "Francis Browne—a brother of Lord Montague—William Wilford, and two other gentlemen identified only as Mr. Pryce and Mr. Fitton" (Manning 270). As it happens, at least six of these nine men were related to each other in some way, and to the Sidneys.

His Catholicism evident not only from his participation in the Catholic petition, but from actions throughout his life, Anthony Browne, Viscount Montagu, was related to Philip's grandfather Sir William Sidney by marriage: Sir William was the second husband of Anne Pagenham, who, through her first husband, Sir Thomas Fitzwilliam, was daughter-in-law to Montagu's grandmother, Lucy Neville (d. 1534). This weak tie between the Sidneys and Montagus was strengthened when the Dormer half-siblings

married the half-sibling offspring of the first Viscount Montagu. And it seems that the tie was strong enough that the son of Anthony Browne and Mary Dormer was living at Wilton in the late 1570s: Edward Waterhouse, writing to Sir Henry Sidney (no date, but placed in Collins to suggest late 1577 / early 1578), says that he had seen at Wilton "the Erle [Henry Herbert, second Earl of Pembroke], the Countesse [Mary Herbert, sister of Philip Sidney], Mr. *Phillip* [Sidney], Mr. *Robert Sydney*, and your litell Cosin *Mountagu*, all in Helth" (Collins 209). If this is Anthony Browne and Mary Dormer's son, it is Anthony Maria Browne, second Viscount Montagu (1574-1629). The second viscount carried on the Catholicism of his father and grandfather, and passed it on to his successors, enabling a later writer to refer to "the resolutely recusant stock of the Viscounts Montagu" (Trappes-Lomax 133).[19] Not quite as "litell" in 1578 as four-year-old Anthony Maria, but another possible candidate for this cousin Montagu, is James Montagu (1568-1618), grandson of Henry's sister Lucy Sidney Harrington.[20] At age 27 he became the first master of Sidney-Sussex College, and was later appointed Bishop of Winchester (McCullough).[21]

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[19] In 1611 the second Viscount Montagu briefly employed seminary priest John Copley as his chaplain, just prior to Copley's marriage and renunciation of Catholicism (Allen). Copley's great uncle was John Shelley, father of Sidney's "cousin" Richard Shelley (d. 1575).

[20] For Lucy as Henry's sister, see MacCaffrey.

[21] James Montagu had six older brothers, two of whom have entries in the *DNB*: Edward, first Baron Montagu (b. 1562/3) and Henry, first Earl of Manchester (b. 1564). In 1578 they were virtually grown men by Elizabethan standards, and thus would seem less likely than Anthony Maria Browne or James Montagu to have been referred to as "little." However, Henry is probably the man described in letters to Sir Robert Sidney in 1595 as "your Cosen *Montague*, the Lawyer" (Collins 348, 353), having been "intended for the law" (Quintrell). Edward likewise has strong ties to Robert Sidney, having "been chosen

It would have been normal for either of these young Montagus to have been living away from home, for "in the sixteenth century it was not the custom among noble families to maintain their children in the households of their mothers" (Ringler 436). A reference to the practice of fosterage in the *New Arcadia* suggests its importance to the Elizabethan nobility: A messenger is about to be sent by Anaxius to ask Basilius for Pamela's hand in marriage. The messenger has heard Anaxius's "divine" message twice, enabling him to reproduce the "grace" with which it was initially spoken; he therefore speculates that its subsequent delivery to Basilius "would make him think the heavens opened when he heard but the proffer thereof. Anaxius gravely allowed the probability of his conjecture, and therefore sent him away, promising him he should have the bringing-up of his second son by Pamela" (*NA* 457.7-11). Though Anaxius limits his generosity to promising the messenger only his "second son" instead of his firstborn, the incommensurability of the dignity of the reward to the servant and the service performed is obvious, and clearly intended (as is everything about Anaxius) to provoke laughter. The practice of fosterage was also useful as a forger of social bonds and as a means of damping down potential religious conflict.[22] Families were beholden to those families that raised their children, regardless of religion. And if a Catholic child could be sent to live with Protestants, there was the additional potential benefit (in the government's eyes) that the child might imbibe Protestantism, and leave the Catholic faith. This fact renders

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to be Robert's companion in education" at Christ Church, Oxford (Osborn 312). I have not yet found evidence by which to positively identify the "cousin Montagu" who was living at Wilton in 1578.

[22] See Fumerton, *Cultural Aesthetics* 36-44.

more plausible the possibility of Anthony Maria Browne's being the little Montague in residence at Wilton.

"Litell Cosin" Montagu's uncle, Sir Henry Browne, was married to Anne Catesby, sister of Gunpowder Plot conspirator Robert Catesby (d. 1605) and daughter of the Sir William Catesby among the petition organizers.[23] Sir Thomas Tresham (1543-1605), who in the 1590s would build the Triangular Lodge at Rushton, was the nephew of William Dormer's second wife, Dorothy Catesby. Dorothy's niece and Tresham's sister, Mary (c. 1535-1597) was the second wife of another of the petition organizers, Sir William Vaux, third Baron Vaux of Harrowden (1535-1595).[24] (Recall also that the third baron's grandfather, Nicholas Vaux (c. 1460-1523), was brother of Jane Vaux, Mary Dudley Sidney's great-grandmother.) Having had Shelley to suffer the government's wrath for him over the 1585 petition likely saved Vaux a lot of trouble and a lot of money: he had been fined £1,000 in 1581 and imprisoned for harboring Edmund Campion.[25] After Campion's execution Sidney was criticized by some Catholics for having done nothing to save him. Vaux's enormous fines for his association with

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[23] Anne Catesby's great-grandmother was Elizabeth Bray, mentioned above. The Brays may have persevered in their Catholicism into the reign of Elizabeth, judging from the contemporary existence of Frs. Richard and Henry Bray, and the marriage of one Reginald Bray to Anne, daughter of Thomas Vaux, second Baron of Harrowden. For the Fathers Bray, see Chadwick 125; for Reginald Bray, see Anstruther, "Vaux" 121.

[24] "Lord Vaux's son" is listed among "the company which Mr. Babington usually or otherwise frequents" (*CSP Scotland* vol. 8, p. 604). Other of Babington's company included "Sir George Peckham's sons" (604); Sidney had sold his interests in the New World to Sir George in June 1583 (McDermott).

[25] Anstruther, *Vaux* 126-27. He three times refused to answer whether "Campion had bin in his house or not" (Petti 7), though around 1567—before Campion had made his public conversion to Catholicism—Vaux had appointed him as tutor to his son Henry (Anstruther, *Vaux* 122, 100).

Campion may have influenced the perennially debt-burdened Sidney to remain silent during Campion's trial and execution.

Twenty years on, the Vaux family would again be a link between Philip Sidney and the Jesuits: the third baron Vaux's son George married Elizabeth Roper, who, after 1598, sheltered John Gerard, SJ in her home; within about five years, Gerard had shepherded into the Catholic fold both of Sidney's "Stellas": Philip's widow, Frances Walsingham-Sidney-Devereaux-Burke, and Penelope Rich (Gerard 178, 34-36).[26] Gerard also helped reconcile to the Church Oliver Manners, brother to Sir Roger Manners, fifth Earl of Rutland and husband of Philip Sidney's daughter Elizabeth (Gerard 186). Their brother Francis Manners, sixth Earl of Rutland, also became Catholic (Martin, P. [2] 562). At some time prior to 1592, Gerard had made another, though very indirect, link with Sidney, when he (along with Fathers Weston and Southwell) stayed with the former chamberlain to the Earl of Leicester. Pierre Janelle reported that this harborer of Catholic priests "is supposed by Fr Morris to have been a Mr. Bold who lived in Berkshire, and may be the same as one Bolt, a friend of [William] Byrd, the master of the Chapel royal" (Janelle 39-40). This would be John Bolt, arrested in 1594 and questioned by Edward Coke "for two days about his possession of several manuscript poems including at least

[26] Edmund Spenser and Lodowick Bryskett identified Frances Sidney as "Stella," (Stillinger, "The Biographical Problem of *Astrophel and Stella*"; Roche, "Autobiographical" Section II). All other references appear to take her as inspired by Penelope Rich.

one by Robert Southwell, and one on Edmund Campion by Henry Walpole" (Kilroy 85).[27]

Petitioner Sir John Arundell also had Sidney family ties. Writing from the Hague in early 1586, Sidney recommends his "cosin Arundel" to Walsingham: he is "one ecceedingli well qualefied, and as far as I any way can fynd earnestli and hartili affected to his contreis good" (Feuillerat 3.157). Such earnest assurances of patriotism would be necessary if one were recommending a Catholic, and indeed "cosin Arundel" is most likely Thomas Arundell, first Baron Wardour (1560-1639), who was (like all the Arundells) a devoted Catholic. The Sidney path to Thomas Arundell runs through the Browne and Radcliffe families.[28] In addition, Viscount Montagu's second wife, Magdalen Dacre, had a brother, Thomas Dacre, who was father-in-law to Philip Howard, first Earl of Arundell (1555/7-1595).

William Tyrwhitt, as noted above, was tied to the Brownes through the marriage of his sister Mary to George, son of the first Viscount Montagu. (This made Mary Tyrwhitt the sister-in-law to Sir Robert Dormer and half-sister-in-law to Mary Dormer.) The Tyrwhitts were also close to Sidney's uncle, the Earl of Leicester, as Leicester's

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[27] For more on Bolt and Byrd's relationship to the recusant scribal communities responsible for perpetuating the legacy of Campion and Sidney, see Woudhuysen and Kilroy.

[28] Anthony, first Viscount Montagu (1528-92) married Jane Radcliffe (1531-52), daughter of Margaret (d. 1534), second wife of Robert Radcliffe (1482-1542), first Earl of Sussex, and grandmother-in-law to Frances Sidney, Henry's sister. Jane Radcliffe and Viscount Montagu begat Mary Browne, who married Henry Wriothesley, second earl of Southampton; they begat Mary Wriothesley, who married Thomas Arundell, First Baron Arundell of Wardour. Thomas Arundell's son William then renews the ties to the Browne family by marrying Mary, daughter of Anthony Maria Browne and Jane Sackville.

step-son Edmund Lord Sheffield married William Tyrwhitt's sister Ursula (Martin, P. [1] 302).[29] Such an arrangement may at first seem undesirable from the Dudleys' perspective, but, as noted above, marriage alliances between prominent families, as also the exchange of children between them, fostered peace and the suppression or termination of feuds. In 1594, apparently with just such a goal in view, William Tyrwhitt's son Robert married Bridget Manners, sister of Roger, fifth Earl of Rutland, who in 1599 married Philip Sidney's daughter Elizabeth (Martin, P. [2] 556-60). According to Fumerton, "The countess of Rutland requested the wardship of Robert Tyrrwhit (*sic*) in order to marry Tyrrwhit to her daughter, Bridget, and so end a feud between the Rutland and Tyrrwhit families" (40).

I have not traced Wilford, Pryce, or Fitton, though Sir Henry Sidney professed himself "good Freindes" with Sir Edward Fitton (Collins 118). This is not the Fitton of the petition—as an English official in Ireland, he was most likely not a Catholic activist, and his death in 1579 precedes the petition by six years. But Sir Edward Fitton may have been related to the petition organizer, who was not the only Catholic Fitton living at the time. For example, a Margaret Fitton, daughter of Sir Edward Fitton of Gawsworth, Cheshire, married into the devoutly Catholic family of John Englefield shortly before the

[29] The *CSP Domestic* for 1583 (Undated) lists "[a]rticles drawn out of the declaration of Richard Smyth, late schoolmaster to Lord Sheffield, concerning the religion, contract and marriage of the Lord Sheffield with Ursula Tirwight in Sir Robert Tirwight's house. Resort of Papists in Mr. William Tirwight's house at Twigmore." The marriage took place in spring 1580, and in the aftermath Sir Robert and several of his sons, including William, spent the next year in the Tower (Martin, P. [1] 303, 308). William himself spent the greater part of the rest of his life in prison for his faith, and appears to have paid more in recusancy fines—£2,440 between 1587 and 1591 alone—than any other Elizabethan (McGrath 199).

crown seized the greater part of estate of Englefield (1586) and gave it to Francis Walsingham.[30] And, as if the smallness of this circle of intermarrying families needed any more demonstration, this John Englefield's son, Sir Francis (1562-1631), married Jane Browne, daughter of Anthony, eldest son of the first Viscount Montagu (Trappes-Lomax 141).

There are at least two additional connections between the Sidneys and the Catholic petition of 1585: "When Shelley was brought before the Privy Council again on April 9 the fact was elicited that a signed copy of the petition was in the hands of his sister, Elizabeth Shelley, then in the custody of the Earl of Sussex" (Manning 270). This is Henry Ratcliffe, fourth Earl of Sussex, brother of the late third earl, Thomas, and brother-in-law of Sidney's aunt Frances (1531?-1589). In similar fashion, Lord Vaux, when imprisoned for his relationship with Campion, was first placed in the custody of his old friend Sir Edward Montagu, who was married to Philip Sidney's cousin Elizabeth Harrington; and later in the Fleet, along with later co-petitioners Tresham and William Catesby, and one "Shelley" (Anstruther, *Vaux* 117-19). Though Vaux was an "obstinate papist" and Montagu a "kindly, honest puritan," this does not seem to have damaged their friendship (*ibid.* 118).

Thus the foremost Catholic leaders of the time formed a big, unhappy family, and visible on the margins of their activity, though apparently not involved with their petition, is Sir Philip Sidney. Aunt Dorothy Catesby was a central point in the network; through

[30] The property passed to Philip Sidney's widow, Frances, when Walsingham died in 1590. She became a Catholic around 1603; thus, Englefield returned to Catholic ownership within about 17 years.

her the Sidneys, Dormers, Brownes, and Catesbys shared a common member. As family both to the discontented Catholics and to Sir Francis Walsingham, who was keeping them all under surveillance, Sidney was simultaneously an insider and an outsider, and because of his closeness to Leicester, Warwick, and the Lord Deputy of Ireland, his distant Catholic kin no doubt placed hope in him to bring them relief from political persecution.

Sidney's intercession on behalf of recusants is illustrated by a letter he wrote in 1581 to Elizabeth, Lady Kitson, daughter of Sir Thomas Cornwallis (1518/19-1604). An MP, Privy Councillor, and comptroller of the household of Queen Mary (Weikel), Lord Cornwallis was a Catholic and sometime recusant and "had been banished to his Suffolk estates at Elizabeth's accession" (Stewart 242).[31] In March 1581, at Lady Kitson's request, Sidney and Greville were petitioning Walsingham on Cornwallis's behalf. Sidney wrote to Kitson, saying that he helped her, "owing a particular duty unto Sir Thomas, which I will never fail to show to my uttermost, and if otherwise have been [thought], I have been mistaken, and if said, the more wronged."[32] He signs the letter, "Your Ladyship's fellow and friend."[33] Sidney's "particular duty" to Sir Thomas is not known, but their fathers would have been well known to each other. Sir John Cornwallis was steward of the household to Edward VI (Hasler 1.659); from 1538 onward, Sir Henry was Edward's closest companion, and the one in whose arms the young king died (MacCaffrey). Henry Sidney's nephew by marriage, Gómez Suarez de Figueroa, the

[31] Stewart's "banishment" may be slightly exaggerated: Hasler (1.659) says that Cornwallis "retired to his estates on the accession of Queen Elizabeth."
[32] Stewart 242. The March date comes from Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney* 127. Ringler (p. 441) also mentions Sidney's intercession on behalf of Cornwallis.
[33] Feuillerat 3.134-5; Duncan-Jones 127.

Count (later Duke) of Feria, also knew Thomas Cornwallis, having recommended him to Philip II as one of the negotiators for the return of Calais to the English (Castelli). Moreover, a family connection was established between the Sidneys and Cornwallises at least by the time of Philip's nephew Robert Sidney. Robert's wife was Dorothy Percy, whose grandfather, Henry, eighth Earl of Northumberland, had married Catherine Neville. Catherine's sister Lucy married Sir William Cornwallis, the brother of Lady Kitson. Thus Robert Sidney's great aunt was daughter-in-law to the recusant to whom Philip Sidney attests his loyalty.

The Cornwallises are also found within the orbit of the Shelleys by way of Lady Kitson's sister Alice Cornwallis's marriage to Richard Southwell (c. 1553-?), brother of St. Robert Southwell, whose maternal grandmother was Elizabeth Shelley, sister of Sir Richard Shelley, the Grand Prior. Yet aside from these family considerations, it is notable that when Sidney writes to Languet, Catholics are "sadly addicted to popery"; when he writes to Catholics, he is their "fellow and friend." Some caution, some playing to his audience's biases, is certainly at work in his letters. Roger Kuin provides further evidence that Sidney's epistolary deprecations of Catholics should not be taken too seriously: Sidney's business partnership with Sir Thomas Gerrard and Sir George Peckham shows that he took pains to ensure that Catholics participating in New World ventures would not be at risk to have their property confiscated, and would be allowed to return to England at will (Kuin, "Querre-Muhau" 573).[34] Sidney's partners in this venture were Catholics, and

[34] This point is also stressed by Duncan-Jones ("Sir Philip Sidney's Debt to Edmund Campion" 98).

so, as Kuin notes, his ability to obtain favorable conditions for them from the queen "merited reward" (573)—in other words, in addition to whatever sincere care Sidney may have had for the welfare of Catholics, financial considerations were certainly also at work.

How different this Philip Sidney is, compared to the militant anti-Catholic enshrined in so many biographies! Yet this member of Leicester's Puritan cohort was surrounded by Catholics not only by the marriages of others, but also at various times by his own choice. In 1576 he met with Edmund Campion—according to Father Persons, "divers" times. Sidney gave Campion alms to distribute, and apparently also gave him the impression that he was about to swim the Tiber. Campion wrote to John Bavand:[35]

> 'Tell this to Dr. Nicholas Sanders, [. . .] because if any one of the labourers sent into the vineyard from the Douai seminary has an opportunity of watering this plant, he may watch the occasion for helping a poor wavering soul. [. . .] If this young man, so wonderfully beloved and admired by his countrymen, chances to be converted, he will astonish his noble father, the Deputy of Ireland, his uncles the Dudleys, and all the young courtiers, and Cecil himself.' (Stewart 176)

Wallace dismisses this out of hand: "Campion's assumption that Sidney was almost ready to embrace Catholicism is absurd enough, as everything else that we know about him at this time bears witness" (178). He is joined in this assessment of the letter by most other writers, including Robert Stillman (2008). Stillman comments on Duncan-Jones's handling of the Campion episode, in which she suggests rather logically that Sidney's friendliness to Catholics may have been prompted by a secret affinity for Catholicism: "Sidney's moderation," Stillman claims, "scarcely needs explanation, however, as the

[35] Wallace calls Bavand Campion's old tutor (178).

product of some putative crypto-Catholicism. His moderation is better explained by its consistency with the practice of his friends" (*Philip* 156-7).[36] Stillman misrepresents Duncan-Jones's position by saying that she "goes one step further" than Campion: whereas Campion suggested that Sidney was about to become a Catholic, Stillman charges Duncan-Jones as having claimed "also that he actually became a crypto-Catholic" (156). But what she actually wrote was that "*Perhaps* Sidney really was a discreet Catholic fellow traveler for a while after his meetings with Campion" (my italics). Stillman quotes this, the real Duncan-Jones, in a footnote, but the author and view he criticizes in the main text are of his own invention, and his criticism part of the received wisdom that it is absurd to think that Sidney had any inklings toward Catholicism.

Yet if Campion's report is "absurd," either Sidney was putting on a consummate show for Campion, or Campion was lying to his superiors in order to boost his own status. Perhaps Sidney was feigning an attraction to Catholicism *and* Campion was lying. Sidney would not have been the first Protestant spy, nor Campion the first Catholic propagandist. But none of these possibilities seems as likely as the conclusion that they were simply being straightforward with each other. Sidney's logical mind did not unthinkingly accept Protestant doctrine. His respect for and family friendship with Campion led him to seek out a meeting and give him a respectful and friendly hearing, while Campion's acumen and rhetorical skill made a visible impression on Sidney in

[36] By explaining apparent Catholic sympathies as the standard protocol amongst irenic Philippists, Stillman offers old wine (Sidney had no such sympathies) in a new wineskin.

favor of the Roman Church. (This is quite a separate consideration from his opinion of the papacy as a political and military force, which by all indications was purely hostile from beginning to end.) If Father Thomas Fitzherbert, writing in 1628, is to be believed, "Sidney had the courage to confess in England that one of the most memorable things he had witnessed abroad was a sermon by Campion which he had attended with the Emperor in Prague" (Stewart 176). Though I do not see Sidney as above using theatricality to mask his true position if need be, with Campion a mutual dodging and feinting seems unlikely considering that Campion had been a good friend of the Sidneys for at least ten years, and had formerly enjoyed the patronage of Leicester. His *History of Ireland* was dedicated to Leicester. Wallace calls Campion a "*protégé* of Sir Henry Sidney" (65, 177), a description supported by the events of 1570: in the wake of Pius V's excommunication of Elizabeth, Henry Sidney warned James Stanihurst that Campion was in danger. As a result of Sir Henry's warning, Campion was able to escape Ireland to the Continent (Graves). Clearly, Campion was a friend to the Sidneys, and Philip likely dealt with him openly. But more basically, one should not categorically dismiss the possibility that Sidney wavered or was once attracted to Catholicism. Everyone suffers doubt at some point, and no one goes through life without some modification of their intellectual and spiritual commitments. *Pace* Addleshaw's endless assertions to the contrary, Sidney was not blindly committed to his Protestant beliefs. As suggested, for example, by Musidorus and Pyrocles' debate concerning the afterlife in Book 5 of the *OA*, and by Sidney's own deathbed conversation regarding various opinions on the state of the soul after death, we can conclude that he valued reasons, and if anyone could give him reasons

to become a Catholic, it would have been the future author of *Rationes decem* ("Ten Reasons," written by Campion in 1581).

Whether Sidney was papist-proof all along or not, it has been known (if not always acknowledged) at least since his correspondence with Languet that his consorting with Catholic exiles made the queen and council back home uneasy. As in 1580 Walsingham warned Sir Henry that his failure to round up Welsh recusants was arousing suspicions at court, he had written in a similar vein to Philip in early 1575. Languet, dismayed by the cloud of suspicion that Philip had brought on himself through his injudicious friendships, arranged for him to shore up his Reformed credentials by making a whistle-stop tour of Protestant divines as he made his way to the English Channel, while Languet engaged in preliminary damage control by sending a reassuring letter to Walsingham. Languet writes:

> Two days after your departure our friend Wotton came to us, bringing me a letter full of kindness from Master Walsyngham. I see that your friends have begun to suspect you on the score of religion, because at Venice you were so intimate with those who profess a different creed from your own. I will write to Master Walsyngham on this subject, and if he has entertained such a thought about you, I will do what I can to remove it; and I hope my letter will have sufficient weight with him not only to make him believe what I shall say of you, but also endeavour to convince others of the same. Meantime I advise you to make acquaintance where you now are, with the French ministers, who are learned and sensible men; invite them to visit you and hear their sermons, and do the same at Heidelberg and Strasburg. (Pears 92)

The Pears edition of the Sidney-Languet correspondence (1845) omits the next sentence, which is given by Stewart: "Yet don't worry about it; for I am certain that you do not doubt my affection and are aware that persons of high position take care to avoid not only

guilt but the suspicion of guilt" (Stewart 137). Stewart comments:

> This highly pragmatic line [. . .] was advice he [Languet] could never quite bring himself to swallow. Three days later, he remarked bitterly that 'Not only those who aspire to command must learn to dissemble, but similarly those who wish to serve princes so that they may benefit adequately from their efforts. This,' he concluded morosely, 'I have not as yet learned to do.' (Stewart 137)

Pears omits this as well, giving us in effect a more idealized image of Languet and Sidney than fits with the actual truth.[37] Philip's visitation of Protestant divines was as much by design as by desire; it is possible that his patronage of Protestant scholar Théophile De Banos was similarly motivated. Duncan-Jones speculates that the "fulsome decidation" to Sidney of De Banos's commentaries on Ramus was the result of a large gift, and ventures that this "display of 'magnificence'" would "signal his Protestant allegiance" and disperse the bad smell at court made by his Catholic friendships in Venice (*Sir Philip Sidney* 70).

Though the facts of his life indicate that he was probably less prone to political corruption than many of his contemporaries, he seems far from being one whose "heart and tongue went both one way." Rather, his heart and tongue were constantly being pulled in contrary directions. Machiavelli and Castiglione had taught the importance of seeming to the successful Renaissance courtier, and Sidney seems to have pursued with gusto the art of managing appearances. He (and his fictional characters) practiced sleight of hand, attempting to perform an action while simultaneously appearing not to perform

[37] Recognition of omissions by Pears is not new. Cf. Dorothy Connell's quotation in 1977 from "the untranslated portion" of one of Languet's letters (*Sir Philip Sidney: The Maker's Mind* 95). To my knowledge, no one has catalogued and analyzed these omissions.

it.[38] In Venice, as later on his embassy to Rudolph II, Sidney likely conformed to local religious practices while thinking that such behavior would either go unnoticed by the folks back home, or be covered by the banner of official duty. He wrote to his brother Robert of his propensity to adopt local customs: "'Marrie, my heresie is that the English behaviour is best in England, and the Italian in Italy'" (Buxton 67).[39] Such willingness to adapt and compromise in matters of religion may come from his "studied aversion to confessional divisions among Christians," a hallmark of the Philippist piety he imbibed from Languet, Mornay, and other of his friends influenced by Melanchthonian teachings (Stillman, *Philip* 157).[40] But his practice of Italian "behaviour" while in Venice did not sit well with the English government, and on the last leg of his journey he had to make special efforts to doctor his Protestant image in order to avoid problems at home. This last part of his travels has been frequently elided in biographies, just as Sidney's associations with people like Shelley and Don Caesar Caraffa, kinsman of Pope Paul IV, have been downplayed or ignored.[41] Wallace dismisses, for example, Simpson's assertion

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[38] "I never dranke of *Aganippe* well," Astrophil claims out of one side of his mouth (*Astrophil and Stella* 74)—all the while giving contrary testimony from the other side. The disguises of Musidorus and Pyrocles put them in the same category; Philisides, Sidney's persona in the *Old Arcadia*, is an oxymoronic happy melancholic by virtue of the sound of his name ("felicities").

[39] Buxton's "heresie" is given in Feuillerat, 3.126, as "heare saie". The reference to "behaviour" seems to refer to manner of dress, but learning to worship like the locals no doubt made Philip's stay in Catholic cities much easier.

[40] In this passage Stillman's idea of ecumenism includes Catholicism; in most of his book, however, it refers more narrowly to the unification of Protestant sects against "Tridentine tyranny" (18).

[41] Bill claims that "Some of those Venetian friendships of his, notably with Shelley and Don Cæsar Caraffa, [. . .] had started the story that he was in danger of being converted to Rome" (135); but Buxton calls Caraffa "a Protestant member of the famous Neapolitan

that the Shelley connection caused the government's suspicion, objecting that "Shelley was travelling with Robert Corbett, a staunch Protestant, whom Sidney called 'my very greatest friend' " (141 n. 2).

But that is the point: Shelley and Corbett were religious opposites, yet members of the same extended family, and friendly enough to travel with each other. Corbett moreover seemed truly dismayed at Shelley's death. Almost every biography and every religious interpretation of Sidney's writings overlooks the fact that his extended family—like very many Elizabethan families—was large and well populated with Catholics. People like Elizabeth and Lord Burghley knew this (Burghley drew up a family tree of the Shelleys [Manning 266]) and were scrutinizing family activities and alliances with as much intensity as they were friendships. With Mary Queen of Scots on English soil from 1567 and Pius V's excommunication in place from 1570, Elizabeth wanted to ensure that the powerful Dudley-Sidney (and later -Pembroke) alliance be prevented from growing either too strong, or so disaffected (as in Sir Henry's Irish situation, or Philip's, from continual disappointment at court) as to countenance a Spanish invasion. If Philip and Anthony Maria Browne were living together at Wilton, it is not hard to imagine Sidney discussing theology with his parents, Anthony Browne and Mary Dormer. The papists who had "that man-like disposition to desire that all men be of [their] mind" (as Sidney described the Duke of Anjou; *MP* 52) may very well have been members of his own family. At any rate, it is clear that Sidney's militant Protestantism has not sufficiently

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family" (*Sir Philip Sidney and the English Renaissance* 68). Ringler cites Buxton on this point (xii).

been understood as limited to its political aspects: namely, defending England against foreign invasion, and supporting Continental Protestant countries against the same.

What is more, the fact of Sidney's wide association with Protestants does not necessarily mean he accepted all of their doctrines, religious or political. Richard McCoy (1979) observes that although the Huguenot theory of "subaltern magistrates,"[42] expounded in the monarchomach treatises of the 1570s, is initially cited by Amphialus in the *NA* as the cause of his war against Basilius, he quickly abandons this as his motivation. In fact, it was recognized by Philanax (and Basilius) that Amphialus was not initially motivated by care for the state, but by personal passion for Philoclea (thus Philanax offers early pardon to Amphialus on behalf of Basilius: "Your fault past is excusable, in that love persuaded, and youth was persuaded" [*NA* 353.32]). While McCoy concludes that Sidney was invested in both perspectives, and thus that this slippage from political to amorous rationale indicates an "ambivalence" in Sidney's political ideology,[43] Martin Raitiere's study of 1982 makes the more precise argument that Sidney refers to monarchomach theory in order to refute it: "Much as he loves Languet, Sidney considers his political ideas tendentious, abstract, and sentimental at best, and at worst conducive to anarchy" (99).[44] Debora Shuger ("Castigating Livy") has also shown Sidney's deep commitment to the old aristocratic ideals and privileges, which are at odds with the

[42] This theory holds that rebellion is unlawful unless it is initiated by a previously constituted authority, such as an inferior magistrate.
[43] McCoy, pp. 184 ff. "Ambivalence" and "ambiguity" are recurring themes througout McCoy's book. A representative claim: "Underlying Sidney's ideological and intellectual confusion is a basic ambivalence toward authority" (172).
[44] For a contrary view, see Briggs; Phillips; and Sinfield, *Faultlines*, ch. 4, esp. p. 85.

constitutionalism pushed by his friends Languet and Hotman. Amphialus may thus be seen as himself not believing in the theory of the subaltern magistrate—he and his mother, Cecropia, use it merely to recruit as many allies as will be taken in by that rationale.

Nor should we expect perfect uniformity amongst Sidney's convictions and opinions from one decade to the next. While his view of the theory of subaltern magistrates was not one of straightforward support, at the least, his opinion on the legality of bringing Mary Queen of Scots to trial was no less unproblematic. Blair Worden adduces evidence from the State Papers that in 1585 Sidney engaged a civil lawyer to draw up a list of arguments against granting impunity to Mary. "Its conclusions, fortified by an array of historical precedents and examples, are those which condemn Musidorus and Pyrocles" in the *OA* (Worden 181), which Sidney had written around 1579-80. While these may have been the positions of the "forward Protestant" party of which Sidney was a member, the princes' treatment in the *OA* indicates that he was conflicted over this question. Sidney may have favored Mary's execution as part of his fight against the Catholic threat. But if the narrator of the *OA* is any indication, in 1579 at least Sidney was concerned that republicanism was eroding the ancient aristocratic privileges. Such is Shuger's argument, and nothing would more undermine aristocratic privilege than to execute a queen.

To close this chapter I turn to Worden's comments on the execution of Mary Queen of Scots. Worden demonstrates that charges against the princes in the trial scene in the *OA* are "parallel" to those levelled against Mary. Yet although he concedes that the

issue was not unproblematic to Sidney (he felt "the pressure of debate in his own mind" [182-3]), Worden's main argument is, overwhelmingly, that Sidney was a "forward Protestant."[45] However, I believe that Grosart's claim remains as valid today as it was in 1873: "*the* Life [of Sidney] remains unwritten. [. . .] for there are lights and shadows, heights and depths—ay, depths—in that life, that have thus far been only very imperfectly sounded."[46] Sidney's life has been admirably researched and written about by many scholars, but much work remains to be done, in ways unthought of and perhaps unthinkable in previous decades and centuries. The Sidney of biographical and critical tradition is, to quote Alan Hager, a "file copy" (*Dazzling* 19) that can be sustained only by keeping many Catholic friends and family members safely out of sight.

[45] Worden characterizes Sidney's religion as "ethical" and "political" "rather than theological"; his Protestantism "carries light credal baggage" (32).
[46] Grosart, vol. 1, p. xvii.

Chapter 2:

Poetry and the Sacraments

In the *Defence of Poesy*, Sidney's ostensible concern is to argue for poetry as a potent agent of moral and even spiritual renewal, against charges that it is an effeminizing waste of time. Coming from a Protestant author, this argument is not without its potential difficulties. First, the severity with which one held a Protestant (Lutheran or Reformed) doctrine of the depravity of the will might conflict with Sidney's claims that poetry not only shows the good but moves readers to take that good in hand, essentially restoring to themselves a Golden World. Second, Sidney's position seems to set him against the then-common Protestant association of the writing of poetic fictions with the "feigning" of Roman Catholicism—hence William Tyndale's anti-Catholic neologism, "popetry" (Herman, *Squitter-Wits* 41). By this estimate, the making of fictions was equivalent to lying.[1] And third, by their emphasis on feigning and fictions, it was charged, both poetry and Roman Catholicism inverted the natural order by elevating imagination above reason.

The first of two questions I take up in this chapter is, how far does Sidney extend the transformative power of poetry? The second, a corollary of the first, is how does poetry do its work? Regarding the first: Some critics have argued that Sidney saw the

[1] This is the second of four objections to poetry to which Sidney responds. They are: 1) that there are more fruitful knowledges than poetry; 2) that poetry is the mother of lies, and poets the principal liars; 3) that poetry incites lust and wantonness, and drains a nation's courage; and 4) that Plato banished poets from his republic.

Holy Spirit as responsible for transforming the minds of readers.[2] Peter C. Herman has opened the possibility that Sidney was prevented from granting poetry any power at all, by dint of his Protestant mindset.[3] Herman traces an "anti-poetic" sentiment through the *Defence* and asserts that every time Sidney advances a claim on behalf of poetry, he qualifies or dismisses it (*Squitter-Wits* 70).

The most popular theory to attempt the reconciliation of the depraved will with the affective quality of poetry, though, has been the interpretation of poetry's workings as limited to the secular realm.[4] Following Sidney's grandiose claims for the poet in the first main section (the *narratio*) are all the places where Sidney seems to leave divinity to the theologians—to back off from the sacred and to root himself firmly in the here and now. Indeed, immediately following the section where he praises poets as surpassing nature with the force of a divine breath, Sidney seems to abandon this lofty strain: those "arguments will by few be understood, and by fewer granted" and so he pursues "a more ordinary opening" of the poet, "that the truth may be the more palpable" (*MP* 79). This move, Michael Mack observes, is "Sidney's attempt to accommodate the differing needs of his heterogeneous audience" (Mack 47). It may also be noted that in doing so, Sidney's method is reminiscent of Alberti's in his treatise *On Painting* (1435). Like Sidney, Alberti begins abstractly, by focusing on the mathematical foundations of

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[2] Weiner, *Sir Philip Sidney* 36; Raiger 38.
[3] Though he states that the *Defence* "does not constitute an unambiguous, public statement of Sidney's poetics, but rather one statement among three, and which one we decide to privilege will reveal much about *our* preferences" (77), Herman seems clearly to reject the notion that Sidney grants poetry much power.
[4] See, for example, Andrew Weiner, *Sir Philip Sidney*; Alan Sinfield, *Literature in Protestant England*.

painting. "Mathematicians measure with their minds alone the forms of things separated from all matter." But Alberti is a painter, and "Since we wish the object to be seen, we will use a more sensate wisdom" (Alberti 43). Sidney may also be said to pursue a more sensate wisdom—"*più grassa Minerva*" or "fatter Minerva"—insofar as he seems to abandon those earlier claims for poetry's divinity. I would argue that Sidney adopts this course, like Alberti, because he too wishes the object to be seen. And in this, his method directly parallels Catholic and Protestant notions of the purpose of the sacraments. The sacraments were accommodations to human nature and to our natural skepticism. In the words of the Latin *Catechismus* of 1566, the first reason the sacraments were instituted is "*humani ingenii imbecillitas*" (89), the weakness of human nature. "We are so constituted by our nature that we can understand nothing intellectually unless it is first perceived through the senses" (*RC* 151).[5] Also, God reassures us with signs, just as he did Moses, since "we yield only a reluctant assent" to promises if they are given without some sign of assurance (*RC* 152).[6] Protestants were to put an even greater emphasis on the accommodatory purpose of the sacraments. But Sidney's emphasis on visuality is linked to another reason why he falls back from mining the metaphysical vein: as I will show, his claims there overlap with theological debates concerning the sacraments.

This "palpable" argument of the *Defence*—the very word suggesting (to many Protestants, at least) the exclusion of spiritual considerations—supposedly limits poetry's

[5] "siquidem natura ita comparatum uidemus, ut ad earum rerum notitiam, quæ mente, atque intelligentia comprehensæ sunt, nisi per ea, quæ aliquo sensu percipiuntur, nemini adspirare liceat" (*Catechismus* 89).
[6] "Altera uero causa est, quod animus noster haud facile commouetur ad ea, quæ nobis promittuntur, credenda" (*Catechismus* 89).

jurisdiction to the earthly realm. Indeed, Sidney sounds this note often: poetry is a mistress-knowledge which serves the master-art, which is self-knowledge, "in the ethic and politic consideration, with the end of well-doing and not of well-knowing only" (*MP* 82-3). Poets assist "earthly learning" (*MP* 83). Sidney boasts that "no other human skill" can match the poet's, and specifically names "the divine" as belonging to a separate category (*MP* 84); "I speak still of moral doctrine" and a quick reiteration: "I speak still of human, and according to the human conceit" (*MP* 91); poetry's end is virtue, which is "the most excellent resting place for all worldly learning" (*MP* 94); "I still and utterly deny that there is sprong out of the earth a more fruitful knowledge" (*MP* 102).

These caveats keeping poetry rooted in earthly soil are certainly there, and, as Robert Stillman demonstrates in his thorough dismantling of Calvinist readings of the *Defence*,[7] they are the chief data for critics looking for a resolution of the incongruity between Sidney's assumed Calvinism, with its hostility to free will, and his empowerment of the reader to recognize and freely take the good he finds in poetry. For if the Fall has rendered us powerless to take the good in hand, or even to recognize it, Sidney's claims are puzzling. He says that we have an "erected wit" but an "infected will" (*MP* 79)—which agrees with Calvinist teaching—but yet that infected will is still able to accept or reject the good—on its own, not as a result of divine revelation or Scriptural truth, but of reading human fictions.

Andrew Weiner is the best known critic to have adopted the argument that Sidney limits poetry's efficacy to the secular plane. Weiner's exposition sets up what may be

[7] Stillman (2008) pp. 140-146.

understood as "hard" and "soft" versions of the infected will, with Luther representing the hard version, and later Reformers—Bullinger, de Mornay, and Calvin—representing the soft version. For Luther, as for the later Reformers, man can do nothing without God. The difference between them, Weiner implies, is that the Lutheran view applies to the whole of existence, whereas for Calvin and the others, man's impotence is limited to the spiritual realm. Citing Charles Trinkaus, Weiner asserts that Calvin held that man's will, though damaged, was still able to influence the natural world and to bring about good things in "secular and social matters" (*Sir Philip Sidney* 48). And since Sidney was a Calvinist (Weiner assumes), his theory of poetry grants it power in matters temporal.

There are two problems with this argument (aside from its apparent failure to convince even Weiner himself: in his treatment of the *Old Arcadia*, Weiner assumes the free will of characters in spiritual matters no less than in secular [142]). First, Luther taught nothing of the sort. Luther indeed taught that the will was fallen, but he always insisted that man always had the freedom of will to reject God's offer of salvation. No one is saved against his will. Second, even though Calvin did indeed leave the will some freedom to make decisions in matters such as secular governance and day-to-day life, Calvin is irrelevant here because Sidney does not limit poetry to earthly considerations.

In the first main section of the text, Sidney emphasizes the divine nature of poetry. Following that, he emphasizes its moral nature, but without ever retracting his earlier claims for its divinity (*pace* Herman, who assumes that "Having thus admitted that his argument [based on divinity] will be controversial, Sidney dismisses it completely"

[70]).[8] After the *exordio* (the story of Pugliano's praise of horses), Sidney's first line of argument in the *narratio* is that poetry is the "first light-giver to ignorance" (*MP* 74); it prepares people for tougher knowledges later on. As Sidney realizes, this logically means that poetry is now useless among peoples with a tradition of literary, philosophical, and scientific pursuits. If poetry were to still be useful, it would have to be directed toward savages like the Irish or the natives of the New World. Such a weak argument is wisely put forward first, not only to be gotten out of the way quickly, but to retain some readerly goodwill just created by the Pugliano episode, and by Sidney's promise to imitate Pugliano by putting forward passionate but bad arguments. Yet this "bad argument" is also helpful in determining the nature of Sidney's own religious or devotional mentality, for it is the same basic argument given by John Calvin and Theodore Beza to explain the varying dispensations of the Old and New Testaments regarding worship and the sacraments. That argument, in summary form, is that the use of images—by which I mean all the trappings of religious devotion, ceremony, and ritual—was permitted to the Hebrews of the Old Testament. But those things pointed to Christ, and when Christ appeared in the flesh, the old rituals became superfluous and indeed harmful, as having potential to turn one's attention towards the images and away from Christ. The Word now dwelt among us, in clarity and immediacy.[9] In the history of the Jewish and

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[8] C.S. Lewis points out (*English Literature* 344) that Sidney is not retracting his argument, but repeating it in different terms.

[9] "For God taught ye church more obscurely before Christ was geue~ to it," yet with more external rites to support the weaker faith that characterized "the estate and condition of those fathers" (Beza, *Other Parte*, A8r, E5v). Cf. also Calvin's commentary on Leviticus 26:3 and on Psalm 99:5. An especially clear formulation of

Christian religions, "poetry" based on images gave way to "tougher knowledges" based on words.

That this is not Sidney's approach is strongly suggested by the rest of this section of the *Defence*—and by the rest of the treatise, as well as by his other writings. The *narratio* continues by using etymologies of the Roman and Greek words for "poet" to suggest the divine nature of poesy: the Romans gave them the "heavenly title" of *vates*—"diviner, foreseer, or prophet" (*MP* 76). Though he rejects the vaticination of the *Sortes Virgilianae* as a "very vain and godless superstition," he immediately softens his criticism by admitting that the basic approach of the Romans—religious reverence for poets—was "altogether not without ground"; "that high flying liberty of conceit proper to the poet, did seem to have some divine force in it" (*MP* 77). Further weakening the criticism of the "superstition" of the Roman view of poetry, Sidney then even dares to cite King David's Psalms as poetic evidence supporting "the reasonableness of this word *vates*" (*MP* 77). Clearly, he sees poetry and Christian devotion not only as compatible with each other, but as natural allies.

The Greek etymology extends the divine claims for poetry. The Greeks drew their name for the poet from the verb ποιεῖν, "to make" (*MP* 77). Sidney explains the Greek term by comparing what the poet does with what the practitioners of other sciences do.

Calvin's position on the old versus the new dispensation comes in his commentary on Jeremiah 31:12: "Then the holy fathers had the same hope as we now receive from the Gospel, as they had also the same Christ. But the difference is, that God then set forth his grace under visible figures, and it was, therefore, more obscure, but that now, figures and types had ceased, and Christ has come forth and appeared to us more clearly" (vol. 4, 83).

The astronomer, geometrician, mathematician, and others are like "actors and players" of what nature has written. They merely "build upon the depth of nature," free to explore within nature's limited radius but not to exceed or transcend nature. The poet, by contrast, is a "maker," in a God-like sense, of "another nature," of a "golden" world surpassing the "brazen world" of nature (*MP* 78). God's role as "the heavenly Maker" of the poet provides the analogy by which the poet's creations are God-like: God has set the poet "beyond and over all the works of that second nature." The poet "goeth hand in hand with nature, not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts but freely ranging only within the zodiac of his own wit" (*MP* 78). "Hand in hand with nature" means not working with nature, but working in a way parallel to nature's working: bringing forth new creatures. However, the poet brings forth supernatural "forms such as never were in nature, as the heroes, demigods, cyclopes, chimeras, furies and such like" (*MP* 78), and does so, moreover, "with the force of a divine breath" (*MP* 79).

While the Roman poets, like the Greek, were "in a full wrong divinity" (*MP* 80), Sidney agrees with the pagans' religious reverence for poetry. He even sees its workings as belonging, or at least analogous to the work of the church. Amongst his countrymen, poetry has been "thrown down to so ridiculous an estimation. But they that with quiet judgements will look a little deeper into it shall find the end and working of it such as, being rightly applied, deserveth not to be scourged out of the church of God" (*MP* 77). Part of the reason he values poetry is because of its visual impact, which sets him apart from Calvin once again. With Sidney, visuality is a key element in effective teaching, which in turn is a prerequisite for moral reformation. David's Psalms "maketh you, as it

were, see God coming in His majesty" (*MP* 77). Besides making the reader see God, the psalmist "*showeth* himself a passionate lover of that unspeakable and everlasting beauty, *to be seen* by the eyes of the mind, only cleared by faith" (*ibid.*, my italics). It may be objected that Calvin did not condemn all images, but only those made for use in worship or for private devotional purposes. Randall Zachman's massive study of the subject, *Image and Word in the Theology of John Calvin*, demonstrates that Calvin was not entirely anti-visual, and that he believed images to be God's original means of self-revelation. But the "living images of God" espoused by Calvin were those found in the natural universe and in Jesus Christ, not the creations of painters, sculptors, or poets. Calvin sees images of the human imagination as dead, meaningless apart from words; he repeatedly accuses them of teaching nothing but lies, and of offering "nothing but imposture."[10] Calvin applies the word "image" and others of similar meaning indifferently to a range of different purposes: sometimes they are meant in the strict sense of "idols to be worshipped as God," but context often suggests a much broader application (e.g., "pictures" may also subsume every artistic medium and subject matter). In more polemical moods, as in his commentary on Jer. 10:8, he switches between the broad and narrow senses, leaving it to the reader to determine his meaning.[11]

Sidney objects to this kind of thinking directly. He argues against the notion that physical nature is superior to the poet's invented nature, since "the works of the one be essential, the other in imitation or fiction." In Sidney's view, the reality or truth of

[10] *Commentary on Isaiah* 44:9, vol. 3, 368.
[11] *Commentaries on Jeremiah and the Lamentations* vol. 1, 24-5.

something is not contingent upon its ontological correspondence with anything in the order of physical nature. Rather, the greater a thing's pedagogical power, the greater its degree of reality, and the more true. Vivid poetic images "strike, pierce [and] possess the sight of the soul" more than the "wordish descriptions" of philosophers (*MP* 85). Given the paramount importance of poetic images, it would therefore seem a paradox that the poet's skill lies in the unembodied "*idea* or fore-conceit of the work, and not in the work itself" (*MP* 79). Presumably this is because the *idea* is a general approach or methodology, which is not easily obscured even by poor execution. Thomas More is held up as an example of a poet who failed to embody the full excellence of his *idea* for the *Utopia* in the work itself. Sidney praises More the poet for the "way" he lays out the ideal patterning of a commonwealth (by using a fictional traveller's tale rather than a philosophical discourse; Alexander 330 n. 72), but faults More the man, for not using that method actually to lay out the best possible patterning (*MP* 86-7). For fictions are more effective for teaching than non-fictions, and insofar as poetic inventions have the more profound effect on the imagination they are that much more "real" than things that have actual physical existence. Therefore the poet's execution of the fore-conceit "is not wholly imaginative, as we are wont to say by them that build castles in the air, but so far substantially it worketh, not only to make a Cyrus, which had been but a particular excellency as nature might have done, but to bestow a Cyrus upon the world to make many Cyruses, if they will learn aright why and how that maker made him" (*MP* 79).

The creation of a poetic Cyrus is an imaginative work, but in transforming readers into living, breathing Cyruses, the poet's work is "substantial" also. Following this claim

Sidney ends the section with a climax, in which he asserts that this ability of the poet to create golden worlds and "make many Cyruses" is so astonishing as to constitute "no small arguments to the incredulous of that first accursed fall of Adam, since our erected wit maketh us know what perfection is, and yet our infected will keepeth us from reaching unto it" (*MP* 79). This somewhat obscure sentence might be paraphrased thus: the poet's ability to create golden worlds is a powerful argument against the effects of original sin—so much that some people cannot believe that poets can actually do such a thing—and the effects of original sin are that our will is prevented from choosing the good that our wit recognizes. In other words, Sidney seems to suggest that poetry, through its creation of golden worlds, can empower the will to choose the good, thus negating the effects of the Fall which had rendered it unable to so choose. This sentence contrasting the "erected wit" and 'infected will" need not, and should not, be read as if Sidney were making a personal statement, that he himself believed that human will was too infected to reach the good.

As Frank B. Evans recognized, "Sidney's argument [. . .] rests upon an understanding of the Fall which is quite at variance with the common Calvinistic view of his contemporaries and harks back to a less harsh Aquinian position" (Evans 13). Sidney recognized this, too, and thus decided not to put the entire weight of his defense of poetry on arguments which "will by few be understood, and by fewer granted." He breaks off in order to "go to a more ordinary opening" (*MP* 79). The poet's proper activity, he says, is *mimesis*. By imitating, Aristotelian-fashion, the actions of virtuous men and women, the

poet will provide a model, "an imaginative ground-plot of a profitable invention" (*MP* 103), for readers to apply to their own moral cultivation.

For many pages Sidney sticks closely to this moral point of view, but even here Sidney still pulls divinity into his argument. *Mimesis* is not tied to nature: in their imitation, poets "borrow nothing of what is, hath been or shall be, but range, only reined with learned discretion, into the divine consideration of what may be and should be" (*MP* 81). And in the most important of his rebuttals of the charges against poetry—that Plato banished poets from his republic—Sidney opens the door to communication between poetry and the divine. He concludes the section on Plato with by saying that he would rather prove that his opponents had misinterpreted Plato than to deny his authority, since wise men accept Plato's authority:

> For indeed I had much rather, since truly I may do it, show their mistaking of Plato, under whose lion's skin they would make an ass-like braying against poesy, than go about to overthrow his authority, whom the wiser a man is, the more just cause he shall find to have him in admiration, especially since he attributeth unto poesy more than myself do, namely to be a very inspiring of a divine force far above man's wit" (*MP* 109)

This section is often characterized as an offhanded statement of what his readers already know—namely, that he disagrees with Plato's theory of poetic inspiration. Astrophil says in sonnet 74, "Some do I heare of Poets' furie tell, / But (God wot) wot not what they mean by it" (ll. 5-6), and this is taken by Tom Parker as "in keeping with Sidney's claim in the *Defence* that he was not convinced by the notion of poetic furor" (Parker 25); Parker then cites the passage from Plato quoted above. John Huntington explains this apparent rejection of inspiration as a characteristic of Sidney's membership in the

aristocracy, whereas inspiration was not a distasteful idea to lower-class poets such as Spenser and Chapman. But Huntington is only able to make this argument because he reads this tricky sentence as if it explicitly rejects poetic inspiration.[12]

A slow reading will show that it does not. It prompts one to ask, where exactly does Sidney think poetry comes from? He claims to stop short of Plato's assigning it a divine origin, but warmly approves that same opinion, considering it worthy of a wise man's admiration. Though "admiration" could be used to describe a sense of wonder at anything, good or bad, Sidney tends to use it in the positive sense.[13] It goes too far to say that Sidney rejects poetic inspiration. I believe this is one of the places it is necessary to read between the lines, and take away not the bald statement ("I don't *ever* go as far as Plato does")—a reading enabled only by ignoring half the sentence—but rather the more hidden assertion ("I don't go that far *in this treatise*, but it is a wise position"). Whether Hazlitt's denigration of the *Arcadia* as "not poetry, but casuistry" (Kay 36) was justified, the assessment seems to fit very well here.

Moreover, in the closing paragraph of the treatise Sidney makes another oblique approval of the doctrine of divine inspiration—and explicitly "conjures" the reader to believe in it directly. "I conjure you all [. . .] to believe with Landin that they [poets] are

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[12] Others who cite this in passing as a denunciation of Plato's theory of inspiration are Krouse, "Plato" (144); Hamilton, "Sidney's Idea" (53); Mack writes, "Sidney *of course* does not subscribe to this Platonic theory of poetry as inspired through a divine furor" (112, my italics). Ringler adduces the reference to Plato in connection with Sidney's "skeptical" attitude toward the *furor poeticus* that Astrophil dismisses in *AS* 3, "Let daintie wits crie on the Sisters nine" (Ringler 460). Kinney, "Parody" (6) disagrees but with only the offhand observation that "for Sidney poetry is divinely inspired."

[13] "In virtually all instances, he means wonder or reverence for something excellent beyond our normal expectations" (Stump, "Sidney's Concept of Tragedy" 52).

so beloved of the gods, that whatsoever they write proceeds of a divine fury" (*MP* 120-1). Obviously—and by Sidney's own reckoning of the sad state of English poetry—with gods as loving as these, sixteenth-century poets needed no enemies. But the sentiment agrees with what he argued passionately (if briefly) in the first section, and with what he reaffirmed in an indirect way while he defended Plato. Other examples of divine fury are found in the *OA* and *NA*. In the *OA*, the Delphic oracles are given by a "woman appointed to that impiety" who was "furiously inspired" (*OA* 5). Given that the oracle seems to direct the entire plot, this claim should not be dismissed as Sidneian sarcasm. In the *NA*, Pyrocles (dressed as Zelmane) finds that by watching Philoclea bathe, his "wit began to be with a divine fury inspired" (*NA* 190.23). Like much of the *NA*, this passage is pushed to the highest possible pitch of intensity and treated with a generous dose of humor: "her voice would in so beloved an occasion second her wit, her hands accorded the lute's music to the voice, her panting heart danced to the music—while, I think, her feet did beat the time" (190.23-26). This leads into a 146-line blazon on Philoclea—not exactly a direct manner of condemning the theory of "divine fury" if that was in fact intended. His reference to the "divine fury" at the end of the *Defence* needs to be taken in the context of the work as a whole. The heavy irony of the *Defence*, especially his closing reference to the work as an "ink-wasting toy," should not be interpreted as a license to dismiss the peroration or the treatise as a whole as a sophisticated joke. Sidney's comments on the *Arcadia* are in the same vein, where he calls that work a "trifle, and triflingly handled," despite its apparent seriousness and careful organization. Yet the humor and self-deprecation also serves as a distancing mechanism, to render the author less liable for

questionable doctrines or faults escaped. “It didn’t mean much to me; I don’t insist on any of these opinions.” These positive references do not inevitably suggest one kind of religious belief over another, but they do suggest that Sidney saw poetry as operating, at least in some capacity, on a preternatural level.

Readerly diligence is required to penetrate the smoke screen created by the humor. The reference to Landino is situated among a long list of “conjurations”: believe with Aristotle one thing; believe with Bembus another; and believe with Sidney himself “that there are many mysteries contained in poetry which of purpose were written darkly, lest by profane wits it should be abused” (*MP* 121).[14] Lodowick Bryskett, Sidney’s longtime friend and servant, writes in the same way in praise of poetic mysteries in his *Discourse of Civill Life*. Written ca. 1585 but published in 1606, Bryskett writes that the ancient poets covered

> morall sences under fabulous fictions: to the end they might the sooner be received under that pleasing forme, and yet not be vulgarly understood, but by such onely as were worthy to tast the sweetnesse of their inventions. For so did the Philosophers of old write their *mysteries* under similitudes, to the end they might not be straight comprehended by every dul wit, and lose their reputation, by being common in the hands and mouth of every simple fellow. (Bryskett 151)

John Harington, chief agent in the transcription of Sidney’s writings, expresses the same theory elsewhere, and uses the same word, “mysteries” (Mack 49). These “mysteries” call to mind the Greek word μυστήριον, or “sacrament,” and introduce the second question I posed at the beginning of the essay: how does poetry work its effects in

[14] Musidorus, disguised as the shepherd Dorus, tells his history to Pamela in the third person, with the moral that “this estate [of a shepherd] is not always to be rejected, since under that veil there may be hidden things to be esteemed” (*NA* 136.23).

readers? I maintain that the treatise's pronounced emphasis on visuality suggests that alongside his undoubted adherence to Philippist principles—or rather, because of those very principles: moderation and compromise in theological disputes, and ecumenism—Sidney was open to and influenced by Catholic thinking surrounding images and the sacraments, and that his theory of poetic efficacy is more easily understood after comparing it with how the sacraments were held to operate. This understanding varied widely amongst Protestant theologians, and amongst Catholics unanimity was likewise lacking; but most Protestant sacramental theologies can be distinguished from most Catholic ones on the basis of two generally held truths. First, Protestant sacramental theory de-emphasizes images and emphasizes words. And second, Protestants do not tend to view the material sacraments as instruments (or vessels, or channels, etc.) of immaterial grace. From this perspective, I will argue that Sidney's poetics approaches much more closely to the Catholic view, in that in his view poetry, like the sacraments, brings about real effects.

The Sacraments: Baptism

Sidney's "right poet" speaks with the "force of a divine breath" (*MP* 79), evoking not only the doctrine of divine inspiration—which Sidney is said to reject—but also the logical starting point for any discussion of the sacraments: namely, the "exsufflations" or blowings under the eyes that began the Catholic baptismal rite. As the first sacrament in a Christian's life, the prerequisite for participation in the rest, baptism provides a significant analogue to Sidney's theory of poetry, insofar as it is the sacrament believed to cleanse the soul of original sin. I do not think baptismal exsufflations are alluded to in

any way in Sidney's phrase "divine breath," yet the treatment of these blowings under the eyes are indicative of the thought processes that guided reformers as they adapted Catholic rites to their own beliefs. Luther's rite of 1523 retained the exsufflations, out of respect for tradition, though he considered them *adiaphora* and without any real role in the rite (Spinks [2] 9-10). By Luther's final revision of 1526 he had removed them from the rite (Old 40), as well as other *adiaphora* such as the use of salt. These elements had no Scriptural mandate, weakening their claim to continued survival in the Protestant rites, but they also suffered from the Protestant bias against the visual and in favor of the spoken word. Even as Luther removed these visual elements, he added a long prayer—the *Sindflutgebet*, or Great Flood Prayer. Hugh Oliphant Old, a scholar of the history of the baptimsal rite, considers that this prayer dramatically altered the rite's character. The exorcisms of the old rite were still there, but the Great Flood Prayer (called "Luther's masterpiece"; 47) diminished their importance (Old 40). Churches in Saxony, under the influence of Philip Melanchthon, generally modeled their baptismal rites on Luther's final revision of 1526 (Spinks [2] 15), that is, they omitted the blowings, salt, and other *adiaphora*. The command of princes, the force of tradition, and the influence of respected theologians were all at various times determining factors for the retention or jettisoning of *adiaphora* (in Scandinavian Lutheranism the baptismal rite included exorcisms until 1783, while it was discarded much earlier elsewhere) (Spinks [2] 26). The most common reason, though, was loyalty to the express commands of Scripture—whatever was not commanded by Christ (blowings, blessing of fonts, salt, exorcisms, etc.) was to be omitted as human invention. As natural signs, with a strong apparent correspondence to

the things they signified, these omitted elements and actions added meaning to the rite. But on sacramental questions, Reformers were not moved by such things. More important was bringing (more or less gradually, depending on the Reformer) local usage into line with the Bible, and this meant an unsentimental rejection of many emotionally powerful images. Calvin went much further than Luther in this respect, envisioning the perfect baptismal rite to consisting of only a prayer and the use of water, as commanded by the Bible—no exorcisms, and no white robe given to the baptizand at the end of the ceremony, as was retained in the Lutheran usage (Spierling 30).

It is not necessary here to slice all the intricacies of the various Reformers' views on how exactly baptism worked its effects. It suffices to recognize two basic camps: one, the Catholic and Lutheran view, saw baptism as an effectual rite that worked the salvation and remission of original sin in the baptizand. The other, associated with Calvin and those of the Reformed tradition who held a theory of double-predestination, saw baptism as a divinely designated sign of an immaterial reality that existed even without the performance of the sacrament. In this view the sacramental sign had been granted to satisfy human anxiety and weakness. Under the terms of double-predestination, souls were saved or damned from all eternity, without respect to anything they could or might choose to do, including becoming baptized. Infants were baptized in the Reformed tradition not because it saved their souls, but because it signaled the commitment of the parents to raise them according to Christian teaching, and was (ideally) a public symbol, akin to circumcision in the Old Testament, of the infant's incorporation into the Christian community. Any grace that was conferred during or as a result of the baptism would

generally have been viewed, in the Reformed tradition, either as the result of faith which the rite had stimulated, or as God's observance of baptism as an additional occasion for the normal distribution of grace, or as a reaffirmation of the covenant between God and man.

Lutheran tradition, by contrast with the Reformed tradition and in harmony with Catholic teaching, saw baptism as having the power to rescue infant (and adult) souls from the devil. This effect was automatic, not tied to the faith of the infant. With respect to the power of the sacrament, Lutheran and Catholic doctrine were fairly close. Catholic teaching held that baptism was valid even if administered by heretics or unbelievers, provided that the proper form and matter were employed.[15] Throughout the Middle Ages Catholic theologians had written of the regenerative power of baptism, and, like the Lutherans who followed them, stressed the importance of catechesis of adults sponsoring infants for baptism, or presenting themselves for baptism (Spinks [1]).

Sidney's theory of poetry can thus be seen to operate in a manner similar to the Lutheran and Catholic understandings of baptism, while approaching nearer to the Catholic rite with regard to the physical images used in the rite. How does poetry work in readers? At several points, Sidney seems to imply that poetry's effects are automatic, taking hold despite potential attempts on the part of hearers or readers to resist. Example given by a historian "draweth no necessary consequence" (*MP* 85), unlike (he implies) the example of the poet. The poet's job is to feign "notable images of virtues, vices or

[15] The form is the use of the words taught by Jesus in Matthew 28: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." The matter is water.

what else" (*MP* 81), and, as Plato and Cicero believed, "who could see virtue would be wonderfully ravished with the love of her beauty" (*MP* 98). The poet "doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way as will entice any man to enter into it" (*MP* 92). There are "infinite proofs of the strange effects of this poetical invention" (*MP* 93). Comic literature embodies our "common errors" in such characters as "it is impossible that any beholder can be content to be such a one" (*MP* 96). He never heard the ballad of Percy and Douglas "that I found my heart not moved more than with a trumpet" (*MP* 97); poetry is "most capable and most fit to awake the thoughts from the sleep of idleness to embrace honourable enterprises" (*MP* 97). Readers even of *Amadis de Gaule* have "found their hearts moved to the exercise of courtesy" (*MP* 92).

However, Sidney also makes clear that the reader is responsible for his own improvement. Poetry may move hearts, but it is up to the judgment of the reader if that is to be translated into virtuous action. Tragedies "well made and represented" made the tyrant Alexander Pheraeus weep, but not reform his actions (*MP* 96). The reader must take poetry and use it as "an imaginative ground-plot for profitable invention" and "understand aright how and why that maker made him." If these preconditions are met, however, poetry is more powerful (says Sidney) than either philosophy or history in moving readers to a renewed life.

The Council of Trent taught the same thing about baptism. Approached with the proper disposition of soul, and provided that the recipient did not pose an obstacle, the sacrament would work its full effects.

The Sacraments: Eucharist

With the exception of the Anabaptists, Protestants recognized each others' and Catholics' baptisms as true and valid sacraments. Beza noted, "The Baptisme of the Papistes although defiled, yet it is a baptisme" (*Other Part* 143). The same cannot be said of the Eucharist. Christ's words at the Last Supper, "this is my body," were interpreted according to two traditions, and Sidney's approach to poetry appears to reconcile the two, whether this was Sidney's intention or not.

According to liturgical scholar C. W. Dugmore, the two traditions are known as the Augustinian and Ambrosian. It would not be accurate to say that these traditions were opposed to one another. Yet the respective emphasis each placed on metaphor and on literalism made them the progenitors of later, more polarized views. In short, Augustine espoused a "realist-symbolism" in the Eucharist, in which the bread and wine were distinct from the body and blood of Christ that they signified, yet were only called signs to begin with due to a "certain similitude" to their signifieds (Dugmore 17-18). Augustine believed that a real union with Christ took place during Holy Communion, but that the *res sacramenti* or thing signified was mystical and invisible. Ambrose, on the other hand, fostered a more strictly realist position, with less emphasis on symbolism. He thus planted the "seeds" of transubstantiation, which was accorded dogmatic status at the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) after having been developed over the centuries by other writers (Dugmore 19). According to Ambrose, the bread and wine become the historical body of Christ which walked the earth and died on a cross. This tendency finds more radical expression later in the Middle Ages in the intensely visual dimension that

surrounds the Eucharist. Given that the consecrated host was the historical body of Christ, so sacred an object cowed Christians into limiting their participation in Communion to viewing the host. The visuals also extended to treating the consecrated host as if it were a present king, with Corpus Christi processions, enshrining the host beneath canopy of state, and so forth. Even so, "Ambrose carefully guards against a materialistic interpretation of his teaching by insisting that the eucharistic food is of a spiritual character" (Dugmore 19).

Protestants took a range of positions on the quality of the host, from Zwingli to Luther. Zwingli held that the entire sacrament was symbolic and memorial in nature, while at the other extreme Luther's opinion, sometimes termed "consubstantiation," wherein the bread and wine retain their proper substance alongside the presence of the body of Christ, was criticized as being essentially straight Catholic. The sticking point was whether Christ was bodily present in the host or not. Or, that is what one gathers from the polemics. The actual teachings of both sides are not so mutually opposed, except in their extremely exaggerated forms.

The Council of Trent did not teach that Christ was physically present in the Eucharist, according to the natural mode of being, as his body once existed on the cross, and now exists at the right hand of the Father:

> the holy Synod teaches, and openly and simply professes, that, in the august sacrament of the holy Eucharist, after the consecration of the bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and man, is truly, really, and substantially contained under the species of those sensible things. For neither are these things mutually repugnant,—that our Saviour Himself always sitteth at the right hand of the Father in heaven, according to the natural mode of existing, and that, nevertheless, He be, in many other

> places, sacramentally present to us in his own substance, by a manner of existing, which, though we can scarcely express it in words, yet can we, by the understanding illuminated by faith, conceive, and we ought most firmly to believe, to be possible unto God.
> (http://history.hanover.edu/texts/trent/ct13.html)

Compare this teaching with Beza's explanation of the Real Presence:

> Therefore they question most fondly heere of the reall presence, seeyng that reall presence (or rather of the matter and substance it selfe) in a certaine place, & the Sacramentall presence are not indeede continually repugnant and contrary: but yet notwithstanding they so farre foorth differ betwixte themselues, that that also which in very deede yet is not, yet is sacramentally present. (Beza, *Other Part* D3r)

The Council and Beza both hold a "sacramental presence" of Christ in the sacrament, and both insist that such a presence is "not repugnant" to the simultaneous existence of Christ's body in heaven. Despite the clarity of the Tridentine decree, the Catholic emphasis on the visual prompted Reformers to attack it as idolatrous and carnal.

While there is no telling for certain what Sidney thought of the Real Presence, his comments on poetic representation may offer some ground for speculation. He likely would have rejected a physical presence, since asserting that the body of Christ is "situationally" present, i.e., physically present in the normal mode of being, in a given location on the altar, is akin to a poetic theory that insists that nothing but "what is" be recounted in poetry. Sidney rejects this theory, and considers inferior those poets who remain "wrapped within the fold of the proposed subject" (*MP* 80), and "the historian in his bare *Was*" (*MP* 89). Likewise, he would have dismissed any Zwinglian memorialism that failed to acknowledge in the Eucharist a "substantial" presence, in whatever mode of being. By a rough analogy, Zwingli aligns with Sidney's portrayal of the philosopher,

who attends to general precepts devoid of particular examples, while a picture like "The Mass of St. Gregory" would correspond to Sidney's historian, tied to particular concrete examples. (This picture depicts the legend that during one of Gregory the Great's Masses, an image of Christ appeared on the altar after the consecration, proving his bodily presence in the host.) The poet "coupleth the general notion with the particular example" (*MP* 85), striking not a compromise but showing to what extent both positions, rightly understood, are necessary. Just as children who take their medicine when it is hidden in something sweet, "if one should begin to tell them the nature of the aloes or rhabarbarum they should receive, would sooner take their physic at their ears than at their mouth" (*MP* 92), so also would too much emphasis on cannibalistic eating of a physical body drive Christians to receive their Eucharistic blessing at their ears rather than at their mouths.

On the question of how the sacrament works, however, Sidney parts ways with the likes of Beza, Calvin, Luther, and any others who elevate the word over the image. Calvin: "Although a vision was exhibited to his eyes the main point was in the voice; because true acquaintance with God is made more by the ears than by the eyes" (*Comm. on Exod.* 33:19, quoted in R. Wallace 72). Luther: "Christ's kingdom is a hearing-kingdom, not a seeing-kingdom; for the eyes do not lead and guide us to where we know and find Christ, but rather the ears do this" (quoted in Koerner 41). Beza: "hearing excelleth the sight, for the atteyning of the knowledge of things" (*Other Parte* **3r).

Sidney seems to agree with such claims, insofar as he grants philosophy greater teaching power than poetry. For example, he readily grants that the philosopher may be a good teacher. But "the philosopher bestoweth but a wordish description, which doth

neither strike, pierce nor possess the sight of the soul so much" as the "perfect picture" of the very same thing, given by the "peerless poet" (*MP* 85). He goes even farther, and grants that the philosopher's method may very well teach more perfectly than the "speaking pictures" of the poets, "yet do I think that no man is so much φιλοφιλόσοφος as to compare the philosopher in moving with the poet. [. . .] For, as Aristotle saith, it is not γνῶσις [*gnosis*] but πρᾶξις [*praxis*] must be the fruit" (*MP* 91). And the philosopher teaches so obscurely that "the learned only can understand him: that is to say, he teacheth them that are already taught. But the poet is the food for the tenderest stomachs; the poet is indeed the right popular philosopher" (*MP* 87). Thus Sidney grants images much more power than do any of these Reformers. If Sidney is serious, this is the opposite of the view of Calvin and Beza, who believed that images were more primitive and more obscure than words (as mentioned above).

Though the *Defence of Poesy* is concerned with words, and especially words that *sound* a certain way through rhyme and meter, throughout the treatise Sidney privileges words that nourish the inward *sight* over those that do not. The poets deal with "whatsoever [. . .] may make the too much loved earth more lovely" (*MP* 78). Images of "all virtues, vices and passions so in their own natural seats laid to the view, that we seem not to hear of them, but clearly to see through them," "even to an ignorant man carry [. . .] an apparent shining" (*MP* 86). Sidney seeks to convey "universal" considerations in a palpable manner, making them accessible to all. In this insistence on the teaching and, more importantly, moving power of images for the ignorant, Sidney echoes the dictum of

St. Gregory: images are the books of the illiterate. This position was reaffirmed by the Second Nicaean Council of 787 and by the Council of Trent. To say nothing of the Protestant esteem for Trent, the fact that Beza (or someone writing in his name) calls the Second Nicaean a "damnable Councell" and identifies Satan as its president, more than suggests the Protestant rejection of Catholic understanding of images' spiritual and pedagogical worth.[16]

In the *Defence*, *mimesis* is simultaneously Platonic and Aristotelian. "Poesy, therefore, is an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in the word μίμησις [*mimesis*]" (*MP* 79). Yet where Aristotle recommends the imitation of heroic action, Sidneian *mimesis* embraces even a Platonic conception of "*ideas*" and things that have no being in the physical world. The Old Testament prophets exercised it in imitating "the unconceivable excellencies of God," and the Greeks and Romans were also "in this kind, though in a full wrong divinity" (*MP* 80). This shows that Sidney's idea of *mimesis* is not limited to the representation of earthly actions. His explanation of the "right poets" continues this line: "to imitate[, they] borrow nothing of what is, hath been or shall be, but range, only with learned discretion, into the divine consideration of what may be and should be" (*MP* 81). "The poet [. . .] doth not learn a conceit out of a matter but maketh matter for a conceit" (*MP* 99)—in other words, the poet works from the top down, like a Demiurge giving body to things according to a divine plan.

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[16] Beza, *Popes Canons* D6r, D5r. The *STC* (2nd ed.) notes that this text is "Not a translation of any known de Bèze text, but rather loosely based on some of his ideas." Yet the Second Nicaean Council is frequently enough damned by Protestant writers as to make safe the assumption that Beza would have agreed with this sentiment.

In summary, Sidney's theory of the working of poetry shows no signs in the *Defence*—and several signs to the contrary—that he would have objected to standard Catholic teaching on the working of baptism and the Eucharist. This is not the same as saying that he was a crypto-Catholic, but merely that he had a Catholic way of thinking about reality that aligned with his ideas on how poetry works. At the same time, there is nothing in the *Defence* that sets him apart as typically Protestant. His poetry shows a sacramental outlook. That is, he inhabits a world where, just as in the sacraments, "what is seen and experienced corresponds to a deeper spiritual reality which is made manifest by the very sign itself" (Cutrone 743). During his lifetime, Protestant worship was not sacrament-centered, though Catholic worship was (and still is). Sidney was simply out of step with the religious trends of his particular moment, for in England, a sacrament-centered piety only begins to appear with Richard Hooker, after Sidney's death. Hooker's *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* were the starting point on a path that led to the Laudianism of the 1630s (Tyacke 754). "High Church" and sacramentally sensitive Protestants have existed in all eras, however, and Sidney seems to have been one of these. He would not have been particularly bothered by those who held other views, and was probably *laissez-faire* and uncombative on theological opinion, if his holding of multiple livings *in absentia* is any indication. If, as seems certain, Sidney was educated according to Philippist ideals (see below), Melanchthon's belief in human agency's ability to cooperate with God in the attainment of grace puts Melanchthon a considerable distance along the road to the Catholic view of the sacraments, and, if Stillman is right about later

Philippists "enhancing" this optimism about agency, this distance would have been reduced even further.

Two recent books have also addressed the question of the *Defence*'s theory of poetic power to move readers, and provide context for my own discussion: the eighth chapter of Alan Sinfield's *Faultlines* (1992) and Robert Stillman's *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism* (2008).[17] Both attempt to account for the role of religion in Sidney's defense of poetry. While Sinfield's project depends on a strict categorization of Sidney as a Puritan, Stillman is conscious of the impropriety of trying to put Sidney into one or another of the narrow confessional categories. Yet ultimately both writers treat religion primarily as a political phenomenon, avoiding theological considerations.

Alan Sinfield: Political Protestantism

Sinfield's interpretation of the *Defence* may be summarized thus:[18] Sidney espoused a vigorous Protestant activism. He had absolutist tendencies which caused him to "suppose that truth, right, and goodness are organized in an ideal, universal hierarchy, that this is displayed especially in the works currently recognized as good culture, and that the role of that culture is to incite people to aspire to the ideal" (*Faultlines* 181). Thus he turned to literature in an attempt to inspire the state to embrace his ideal, or, in

[17] Stillman's book is a development of his earlier article, "Deadly Stinging Adders: Sidney's Piety, Philippism, and the *Defence of Poesy*." *Spenser Studies* XVI (2002): 231-69.
[18] His reading may be found in *Faultlines*, chapter 8: "Sidney's *Defence* and the Collective-Farm Chairman: Puritan Humanism and the Cultural Apparatus," pp.181-213.

Sinfield's words, he tried "to negotiate a relationship between the cultural apparatus and his political project" (206). In order to promote his vigorous activism, he sought to vindicate the vigorous hero of pagan classical epic against Protestant criticisms. If he could do this, his brand of muscular intervention on behalf of Protestantism would be able to boast the imprimatur of classical literary precedent.

This was easier said than done, however, for Sidney was a "puritan humanist," one of "those who experienced with special intensity the disjunction between humane letters and protestantism" (*Faultlines* 187). Sinfield does not recognize in his essay that the disjunction is not a uniquely Protestant one—or indeed, that it predated Protestantism by many centuries. The tension runs from Jerome's dream of Christ chiding him for loving Cicero more than the Bible, through Dante's *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, and on into present-day debates over the proper kind and degree of admiration for popular culture that may be considered licit for Christians. Why, then, does Sinfield use the term "puritan"?

In fact, he has good reasons for labelling Sidney a Puritan. As indicated by his silent suppression of the long pre-puritan tension between Christianity and profane letters, these reasons are rhetorical. First, by calling Sidney a Puritan Sinfield reinforces the fact of his association with the Leicester faction and those who fell within its circumference, such as George Buchanan and the various nonconformist ministers supported by Leicester and Sidney (184). That Sidney shared this group's politics is evident; that he shared their doctrinal convictions must remain an assumption until proven by more than a suggestion of guilt by association.

Second, calling Sidney a Puritan allows Sinfield to rank him within the "illiberal" camp on the question of whether pagans may be saved. The term is not used by Sinfield—it comes from D. P. Walker's 1955 essay in which Walker had argued that Sidney held the "liberal" position that "some" pagans were "probably saved" (Walker 262), based on a view of human reason as capable of attaining some Christian truths on its own, without the benefit of revelation. This is not Pelagianism on Walker's part, for he never claims that reason itself was sufficient for obtaining salvation. He merely says that the "liberal" camp, which included "most Catholics, a few Protestants" (262), believed that reason was able to reach *some* Christian truths. A study of Catholic documents will show that salvation itself always remained God's prerogative and occurred through God's power (Christ told his disciples, "without me ye can do nothing" [John 15:5]). God knew the human heart, and the Catholic position held that those who through no fault of their own were ignorant of Christian revelation might yet be granted salvation. This remains the Catholic position to this day.[19]

Indeed, it is for the sake of shooting down Walker that Sinfield characterizes the tension between Christianity and profane letters thus: "the ultimate question is whether pagans may be saved" (*Faultlines* 187). In fact, this is not the ultimate question, which a

[19] As decreed by the Second Vatican Council (1964): "Those also can attain to everlasting salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and, moved by grace, strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience." (Catholic Church, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)" sec. 16; also online in a nearly identical translation (omits "everlasting" before "salvation") at http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html). This is reiterated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 847. See also Denzinger 3869-72.

more accurate appraisal would identify as whether reason alone is sufficient to salvation. Sidney must attempt to reconcile humanist claims for the power of reason with Protestant convictions that mankind is fallen (204). As Sinfield demonstrates at some length, Sidney's position on everything from love poetry to the possibility of divine inspiration in pagan poets is "distinctly ambivalent" (200). Sinfield characterizes this as a consequence of the impossibility of reconciling Sidney's earnest Puritanism with his earnest humanism, but surely it is more logical to conclude that a man who never defends the Puritan viewpoint is not really a Puritan—at least not in the sense that Sinfield needs him to be in order to succeed in his main critical task, which is to expose all religion as ultimately political and religious believers as unwitting abettors of the existing power relations. Religion is not understandable on its own terms because it does not have its own terms: it is better described as "power relations inscribed [. . .] in religious ideology" (145). As he explains in another essay, Puritanism involved no "distinctive doctrinal perspective" (143), whatever Puritans at the time may have believed.

Sidney's refusal in the *Defence* to take sides with the Puritans, while readily taking their side in the world of public affairs, suggests that he understands precisely that one's public policy and inner metaphysical convictions need not be identical. Sinfield seems to fear this possibility, since it is a flaccid exposé indeed where the critic has been beaten to the punch by the author himself. He guards his critical project by constructing a Puritanism that is not really Puritan, but common to all Christians. He also works to make Sidney's "Puritanism" look less exclusively political than it in fact is, through vague statements such as that Sidney was "committed to defending and enhancing the reformed

religion in England" (184). But we have not a single piece of evidence that this is the case. All the evidence points abroad: at helping the Dutch, and discomfiting the Spanish and the Papacy. Sidney's religion, it turns out, is just as Worden claims: political and ethical.[20]

Robert Stillman: Cosmopolitan Protestantism

Stillman rejects Sinfield's understanding of religion, while nevertheless reading the *Defence* in an essentially similar way, which I discuss below. The most obvious difference between Stillman and the "Calvinist" and "puritan" critics is that Stillman locates Sidney's debt in the Melanchthonian tradition, not the Calvinist one. The entire project of *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism* is to situate the *Defence* within the tradition of Philippist oratory. Approaching Sidney from a Philippist perspective moots questions about the total depravity of the will, since Melanchthon, especially in his later years, taught a "synergistic" view of salvation—that is, man cooperates with God to achieve salvation.

Stillman begins his explanation of how poetry can change people by considering the differences between the *vates* (or seer) and the "right poet" (*Philip Sidney* 158 ff.). He must come to grips with how much and what kind of power Sidney attributes to poetry. He concludes that there is not much difference between the *vates* and the "right poet," since Sidney's understanding of poetry's place in the world "transcends" the categories of sacred and secular. Sidney's view is that poets employ "notable" images of virtue and

[20] See chapter 4 for a full discussion of Worden's assessment of Sidney's religion.

vice to move the will. Stillman reads "notable" as a pun on the Melanchthonian concept of *notitiae*, which are universal moral notions and not appropriately termed "sacred" or "secular"—they just are, and everyone has them. Stillman goes too far in emphasizing the "endless" punning on the very common word "notable," taking every instance of it in the *Defence* as a pun on *notitiae*. So also he takes too much liberty in repeatedly asking the reader to translate "*hypotyposes*" (the subtitle of "first editions" (114) or the "first edition" (46) of Melanchthon's *Loci Communes*) as "speaking pictures" (44 n. 25, 46, 114). To take Sidney's phrase "speaking pictures" and call it a translation of *hypotyposes* seems an unconvincing attempt to tie Sidney to Melanchthon with as many ropes as possible.[21]

That Sidney was educated in Philippist ideas seems certain, given his intimacy with so many men devoted to perpetuating Melanchthon's memory—men who had either studied under Melanchthon directly, or imbibed his teachings at second hand. Among the first sort are Hubert Languet and Johannes Sturm. Languet moved to Wittenberg in 1548 to study under Melanchthon after reading his *Loci Communes*, and remained devoted to him until his death in 1562, and to his teachings thereafter. Sturm was a teacher, and he and Languet together were among those responsible for passing on the Melanchthonian tradition. Languet's importance in Sidney's life, as his mentor, friend, and correspondent, is well known.

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[21] Under ὑποτύπωσις, Liddell-Scott's dictionary gives, "*an outline, pattern*"; Arndt-Gingrich gives "*model, example,* rather in the sense *prototype*." The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago translates "hypotyposes" as "fundamental themes" (http://collections.lstc.edu/gruber/melanchthon/loci.php).

Yet for all his explanatory power, and for all he undoubtedly does to advance our understanding of Melanchthon's rhetorical theory on the politics of Sidney and his circle, Stillman's method is, ironically, very similar to that of the Calvinist-Sidney scholars he opposes. Namely, both methods entail the explication of the "piety" of the *Defence* by focusing on the ways it avoids religious questions, focusing instead on worldly goals such as establishing certain types of government. The "Calvinist" argument holds that Calvinists restrict the power of reason to the secular realm; the second section of Sidney's *Defence* addresses "ethic and politic" matters; ergo, Sidney was a Calvinist. On Stillman's side, he shows that Sidney shared certain intellectual and political assumptions with Melanchthon and his disciples. Sometimes these are "pious" (a favorite word of Stillman's in describing ecclesiastical or metaphysical questions); but they tend not to matter that much for anyone wishing to analyze Sidney's theological convictions. E.g., Sidney believed that the cosmos was rationally designed (163). This is a "pious" thought, but it will not exactly make anyone in his time stand out in a crowd. Moreover, Stillman emphasizes again and again that Philippists had nothing but disdain for theological controversy. "Sidney was too courtly, too urbane, *and* too pious to indulge in wrangling" (157)—consequently, no theological explanation of the *Defence* is forthcoming. As I have shown, however, theological analysis is possible to a degree, and in a way that supports Stillman's polemic-averse Philippist Sidney.

Instead, Stillman relies on philosophical and anthropological arguments with "origins in Philippist piety" (157). The changed reader promised by the *Defence* is explained as rooted in the belief, taught by Philip Melanchthon, that natural law

arguments, eloquently presented, can compel readers' assent (xiii, 181). As it happens, however, the intellectual currents treated here as a Melanchthonian legacy are in fact the common property of Renaissance humanists, of whatever religious denomination.

Two examples show how. First, Stillman must force Catholic natural law theorists out of the ring in order to leave Melanchthon the seminal progenitor of this philosophical school. Whereas a recent editor of the *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos* interpreted its natural law bent as "not only professedly catholic, but uncannily Catholic," Stillman objects that we need not turn to Aquinas to explain natural law theory in the 1570s. Instead, we can look to contemporary Protestants: John Ponet, George Buchanan, and—above all—Melanchthon. Melanchthon employed "natural law arguments derived from Aristotle and his scholastic commentators" (183), the most famous of whom was, of course, Aquinas. While thus acknowledging Aquinas's importance for Melanchthon, Stillman nevertheless must ultimately marginalize Aquinas so as not to admit challengers to his Philippist explanation of Sidney's poetics.

In addition to reclaiming natural law theory as particularly "Protestant," Stillman further delineates a "new hermeneutic" as the foundation of Sidney's Philippist education. Yet the "new hermeneutic" that comes to Sidney as a Melanchthonian legacy seems to be essentially the common property of all sixteenth-century humanists, regardless of their religious affiliation. Stillman cites Kathy Eden, Peter Mack, and Kees Meerhoff no fewer than six times[22] as having illuminated the "new hermeneutic" for today's readers. In Stillman's formulation, it entailed "a commitment to reading whole

[22] viii, *64,* 71, 102 and other places (italics not listed in Stillman's index).

books to recover complete arguments," and emphasized authorial intention, clarity, and the accommodation of texts "to the reader's experience" (viii). Compare this to J. H. Hexter's description of humanistic method, published in 1965:

> The rhetorical (or historical) method of the humanists on the other hand [i.e., in contrast to the scholastic method] takes a literary text and by studying it at once internally as a coherent expression of its author's intention and externally in connection with its setting in time and space, with its historical milieu, aims to achieve a sympathetic understanding of the work as a whole and of the whole intention of its author. For this purpose a most careful study of the language of the text is indispensable, so that philology and history replace dialectic and classification as the instruments of investigation. (Surtz lxv)

This was the method of More and Erasmus no less than that of Melanchthon. It is instructive to note that whatever the *Defence* may owe to Melanchthon, it also looks back to Erasmus. In treating a serious subject in a lighthearted manner, Sidney imitates Erasmus in *The Praise of Folly*. And he imitates that same work again in his choice of examples: both authors cite Amphion and Orpheus, and the "tale of the belly."[23] As Erasmus says, and Sidney agrees, "It is trifles like this that stir to action the great beast the people" (Erasmus 26). It sounds as if the old humanism has been repackaged to make Sidney appear more Philippist.

As I mentioned, Stillman is critical of others for trying to force Sidney into too narrow a confessional box. Yet it should by now be apparent that he is guilty of this himself in his attempt to define Philippism as the sole hermeneutical key to Sidney's life and work. One theoretical response to such a charge is to point out that Philippists were

[23] Simon, "Sidney's *Old Arcadia*: In Praise of Folly," observes "Erasmian irony" in the *Old Arcadia* but does not remark on these echoes of Erasmus in the *Defence*.

characterized by an "anti-confessional" spirit, disdainful of doctrinal disputation and controversy, and "ecumenically inclusive" (*Philip Sidney* xi). This would make "Philippism" a much more capacious term than "Calvinist" or "Lutheran," for example, and would also help explain why it is so hard to pin Sidney down theologically. Yet despite the "big-tent" connotations of Philippism, we should not accept this definition too quickly. Quite often in this book, "ecumenical Christianity" is synonymous with "anti-Catholic Christianity," and is limited to the reconciliation of warring Protestant sects. Indeed, a further characteristic of Philippists was their "fiercely anti-Papal convictions" (13) and their commitment to resist "the tyrannical power of the Pope and his minions" (14). The big tent of Philippism is not without its boundaries.[24]

Tyranny, Stillman argues, is the guiding theme not only of all of Sidney's works, but of his entire adult life. Sidney's mentor was the French diplomat and ex-pupil of Melanchthon, Hubert Languet, and at his hands during his continental tour of 1572-75, Sidney imbibed his Melanchthonian "piety," rhetorical philosophy, and politics. As if to dissuade any attempts at finding non-Melanchthonian influences on Sidney, Stillman maintains that the "impact" of this education was "nothing short of definitive" (vii). "The sustained friendships both with Languet and his vast body of associates supplied Sidney with the basis of his political and religious principles, as well with the foundational assumptions of his intellectual life, from his normative standards for reading and writing to his core concepts about the nature of knowledge and the mind" (15). It seems that

[24] Stillman notes that Philippists were "open to ecumenical compromise, but militant in defense of essential matters of doctrine" (38), without specifying those essentials.

virtually everything about Sidney was determined by Philippism. Yet it seems unwise to cause the concept of tyranny to bear so great an interpretive burden. Not only does Stillman's theory make Sidney look like the puppet of a few Continental Protestants, but it ignores the influences and loyalties he owed to his own English friends and relations. Moreover, it is a readily verifiable fact that tyranny was not at the center of all of Sidney's writings. For example, Donald Stump, in an examination of the stories from the *New Arcadia* that are explicitly characterized as stage plays, has shown that none of these episodes has a tyrant as the main protagonist, nor do any of the cases of misrule which are remedied by Musidorus and Pyrocles result from tyranny on the ruler's part. Rather, the tragedy of these episodes stems from an Aristotelian *hamartia* or error committed by Basilius, by the Paphlagonian King, by Amphialus (Stump, "Sidney's Concept of Tragedy" 55-6).[25]

Sidney's wide circle of Protestant friends sometimes has driven critics to analyze the *Defence* as doctrinally Protestant—and consequently, the rest of the Sidney corpus as Protestant literature. These friendships are cited in an early essay by Alan Sinfield as the main reason why he believes Sidney was a Puritan: "All that we know of Sidney's friends and political interests indicates that we should place him on [. . .] the puritan wing of the Elizabethan church" ("Sidney, du Plessis-Mornay and the Pagans" 35). Stillman rejects Sinfield's methodology as too secular—as ignoring the very real spiritual motivations felt by men and women of this period—but nevertheless borrows his methodology inasmuch

[25] Stump recognizes that "not all the characteristics of the tragic plots in the Arcadia can be traced to Aristotle or to the Greek tradition" (61).

as he reduces Sidney to little more than insensate clay to be formed by Languet and Mornay. His Philippist education, in Stillman's argument, explains also Sidney's friendliness to Catholics. Whereas Katherine Duncan-Jones suggests rather logically that this friendliness may have been prompted by a secret affinity with Catholicism, Stillman claims that "Sidney's moderation scarecely needs explanation, however, as the product of some putative crypto-Catholicism. His moderation is better explained by its consistency with the practice of his friends" (156-7).[26]

But if Sidney "was" his friends, we should look at all of them, not just the Protestants. Sidney's circle of friends and family is broadly inclusive, as I demonstrate in Chapter 1; his Catholic and other associates should not be dismissed *a priori*. The *Defence* itself gives ample reason not to consider Sidney's Protestant friends as wholly determinative of his identity, when, towards the end of the work, he gives a catalogue of worthies who have been poets or patrons. The list mirrors his own life in its religious diversity, containing four ancients, three Protestants, and ten Catholics.[27] Stillman calls attention to this "parade of worthies," emphasizing its "cosmopolitan" nature. But he uses

[26] While Stillman sees Duncan-Jones as espousing a crypto-Catholic Sidney, Steven R. Mentz's doctoral dissertation (2000) cites "Duncan-Jones, *Courtier Poet, passim*" in support of Sidney's Calvinism (alongside two utterly different books that really do argue his Calvinism: Weiner's *Sir Philip Sidney* (but only pp. 5-18) and Sinfield's *Literature in Protestant England*).

[27] *Ancients:* David, Hadrian, Sophocles, Germanicus. *Protestants:* Beza, Melanchthon, Buchanan. *Catholics:* Robert, King of Sicily, King Francis of France, King James of Scotland (1394-1437), Pietro Bembo, Bernardus Dovizi ("Bibbiena"), Girolamo Fracastoro (Fracastorius), Julius Caesar Scaliger, Giovanni Pontano (Pontanus), Marc-Antoine Muret (Muretus), Michel de l'Hôpital ("that Hospital of France").

it only to demonstrate the complexity of Sidney's politics, and their situation around the two poles of militant action and peaceful counselorship.

Melanchthonian piety, no less than its politics, was also based on resisting tyranny, since the world could be subdivided in terms of kinds of tyranny to be resisted: political tyranny (xii), "the tyranny of Tridentine Catholicism" (also called "Tridentine tyranny"), and the "tyranny of self-love" (xiii). "Tridentine tyranny" is left nebulous by the author, never explicitly being defined as primarily temporal, spiritual, or a mix of both. The decrees of the Council of Trent are never mentioned. It is up to individual readers to decide what aspect(s) of "Trent" Sidney opposed. The tyranny of self-love is a species of piety, since slavery to self-love is a consequence of sin. In common with a long line of Sidney commentators stretching back into the nineteenth century, Stillman posits the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572 as the catalyst that set Sidney and Languet, along with other Philippists such as Philip du Plessis-Mornay, a sense of urgency for prosecuting this resistance to tyranny. The fact—noted by Stillman—that Sidney mentions the Massacre only once in all his extant writings does not seem to disturb his faith in this assumption.

Sidney's *Defence*, according to Stillman, should be read as a Philippist call to arms against all kinds of tyranny. Sidney's "right poet" is not bound to historical facts: the poet deals with what should be, not with what is; the poet surpasses nature, delivering a golden world; and so forth. Poets are not bound to historical facts because the poet's job is to alter history by resisting tyranny: "In the *Defence*, Sidney imagines a readership that is set free from history, paradoxically, in order to act upon history" (5). Poetry must be

set free from historical facts, because facts are "merely partisan" and encourage factionalism. Poets (and philosophers and, ironically, historians) must eschew facts, and focus on "commonplaces" or universals in order to tap into the persuasiveness of natural law arguments for securing peace and liberty.

As noted, Stillman finds natural law behind Sidney's theory of poetry's persuasive power. In his respect for natural law, Sidney was no different from other Philippists—or from most intellectuals in the sixteenth century. The Philippists believed that reason and natural law were the sure means to transcend political and religious disputes: through proper use of natural law, one could "compel (not merely gain) assent" (xiii).[28] Sidney's use of natural law, however, was radically different from Languet's and Mornay's. Stillman explains that the members of Sidney's Philippist circle pursued the fight against tyranny in different ways. Languet addressed the problem through the writing of history; Mornay used his philosophical writings. Philosophy and history "were forms of knowledge traditionally revered for their public consequence" (3). But Sidney takes the "audacious" position of arguing that poetry is the master-science, a position Stillman describes as "the product of a desperately determined and ironically self-aware idealism. Poetry *must* work to undo tyranny because history and philosophy *cannot*" (xiii, italics in original). Sidney thus saw the *Defence of Poesy* and his own poetry as "the urgently required means of securing the pious and political goals of his Philippist

[28] The power of natural law to compel assent seems jeopardized by this sentence from Stillman: "He [i.e., Sidney] leads by the mind, rather than draws by the nose—and he leads those who are predisposed to adhere to the pious and political principles that the *Defence* assumes at its dialectical foundations to be true" (6). Does this not mean that Sidney is able to convince only those who are convinced already?

education" (vii), where "pious goals" means, primarily, freedom of self-determination for Reformed churches.

This argument suggests a serious misreading of the *Defence*, for two reasons. First, it does not account for Sidney's well documented admiration for historical scholarship. In helping his brother Robert devise a course of study, Philip recommends that he read several historians (and philosophers), but does not recommend any poets.[29] If he intended poetry to work on an international stage to counter tyranny, surely he would not miss an obvious opportunity to remind his own brother of its worth. Second, if he intended *his own poetry* to combat tyranny on an international stage, we are never told why the *Defence*—and all his other works—were written in English and not Latin,[30] why they were not intended for publication, and why they were not printed until years after Sidney's death. In a crisis situation such as certainly existed in war-torn Europe, one would expect Sidney's actions and imaginative writings to have at least a shred of public urgency about them—but instead, they are treated by their author as trifles tossed off to entertain his sister and her friends. Nor does Stillman explain why or how his contemporaries would have considered imaginative, private, vernacular works to have had any potential to secure international peace and restore national sovereignties. H. R. Woudhuysen speculates that the manuscript proliferation of the *Old Arcadia* influenced

[29] PS to Robert Sidney, 18 October 1580 (Collins 283-285).
[30] Stillman tries to interpret the use of English rather than Latin (certainly the much more "cosmopolitan" of the two) as strengthening his argument: "Sidney chose to write his *Defence* in English [. . .] but he does so, characteristically, by recommending [. . .] the application of those principles that he acquired in his own cosmopolitan education abroad" (32).

Sidney to exercise more control over the distribution of later works, including the *Defence*: the manuscript evidence suggests that the *Defence* was not intended for public consumption, let alone as an urgent intervention in an international crisis.[31] (Woudhuysen is listed in Stillman's bibliography, but not in the index.) Perhaps recognizing these problems but without a way to reconcile them with his earlier claims, Stillman closes his book by describing the *Defence* as "a coterie text designed for a small network of like-minded family and friends, an intellectual power elite among the English Reformed" (237).[32]

Stillman claims that Languet and Mornay "would have been more than a little confounded by Sidney's triumphant claims on behalf of his own muse, poetry" (32-3)—this is quite true, for Languet, at least, could not read English. At any rate, Stillman's book does not discuss Sidney's poetry. Its primary task is to theorize the *Defence* as a manifestation of Philippist rhetoric, with supporting examples drawn mainly from prose sections of the *Old* and *New Arcadia*. The poem "Ye goat-herd gods" from the *Arcadias* is considered briefly; *Astrophil and Stella* is named, once, as evidence that Sidney moved easily between secular and divine literature. But how *Astrophil and Stella* advances—or even relates to—the dream of Protestant unity, or the survival of the Reformed churches,

[31] Woudhuysen reports only two extant copies of the *Defence* (212) and claims that, like *The Lady of May*, "*A defence of poetry* was also kept on a tight rein" (211).
[32] Page 24 also calls it a "coterie text," making the claims for its status as an international intervention text all the stranger.

is not addressed.[33] (I will argue in Chapter 4 that it is not unrelated to a desire for unity, but that this unity transcends narrowly Protestant concerns.)

All of these facts indicate that Stillman seriously misjudges Sidney's motivations for writing. In addition to not allowing Sidney's poetry to support or challenge his thesis, Stillman consistently reads the *Defence* at face value—if such a reading is possible, given the work's pervasive wit, wordplay, and internal contradictions. He never acknowledges possible difficulties in interpretation caused by Sidney's unceasing playfulness (which would be puzzling, if not pathological, if the work had been written to defuse an international crisis) and deliberate obscurantism. This is to say nothing of the demands of *sprezzatura* that Sidney no doubt felt pressing on him, which would induce him to include in his treatise such amusing elements as his encounter with Venetian riding instructor John Pietro Pugliano, who nearly made him wish himself a horse, or his warning—by comparing himself to Pugliano—that he was about to ply the reader with bad arguments.

One example is the section on Plato, quoted above. The gist of it, recall, is that while Plato believes poetry to be inspired by "a divine force, far above man's wit," Sidney does not. This is a *locus classicus* for critics who want to keep Sidney's claims for poetry from reaching into spiritual or divine matters. Stillman comments, "Sidney clearly does not attribute inspiration to the right poet (he explicitly rejects the *Ion*'s characterization of poetry as the 'very inspiring of a divine force')" (159). But the

[33] Stillman alludes to the "Rich" sonnets from *Astrophil and Stella* on p. 4, as examples of Sidney's allowing himself an occasional topical reference, as an exception that proves the rule that "his corpus is strikingly free of topical references."

passage in question is anything but straightforward; as I have shown above, Sidney does not commit himself against divine inspiration here, but says that wise men with respect and approve it ("hold in admiration").

Stillman effectively demolishes the views of those critics, foremost among whom is Alan Sinfield, who see Sidney as a rigid Calvinist. "Calvinist piety does not work for interpreting Sidneian poetry or poetics, but Sidney's training among the Philippists does" (16). But neither is Philippism the whole story. By focusing on the *Defence* and a handful of carefully selected passages from the *Arcadias*, Stillman is able to sidestep the many passages that might problematize his thesis. If Sinfield has erred in confining Sidney to a Calvinist cubby-hole too small to contain him, Stillman replaces "Calvinist" with "Philippist." He sees Sidney's politics and piety as indistinguishable, and would have all of Sidney's positions determined by the influence of others. But what is needed is not a single master-key that unlocks all of his works. Instead, while Philippism provides (thanks to Stillman's efforts) an essential piece of a larger hermeneutic puzzle, it remains but one piece among many. The *Arcadias* demonstrate the plurality of Sidney's vision, with its strong Catholic element, perhaps better than any of his other works, and it is to them that we now turn.

Chapter 3:

Sacramental Mentality in Sidney's *Arcadias*

In one of the many amusing episodes of both *Arcadias*, Musidorus attempt to pay court to Pamela indirectly, by addressing his blandishments to Mopsa (*NA* 129 ff.), daughter of Dametas, Arcadia's chief herdman (25.19). Though he speaks to Mopsa, he looks at Pamela (132.26). Though funny, the episode operates in Sidney's usual mode of masking a serious topic in comic garb. The issue in question surfaces most clearly at the end of the scene, when Musidorus presents a gift to Pamela, which she is to give to Mopsa on his behalf. In the *Old Arcadia* (*OA*), the gift is "an altar of gold, very full of the most esteemed stones, dedicated to Pollux who, because he was made a god for his brother Castor's virtue, all the honour men did to him seemed to have their final intent to the greater god Castor" (95). In the *New Arcadia* (*NA*), the gift has been changed, but the significance remains the same: namely, to render honor to some godlike person by the mediation of a mere mortal:

> a jewel made in the figure of a crabfish, which because it looks one way and goes another, I thought it did fitly pattern out my looking to Mopsa but bending to Pamela—the word about it was "By force, not choice"—and still kneeling, besought the princess that she would vouchsafe to give it Mopsa, and with the blessedness of her hand to make acceptable unto her that toy which I had found (*NA* 139-40)

The activity of these passages bears strong resemblance to Catholic teachings concerning the sacraments, and to Catholic devotional practices such as the cult of the saints and to the more general notion that, in this life, spiritual things are most often mediated through

an encounter with physical, sensory objects. As the motto on Musidorus's crabfish jewel acknowledges, it is "by force, not choice" that an embodied existence uses such intermediaries. The ultimate focus of the Catholic faithful remains always on Christ, while their physical gaze rests on various external helps to devotion—things held, or seen, such as rosaries and images of saints. In another parallel with the *Arcadias*, the mediator in Catholic spirituality is helpless to "save" us, just as in Musidorus's case Mopsa is entirely powerless to obtain Pamela's grace for him.

Such intermediaries and external devotional aids were officially jettisoned by virtually all varieties of Protestantism very early in the Reformation. "Officially" is the indispensible word here, for as Robert Scribner has documented, Catholic and other "superstitions" condemned by Protestant preachers held on in Protestant lands well into the eighteenth century (Scribner). What is at stake in our interpretation of such passages as those just quoted from the *Arcadias*, I suggest, is the awareness that stark binary oppositions, while useful for establishing the limits or extremes of a given phenomenon, seldom describe actual people with any great accuracy. So it was with Philip Sidney. Almost unanimously, and ever since his death, he has been regarded as a militant Protestant and rabid anti-Catholic. When this assessment is recognized as the propagandistic caricature that it undoubtedly is, it becomes possible to reread the *Arcadias* and to discover in them a more complex Philip Sidney than was previously thought to have existed, and to obtain a glimpse of how traditional Christianity (Catholicism) acted as a shaping force in the literature of the later Reformation in England.

Three Preliminary Objections Answered

The foregoing chapter discussed the apparent sympathies between Sidney's *Defence of Poesy* and Catholic sacramental theology. Before searching for similar traits in the *Arcadias*, three objections must be acknowledged and answered. First, it may reasonably be argued that the *Defence* is *sui generis* among Sidney's works, standing out as a monument to poetic theory that was not in fact followed in Sidney's own practice. Literature in the *Defense* is imbued with a quasi-divinity, powerful to renew humanity. But if the *Defence* does in fact stand alone amidst his *oeuvre*, we ought not to expect to find a sacramental worldview in works which Sidney denigrates as a "trifle" and "toy."[1] Such self-effacement, however, seems best understood as conventional humility and not to be taken literally, especially considering the patently serious nature of the "trifles" in question.

The second objection to reading the *Arcadias*—especially the *OA*—from a sacramental perspective is based on the notion of a progressive ennobling of Sidney's conception of literature, running from his creation of thoroughly immoral heroes who get what they want (in the *OA*), through an immoral hero (Astrophil) whose desires are denied, through much nobler heroes whose desires are ultimately denied (in the *NA*) and culminating in the pious project of translating the Psalms into English verse. Or, to put it another way, this view sees Sidney as progressing from a view of literature first as racy

[1] He refers to his *Old Arcadia* as "but a trifle, and that triflingly handled" (*NA* 506) and as his "toyfull Books" (PS to Robert Sidney, 18 October 1580; Collins 283-85). A similar statement is found in the *Defence*, where Sidney claims that he is merely a poet "sick among the rest" (*MP* 119), and not setting himself up as a model for imitation by others.

secular amusement (*OA, Astrophil and Stella*), to having a more noble status as a moral vehicle (*Defence*, *NA*), and finally ending in the view that secular literature is misguided entirely.[2] The *Defence* seems to align with none of these stances, claiming that "if the poet do his part aright," he will show bad characters entirely bad, and good characters entirely good). If one wishes to situate it within a linear moral progression in Sidney's literary output, its composition between the *OA* and *NA* seems to suggest that Sidney may only have come to insist on literary morality after he reviewed the filthy sink of passions run amok that he had created in the first incarnations of Pyrocles and Musidorus, but did not quite manage to bring it to full effect in the *NA*.[3]

The problem with such a chronology is that, while it seems clear that the *OA* comes first among Sidney's major works, the *Defence* (which cannot precisely be dated)

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[2] Richard Helgerson, *The Elizabethan Prodigals*, comes to this conclusion about Sidney's experience as an author of secular literature: "From 1578 to 1584, [. . .], Sidney tested poetry—and all that was associated with it—love, beauty, contemplation, and desire—against the humanists' standard of rational well-doing. And poetry failed. It could neither be reconciled to the paternal notion of virtue, nor could it stand on its own as an alternative system of value" (154). Cf. Stillman, *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism*, for the opposite view (though Stillman discusses only the *Defence*, thus leaving unclear how he sees Sidney's other works serving to renew mankind). Sinfield, *Faultlines* (193) speculates that Sidney may have "moved towards divine or severely instructional writing" toward the end of his life.

[3] Critics disagree about the morality of the princes. Though most find in them a mix of good and bad, some praise them as being above censure (Dana, "Heroic" 316), while others swing to the opposite extreme by denying any good in them (Marenco, "Double Plot"; Weiner, *Sir Philip Sidney*) or by lading them with crimes they did not commit (e.g., Norbrook 96 says that the princes "abduct the princesses," which is not true at all of Pyrocles, and only half-true of Musidorus (Pamela goes with him willingly). (Norbrook's account suffers from other factual errors, claiming that Gynecia is in love with Musidorus (she loves Pyrocles) and that Amphialus stages the mock execution of Philoclea in the *NA* (Cecropia does this).) Davis, *Map of Arcadia*, sees the princes as undergoing a process of moral education, a view rejected by Hamilton (1966), who sees no moral progress in them.

seems to have been composed around the same time as *Astrophil and Stella*, and *AS* seems to lack the moral clarity called for by the *Defence*. Moreover, there are other explanations for the rampant lustfulness of Sidney's heroes—at least those of the *OA*. Stephen Greenblatt argued that Sidney's Arcadian world was too complex to admit black-and-white characters, such as those called for in the *Defence*, at least in its starring roles (Dametas and his family are pure buffoonery, for example) (Greenblatt 271). Debora Shuger reminds us of the easily-forgotten fact that while the poet's job (as detailed in the *Defence*) was to set forth what "should be," rather than what is, "what should be" might be different for someone in Sidney's position than it is for non-aristocratic readers living under democratic government today.[4]

A third and final possible objection to reading the *Arcadias* from a sacramental perspective is their deep ambiguity. It is hard to tell where Sidney stands on a number of issues, for he often presents both sides of a debate, conflict, or moral situation without providing a clear sentence in favor of one or the other. He treats heroism ironically in both *Arcadias*, for example. Ethically, Musidorus and Pyrocles are by turns liars, deceivers, would-be rapists, perjurers, and peeping-toms. Spiritually, they cause scandal

[4] Shuger, "Castigating Livy." Shuger's comparison of Livy's account of Tarquin and Lucretia with Sidney's parodic retelling in the *Old Arcadia* illuminates Sidney's efforts to defend aristocratic privilege against republicanism and monarchic absolutism. By the decree of "everlasting justice" (*OA* 230), the princes would have justly been killed for their crimes: in harmony with the prescriptions of the *Defence*, they would have been shown exiting the stage in fetters, rather than being married to the princesses. Sidney's "erected wit" told him that this was true, but his "infected will" perhaps kept him from exercising the rigorous self-denial that he would have needed to disadvantage characters from his own noble class. Likewise, his "erected wit" made him aware, while writing the *Defence*, of what he had done to advance his own interests in the *OA*.

by their actions and deliberately lead other characters into sin. Politically, when they intervene in international affairs, they are largely ineffective (especially in the *NA*, which expands the account of their deeds in Asia Minor). On the other hand, Musidorus and Pyrocles are indeed truly heroic. Their martial prowess is guided and sustained by a refined sense of morality and chivalry, unlike that of other notably martial characters, such as Anaxius and Plexirtus, who lack good moral impulses and care only for personal aggrandizement.

In addition to the confusing treatment of heroism, the narrators of the *Arcadias* are unreliable. The narrator of the *OA* is able to celebrate premarital sex at the end of Book 3, and gravely denounce it with "everlasting justice" at the beginning of Book 4. In the *NA*, stories that had been told by a single omniscient narrator in the *OA* are divided among multiple characters. The story of Queen Erona, for example, must be assembled from partial accounts as told by at least three different characters, thus increasing the reader's sense of doubt as to the trustworthiness of the overall account.

In other words, if we ask "Why are the 'heroes' of the *OA* so immoral, and of the *NA* so inconsistent and at times paralyzed by love?" we might answer, because Philip Sidney wanted to present a new kind of chivalric ideal, one that connects with and improves readers through a twofold method. First, Sidney creates characters (and narrators) that are mixtures of the real and the ideal. In showing the reader "what should be" he cannot travel the *via positiva* exclusively—for example, by making his good knights always win, and all their deeds prosper, while making his bad knights always lose—because that would entail (in Skretkowicz's words) the "annihilation" of the

characters' human nature, with its inherent imperfections ("Chivalry" 170). This conjoining of the real and the ideal is likewise manifested in the princes' manner of settling new governments. Skill in governance is important in the rulers they install, but that is an ideal which should (ideally) be found in someone with blood-ties to the throne[5]—in other words, a physical ontological relation is just as important as the abstract knowledge of how to rule.[6] Second, the real human natures of Sidney's knights differentiate them from the cardboard, generic, superhuman heroes of some medieval romance. In recognizing their real human psychology and inconsistency, readers are more likely to identify with them, thus increasing the possibility (called for by the *Defence*) of increased self-knowledge.

In short, Sidney never loses sight of the effective pressure of the "real" upon the "ideal" and sees them as inextricably connected. I believe that the nature of their relationship is present in a comparison of Protestant and Catholic (and Orthodox) sacramental attitudes, and that these attitudes are a fruitful heuristic for the investigation of Sidney's religious convictions. Understandings of the Eucharist may stand generally for the various faiths' incompatible attitudes toward spirituality and materiality.

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[5] After deposing and killing the King of Phrygia, Musidorus settles the crown upon the nearest blood relation: "understanding that there was left of the blood royal, and next to the succession, an aged gentleman of approved goodness" (*NA* 175.4). See also *NA* pp. 620-22 for genealogical tables, which reveal that virtually everyone in the *NA* is related to everyone else.

[6] Amphialus perhaps stands as the most extreme manifestation of the (in his case) unhappy coexistence of the real and the ideal: known through the whole world for his near perfection in chivarly, he earns the reader's scorn for allowing himself to be dominated by his wicked mother

Protestants, following Augustine's dictum "Believe, and you have already eaten,"[7] favor an intellectual or spiritual—nonmaterial—sacramentalism.[8] Catholics, by contrast, while not disregarding the importance of faith and understanding to the proper reception of the Eucharist, give much greater importance than do Protestants to the physical elements and especially to the host as the body of Christ. The *Catechismus Romanus* of 1566 (also known as the Catechism of the Council of Trent, the Catechism of Pius V, or simply the Roman Catechism) teaches that there are three ways to receive the Eucharist: physically (*sacramentaliter*), spiritually (*spiritualiter*), and a combination of these two. While Reformers such as John Calvin emphasize the spiritual eating, the Roman Catechism judges that those who are able to receive both *sacramentaliter* and *spiritualiter*, but opt to receive only spiritually, "are clearly choosing a way which is only second best, and are thereby depriving themselves of inestimable gifts" (*RC* 241). Likewise, Catholics depend much more on material objects generally in devotions of day to day life. This lends itself to Protestant parody, as well as to the risk that individual Catholics may come to attribute power to the elements themselves, rather than to the power of God. But the full teaching of the Catholic Church gives prominent place to the physical as the normal conduit and facilitator of things spiritual. And the sacraments are the conduits *par excellence* of

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[7] *Exposition of the Gospel of John* 25:12, cited in Pelikan, *Christian Tradition* 4.54.
[8] As, for example, in John Ponet's *A notable sermon concerninge the ryght vse of the lordes supper*, 14 March 1550. Ponet claims that the physical elements of the Lord's Supper are unnecessary, since we may gain the full benefits of it by partaking *spiritualiter*. But "There is another kinde of eatinge . . . called . . . Sacramentaliter" (C7r), which occurs when the physical sacrament is employed. "Wherefore thus I may conclude, he that beleueth, eateth: And he that beleueth not, eateth not, although he eate the Sacrament euery day in the weeke" (C8v).

Christ's grace: "The sacraments," says the *Catechism*, "are the proper channels through which the efficacy of Christ's Passion flows into the soul. That efficacy is the grace which he merited for us on the Cross, and without which we cannot hope for salvation" (152).[9] Hence, though the physical elements are efficacious only by virtue of Christ's passion, they are nevertheless indispensible to the Catholic spiritual life. In the same way, Sidney works to move readers to understand and undertake the good ("it is not γνῶσις [*gnosis*] but πρᾶξις [*praxis*] must be the fruit" [*MP* 91]) and consequently never divorces his ideals from concrete physical realities.

Past Assessments of Religion in the *Arcadias*: Introduction

Handling of the *Arcadias* in terms of religion has taken different approaches from the one just described, and may be grouped into three general categories: political, anthropological, the polemical/theological. Many analyses of the political and anthropological types tend toward vagueness, while specificity is more at home in polemical/theological readings. My own readings, while they stress a much greater Catholic component in Sidney and his works than has been suggested by critics, avoid the temptation to place him exclusively in the Catholic camp. Too frequently, critics find what they are looking for whether the text supports it or not. In Sidney studies, traces of Calvinism, Philippism, or whatever else, have been made the foundation of "all or nothing" theses which reject *a priori* the possibility of the coexistence in Sidney's

[9] "Virtutem enim, quæ ex passione Christi manat, hocest gratiam, quam ille nobis in ara crucis meruit, per sacramenta, quasi per alueum quēdam, in nos ipsos deriuare oportet" (*Catechismus* 89-90).

writings of influence from multiple faith traditions. This is a mistake. In the 1580s England's Reformation had not yet entered the dogmatic stage of its history—doctrines were still in formation, as were the religious self-identities of many people. And as Chapter 1 demonstrates, Sidney's circle of family and friends extended well beyond the Protestant luminaries (for example, Languet, Mornay, Walsingham, Buchanan) so often cited as evidence for Sidney's own Protestantism. The beliefs of one's family and friends are no safe guides to the individual's own beliefs, but Sidney's works show enough sympathy with Catholic thinking to support the view that in addition to befriending Catholics, he was in no way hostile to their religious beliefs.

First Category: Political Religion

Very often, "Protestantism" as used by Sidney scholars means nothing more than "political opposition to Spain and Rome." Blair Worden's recent study of the *OA* is both typical and unique in this respect. Typically with other scholars, Worden's concern with Sidney's religion is focused on questions of international policy. Worden amply describes how the spectre of the match between Protestant Elizabeth and Catholic Anjou informs the concerns of the *OA*, and how fear of the continuing threat posed by Mary Queen of Scots informs the *NA*. According to Worden, Sidney belonged to a political "party" comprised of men whom Worden calls "forward Protestants" (and, at one point, "evangelical Protestants" [162]): Robert Dudley, Francis Walsingham, George Buchanan, Thomas Wilson, and others; on the Continent, the party included men like Hubert Languet, Philippe du Plessis-Mornay, and Theodore Beza. In England, this group

opposed Elizabeth's proposed marriage to François, duc d'Anjou. They wanted England to intervene militarily in the Low Countries to assist the Dutch Protestants in their struggle against Catholic Spain.

Worden's uniqueness lies in that, unlike other critics who have little to say about the particularities of Sidney's religious belief, Worden frankly admits that this very lacuna is a product of Sidney's own disinterest in particularities of religious belief: "The emphasis of the 'religion he professed' [Greville's phrase] was ethical (and [. . .] political) rather than theological. [. . .] His Protestantism, as far as we can see, carries light credal baggage" (32).[10] Thus when Worden claims that Sidney's vocabulary "reveals a coherent and insistent philosophy of virtue and religion" (23), the word "religion" means (as the overall direction of the text makes clear) protecting England's state church, which is equivalent to protecting the Queen who was that church's supreme governor, against the threats of military invasion, espionage, and assassination plots. Robert Stillman likewise detects Sidney's disinterest in doctrinal precision, but unlike Worden, attributes it to Sidney's Philippist education. (The Philippists, or followers of Melanchthon, are described by Stillman as averse to theological controversy (*Philip Sidney* 13), "anti-confessional" and "ecumenically inclusive" (xi), and committed to "ecumenical Christianity" (17).)

Despite Sidney's own reticence on theological questions, and despite his intense interest in Protestantism in its political aspect, Worden nevertheless attempts to

[10] J. W. Lever had claimed no later than 1966 (I have not seen his book in its first edition of 1956) that Sidney's "creed laid its main stress upon the individual conscience and practical morality" (Lever 79).

characterize Sidney's beliefs. To add some theological depth to Sidney's political Protestantism, he calls on Fulke Greville. Greville, too, considered politics the guiding force in Sidney's life—the bulk of his *The Life of the Renowned Sir Philip Sidney* is concerned with international affairs.[11] But it has not gone unnoticed that Greville was, in John Buxton's phrase, "a more stern Puritan than Sidney" (110). This bit of understatement means that Greville railed against "Rome's undermining superstitions" while Sidney was more concerned with "the commanding forces of Spain" (Greville 49). To be sure, Greville's anti-Catholicism is clearer theologically, and more forcefully expressed, than any putatively anti-Catholic sentiments to be found in any of Sidney's writings.[12] And for this reason, Worden is forced to rely heavily on Greville throughout his book for quotations illustrating "Sidney's" religious opinions.[13]

Second Category: Anthropological Religion

Worden's assessment of the nonpolitical side of Sidney's religion is vague and anthropological in nature. It is based entirely on a pessimistic view, often associated with John Calvin, that human reason is darkened and that man is separated from God by sin.

[11] See Peter C. Herman, "'Bastard Children of Tyranny,'" for an explanation of how Greville's personal fortunes and changes in the political landscape suppressed this work's initial publication under King James I, but called forth its first edition during the Commonwealth.

[12] See Chapter 1 for Sidney's statements that "he likes not their persons" and about Shelley's being "sadly addicted to Popery," which seem perfunctory sentiments tailored to satisfy the expectations of certain people.

[13] Other authors employ the same strategy. For example, Barbara Brumbaugh (discussed below) quotes from Greville while using phrases such as "Sidney predicted," and "According to Sidney" ("Cecropia" 30). All of this is indeed prefaced by the phrase, "According to Greville," but Brumbaugh registers no doubts about the trustworthiness of Greville's claims.

The impressionistic manner in which he describes the Protestantism of the *Arcadia* merits the passage's full quotation:

> The shadow of Adam's transgression is cast across the *Arcadia*. Sidney gives no historical or theological definition to it. For all we can tell it might be not an event but a metaphor. That is why it can be inserted, with no sense of strain, into a pagan narrative. Yet its effect there, our separation from God, is a Christian one and, in its emphases, a Protestant one. (Worden 35)

The "Protestant emphases" in the "effect" of the "shadow" cast across the work—such language bespeaks a general uncertainty about the very project of describing the *Arcadia* in religious terms, and a sense of the danger of uncritically transferring his obvious political allegiances to the spiritual realm. Perhaps aware of this and eager to put his claim on firmer ground, Worden elaborates: the "emphases" are on the corruption of reason and the darkness of human ignorance of the divine. As it happens, the fact that Worden is able, for 13 lines, to explicate the "emphases" of the "definition" that Sidney does not give, suggests that Sidney does not spell out his Protestant beliefs in the *Arcadia* because his Protestantism—though it carries "light credal baggage"—is died in the wool, part of the air he breathes. And for the very reason that he never mentions his Protestanism explicitly, his critics are free to identify those "Protestant" emphases throughout the text.

Worden's emphasis on the darkness of human reason was anticipated by some 30 years by William R. Elton in *King Lear and the Gods* (1966). The Calvinist ideas that Elton finds in the *Arcadia* are, unsurprisingly, purely pessimistic: "the *Deus absconditus*; the gods as somehow not consonant with human happiness; human reason as corrupted

and dark; man's position in relation to cosmic forces as one of helpless despair; and mankind as a 'worm'" (36-37). This detailed list is undermined considerably, and Sidney's debt to Calvin left in doubt, by Elton's excessive hedging of his thesis. His claims stand on a framework of qualifications: it is "at least within the range of possibility that a number of references to the heavens in the *Arcadia* may, in addition to their rhetorical conventionality, have a Calvinist tinge"; the ideas might have come "from the Renaissance climate, from Montaigne, and elsewhere"; and "such conceptions are, of course, not necessarily all in total accord with the intention of Calvin, [though] they represent, at least in effect, feelings which the Calvinist premises could have produced" (36-37). Elton tries to illuminate the *Arcadia* in a Calvinist light, and I think he is not entirely wrong in his assumptions regarding the "possibility" of a "Calvinist tinge"—but here he offers only penumbras formed by emanations.

While Elton's very tentative Calvinist thesis is founded on the darkness of human reason, he nevertheless endorses D. P. Walker's exposition of Pamela as a *prisca theologus*, or pre-Christian pagan who had access to that portion of Christian truth able to be derived by reason. In other words, Elton believes that Sidney held a "liberal Calvinist position" (Elton 40) that, apparently, considered human reason utterly prostrate and yet, at the same time, capable of discovering some Christian truths. The pessimistic tone that Elton and Worden recognize in the *Arcadia* is certainly there, but, as Elton concedes, it is difficult to cite Calvinism as its source with any degree of certainty. And Sidney's pessimism is just as certainly answered by his evident optimism. Walker's 1955 essay was the earliest serious analysis of the evidence that Sidney's view of man was not in line

with the mainstream of contemporary Protestantism. Walker avers that this "liberal" position—believing that reason was in fact able to arrive at some, but not all, of Christian truth—was held by "most Catholics, a few Protestants" (Walker 262; see Elton 39 ff.).

While Elton seems simultaneously to resist and endorse Walker, Alan Sinfield expressly contradicts him. Sinfield argues that Sidney is a strict Calvinist, and that Pamela is not a *prisca theologus*. He derides Roger Howell's "notion that Sidney in his last years was moving away from strictly Protestant concerns and towards 'ecumenical' and 'pan-Christian' principles" ("Sidney, du Plessis-Mornay" 35), asserting that "There was no dwindling in Sidney's commitment to the Calvinist cause in his last years" (36). Politically, this is certainly true. But Sinfield seems to be blurring the distinction between Sidney's politics and his view of human reason. And, as I will argue in my discussion of the Sidney Psalms, it would seem that Sidney was indeed entertaining non-Protestant views—indeed, Catholic views, and not limited to assessments of human reason—in his last years. If my discussion of *Astrophil and Stella* is any indication, he was also indeed concerned with pan-Christian unity and ecumenism. And if my other chapters are any indication, he would not have had to "move away" from Protestantism in any significant way to arrive at that position. Sinfield is able to hold his strict Calvinist view of Sidney "because all that we know of Sidney's friends and political interests indicates that we should place him on the puritan wing of the Elizabethan church" (35). In a later essay, Sinfield revised his argument while maintaining the same conclusion,[14] but here, as in

[14] In *Faultlines*, chapter 8 ("Sidney's *Defence* and the Collective-Farm Chairman"), Sinfield argues that Walker is wrong because he misreads Mornay's *De la vérité de la*

that later essay, Sinfield has assumed that politics and religion are one, and that individuals befriended only members of their own church. But besides the fact that these assumptions are demonstrably false, Sinfield in this essay has made his judgments on the *Arcadia* without reference to the text itself, resting his case on a few sentences from the *Defence* and from Sidney's personal letters.

Along with Sinfield, the most influential critic to have adopted the anthropological approach is Andrew Weiner (*Sir Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Protestantism* [1978]). Weiner's method is closely related to that of the previous examples, as it is based on humanity's lack of free will and inability to choose the good. Weiner extracts a Calvinist sensibility from the *OA* by relying upon a nuanced understanding of differences between Lutheran and Calvinist teachings on free will (and incidentally, on eloquence in relation to the will). In Weiner's scheme, Luther represents the "hard" view of free will, in which the Fall of man has left the will wholly impotent. For Weiner's Luther, eloquence could not move men to choose the good because the will was wholly corrupted by the Fall. Calvin, according to Weiner, represents the "soft" version of the will, in which the Fall rendered the will impotent to choose the good in spiritual matters, but still able to secure the proper ordering of things secular. Therefore

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religion chrestienne. His critique of Walker is misdirected, however, since Sinfield's concern is whether pagans could be saved without the Christian revelation, but Walker never claims this for them. He merely reports that the liberal position held that "some of them were probably saved" (Walker 262).

eloquence, from this Calvinist perspective, was still useful for moving men to choose the good—in non-spiritual matters.[15]

However, on free will Sidney is more Lutheran than Calvinist. Luther never denies the ability of human beings to make "civic" decisions—whether to marry, how to earn one's living, how to order one's daily affairs, and other such routine concerns. In this he is no different from Calvin. Luther, also like Calvin, denies that human beings can choose to perform any work that might have spiritual merit. Unlike Calvin, however, Luther preserves the freedom of the will to *reject* grace. In Luther's view, the will is thus not wholly impotent in spiritual matters, and Weiner's distinction between a "hard" and "soft" view of of the will does not hold. Moreover, though Weiner claims that the soft, "Calvinist" view of free will grants freedom only in secular matters, this does not stop Weiner from repeatedly criticizing Musidorus and Pyrocles for failing to make the right spiritual choices.[16] And if the persuasive power of Weiner's thesis lies its taking care to distinguish between the secular and the spiritual, his failure to make such a distinction in his own criticism suggests that he has not yet truly convinced himself of its truth.[17]

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[15] Alan Sinfield advanced a similar argument a few years later: "Sidney can then allow natural understanding, in Calvin's manner, to the philosophical poet and the poet who shows what should be, for these are *practical and ethical concerns*" (*Literature in Protestant England* 23, my italics).

[16] That Sidney is in general more indebted to the Lutheran tradition (via Melanchthon) than to the Calvinist, has been exhaustively demonstrated by Robert Stillman, *Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Renaissance Cosmopolitanism*.

[17] it is not explained why Sidney should have faced an either/or choice between Luther and Calvin on the question of free will with respect to secular matters. He could have gotten a satisfactory answer without reference to either of them, from the Neo-Stoic distinction between first and second causes. Sidney's fondness for the Stoics has been recognized by many scholars, including Weiner, who sees Philanax as representing Stoic

Finally, there are the critics who attempt to pin the Calvinist tag onto Sidney based on moral or temperamental grounds. In this view, sternness is associated with Calvinism and Puritanism (the terms are used interchangeably by many authors). Percy Addleshaw saw him as a "prig" and a "bigot"—both qualities that he seems to associate with anyone who thinks that theology is worth fighting for. Among this group Addleshaw counts Sidney,[18] and though he never explicitly links Sidney to Calvin, his disdain for religious zealots suggests that he would have filed them in the same mental cabinet. Addleshaw's biography of Sidney is remarkable today for being the first consciously to reject the hagiographical tradition that preceded (and followed) it, and for its egregious and undisguised bias against all things religious, insofar as they do not contribute to the "peace and quiet" that come from "enlightened and humane" values (92). We have seen this "moral Calvinism" already in Worden and Elton, and it has been picked up by others. Franco Marenco, after linking Sidney to Calvinism in his book *Arcadia Puritana*, returned to denounce, with the zeal of a revivalist preacher, the moral failings of virtually

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values (Weiner *Sir Philip Sidney*). Brian P. Copenhaver and Charles B. Schmitt summarize how Justus Lipsius, Sidney's friend and author of "the leading statements of the Renaissance revival of Stoicism" (261), explained first and second causes: "Freedom, contingency, and moral responsibility are preserved in the order of *second causes*, far removed from the realm of *first causes* where destiny prevails. [. . .] God *is* fate, which thus poses no threat to divine might or freedom. Fate causes everything, but not every act is a *direct* effect of fate. Within the sphere of fate's *indirect* effects (*via* second causes), humans preserve their moral liberty and responsibility. Noble deeds and vile crimes are their own, rescued by the distinction between first and second causes" (266, 268).

[18] "[T]he chief aim of his life was to be a Protestant, and often an unpleasant one"; "This fact, at least, is certain, though it is glossed over by his commentators, that however much poetry and romance attracted him, true religion as he understood it, and frightful bigotry was what concerned him most" (75).

all the characters in the *OA*.[19] The humorous side of the *OA* seems to have been lost on Marenco, just as it had been on Addleshaw, who claimed that Sidney "seems never to have laughed heartily. [. . .] The lighter side of life was a region he never explored. To most modern ears his excessive puritanism is offensive, or should be" (1-2).[20] One wonders whether such a critic has actually read the *Arcadia*. Yet, perhaps because of the widespread perception that Sidney was a dour Calvinist, it is not uncommon to find humorous scenes discussed in deadly serious fashion. For example, Paul Green (1979) manages to keep a straight face while discussing the attempted suicides of Pyrocles. This is no small feat, since in both versions of the *Arcadia* Pyrocles' failures border on slapstick comedy.[21]

Third Category: Polemical / Theological Religion

In contrast to the politically and anthropologically based assessments of religion in the *Arcadias* is the polemical or theological approach. Barbara Brumbaugh has

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[19] Franco Marenco, "Double Plot in Sidney's Old *Arcadia*." *The Modern Language Review* 64.2 (1969): 248-63.

[20] Margaret Dana ("Providential Plot") implies an impressionistic moral Calvinism in the *OA*: the "firm moral structure" reflects "Sidney's Protestant belief" (45), and the royal advisor Philanax "sounds very much like a Calvinist preacher" (46). Dana backs away from her Calvinist observations in the essay's final paragraph, concluding that Sidney's ideal model for emulation was not Euarchus, with his "Calvinistic condemnation" of the princes, but "the flexible narrator himself" (57).

[21] To share in Green's seriousness for a moment, I would suggest that Sidney makes Pyrocles look utterly ridiculous in these otherwise deadly serious moments as a way of eliciting the reader's scorn for suicide. As Green notes, the argument with which Philoclea convinces him to leave off his quest of self-destruction is paradoxical: if he kills himself, she will kill herself, too. That it takes such an argument to call Pyrocles back to his senses suggests that his suicidal tendencies are intended to be read as ludicrous and not worthy of the reader's respect.

established herself, in a series of recent articles on the *NA*, as a new champion of the view first popularized by Greville, that Sidney was anti-Catholic on a theological level. But despite her thorough research and often original insights into the *NA*, Brumbaugh's approach thus far has been dogged by two problems: first, she has such confidence that Sidney is anti-Catholic that her assessments of putatively anti-Catholic moments in the *NA* are examined without regard to important alternative interpretations and contrary evidence within the *NA* itself. And second, she commits the common mistake of identifying Sidney's foreign policy goals with his metaphysical beliefs, and his friends' beliefs (especially Greville's) with his own.

First Problem: Contrary Evidence

Brumbaugh's method is to examine a particular passage or poem in light of contemporary Protestant polemical writings. When parallels are found—and there are many—she has established the likelihood that Sidney may have been using the passage to criticize the Roman Church, praise Protestantism, or otherwise comment on the state of English religion. This seems to assume that the *NA* in its entirety is an anti-Catholic commentary, if only we have eyes to see. But this is not so, as will be seen by reviewing a few examples.

Brumbaugh compares Cecropia's "allegorical family history" ("Cecropia" 22) with Protestant polemics, and makes a rational case for reading Cecropia as the "Whore of Babylon" for which anti-Catholics took the Church. She lists many parallels: for example, Cecropia and the Church both glory in pomp; both had fallen from power; both

were plotting against kings: Cecropia against Basilius, and the Catholic Church against Elizabeth (22-23). As the parallels accumulate, their very quantity does begin to suggest authorial intention to criticize the Roman Church. Yet certain competing interpretations must be suppressed or ignored in order for Brumbaugh's anti-Catholic reading to stand.

One such important detail concerns the births of Pamela and Philoclea. Their father, Basilius, married in old age, and their births came as a surprise to those who had expected Basilius to die single and without an heir. In particular, Cecropia's son Amphialus was cut off from the Arcadian succession by the birth of Pamela to Basilius, his uncle. The bulk of Book Three of the *NA* is concerned with Cecropia's rebellion in hopes of overthrowing Basilius and restoring her family to power. Brumbaugh sees Cecropia not only as the Whore of Babylon but also as the Mass. Thus, in these fictional events she sees a parallel to the history of the Catholic Church in England. Formerly powerful, she explains, the Mass suffered a blow when Henry VIII repudiated papal power. In order to make this comparison, Brumbaugh must equate the Mass with papal authority—which does not quite work, since although Henry did indeed repudiate papal authority, he did not repudiate the Mass, which continued in use at least until Henry's death in 1547.

Where Brumbaugh sees a tale of the dashed hopes of a nephew's inheritance and interprets it as an allegory of the fate of the Catholic Church in England, most Sidney scholars would instead tend to read it as inspired by Sidney's own experience. In 1581, a son was born to his uncle, the Earl of Leicester. Until Lord Denbigh's birth, Sidney was Leicester's heir—a fact that surely won Sidney no small amount of respect. The parallel

with Amphialus, both losing their inheritance due to an unexpected birth, is obvious. And just as Cecropia saw death as a legitimate instrument to regain her son's lost inheritance (she schemed to assassinate Basilius, and to kill one or both of his daughters), so Sidney was restored as heir through the death of the infant Denbigh. Denbigh's short life, 6 June 1581 – 19 July 1584 (Adams), corresponds with the low point in Sidney's public career: chronically unemployed and in debt, driven by financial necessity to navigate the moral quandary of accepting money from recusant fines, he spent most of this time at Wilton, writing the *NA* and *Astrophil and Stella*. It is possible that these career doldrums are directly related to his loss of status as Leicester's heir, and possible too that some of the plot details in Book 3 were suggested by this event in his own life. This obvious and important biographical parallel between Sidney and Amphialus is not mentioned by Brumbaugh, and consequently neither is the question it raises for her interpretation of the *NA* with respect to Sidney's religion.

The interpretive question to which I refer, of course, is how far do Sidney's "autobiographical" characters represent the man himself? For Amphialus is joined by Astrophil and by Philisides in the *OA* and *NA* as examples of what Ringler calls (in reference to Philisides), "Sidney's fictionalized self-portrait."[22] The loss of inheritace suffered by both is just one example of the common ground between Sidney and Amphialus. Richard McCoy explores other of Sidney's qualities and their manifestation

[22] Ringler, p. 418. For a list and analysis of Sidney's self-manifestations in Astrophil, see Alan Sinfield, "Sidney and Astrophil." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 20.1 (1980): 25-41, and Thomas P. Roche, Jr., "Autobiographical Elements in Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella*." *Spenser Studies* 5 (1985): 209-29.

in this character (*Rebellion in Arcadia*) Astrophil and Philisides provide an independent witness that Sidney was in the habit of planting biographical elements in his characters. Amphialus means "between two seas"—a nickname that could easily apply to Sidney, who, as I demonstrated earlier, found himself in a balancing act between conformity to the English Church and adopting the Catholic religion professed by not a few family and friends, between advancing his own self-interest at Court and those of his oppressed Catholic friends. If, as seems very likely, he did intend a biographical connection with Amphialus, the logical extension of Brumbaugh's argument would lead to a rather dramatic conclusion: if, that is, Sidney wrote a piece of himself into Amphialus, and if, as Brumbaugh's marshalling of the evidence makes seem plausible, part of Sidney's intention was to use Cecropia negatively to represent the Catholic Church, then the logical consequence of these two observations is that Sidney was in some aspect or degree portraying himself as a conflicted son of the Catholic Church. For Amphialus is nothing if not conflicted in his relationship to his mother.

Such a conclusion quickly raises other questions, producing a true hornet's nest of interpretation. For if Cecropia represents the Catholic Church, she also represents atheism. Another problem is that Sidney likely wrote part of himself into Musidorus and Pyrocles. Add this to Brumbaugh's own thesis that Amphialus represents Pyrocles in his concupiscible faculty ("*Jerusalem*" 338), and the mind reels. This is one reason why scholars like Stillman warn against allegorical readings of Sidney's works: their complexity defies the identification of simple correspondences. None of this is apparent, however, in Brumbaugh's explanation of Cecropia as the Whore of Babylon.

Furthermore, Amphialus's "idolatrous" worship of Philoclea must be considered. He offers her "daily presents (as it were, oblations to pacify an angry deity)" (*NA* 334.24). These oblations Brumbaugh reads as Masses, and concludes that "through Amphialus's courtship of Philoclea Sidney criticizes forms of worship presented as inappropriate" ("Cecropia" 32-3). This one scene, however, cannot account for Sidney's feelings about Roman "idolatry" in any complete sense. For Amphialus is not the only person in the *Arcadias* to offer "daily oblations" to a woman: Pyrocles does the same (*OA* 78; see below), and is not criticized for it, nor presented in the same hopeless, ridiculous light as Amphialus. Moreover, as I will discuss below, throughout both *Arcadias* Sidney constantly uses the language of Petrarchan adoration and "idolatry," and, as Worden also notes, not all of Sidney's representations of this love-idolatry are "unsympathetic" (Worden 330).

Altars make another appearance in Brumbaugh's work, in her analysis of the poem "Now was our heav'nly vault deprived of the light," which appears in both *Arcadias.* Through a number of details Brumbaugh links Venus and Diana (who appear in the poem) to the Church in its caricature as the Whore of Babylon. They complain that their altars have been defaced, just as iconoclasts had deface Catholic altars ("Temples" 206). And the fact that Philisides, the reciter of the poem in the *OA*, chooses the plain servant girl Mira over the pagan goddesses, is said to indicate a rejection of the "inventions" of the Catholic Church in preference for the simpler Protestant style of worship. Yet if the portrayal of broken altars to Venus and Diana is meant as a rejection of Roman altars and images, it does not explain the numerous other positive references to

the same in both *Arcadias*. And if we consider the change from Philisides as narrator of the poem in the *OA* to Amphialus in the *NA*, Brumbaugh's *OA* interpretation applies only if we consider Amphialus, son of the Whore of Babylon, somehow repudiating its liturgical accoutrements and devotional habits, even as he continues in his "idolatry" by his worship of Philoclea.

Second Problem: Identifying Politics and Religion

In addition to the issues just discussed, Brumbaugh's interpretations are weakened by her failure to distinguish between Sidney's political support for European Protestants and his own theological convictions. In her essay on "Now was our heav'nly vault deprived of the light," Brumbaugh slides without comment from discussing the doctrinal and liturgical revolution begun under Edward VI, to Elizabeth's lack of support for the international Protestant Cause. Brumbaugh argues "that a fleeting period of happiness during the youth of the poem's narrator is associated with a golden era for Protestantism under Edward VI, but that Queen Elizabeth's leadership of the nation's church is criticized as inadequate" (198). This however is a strained locution designed to give Brumbaugh's thesis a degree of coherence that it would lack, were she to speak plainly. For in fact "leadership of the nation's church" actually has nothing to do with the church, and everything to do with providing military support to the Dutch Protestants.[23]

But these are apples and oranges: one cannot equate the stalling of church reform at home with the failure to support military intervention abroad, subsuming both

[23] See especially pp. 202 and 203, where this becomes fully apparent.

situations under the rubric of "leadership of the nation's church." It does not follow that because Sidney was disappointed in Elizabeth's approach to foreign policy he was therefore also disappointed in the cessation of Edwardian-style domestic church reform. Reformed Christians did not have a monopoly on wanting Spain to get out of the Low Countries. It is entirely probable that many people—Dutch Catholics, for instance—prayed their rosaries amidst candles and incense for Spain's defeat. The Netherlands were far from being uniformly Protestant, after all, and war imposed hardships on Catholics and Protestants alike.[24]

She again conflates church reform with foreign policy in a single, long sentence at the end of the same essay. In the poem, Venus and Diana are served by Mira, who Brumbaugh argues represents the one true church. Brumbaugh writes:

> Philisides' testimony that once he had attained his vision of Mira, 'all things afterwards seemed but blind darkness unto' him would, if Mira is interpreted as the true church, accord well with Malcolm Wallace's estimation, 'From the time of his return to England in 1577 Sidney's one absorbing interest during the remainder of his life was in the cause of international Protestantism, with which he believed the welfare of England to be bound up.' (220)

Again, this is comparing apples and oranges. It was not for the sake of keeping candles off the altars of Kent that Sidney was interested in raiding Spanish vessels off the coast of Florida. It was not church reform he was interested in, but in the military defeat of Spain and Rome. Even Sidney's letter to Walsingham, much quoted as one of the clearest

[24] "Reformation stirrings were felt in the Netherlands from at least 1520, and perhaps earlier, but Protestantism did not achieve anything like an 'established' position until relatively late in the century" (Carl Bangs, "Dutch Theology, Trade, and War: 1590-1610." *Church History* 39.4 (1970): 470-82, p. 470).

expressions of Sidney's belief in Providence and of his devotion to the Protestant Cause, contains no explicitly unpolitical elements:

> If her Majesty were the fountain I would fear considering what I daily find that we should wax dry, but she is but a means whom God useth and I know not whether I am deceived but I am faithfully persuaded that if she should withdraw her self other springs would rise to help this action. For methinks I see the great work indeed in hand, against the abusers of the world, wherein it is no greater fault to have confidence in man's power, then it is too hastily to despair of God's work.
>
> (Feuillerat 3.167)

Nor does this passage contain anything uniquely Protestant. Catholics believe in Providence. Even many non-Christian religions have some version of this belief.

Such is a thumbnail sketch of the broadly pro-Protestant *Arcadia* as it has been manufactured by the critics of the past several decades. As may be seen from this account, they have yielded useful knowledge and insights but have either not really discussed religion, or have discussed it from a perspective that omits reference to real Catholic beliefs. I propose that when these beliefs are readmitted into the reader's consciousness, the *Arcadias* take on a new dimension that would have remained largely invisible or obscure otherwise.

The *Old Arcadia*

David Norbrook has criticized the *Arcadia* for "exploring inner states" in a "clumsy and external" manner (106). The characters in the *OA* do have a habit of making outward show of their inner states. Cleophila gives voice to this tendency when she says,

"My thoughts [. . .] With flamy breath do issue oft in sound" (*OA* 104).[25] But rather than criticize it as clumsy, I propose that Sidney's method shows an affinity for the traditional Catholic understanding of materiality as a suitable and normal conduit for spiritual things. To put it more succinctly, Sidney has a sacramental mentality.

In the *OA*, characters' thoughts, no matter how insignificant, can take the shape of apostrophes to abstractions, animals, and inanimate objects. The book repeatedly shows characters grappling with inner turmoil by performing physical actions, such as withdrawing to solitary places, rendering their complaints into verse (sometimes simultaneously writing the verses down), and performing gestures such as crossing the arms. Impresas also work to externalize some abstract truth about their wearers. In the presence of others, emotions seem to have no alternative but to manifest themselves externally: again and again Sidney writes of countenances bearing witness to emotional reactions. When Pyrocles (dressed as the Amazon Cleophila) returns safely after having addressed the Phagonian rebels, we read of Basilius, Gynecia, and Philoclea that "there wanted no outward signs of their inward affection" (116).

Sidney's sacramental habit of relying on outward signs to signify and in many cases to influence or create inner reality might be called "externalized piety." By this term I am not also referring to the few passages in the book which depict actual religious ritual. Rather, I am limiting the term to ostensibly non-religious actions that externally manifest the inner life of a character: ostensibly non-religious, but frequently described in

[25] Cf. Sonnet 28 of *Astrophil and Stella*: "I in pure simplicitie, / Breathe out the flames which burne within my heart."

religious terms, and always born of the characters' quasi-religious devotion or reverence to their beloveds, who are often described as their goddess or saint. Several passages in the *OA* illustrate the tendency to refer to women and to the love of women in terms drawn from Catholic spirituality: Pyrocles "serves a goddess" (145) and considers it "blasphemy" to suggest that Philoclea's beauty could be surpassed (25). Musidorus first speaks against love as from a "pulpit" but later must "recant" when he falls in love and takes on a shepherd's costume (38).[26] Basilius calls Cleophila "heavenly woman or eathly goddess" (155), and when Pyrocles pretends not to love Philoclea, she (Pyrocles, dressed as Cleophila) felt she was "condemning herself to commit a sacrilege against the sweet saint that lived in her inmost temple" (183). Many more examples might be listed.

Several significant passages illustrate the nature of Sidney's externalized piety. Linking all of these passages is a common thread of a perceived correspondence between the state of mind of the character uttering his or her complaints, and the addressee of the complaints, be it an object, abstraction or something else. In each case the complaining characters lean on some physical object chosen for specific qualities that make it an effective intermediary for procuring grace for the soul. Scenes like these occur frequently enough to suggest that they are not products of chance inspiration, but rather represent a fixed aspect of the author's worldview. The essential correspondence of immaterial inner life and the material external world seems to have been a consideration of primary importance for Sidney.

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[26] Note the irony that Musidorus becomes a "pastor" (shepherd) only after he leaves off from preaching.

In the last poem of the First Eclogues, Musidorus explains that when his spirit is oppressed, he likes to get away from people and resort to the woods or the open air. Whereas at court he would be "limited to a whisp'ring note, the lament of a courtier," here in the woods, outside the hearing of others, can "disburden a passion . . . by the help of an outcry." His relief comes not only from the fact that his remote location frees him from the protocols of polite society, but depends also on the physical presence of the right kind of trees—the kind of trees in which he will be able to find a representation of his inward state. He sings, "And when I meet these trees [. . .], Ease I do feel [. . .] For that I find in them part of my estate represented" (76-77). The laurel represents victory; myrrh, lamentation; olive, quietness; and so forth. Each tree has fixed significations, and the fact that Musidorus catalogues the essences of not just a few but of sixteen different trees indicates that he has a clear and complex understanding of the world around him. Not only has he studied the external features of the trees, but he understands their metaphysical properties, and these immaterial traits are no less identifying features of the trees than the texture of their bark or shape of their leaves. To Musidorus, the physical and metaphysical are joint rulers of a single realm, with the physical controlling access to the metaphysical.

After cataloging the essences of the various trees, he comes to "the cedar, queen of woods." When he sees the cedar, he explains, "Then do I shape to myself that form which reigns so within me." In other words, he envisions Pamela, whose "living image," he says, lives in him (87). He continues:

And think there she do dwell and hear what plaints I do utter:

> When that noble top doth nod, I believe she salutes me;
> When by the wind it maketh a noise, I do think she doth answer.
> Then kneeling to the ground, oft thus do I speak to that image. (77)

As queen of the woods, the cedar represents Pamela, who is now queen of his heart (though only a princess in social position). Because of this quality of queenship it shares with Pamela, Musidous feels that it is an appropriate tree to receive his petitions. In addition to the correspondence between the tree and Pamela, note that this passage uses devotional language: kneeling before and speaking to an image. In short, Musidorus is speaking and acting like a Catholic engaged in intercessory prayer to the image of a saint. And not just any saint, but a queen. Later in the *OA* Pamela is called "the lady of us all" (345) in reference to her future status as queen of all Arcadians. But outside the book, in the England into which Sidney was born, Catholics identified Mary, Queen of Heaven, as "our Lady." Essentially, then, Musidorus's act of communing with the cedar tree, while somewhat odd in itself, also may be seen as kneeling in prayer to an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This action, though it has no connection with any of the seven sacraments, is yet sacramental in nature due to its reliance on a physical aid to achieve spiritual grace.

In the stanza following Musidorus's kneeling to the cedar, Pyrocles' response strengthens this feeling of Catholic practice:

> And for a sure sacrifice I do daily oblation offer
> Of my own heart, where thoughts be the temple, sight is an altar. (78)

The notion of the heart as a sacrifice is familiar from Psalm 51 ("The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."), but Pyrocles' heart is not broken or contrite, and his use of sight as an altar—the emphasis on

the visibility of his sacrifice—keeps us in mind of the Catholic piety alluded to by Musidorus. Examples like these demonstrate why it is insufficient for Brumbaugh to point out that Amphialus is an idolater: because so is Musidorus, so is Pyrocles; so are most of the lovers in the book. If even the heroes of the book are idolaters, what does that say about Sidney's supposed anti-Catholicism?

Philoclea provides the second example of a sacramental outlook in the *OA*. the troubled princess Philoclea resorts to a small wood, providing a second example of externalized piety. In this wood the effect of the moonlight shining through the treetops "bred a fearful devotion to look upon it," and there was "a fair white marble stone that should seem had been dedicated in ancient time to the sylvan gods." The wood is described as a "stately shrine" and a "little chapel," and the stone "served as an altar in that woody devotion" (95-6). Such language suggests that her situation is ultimately spiritual. Previously, Philoclea had inscribed a vow of chastity onto the white stone: her resolution was pure and steadfast, just like the stone, making it a fit surface to receive the inscription of her vow. Everything about the woody chapel evokes religious awe and seems custom-tailored to respond to Philoclea's inner state. And, like Musidorus and Pyrocles, she too is relying on an intercessor in a spiritual matter.

This scene is worth noting also for its eclectic mix of competing religious traditions. The pure white stone calls to mind pagan or natural religion. It is also called an "altar." Altars are found in all Catholic churches (but not all Protestant ones). Yet pure whiteness is associated with iconoclasm, which frequently targeted altars for destruction. Finally, the place's description as a "woody chapel" identifies it with the numerous

(perhaps more legendary than real) accounts of nonconformist worship, which betook itself to the woods in order to avoid interference by city and town authorities (Stell). The panoply of religious symbolism in this passage could represent a desire for a space in which such a confused mix of competing symbols might coexist in harmony.[27]

A third example: During their elopement, Pamela and Musidorus pause to rest "in a fair thick wood," "all of pine trees" (173). The pine represents a number of things that correspond with the lovers' present situation: "Pine is a mast for a ship," Musidorus relates in the First Eclogues, and they are travelling to the coast in order to sail to Musidorus's native Thessalia. Among the pine's other qualities: "Pine is high, hope is as high; sharp-leaved, sharp yet be my hope's buds" (77). But the main correspondence between inner state and external world in this scene is identified by Pamela as she carves their names into the trees, "making in their barks pretty knots which tied together the names of Musidorus and Pamela, sometimes intermixedly changing them to Pamedorus and Musimela" (174). One unfortunate pine tree must endure her engraving an entire sonnet into its bark, and on one of its roots a couplet that speaks of the "root of my desire" (174). She wounds the bark of these "straight upraised" trees because, wounded, they are accurate representations of her own high, straight, and "wounded" thoughts. Thus Pamela and Musidorus turn to the pines as fitting material intercessors to ease their mutual pain of having sworn to remain chaste until marriage.

[27] On the other hand, it could also be a factor behind Philoclea's own "raving" confusion in this scene (98).

A brief word is necessary to explain why I have said the pain of self-restraint was mutual, since critics always regard Pamela as the most self-possessed and majestic of the young nobles of the book. Her thoughts are of chastity, but at the same time she wants badly to violate her promise to herself that she would not commit an act of marriage without the solemnity of marriage (as it is later described at the princes' trial). Critics usually speak only of the lust of Musidorus in connection with this scene—his near attempt at rape and the manifestation of his unruly desires by the sudden arrival of the remnants of the Phagonian rebellion. However, noble and majestic though she certainly is, Pamela's thoughts are largely in harmony with his: in addition to their names, she carves "twenty other flowers of her travailing fancies, which had bound themselves to a greater restraint than they could without much pain well endure" (174).[28] She is repressing *twenty* products of her fancy, feels the pain of the effort, and enlists the trees in easing her soul by cutting their bark, thus bringing them into even greater correspondence with her inner state than when they were merely straight and noble.

There is more to this last scene. In response to Pamela's carved verses, Musidorus scratches 18 lines of verse into another tree. He twice calls the trees "blessed" for having

[28] Additionally, she sings to Musidorus of her sexual longings in procreative verses about about "diverse flowers" combining to form "one sight of beauty breed," "Though each of them his private form preserve" (175). She ends her stanzas by trying to give herself to him: "That he to whom these sundry gifts I bind, / All what I am, still one, his own, do find." Musidorus replies by claiming unworthiness: "No, no, such force with my small force to try / Is not my skill, nor reach of mortal mind" (176). This is a curious inversion of the positions in which they will find themselves on the next page, when Musidorus has become the active partner and Pamela the passive.

received the "grace" of Pamela's touch, a touch that was made possible by "some late grace" but itself produces a yet "greater grace":

> You goodly pines, which still with brave ascent
> In nature's pride your heads to heav'nward heave,
> Though you besides such graces earth hath lent,
> Of some late grace a greater grace receive,
>
> By her who was (O blessed you) content,
> With her fair hand, your tender barks to cleave,
> And so by you (O blessed you) hath sent
> Such piercing words as no thoughts else conceive (174-75)

He admonishes the trees that they should also gratefully accept his carved words, since although Pamela is one "whom worth makes highest over all," and he possesses merely "a baser hand," his words are nonetheless "all to her service meant." "Grace," of course, meant many things in Sidney's day, just as it does today. But in the context of a character who kneels to trees, it is reasonable to expect a spiritual interpretation of the word "grace." The grace that appears in Musidorus's poem is of that elevated, even supernatural sort. The earth has lent the pines "such graces" as it can; now the pines will receive a "greater grace" than earth is capable of bestowing. Following this "greater grace" with a double invocation of the blessedness of the trees, Musidorus has adopted a manner of speaking fully in harmony with traditional Catholic sacramental thought.

Cleophila provides several examples of the conscious search for external objects in correspondence with one's thoughts. At one point, Cleophila weeps into a clear stream, saying to it that "a love as clear as yourselves, employed to a love (I fear) as cold as yourselves, makes me increase your flood with my tears." (103-4). She then writes verses in the sand with a willow stick (104). The cold, pure stream corresponds to the apparent

coldness of Philoclea in response to the purity of Cleophila's love; Philoclea's failure to accept this love is written with a willow stick (the willow representing "refusal" [77]) and because the whole enterprise is so uncertain, it is written into a shifting, unsteady, sandy bank. In another passage, she throws her harmonious lute to the ground for not corresponding with her discordant thoughts: "Alas, poor lute, how much thou art deceived to think that in my miseries thou couldst ease my woes" (82). Where there is no correspondence, the lute is unable to soothe the soul.

My final example shows a less obvious search for correspondence, but also betrays an obvious debt to Catholic devotional tradition. In Book 2 Cleophila tries to relieve her "violent desires" by revisiting the place where she first met Philoclea: "There would she kiss the ground, and thank the trees; bless the air, and do dutiful reverence to everything that she thought did accompany her at the first meeting" (99-100). The "correspondence" here is indirect: the objects she focuses on correspond to her inner state only by virtue of having been physically present at her first sight of Philoclea. But her actions in this passage bear every resemblance to Catholic pilgrimages and the veneration of saints' relics. Shrines and pilgrimages were abolished and physically uprooted by Henry VIII but continued to live for generations in English memory—not least, in that of the Sidneys.[29]

It may be observed that in all of these examples, the characters speak in verse. Their versifying, when considered along with the very deliberate manner and strict

[29] See Waller, "The Other Virgin: Walsingham and Robert Sidney's Sixth Song," for an account of the Catholic nostalgia evident in Robert Sidney's Sixth Song.

criteria by which their nonhuman auditors are selected, strengthens the sense of ritual observance. Ceremony and ritual are more a Catholic phenomenon than a Protestant one, as indicated by Cardinal Pole's belief that "ceremonies give more light than the disobedient reading of Scripture" (Blench 51). This is especially true in the differences in how Catholics and Protestants administered the sacraments. Protestants eliminated most of the ceremony and ritual surrounding Baptism, for example, as distracting from the sacrament itself and as having no warrant in Scripture.[30] Catholics, on the other hand, deemed that the rituals were very important, though not necessary for a valid sacrament.[31] The ritual aspect of the *OA*'s quests for material intercessors sparks a sense that these characters, and their creator, are aware of and sympathetic to Catholic devotional practice.

"Sincerity": A Possible Alternative?

It may be objected that my association of the *OA* with Catholic sacramental thought is misguided, insofar as the scenes I have discussed might be seen as examples of the new—and significantly Protestant—fashion for "sincerity." In the sixteenth century

[30] See Spinks [2], chapters 1 and 2.

[31] "The pastor should try to make the ceremonies as understandable as possible, so that the faithful may appreciate them—not as absolutely necessary, but as very important and worthy of honor" (*RC* 191): "Danda est igitur Pastoribus opera, ut eas fideles intelligant, certoque sibi persuadeant, si minus necessariæ sint, plurimi tamen faciendas, magnoque in honore esse opertere" (*Catechismus* 118). The ceremonies accompanying baptism were not to be performed by extraordinary ministers (i.e., by a lay person in case of an urgent need for baptism), "not because these additional ceremonies have more dignity than the sacrament itself, but only because they are less necessary" (*Roman Catechism* 175): "quamuis, ut dictum est, non omnibus liceat solemnes cærimonias adhibere: non quidem quod ritus, aut cærimoniæ plus dignitatis, sed quod minus necessitatis, quam sacramentum, habeant" (*Catechismus* 105).

sincerity was an "intense concern" (Trilling 26). Paradoxically, at the same time that Protestants were rejecting much of the external piety of medieval Catholicism, the new fashion for "sincerity," or the outward manifestation of one's inner state, meant that the importance of externality was not eliminated, but rather shifted to a new arena. John Jeffries Martin has argued that during the Renaissance "we discover a growing moral imperative to make one's feelings and convictions known" (Martin, J. 1326). Early Renaissance concern with prudence—or, the careful disguising of one's true beliefs—gives way to a "new concern with sincerity" which grew partly from the Protestant conviction that it was a sin to conceal your true beliefs. But whereas an earlier ideal, such as that given in by Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*, would have recommended the prudent concealment of emotions, reformers such as Luther and Calvin "gave a new legitimacy to the expression of one's emotions" (Martin 1330, 1322, 1330). Martin in fact cites *Astrophil and Stella* as his first example of this new ideal: he claims that "Look in thy heart, and write" "might be seen as an epigram of the age" (1326). Patricia Fumerton, too, sees in the Elizabethan era "a real need for expressing the inner, private self" ("'Secret' Arts" 62). And, like Martin, she sees *Astrophil and Stella* as a literary embodiment of a multifaceted cultural response to this need. Might the *OA* stand as yet an earlier example than *AS*?

Such a question is, in my opinion, beside the point of my thesis. For beyond the successful expression of one's thoughts, why be "sincere"? What good is it to reveal your true beliefs if your only audience is a lute? or a tree? or a stream? Why do characters in

the *OA* take pains that no other human being hears their outpourings, and why seek specifically non-human auditors with special correspondences to their thoughts?

Perhaps humans are avoided in this enterprise because of the impossibility of being sure that one will find a mind in harmony with one's own. This harmony seems to be an essential criterion for finding relief of mind, and since the properties of inanimate objects tend not to shift from minute to minute as do human thoughts and emotions, it is a safer prospect to seek out the willow branches, cold streams, and sandy banks, while avoiding people. For when Musidorus asks, "to what serve exclamations *where there are no ears* to receive the sound?" (*OA* 91; *NA* 134.14, my italics), he means that it is fruitless to utter your complaints unless you are in the presence of a helpful person, *or* a harmonious proxy for that person—and in the *OA* that proxy often turns out to be an inanimate object.

Something of this insistence on correspondences is common to the sacraments, and since sacraments are signs, it extends into a consideration of sixteenth-century semiotics in general. I do not wish to imply that Sidney held any kind of belief in a one-to-one correspondence between words and things. Educated people knew that language was subject to historical flux. For example, at the very beginning of its discussion of sacramental signs the *Roman Catechism* explains that "The faithful should be taught that the word 'sacrament' has had different meanings, depending on how it was used by different writers" (145).[32] Not only does "baptism" mean other things in other writers—

[32] "Quare docendi sunt fideles, sacramenti nomen, quod ad propositam rem attinet, aliter a prophanis, quam a sacris scriptoribus, acceptum esse" (*Catechismus* 84).

even when used in Scripture—besides its strict sacramental meaning,[33] but the Fathers use many different words to designate this sacrament.[34] It can also be signified by nonverbal means, as in Old Testament prefigurations such as the parting of the Red Sea, the healing of Naaman the Syrian, and other examples (*Catechismus* 100). So also with "eucharist": "Because no one name could possibly be adequate to the reality of this sacrament, there has been some variety of expression among the Church's writers treating it" (*RC* 211).

Even so, this does not mean that this era considered all signs arbitrary.[35] Sacraments, by definition, bear resemblance to the things they signify: "they make known to us by means of a certain appearance and resemblance what God, by his invisible power, accomplishes in our souls" (*RC* 147). As Augustine declared, "Had not the sacraments some resemblance to the things of which they are sacraments they would not be sacraments at all" (quoted in R. Wallace 140). The *Roman Catechism* explains that "water is best adapted to signify the effect of Baptism, because water naturally cleanses, and thus it can signify a spiritual cleansing" (168).[36] It is what Augustine would classify

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[33] "Ac baptismus quidem græcum esse nomen nemo ignorat: quod etsi in sacris literis nō solum eam ablutionem, quæ cum sacramento coniuncta est, sed etiā omne ablutionis genus, quod aliquando ad passionem translatū est, significat; tamen apud Ecclesiæ scriptores non quamuis corporis ablutionem declarat, sed eam, quæ cum sacramento coniungutur, nec sine præscripta uerborum forma ministratur" (*Catechismus* 98).

[34] "Alia quoque nomina ad eandem rem significandam sancti Patres usurparunt" (*Catechismus* 98).

[35] Marvin Hunt has suggested that "the structuralist perspective was pervasive in Sidney's thought" ("Charactonymic" 7).

[36] "Deinde aqua effectum baptismi maxime significat. ut enim aqua sordes abluit, ita etiam baptismi uim, atque efficientiam, quo peccatorum maculæ eluuntur, optime demonstrat" (*Catechismus* 100).

as a "natural" sign. Such signs, "without any desire or intention of signifying, make us aware of something beyond themselves, like smoke which signifies fire. It does this without any will to signify, for even when smoke appears alone, observation and memory of experience with things bring a recognition of an underlying fire" (Augustine 2.1.2). It is for this same reason that the chrism used in the sacrament of confirmation is made of olive oil mixed with balsam: because the natural properties of these substances make them appropriate to this sacramental sign.[37]

The universal and effortless signification effected by natural signs, however, is more guaranteed in theory than in practice. For this reason the physical elements or natural signs of the sacraments must be accompanied by words, which Augustine classifies as "conventional" signs. For sacraments have two parts: "The first has the nature [*rationem*] of matter and is called the 'element.' The second has the nature [*vim*] of form and is commonly called the 'word'" (*RC* 153). "Words must be added to the matter (the element) in order to make unmistakable the significance of the thing done" (154).[38] This is the universal understanding of what constitutes a sacrament: John Calvin, for example, also insists on the joining of words to matter in making a sacrament.

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[37] "By its very nature rich and flowing, olive oil symbolizes the plenitude of grace which flows from Christ." "Balsam, too, which is mixed with the olive oil, is appropriately significant. Its pleasant fragrance symbolizes the diffusion of the fragrance of virtue" (*RC* 202).

[38] "Duo enim sunt, ex quibus quodlibet sacramentum cōficitur: quorum alterum materiæ rationem habet, atque elementum dicitur: alterum formæ uim , & uerbum communi uocabulo appellatur." "Addenda autem erant uerba ad materiam, ut apertior, clariorque rei, quæ gerebatur, significatio fieret. Verba enim inter omnia signa maximam uim habere perspicuum est: ac, si ipsa desint, plane obscurum erit, quidnam materia sacramētorum designet, ac demonstret" (*Catechismus* 91).

Evidently, Sidney is treating his non-human auditors in the *OA* as a species of sacramental sign. By making them natural objects such as trees, water, sand, and stones, he can count on their signifying power as natural signs. The lute which Cleophila throws to the ground may also be considered a natural sign, in that the harmony it produces is nonverbal and immediately recognized as in disagreement with Cleophila's mental turmoil. Words are always added to these natural signs, just as in the composition of a sacrament. But in addition, the sacramental signs of the *OA* actually effect what they signify—a quality that places them closer to Catholic sacraments than to Protestant. This is a basic disagreement between the two views. Catholics believe that sacraments effect what they signify: a sacrament "is something perceptible to the senses which, by virtue of its divine institution, has the power both to signify and to effect holiness" (*RC* 150). In baptism, "the bodily washing [. . .] not only signifies but actually effects a sacred reality in the soul, by virtue of the invisible [Latin: *interius*] action of the Holy Spirit" (*ibid.*).[39] It cleanses the soul of sin (184) and opens the gates of heaven (191). Protestants, by contrast, saw baptism as a formal initiation into the Christian community (Spierling). Luther believed that it saved souls from Satan, though in holding this traditional belief he differed from most non-Lutheran Protestants. The sacraments in general were thought by Calvin to "confirm" faith (R. Wallace 139), but not to remit sins or perform the wonders claimed for them by Catholics. Sidney's characters perform their sacramental rituals and

[39] "dicebamus solemnem illam corporis ablutionem signum esse, & efficientiam habere rei sacræ, quæ interius spiritus sancti fieret, idem etiā in aliis sacramentis exercere aliquis uelit" (*Catechismus* 87-88).

seek out specific kinds of signs because they are effective, because they actually provide relief rather than merely signifying relief.

The *New Arcadia*

The *NA* preserves and extends the sacramental vision I have just described at work in the *OA*. First, it retains most of the episodes of "externalized piety" discussed above. Since one of the major changes to the *Arcadia* in its 1590 incarnation was the removal of all of the eclogues, we no longer see Musidorus kneeling before the image of Pamela in the cedar tree, nor hear of Pyrocles' "daily oblations." But Musidorus nevertheless reports that "many times have I stood here bewailing myself unto [the trees]," observing that the palm tree represents "love without sense of pain" (128.16-19). Pyrocles as well is caught by Musidorus "alone with certain graces and countenances as if he were disputing with the trees" (48.36). In this the characters show the same belief as in the *OA*, in the fixed significations of trees and objects.[40] Given the new plot direction of the *NA*, there is no elopement scene with Musidorus and Pamela. But in the *NA* Philoclea still visits her "woody chapel" (*NA* 146), Pyrocles still talks to his lute (121.31), and still makes pilgrimage to the place he first saw Philoclea, making "dutiful reverence to everything that she thought did accompany her at their first meeting," honoring and blessing ("bliss the air") all the relics associated with that "mishap" (225). And characters still refer to their beloveds as deities, as when Musidorus refers to Pamela as "the planet,

[40] One of the four lacunae that appear in all MSS of the *NA* is of the catalog of trees (188.34; discussion of lacunae on p. lvi of the Textual Introduction). This may indicate that Sidney intended to insert the catalogue later, after working it up with greater care.

nay, the goddess against which the only shield must be my sepulchre" (107-08). In an episode unique to the *NA*, the royal family (minus Pamela) take Pyrocles on a coach ride to watch birds of prey and other sport. All of nature seems intended to aid their moral development by its allegorical significance: the greyhounds, spaniels, and hounds reinforce social hierarchy by representing the lords, the gentlemen, and "the yeomen of dogs" (142.10-12); when a heron flies high, it is "to give example to great persons that, the higher they be, the less they should show" (142.19-21); and when a gerfalcon is released to attack the heron, its gradual, indirect course upwards reminds the viewers of a "good builder, [who] to a high tower, will not make his stair upright, but wind[s] almost the full compass about, that the steepness be the more unsensible" (142.24-26).[41]

Where the *NA* extends the *OA*'s sacramental vision is in its treatment of art and beauty, both of which are much more prominent in the revision. Norman K. Farmer asserts that the *NA* is "expressive, as the *Old Arcadia* had not been, in a strikingly visual way; on this point there is no debate" (1), while Jon S. Lawry claims that in moving from the *OA* to the *NA*, Sidney "chang[ed] the general mode of perception from the ear to the eye" (154). This shift has been described by S. K. Heninger, Jr. as Sidney's response "to the crisis in literary studies brought about by the recovery of Aristotle's *Poetics*," which called on poets to look at observable nature rather than speculate about Forms, Ideas, and Essences; under this new literary regime the poet must deal in physical reality rather than in intelligible (Heninger, "Speaking Pictures" 3-4).

[41] While this is an example of the sacramental worldview, it is one of the rare parts of the *NA* not incompatible with Calvin's theory of images (to be discussed in the Psalms chapter).

> Sidney appears at that node in our cultural history when the prevalent esthetics was turning from a dependence upon the formal criteria of proportion and verging toward an empirical basis in the accurate observation and description of physical nature. Sidney, as an author of songs and sonnets, a humanist, a platonist, looks back nostalgically to a poetics with heavenly beauty as its subject matter and the Muses as its sponsor. As a modern man of practical affairs, a Protestant, an incipient empiricist, he introduces a new poetics where images direct their sensuous appeal to the mind's eye. (15)

Beauty as proportion is a decidedly medieval notion, while beauty as light comes later.[42] Sidney demonstrates some of this older understanding of beauty as proportion—from the time, as Heninger says, where the poet's subject was "heavenly beauty" (that is, the divine ordering of the cosmos "in measure and number and weight" [Wisdom 11:20, KJV])—when he writes of Kalander's hunting dogs. Their cries being such that "any man would perceive therein some kind of proportion, but the skilful woodmen did find a music" (54.23). Yet Heninger is right that Sidney finds appeal in the sensuousness of the physical.

At the same time, Sidney's focus on the physical (especially apparent in Book Three of the *NA*) does not preclude his serious engagement with the older concern with heavenly proportion. In fact, he seems to regard physical beauty as a bridge between visible, earthly existence and invisible, heavenly beatitude. The very beginning of the *New Arcadia* proclaims the mediating role of beauty, as the shepherds Strephon and Claius remember the departed Queen Urania. They describe her as "a maide, who is such, that as the greatest thing the world can shewe, is her beautie, so the least thing that may be praysed in her, is her beautie" (*NA* 7). Given that Urania, by virtue of her name,

[42] See Umberto Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, pp. 47-48.

attributes, and physical absence, represents a heavenly being,[43] Urania's beauty here is the link between heaven and earth. By focusing on beauty we can attain the highest the earth has to offer, and get a glimpse of the lowest of heavenly attributes. Beauty is here the sole common factor between the two realms.

This view of beauty has been challenged by Susanne Fendler. In Fendler's view, Sidney retains the old understanding of beauty at the beginning of the *NA* in the character of Urania. Never physically present, for Fendler she represents a pure sign and a Neoplatonic impulse to interpret beauty in terms of its value as an aid on the ascent to God (Fendler 272-4). However, she reads Sidney's other female characters as embodying a different kind of beauty, one shorn of any transcendent reference. Instead of being a sign of virtue, which (to readers before Sidney's time) would traditionally call to mind God's perfection, the beauty of Parthenia, Pamela, and Philoclea is read as a means of differentiating fictional characters as unique individuals and as a visible sign of their social status (that is, to indicate their aristocratic breeding and virtue). In his desire to write more fully individualized characters, Fendler argues, Sidney had no choice: "as different kinds of beauty are introduced and made to become characteristics that distinguish one character from another, beauty has to be freed from its religious connotations" (282).

Fendler's argument, however, requires some correctives. She detects a shift from "the traditional concept of the sign" of beauty as a pointer toward virtue, to beauty as a

[43] Duncan-Jones, "Sidney's Urania," claims that Urania in the *NA* may be Venus Urania, the muse of Christian poetry.

signifier of the "self." Yet she herself does not always differentiate between "beauty" and "virtue" in the essay itself. And in the *NA*, from beginning to end, character after character assumes the association of beauty and virtue. In fact, the only characters who call attention to their own beauty are morally bad ones: the maids of Cecropia (315.20); Dido (betrayer of Pyrocles for ransom money, 240.31-34).[44] The association of beauty and virtue is made by the *Defence* as well: whoever "could see virtue, would be wonderfully ravished with the love of her beauty."

Ultimately, beauty for Sidney is necessarily moral (though almost always it is also bodily). The Queen of Laconia is neither perfectly beautiful nor very ugly, "but she was a queen, and therefore beautiful" (96.9), a conclusion that refers to her moral status as a ruler. Beauty forces compassion in warriors in battle, presumably because it conveys the presence of virtue: Amphialus sees the beauty of Agenor (whose beaver was up), and "compassion so rebated the edge of choler that he spared that fair nakedness and let his staff fall to Agenor's vamplate" (339.32-35). Philanax pities Ismenus because of his "most lovely presence," and so spares him. He even seems to believe that beauty is a sufficient indicator of virtue, even in a rebel soldier who has just wounded him, since he intends to give Ismenus to his younger brother as a companion. Philoclea imprisoned, her hair a complete mess, suffers no diminishment of her beauty, any more "than a die any way cast could lose his squareness" (329.35). Kalander's picture gallery is called "a

[44] Dido is daughter of Chremes the miser; they both gladly turn over Pyrocles for the ransom money promised by Queen Artaxia (245-46). Chremes should also be interpreted as one of the various "idolaters" who populate the *NA*: he is like the Rich Man in Luke 12:13-21, who stores up possessions but is not "rich in God." See also Colossians 3:5, which speaks of "covetousness, which is idolatry."

square room" (14.36), which, as Norman Farmer explains, denotes stability and order (Farmer 7). Other examples could be given (see e.g. *NA* 130.25 and 131.19), but it seems clear that beauty and virtue do not suffer any radical sundering in the *NA*.

Fendler cites the love of Argalus and Parthenia as evidence of a shift from "the traditional concept of the sign" of beauty as a pointer toward virtue, to beauty as a signifier of the "self" (273).[45] Yet it is certainly important to recognize that Argalus and Parthenia are unique in the *NA*, indeed, in all of Sidney's writings, as a perfectly happy married couple. In this capacity Argalus and Parthenia serve as a living picture that provides moral guidance to others in the book. Lawry points out that the three pairs of lovers introduced in Book I of the *NA* correspond to the tripartite model of human nature: Intellect, Spirit, and Appetite; and that they correspond closely to the other three main couples. Such an ordering may be represented thus:

Intellect	**Spirit**	**Appetite**
Argalus/Parthenia	Amphialus/Helen	Phalantus/Artesia
Musidorus/Pamela	Pyrocles/Philoclea	Basilius/Gynecia

(derived from Lawry 164)

If Lawry is correct, Sidney has set out his pairs of lovers in an "emblematically pictorial" way (157); a "processional principle" (161) is at work in the *NA*, in which narratives are put before the reader, and before the book's own characters, as "a collection of instructive tableaus" (156). To derive the full meaning of the text, the reader is expected "to look within individual pictures (in 'outward' setting, dress, armor, or fixed tale) to see their

[45] Argalus continued to love Parthenia even after poison rubbed on her face had destroyed her beauty. As Fendler would have it, this indicates that he has moved from loving her virtues to loving her self.

inward significance, and then to move processionally with them and among them" (162). The image of Argalus and Parthenia is, apart from the beauty of the individuals, itself beautiful, and stands as an exemplar for the rest of the lovers to imitate, whether they recognize that fact (as do Musidorus and Pamela) or not (as most of the other characters). This taxonomy of the lovers illustrates the proper ordering of the "trinity" of human nature, with Intellect ruling over the Spirit and Appetite. As Lawry points out, Musidorus and Pyrocles learn from and act on their encounters with these living images. Far from freeing beauty from its religious connotations, then, Sidney is showing that varieties of the concrete and particular all may serve as guides to the divine (inosfar as "virtue" in Fendler's argument points to God's perfection, which we should strive to emulate). This is his sacramental mentality at work.[46]

Sidney's concern with the role of beauty in moving people to virtue is seen also in his treatment of artworks. Pictures are important to the characters of the *NA*, from Kalander's gallery (*NA* 14), to the tournament of Phalantus (where combatants defend their ladies' pictures) (94.26 ff.), to Pyrocles' victory over a monster being "by sculpture and picture celebrated in most parts of Asia" (270.31), to the great detail with which the many knightly impresas are described. Sidney's familiarity with Italian art and with the *techne* of painting were remarkable for an Englishman of his time,[47] and is hinted at in his painterly description of the gestures Pyrocles makes during his speech to the

[46] This paragraph seems to have promise but to suffer from some confusion.
[47] "According to Nicholas Hillyard, the most prominent limner of the English Renaissance, Sidney was knowledgeable about the theoretical and practical concerns of painters" (Farmer 2).

Phagonian rebels: they "served as a shadow to make the picture more lively and sensible" (287.18-20). His practical artistic knowledge is also on display when he describes Queen Erona's face as being "a thought longer than the exact symmetrians perhaps would allow" (95.26).

Erona serves my purpose in this chapter in another way as well, through the tragic tale of her love for Antiphilus ("anti-love"). The story appears in both *Arcadias*, though in slightly different forms. The basis of both versions is that Erona institutes a wave of iconoclasm, causing Cupid's statues and pictures to be removed from the land. And in both, Cupid takes revenge by making her fall hopelessly in love with her opposite, the base-born Antiphilus. Winfried Schleiner illuminates the episode by situating Antiphilus in a long string of low-born characters in the *NA*, all of whom act wickedly. According to Schleiner, Sidney is illustrating the dangers, public and private, of mixing love with disparity of rank, of linking baseness with nobility. Other examples include Chremes the miser, who is "a *nouveau riche* and upstart, who has tried to climb by buying an estate" (Schleiner 385); Andromana, who becomes queen of Iberia but began as "a private man's wife" (*NA* 215.29); Plexirtus, bastard son of the Paphlagonian king, who usurps power; the Phagonian mob, who nearly kill the Arcadian royal family and their guests.

Apparently Sidney scorned *nouveaux riches* and upstarts. In itself this is not so noteworthy: he was acutely self-conscious (as was his father) of the shallow soil in which the Sidney family's nobility grew, and he thus considered "that my chiefest honour is to be a Dudley" (*MP* 134.17), a family with a much more solidly noble ancestry than the Sidneys'. But in Erona's case, Sidney works the demise of the low-born upstart in the

context of a punishment against Erona's violation of the traditional religion. The wrath of Cupid is stressed more in the *OA* than in the *NA*, but iconoclasm is punished severely in both versions. Shuger's essay, cited above, examines the *OA*'s trial scene as revealing Sidney's anxiety for and fervent defense of the old aristocracy and its privileges. Given the anti-iconoclastic sentiment of the Erona episode, and Stephen Hamrick's demonstration that Cupid was often associated by Protestants with the "idolatry" of the Catholic Church,[48] it seems likely that Sidney may have felt some ambivalence about the "upstart" nature of the Reformed Church and its lack of ancient pedigree, despite the efforts of polemicists such as William Fulke to link it with the true, ancient church. It also stands to reason that he would have supported traditional religion openly were it not for the choice of Henry VIII (made for private reasons) to set England on the path to public conflict with her international Catholic neighbors.

Ultimately, Erona's iconoclastic fervor—getting rid of the offending shapes (the sculptures and pictures of Cupid/Love)—succeeds only in reestablishing "the shape of loveliness" in Plangus, the unfortunate knight who falls in love with her. Her sadness at her ill fate and that of Antiphilus combined with her beauty to cause Plangus "to perceive the shape of loveliness more perfectly in woe than in joyfulness (as in a picture, which receives greater life by the darkness of shadows than by more glittering colours)" (301.27). Thus Erona's drive for a more spiritual worship resulted in her unwitting transformation into the embodiment of loveliness, which constrains Plangus to serve her. Instead of purifying her realm, her iconoclasm has instead created another "idolater."

[48] Hamrick, "*Tottel's Miscellany* and the English Reformation."

The case of the Phagonian mob is nearly as suggestive as the fate Sidney derived for would-be iconoclast Erona. The commoners are criticized for mingling public affairs with private grudges (291.12), and though this is reported by Cecropia's wicked and cowardly servant Clinias, it agrees with the narratorial tone of the main skirmish outside the royal lodges. It suggests that Sidney would have taken care to distinguish public affairs from private—to distinguish between international Catholicism and the Catholics who lived down the street, such as Edward Bannister, the recusant from Putney to whom Sidney may have given one of his poems in manuscript.[49] Or Sir Thomas Cornwallis, a prominent Suffolk recusant to whom Sidney claimed to owe "a particular duty" which he would "never fail to show to my uttermost" (Stewart 242).)

The reader may have noticed that the common people and their negative association with art is a significant feature of both the Erona and Phagonian rebellion episodes. One further scene in which a low-born character interacts with art may suggest another aspect of Sidney's sacramental view. In the scene in question, Miso (wife of Dametas, chief herdsman of Arcadia) relates how she once "scriked out, for fear" upon seeing a picture of the devil (211.27). Adam McKeown ponders, "In Miso's case we are left to wonder why the peasant woman's reaction to a painted devil is more ridiculous than Pyrocles' enthrallment at the image of Philoclea in Kalander's gallery, or Helen's weeping over a painting of her lost Amphialus." McKeown concludes that there is no real difference; all three reactions express "primal emotions—fear and longing. One is simply

[49] Woudhuysen 242, who cites Ringler 555. Woudhuysen adds that "Despite Bannister's presence in 1584 at Putney, near to Sidney's marital home, there seems to be no obvious close connection between the two" (243).

better dressed than the other" (McKeown 28). In other words, art is deployed in the *NA* as a tool for making lower-class characters look ridiculous, and giving upper-class characters an opportunity to show their good breeding.

While McKeown's thesis is ultimately untenable, its usefulness lies in that it does in fact bring to the surface a real similarity between these otherwise very different reactions to pictures—though not the one he suggests. While the emotions the pictures provoke—fear and longing—are opposites, both imply a sense of presence communicated through the likeness. This is like the theory by which icons are venerated. In his iconodule treatise *On the Holy Images*, John of Damascus relates St. Basil's observation that the image of the king is called the king. It follows, says the Damascene, that "honouring the image becomes honouring the one who is set forth in image" (John of Damascus 34-35). Miso's reaction to the painted devil seems very much as if she considers it to be the devil himself.

Likewise, Helen's interaction with her picture of Amphialus seems to take Damascene's statement yet a step further. At her first appearance in the book, we see her ladies in waiting holding a picture for her to look at as they travel by carriage (58.30). She agrees to tell her tale after Musidorus "conjures" her to do so, admitting that his "conjuration" is too powerful to disobey. When she tells him of how Philoxenus loved her, but she loved Amphialus instead, "she looked upon the picture before her, and straight sighed, and straight tears followed, as if the idol, of duty, ought to be honoured with such oblations; and then her speech stayed, the tale having brought her to that look, but that look having quite put her out of her tale" (60.33-61.1). The picture seems to

control her, producing responses automatically, and her submission to the picture is emphasized when she shows it to Ismenus (the page of Amphialus [66.19],) and says, "here is my lord; where is yours?" (66.33). She understands that the picture is not the person, for Ismenus's lord is the person in her picture (and besides, otherwise she would not be out looking for him). But in his personal absence his picture serves as a powerful stand-in.

The importance of this scene to my argument lies in its sympathetic portrayal of an idolater. The narrator clearly calls the picture "the idol," and her tears and sighs "oblations." And when we read that Musidorus thinks of her as "the fair queen, whose case in his heart he pitied" (66.7-8), he does not pity her because of her theological error concerning pictures, of which he is himself guilty, and for which neither he nor she is ever condemned. Indeed, Helen is consistently praised in the *NA*. Through her skill in medicine and access to the best physicians (to her Amphialus owes his life, and Parthenia her beauty), she is the character most associated with health—*salus*, or, by extension, salvation. In more than one way she resembles Amphialus: she idolizes him, while he idolizes Philoclea. Also, she wants to imprison him because she loves him, just as Amphialus does with Philoclea. Helen's idolatrous mindset and desire to cage him she loves would not seem to add up to a ringing endorsement of her as a good queen, yet, like Amphialus, she is highly praised in the *NA*.

Conclusion

Jon S. Lawry has argued that Sidney's practice in both *Arcadias* was founded on the belief that "right fiction, a 'speaking picture,' is in a sense incarnative, allowing the word to be made flesh" (*Sidney's Two Arcadias* 4). Michael Mack teaches that Sidney's poetic theory calls for the reader "to incarnate [. . .] the Idea of the work in one's own life" (Mack 71), which is perhaps another way of saying with Sidney that "it is not gnosis but praxis must be the fruit" of poetry. "Incarnational" is an apt term for the scenes of "externalized piety" I have discussed. C.S. Lewis brought up the question of how incarnation was to be understood by Protestants and Catholics, and in their respective literatures:

> In the world of matter, Catholics and Protestants disagree as to the kind and degree of incarnation or embodiment which we can safely try to give to the spiritual; but in the world of imagination, where allegory exists, unlimited embodiment is equally approved by both. Imagined buildings and institutions which have a strong resemblance to the actual buildings and institutions of the Church of Rome, will therefore appear, and ought to appear, in any Protestant allegory. If the allegorist knows his business their prevalence will rather mean that the allegory is not Catholic than that it is. For allegory is *idem in alio*. Only a bungler, like Deguileville, would introduce a monastery into his poem if he were really writing about monasticism. (*Allegory of Love* 323)

The debate continues over whether the *Arcadias* are allegories or not.[50] But the kind of incarnation Lewis is talking about is different from the kind I have just discussed. Lewis

[50] The most thorough recent allegorical reading is Worden's *The Sound of Virtue*. Additional arguments favoring a pro-allegorical Sidney come from Barbara Brumbaugh's work (discussed above), Kenneth Borris, *Allegory and Epic in English Renaissance Literature* and Alan Isler, "The Allegory of the Hero and Sidney's Two *Arcadias*." Staunchly opposed to any allegorical reading of Sidney is Robert Stillman (2008).

mentions, for example, allegorizing penance with whips, or holiness as entailing being cut of "*as if* by a wall from the World" (322). Sidney shows his heroes kneeling before images of "the lady of us all," offering "daily oblations," making pilgrimage to kiss a certain plot of land and "bliss the air" (*NA* 225.13). And Sidney does in fact "introduce a monastery into his poem" when, in the *NA*, Musidorus and Pyrocles deliver Leucippe (a rejected mistress of Pamphilus) "to a house thereby, dedicated to Vestal nuns, where she resolved to spend all her years [. . .] in bewailing the wrong, and yet praying for the wrong-doer" (260.23). Is this a "real" convent, or allegorical "bungling"? In Lewis's examples the author devises to embody some spiritual truth for the reader to discern. Sidney's examples differ in that in addition to whatever spiritual truths the work as a whole may be read as embodying,[51] the characters themselves seek out material embodiment of their emotional and spiritual states, and look to concrete intermediaries to assist them in the care they apply to the same. Sidney's characters talk and act like Catholics.

[51] Embodiment of this sort does figure in the text. For example, in three scenes in which the inner states of the characters are made flesh, as it were, by the sudden appearance of a physical analogue. These are the disruption of the First Eclogues by the appearance of a bear and a lion; the Phagonian rebellion, which materializes just in time to save Pyrocles from Gynecia's uncontrollable lust; and the appearance of the remnant of Phagonian rebels which surprises Musidorus as he is about to rape the sleeping Pamela. In all of these cases, lustful thoughts are embodied in the action that immediately follows. Critics have especially focused on the bear and lion as representing the animalistic urges raging in the two princes (E.g., Dana, "Providential" 49; Ford, "Philosophy" 43; Marenco, "Double Plot" 253). But these scenes, too, may stand as examples of the sacramental mentality, since concrete reality breaks in and serves as an aid to help (or rather, force) the characters focus on something other than the impure thoughts which were about to dominate them.

Only one other writer, to my knowledge, has described Sidney's approach as "sacramental," though in a more impressionistic manner than I have tried to use. Robert Kimbrough's understanding of the sacramental seems to entail the use of what is "unreal" as an instrument for imposing meaning and fullness onto human life. Focusing on the Elizabethan concept of imitation, he argues that that their

> self-conscious art could remain vital only so long as the artist believed feelingly and unself-consciously that neither art nor nature was real. His soul, wit, imagination, or reason was real, and God was real; but the products of selfhood and God, art and nature, were not. For this reason, the major episodes in the *New Arcadia* are sacramental, not sentimental, even though set in the never-never land of knightly romance. (139)

So long as Sidney works in this "unreal" mode of romance, his art will have "sacramental" power to move readers. That is (recalling that the Greek for *sacramentum* is μυστερι ν, "mystery"), there must be something about the transactions of the book that cannot be explained, some mystery whereby the "unreal" physical world can be manipulated to positive effect on the "real" world of intellect, wit, soul, and spirit. If the descriptions become "forthrightly realistic" as in Book Three (140), he claims, the sacramental quality is lost. He quotes the gritty and brutal paragraph on the fight between Amphialus and Argalus, and concludes, "Because this fight is fully experienced by the writer and the reader, the death of Argalus is not sacramental" (140). There is no mystery surrounding it for the reader to benefit from. It just is.

Sidney may have lost his "sacramental" grounding towards the end of Book Three, as Kimbrough contends. Yet Book Three has its own significant case of physically-induced spirituality, as it were, in the newfound holiness of the two princesses.

They suffer not only imprisonment, but physical torture, yet the application of these thorns in their flesh bring them to new spiritual fortitude. And as I hope to show in another chapter, Sidney's mind is not far from sacramental concerns as he translates the Psalms into English verse.

From all this, does it follow that Sidney was sympathetic to the old religion? Let us reconsider the gift of the golden altar with which this chapter began. The richness of the altar, along with the fact that its inscription, *Sic vos non vobis*, is described as being written not in Latin, but "in Roman words" (95), and its dedication to Castor and Pollux, all make it sound at home amidst Catholic liturgy and devotion. On the very next page of the *OA* appears Philoclea's natural, unadorned white altar, inscribed with English words. If we are meant to compare the two, the golden altar does not come off the worse—the narrator calls it "rich" and "precious," and it gives Pamela "a great testimony of the giver's worthiness" (95). But neither is the unadorned altar in any way criticized. This doubly-positive juxtaposition of "Protestant" and "Catholic" altars may be one of the clearest indications of the ecumenical spirit emphasized by Robert Stillman as one of the hallmarks of Sidney's education among the Philippists. It stands as a compelling testimony to the desire for a religious life that embraces art, ornament, ceremony, and material intercession—in a word, tradition. For "they that with quiet judgements will look a little deeper into it shall find the end and working of it such as, being rightly applied, deserveth not to be scourged out of the Church of God" (*MP* 77).

Chapter 4:

Astrophil and Stella

> In truth, ô Love, with what a boyish kind
> Thou doest proceed in thy most serious wayes
> Sonnet 11, ll. 1-2

> reason, Princesse hy,
> Whose throne is in the mind,
> Which Musick can in sky
> And hidden beauties find
> Sixth Song, ll. 49-52

These two epigraphs lay out this chapter's main contours. It proceeds in two sections that share a common goal: to point toward a more ecumenical and indeed Catholic-friendly Sidney than has generally emerged from previous scholarship on *Astrophil and Stella* (hereafter *AS*). First, I will discuss the ways in which *AS*, by turns funny, erotic, and blasphemous, ultimately contains a serious and orthodoxly Christian lesson. Sidney's allusions to and adaptations of Petrarch, Ronsard, and mid-century Tudor poets are well known. Less discussed, however, are *AS*'s references to biblical passages. Most of these come from the Old and New Testaments. Such an observation might seem unremarkable, for if Sidney is considered not only a Protestant, but a practitioner of what has been imagined as a "Protestant poetics," one would expect his poetic inspiration to be drawn from the Bible.[1] But the fabric of Sidney's sequence

[1] This is Barbara Lewalski's claim throughout her book *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (1979). As the title suggests, her main concern is with the seventeenth century, but her brief comments on Sidney show that she regards

appears to contain threads provided by the Apocrypha as well. The deuterocanonical books were treated differently by Protestants than by Catholics: while the former set them apart as lacking the divine inspiration of the primary canonical books, the latter declared (in an early session of the Council of Trent) most of them to be on equal footing with the canonical books. My purpose in focusing on the Apocryphal overtones (which are relatively minor, as will be seen) is not to argue that Sidney was a crypto-Catholic, but rather to cultivate a better understanding of Sidney's ecumenical spirit. Robert Stillman's work on Sidney's Philippist education (see Chapter 2, above) has moved this discussion in generally the right direction, though it carries a residue of previous, more polemical scholarship. Moreover, in tapping into the Bible for some of his subject-matter, Sidney may be seen as sharing some of St. Robert Southwell's concerns that poetry be used for moral and spiritual edification rather than for arousing sexual passion.

A particular verse from the Apocrypha will take me into the second section of the chapter. This is Wisdom 11:20, which ends with, "thou hast ordered all things in measure and number and weight." This verse was long taken as a kind of mandate for poets to pay careful attention to the structure of their poems, from units as small as a single line of verse, all the way up to the arrangement of complete sequences or books. I hope to expand on the numerological observations of previous scholars such as Alastair Fowler, Thomas P. Roche, Jr., and especially Tom Parker. Fowler and Roche have done Sidney studies good service in revealing the amazingly intricate symmetries around which *AS*

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him as a harbinger of the later poetic characteristics she considers typically Protestant (cf. 45, 80, and 241).

was planned and written, and Parker has advanced our understanding of the structural concerns behind the sequence with his thesis regarding harmonic proportions based on Plato's lambda sequence (as derived from the *Timaeus*). Yet I contend that Sidney's very engagement with the harmonic and arithmetic intervals of the lambda numbers has further ramifications than have been previously noticed. Sidney's chosen form of 108 sonnets and 11 songs is far from random, and may be seen as providing, first, a subtextual commentary on the standard Petrarchan notion of the poet's finding relief from the turbulence of sublunary passions in the perfection of cosmic and divine order as embodied by the poem's larger arrangement. Second, if Parker is right that numerological (Parker would prefer the term "harmonic") considerations govern the structure not only of *AS*, but also of the *Certain Sonnets* and the eclogues of the *Old Arcadia*, an argument can be made linking this literary practice to larger cultural phenomena, which include Catholic sacramentality.

Sleeping and Rising

Thomas Roche has been the chief illuminator of the biblical allusions in *AS*. One of his contributions has been to point out that Astrophil is an expert at creating "inversions of explicitly biblical metaphors" (*Petrarch* 202). Roche points to Romans 13:10-14 as the source of the sleep metaphor that appears in several sonnets, beginning with sonnet 31. In this passage Paul associates sleep with a pre-Christian era of ignorance, and darkness with wrongdoing and dishonesty:

> And that, considering the seson, that it is now time that we shulde arise from slepe: for now is our salutation nerer, then when we beleued it.

> The night is past, & the day is at hand: let vs therefore cast away the workes of darkenes, and let vs put on the armour of light,
> So that we walke honestly, as in the day (Roche, *Petrarch* 201)

By alerting the reader to this biblical use of sleep and night imagery Roche reminds us of an important point, especially in light of the great political emphasis placed on sleep metaphors by Blair Worden in his discussion of the *OA*.[2] In Worden's estimate, sleep metaphors in Sidney's writing convey his dissatisfaction, as well as that of the "forward Protestants" generally, with Queen Elizabeth's reluctance to intervene militarily in support of Protestants on the continent. This is doubtless true, but it is just as certain that in the mind of most Elizabethan Christians the connotations of night and day, sleeping and waking, extended beyond this concern. Many would have recalled St. Paul's words, either from the above passage to the Romans or from 1 Thessalonians 5:5-6, which Roche also puts forward: "Ye are all the children of the light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night neither of darknes. Therefore let vs not slepe as do other, but let vs watch and be sober." The Genevan glosses on this verse are particularly apt to the interpretation of Astrophil's state, as Roche points out: "Here slepe is taken for contempt of saluation, when men continewe in sinnes, and wil not awake to godlines." And for "watch," "And not be ouercome with the cares of the world." Thus sleep should not be read in too narrow a manner, for even in the admittedly political context of the *OA* it may still bear more eternal resonances.

In addition to inverting biblical metaphors, Astrophil constantly uses spiritual terminology in materialistic senses. The most obvious of these is his use of the word

[2] Worden, *The Sound of Virtue*.

"grace," which in Astrophil's usage generally refers to sexual favors (e.g. sonnets 1, 27, 40, 46) or to physical beauty (e.g. sonnets 9, 12, 31, 39). Roche points out one subtle perversion of this kind in sonnet 36, "*Stella*, whence doth this new assault arise." The word that Astrophil translates from the spiritual to the material realm, Roche avers, is "soul" in line 12. He first gives a traditional paraphrase of the complicated syntax and sense of the final lines:

> That not my soule, which at thy foot did fall,
> Long since forc'd by thy beames, but stone nor tree
> By Sence's priviledge, can scape from thee. (ll. 12-14)

This ostensibly means that "neither rational nor vegetable soul can escape [Stella's] influence" (*Petrarch* 213). But Roche adds that the phrase "That not my soule," instead of referring to Astrophil's soul, may in fact mean just what it says: *not* Astrophil's soul, but "the flesh," in "an opposition unstated but implied" (213). This reading then provides balance within the sonnet, between the "ransackt heart" (or spirit) in line 2, and the *not-soule* (or body) of line 12. In addition, it seems a plausible reading based on Astophil's psychology: Astrophil, worse than a born slave since sonnet 2, prostrates himself bodily at Stella's feet ("not my soule, which at thy foot did fall").

But Roche's suggestion, I think, cannot stand. Reading "not my soule" as "the flesh," while clever, quickly runs into difficulties. For if "not my soule" means, as Roche suggests it may, "the flesh," that means Astrophil's flesh "did fall" at Stella's foot (line 12). But if flesh is taken synecdochally for a particular body part, falling is the last thing one would expect it to do, especially since in line 6 Astrophil referred to his "forces

razde" ("raised")—a phrase that Roche takes as one of Astrophil's "phallicities."[3] Astrophil may be the "old man" spiritually, but in his instinctual bodily response to Stella's beauty he is very much the "new" man.

The passage yields a cleaner—if bawdier—meaning if we take it more directly. When Astrophil says "not my soule" in this place, we should put aside the skepticism he had stirred in us by his earlier professions of sincerity ("When I say '*Stella*', I do mean the same," sonnet 28, line 5). Here, he means what he says: his soul, and stone, and tree are all slaves to Stella, and the traditional meaning advanced first by Roche still applies: "neither rational nor vegetable soul can escape your influence." But "soule" here means soul, while "stone" and "tree" mean body: they should be taken metaphorically for Astrophil's genitalia in their "razde" (raised) state. According to Roche, "the raised forces," that is, "the flesh," "escapes the conquest already made upon his soul" (213), but what Astrophil is saying here is that his entire person is in thrall to Stella. But the effects of conquest are opposite: his soul falls at Stella's feet, while his body (or part of it) rises under her assault. Moreover, his soul is unable to escape for a different reason than his body, for the soul was "forc'd by thy beames" while "stone nor tree" are unable to escape from Stella because they possess "Sence's priviledge"—that is, the soul is forced by an intangible power, while the body operates in the realm of the physical. This appears to be a sexual pun not detected by Alan Sinfield, who forced a revision of the critical consensus (that Astrophil becomes overtly sexual only around sonnet 52) by showing

[3] This nonce-word appears on p. 210; Roche also uses "inphallicities" in the same sense, p. 211.

"that Astrophil's love for Stella is sexual right from the beginning of the sequence" ("Sexual Puns" 343). Even when purportedly speaking of the natural world, Astrophil finds a way to make that language work for his concupiscent ends.

"Our Thorny Soil": Astrophil's Parable

Barbara Lewalski observes that although the Bible provided Protestant poets with a "comprehensive" range of possibilities for literary imitation, the parables of Christ offered little to Protestant genre theory (Lewalski 71, 69). This is open to question.[4] In *AS* Sidney seems to have drawn inspiration, at least, from the parables. In the peroration of the *Defence* he had spoken in parable-like terms when he claimed "that there are many mysteries contained in poetry which of purpose were written darkly, lest by profane wits it should be abused" (*MP* 121). Since the peroration is loaded with wit, irony, and exaggeration, this and its other claims should not be accepted uncritically. But as I have suggested in Chapter 2, Sidney's pervasive wit may serve as a tactic to win the good will of his audience while also distancing himself from the implications of some of that treatise's ideas. So while nothing in Sidney should be accepted uncritically, neither can it be dismissed uncritically.

If Sidney did accept the notion that poetry's obscure manner protected it from being taken up by the unworthy, he would have found a powerful precedent in the words

[4] Lewalski no doubt knows of various poems that owe their existence, if not their genre, to parables: for example Henry Lok's sonnet 50, "A tenant most vntrue, O Lord," based on the parable of the vineyard (Matthew 21, Mark 12, Luke 20). Lewalski sees the Bible as "the supreme example of genera mista [mixed genre] contained within a comprehensive whole" (71).

of Jesus. In fact, in his *Defence* Sidney enlists Jesus as one of his authorities for using figurative speech; Christ knew that through the vividness of parables, their moral teaching "would more constantly (as it were) inhabit both the memory and judgement" (*MP* 87). In Matthew 13, the disciples of Jesus ask him about his use of parables, and he replies in a way that resonates with Sidney's remark on the need to hide the sacred mysteries of poetry:

> 10: Why speakest thou unto them in parables?
> 11: He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.
> 12: For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.
> 13: Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.
> 14: And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:
> 15: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.[5]
>
> (Matthew 13:10-15)

Just prior to this Jesus had told the Parable of the Sower, in which the kingdom of God is likened to the seed cast out by a sower. The seed falls in various places: the wayside, stony ground, among thorns, and some falls on good soil. Naturally, the seed only produces when it falls on good soil. In sonnet 10 Astrophil draws on this parable. The sonnet is an address to Reason, who "still / Wouldst brabling be with sence and love in me" (ll. 1-2). "Brabling" is a common enough word in the sixteenth century, but seems to

[5] Cf. also Mark 4:12 and Luke 8:10, both containing similar statements following a delivery of the Parable of the Sower.

have been chosen here for its close resemblance to the word "bramble." Considering the sixteenth-century convention of representing a medial M or N by a macron over the preceding vowel, "brāble" and "brable" could conceivably have appeared as virtually identical words. This possible allusion to brambles is amplified and made explicit when Astrophil counsels Reason to pick a more appropriate home—such as the Muses' Hill, or heaven—than in Astrophil's anti-rational heart. He asks Reason, "Why shouldst thou toyle our thorny soil to till?" (l. 6).

Jesus explains the thorny soil of the parable: "He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful" (Matthew 13:22). These two things that "choke the word," namely "care of this world" and "the deceitfulness of riches," are the very things that preoccupy Astrophil throughout the sonnet sequence. However, in Astrophil's reception of the parable they undergo a chiasmic transformation and become "the deceitfulness of this world" and "care of riches." Astrophil's engagement with "the deceitfulness of this world" may be identified in the numerous sonnets in which he decries the inauthenticity of his fellow poets and protests his own sincerity. The "care of riches," of course, is care for Lady Penelope Rich, the real woman on whom Stella was based, and care (though of a different kind) also for her husband, whom Astrophil skewers in several sonnets.

It seems certain that Sidney's use of the phrase "our thorny soil" was inspired by the Parable of the Sower. But, the reader may ask, is it too great an imaginative leap to read the word "riches" in this parable and conclude that it is a previously undetected pun

on Lady Rich buried in the "thorny soil" of the sonnet? It would be in keeping with Astrophil's propensity to twist spiritual things to suit his own situation if he were to reorder the biblical words to apply to himself. For nowhere in the sequence does he call Stella deceitful.[6] Penelope Rich, moreover, does not seem to have been deceitful, if her later apparent disinclination to hide her affair with Charles Blount is any indication. Sidney could have found the idea to permute the words of Matthew 13 through the tradition associated with Nicholas of Lyra's commentary on the parable. We have no sure proof that Sidney knew Lyra's commentary, but it was popular and Lyra was constantly cited as an authority in the religious polemics of the day. Lyra compresses the double formula of "care of the world and deceitfulness of riches" by dropping out the two middle terms: the seed that fell among thorns, he explains, is the word that falls "among hearts lacerated by care for riches."[7]

Esau and Astrophil's "Race"

The recurring motif of the "race" provides another example of biblical influence at work in *AS.* In sonnet 18 Astrophil laments, "I see my course to lose my selfe doth bend" (l. 12). Race and running imagery appear in several other sonnets in *AS* as well. In 19 Astrophil says "I willing run, yet while I run, repent"; in 20, "Flie, fly, my friends"; running or race also appear in sonnets 8, 22, 23, 26, 41, 60, 64, 80, 88, 104, 105, and in

[6] In sonnet 8 Stella's looks deceive Cupid. In the Fifth Song Astrophil calls Stella a thief, murderer, tyrant, rebel, traitor, witch, and devil—but not a liar or deceitful—and the upshot of this Song is that it was all just a rhetorical demonstration designed to show her what she could expect if she got on his bad side.

[7] "Alia autem ceciderunt in spinas, i(d est), in corda solicitudinibus divitiarum l(ace)rata" (Lyra, commentary on Matthew 13).

song 5. Sonnet 37 contains a submerged reference to running a race, in the line "Rich in those gifts which give th'eternall crowne," if we recall 2 Timothy 4:7-8: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

But while the image of running and the race appears in many sonnets, in the cluster beginning around 18 and ending in the low 20s it appears in close proximity with the image of "birthright" and the speaker's youth. In 18 Astrophil says he is "Unable quite to pay even Nature's rent, / Which unto it by birthright I do ow," and that "My youth doth waste, my knowledge brings forth toyes"; in 21, "to my birth I owe / Nobler desires." In sonnet 26 birthright resurfaces in connection with astrological questions: only fools, says Astrophil, think the stars "To have for no cause birthright in the skie, / But for to spangle the blacke weeds of night."

The proximity of running and birthright in these poems calls to mind two New Testament passages where these ideas also appear near each other. In Hebrews 12:1, he exhorts his readers with race imagery ("let us run with patience the race that is set before us") before cautioning them to be diligent "Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person [among them], as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright" (verse 16). In Romans 9, Paul explains that "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God," giving Esau as an example: "It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (v. 12-13). Therefore, "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (v. 16).

In these sonnets Astrophil seems to regard himself as a kind of Esau. I would suggest that in these comparisons we also have a degree of authorial introspection. Astrophil is not Sidney, but numerous details in *AS* are taken from Sidney's own biography. To my knowledge, the allusions to Esau have not previously been detected, but I suggest they constitute another layer of Sidneian biography written into the fiction of the sequence.

Firstborn, but cheated of his birthright by the birth of Baron Denbigh in 1581, Sidney shares other traits with Esau as well. Though Esau was tricked by his brother Jacob and thus prevented from receiving his father's final blessing, he had earlier sold his birthright for a meal. Astrophil would not be one to cast stones: "'But ah,' Desire still cries, 'give me some food.'" The tercet in which this line appears constitutes the central three lines of the entire sequence, suggesting its importance in Sidney's conception of the work's overall theme. The Geneva gloss on Esau's story in Genesis 25:29-34 is pertinent: "Thus the wicked prefer their worldelie commodities to Gods spirit and graces." Esau and Astrophil are both "children of the flesh," and Sidney may have felt himself in the same category as he worried about his youth wasting, and his knowledge bringing forth toys (cf. sonnet 18).

Another link between Sidney and Esau is their shared redness. That Esau was red or at any rate came to be associated with redness is clear from Genesis 25: at his birth he "came out red, all over like an hairy garment" (Esau means "hairy") and later he sells his birthright for a meal of red pottage (Esau's other name, Edom, means "red"). There is some evidence that Sidney had a reddish quality to his hair and/or complexion. Ben

Jonson's reports that Sidney's complexion had been "spoiled with pimples and of high blood and long," which certainly implies a redness (Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney* xii). John Aubrey recalled that "he much resembled his sister, but his hair was not red, but a little inclining, viz. a dark amber color" (Judson 15), while the "Knole House portrait" caused one observer to note "the very ruddy complexion and the pale yellow ochre and sienna brown hair" (Judson 57). Aubrey's qualification ("his hair was not red") may mean simply that we should not assume that Philip's hair was red like Mary's, but it could also indicate that Philip was commonly, if wrongly, thought to have had red hair. Another portrait, at Shrewsbury School, shows the poet "with wavy, auburn hair and mustache of the same color" (Judson 65). From these three descriptions it seems likely that redness was sometimes associated with Sidney.

Finally, Esau and Jacob represent archetypes of the active and contemplative lives. Esau is a man of the fields, Jacob a man of the tents. Something of this contrast is present within Sidney himself, insofar as he is known as England's shepherd-knight and depicts himself as such in the *Arcadias* as the forlorn Philisides. Sidney's inability to make his mark in the world of public affairs resulted in his unwanted retirement at Wilton, the place where most of his writing probably occurred. Like Sidney in real life, Astrophil casts himself as a shepherd late in the sequence (song 9), after it becomes apparent that his aggressive policy of the majority of the foregoing sonnets is doomed to failure. The manifest concern with authenticity in *AS* suggests another possible point of reflection on Jacob and Esau: of the two, Esau appears to have been the more sincere (Jacob tricked him out of their father's blessing). Yet, "As it is written, Jacob have I

loved, but Esau have I hated" (Romans 9:13). Astrophil's simultaneous profession of but failure to practice perfect honesty seems a possible probing of the limits of dissimulation for the honest man, a question that concerned Sidney personally in his own life (see Chatper 1).

Sidney and Southwell

The biblical references I have just reviewed open the door to a brief comparison with his seeming opposite, both in life and in poetic terms: Robert Southwell. Alison Shell suggests that Southwell was campaigning for an approach to poetry that was at odds with Sidney's[8]—that Southwell saw Sidney as endorsing vain, amatory verse, while he (Southwell) was reclaiming poetry for religious subjects. Shell relates that Protestants were very wary of rendering New Testament themes in verse, for that would amount to "idolatry" (Shell 64).[9] However, I would argue that Sidney and Southwell are not so far apart as may initially seem. Though Southwell is more explicit in his use of biblical narrative as subject matter for his poetry, Sidney's poetry, as has been seen, was not without direct biblical influence. The difference between them is that Southwell, being Catholic, had much freer rein to treat explicitly biblical themes, whereas Sidney, being Protestant, was better advised to approach biblical themes indirectly.

Southwell's poetry has frequently been compared unfavorably with Sidney's, as being less technically accomplished and more old-fashioned. Did they know each other?

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[8] "Southwell was constructing a model of poetic virtue alternative to that imputed to Sidney" (Shell 70).

[9] Shell here cites Murray Roston's *Biblical Drama in England: From the Middle Ages Till the Present Day* (London: Faber & Faber, 1968).

Pierre Janelle and Louis Martz both note that Southwell is fairly clearly situated in the miscellany tradition, which was then aging ungracefully, and that there is no evidence of his having had any knowledge of Sidney's work, which represents the poetical cutting edge of that period.[10] Martz does not believe Southwell knew Sidney's poetry, due to "Southwell's connection with these conservative families [Vaux and Howard], who were cut off from the court by religious differences" (Martz 187). This is a dubious assumption, since I have shown in Chapter 1 that it is a mistake to insist too firmly on a separation of families based on creed. Rose Anita Morton gives a more sanguine assessment, seeing in Southwell's poetry literary brilliance and direct knowledge of Sidney, "whose engaging prose and poetry possessed many merits and beauties that evidently appealed to the young priest" (Morton v). In the absence of direct knowledge of one another, Southwell's biographer Christopher Devlin suggests they may have shared a common enemy: Stephen Gosson, who arrived at the English College in Rome in April 1584 as a "hired trouble-maker sent by Walsingham," and whose *School of Abuse* (some argue) prompted Sidney's *Defence of Poesie* (Devlin 62). Yet Devlin also comments on "the groan of nature in bondage to original sin" which one senses in the poem "Life is but losse," "The central theme is the same as that expressed by Sidney in the words 'erected wit' and 'infected will'" (Devlin 148).

At any rate, there seems little doubt that Sidney and Southwell knew of each other's existence, if not of their poetry (all of Southwell's poetry postdates Sidney's death, for one thing). Sir Richard Shelley is a common relative between them: he was

[10] Janelle, *Robert Southwell the Writer*, p. 219; Martz, *Poetry of Meditation*, p. 187.

Southwell's great uncle, and Sidney's aunt's brother-in-law. Southwell's "distinctive auburn hair" (Brown) opens the possibility that the two men shared similar looks. As Walsinghams's son-in-law, Sidney was in as good a position as anyone to know the identities of Jesuits entering the country.[11] And if Southwell's poetry reflects the influence of the popular verse of his youth, rather than that of the exciting 1580s, that is no more than one might expect of a man whose energies were more focused on staying alive and providing the sacraments to fellow Catholics, than on assimilating the new poetry. The impulse toward a moral reform of poetry was strong in the 1580s, and Sidney should be considered a part of it no less than Southwell.

The biblical references above, from the Old and New Testaments, are joined by a likely reference to the Apocrypha. In sonnet 19 Astrophil says (speaking of Stella, naturally):

> For though she passe all things, yet what is all
> That unto me, who fare like him that both
> Lookes to the skies, and in a ditch doth fall? (ll. 9-11)

Editorial notes point out that the watcher of the skies in line 11 is inspired by Plato's story of Thales, who fell into a ditch (e.g. Ringler 467, who reminds us also that Sidney used this image of the astronomer in the *Defence*), but the pattern of images in this sonnet also recalls a passage from Sirach, chapter 25. There we read first, "But the love of the Lord passeth all things for illumination" (25:11), and then, "Stumble not at the beauty of a woman, and desire her not for pleasure" (25:21). The close proximity between the ideas

[11] Southwell arrived in England in late July 1586, while Sidney had been serving in the Netherlands as governor of Flushing since November 1585.

of "passing all things" and "stumbling" in the poem reflects the same proximity of the same ideas in Sirach 25. In fact, most of Sirach 25 deals with themes pertinent to *AS*: it is a reflection on the wise and godly man's proper relationship to women. This lone passage may be too tenuous a thread by which to support the claim that Sidney was reading the Apocrypha, and that fact would not in itself be very remarkable. The Apocrypha was, after all, printed in the Geneva and other Protestant Bibles throughout the sixteenth century. But Sirach 25 contains an echo of Hebrews 12, cited above in connection with Esau and the imagery of running a race: "A wicked wife maketh [. . .] weake hands and feble knees" (Sirach 25:25); "Wherefore lift vp (your) hands which hang downe, and (your) weake knees" (Hebrews 12:12).[12] The almost identical references to hands and knees bespeaks a relationship between the two passages that Sidney knew of, and the apparent integration of both passages into *AS* suggests that Sidney treated the Apocrypha with the same deference as the Old and New Testament: all three were potential sources for his poetry.

"Hidden Beauties"

Since Sidney apparently knew the book of Sirach, he doubtless also knew Wisdom 11:20, "thou hast ordered all things in measure and number and weight." Poets applied this teaching to their own creations, and Sidney was no exception. Alastair Fowler was the first to provide a detailed description of the elaborate symmetries that govern the structure of *AS*. His observations provide essential background for what

[12] Verse numberings here are from the Geneva Bible (1562) but vary depending on the translation used.

follows, so I reproduce some of his tables here. Sidney's use of numerical structuring was not merely a pretty device, but reflects a mentality that might be described as hermetic or sacramental, or perhaps both.

The first and indispensible prerequisite for any spatial or structural analysis of *AS* is the confidence that we have the right number of poems, in the right order. The two 1591 editions by Newman and the 1597 edition by Kingston printed 107 sonnets followed by 10 songs. The 1598 folio edition of Sidney's works, however, added a 108th sonnet (number 37, the main "Rich" sonnet) and an 11th song (song 11), and distributed the songs in seemingly random positions amidst the sonnets, thus:

I	II	III	IV	V-IX	X	XI
1-63	64-72	73-83	84-85	86	87-92	93-104	105-108

The 1598 folio has greater textual authority than the earlier pirated editions, as it was edited and overseen by the Countess of Pembroke (Sidney's sister, Mary). Plus, as Fowler notes, this arrangement is supported by internal evidence. For the sonnets form significant groupings if we attend to the placement of the songs among them. Fowler's table clearly shows the 63 consecutive sonnets that precede the first song, and the lone sonnet 86, sandwiched between songs 4 and 5. It becomes apparent that 22 sonnets are grouped symmetrically around sonnet 86:

I	II	III	IV	V-IX	X	XI
63	9	11	2	1	6	12	4
63	22			1	22	

(Fowler, *Triumphal* 177)

How the number 22 is supposed to signify chastity, or temperance (177, 182), Fowler does not explain. But the symmetry around sonnet 86, the only sonnet not placed next to another sonnet, is undeniable. 63, standing at the head of the array, is of course the well known "grand climacteric." Fowler describes climacteric years:

> According to the theory, 7, the number of the body, and 9, the number of the mind, have power to determine certain critical stages in human life. The first and last of these climacterics are 49 and 81, because of the special power of square numbers. The most critical, however, is the median climacteric, 63 (that is, 7x9); since it pertains to both parts of human nature (*quod et ad corpus et ad animum pertineat)*.
>
> (Fowler, *Spenser* 269)

Petrarch is said to have "displayed considerable anxiety concerning his own safe passage of the grand climacteric" (Thorndike 3.220), and Henry Constable noted that his secular poems "did amount just amount to the climactericall number 63" (Wickes 275; Roche, *Petrarch* 323). Soon after this crisis of body and soul—which in fact included four poems in honor of Penelope Rich (Roche 327)—Constable would decide to abandon frivolous verse and convert to Catholicism (circa 1589) (Wickes). The number 63 was clearly an instantly recognizable symbolic number. In addition to standing at the head of *AS* as a silent announcement of Astrophil's life crisis, 63 reappears as the stanza total of songs 5-9, the longest unbroken unit of song stanzas in the sequence.

AS displays many symmetries in its design, and by laying out the stanza and line data for the songs, one can see the recessed symmetry emanating from the fifth song:

SONG	I	II	III	IV	**V**	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI
LINES PER STANZA	4	4	6	6	**6**	6	6	4	5	6	5
STANZA TOTAL	9	7	3	9	**15**	9	3	26	10	8	9
LINE TOTAL	36	28	18	54	**90**	54	18	104	50	48	45
			a	*b*	***C***	*b*	*a*				

(Fowler, *Triumphal* 177)

Fowler points out that the symmetry extends further if we observe the "organic" divisions of the eighth song. Its first 7 stanzas are spoken by a third-person narrator, and are followed by 9 stanzas in Astrophil's voice. Such breaking up of the stanzas of this song is hinted at by the poem's last line, which ends with the words, "my song is broken." Use of the first-person pronoun "my" here is startling and seems to indicate authorial commentary, since in context it is hard to explain why a third-person narrator would be so overcome with emotion as to have to break off his song:

> Therewithall away she went,
> Leaving him so passion rent,
> With what she had done and spoken,
> That therewith my song is broken. (ll. 101-4)

As Roche observes, the song is "broken" in the additional sense that it is one stanza short of reaching 108 lines, which would mirror the 108 sonnets. This is the resulting pattern:

SONG	I	II	III	IV	**V**	VI	VII	VIII	VIII
LINES PER STANZA	4	4	6	6	**6**	6	6	4	4
STANZA TOTAL	9	7	3	9	**15**	9	3	7	9
LINE TOTAL	36	28	18	54	**90**	54	18	28	36
	a	*b*	*c*	*a*	***D***	*a*	*c*	*b*	*a*

(Fowler, *Triumphal* 178)

The interested reader may consult Fowler for additional observations regarding the multiple centers of *AS*, but Roche's contribution must concern us here. Roche reveals further symmetry within Fowler's findings by noting the central placement of the

sequence's two invocations. The first is an address to Morpheus at sonnet 32, which is the midpoint of the climacteral grouping of the first 63 sonnets. The second is at sonnet 55, which is at the midpoint of the 108 sonnets as a whole. Thus the 32nd sonnets both of the first 54 sonnets and of the last 54 are distinguished in a special way: the first, number 32, by an address to Morpheus, and the second, number 86, ("Alas, whence came this change of lookes?") by its lonely placement between songs 4 and the climax of invective in song 5, the only sonnet isolated in this way. As can be seen from Fowler's tables above, there is good reason to see the fifth song as a central moment of the sequence. The more complex symmetry that Roche's discovery reveals is seen in this table:

1-31	**32**	**33-54**	**55**	**56-63**	**64-85**	**86**	**87-108**
31	1	22	1	8	22	1	22
31	1	22		31		1	22
a	b	c		a		b	c

(Roche, *Petrarch* 240)

A. C. Hamilton asserted that "Sidney does not impose any external structure or framework upon his collection unless it is biography" ("Sidney's *Astrophel*" 62), but as the foregoing data should make abundantly clear, such a judgement has as much merit as the pronouncements of a blind art critic.

Significance of the Numbers

After admiring the craftsmanship and ingenuity needed to construct a sequence according to patterns such as those just described, one must ask why Sidney would have done such a thing in the first place. If Fowler and Roche are correct, Sidney's main point in choosing 108 as the structure was to allude to the Homeric Penelope, who, according

to the *Odyssey*, successfully resisted all 108 suitors until her husband returned home. However, "the allusion to Homer," Tom Parker notes, "is obscure," and although Roche detects in *AS* 84 ("Highway since you my chiefe *Pernassus* be") a possible allusion to Ulysses' journey back to Ithaca, "there is nothing to connect Astrophil's one sonnet to a highway with Ulysses' epic decade" (Parker 68). This latter, I believe, is the strongest criticism of the "Penelope game" theory—at least as a primary explanation for the use of 108.[13] For obscurity never stopped a numerologically-minded poet (or critic), and it seems quite possible that poetry written for a coterie audience, not intended for broader publication, could have been crafted according to that audience's known cultural competency. If Sidney intended the Homeric allusion, it was probably because he knew someone who would pick it up. Moreover, by comparison of allusive obscurity with impresa theory, it is unlikely that Sidney would have gone forward with a nonverbal subtext so obscure or difficult as to defy all detection and interpretation.[14] Parker provides a convincing alternative explanation of the number, but we should not therefore rule out the possibility that Sidney was aware of the Homeric interpretations made possible by his text. Just as the connection between Stella and Lady Rich cannot be denied, there is also a resemblance between unyielding Stella and steadfast Penelope of Ithaca.

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[13] Parker also points out that several poems and sonnet sequences that followed in *Astophil and Stella*'s wake employ the number 108 as a structural principle, but without at all alluding to Homer or Penelope. Even if this is true, it does not follow that Sidney did not intend 108 to convey such allusions. Disciples do not always perpetuate their master's legacy in its full integrity, or with complete understanding.

[14] "There should be no introduction of a body that is unfamiliar, obscure and unknown" (Fraunce 23).

Parker's argument is that the total of 108 sonnets and 108 song stanzas was inspired by the account of the creation of the World Soul in the *Timaeus*. The basic numbers underlying the creation process are known as the Lambda Sequence because of the way they are arranged beneath the Monad:

1
2 3
4 9
8 27

The even numbers (the "Same") are feminine, and the odds (the "Different") masculine. When the Demiurge mixes together the Same, the Different, and Being in his mixing-bowl, he produces strips of the World Soul that are cut into various lengths. Plato includes instructions as to how these lengths are to be determined. In short, one must determine the harmonic mean and the arithmetic mean between each pair of Lambda numbers, taking the male and female lines separately (see Table 1, next page).[15]

It will be seen that several numbers are repeated in the "Final Sequence" column. Parker explains in his Introduction that, following Plato's somewhat cryptic instructions in the *Timaeus*, we must arrange the Final Sequence numbers in order and eliminate all duplicates. Then we will add, still in obedience to the *Timaeus*, the intervals 9/8 and 13/256. Evidently Plato conceived of the World Soul in musical terms, and Parker explains these last two numbers as the equivalent of a tone and a semitone (Parker 30-1). What we end up with is a series of numbers whose sum is 108. That Plato wanted to

[15] Parker gives the formulae for calculating these means: "Where the extremes are *a* and *b*, the arithmetic mean is the half-way point between the extremes (i.e. ½(a+b)), and the harmonic mean (*g*) is 2*ab*/(*a*+*b*)" (29 n.).

arrive at 108 is fairly certain, given the special instructions to add the last two fractions. Also, 108 is half of 216, the product of the embodied female number, 8, and the embodied male number, 27 (8 x 27 = 216). This is the Platonic "marriage number," used most famously by Spenser in the *Epithalamion*. This wedding poem consists of 433 lines: the first 216 are concerned with earthly marriage, the last 216 with divine union, and the central line of the poem refers to the rites "The which do endless matrimony make," which joins the earthly to the heavenly.[16]

By arranging the poems according to such a harmonious, cosmic pattern, Parker explains, Sidney ensured that his sequence would "achieve an intrinsic beauty" that called to mind divine truth. "The subject of the sequence, presented in such a manner, is not vanity but truth" (Parker 70). Plus, symmetries are intrinsically pleasing, and by endowing his sequence with their beauty he may have been aiming to do what he could to "make the too-much-loved earth more lovely" (*DP* 9). He may have enjoyed the intellectual challenge of forcing his poetic matter into a predetermined, uncompromising form. No doubt there is some truth to each of these suggestions, but they cannot be the whole story.

Parker provides good support for his perception that musical harmonies underlie the arrangement of *AS*. He further opens new ground for our understanding of Sidney's thinking through his assertion that the form employed in *AS* is one that had inspired Sidney during the writing of the *Certain Sonnets* as well as the eclogues of the *Old*

[16] No one has yet suggested that *AS* be read in light of the marriage number 216, but considering that the number of sonnets plus the number of song stanzas adds up to 216, it may not be a bad idea.

Table 1: Calculation of the World Soul Intervals

Base Numbers	Harmonic Mean	Arithmetic Mean	Final Sequence	Description of Sequence Number
1			1.00	base
		1.3	1.33	arithmetic mean of 1 and 2
	1.5		1.50	harmonic mean of 1 and 2
2			2.00	base
		2.7	2.67	arithmetic mean of 2 and 4
	3.0		3.00	harmonic mean of 2 and 4
4			4.00	base
		5.3	5.33	arithmetic mean of 4 and 8
	6.0		6.00	harmonic mean of 4 and 8
8			8.00	base

Base Numbers	Harmonic Mean	Arithmetic Mean	Final Sequence	Description of Sequence Number
1			1.00	base
		1.5	1.50	arithmetic mean of 1 and 3
	2.0		2.00	harmonic mean of 1 and 3
3			3.00	base
		4.5	4.50	arithmetic mean of 3 and 9
	6.0		6.00	harmonic mean of 3 and 9
9			9.00	base
		13.5	13.50	arithmetic mean of 9 and 27
	18.0		18.00	harmonic mean of 9 and 27
27			27.00	base

Arcadia, but his explanation of the relationship between them is given "in passing" (81). Nevertheless, he points out several significant similarities between *AS* and the poems of the *OA* and *Certain Sonnets* mostly based on numbers from the Lambda Sequence or on calculations on the climacteric (Parker 81-4). I believe there is another nonverbal consideration governing the relationship between *AS* and the *OA*, based on the second epigraph of this chapter. In the Sixth Song we read of reason's ability to detect music in the sky. This is a clear allusion to the music of the spheres, which cannot be heard or seen

but apprehended only by reason. And at this point I step in to crunch my share of the numbers.

Halley Jones, a former student, showed me that the number 36 appears not only as the number of lines in the first song and in Astrophil's speech in song 8, but is also the difference in line totals between all of the songs from the third to the seventh. Jones observed also that 36 is one-third of 108, and went on to propose a thesis of harmonic correspondences based on musical intervals, in the manner of Parker's thesis. I would suggest that 36 is important, but perhaps for a different reason: in addition to being an exact third of 108, it is an exact tenth of 360, the number of degrees in a circle. It is also the reverse of the digits in 63, the grand climacteric, a fact that may not be without importance, as we will see shortly. The total number of lines from song 1 through the second section of song 8, which marks the end of the recessed symmetry, is 362, and the differences between the line totals of these units is 180.

Song	Line Total	Difference
1	36	
2	28	8
3	18	10
4	54	36
5	90	36
6	54	36
7	18	36
8.1	28	10
8.2	36	8
TOTALS	**362**	**180**

The total of 362 exceeds the perfect circular number 360 by two lines. While fudging is both a time-honored tradition of numerologists determined to get what they want, as well

as a chief criticism leveled at them by skeptics, I believe song 8 gives at least the semblance of a warrant to remove two lines. The second section of song 8, it will be recalled, is spoken by Astrophil. However, the narrator interrupts for one line, and in another line Astrophil reports what the birds are saying instead of using his own words. Thus if we count only the lines that are fully Astrophil's, we reach a line total of 360 for the group from song 1 through song 8.2. Perhaps not coincidentally, if we remove only the single line not spoken by Astrophil ("(Knees on ground he then did stay)," l. 50), but leave his words reporting the birds' speech, we are left with we are left with 63 lines from that poem: another grand climacteric.

I see these numbers as connoting circularity and thus another aspect of the perfection that Parker finds signified by the structure of *AS*. If we turn to the poems of the *OA*, this circular logic (so to speak) appears again in the total of 340 stanzas. This number bears no immediate relationship to anything pertaining to the geometry of circles. But that it does pertain to circles, and to the 108 of *AS*, is apparent when we realize that 340 is 108π. Pi here amounts to 3.148 rather than its more precise 3.1415, but this is poetry after all, not geometry. A connection with the Lambda number 27 is revealed if one calculates the "area" of the *OA* poems, using 170 as the "radius" of the 340 stanzas which may be seen as the "diameter": $\pi(170^2) = 90{,}792$; and 90,792 divided by the total number of lines in the *OA* poems as a whole (3,362 lines) is 27.005—again, this degree of precision will not satisfy the scientist, but is so close as to be considered exact for all

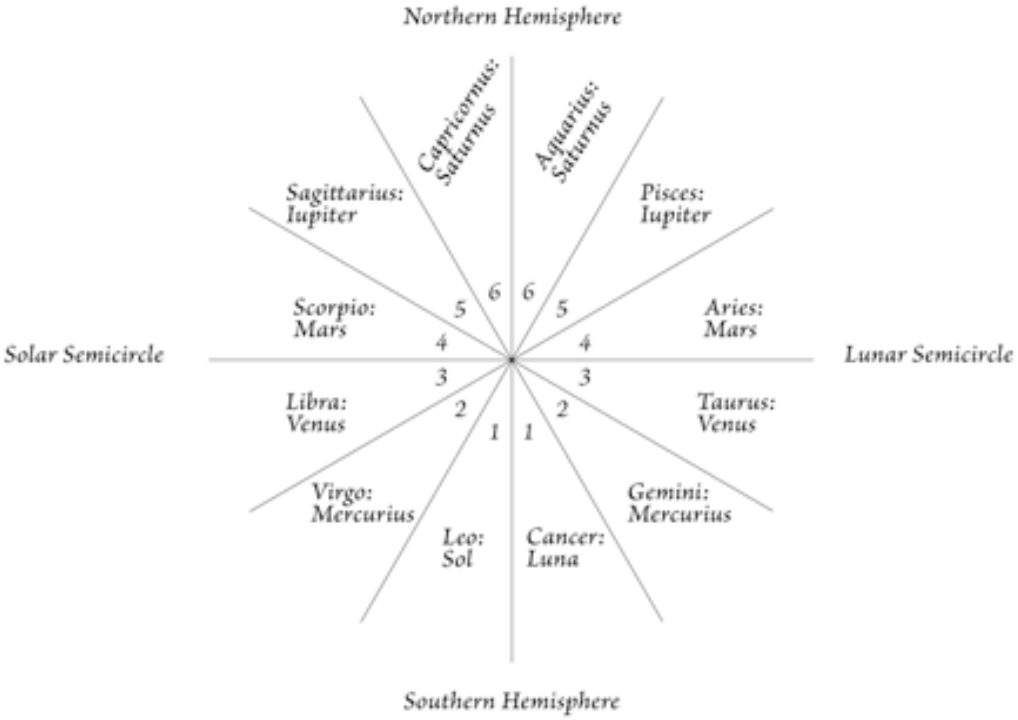
poetical purposes.[17] There is some relationship between 108 and 360 that has been lost to us, though it seems to have been assumed by Sidney.

In selecting numbers redolent of cosmic harmony and of the kinship between the wider world and the human soul as the structuring principle of his poetry, Sidney manifests a desire to actuate such harmony and such kinship in the world that exists outside the poems. Sidney lived in chaotic times. In Reformation Europe, where confusion and violent conflict were facts of life, the desire for the corruptible to put on incorruption, and the mortal immortality, must have been intense (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:53). We see a desire to rise above earthly things and embrace the divine in the final two poems of the "Certain Sonnets." As Roche's explanation of the number 32 suggests, the 32 poems of the *Certain Sonnets* may represent a spiritual crisis as the mid-point of the climacteric number 63. And in the *OA* the verse eclogues set a perfect pastoral world against the fallen world of prose represented in the five Books or Acts.

The 71st poem of the *OA*, and the first of the Fourth Eclogues, "Yee Gote-heard Gods," illustrates the enactment of cosmic harmony in a manner more explicit than the others. (Its placement as the 71st poem may be significant as well, considering that the mid-point of *AS* occurs in its 71st sonnet.) It takes the shape of a cosmic dance. Alastair Fowler has shown that the sestina form has been associated with astronomical and zodiacal meaning ever since "the first Italian sestina, Dante's authoritative *Al poco*

[17] Douglas Bush criticized numerological analysis as "learnedly uncritical free-wheeling" (Røstvig and Bush 194), but his comments demonstrate that he does not share, and possibly does not understand, the poetic and cosmological assumptions of sixteenth-century poets.

giorno ed al gran cerchio d'ombra" (Fowler, *Conceitful* 40). The movement of its six repeated end-words may be associated with the double division of the zodiac shown by Fowler, and recreated here:



(Fowler, *Conceitful* 40)

What seems random upon reading the poem in fact follows an unvarying and graceful order, as may be seen if the movement of the end-words—their dance-like shuffling and ultimate return to their original positions—is depicted in animated form. Thomas Greene gives evidence that such dizzying but perfectly harmonious patterns (such as one finds in the labyrinth dances of the French court, or in Sidney's double sestina) were thought to have a kind of magical or talismanic power. By "imitating and repeating the primordial

creation," creation's power and harmony are not only made visible but also transferred to those enacting it (1444). According to Ficino (as quoted by Greene),

> song is a most powerful imitator of all things. It imitates the intentions and passions of the soul as well as words; it represents also people's physical gestures, motions, and actions as well as their characters and imitates all these and acts them out so forcibly that it immediately provokes both the singer and the audience to imitate and act out the same things. By the same power, when it imitates the celestials, it also wonderfully arouses our spirits upwards to the celestial influence and the celestial influence downwards to our spirit.... Song... casts [power] into the singer and from him into the nearby listener. (1445)

This power of song, Greene notes, Ficino also attributes to dance.

If Sidney had such a theory of cosmic influence in mind as he constructed his own "labyrinth dance" in his zodiacal double sestina, and when he mirrored the music of the spheres in his implementation of Pythagorean harmonies and geometrical formulas in the structuring of his poetical works, it would seem to put him in company with a semi-esoteric camp that saw words and their precise arrangement as instruments with power to alter physical reality.

Critical consensus, however, holds that Sidney rejected astrology and other such "magical" disciplines. Hardin Craig's observations here are succinct and accurate: he points out that when Greville reports that Sidney scorned it, we should not overlook the fact that "He is voicing his own opinions and not those of Sidney." As Craig indicates, Sidney "knew a great deal about astrology, evidently wished his brother Robert to learn the rudiments of the subject, and used astrology very extensively and deftly in his works." He mentions two visits to Dr. Dee (from Dee's diary), possibly (as Wallace guesses) "to learn the auspices of his journey. If so, it was a customary enough thing to

do. *Arcadia* has many seriously intended allusions to horoscopes and astrological soothsayers; and still further confirmation of Sidney's faith in astrology is to be found in *Astrophel and Stella* [cites sonnet 26, "Though dustie wits dare scorne Astrologie"]" (all of this is in Craig, p. 34). One should not overlook, as Craig does, the fact of Sidney's own horoscope having been cast in 1571. Duncan-Jones, after reporting Thomas Moffett's testimony concerning Sidney's "innate loathing" for astrology, speculates that the Earl of Leicester arranged to have it drawn up for his 16-year-old nephew, perhaps by Dr. Thomas Allen.[18]

Craig's mention of astrology and hermeticism in Sidney's works may be illustrated here. The oracle at Delphos is important to the plots of both *Arcadias*, despite the skepticism of Basilius's royal adviser Philanax. Moreover, in the *NA* the oracle is consulted a second time, and by none other than Philanax. After his trip to Delphos Philanax stops trying to argue against the use of oracles, but nevertheless does not neglect to fortify the lodges against attack (*NA* 457-58). In the *NA* (138.27-30), Musidorus finishes telling his own life story in the third person. Pamela asks whether there is any more to be told. He replies, "'Alas, no' said I, 'for even here the historiographer stopped, saying the rest belonged to astrology.'" Whether this is a positive reference to astrology or an amusing detail, seems impossible to determine with certainty. (The "historiographer" is Musidorus, of course, since he has just told his own story to Pamela.) The *Defence* makes reference to magic circles. Sidney says that "the poet never maketh

[18] Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney*, p. 50-51. The horoscope may be found at the Bodleian Library, Ashmole MS 356.

any circles about your imagination, to conjure you to believe for true what he writes" (*DP* 34), and at the end says "I conjure you all" to believe all of the statements of the peroration. Arcadia is the "charmed circle where all his [Musidorus's] spirits for ever should be enchanted" (*NA* 136.7). Musidorus "conjures" Queen Helen of Corinth to tell her tale, and she replies, "'Your conjuration, fair knight,' said she, 'is too strong for my poor spirit to disobey'" (*NA* 59.37).

Alchemy, cabala, and other "occult" arts were popular during Sidney's day. John Dee was England's premier practitioner of such arts, and his longtime assistant was Sidney's friend Edward Dyer (fictionalized as Coredens in the *OA*). Another cabalist and hermetic luminary was William Alabaster, who is indirectly and posthumously associated with Sidney by virtue of his having been a client of the Earl of Essex, Sidney's widow's second husband.[19] The esoteric sciences in Sidney's day were far from being the eccentric hobbies of a handful of crackpots on the margins of society.

It is commonly but mistakenly thought that the esoteric, hermetic, "occult" mentality was incompatible with Protestantism. Andrew Weiner, for example, claims that "Instead of a hermetist Sidney, we have a Protestant one" (Weiner, "Expelling the Beast" 5). This is a false distinction. As Lynn Thorndike explains, there was nothing Catholic or Protestant about it:

> There was no more reason for a Catholic and Protestant to disagree about herbs and gems, astrology and witchcraft, than there was for them to come to blows over Greek grammar and prosody. These were neutral or rather

[19] Hammer, "Devereux, Robert, second earl of Essex (1565–1601)." Alabaster also served for a time as Essex's chaplain. For cabalism in Alabaster, see his own *Apparatus in Revelationem Iesu Christi* of 1607.

> universal territories open to men of every creed and country.
> (Thorndike 5.378)

Melanchthon, who was such an important figure in Sidney's education, possessed a "devotion to astrological divination" (Thorndike 5.405). "Melanchthon argued that only the influence of the sky could account for the vast differences between individuals, regions and races, and that astrology was a part of physical science" (5.394). In such beliefs Melanchthon was joined by a great number of his friends.

Much scholarship on *AS* has not concerned itself with such facts, however, being more likely to analyze the sequence as a psychological and moral drama. J. W. Lever is typical in this respect:

> Sidney [. . .] is concerned with an empirical approach to love in terms of its psychological and moral effects. His interests lie not in the sphere of metaphysics but in observations of character and social conduct: the subjects of his sonnet are his lady, the world of men, and himself; its pivot, his own psyche. (Lever 62)

Because Lever's own interests do not bend towards metaphysics, he was perhaps equipped to see that Sidney's Protestantism did not incline that way, either; it was instead concerned with conscience and morality (Lever 79). Katherine Roberts identifies Protestantism and morality when she refers to "the strict Protestant underpinnings of Elizabethan society" (Roberts 30), "Protestant Elizabethan morality" (38), and "Sidney's strong belief in Protestant Christianity" (40). Eliminate the word "Protestant" and she speaks the truth, for otherwise what she means is that from a moral point of view, Sidney was as good a Protestant as Pope Pius V. The *Roman Catechism* sounds as if it is describing Astrophil when it denounces the adulterer:

> But even though the adulterer may escape the punishment of death, he does not escape the great pains and torments that often overtake such sins as his. He becomes afflicted with blindness of mind a most severe punishment; he is lost to all regard for God, for reputation, for honour, for family, and even for life; and thus, utterly abandoned and worthless, he is undeserving of confidence in any matter of moment, and becomes unfitted to discharge any kind of duty.[20]

J. G. Nichols shows a similar preference for psychological insights and aversion to metaphysical or hermetic ideas in his comparison of *AS* 41 and 53. In 41, Astrophil's tournament performance is helped by the mere fact of Stella's looking on. The "beames" from her face "made so faire my race." Nichols explains this as the "quasi-scientific notion [. . .] of ocular fascination" (Nichols 118),[21] by which, willy-nilly, the beams produce their effects in whomever they touch. The fact that (presumably) no one now believes in ocular fascination means, for Nichols, that sonnet 41 "suffers from one of the worst defects a sonnet can have." "If we are no longer able to accept the notion of ocular fascination as a physical process, we are also unable, in this instance, to take the lines figuratively in any satisfying way." By contrast, sonnet 53 is "so much better" (118). Here, as in Sonnet 41, Stella is responsible for Astrophil's performance. But in sonnet 53, his fumbling "is easily appreciable in terms of a psychological influence; Astrophil was overcome with emotion, and consequently confused" (119).

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[20] Translation from http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/romancat.html; a watered-down translation may be found in *Roman Catechism* 424. The Latin reads: "Qui uero mortem effugiunt, intolerabiles tamen dolores, ac pœnarum cruciatus, quibus sæpe plectuntur, non effugiunt. nam mente cæci, quæ pœna grauissima est, ita fiunt, ut neque Dei, neque famæ, neque dignitatis, neque filiorum denique, uitæque suæ rationem habeant: hocque pacto adeo nequam, & inutiles fiunt, ut nihil graue committi eis debeat, & ad nullum fere officii munus idonei sint" (*Catechismus* 268).

[21] "Fascination" in the now-obsolete sense of "The casting of a spell; sorcery, enchantment" (def. 1 in *OED*).

The "ocular fascination" which Nichols not only rejects, but feels is so outdated that the poem "sinks lamentably" under its weight (118), belongs to the same mindset that believed in the power of labyrinth dances and in sacramental efficacy *ex opere operato* ("from the work having been performed"). Astrophil's own will and psychology had nothing to do with the efficacy of Stella's facial beams—he did not even know Stella was present at the tournament of sonnet 41. In sonnet 53, however, Astrophil looks back at Stella, whereupon his self-doubt causes him to perform unskillfully. This is more palatable to Nichols, and more accords with an alternative view of the sacraments, which predicates their efficacy on the goodness of the recipient—efficacy *ex opere operantis*, or, "from the work of the one doing the work."

Epilogue

Thomas Nashe said the epilogue of *AS* was despair. The real epilogue is that the two women identified as Stella—Penelope Rich and Frances Sidney—both became Catholics. But while the conversion of those associated with Sidney is noteworthy, we get a better sense of the man himself by heeding Tom Parker's contention that the harmonic proportions that govern the structure of *Astrophil and Stella* also to some extent inform the arrangement of the poems in the *Old Arcadia* and the *Certain Sonnets*. If this is true, as seems almost certain, it reveals a constant in Sidney's compositional practice that spans his entire career.

In the *Defence* Sidney wishes for a day when love poetry was employed "in singing the praises of the immortal beauty" (*MP* 116); perhaps he considered the

elaborate, celestially-inspired structuring of his own poetry as a step in this direction. Even though his focus on divine things is expressed obliquely and indeed is expressed most clearly without any words at all, the divine in *AS* is no insignificant feature. As Maren-Sofie Røstvig explains of numerical and proportional patterning, "Its nonverbal character invests [the poem] with a higher kind of reality and a higher kind of beauty than words can ever hope to reach" (79). Some readers have considered Sidney's Psalm translations as fundamentally at odds with his previous, ostensibly "secular" verse.[22] But to the reader who recognizes that he had concerned himself with spiritual things all along, these biblical verse paraphrases appear in their truer guise: they are paths to the same divine destination as all his other verse, only the Psalms are more clearly labelled. And, as the next chapter will demonstrate, they also contain some of the most explicitly eucharistic language of all of Sidney's writings.

[22] "The very existence of Sidney's versions, written with a flair for tedium, remains a mystery to me" (Nichols 49).

Chapter 5:

Effectual Signs: the Catholic Semiotic of the Sidney Psalms

From Martin Luther's insertion of the word "*allein*" into his German translation of Romans 3:28, to the "two twenty-dollar bills" of the *Living Bible*'s rendition of the parable of the Good Samaritan, vernacular translations of the Bible have provided some memorable innovations. And for innovation, the English verse paraphrases of the Psalms begun by Philip Sidney and completed by his sister Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, do not disappoint. Philip and Mary's translations are possibly unique among Protestant versions of the Psalms (certainly among the major Protestant versions): at several points where other translations speak of spirit, interiority, and invisibility, the Sidney versions introduce body, exteriority, and visibility.

Why does this matter? For a small group of Sidney scholars, it complicates the debate over his religious convictions which has been carried on now for some 50 years. But to study the ways the Sidney versions turn inside into outside is to recover an easily forgotten truth about the Reformation in general. These Protestant verse translations borrow from Catholic sacramental thought, and provide a new literary example of the cultural and theological interpermeability among the sects of the so-called second generation of the Reformation—following the earliest period, during which a divided Western Christendom was not yet seen as inevitable, but before the hardenings of religious identities which would characterize the seventeenth century. In Sidney's day, the tradition that many today would label "Calvinism" was still in the process of defining

itself; even moreso "Anglicanism," a dough of various continental religious reforms poured into a thoroughly medieval mold. Though some individuals and groups were uncompromisingly rigid (e.g., Karlstadt during the 1520s; Hooper during the reign of Edward VI; the Gnesio-Lutherans after Luther's death), they were the exception rather than the rule. The Sidney Psalms are an important document in the history of Protestantism because, it can be argued, they exhibit doctrinal positions outside the mainstream of any identifiable Protestant group of the time. Yet their reception appears to have been completely positive. They were read widely in manuscript, and influenced many later poets (Hamlin 119). Mary Sidney presented them as a gift to Queen Elizabeth. My concern here is to show that the theology of the Sidney Psalms is broader than the doctrinal framework of the Protestant sects with which Philip and Mary are most often associated—and of those with whom they primarily associated during their lives.

The particularity of the Sidney Psalms in turning "inner-oriented" passages outward is distinctly un-Protestant. One of the major factors driving the Reformation was a reaction against the "externalization of faith" which had characterized fifteenth-century Europe (see Eire chapter 1). Whether the English also "reacted" against this visual and physical religious culture is questionable, but from an early stage Protestantism is defined in large part by its focus on spirituality and its rejection of what it considered to be idolatrous embodiment and empty Catholic show.[1] C.S. Lewis sketches the extremes of this continuum: "The one suspects that all spiritual gifts are falsely claimed if they cannot

[1] See particularly Eamon Duffy's *The Stripping of the Altars* for the argument that in England the vigor of the old religion ebbed only due to official suppression by the state.

be embodied in bricks and mortar, or official positions, or institutions: the other, that nothing retains its spirituality if incarnation is pushed to that degree and in that way" (*Allegory of Love* 323).

Hannibal Hamlin finds in the psalm translations of Wyatt, Surrey, and Gascoigne a "focus on inwardness and the exploration of the self." This focus, he claims, is "intensified and dramatized" in later writers, including Mary Sidney (Hamlin 123). As I hope to show, her translations (and her brother's) are at least as notable for their frequent inversion of inwardness. The conscious joining within their psalms of word and image, and of internal and external, is in harmony with Sidney's poetic philosophy: the poet must join precept and example to produce virtous action in readers. It also accords with Catholic sacramental theology and liturgy: in Catholic worship, the sacrifice of the Mass is central; in Protestant worship, the sermon. The Catholic Eucharist combines word, image, spirit, and body; the Protestant sermon is much more verbally-oriented. Finally, the "externalizations" of the Sidney Psalms support an understanding of the Body of Christ—in the Eucharist as well as in wider Christendom—that is more ecumenical (more "catholic") than Sidney is usually credited as having espoused, especially given his death in combat against Catholic forces. A substratum linking all these concerns may be discerned in a consideration of Protestant and Catholic semiotic theories: first, in the truth-value each group was prepared to grant to different kinds of signs (specifically to words and images); and second, in their different understandings of the nature of semiosis itself.

Unique as they are, the Sidney Psalms borrow extensively from previous

Protestant translations of the Psalms. Following William Ringler (1962), most critics list the Psalter printed with the *Book of Common Prayer*, the Geneva Bible, Beza's paraphrases, and the Marot/Beza Psalter as among their most important sources. Ringler claims that Philip "ignored the Vulgate; and there is no evidence that he made use of the standard Protestant Latin version by Tremellius [. . .]. I have examined more than fifty sixteenth-century versions of the Psalms, but I have found no clear evidence that Sidney made direct use of any texts other than these four" (i.e., the *BCP* Psalter, Geneva, Beza, and Marot/Beza) (Ringler 505-6). Ringler is unusual, however, in omitting Calvin's Psalm translation and commentary from his list. Later scholarship has convincingly shown the Sidney Psalms' debt to Calvin. Gary Waller has argued that Calvinism appears in four different ways in the Sidney Psalms: various psalms either 1) support Calvinist ideas in themselves; 2) lend themselves to importation of Calvinist ideas (via the Geneva glosses); 3) receive a Calvinist "twist" via a hint from Calvin's or Beza's commentary; or 4) go against Calvinist ideas (Waller, "This Matching" 24). Margaret Hannay not only lists Calvin and Beza as Sidney sources, but specifies their English translations by Arthur Golding (of Calvin, 1571) and Anthony Gilby (of Beza, 1580; Hannay 28). For these reasons, these editions of Calvin and Beza provide most of my points of comparison with the Sidney Psalms.

Sidney himself has long been associated with the Calvinist or Reformed or Puritan tradition (meaning anything from simply that he was not Catholic and not Lutheran, to that was a militant proponent of Calvin's ideas). While it is true that he supported the Reformed political agenda, a strong theological identification of Sidney

with Calvinism founders on the doctrines of the freedom of the will and the power of human reason to discover truth—in both, Sidney and Calvin seem to hold mutually exclusive views. For this reason, Robert Stillman has made a case for identifying Sidney with the Philippists, those Christians who looked to Philip Melanchthon as their leading light and whose views on free will were much more in harmony with Sidney's own.[2] This argument makes sense. However, the kind of visuality and physical embodiment latent in the Sidney Psalms put Philip and Mary at odds even with Melanchthon, as well as the Lutheran tradition.

Some possible objections should be addressed. One might argue that this "problem" of visuality in Protestant poetry is not really a problem, and not so mysterious after all. Late-sixteenth-century poets commonly concerned themselves with the visual, with the creation of vivid images in their works, and had ample store of philosophical arguments to support such a concern. By the 1580s, S. K. Heninger says, poets generally were beginning to understand that physical phenomena constituted the proper object of Aristotlelian *mimesis*. This meant that "the prevalent esthetics was turning from a dependence upon the formal criteria of proportion and verging toward an empirical basis in the accurate observation and description of physical nature" (Heninger 15). And though this description does not fit Sidney—he thought poets should deliver not the

[2] Stillman, "Deadly Stinging Adders." In a letter of 5 November 1575, Zacharias Ursinus wrote to Sidney of the hard fate of their "coreligionists": these included Melanchthon's son-in-law Caspar Peucer, and Georg Cracovius, another Philippist (Osborn 382).

"brazen" world of nature, but rather a "golden" world seen by the mind[3]— this is not to say that Platonists would have found less ground than Aristotelians for cultivating vivid verbal images in their poems. Nor is it to insist that Sidney was a Platonist; yet in the *Defence of Poesie*, he acknowledges Plato's influence on his visual thinking by referring to "the saying of Plato and Tully," that whoever saw virtue would be ravished with her beauty (*MP* 98). Thus, the poet who wishes to move men to virtuous action presents readers with a "perfect picture" of the subject-matter: not with a "wordish description" such as philosophers offer, "which doth neither strike, pierce, nor possess the sight of the soul so much" as does an image (*MP* 85). But while Frances Yates, Walter Ong, Forrest Robinson, and others have documented the ubiquity of visual epistemology in the sixteenth century, this does not explain why, against the example of the Geneva Bible, Beza, and their other known sources, the Sidneys would turn the interiority and immateriality of several psalm passages into their opposites. The influence of these source texts is apparent throughout the Sidney Psalms, and, regardless of whether a pictorial aesthetic was "in the air"—whether based on sense-perception of physical nature or on mental images with no existence in external reality—one assumes that liberties with the biblical text were not taken lightly.

Again, one might object that only the most rigid Puritans, at their most polemically caricatured, would have been opposed to the kind of verbal images created by poets; words were not going to seduce readers into idolatry, as might a statue in a

[3] "Sidney proceeds from the assumption that the objects of artistic imitation are not the individual impressions derived from sensation but concepts both formed and viewed within the mind" (Robinson 106-7).

church, or a painted icon. Calvin even denies that idols themselves have any religious effect on the mind, "as long as they are in taverns or workshops."[4] Yet, as Peter C. Herman has documented, anti-poetic sentiment was widespread among all types of Protestants in Sidney's day, poetry being associated with the fickle faculty of the imagination and therefore with the Roman Church, whose sacraments and docrines were denounced as "poetry" and human inventions that marred the true worship of God. Human reason was suspect, and true knowledge came from the Bible (Herman, *Squitter-wits*). Thus, idolatry was not the only factor driving the Elizabethan clergyman's objection to images (of whatever medium): their epistemological trustworthiness was also a concern. Here was a point of difference between Catholics and Protestants.

The Reformation era recognized that words and images transmit meaning differently. Catholic tradition, at least since Gregory the Great, considered this an educational boon: stained glass windows, painted rood screens, statuary, carved baptismal fonts, and other such religious appurtenances constituted, in Gregory's phrase, "books for the illiterate." To be sure, the fact that images could teach meant they could teach wrong as well as right. John Gerard notes that his fellow Jesuit Edward Oldcorne, at a friend's house in London, "saw a painted pane of glass depicting Mars and Venus. The scene was indecent, and although the house did not belong to his friend—he had merely rented it—Father Oldcorne, unable to endure the sight, struck his fist through the glass and told his friend how unseemly it was to let such things stand" (Gerard 10). But Christian images were not "unseemly" to Catholics.

[4] Calvin, *Commentaries on Ezekiel*, vol. 1, 286.

Lutherans tolerated images in their churches. In *Against the Heavenly Prophets*, Luther asserted that "images for memorial and witness, such as crucifixes and images of saints, are to be tolerated" (Zachman, *John Calvin* 179). But images were not useful much beyond this limited scope. While they might help us remember or understand a text, they could not help us understand God himself. Randall Zachman explains that "Luther consistently *contrasts* what we hear with what we see and feel" (*ibid.* 177)—for example, the visible aspect of the Crucifixion presents only death and defeat, although we learn from sermons that it in fact conceals a triumph over death.

Luther himself favored the continued use of such church art. But "Many Lutherans rejected such pomp as a corrupting compromise with Rome" (Koerner 62). And outside of Lutheran circles, anti-Romanists went to great lengths to distance Christianity from images of all kinds. Sometimes, to underline how evident was the idolatrous lure of images, Reformed controversial writers would point out that *even Mohammedans* had wisdom and piety enough to keep images out of their otherwise heretical worship. Other Protestant tactics in the war against images, according to Catholic Bible translator and polemicist Gregory Martin, included willful deception. Why, asks Martin, except "to make the simple beleeue that idols and images are al one," did English Protestants continue to paint on their church walls a phrase—"*Babes keepe your selues from images*" (1 John 5:21; "ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδωλών," from idols)—"vvhich in their Bibles they correct as a fault?" And why else do they flatten semantic distinctions between a wide array of Hebrew and Greek words, making "all the belles ring one note" by translating them all as "image" (Martin, G. 43, 42, 79, 51)? Non-discursive signs

(called "presentational signs" by Susanne Langer) such as icons, statues, and any signs not governed by syntax, have an immediacy that discursive signs (words in sentences) lack;[5] hence phrases such as "*colores rhetorici*" and the frequent praise given, even by Reformers, to vivid passages of Scripture for their pictorial impact. (And this power of visual immediacy, according to Nicholas of Lyra, is why Moses flew off the handle in Exodus 32, breaking the tablets of the Ten Commandments: "although he had been angry from hearing the sin, he was even moreso from seeing it" (Lyra).[6]

While granting images this immediacy, Calvin and Beza considered images inferior to words in communicative power and precision, and having what one might call a propositional truth quotient much lower than that offered by words. As mentioned above (Chapter 2), Calvin was not opposed to the "living images of God" that one found in the universe and in Jesus. These, however, were not man-made images, which Calvin considered capable only of lying. Beza concurs, repeating Calvin's argument that the history of the use of signs in the ritual and worship of God's people follows a path divisible into two main segments, from the shadowy obscurity of images in ancient rites, to the transparency of meaning afforded by words in (pre-)modern times. The great pivotal moment was, of course, the Incarnation: what had been foreshadowed darkly in the ancient rites had been revealed clearly by its entrance into the physical order of being

[5] Though, as Walter Ong notes in *Orality and Literacy*, even images are "read" one part at a time. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key.*
[6] "Licet fuisset iratus ex auditu peccati, magis tamen ex visu."

in Christ (the Word) and the Gospel, thus superseding the old ceremonies.[7] And while insisting that the rites and sacraments of the Jewish fathers were essentially valid, Beza posits that images such as these, when they do not lie, convey the same message as written words, only in a primitive and imprecise manner.[8] Catholics too believed that the new signs (sacraments) were much clearer than the old. But whereas a Calvin or a Beza believed this was due to the superiority of words over images, the Catholic catechism taught that the superiority of the new sacraments derived from the virtue of the precision of the verbal formulas which accompanied the images.[9]

Catholics and Protestants agreed that once Christ has delivered the reality which those past ceremonies could only signify, Christians ought not to be satisfied with what

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[7] "For God taught ye church more obscurely before Christ was geuē to it," yet with more external rites to support the weaker faith that characterized "the estate and condition of those fathers" (Beza, *Other Parte*, A8r, E5v). Cf. also Calvin's commentary on Leviticus 26:3 and on Psalm 99:5. An especially clear formulation of Calvin's position on the old versus the new dispensation comes in his commentary on Jeremiah 31:12: "Then the holy fathers had the same hope as we now receive from the Gospel, as they had also the same Christ. But the difference is, that God then set forth his grace under visible figures, and it was, therefore, more obscure, but that now, figures and types had ceased, and Christ has come forth and appeared to us more clearly" (vol. 4, 83).

[8] Beza, *Other Parte*, B2v-B3r. He is referring here specifically to the visual and spoken elements of the sacraments.

[9] "In this regard [In regard of the necessity to join the *verbum* to the *elementum*] the sacraments of the New Law far excell those of the Old. There was, as far as we know, no definite form for administering the sacraments of the Old Testament; and because of this they remained very uncertain and obscure. Under the New Law, however, the verbal form is so important that its omission—even if accidental—renders the sacrament null" (*Roman Catechism* 154). "In hoc autem nostra sacramenta antiquæ legis sacramentis plurimum præstant, quod in illis administrandis nulla, quod quidem acceperimus, definita forma seruaretur; quo etiam fiebat, ut incerta admodum, & obscura essent: nostra uero formā uerborum ita præscriptam habent, ut, si forte ab ea discedatur, sacramenti ratio constare non possit: ob eqmq. rem clarissima sunt, ac nullum relinquūt dubitandi locum" (*Catechismus Romanus* [1566], p. 91).

the Geneva Bible calls "impotent and beggerlie rudiments," which it then glosses as "Iewish ceremonies" (Galatians 4:9). In general, Protestants viewed sacraments and rites as stimulants to faith. Catholics, too, believed that the sacraments aroused and strengthened faith, but, unlike Protestants, Catholics believe (now as then) that these external means "are the proper channels through which the efficacy of Christ's Passion flows into the soul."[10] In the *Roman Catechism*, their power is unquestioned; in Protestant teaching, this conviction is either less strong or lacking altogether. If a recipient of the sacraments experienced a substantial change of life, a more popular Protestant explanation was that it had been effected directly by the Holy Spirit, with the external signs not acting instrumentally as in Catholic thought.

Sidney saw things differently. While he no doubt agreed that nondiscursive signs transmit meaning differently than discursive ones, he saw in images a capacity for propositional truth where many of his contemporaries saw only lies, and saw the power of signs as going beyond the mere strengthening of faith, even to having a role in the alteration of the physical order. As I hope to demonstrate, these semiotic considerations set the Sidneys apart from their more orthodox Protestant contemporaries—especially Calvin and Beza, whose Psalm scholarship they use but whose strictures on images and teachings on the Eucharist they seem to ignore (given the Eucharistic implications of the Sidney Psalm passages in question).

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[10] Catholic Church, *Roman Catechism*, p. 152. "Virtutem enim, quæ ex passione Christi manat, hocest gratiam, quam ille nobis in ara crucis meruit, per sacramenta, quasi per alueum quēdam, in nos ipsos deriuare oportet" (Catholic Church, *Catechismvs*, p. 89-90).

Although examples of the Sidneys' borrowings from previous authors are numerous, they exercised discretion with their sources, never wholly committing to the teaching of any one exegete. Neither were they bound in their translations either to preserving traditional Latin renderings, or to representing Hebrew literalness. The name "Jehovah," for example, appears in the Sidney Psalms 99 times, a frequency somewhere between the name's single appearance in the Geneva Psalms (Ps. 83:18) and more than 50 occurrences in the first ten psalms alone in the literal rendering of the Hebrew names by Tremellius.[11]

Where they differ from their fellow non-Catholics, Sidney emphasizes the body and the faculty of seeing, while his sister shows a unique fondness for painting, wealth, and clothing. According to a cultural reading, this poetic emphasis on externals merely means that the Sidneys exhibit the general habits of thought common to educated people of their day. But if these tendencies are submitted to religious analysis, different possibilities present themselves. If the confessional divide between Protestant and Catholic was as rigid in 1580 as it was in 1680 (and 1780, and 1880), these poets should have been seen as preachers of *sententiae haeresi proximae*, doctrinal dissidents, whose beliefs ran athwart the teachings of their primary sources and of other authoritative Protestant documents of their time. But this did not happen, suggesting that confessional identities had not yet crystallized, and a Western Christendom *permanently* fragmented

[11] Theodore Steinberg, arguing that Mary Sidney knew Hebrew, notes that she "never uses Jehovah except when she is translating the Tetragrammaton" (13). However, the Tetragrammaton appears so many times in the Hebrew Psalms as to render a very high statistical probability of such correspondence.

into implacably opposed subgroups was not yet easily conceivable. It is possible to see the Sidney Psalms as materially representing an interplay of different faith traditions, and to imagine this mix as reflecting the crises of faith so common during this era when one's faith was increasingly seen as an indicator of one's national loyalty.

Philip Sidney's Psalms

Sidney Psalm 16 contains a good example of physicality not present in Calvin, Geneva, or other known sources for the Sidney Psalter. In verse 10, the poet inserts a reference to the body where the Bible mentions only the soul. In Pembroke's revision of this psalm, we find a second conjunction of body and soul in verse 11. Compare their versions with that of the Geneva Bible:[12]

Philip Sidney	**Mary Sidney Herbert**
For I know the deadly grave On my soul no power shall have, For I know thou wilt defend Ev'en the body of Thyne Own [. . .] Thou the path wilt make me tread, Which to life true life doth lead: Where who may contemplate Thee Shall feel in Thy face's sight All the fulness of delight, And whose bodys placed be On thy blessed making hand Shall in endlesse pleasures stand! (16.31-4, 37-44)	For I know the deadly grave On my soule noe pow'r shall have, For I know thou wilt defend Even the body of thine own Deare beloved holy one From a fowle corrupting end. Thou lifes path wilt make me knowe, In whose view doth plenty growe All delights that soules can crave; And whose bodies placed stand On thy blessed-making hand, They all joies, like-endless, have. (16.31-42)

[12] All quotations from Psalms 1-43 (versified by Philip Sidney) are taken from the reconstructed original versions printed in William A. Ringler, Jr.'s edition of Sidney's poems. Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke's work, including passages reflecting her revisions of Philip's poems, is quoted from J. C. A. Rathmell.

Geneva Bible

9b: my flesh also doeth rest in hope
10:For thou wilt not leaue my soule in the graue:
nether wilt thou suffer thine holie one to se
corruption.
11: Thou wilt shewe me the path of life: in thy
presence (is) the fulnes of ioye: (and) at thy
right hand there (are) pleasures for euermore.

While Calvin notes that the Hebrew word which both he and Sidney translate as "soul" really means "body,"[13] none of the English versions refers to the body in these verses. Ringler claims that this Psalm "is translated from Beza" (Ringler 512), but apparently not in any strict sense of the word, since no scent of either *caro* or *corpus* is found in verse 10 of any part of Beza's versions (the parts being the *argumentum*, *paraphrasis*, *interpretatio*, and *carmen*), either in Latin or French.[14] Sidney could have gotten the "body" in verse 10 by way of repeating the "flesh" from verse 9; but joining it with "soul" here is an innovation.

Where Sidney refers to the endless pleasures of the body, and Pembroke includes in addition another reference to the delights of the soul, the Geneva refers only to "the fulnes of ioye" that comes from God's favor;[15] but Beza's paraphrase pointedly avoids

[13] "[. . .] there is no dowt, but in the second member there is mention made of the body [. . .] And although wee translate the word [*Nephesh*] into latin [*Anima*,] that is to saye, [Soule:] yet notwithstandinge, among the Hebrews it signifyeth nothing else but the breath of lyfe or the lyfe it self" (Calvin, *Psalmes* 51r).
[14] The question of Beza's text for this verse is apparently more complicated than this. Gregory Martin relates that Beza originally translated *anima* as "carcass," for fear that the idea of a soul remaining either in a grave or in hell for a short time would favor the Papist doctrine of Purgatory (Martin, G. 101). However, in all the editions I have seen, Beza writes "soul" or "*anima*," or simply "*me*," as in the Latin *carmen* for Psalm 16:10.
[15] Psalm 16:11 and marginal note.

the body by referring to "the ioye wherewith the minde [*animus*] can rightly be satiate."[16] For Beza, the weight of the psalm falls on interiority.[17] But Sidney joins soul and body explicitly in this psalm—and Pembroke, in her revision of her brother's poem, does so twice—clothing interiority with visible external form, and positing an interconnectedness between outer and inner—a real relation—unusual, if not unique, among their Protestant contemporaries.

A sense of purpose behind this interconnectedness emerges in light of the Eucharistic overtones present in every line of Sidney's final stanza. Roman Catholic promises of good fortune attached to participation in the Mass, promises ridiculed by Protestant polemicists,[18] seem seriously taken here. "Thou the path wilt make me tread, / Which to life true life doth lead" is most obviously an acknowledgment that God will direct the feet of the righteous, but if the Sidneys' unusual conjunction of body and soul has anything to do with their understanding of the Eucharist, "thou" could as easily be read as an acknowledgement of Christ as present in the host. Seeing as the Psalms were understood, across centuries of exegesis extending into and beyond the sixteenth century, to have Christ as their subject, the fact that a given psalm should be interpreted Eucharistically places no great strain on credibility. In the next lines, "Where who may contemplate Thee / Shall feel in Thy face's sight / All the fulness of delight" elaborates considerably on the more general "in thy presence" of other translations, and sounds

[16] Beza, *Psalmes*, p. 24.
[17] This psalm "doth manifestly reproue the Pharisaicall doctrine of the merite of workes, euen following faith" (Beza, *Psalmes* 23).
[18] See, for example, Jewel's Twentieth Article against Thomas Harding in Jewel 2.749-57.

much like an allusion to Eucharistic adoration; while the reference to a "blessed-making hand" brings to mind images of priestly consecration of the elements. The correspondence between the surface meaning of the poem and a Eucharistic interpretation is not direct, to be sure. Nor need it be. As with allegory and parable, exact correspondences are not necessary for the valid assertion of hermeneutic overtones in a poem. (Consider the disconnect between lived reality and intended meaning in the parable of the royal wedding in Matthew 22:1-14: a king invites guests who kill his messengers; he then burns their city and invites commoners instead, but ties up and ejects one who is not dressed properly. Surely very few weddings, if any, were ever anything like this.) The sacramental meaning is there for the sacramentally-minded reader.

These Eucharistic overtones seem yet more plausible, considering the echo of Psalm 16 in Miles Coverdale's preface to Calvin's treatise on the Lord's Supper. By partaking of one loaf and one cup, says Coverdale, we are made "partakers of Christe, and wyth Christe in all that is hys, none other wyse then all *the membres of one body be partakers of all ioyes and pleasures* that chaunce to the heade."[19] "All ioyes and pleasures" recalls the fullness of joy and everlasting pleasures of Psalm 16:11. If in the final verses of Psalm 16 Coverdale is reminded of the unity with Christ that comes from right participation in the Lord's Supper, Philip Sidney pushes the "head and members" metaphor even farther by openly asserting a yoking of body and spirit that is absent from contemporary renderings—and again, this yoking is made more conspicuous by repetition in Pembroke's revision. Indeed, this contrasts with the division between body

[19] Calvin*, A Faythful and Moost Godlye Treatyse*, B1v-B2r (my emphasis).

and spirit asserted by Calvin and Beza in their attacks on Catholic Eucharistic doctrine. In attacking the custom of adoration of the host, Calvin explains that papistical reasoning held that since the host was the body of Christ, it was impossible that the soul could be absent from it.[20] Thus the whole Christ is present. Elsewhere—in Book 3 of the *Institutes*—Calvin asserts a "diuision of the flesh and the spirite" (3.2.18), further highlighting the apparent Sidney departure from Calvinist teaching in joining body and spirit in Psalm 16. Beza agrees, placing Christ's finite, human body wholly in heaven until such time as he comes again to judge the earth.[21] The material part of the Sacrament might "seal" the spiritual truths contained in it,[22] might give us confidence that the

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[20] Calvin, *The Institvtion of Christian Religion* 4.17.35 (hereafter cited as *Institutes*). "This knowledge shall also easily draw vs away from the carnal worshipping, which some haue with peruerse rashnesse erected in the Sacrament: because they made accompt with themselues in this maner: If it be the body, then both the soule and the Godhead are together with the body, which now can not be seuered: therfore Christ is there to be worshipped." Calvin admits that body and soul are "intermingled" somewhat, but not "so intermingled [. . .] that both do not retain their own properties. For neither is soul body, nor is body soul" (*Institutes* 2.14.1; quoted in Wallace 167).

[21] Beza, *Other Parte* R3v. The "Black Rubric" present in some copies of the 1552 *Book of Common Prayer* explained that kneeling at Communion did not imply adoration of the host or "anye reall and essenciall presence," since Christ's body is in heaven. Though the Rubric was included "against the Archbishop's will and without the consent of the Church" (Frere 85), and was omitted from later revisions, the heavenly location of Christ's body was also the position of John Jewel in the early 1560s (see *A Reply unto M. Harding's Answer* in Jewel 1.449). See also Calvin's *Institutes* 4.17.16, and esp. 4.17.26: "I will make this also euident with as great brefenes as I can. The body of Christ, sins the time that it rose againe, not Aristotle but the Holy Ghost teacheth to be limited, and that it is comprehended in heauen vntill the last day." Not all Protestants held this view of the Second Coming. Lancelot Andrewes, for example, preached an "inaugurated eschatology," according to Nicholas Lossky (cited in Matthews 341).

[22] Beza: "by visible signes our fayth is admonished, and the thing signified is sealed" (*The Other Parte* E2r).; According to Ronald Wallace, Calvin held that God "gives us not only the Word, but also, along with the Word, sacraments or signs, which seal the promise given in the Word and make it more vivid and sure" (Wallace 133).

spiritual reality is present; but ultimately, the things signified, "Christ himselfe with his giftes," "are meere qualities as they are offered to the mindes onely."[23] Materiality could have no place in the working of spiritual effects. "I graunt, that bodily thinges may bee participated by bodily senses, but I vtterly reiecte that reall, touching and cleauing together of the bodie of Christe with our bodies, as a Monster, then which nothing can bee faigned more false and lesse fitte, for the ende of the Sacramentes, pretende they what they wil, for the maintenance of this dotage."[24] Calvin's criticism of Augustine, too, reiterates that like affects like in spiritual matters: "I am afraid the speculation of Augustine is more subtle than correct, that the Law was written by the finger of God, because only the Spirit of God engraves it on our hearts."[25]

Internal and external find themselves joined again—and again, only in Sidney's translation—in Psalm 25, this time through the importation of visual terminology. It begins, "To thee, O Lord most just, / I lift my in ward sight" (25.1-2). The element of seeing is nowhere present in the biblical text, which reads, "Unto thee, ô Lord, lift I up my soul" (Geneva Bible). Likewise in Pembroke's translation of Psalm 73: "But cumbrous cloudes my inward sight did blynd" (73.48). This, like Sidney's "in ward sight" of Psalm 25, is original in her version. Ironically, seeing may have been suggested by Calvin's commentary on Psalm 25, in which gazing comes in for censure: "nothing is more contrary to the true and sincere calling vppon God, than waueringly to gaze aboute

[23] Beza, *Other Parte* D4v.
[24] *Ibid.* D5r-v.
[25] Calvin, Commentary on Exodus 24:12; *Commentaries . . . in the Form of a Harmony* vol. 3, 325-6.

whyther anye worldly help be comming to our succour."[26] Although Sidney's visual faculty here is his inward sight, the emphasis is nonetheless on externals, since the soul is not engaged in the self-scrutiny that is a hallmark of Protestant piety, but rather is looking outward. Seeing also creeps into his version of Psalm 42:

Philip Sidney	**Geneva Bible**
As the chafed hart which brayeth Seeking some refreshing brook, So my soul in panting playeth, Thirsting on my God to look. My soul thirsts indeed in me, After ever living thee; Ah, when comes my blessed being, Of Thy face to have a seing? (42.1-8)	1: As the hart braieth for the riuers of water, so panteth my soule after thee, O God. 2: My soule thirsteth for God, (euen) for the liuing God: when shall I come and appeare (before) the presence of God? (Psalm 42:1-2)

The means of spiritual renewal, not specified in the Geneva version, is identified as sight in Sidney's. In verse 2, visibility is apparent in the Geneva, but the line of sight runs from God to the Psalmist, whereas in Sidney's version the Psalmist is the beholder, and God the beheld.[27] Overall, visibility and the mere act of looking—the ability to take in with senses other than hearing—holds much more importance for Sidney than for his contemporary translators of the Psalms.

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[26] Calvin, *Psalmes* 90v.

[27] Another novel introduction of seeing appears in Psalm 31, where Sidney renders the biblical "thou hast redeemed me" as "Thou [. . .] hast restord my light" (31.14), replacing the commercial term of buying back with a term of sight. The importance of "inward sight" is suggested by its appearance elsewhere in Sidney's works. For example, in the *Old Arcadia* 26 ("Apollo great, whose beames the greater world do light"; Ringler 44), and in several places in the *Defence:* "unspeakable and everlasting beauty, to be seen by the eyes of the mind, only cleared by faith" (*MP* 77); "the inward light each mind hath in it self" (*MP* 91); and the aforementioned passage (a "wordish description, which doth neither strike [. . .] the sight of the soul") (*MP* 85).

In Psalm 27 Sidney again introduces looking: "that dwell I may / In house of High Jehova still, / On beauty His my eyes to stay / And look into / His Temple too" (lines 20-24). The Vulgate, Great Bible, Geneva, and Calvin (in Golding's translation) all give "visit his temple." The word "visit," while etymologically rooted in seeing (related to Latin *video* and *viso*), connotes movement and activity, "to go to see" (*OED* "visit" 8a; Lewis & Short "viso" II. B.); Tremellius here uses the word *inquirendum*—more of an active asking about the temple than a passive gazing at it;[28] a modern translation gives "and diligently to survey his temple."[29] By contrast, Sidney's "looke" does not seem to connote any activity or diligence beyond mere looking. It is an act complete in itself, not subservient to any further purpose. Why would the Psalmist need to physically visit the temple in the first place? "Was this that he might feed his eyes with empty pictures, with its costly materials, and with the exquisite workmanship of it?" Calvin asks, clearly uncomfortable with the possibility of such beauty ensnaring and derailing unwary believers from the proper focus of their worship. To hedge against such a chance, he spells out what many people, Catholics not the least, would feel almost instinctually: that the outward construction and ornamentation of the Temple were meant to lead the viewer's thoughts away from carnality, up to the spiritual truths they shadowed: "Assuredly he does not speak of gazing inquisitively at it, but thus alludes to its visible

[28] Gilby's translation of Beza renders "visit thy temple" as "meditate in thy temple." A phrase parallel to Sidney's may be found in Pierre de la Primaudaye's *The French Academie*, chapter 12, "Of speech and speaking": "When a wise man openeth his lips (saith *Socrates*) we beholde as it were in a temple, the goodly similitudes & images of the soule" (127).
[29] Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (trans. James Anderson) vol. 1, 453.

workmanship, that with the spiritual eyes of faith he may consider the glory more excellent than the whole world, which was there represented."[30] Calvin warns the reader of Psalm 27 not to think that David was so "grosse" as to imagine that he could "bynd [God] to Timber and Stones." Rather, he explains, the beauty of the Temple consists not in outward godliness "too bee seene with the eye," but in the "image of spiritual things." Yet after granting outward ornamentation the potential to direct minds to spiritual things, he undercuts them in no uncertain terms: this psalm, Calvin claims, does not refer to "pictures and images, which deserue so litle to bee nombred among ornamentes of churches, that they are rather dung and durt which defyleth all the purenes of holy things."[31] Unlike Calvin, Sidney seems untroubled by physical beauty in the service of spiritual things. Buxton noted that "For Sidney, as for Bruno, and as for so many men of the Renaissance, physical beauty was a guiding star to the world of spiritual and intellectual beauty. But Sidney was a poet, unwilling to kick away the ladder by which his apprehension mounted" (Buxton 164).[32]

Sidney's commitment to external visibility appears even when he stays close to the biblical text. In Psalm 33:13 and 14 he uncharacteristically passes up the opportunity

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[30] *Commentaries . . . in the Form of a Harmony* vol. 2, 172.
[31] Calvin, *Psalmes* 100v.
[32] Sidney's deathbed praise of beauty does not appear to have sat well with George Gifford, the puritan preacher who was with Sidney. Sidney reflected: "The Lord himself is an infinite spirit, and his providence reacheth unto all things. He is a most good spirit; for otherwise how should the world continue in the beauty it hath?" Gifford comments: "This he spoke with vehement gesture and great joy, even ravished with the consideration of God's omnipotency, providence, and goodness, whose fatherly love in remembering him, to chastise him for his soul's health, he did now feel." Dorothy Connel observes "how Gifford turns the tone back towards his own sombre point of view in the lines that follow Sidney's statement" (Connell 11).

to include the kingly term "throne" used by both Calvin and Beza. He also chooses not to incorporate either their exegesis or the Geneva's marginal note into his translation, all of which warn readers against putting too much faith in externals. In other places he takes the opportunity to include royal terminology, and to incorporate (or at least concur with) Calvin's exegesis: E.g., Psalm 18:19, "He broght me forthe also into a large place" (Geneva) becomes, via Calvin's reference to David's former career as shepherd (*Psalmes* 60v), "He lifted me unto a largly noble place" (18.42); Psalm 15:5, "He . . . shal neuer be moued" (Geneva) becomes, via Calvin's exegesis that this refers to the eternal Jerusalem (*Psalmes* 47v), "in sacred Mount shall raign" (15.13). Anne Lake Prescott also notes the Sidneian tendency toward royal terms: "sometimes the translators, more than they need to, see God's behavior in courtly terms. They do not radically misread, but given a choice they choose like exiled subjects of Mary and vastly relieved subjects of Elizabeth" (Prescott 180).

Sidney's version of Psalm 33:13-14 is full of looking and beholding: "The Lord loketh downe from heauen, (and) beholdeth all the children of men. / From the habitacion of hys dwelling he beholdeth all them, that dwell in the earth" (Geneva Bible, Psalm 33:13-14). Calvin turns "habitacion of hys dwelling" into "dwelling place of his throne," and Beza focuses exclusively on the royal term, leaving only "his most hie throne."[33] However, Sidney simplifies "habitacion of hys dwelling" to "where he dwelleth" (33.52). I suggest that Beza and Calvin felt compelled, in a way Sidney and Pembroke did not, to inject the courtly connotations of the word "throne" into a verse they saw as giving divine

[33] The Hebrew literally means "settled place" (Darby's translation).

sanction to gazing. Both Calvin and Geneva note that God's looking down from heaven indicates that our affairs "are not tossed by chance"[34] but "gouerned by Goddes prouidence" (Geneva); but Calvin further analyzes the divine gaze: The word "throne" indicates for Calvin "that heauen is not an ydle palace of pleasures [. . .]: but a princely court" from where God actively governs the nations.[35] Likewise Beza, who works Calvin's marginalia into his paraphrase of the biblical text: "For God is not an idle beholder of the things that he hath created, neyther doth he suffer them to be carried at all aduentures."[36] (Ironic, considering that Gregory Martin belittles Beza for criticizing scriptural passages he dislikes as having "crept out of the margent into the text."[37]

Such Reformed apologetics explaining away the "gazing" in Psalm 33:13-14 bespeak Protestant Eucharistic concerns. Even though Calvin hints at the importance of vision by calling the Lord's Supper "a glasse wherin we mighte beholde Christe," his frequent disparagement of the visible leaves no doubt as to his ultimate opinion about the ancillary status of nondiscursive signs to discursive ones—the subservience of the image to the word.[38] Beza's paraphrase echoes the common denunciation of the adoration of the

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[34] Calvin, *Psalmes* 124v.
[35] *Ibid.* 125r. Calvin's stress on God's active governance of the universe is consciously opposed to Epicurean and Stoic notions of God's absent or non-active relationship to human existence. According to Partee, Calvin refers to this issue in many other places: the *Institutes* I.4.2; Commentary on Daniel 4:17; Commentary on Hosea 7:2, Commentary on Zephaniah 1:12, Commentary on Psalms 10:4 and 24:1 (Partee 101, n. 17).
[36] Beza, *Psalmes* 65.
[37] Martin, G. a6r.
[38] Calvin, *A Faythful and Moost Godlye Treatyse* B7r. The hierarchy of modes of understanding, from most to least reliable, runs thus: secret virtue of the Holy Spirit, which does not rely on senses; hearing; seeing (see e.g., Calvin, *Theological Treatises*

host and of Eucharistic processions, given formulation in Article 25 of the Thirty-Nine Articles: "The Sacraments are not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them." English pulpits disseminated the same anti-visual attitude by means of the official Elizabethan *Homily on the Lord's Supper*, which prescribes that "euery one of vs must be ghestes and not gasers, eaters, and not lookers," and warns not to trust "in the outwarde receiuyng" of the Eucharist.[39] That Beza intended an allusion to the Lord's Supper in his paraphrase of Psalm 33 seems likely, as does the same intent on Calvin's part, suggested by Calvin's decidedly anti-visual and anti-physical commentary: "the more richely [. . .] [God] poureth out his goodnesse vppon vs, so muche the lesse lift we vp our vnderstanding vntoo him, but frowardly settle our selues

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173). Wallace sums up Calvin's position on visible aids to worship: "Calvin will not allow the introduction into the ritual of the Church of any visible aids to worship or ceremonies other than those that are essential to decency and order in the simple celebration of the sacraments and the straightforward preaching of the Word" (Wallace 247-8). Cf. also Calvin's commentary on God's showing himself to Moses (Exodus 33:19): "although a vision was exhibited to his eyes, the main point was in the voice; because true acquaintance with God is made more by the ears than by the eyes. [. . .] for speechless visions would be cold and altogether evanescent, did they not borrow efficacy from words. Thus, therefore, just as logicians compare a syllogism to the body, and the reasoning, which it includes, to the soul; so, properly speaking, the soul of a vision is the doctrine itself, from whence faith takes its rise" (*Commentaries . . . in the Form of a Harmony* vol. 3, 378). To use "this form of stating the truth [i.e., visible aids] would now be not only superfluous to us, but even injurious, as it would draw us back from the enjoyment of heavenly things" (Commentary on Jeremiah 31:12: vol. 4, 82); "For in the olde testament (the time of figures) the lorde instituted such ceremonies, to be obserued, vntyl that sacrifyce were celebrated in the fleshe of his moste deare beloued sonne, which was the truth of thē al. Seing therfore, al thys is finished, there remayneth no more but that we vse the communion therof. It is therfore superfluous, to declare that thynge, wyth figures" (*A Faythful and Moost Godlye Treatyse* D1r).

[39] Church of England 398, 407.

fast vppon the outwarde meanes that stande about vs."[40]

In short, Sidney's continued reference to the physical body and to the faculty of sight, voiced in the eminently Eucharistic forum of the Psalms, suggests a sacramentalism that is at odds with an Elizabethan orthodoxy. This sacramentalism that grants such importance and power to the visible sign, points to two things. The first is a fuller and more permanent relation between the sign and the signified than Protestant religion typically admitted. This is the more apparent considering the lack of such emphases—if not the active campaign against carnality and gazing in the Sacrament—in Calvin, Beza, and other Protestant documents of the time. And the second, is that Sidney's continual joining of physical and spiritual realities, and as we shall see later, Pembroke's, bespeaks an understanding of understanding itself that finds a parallel in Scholastic theology. And in their attitude towards externals these two poets provide an example of how the line separating Protestant and Papist can blur—or rather, was not yet clearly drawn in matters beyond one's attitude towards Spanish invasion and the Pope.

The Nature of Signification: Two Views

The semiotic theory that follows has been greatly oversimplified in order not to deflect the reader from the main point of this essay: a close reading of selected passages from the Sidney Psalter. Even so, it will be criticized by some as either too technical or out of place in a literary study. Nonetheless, a few sentences will have to suffice to describe the twofold manner in which from a semiotic point of view Sidney's

[40] Calvin, *Psalmes* 124v.

understanding of signification differs from his contemporaries'.[41] First: in the criteria for determining the truth or falsehood of a statement; and second: in the role played by purely physical entities in producing purely non-physical effects (e.g., understanding, grace, sanctification).

The point I will try to make here is that Sidney understands purely mental entities to have "being," and therefore truth, every bit as much as purely physical entities. The Reformers tended to consider Christ's Eucharistic statement "this is my body" as figurative, insofar as the host is physically bread, and insofar as Christ's resurrected body was understood to be in heaven. Consider as a parallel example a man who claims to be the father of a certain child. Unless he is in fact the biological father, his claim "I am this child's father" will be considered false, or else interpreted in some way refecting his affection or sense of responsibility towards the child. But how passionately soever one may believe in the presence of the physical body of Christ in the host, and how firmly soever a man may assert blood-relation, unless these conceptions coincide with some other, non-mental, state of existence, they will be considered false or figuratively meant.

This is where Sidney differs from the Reformers: he considers the relations between persons and objects—be they physical, or existing only mentally—and not the objects absolutely. The relation between a person and an object of belief or thought is always "true" insofar as it is *known*. And for Sidney, as for Scotus and Thomas before him, and for certain present-day semioticians, knowability is a real "'property' of being,"

[41] For extended discussions of the issues raised here, see Deely, *Basics of Semiotics* chapter 3; Deely, ed., *Tractatus de Signis*, Editorial Afterword; Leeming, esp. chapters 8-10; and Maritain.

according to a metaphysics in which truth and being are convertible.[42] Understanding need not be simultaneously or concurrently rooted in anything in the physical order in order to be considered "real." If Sidney had dreamed of a planet beyond Saturn, the relation between himself and this planet—though present only to the mind (Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto not yet having been discovered)—would nonetheless exist, and to refer to such a thought is to refer to a real thing, despite the lack of any corresponding physical entity. This, it seems, is the nature of the Reformed attack on images: images were "true" or "false" according to whether what they depicted either had physical existence, or was painted or copied from life. However, one recalls that Sidney scorns "the meaner sort of painters, who counterfeit only such faces as are set before them" (*MP* 80)—precisely because they require physical presence in order to create a picture. The "more excellent" painters work in physical media, just as the meaner sort do, but begin from an "idea or fore-conceit" truer even than the undeniable truth of brute carnality—truer precisely because its ontological status is indifferent to whether it receives physical manifestation or remains only in the mind.[43] This is important for understanding Sidney's poetic theory.

So much for the first semiotic concern. Regarding the second, I assert that Sidney grants the physical an instrumental role in bringing about non-physical effects, whereas many Protestant thinkers—especially in discussions of sacramental causality—deny that

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[42] Deely, *Tractatus* 500.

[43] Ontological relation, "alone in the whole of physical reality, is indifferent to the source or ground of its being [. . .]. The same relation or set of relations that exists at one time purely objectively may be transferred as such into the order of physical being" (Deely, *Basics of Semiotics* 46).

there can be any intercourse between the physical and the spiritual. In fact, what one finds in the Sidney Psalms is very much a sacramental manifestation of Sidney's theory of "right poetry" being able to produce virtuous action.

I limit myself here to a comparison of the poetics set forth in the *Defence* with a drastically abbreviated summary of "dispositive" sacramental causality (a widely accepted Catholic view in Sidney's time). To be brief, both Sidney and Catholic theologians posit a tripartite semiotic model (summarized in Figure 1):

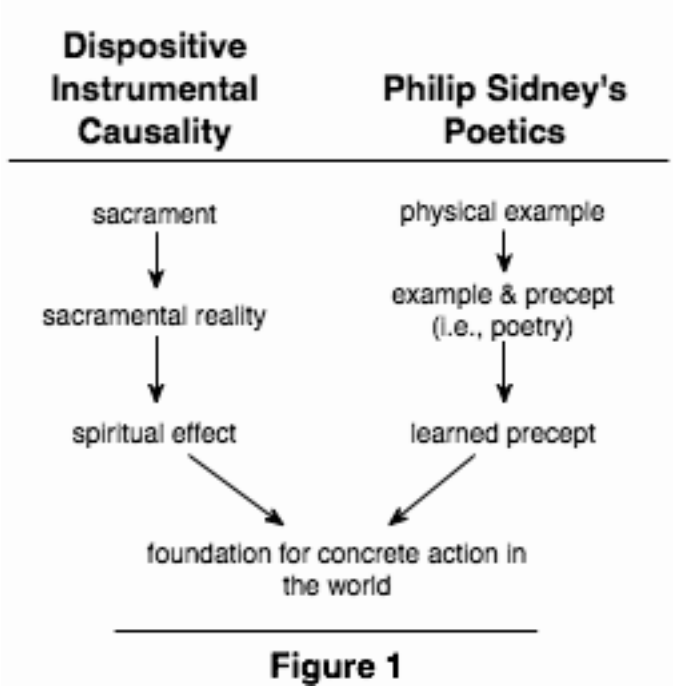

Figure 1

In these models the physical instrument does not produce any immediate effect, but works through an intermediate stage.[44] In the sacramental model, the physical elements of the rite (bread and wine, water of baptism, etc.) signify the "sacramental reality," "an

[44] In Peircean semiotic theory, this middle term would be called the "interpretant"—though it goes by various names among various authors.

effect of the rite which is different from grace" (Leeming 251). In a manner of speaking, the sacramental reality is a state of mind or soul not physically apparent but brought about by the significance of the physical elements of the sacrament. The water and ritual of Baptism, for example, were thought to imprint a character on the soul, "a sign of the holiness which ought to be present" in the baptized (*ibid.*). From this sacramental reality the soul would be further directed to the final reality, the good proper to the particular sacrament. This ultimately spiritual effect then provides the foundation for good deeds which would not have been possible in the unregenerate.

By contrast with this, Protestant theories of sacramental causality were more likely to deemphasize or deny the role of the physical element, asserting instead an "occasional" or "moral" instrumental causality. That is, the administration of the sacraments was the occasion on which God chose directly to confer grace to souls: concomitantly though not through them; or the merits of Christ's death on the Cross moved God to bestow his gifts when the sacraments were administered. In these schemes spiritual means work spiritual effects and non-spiritual elements are denied physical instrumental causality, at least in the same sense or degree one finds in more typically Catholic understandings.[45] And while an omnipotent God may surely bestow spiritual gifts directly, bypassing the use of rites altogether, sixteenth-century theologians generally concurred that the sacraments had been instituted as the means by which God

[45] The Thirty-Nine Articles do grant the sacraments a sort of instrumental agency, calling them "effectual signs"; to Richard Hooker they are "moral instruments" rather than physical instruments (Crockett 275). See Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* V.57.5.

was pleased to communicate his gifts to his Church. Therefore, some physical element was virtually always involved in the bestowing of grace and other spiritual benefits.

To situate Sidney's poetic theory within this framework, we might pose the question: Why must external and internal be constantly joined, as we see repeatedly in the Sidney Psalms? Because just as with the sacraments and their spiritual effects (which make possible renewed life), so also with the external environment and our understanding of it (which enables virtuous action). Both renewed spiritual life and the performance of virtuous actions come to us through intermediaries: states of mind which have, as it were, one foot each in the physical and conceptual realms. These intermediate stages are overwhelmingly born of physical signs and point us toward the sign's object, allowing for the "enriching of memory, enabling of judgment, and enlarging of conceit" (*MP* 82). Virtually all our learning takes its first point of origin from physical instrumental signs (that is, from sense perception rather than from other ideas, each idea being itself a potential sign). Hence the vast importance of external reality even in things such as spiritual formation, for its power to stimulate the memory. But always standing between the sign and its object—and consequently acting as a bridge between the material and the immaterial—are those (to use a modern technical semiotic term) "interpretants," those "sacramental realities," our understandings of those objects.

A few examples from the *Defence* demonstrate this theory at work. Sidney repeatedly posits triadic relationships as paving the way to man's ultimate good: "the knowledge of a man's self, [. . .] with the end of well-doing and not of well-knowing only" (*MP* 82-3). The most obvious triad in the work is that of historian-poet-philosopher.

Historians occupy themselves with the physical, with "examples," while philosophers limit themselves to pondering "precepts" or ultimate reality. Why can neither group actually teach virtue, either strictly by example, or strictly by precept? Because "both, not having both, do both halt" (*MP* 85). The poet teaches more effectively than they do because, Sidney hints, he acts as a "moderator" between these two extremes (*MP* 84), reaching back with one hand to grasp the example while pointing with the other toward the precept. History does not tell one where to go; nor philosophy, how we got here. Poetry bridges the two.

Whether reflecting on human sign usage in general, or with specific reference to sacramental signs, we observe two facts: that they are triadic in nature, and that their workings follow a circular movement, from the physicality of the initial sign, through the immateriality of the object signified, and back to the concrete in right action.

Mary Sidney Herbert's Psalms

Pembroke's psalms provide parallels to Sidney's poetic practice. Two phrases from her Psalm 68—phrases not found in any other version—describe her visual ethos: "throned on delightes" (l. 9), and "with tryumphant show" (l. 64). In Psalm 83 Pembroke changes the Geneva's "fill them with disgrace" to "paint their daunted face, / With pencell of disgrace" (83.45-46), and in Psalm 96, she graduates from the miniature to the history painting,[46] diverging from her translational models by inserting explicit pictorial

[46] A "pencil" was a fine brush such as those used to paint miniatures. Pembroke's use of it in connection with enemies suggests an intimate relationship, since miniatures were normally only done of lovers and beloveds.

vocabulary. The verse in question is Psalm 96:3, which, in virtually all translations, begins with "Declare his glory among all nations."[47] But Pembroke discards preaching as the medium of educating the nations, and replaces it with painting: "Make each country know his worth; / Of his actes the wondred story / Paint unto each people forth" (96.7-9). Oddly enough, Calvin may have provided the cue for using the word "paint"—for he notes in his commentary that the psalmist "painteth out the Lorde whom hee will haue praysed"; even so, to miss an opportunity to use a verb of speaking—preaching being so central to Protestant theology[48]—and to replace it with the verb "paint," indicates a poet with as much love for the visual as for Calvin's verbal exegesis.

Moreover, this rendering has David calling for something expressly forbidden by the *Book of Homilies*: to communicate a story by painting. In the official Elizabethan sermon against idolatry, "not onely carued, grauen, and moulten images, but also painted images" are forbidden.[49] The sermon later makes a distinction between "thinges forbidden by Gods woorde, as paintyng of Images of GOD, and thinges permitted of God, as such discriptions vsed of the prophetes"[50]—a distinction that calls to mind the

[47] Beza is an exception, who has "Rehearse." The Vulgate reads "Annuntiate"—announce his glory.
[48] While preaching was elevated to extreme importance among Protestants (one recalls Hugh Latimer's frequent warning, "Take away preaching, take away salvation"; Latimer D3r, K7v, etc.), it should not be forgotten how important preaching was to Catholics as well. John Gerard writes of a raid on the house where he was staying: "On the table they saw all my meditation notes, my breviary, and several Catholic books, and, what I valued most, my manuscript sermons and notes for sermons which I had collected together over the last ten years. I treasured them more than anything—more than all the precious things these men perhaps had hidden away in chests" (Gerard 153-4).
[49] Church of England 51.
[50] *Ibid.* 87.

belief that in Old Testament times, weak faith required the use of "figures" and "images," whereas such usage properly ceases after the fulfillment of such images in the Incarnation. In illustration of "things permitted of God," Beza says of Psalm 68 that David "addeth maruellous artificiall colours, rather painting it foorth, then writing it."[51] Calvin accepted Scriptural imagery, Zachman explains, because he believed "that God portrays Godself in Scripture the same way that God manifests Godself to us in the universe."[52] Thus, it was permissible for a translator to imitate the masters, as it were, by "painting forth" images originally contrived by the prophets, but to call on readers to "paint" the works of God as a teaching tool for the nations would be tantamount to asking them to lie. This prohibition seems to assume the contingency of truth upon concomitant physical manifestation of the depicted subject, as discussed above. Any non-contemporary depiction lacks a physical relation to the story or person depicted, and as a result, the relation posited between a picture and such a subject could as easily be false as true. Hence the note struck so often by Calvin, as here by the homilist: all images are vain and worthless, and tell nothing but lies. Words, on the other hand, could be translated, and regain whatever "reality" they may have lost when their language was not understood.

Pembroke's use of the word "paint" runs counter to the standard Protestant teaching of her day, but her understanding of the truth value of an image, be it visual or poetic, agrees with her brother's doctrine expounded in the *Defence*: "right poets," he

[51] Beza, *Psalmes* 163. "It" here seems to refer to the psalm as a whole, but may refer to "the former benefices of God" (ibid.).
[52] Zachman, *John Calvin* 181.

says, "bestow that in colours upon you which is fittest for the eye to see: as the [. . .] look of Lucretia, [. . .] wherein he painteth not Lucretia whom he never saw, but painteth the outward beauty of such a virtue" (*MP* 81). In other words, an object's truth status or reality does not suffer through its lack of being simultaneously physical. And its truth does not hinge on direct intersubjective contact; it can exist indirectly,[53] between the verbal picture of Lucretia created by a poet, and the knowledge of virtue as it exists in a reader. The poet may never have seen a Lucretia of flesh and blood; such a woman may never have existed; and the poet and reader may never establish physical contact. But since the poet "nothing affirms" in the way of actual physical relation, he "therefore never lieth" (*MP* 102). And purely mind-dependent images such as Lucretia are also true insofar as they are the seeds of future deeds, or, in other words, through their connection with the promise of being clothed with future physical manifestation in virtuous action. Poetry in this capacity works like a lower-order sacrament: whereas a sacrament in its capacity as a practical sign both indicates and effects the grace proper to it—as in law a title-deed not only declares intent, but also effects that intent (Leeming 290)—the proper function of poetry is to display the Good by means of a visible sign which will move readers to effect it in themselves.

Pembroke's Psalm 45 operates on just this principle. In an unusually intimate enactment of the sanction given to translators to retain florid imagery original to the psalmist, she provides a sumptuous depiction of queenly underwear. But while the

[53] Indeed, in understanding, it must exist indirectly, in accordance with the proper action of signs. It can be imagined that this idea of mandatory mediation might not win many Protestant supporters.

original portrayal of this rich wardrobe had divine sanction, the interpretive decision to render "inward" of the Geneva as "under clothes" (45.51) also chafes against the sermon on idolatry: churches ("the king's daughter" being the Church) and their members should be "humble, frugall, and nothing esteeming earthly and outwarde thynges, but gloriouslye decked with inwarde ornamentes, accordyng as the prophet declareth, saying, The kings daughter is altogeather glorious inwardly."[54] Beza likewise declares that this beauty "is inward, and [. . .] not to be seen of fleshly eyes."[55] Yet Pembroke makes the entire golden couture external and visible, a shiny upper garment with golden "under clothes" as representing an analogous inner state:

> This Queene that can a king her father call,
> Doth only shee in upper garment shine?
> Naie under clothes, and what she weareth all,
> Golde is the stuffe the fasshion Arte divine; (45.49-52)

The Countess provides numerous other wardrobe services: In one place, she clothes a biblically nondescript "people" with "solempne robes" (Ps. 110.10);[56] in another, she strips them of clothes they never had by changing "thei shalbe changed" (Ps. 102:26) into "Uncloth'd of all the clothes they beare" (Ps. 102.84);[57] and "visit me with thy salvacion"

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[54] Church of England 146.
[55] Beza, *Psalmes* 109.
[56] Pembroke seems to have taken her wardrobe cue from Beza in this verse, whose bloated paraphrase includes two mentions of garments not present in the biblical texts. Beza, however, introduces the garments in order to underline the fact that even lowly things will be made holy in Christ's kingdom: verse 4, "And do not maruell that I haue made mention of holy garments. For all thinges shall here be most holy, and separate from all impuritie" (*Psalmes* 305).
[57] Similar, but not identical in meaning, to Beza's paraphrase: "whiles that at the length they be changed by thee from the forme that we now see, as a garment cast off" (*Psalmes* 271).

(Ps. 106:4) becomes "Make me [. . .] thy safeties liv'ry weare" (Ps. 106.10). Focusing on outward adornments as she does, in the sacramental context of the Book of Psalms, causes one to think of the distinction posited by pre-Trent Catholic theologians of the different effects on the soul by the different sacraments. While Baptism, Confirmation, and Orders imprinted an indelible "character" on the soul, the remaining sacraments conferred an *ornatus animae* (adornment of the soul) (Leeming 329). At any rate, whatever she intended by the examples I have given here, they all give explicitly "outward" expression to passages with obviously "inward" meaning.[58]

In addition to painting and clothing, material wealth is unusually prominent in certain of Pembroke's psalms. Her interpretation of Psalm 68:30, "They shall bring silver" (68.81) ignores both Geneva and Calvin, who prefer to read the silver not as a gift, but as something to be trodden under foot. Even "Archbishop Whitgift, attended by 1,000 servants, 40 of them gentlemen wearing chains of gold" (McGrath 23), would look poor next to some of Pembroke's psalms, so much does the emphasis on money make them stand out among contemporary translations. In her version of Psalm 66, monetary images recur every few lines. The two references to wealth in the Geneva translation—God's trying the psalmist like silver, and putting him into a wealthy place—are compounded in her version to no fewer than eleven. God's people are depicted "spending" their voices on his praises (line 27); God hears the sighs "spent" by the psalmist (line 58), who asks those who fear God to "lend" an ear (line 50), and goes to God's house to "pay and offer

[58] "Nay all, ev'n all / Shall prostrate fall, / That crownes and scepters weare" (72.38-40)—another instance of clothing not in the original texts. Cf. Ps. 109:18-19 for an example of clothing metaphor in original.

what I owe" (line 42). "All earth dwellers" are called to become "tellers," of God's "worth" (lines 11-12), calling to mind not only those who certify the good deeds of the Lord, but also of bank employees ("tellers") who certify a different kind of deed. As Calvin explains in a similar context, "It is no uncommon thing for the glory of the spiritual kingdom of Christ to be portrayed under images of outward splendor. David [. . .] has here [Ps. 72:15] foretold that the kingdom of Christ would be distinguished for its wealth; but this is to be understood as referring to its spiritual character." While Calvin takes pains to downplay the rich imagery, the Countess plays it for its full worth. And, in a passage that raises questions about the Lord's Supper, Pembroke's psalmist brings out the "cost" in "holocaust," as it were, by a continual upping of his sacrificial ante: he will offer "The fatt of Ramms with sweete perfume: / Nay goates, nay bulls, of greater sizes, / And greater *prices* to consume" (lines 46-48, my emphasis).[59]

This observation brings the discussion around once again to the Eucharist. For Pembroke was not the first author to associate sacrifice with price: Calvin does so in the *Institutes* when denouncing the sacrifice of the Mass as a sacrilege of the Lord's Supper, because it pretends "to pay a price to God, which he may receiue for satisfaction" (4.18.7).

And consider Psalm 96, among the most Roman-flavored of all her verses:

> Take your Offrings gett you thither,
> Where he doth enshrined sitt.

[59] "Price" rhymed with "prize" in Sidney's day, as evidenced by its occasional spelling as "prize"—cf. Henry Sidney's letter to Elizabeth, August 1577: "you shall see soch an Encrease of Revenue, as your Majestie shall not thinke the Pourchace over prized" (Collins 205).

Goe adore him in the place
Where his pompe is most displaied: (96.23-26)

While the biblical text does call for an "offering" to be made to God in his "glorious Sanctuarie" (Geneva), the words used here—"enshrined," "adore," "pompe," "displaied"—evoke the sacrifice of the Mass and Eucharistic adoration. The priest "offers" the sacrifice, which then "sits enshrined" in the tabernacle; or is "displaied" in a monstrance for the devout to "adore"; or with "pompe" is carried around the church in procession. Calvin, among others, specifically attacks the "pompe" with which the Host is adored in popish ceremonies: "They consecrate an host, as they call it, which they may cary about in pompe, which they may shewe foorth in a common gazinge to be looked vppon, worshipped, and called vppon."[60] One final notice may be given to Pembroke's Psalm 104:

To thee, to thee, all roiall pompes belonge,
Clothed art thou in state and glory bright:
For what is else this Eye-delighting light
But unto thee a garment wide and long?
The vaunted heaven but a Curtaine right,
A Canopy, thou over thee hast hunge? (104.3-8)

Pembroke's verses quoted here describe the invisible majesty of God clothing itself in nature, primarily with light and sky, as if hung under a canopy. The proximity of "pompes" and being "hunge" under a "Canopy," however, would have set bells ringing in the mind of anyone at odds with Catholic practice of reserving consecrated hosts in a pix, hung under a canopy over the altar. John Jewel, in his Ninth Article in reply to Thomas

[60] Calvin, *Institutes* 4.17.37

Harding (written in the mid-1560s), denies that in the primitive Church "the sacrament was then, or now ought to be, hanged up under a canopy" (Jewel 2.553). According to Jewel, Harding bases his defense of this practice on an analogy with earthly potentates: "Princes use to sit under a cloth of estate; bishops and deans under painted thrones, or cloth of arras; *ergo*, (saith M. Harding), the sacrament ought to be hanged up under a canopy (*ibid.* 557). Yet Pembroke here attributes such language to God himself. Why, in the Eucharistically-oriented Book of Psalms, would a Protestant use such language, unless she saw grounds for the Catholic practice in an analogy of greater power even than Harding's: an analogy between the glory of God as manifested in the Sacrament and as manifested not in the realm of secular power, but in the book of nature itself? Or why, unless, perhaps, she favored the old ways, or at least had no disagreements with Catholicism on ceremonial grounds?

These "Romish" passages in the Sidney Psalms are numerous enough to cause one to question just what it meant to be both a Protestant and a poet, in a time when disagreements over religion and signification could lead to imprisonment, poverty, massacre, and civil war. Could it be that the Elizabethan poets—growing up in the absence of a visual culture which characterized Catholic countries, and which had place in England before the demolitions of Edward's reign—looked to poetry as a non-idolatrous means for reestablishing a "pictorial culture" in England?[61]

The Sidneys were not Papists, nor would I argue that they were crypto-Catholics.

[61] Stage plays come to serve this function in the decades after Sidney's death. Cf. Louis Montrose, *The Purpose of Playing*; S. K. Heninger, "Sidney's Speaking Pictures and the Theater"; Leonard Barkan, "Making Pictures Speak."

But these examples illustrate the danger of assessing sixteenth-century religious identity in light of the seventeenth-century hardening of religious confessions. The marriage of material and immaterial in the semiotic and poetic models described in this essay may call for a view of the Sidneys' ecclesiology that is more ecumenical, if the 1580s are not too early a date to apply that word, for these departures from the traditional renderings of the Psalms seem to indicate an inability to conform to the stock descriptions of Catholics and Protestants alike.

Conclusion

The old notion that Sidney's Protestantism must inform if not determine every aspect of his life and works has been tested and found wanting. With this dissertation I have tried to suggest a way of studying Sidney founded upon a rejection of this long-held assumption. It is surprising that a Catholic approach has not previously suggested itself to more than perhaps two or three scholars, given the perennial difficulty critics have had in reconciling his ideas to Reformed orthodoxy. Yet I am convinced that a recovery and application of pre-Reformation and non-Protestant traditions and ways of thinking hold nothing but promise for increasing our understanding of this poet. Indeed, I believe our current knowledge represents the tip of an iceberg that still awaits discovery for those who choose, as it were, to go beneath the surface.

There are several areas that deserve greater study, and I list them in no particular order. The Eucharistic implications of the Psalms have shown themselves in this dissertation, but cannot be said to have been explained, let alone fully enumerated. Sidney and Pembroke's debts to previous translators and commentators (Geneva Bible, Calvin, etc.) have been studied by William Ringler, Gary Waller, Margaret Hannay, and others, but Sidney's debt to the tradition of Catholic commentary remains a mystery. Worthy of a book in its own right, given that Psalm translation was not a particularly Protestant affair, despite some characterizations of it as such. Catholic liturgical studies are also untapped resources for Sidney scholars. Considering that Petrarch drew on the

liturgical calendar in constructing his *Rime*, we cannot assume that similar considerations are entirely absent from Sidney's design of *AS*, for example.

Musical theory is the undiscovered country in Sidney studies. Tom Parker's work on *AS* and S. K. Heninger's on Pythagoreanism in the Renaissance offer valuable starting places for those who might take up this thread. Musical concerns are related to cosmology. A deeper understanding of both of these promises new insights into the relationship between the parts of single poems, to the relationship between complete sequences (such as between *AS*, *OA*, and the *Certain Sonnets*), and to the relationship between Sidney's poetry and the work of other poets who may have shared Sidney's musical and cosmological assumptions. Moreover, music is the glue between Sidney and some of his lesser-known friends: "a group of recusant music-lovers, largely based in East Anglia" (Woudhuysen 385). William Byrd, Catholic composer to Queen Elizabeth, set some of Sidney's poems to music and is thought to have known Sidney personally.

Giordano Bruno is said (by himself) to have been another of Sidney's friends. This has been taken with a grain of salt by most recent scholars, though a reading of Yates's *Art of Memory* suggests that if there is common ground between Bruno and Sidney, it is with respect to the arts of memory. Sidney refers to the doctrines of "they that have taught the art of memory" (*MP* 101) and his heroes stock the "places" of their memory with vivid images (*NA* 4.34, 129.8). The art of memory is not far removed from considerations of Jesuit meditation, which Louis Martz has shown was so important for English verse in the seventeenth century. Sidney would have known of the Spiritual Exercises through any number of publications, if not through his friend Edmund

Campion during their meetings in Prague in 1576. It remains to be seen whether or to what extent Sidney's ruminations on memory are related to Ignatian meditation with its visual emphasis on "composition of place."

Art historical research promises a better understanding of Sidney's concept of himself. A study of melancholic conventions in portraiture may offer insights into Sidney's self-representation as the melancholic shepherd-knight Philisides in the *OA*. His extensive handling of emblems and impresas, especially in the *NA*, has been little studied. Alastair Fowler has characterized the elaborate symmetries of *AS* as reflecting the influence of mannerist art, but these remain to be analyzed in terms of specific works of art an in the larger context of Italian art in the 1570s with which Sidney gives every indication of being enthralled.

Finally, the archives of eastern Europe, and Prague in particular, promise untold new discoveries. The court of Rudolph II attracted many Englishmen associated with Sidney: from scientist-magicians such as John Dee and his associate Edward Kelley, to Walsingham's spies hired to supply information on Jesuit activity (with whom Sidney would have been associated by virtue of friendship and his later status as Walsingham's son-in-law), to Sidney himself during his 1577 embassy. Any one of these areas of study promises to push our understanding of Philip Sidney in new directions. Taken together, they may prompt a new way of thinking about the era as a whole.

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