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Praise, Patronage, and the Penshurst Poems: From Jonson (1616) to Southey (1799)

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Praise, Patronage, and the Penshurst Poems:

From Jonson (1616) to Southey (1799)

by

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A THESIS

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Abstract

The Penshurst group of poems (1616-1799) is a collection of twelve poems—beginning with Ben Jonson’s country-house poem “To Penshurst”—which praises the ancient estate of Penshurst and the eminent Sidney family. Although praise is a constant theme, only the first five poems praise the respective patron and lord of Penshurst, while the remaining poems praise the exemplary Sidneys of bygone days, including Sir Philip and Dorothy (Sacharissa) Sidney. This shift in praise coincides with and is largely due to the gradual shift in literary economy: from the patronage system to the literary marketplace. Instead of obligatory laudatory works for aristocratic patrons, print culture offered writers new opportunities and literary authority: poets praised subjects they felt worthy and commercial readers found fashionable. The De L’Isle and Sidney Manuscripts—located in the Kent History and Library Centre—has provided this study with new and invaluable information regarding praise, patronage, and Penshurst.

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To my country house in Springbank, Alberta, where my family and
happiness reside.

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The three utilities of Poetry: the praise of Virtue and Goodness, the memory of things remarkable, and to invigorate the Affections.

Welsh Triad (qtd. in Southey, *The Minor Poems* 108)

A Note on the Texts of the Penshurst Poems

Due to the obscurity of the Penshurst poems—with the exception of Ben Jonson’s “To Penshurst”—and because only excerpts of the poems are cited within the body of this thesis, each poem in its entirety is included in Appendix B. The copy text of each Penshurst poem is the earliest available printed edition and is documented in both the Bibliography and Appendix B. The year that follows the title of each poem refers to the publication year and not the year in which the poem was written. In an attempt to maintain the historical integrity of these twelve Penshurst poems, I have made very few changes to the texts: stanza breaks, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation have not been altered. The long “s” is modernized, line numbers are added, and indentations, which do not identify stanza breaks, are removed.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Since the early seventeenth century, poets have been fascinated and inspired by the architecture, inhabitants, and history of Penshurst Place—a mediaeval country estate located in Kent, England and home to the eminent Sidney family for nearly 500 years. Although other country estates have received poetic consideration, including Saxham Hall, Stowe, and Knole, none have been celebrated as often as Penshurst. Ben Jonson begins the tradition of “Penshurst poems” with his famous country-house poem, “To Penshurst,” which celebrates and praises the estate’s lord, Robert Sidney, Earl of Leicester, and his family. Numerous poems about Penshurst were written and published in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; however, unlike Jonson’s “To Penshurst,” these subsequent poems have received little—if any—scholarly attention. Individually, these poems offer intimate details about the Sidney family and the society and attitudes centered on the country estate. Collectively, these poems, which span nearly two hundred years of political, economic, and literary developments, present an intriguing case on the evolution of literary praise, patronage, and the significance of the country estate and its inhabitants. Other than Penshurst itself, praise is the most pronounced theme within this group of poems. The object of praise, however, changes throughout the sequence: praise begins with the respective lord and his family then shifts to a sentimental and almost mournful admiration for Penshurst’s bygone heroes, poets, and beauties. In “To Penshurst” (1616), Jonson directly praises the current lord and his family:

These, Penshurst, are thy praise, and yet not all.

Thy lady’s noble, fruitful, chaste withal.

His children thy great lord may call his own;

A fortune, in this age, but rarely known. (91-94)

Nearly two hundred years later in “For a Tablet at Penshurst” (1799), Robert Southey disregards the current inhabitants of Penshurst and reflects on the famous poet and courtier, Sir Philip Sidney: “... That stately oak / Itself hath moulder’d now, but Sidney’s fame / Lives and shall live, immortalized in song” (19-21). This shift in praise invokes several questions particular to the Penshurst poems, but also, perhaps, pertinent to other poets and poetry from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: What is the relationship between the poet and the inhabitants of Penshurst, and how does this change during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? Why do later poets focus on bygone figures rather than current inhabitants? What is the significance of Penshurst Place (and country houses in general) during this two hundred year period? Can the evolution of praise apply to other poetry from this time? In an attempt to answer these and other questions, this thesis examines three main factors that contribute to the transition of praise illustrated in the Penshurst group of poems: 1) the celebrated Sidney family and its history of notable figures; 2) the move from a literary patronage system towards a literary marketplace; 3) the changing role of patronage within the patronage economy and the literary marketplace.

Throughout Renaissance and Early Modern England, literary patronage played a predominant role in the production of literature, in the socioeconomic survival and security of most writers, and in the praise and promotion of royal and aristocratic patrons and their families; however, due to the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695, which marked the end of pre-publication censorship, publishers began to compete for a growing commercial readership and writers began to turn to self-representation and the expanding literary marketplace. As writers became less reliant on the aristocratic patron and more

reliant on the reading public, literary praise became less of an obligation and more of a personal and professional choice. Instead of obligatory laudatory works for aristocratic patrons, print culture offered writers new opportunities and literary authority: poets praised subjects they felt worthy and commercial readers found fashionable—such as the notable and virtuous Sidneys of days gone by. Regardless of the proliferation of printed text and the “increasing sociocultural authority of authors as well as the interpretative importance of the reader” (Marotti 22), the shift from the patronage system to the literary marketplace was neither sudden nor absolute. While the commercial reader became the dominant literary consumer of the early-eighteenth century, the aristocratic patron remained an important factor in the production and distribution of literature. The Penshurst poems—from Jonson’s “To Penshurst” (1616) to Southey’s “For a Tablet at Penshurst” (1799)—illustrate the gradual shift from a patronage economy to a print economy and, as a consequence, the gradual reshaping of literary praise in seventeenth and eighteenth-century England—a movement away from obligatory, laudatory works for aristocratic patrons toward reflective, sentimental works for the growing reading public. Beginning with Jonson’s well-known patronage poem, the Penshurst poems also illustrate that although print culture had become the dominant platform for the exchange of literature, the patronage system and the literary marketplace successfully co-existed over this two hundred-year period.

From the abundance of poems that refer to Penshurst and its inhabitants, only a select twelve poems—four from the seventeenth century and eight from the eighteenth century—are examined within this thesis and deemed part of the Penshurst group of poems. In order to maintain a firm focus on the estate within this given period, the following criteria have

been established to define and identify a Penshurst poem: 1) “Penshurst” must be in the title or text of the poem; 2) The poem must focus on the architecture or landscape of the estate, or on the inhabitants (past or present) in context to the estate; 3) Penshurst cannot be merely a location for reflection; 4) The poem must be written between 1616 and 1800. Consistent with these criteria, the Penshurst group of poems includes:

- ❖ “To Penshurst” (1616), by Ben Jonson
- ❖ “At Penshurst” [“Had *Dorothea* liv’d when Mortals made”] (1645), by Edmund Waller
- ❖ “At Penshurst” [“While in this Parke I sing”] (1645), by Edmund Waller
- ❖ “To My Lord of Leicester” (1645), by Edmund Waller
- ❖ “The Peroquette” (1719), by Thomas D’Urfey
- ❖ “Penshurst” (1750), by Francis Coventry
- ❖ “Inscription for an Oak in Penshurst Park” (1761), by Francis Coventry
- ❖ “Sonnet XLVI: Written at Penshurst, in Autumn 1788” (1789), by Charlotte Turner Smith
- ❖ “Sonnet XII. Written at Penshurst” (1789), by Edward Hamley
- ❖ “Sonnet XLIV. Written at Penshurst” (1789), by Edward Hamley
- ❖ “Sonnet, Written at Penshurst” (1798), by Egerton Brydges
- ❖ “For a Tablet at Penshurst” (1799), by Robert Southey

After the death of Sir Philip Sidney (1554-86), a remarkable amount of poetry was written about his exceptional (and mythologized) life and death.¹ Although he remains the most famous member of the Sidney family—whose name is most frequently associated

¹ See Gavin Alexander’s *Writing After Sidney: The Literary Response to Sir Philip Sidney 1586-1640* (Oxford, 2006).

with Penshurst—few of these poems reflect upon Sir Philip in relation to Penshurst. Edmund Spenser’s elegy “Astrophel,” for example, mourns the loss of Sir Philip; however, it neither mentions nor alludes to Penshurst. Like his great uncle, Algernon Sidney is recognized and celebrated for his military valor as expressed in Robert Southey’s “Epitaph On Algernon Sidney.” Although Southey’s poem alludes to Penshurst as Algernon’s place of interment, the estate is neither mentioned by name nor does it receive further consideration. Conversely, Southey’s “For a Tablet At Penshurst” accounts for one of the twelve Penshurst poems as it includes “Penshurst” within its title and text, and reflects upon Penshurst’s “high-born beauties and enamour’d chiefs” (4) in relation to the estate. Other Penshurst-related poems merit scholarly attention; however, in keeping with the established criteria, they do not belong to this unique group. In Mary Wroth’s “Penshurst Mount” (1621), for example, Penshurst merely provides a place for romantic reflection. Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s “The Picture Gallery at Penshurst” (1833) and Fredrick William Faber’s “XLIV. The Groves of Penshurst” (1857) fall outside the period of this study.

Penshurst poems appeared in folios and miscellanies, within novels, in the form of pamphlets, and later in anthologies. Although no evidence has been found, Jonson’s patronage poem was likely presented to the Sidney family in the form of a presentation manuscript prior to its publication in Jonson’s 1616 folio volume of his works. It is probable that other patronage poems, including Coventry’s “Penshurst,” were also privately presented before publication. Although the poetry of Penshurst was originally a literary description about the estate and family, it soon became part of the estate’s culture and identity. In *A General Account of Tunbridge Wells and its Environs* (1771), Richard Onely

describes the poets and poetry of Penshurst alongside the estate's rooms, halls, paintings, and park. Onely writes, "This Park, and most of the above-mentioned objects are celebrated by Ben Jonson and Waller; and the house, pictures, park, &c. have been lately described by Mr. Coventry, in an elegant poem, called Penshurst, in the 4th vol. of Dodsley's Collection" (21). Excerpts from Penshurst-related poems are also used as supporting text in descriptions of the estate and family. "The Story of an Old English Mansion: Penshurst (Kent)—The Home of the Sidneys," published in the *London Society* journal (1862), begins with the first stanza of Jonson's "To Penshurst" and incorporates poetic excerpts from Sidney, Spenser, and Southey to illustrate particulars about the family and estate (42).

With the exception of Jonson's much-studied poem, few Penshurst poems have received critical attention and they have yet to be studied as a group. In 1882, Julia De Vaynes recognized that a group of Penshurst poems exist and published them in *The Kentish Garland: On Persons and Places* under the heading "Penshurst Group." De Vaynes provides fragments and full texts of eleven Penshurst-related poems (several of which are Waller's Sacharissa poems)¹ and offers a brief overview on each. De Vaynes writes in her introduction,

None of our fine old family county seats can rival Penshurst in poetic celebrity, and it is a question to whom for this it is the most deeply indebted, —whether to the undying laurels twined round our English Bayard, Sir Philip Sidney, or to him who 'catch'd at love and fill'd his arms with bays,' — Waller, that somewhat unworthy descendant of the knightly Kentish Wallers of

¹ Edmund Waller wrote twenty poems for and about the beautiful, young, and accomplished Dorothy Sidney, daughter of Robert Sidney, 2nd Earl of Leicester. Sacharissa (a derivative of the Latin word *saccharum*, meaning sugar) is the poetic name given by Waller to Dorothy. Three "Sacharissa poems" are included in the Penshurst group.

Groombridge. Since his time poems of every size, length, and variety of merit have been lavished on its consecrated ground. (764)

De Vaynes questions who is responsible for Penshurst's poetic celebrity; however, she limits her inquiries and commentary to individual poems and focuses solely on the estate, occupants, and respective poet. The intent of this thesis is to expand the analysis beyond individual poems and beyond the walls of Penshurst in order to uncover and assess the connections among literary praise, patronage, print culture, and the significance of the country estate and its inhabitants during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The Kent History and Library Centre in Maidstone, England houses the De L'Isle and Sidney Manuscripts, which include an exceptional number of original Sidney family documents dated c1151¹ to 1994.² Prior to their Maidstone arrival, the personal and political letters, wills, house rules, patents, and poetic manuscripts, among other documents have been available in a transcribed, six-volume collection published by the Historical Manuscript Commission (HMC).³ J.C.A. Rathmell repeatedly refers to this collection in his essay "Jonson, Lord Lisle, and Penshurst," and describes the "Sydney Papers" as "an almost embarrassing wealth of information about the Penshurst household" (251). The letters between Francis Coventry and William Perry have been particularly useful for this study as they clearly illustrate the relationship between this specific poet and patron. Unfortunately, documentation connecting the Sidneys to Ben Jonson is limited to a single sentence about Jonson's death. However, through the amalgamation of Jonson's poetry, documented activities, and social connections, a general account of the Sidney-

¹ De L'Isle MSS, U1475 Collection, dated c1151 to 1826.

² Sidney MSS, U1500 Collection, dated 15th century to 1994.

³ *Report on the Manuscripts of Lord De L'Isle and Dudley*, 6 vols., HMC, 77 (1925–66).

Jonson relationship can be surmised. Michael Brennan's research on the Sidney family; Dustin Griffin's views on literary patronage from 1650-1800; G.R. Hibbard's essay on country-house poetry; and Raymond Williams's renowned analysis on the social and economic changes in rural England have been most informative and are repeatedly utilized throughout this thesis. While the above-mentioned sources—and many more—have been the building blocks of this thesis, the allure of Penshurst Place itself—the architecture, landscape, history, and folklore—has been the foundation and the ultimate inspiration.

Chapter 2: Praise and the Country-House Poem

Although this thesis studies the poetry of a country house and not country-house poetry, an overview of this small seventeenth-century genre is essential for the analysis of Jonson's "To Penshurst" and for the introduction to the relationships between literary praise, patronage, and the country estate. Country-house poetry is a celebratory genre written by poets to their patrons with a focus on the patron's country estate. The poet praises the virtuous qualities of the estate—utility, hospitality, order, and harmony with nature—which metonymically reflect the virtues of the lord and his family. G.R. Hibbard extends the definition of the country-house poem to include not only praise for the estate and inhabitants, but also for "the whole way of life which the country house was the centre" (159). Hibbard includes no more than seven principal poems in this literary tradition—beginning with Jonson's "To Penshurst" and ending with Andrew Marvell's "Upon Appleton House" (1651).¹ In *The Country House Poem: A Cabinet of Seventeenth-Century Estate Poems and Related Items*, Alastair Fowler expands this homogeneous genre to include seventy-seven poems, which he refers to as estate poems. Along with the number of poems, the genre's inaugural poem is also debated. Kari Boyd McBride and Barbara Lewalski argue that the first poem in the tradition is not Jonson's poem but instead Amelia Lanyer's "The Description of Cooke-ham" (1611). Regardless of the number of poems or the first published, Jonson's "To Penshurst," the model for subsequent country-house poetry, is the first and foundational poem in the Penshurst group of poems.

¹ G.R. Hibbard limits the country-house genre to include only seven principal poems: Ben Jonson's "To Penshurst" and "Sir Robert Wroth," Thomas Carew's "To Saxham" and "To My Friend G.N. from Wrest," Robert Herrick's "A Country-life: To his Brother Mr. Thomas Herrick" and "A Panegerick to Sir Lewis Pemberton," and Andrew Marvell's "Upon Appleton House." Hibbard also refers to Alexander Pope's "Epistle to Burlington" as a continuation of the genre.

Country-house poems, including many of Fowler's estate poems, share several fundamental characteristics. The most obvious, as the name of the genre indicates, is the focus on the country house and the society that surrounds it. Fowler's insistence to name the genre "estate poetry" rather than "country-house poetry" is well-reasoned, for these poems address the entire estate and, ironically, the physical description of the house is either minimal or entirely absent. Jonson's "To Penshurst" focuses on and praises three different aspects of the estate: the physical elements, the community and hospitality, and the family values. The first forty-four lines describe the architecture and landscape of Penshurst in terms of utility and their harmonious existence with nature. William McClung states, "The architecture that is the object of praise and criticism in the English country-house poems is evaluated ethically, not esthetically" (46). Instead of the grand structures and adorned details, which are important to the image of other estates and lords, Jonson emphasizes Penshurst's enjoyment, use, and relationship with nature:

Thou joy'st in better marks, of soyle, of ayre,

Of wood or water: therein thou art faire.

Thou hast thy walks for health, as well as sport:

Thy *Mount*, to which thy *Dryads* doe resort.

.....

To crowne thy open table, doth provide

The purpled pheasant, with the speckled side:

The painted partrich lyes in ev'ry field,

And for thy mess is willing to be killed. (7-10, 27-30)

Based on an interdependent relationship of security, respect, and gratitude, the pheasant and partridge willingly give themselves to their landlord, Robert Sidney. Hibbard claims, “Man and this ordered nature are interdependent; each sustains the other and without the other would degenerate into mere savagery. . . . The things of nature, like everything else connected with Penshurst, find their proper end and pleasure in being put to use” (165). Not only is a respectful interdependence found in Penshurst’s relationship with nature, but also in the relationships between people. According to Jonson, the commendable society of Penshurst includes the landowner and his family, as well as the tenants, the workers, and even the guest and poet:

There’s none, that dwell about them, wish them downe;
But all come in, the farmer and the clowne;
And no one empty-handed, to salute
Thy lord and lady, though they have no sute. (47-50)

Although Jonson’s Penshurst exists in the early seventeenth century, he describes a mediaeval lifestyle in which all classes contribute to a single, self-contained community. Mark Girouard states, “In the Middle Ages (and indeed up till the early eighteenth century) when someone talked about his family he meant everyone living under his roof, including his servants; by the nineteenth century he meant his wife and children” (10). Moreover, a society like Penshurst “worked not only for the power and glory of its lord but for the advantage and protection of everyone in it. The livery or badge of a powerful man was a sign of privilege not servitude” (16). After the forty-four-line tribute to Penshurst’s society and hospitality, the poem turns to the virtuous Sidney family and particularly to the rearing of the Sidney children:

They are and have been taught religion; Thence
Their gentler spirits have suck'd innocence.
Each morne, and even, they are taught to pray,
With the whole household, and may, every day,
Reade in their vertuous parents noble parts,
The mysteries of manners, armes, and arts. (93-98)

Jonson depicts Robert and Barbara Sidney's attention to their children as exemplary parenting, and the common activities of the family are "seen as the moral and spiritual foundation of the larger body politic" (Wayne 75). Through his description of the estate, Jonson demonstrates that Penshurst is not a house for show, but a home where "thy lord dwells" and virtues are fostered.

Comparison, which is intentionally used as a means for praise and criticism, is another recurrent characteristic of country-house poetry. While the country-house poet commends the estate and its lord for their virtuous qualities, the poet simultaneously compares and criticizes other estates for their lack of virtue. In praise of Robert Sidney's moral economy, respect for tradition, and attention to nature, Jonson's poem begins with an apostrophe to the estate and a description of what Penshurst is and what it is not:

Thou art not, PENSURST, built to envious show
Of touch, or marble; nor canst boast a row
Of polish'd pillars, or a rooffe of gold:
Thou hast no lantherne, whereof tales are told;
Or stayre, or courts; but stand'st an ancient pile,
And these grudg'd at, art reverenc'd the while.

Thou joy'st in better markes, of soyle, of ayre,

Of wood, of water: therein thou art faire. (1-8)

Through the use of negatives, these introductory lines suggest the traditional architecture of the “ancient pile” in comparison to the newer, more elaborate estates, which are built for show rather than utility. Instead of marble, polished pillars, and a roof of gold, Jonson illustrates Penshurst’s (thus Sidney’s) favourable connection with nature—with the soil, air, wood, and water. Around the time Jonson wrote “To Penshurst,” Sidney’s closest Kentish neighbour, Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset, had recently completed extensive and outrageously expensive renovations at his Knole estate. These renovations include a lantern; seven courts; pillars; a grand, painted staircase; and chimneypieces of touch (black stone) or marble (Sackville-West 2). While the poem begins with a comparison of Penshurst with other estates, it concludes with a direct comparison of Sidney with other lords: “Those proud ambitious heaps, and nothing else / May say, their lords have built, but thy lord dwells” (101-102). Jonson’s final words, “but thy lord dwells,” praise Sidney for his attention to his country estate and condemn other lords whose attention strays elsewhere. From the Middle Ages until the nineteenth century, the size and splendor of the newly built or renovated country houses were often an indicator of the landowners’ ambitions and a means of raising one’s political and social status (Girouard 2). Although these grand estates were important to one’s status, landowners spent a large portion of their time in London—lured by the pleasures and politics of the city—and neglected their responsibilities in the country. Girouard states, “Landowners were expected to foster their inheritance, look after their dependents, play their part in local government and be loyal to the interests of their own order” (5). Sir Christopher Hatton, Lord Chancellor is a prime example of the

neglectful landowner. In 1583, Hatton built his enormous house at Holdenby with the intention of attracting a visit from the Queen. With the exception of the awaiting servants, the house was rarely occupied. In 1591, Hatton died moneyless and childless, and Holdenby never received the much-anticipated royal visit (Girouard 112). The numerous letters written by Robert Sidney to his wife, Barbara, indicate that he, too, was regularly absent from his country estate due to court obligations; however, these letters also indicate his genuine interest in the estate and his desire to be at Penshurst. In an August 1616 letter, Sidney closes with a brief yet poignant affirmation of his longing for his wife and estate: “[...] I long to see you and to see Penshurst” (De L’Isle U1475 C81/271). The following chapter, “The Sidney Family: A History of Heroes, Beauties, and Poets,” describes in depth Sidney’s fond relationship with his estate and his family.

A key characteristic of country-house poetry is the patronage relationship between the poet and the lord of the estate. It is this characteristic that regularly excludes Lanyer’s “The Description of Cooke-ham” and Fowler’s estate poems from the principal group of country-house poems: In some cases the patron is not the lord of the estate, or, conversely, the lord (or family member) is not a patron of the poet. In “The Description of Cooke-ham,” Lanyer praises her patron, Margaret Clifford, Countess of Cumberland, who is not the owner of Cooke-ham, but an inhabitant during Cumberland’s estrangement from her husband (McBride 108). McBride argues that despite the androcentric tropes of country-house discourse, such as land ownership and political power, “Cumberland’s legitimacy is reflected in the estate she inhabits. But unlike [the nobility of country-house lords], Cumberland’s virtue resides in Cumberland herself, coming and going with her” (109-110). Waller’s two “At Penshurst” poems, also included in Fowler’s collection, are amatory verses

praising Dorothy Sidney, daughter of Robert Sidney, second Earl of Leicester. Since Lady Dorothy is neither the owner of Penshurst nor Waller's patron, these love poems do not accurately represent country-house poetry.

The relationship between the poet and lord of the estate is significant to country-house poetry since the poet requires access into the domestic life of their patron in order to portray the lord and his estate in an accurate (though often exaggerated and overly favorable) manner. As a probable tutor to Robert Sidney's eldest son, William Sidney, Jonson temporarily lived at Penshurst and, therefore, participated in and was privy to the estate's affairs and activities. Numerous documents in the De L'Isle and Sidney Manuscripts support Jonson's claims about the Sidney family and the estate, such as Robert Sidney's concern for his children's education and the daily routine of communal eating and praying. Although the relationship between Sidney and Jonson is unclear, and the genesis of "To Penshurst" is unknown, it can be certain that the poem and the relationship were both motivated by social, political, and economic—as well as literary—incentives. Dustin Griffin states, "The system of patronage was never simply a form of *noblesse oblige* or disinterested generosity. It was in effect an economic arrangement that provided benefits to both parties" (10). The circumstances of Sidney and Jonson's "economic arrangement" are also unknown; however, Jonson's patronage relation with King James and other important political figures made Jonson an attractive relation to the Sidney household. In return, Jonson's support from the Sidney family assisted him in gaining further support from the king and other aristocrats (Evans 120). Chapter 4, "A Changing Economy: Praise, Patronage, and the Literary Marketplace," explores this seventeenth and eighteenth-

century literary economy and its gradual evolution from a patronage system to a literary marketplace.

While praise is a means for country-house poets to celebrate their patrons, it is also a means to “voice and define the values of a society” (Hibbard 159). Praise and its numerous literary forms—panegyrics, hymns, epics, romances, love lyrics, elegies, saints’ lives, and allegories (Burrow 3)—have been used throughout history as a tool to voice and define virtue and vice. Although Plato and Socrates believed that poetry led men to vice, they gave exception to hymns and poems that praised gods and famous men of honour (Hardison 26-27). In Plato’s “Protagoras” dialogue, Socrates claims that the work of great poets can instruct the young since “in them are contained many admonitions, and many tales, and praises of encomia of ancient and famous men, which [the student] is required to learn by heart, in order that he may imitate or emulate them, and desire to become like them” (qtd. in Hardison, 27). Two thousand years after Plato’s dialogues, country-house poets continue to praise great men and use their virtuous ways as examples for others. McClung states, “A formal analysis of the country-house genre should not obscure the essentially didactic impulse behind these metrical critiques, an impulse well sketched by Hibbard and one natural to poets for whom, as for most men of the seventeenth century, the country possessed great moral prestige” (5). In addition to the instruction of others, the “didactic impulse” of country-house poetry serves to gently counsel and support the poem’s respective lord. Rathmell claims:

... Jonson’s poem is intended not simply as a celebration of Penshurst’s homely virtues but also as a tactful means of reconciling Lord Lisle to living within his means and of persuading him that his inability to emulate the

magnificence of wealthier courtiers, so far from being a cause for shame, is in fact a matter for congratulation. (256)

In the letters from Robert Sidney to his wife, Sidney repeatedly expresses his financial concerns; yet, he also expresses his desire to enlarge his gardens and build grand stables similar to those at neighbouring Cobham Hall and Knole (De L'Isle U1475 C50/4). The extent of Jonson's knowledge about Sidney's plight is uncertain; however, "it is unlikely that in a court so devoted to gossip [Jonson] did not catch some whisper of the Lord Chamberlain's troubles" (Rathmell 256). Despite Sidney's financial difficulties, Jonson's admiration for simplicity and substance allows him to praise the riches rooted in Sidney's virtues rather than in the architecture and detail of his estate. For Jonson, an "ancient pile" where "thy lord dwells" holds greater value than a grand estate that is absent of its lord and virtues.

Though not a member of the distinct tradition of country-house poetry, Pope's "Epistle to Burlington"¹ (1731) reflects many of the motifs common to this genre. Hibbard and McClung, among other scholars, describe Pope's poem as a "later estate poem" (McClung 175) because of its use of praise and criticism, and on account of Pope's moral guidance regarding sense, taste, nature, and utility as they apply to the country estate. Pope's poem is a response to Richard Boyle, third Earl of Burlington's drawings and promotion of Palladian-style architecture, which is based on simplicity, utility, and aesthetic taste. The poem also addresses and commends the exceptional landscape gardens at Stowe—owned and designed by Pope's friend Richard Temple, Viscount Cobham. While Pope praises

¹ *An Epistle to the Right Honourable Richard Earl of Burlington. Occasion'd by His Publishing Palladio's Designs of the Baths, Arches, Theatres, &c. of Ancient Rome* was first published in 1731 in pamphlet form. Pope's poem was later published along with three other epistles in the collection entitled *Moral Essays*.

Burlington's designs and Cobham's landscape creations, he criticizes Timon's villa—a likely allusion to the Duke of Chandos's Cannons and other such estates (Hibbard 162)—and its false taste, disregard for nature, and lack of moral economy:

At Timon's villa let us pass a day,
Where all cry out, "What sums are thrown away!"
So proud, so grand of that stupendous air,
Soft and agreeable come never there.
Greatness, with Timon, dwells in such a draught
As brings all Brobdingnag before your thought.
To compass this, his building is a town,
His pond an ocean, his parterre a down:
Who but must laugh, the master when he sees,
A puny insect, shiv'ring at a breeze! (99-108)

Unlike Jonson and other country-house poets who praise their present-day lord, Pope praises and recommends the ideals and virtues that are no longer a standard among the rural aristocracy. In contrast to Penshurst's abundant gardens, broad beeches, and chestnut shade, Pope describes the modern landscape (with an exception to Cobham's Stowe), which is synthetic, barren, and unable to provide protection for even the smallest of insects. According to Hibbard, "the values Pope believes in are no longer to be found in the great houses being built at the time, but in Burlington's designs, and in a way of life that had already largely disappeared among the upper class" (160). While Pope's criticism of the present and reflection of the past is pertinent to the study of country-house poetry, it is

also a recurring theme and an important point of analysis within the Penshurst group of poems.

Although Jonson's "To Penshurst" is the only Penshurst poem that qualifies as a country-house poem, these two groups have much in common, including a remarkable similarity in their use of praise and in their timelines. Country-house poetry and the Penshurst group of poems both begin in 1616 with "To Penshurst," in which Jonson praises the virtues of the current lord, Robert Sidney. In the middle of the seventeenth century, country-house poetry ends with Marvell's "Upon Appleton House" (1651) and a significant change occurs within the Penshurst group. From Jonson through Waller's three Sacharissa poems (1645), Penshurst poems praise the current inhabitants and society of Penshurst in a similar fashion to country-house poets and their respective country estates. After Waller's poems, however, poets no longer praise Penshurst in its present state, but praise the people and society of the past. As well, praise is no longer celebratory and optimistic, but has become reflective and somewhat mournful in the absence of the heroes, beauties, poets, and virtues of bygone days. Edward Hamley's poem "Sonnet XII. Written at Penshurst" (1789), for example, reflects upon Penshurst and the gallant Sir Philip Sidney who was fatally injured in 1586—two hundred years before Hamley's poem:

PENSHURST, whose moss-grown tow'rs in hoary state
Frown o'er the meads, where silent Medway flows;
Where erst the gallant Sydney sought repose
And left for song the bloody fields of Fate. (1-4)

While this shift in praise becomes a trend in the poems following Waller, an exception occurs with Thomas D'Urfey's "The Peroquette" (1719)—the next poem in the Penshurst

group. Unlike other Penshurst poets who address the present or past inhabitants in a favourable manner, D'Urfey addresses the present lord of Penshurst, Sir Philip Sidney, third Earl of Leicester, in a manner that appears to be playful, lewd, and perhaps even insolent. D'Urfey's reputation as a racy, occasionally obscene, and satirical writer and playwright is evident in the subject matter of his poem, as well as in the social circles that both he and Philip Sidney belong (Pritchard). Like Pope's mid-eighteenth-century "Epistle to Burlington," the remaining seven Penshurst poems (from 1750-1799) reflect on and praise the virtues, taste, and moral economy of the past in contrast to their respective present-day, aristocratic society.

In his well-informed essay, "The Country-House Poem of the Seventeenth Century," Hibbard claims, "After 1660 [country-house poetry] was no longer written, because the way of life that it reflects, and out of which it grows, was on the decline" (159). Hibbard continues with a brief explanation as to why this change occurs:

With Marvell the tradition I have been following so far comes to an end. From this time onwards the pattern established by *To Penshurst* ceases to be used. The change corresponds with the change that came over English poetry generally. From the middle of the seventeenth century the poet became less dependent on the patron: and while the country house became grander than before, and even continued as a cultural centre for another century, it no longer occupied that focal position in the life of the nation which it had held during the first half of the seventeenth century. Increasingly it became a backwater outside the main current of political, social and intellectual life which centered on London. (171)

As Hibbard indicates, the changes in literary patronage and in the significance of the country estate affect not only country-house poetry, but English poetry in general. The following chapters describe in detail how these literary, economic, social, and political changes alter praise in the Penshurst group of poems. While Hibbard's analysis helps explain the end of country-house poetry and the shift in praise, the question still remains as to why Penshurst Place continues to fascinate and inspire poets throughout the second-half of the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth century. What unique characteristics does Penshurst possess that elude other British country estates?

Chapter 3: Penshurst and the Sidney Family: A History of Statesmen, Warriors, Poets, and Beauties

Statesmen, warriors, poets, beauties—what thoughts have been matured,
what musings inspired, what passion kindled, within the stately walls of
Penshurst and beneath its beech-trees' lengthening shades! (Ewald 4)

Long after the estates of Cooke-ham, Saxham Hall, and Nunappleton make their first and final appearance in verse,¹ Penshurst and the Sidney family continue to inspire and be a topic of praise for late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century poets. In 1882, Julia DeVaynes writes, "None of our fine old family county seats can rival Penshurst in poetic celebrity, and it is a question to whom for this it is the most deeply indebted" (764). While her central inquiry is about who is most responsible for Penshurst's poetic celebrity, DeVaynes indirectly inquires why the poetry of Penshurst outrivals the poetry of other country estates in number, duration, and allure. In order to answer these questions, one must first recognize that Penshurst's poetic celebrity is not indebted to merely one person, as DeVaynes suggests, but to the combination of an exemplary family, notable poets and poetry, and Penshurst itself.

Throughout the Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Caroline eras, several of Britain's finest statesmen, warriors, poets, and beauties belonged to the Sidney family. Moreover, the Sidneys "possessed an entirely respectable lineage" and "a long-established family tradition

¹ These estates and their respective lord or lady are the subjects of country house poems: "A Description of Cook-ham" (1611) by Amelia Lanyer, "To Saxham" (1640) by Thomas Carew, and Andrew Marvell's "Upon Appleton House" (1651).

of royal trusted service,” which is traceable to John de Sydenie, a Surrey yeoman during the reign of Edward I (Brennan, *The Sidneys* 8-9). This virtuous and talented family, which includes well-known names as Sir Philip Sidney; Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke; Robert and Barbara Sidney, Earl and Countess of Leicester; Mary Wroth; Dorothy Sidney (Sacharissa); and Algernon Sidney among others, has fascinated and inspired poets since the early 1600s. Poets and their works, particularly Jonson’s “To Penshurst” and Waller’s Sacharissa poems, also contribute to the allure of the Sidney family and have become a memorable part of Penshurst’s history. In the poem “Penshurst” (1750), for example, Francis Coventry admiringly reflects upon Waller and Jonson alongside members of the Sidney family:

“Here mighty Dudley¹ once wou’d rove,
“To plan his triumphs in the grove;
There looser Waller, ever gay,
With Sacchariss in dalliance lay;
And Philip, side-long yonder spring,
“His lavish carols wont to sing.”
.....
Tho’ here thy Waller sung before,
And Johnson dipt his learned pen,
And Sidney pour’d his fancy-flowing strain. (74-79, 287-289)

¹ Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (1532/3-1588)—maternal uncle to Sir Philip Sidney: brother to Lady Mary Sidney (née Dudley)—was a close friend, potential suitor, and favourite courtier of Queen Elizabeth I.

In Coventry's poem, as in all Penshurst poems, Penshurst is the steadfast and stately subject that is as praiseworthy as its inhabitants. Penshurst, "which gav'st so many heroes birth" (Coventry, "Penshurst" 275), is the cradle where heroics, virtues, talent, and beauty are born and nurtured. After Waller and his Sacharissa poems—when praise shifts from the present Penshurst inhabitants to those of bygone days—this medieval country estate continues to provide a location for inspiration and reflection, where the "GENIUS of Penshurst old" (Coventry, "Penshurst" 1) continues to guide poets to "Where ancient bards retirement chose / Or ancient Lovers wept their woes" (Coventry, "Penshurst" 84-85).

Penshurst, the ancient pile of Jonson's poem, was built in 1341 by Sir John de Pulteney, a wealthy drapery merchant and four-time Lord Mayor of London (Ewald 6).¹ Similar to other medieval castles and country manors, Pulteney's Penshurst was fortified with battlements and towers, and the structure consisted of smaller rooms surrounding a great hall. This ancient hall, where family, household, royalty, and even the "farmer and the clown" (Jonson 48) were fed and entertained, stands today and boasts the original open-timber roof, decorative moldings, and intricate window tracery. Architectural historian Marc Girouard claims, "No surviving room in England gives so vivid a feeling of the magnificence and functions of a great hall of the fourteenth century as the hall at Penshurst" (38). In 1552, King Edward VI—then owner of Penshurst—granted the estate to Sir William Sidney for his loyal service to himself and his father, Henry VIII (Brennan, *The Sidneys* 2). After the death of Sir William Sidney in 1553, his heir, Sir Henry Sidney, built additions to Penshurst in keeping with the original, medieval style. Sir Henry's use of local

¹ During the time of William the Conqueror (eleventh century), an earlier house (no longer extant) was built and inhabited by Sir Stephen de Penchester. The Penchester family remained in this area for nearly two centuries, thus naming the village and estate Penchester, later Penshurst (Ewald 5).

“countrey stone” (Jonson 45) and conservative, medieval detailing was intended to be emblematic of the feudal society and values, and the long and noble Sidney lineage (Wayne 99). The incorporation of construction dates and of Sidney and Dudley insignias and initials was a means to link and enforce the family’s legitimate entitlement to the ancient estate. According to Don Wayne, Sir Henry Sidney’s choice of style, which incorporates the old with the new, enabled him to “turn the limited finances at his disposal into a virtue by calling attention to the past from which his family and the class it belonged were supposedly descended” (96).

In 1586, after the death of his father (Sir Henry Sidney) and elder brother (Sir Philip Sidney), Robert Sidney was granted ownership of Penshurst. The Long Gallery, which houses numerous family and royal portraits, is one of the most important additions attributed to Robert Sidney. According to Girouard, the sixteenth century witnessed the aristocratic phenomenon of portrait collecting and “although the Elizabethan upper classes were genuinely anxious to be morally and intellectually equipped for their responsibilities, they also had an eye for the main chance. Both portraits and galleries were used as pieces in the power game; galleries became status symbols as much as places of exercise” (101-102). The picture gallery at Penshurst also became a place for reflection and inspiration for visiting poets. After a visit to Penshurst in approximately 1833, for example, Elizabeth Barrett Browning expresses her curiosity towards “the great dead” (11) and a particular fondness for Dorothy Sidney (Sacharissa) in her poem “The Picture Gallery at Penshurst”¹:

And rested there the lips, so warm and loving,

That, they could speak, one might be fain to guess:

¹ Browning’s poem meets the criteria of a Penshurst poem with the exception that it is written after 1800.

Only they had been much too bright, if moving,
To stay by their own will, all motionless.
One outstretch'd hand its marble seal 'gan press
On roses which look'd fading while the eyes,
Uplifted in a calm, proud loveliness,
Seem'd busy with their flow'ry destinies,
Drawing, for ladye's heart, some moral quaint and wise. (28-36)

Like Browning, Edward Hovell-Thurlow also finds inspiration from his visit to the Long Gallery. In his poem "Sonnet, On Beholding the Portraiture of Sir Philip Sidney, In the Gallery at Penshurst" (1821), Hovell-Thurlow praises the much-admired Sir Philip Sidney:

The man that looks, sweet Sidney, in thy face,
Beholding there love's truest majesty,
And the soft image of departed grace,
Shall fill his mind with magnanimity:
There may he read unfeign'd humility,
And golden pity, born of heav'nly brood. (1-6)

For more than four hundred years, visitors "breathed where they had breathed" (Browning 6) and "walked in silence in a cloud of thought" (Browning 8). Today, through the care and commitment of Philip Sidney, second Viscount De L'Isle and his family, the Long Gallery, the Great Hall, the gardens, and other portions of Penshurst are preserved and open for public viewing.¹

¹ In order to maintain "the fabric of this historical building . . . as part of England's great heritage," Penshurst's present owners depend on public funding from tourists (Penshurst).

In *The Stately Homes of England* (1878), Llewellyn Jewitt describes Penshurst and—unavoidably—the admirable character of the Sidney inhabitants: “Penshurst—the ‘Home’ of the Sidneys—the stately Sidneys: stately in their character, in their careers, in their patriotism, in their heroism, in their rectitude, and in their verse—is surely one of the best of the Stately Homes of England” (172). Inadvertently, Jewitt expresses the interdependence between Penshurst and the Sidney family: Jewitt demonstrates that the allure and stateliness of the estate is embedded within the allure and stateliness of the family, and vice versa. Penshurst poems similarly convey this unique, reciprocal relationship and illustrate that both Penshurst and members of the Sidney family (living or dead) are equally worthy of poetic praise and popularity. In the final four lines of “To Penshurst,” Jonson summarizes the lord and estate’s shared and interdependent virtue:

Now, Penshurst, they that will proportion thee
With other edifices, when they see
Those proud, ambitious heaps, and nothing else,
May say, their lords have built, but thy lord dwells. (99-102)

Jonson stresses that Penshurst’s virtue is based on its lord’s presence and involvement, and the lord’s virtue is based on his presence and involvement with his ancient, country estate.

Kerri Boyd McBride argues,

Penshurst . . . is a reification of the Sidneys’ qualities, which “dwell” in the estate regardless of their presence. Consonant with the circular logic of country house discourse, it is Penshurst that legitimates the Sidneys, particularly Robert Sidney, whose virtuous management of the estate makes it a place that signifies virtue. (110)

While Jonson's poem makes a direct reference to Robert Sidney, who is known and praised for his interest and commitment to his family and estate, McBride refers to the firmly established relationship between the estate and its inhabitants, which allows the Sidneys to be absent while still contributing to the virtuousness of the estate.

In most Penshurst poems—with the exception of those by Jonson, Waller, and D'Urfey—the allure and virtuousness of the estate derive from a statesman, warrior, poet, or beauty from years past. In the latter half of the eighteenth century, Penshurst falls into a temporary state of neglect, where “moss-grown tow'rs in hoary state / Frown o'er the meads, where silent Medway flows” (Hamley 1-2); however, the noble inhabitants of bygone days continue to confer virtue on the estate, and, in return, the existence of the estate contributes to the memory and ongoing praise of these Sidney family members.

Of the twelve Penshurst poems, nine allude to or make direct reference to the Elizabethan courtier and poet, Sir Philip Sidney. Poets praise Sidney as a gallant soldier and a gifted poet, and make reference to the famous oak, which was planted at Penshurst upon his birth; and the bloody battlefield at Zutphen, where Sidney was fatally injured.¹ Southey, for example, dedicates a large portion of “For A Tablet at Penshurst” (1799) to Sidney in relation to the estate:

The groves of Penshurst. Sidney here was born,
Sidney, than whom no gentler, braver man
His own delightful genius ever feign'd,
Illustrating the vales of Arcady

¹ Various sources report that the “Sidney Oak” was mistakenly felled in 1768 (DeVaynes 766). According to the Penshurst Estate Office in April 2013, however, the Sidney Oak presently exists—though, in very poor condition— and its acorns have been sent around the world as gifts from the Sidney family.

With courteous courage and with loyal loves.
Upon his natal day the acorn here
Was planted. It grew up a stately oak,
And in the beauty of its strength it stood
And flourish'd, when his perishable part
Had moulder'd dust to dust. That stately oak
Itself hath moulder'd now, but Sidney's fame
Lives and shall live, immortalized in song. (10-21)

Southey and other seventeenth and eighteenth-century writers contemplate the immortal poet and his works; however, it was not until after Sidney's death in 1586 and with the posthumous publication of *Arcadia* (1590), *Astrophil and Stella* (1591), and *The Defence of Poesy* (1595), that Sidney became publicly celebrated as one of the finest and influential Renaissance writers. Gavin Alexander claims,

In his lifetime, Sidney was not known by the majority of his contemporaries as a poet and maker of fictions, and was celebrated especially on the continent, for his political rather than his poetic vision, and for his public rather than his private life. After his death readers had to construct an image of the author of the *Arcadia*, *Astrophil and Stella*, and the *Defence*, and most sought for meanings not in Sidney's political projects but in that private life.
(xxix-xxx)

Moreover, "Sidney's status as point of origin for later writers is seen as a convenient genealogical myth: a founding father was needed, and Sidney fitted the bill; this is why writers who say he inspires them write nothing like him" (xxxi). Although the constructed

idea of Sidney—the perfect Renaissance courtier¹ and the founding father of Renaissance literature—exaggerates and over-idealizes his virtues, Sidney’s exceptional “qualities of mind and character” (Ringler 9) and profound contributions to Renaissance literature (works, innovation, and patronage) make him worthy of literary praise and popularity, and deem him the most celebrated member of the Sidney family.

In addition to Sir Philip Sidney, several other Sidney members are known for their significant contributions to the literary tradition. Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke (1561-1621) was a literary patron and the principle advocate, confidant, and influence for her brother, Sir Philip Sidney. Pembroke’s primary works include the revision and completion of Sidney’s *Arcadia*, the completion of Sidney’s *Psalmes*, and her translations of Robert Garnier and Phillippe de Mornay (Alexander 84). Lady Mary Wroth (1587-1651/53), eldest daughter of Robert and Barbara Sidney, is the second-most notable writer of the Sidney family, after her uncle, Sir Philip Sidney. Her works include the well-known and controversial romance, *The Countess of Montgomery’s Urania*; a sonnet sequence consisting of more than one hundred poems and songs; and the dramatic comedy, “Love’s Victory.” According to biographer Mary Ellen Lamb, *Urania* is “the first extant romance written by an Englishwoman” and Wroth is the “first known Englishwoman to write a sonnet sequence.” Although Mary Sidney and Mary Wroth contribute to the literary legacy

¹ According to Alan Hager and other Renaissance scholars, Sidney’s reputation as the perfect Renaissance courtier is largely a product of his early and heroic death, and of Queen Elizabeth’s “propagandistic design” (2). The queen’s intention was to create a model of chivalric heroism and courtesy “that would serve to control the impetuosity of some of her courtiers” (4) and provide the court with an image of chivalry and order. Hager further suggests that Sidney’s lavish funeral and its strategically appointed date were designed by the queen to help “turn the minds of the populace from the beheading of Mary [Queen of Scots]” (8).

of Penshurst and are the recipients and subjects of numerous literary works, they do not appear in the Penshurst group of poems.

Unlike his famous brother, Sir Philip Sidney, Robert Sidney, Earl of Leicester (1563-1626) is not predominantly known for his literary works¹ or military heroics, but for his honourable service to the court, his love and dedication to his family and estate, and—most notably—as the patron and subject of Jonson’s “To Penshurst.” As a young adult, Sidney spent several years touring the continent then served as a captain in the Low Countries where he witnessed his brother’s fatal injury at the Battle of Zutphen. In 1589, Queen Elizabeth appointed Sidney Governor of Flushing (Vlissingen, Netherlands), which required Sidney to spend half of his time between 1589 and 1603 “in honourable isolation in Flushing” (Shephard). With the succession of James I, Sidney returned to England and received the title of Baron Sidney of Penshurst and was appointed Lord Chamberlain of Queen Anne’s household. In 1618, King James granted Sidney the long-awaited title of Earl of Leicester—a distinguished title originally held by Sidney’s maternal uncle, Robert Dudley.

Robert Sidney’s marriage to Barbara Gamage—“the much-sought-after heir of the recently deceased John Gamage” (Shephard)—was a long and happy union, which produced eleven children. As his numerous letters indicate, Sidney was frequently away from Penshurst; yet, unlike many other rural aristocrats, he maintained a genuine interest

¹ A holograph (autograph) copy of sixty-seven poems written by Robert Sidney was discovered in 1973. Although it is likely Sidney’s sister (Countess of Pembroke—to whom the manuscript is addressed) and his daughter (Mary Wroth) read his work, Sidney was not known among his contemporaries as a writer (Brennan, “Sir Robert” 233). According to Michael Brennan, “it seems likely that in order to escape the inevitable comparison with his more talented brother, Philip, Robert deliberately sought to keep his poetic effusions away from public gaze” (233).

in his family and in the management of his estate. In a letter dated September 25, 1595, Sidney reminds Barbara about the management of his precious fruit trees: "Sweethart. I pray you remember to send to Jaques, the gardner, to come to Penshurst against Alhalowtyde, and to bring yellow peaches, apricots, cherry and plum trees to set along the wall towards the church" (De L'Isle U1457 C81/67). In a letter dated October 22, 1607, Sidney expresses his concern for his sons' education and remarks on his wife's desire to have her sons remain at Penshurst: "I had thought the boyes had bine gon to Oxford; but mee thinks you finde occasions to stay them still" (De L'Isle U1475 81/154). As biographer Madeleine Gray indicates, it was not only Robert Sidney who showed an exceptional and admirable amount of interest in his family and estate, but also his wife, Barbara:

At Penshurst she kept house in the traditional Welsh manner with a household that was unfashionably large by English standards. She seems to have been equally unfashionable in her devotion to her children. She was unwilling to leave them in England when she visited the Netherlands, and she kept her eldest son at home long after her husband considered he should have been sent to a tutor.

Although "To Penshurst" contains liberal amounts of exaggeration and flattery, Jonson's account of Robert Sidney—his family and their virtuous life at Penshurst—concur with the multitude of documents preserved in the De L'Isle and Sidney Manuscripts and with the topographical features of the existing estate. Keri Boyd McBride argues, however, that Jonson's poem over-idealizes Sidney's virtues by excluding the less-than-ideal aspects of his domestic life:

... though Robert Sidney certainly had a life prior to and outside of Ben Jonson's "To Penshurst," his existence as a type of the Good Lord, as well as Penshurst's analogous existence as a model of the ideal economy, gained a reality or perhaps hyper-reality from Jonson's poem that was ... in contrast to Sidney's and Penshurst's extra-poetic existence, which were anything but ideal [such as Sidney's financial difficulties]. (9)

While it is likely Jonson was aware of the family's financial misfortunes, Rathmell argues, "the point to be made is not that Jonson glossed over the less serene aspects of [Sidney's] domestic affairs but that he showed extraordinary finesse and delicacy in reassuring [his patron and friend] as to the true basis of [his] good fortunes" (260).

On account of Jonson's "To Penshurst," Robert Sidney is the first and most intimately portrayed Sidney who appears in the Penshurst group of poems. It is curious, therefore, Robert Sidney is not referenced in later Penshurst poems as is his older brother, Sir Philip Sidney; his granddaughter, Dorothy Sidney; and his grandson, Algernon Sidney. The cause for this absence may be due to the decreasing number of patronage relationships among poets and aristocratic landowners, and to the diminishing "way of life" (Hibbard 159) that the country estate and its seventeenth-century lord represented.¹

Dorothy Sidney (1617-84), who was "early distinguished by her grace and beauty" (Ady 30), is the eldest of Robert Sidney, second Earl of Leicester and Dorothy Percy's thirteen children. While her beauty, charm, and illustrious lineage brought her popularity

¹ *The Gentry: The Rise and Fall of a Ruling Class* (1976), by G.E. Mingay offers a simple yet illuminating discussion on the social, political, and economic changes of the aristocratic landowner during the seventeenth century. These changes, which are an extension to Hibbard's claims, include the "rise of a new class of gentry with 'bourgeois' attitudes" and "the relative decline in the wealth of the aristocracy, and their absolute decline in prestige, authority and military power" (53).

among the “young and old, grave and gay, scholars and statesmen, soldiers and poets, fashionable ladies and solemn divines” (Ady vi), her indelible celebrity comes from Edmund Waller’s Sacharissa poems. Between 1634 and 1638, Waller composed twenty poems in praise of Dorothy Sidney, whom he poetically names Sacharissa. In 1639, despite Waller’s public and poetic attentions, Dorothy marries Lord Henry Spencer, who is killed four years later at the Battle of Newbury (Chernaik, “Spencer”).¹ Although Waller’s love was unrequited, “the lyrics written in [Dorothy Sidney’s] praise... sufficed to make the bard supreme among the singers of his age” (Ady v). Three of Waller’s Sacharissa poems belong to the Penshurst group of poems, and five more Penshurst poems make reference to this “high-born beaut[y]” (Southey, “For a Tablet” 4).

Algernon Sidney (1623-83)—“whig patriot-hero and martyr” (Scott)—is the last of the Sidney family members memorialized in the Penshurst group of poems. In his poem “Penshurst,” Coventry refers to Algernon as an unshaken patriot (8); and in “For a Tablet at Penshurst,” Southey refers to both Algernon and his great-uncle, Sir Philip Sidney, as “enamour’d chiefs” (4). Algernon is the second son of Robert Sidney and Dorothy Percy, and is known for his military achievements, political writings, and commitment to an English republican government. Although the Sidney family provided loyal service to the monarch for nearly 150 years, King Charles I’s betrayal of Algernon’s father in 1643 and the influence of Algernon’s parliamentarian uncle, the Earl of Northumberland, helped sway Algernon’s political efforts towards a republican government and away from monarchical rule (Brennan, *The Sidneys* 146, 148, 149, 152). In February 1683, Algernon was

¹ Throughout her short marriage and for twelve years afterwards, Lady Spencer lived at Althorp—the Spencer family estate. Althorp was also the home of Lady Diana Spencer (1961-1997), a direct descendent of Lord Henry and Lady Dorothy Spencer (née Sidney) (Reynolds).

imprisoned for his alleged involvement in the Rye House Plot and beheaded ten months later. Although “Epitaph On Algernon Sidney” (1823)¹ is not a Penshurst poem, Southey situates his elegy at Penshurst—Algernon’s final resting place—and expresses the importance of Algernon’s contribution and commitment to the reformation of England:

HERE Sidney lies, he whom perverted law,
The pliant jury, and the bloody judge
Doom’d to a traitor’s death. A tyrant King
Required, an abject country saw and shared
The crime. The noble cause of Liberty
He loved in life, and to that noble cause
In death bore witness. But his Country rose
Like Sampson from her sleep, and broke her chains,
And proudly with her worthies she enroll’d
Her murder’d Sidney’s name. The voice of man
Gives honor or destroys; but earthly power
Gives not, nor takes away, the self-applause
Which on the scaffold suffering virtue feels,
Nor that which God appointed its reward. (118)

Not only was Algernon an inspiration for British poets and politicians, but, as Peter Richards indicates in “Algernon Sidney (1623-1683): A Martyr to Liberty,” his beliefs on human rights and liberty were a major influence on American politics and independence. Thomas Jefferson describes Sidney’s most influential literary work, *Discourses Concerning*

¹ Southey’s poem was published in 1823; however, the year “1799” is appended to the bottom of the poem and is presumably the year “Epitaph On Algernon Sidney” was written.

Government, as “probably the best elementary book of the principles of government, as founded in natural right which has ever been published in any language” (qtd. in Richards 7); and in a letter to Jefferson, John Adams praises the “intrinsic merit” of Sidney’s work and equates the American struggle for liberty with that experienced by Algernon Sidney and other “advocates of liberty from that time” (qtd. in Richards 1). Similar to the literary legacy of Sir Philip Sidney, Algernon’s literary and political legacy remains relevant today and continues to contribute to the ongoing appeal of Penshurst and the Sidney family.

In respect to Penshurst’s poetic allure, it is the union of Penshurst’s literary connections, long history (1341 to present), and strong association with its celebrated and virtuous inhabitants that significantly separate it from other country estates, such as those described in country-house poetry. Cooke-ham, for example, is no longer extant and the precise location and history of the estate is unclear. Although Amelia Lanyer’s poem is entitled “The Description of Cooke-ham,” Cook-ham is of no particular significance to the poet or subject as it is merely a setting in which Lanyer showcases Margaret Clifford, Countess of Cumberland’s virtues. Cumberland is the dedicatee and subject of several poems in Lanyer’s *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1611); however, Cooke-ham does not receive any further consideration from Lanyer or—seemingly—from any other poet. Andrew Marvell’s “Upon Appleton House, To My Lord Fairfax” offers a thorough description of the history of Nunappleton and of the virtues, career, and retirement of Lord General Thomas Fairfax;¹ however, in contrast to Jonson’s “To Penshurst,” which focuses on the reciprocal relationship that exists between Penshurst and its inhabitants, Marvell’s poem consistently

¹ In 1645, Algernon Sidney was appointed colonel of one of the New Model Army cavalry regiments, which was commanded by the prominent parliamentarian officer, Thomas Fairfax (Brennan 150).

strays from the Fairfax-Nunappleton relationship, as it wanders from topics of ancestry and inheritance to—most notably—English politics and civil war. The relationship between the estate and lord continues to dwindle as Marvell indicates that Lord Fairfax not only resides at Nunappleton, but splits his time between his other estates: “Him Bishop’s Hill, or Denton may, / Or Bilbrough, better hold than they” (73-74). With the exception of “Upon the New-built House at Nunappleton,” a short verse written by Lord Fairfax (Hibbard 170), no other poems concerning Nunappleton appear to exist. On the contrary, Marvell’s “Upon the Hill and Grove at Bill-borow” (1681) is a poem dedicated to Lord Fairfax, which celebrates his estate at Bill-borow (Bilbrough)—Fairfax’s final resting place.

In his essay “The Country House Poem of the Seventeenth Century,” G.R. Hibbard shrewdly describes the synergetic relationship (or lack thereof) between a man and his house: “A great man can confer dignity and grandeur on a simple house, but a magnificent house only serves to emphasize the insignificance of an owner who has no claim to greatness except his house” (171). While many great men, virtuous families, and magnificent houses can be found throughout England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, few of these houses and inhabitants are as closely connected as Penshurst and the Sidney family.¹ As the Penshurst group of poems illustrates, the relationship between Penshurst and the Sidney family serves to magnify the virtues of both the ancient estate and its inhabitants—more precisely, those inhabitants which include the

¹ In addition to Penshurst, a small number of royal residences and private estates, such as Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, Holyrood Palace, Althorp (Spencer family), and Knole (Sackville family), maintain a close association with their inhabitants. *Inheritance: The Story of Knole and the Sackvilles* (2010), written by Robert Sackville-West, provides a comprehensive and entertaining look at the relationship between Knole and its Sackville inhabitants.

statesmen, warriors, poets, and beauties from the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries.

Chapter 4: A Changing Economy: Praise, Patronage, and the Literary Marketplace

Throughout Renaissance and Early Modern England, the literary patronage system played a significant role in the production of literature, in the socioeconomic survival and security of most writers, and in the praise and promotion of royal and aristocratic patrons and their families. According to Robert C. Evans,

Painting, architecture, music—all the arts and not just literature were affected by a patronage culture so pervasive that no individual or sphere of life could entirely escape its effects. The connection between poetry and patronage, then, involved more than how writers were paid, the ways they made their livings. It involved more fundamentally, how they lived their lives.
(23)

In return for past, present, and future services, patronage poets received various tangible and intangible forms of payment that affected not only their pocketbooks, but also “how they lived their lives.” Money came in the form of a one-time payment, an annual pension, or a letter of credit; hospitality included not only food and lodging, but also an opportunity to mix with the aristocracy and “cross a line, under controlled conditions, that normally separates the ranks of a hierarchical society” (Griffin 19); and symbolic capital, such as encouragement, introductions, protection, and authority contributed to the poet’s literary, economic, and social successes (Griffin 20-26). The patronage system not only benefited the dependent poet, but also provided a desirable return for the patron. Along with the poet’s gift of a manuscript, play, or literary dedication, the poet may also provide literary services and witty entertainment for the patron and his guests. Moreover, by supporting the arts, the patron was able to promote and—to a large extent—define what “counts as

culture” (Griffin 42), while affirming his aristocratic power and status as a noble patron and member of the elite. Perhaps the most desirable exchange received by a patron was the written praise and recognition of his virtues, accomplishments, and status (genuine and exaggerated). Dustin Griffin claims,

In a culture still imbued with notions of family honor and reputation, patrons would be prepared to offer their support not only for political services but for the kind of ‘fame’ that could be conferred on them by a poet. . . . And to be praised in print was increasingly the chief means by which one might attain fame in one’s lifetime.” (34)

Although patronage poetry was ostensibly intended for the patron, both poet and patron were aware that through manuscript copies and circulation these literary praises would inevitably reach multiple audiences including family, friends, rivals, and even the king, “whose judgment could determine the social worth and status of them all” (Evans 120).

With the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695, which marked the end of pre-publication censorship, increasing numbers of publishers began to compete for a growing readership and writers began to turn to self-representation and the literary marketplace—away from the patronage economy and its dependency on the elite. In *Authoring the Self* (2005), Scott Hess states, “by the end of the 1720s, [the print market] had supplanted patronage and coterie manuscript circulation as the clearly dominant context for poetry” (5). In the eighteenth century, the rapidly growing print industry not only promoted the production and distribution of poetry and novels, but also gave rise to new forms of literature and new means for which writers and the reading public could participate in the fashionable and commercial culture of printed text. In addition to daily, weekly, and regional newspapers;

essay-papers, advertisements, magazines, and literary reviews helped expand the print market audience, while promoting literary works and fostering literary taste. And the emergence of the coffeehouse, commercial and later public lending libraries, book clubs, literary societies, and other social institutions further encouraged the popularity of printed text for both writers and readers (Hess 41).¹

Regardless of the proliferation of printed text and the growing number of public patrons, the shift from the patronage system to the literary marketplace was neither sudden nor absolute. In “Patronage, Poetry, and Print” (1991), Arthur F. Marotti argues that print culture existed as early as the mid-sixteenth century with *Tottel’s Miscellany* (1557);² patronage culture existed beyond the seventeenth century in new and various forms; and, therefore, print and patronage cultures co-existed and complemented one another throughout Early Modern England. While the “bookstall patron” (Marotti 22) became the dominant literary consumer of the early-eighteenth century, the aristocratic patron remained an important factor in the production and distribution of literature, and—paradoxically—helped facilitate the shift from manuscript culture to print culture. Marotti explains,

In the case of published lyric poetry, [aristocratic] patrons served multiple purposes: not only were they actual or wished-for dispensers of money,

¹ In his novel, *The History of Pompey the Little* (1751), Francis Coventry humorously characterizes emerging writers and marketplace professionals: “On [the bard and lap-dog’s] arrival in the club-room, they found there assembled a free-thinking writer of moral essays, a no-thinking scribbler of magazines, a Scotch translator of Greek and Latin authors, a Grub-street bookseller, and a Fleet parson” (169). Coventry’s novel contains numerous commentaries on literary patronage, literary taste, and the growing popularity of literature among all socio-economic classes.

² According to Marotti, Chaucer’s collected works (1532), Wyatt’s *Pentitential Psalms* (1550), and other publications occurred before 1557; however, *Tottel’s Miscellany* is “the first major publication of English Renaissance lyric poetry” (23).

social or political support and favour, offices and employment but also, as ideal readers and celebrity-endorsers, they were symbolic or mediatory figures, facilitating the transition from manuscript culture to print culture. They were part of a process in which socially-restricted occasional verse was incorporated into the newly emerging modern institution of literature, an environment in which they were reduced to a minor feature of the publishing format and the subservient author began to enjoy prestige as a member of a new literary and aesthetic elite. (45-46)

Coventry's "Penshurst" (1750), for example, was written in response to a request from Coventry's patrons, William and Elizabeth Perry (née Sidney); however, "Penshurst" was also published and sold in pamphlet form by Robert Dodsley and Mary Cooper. Although the poem itself does not directly flatter or praise the lord and lady of Penshurst, the large-print dedication on the title page—"Penshurst. Inscribed to William Perry, Esq; and The Hon^{ble}. Mrs. Elizabeth Perry"—affirms the Perrys' aristocratic power and status as noble patrons, while serving as a celebrity endorsement for potential bookstall patrons. In the "Preface to the Dedication" of Henry Fielding's *The Historical Register for the Year 1736*, Fielding notes the importance of the patron in regards to marketplace success:

What, says [my bookseller], does more service to a book or raises curiosity in a reader equal with 'dedicated to his Grace the Duke of —', or 'the Right Honourable the Earl of —' in an advertisement? I think the patron here may properly be said to give a name to the book. (qtd. in Black, *Culture* 152).

In the case of Coventry's published poem, the dedication appears to be as important as—if not part of—the poem's title.

As writers became less reliant on the aristocratic patron and more reliant on the reading public, praise became less of an obligation and more of a personal and professional choice. Instead of a patron receiving poetic praise and flattery, writers frequently reflected upon and praised the virtuous way of life and people of the past. In his well-known book, *The Country and the City*, Raymond Williams claims that throughout history writers have felt a persistent nostalgia for days gone by and their “well-known habit of using the past, the ‘good old days,’ [is often] a stick to beat the present” (12). In her poem “Sonnet XLVI: Written at Penshurst, in Autumn 1788,” Charlotte Turner Smith describes Penshurst’s past in contrast to its present state:

Ye Towers sublime deserted now and drear,
Ye woods, deep sighing to the hollow blast,
The musing wanderer loves to linger near,
While History points to all your glories past. (1-4)

Although Penshurst fell into a temporary state of disrepair and patronage was no longer a significant draw, it is not surprising that poets continued to write about Penshurst and its exemplary statesmen, warriors, poets, and beauties of days gone by. The Sidney family and the Penshurst traditions exemplified the virtuous “good old days,” and, as a matter of eighteenth-century literary taste for sensibility and politeness, Penshurst was a fashionable subject for the expanding literary public.

The Penshurst group of poems—from Jonson’s “To Penshurst” (1616) to Southey’s “For a Tablet at Penshurst” (1799)—provides a comprehensive example of the gradual shift from a patronage economy to a print economy and, as a consequence, the gradual reshaping of literary praise in seventeenth and eighteenth-century England. Beginning with

Jonson's well-known patronage poem, the Penshurst group of poems also illustrates that although print culture had become the dominant platform for the exchange of literature, the patronage system and the literary marketplace successfully co-existed over this two hundred-year period. To further explore the circumstances and development of these economic and laudatory changes, the following chapters address each Penshurst poem—individually or as a group—in order of its publication date. In addition, a pertinent examination of the respective poet's life and literary career is offered in an attempt to uncover the poet's motivation, style, and deviation of literary praise in relation to patronage and print cultures. In *Ben Jonson and the Poetics of Patronage*, Robert C. Evans writes, "[Jonson's] writings, not his life, are my first concern. I am less interested in how he lived than in how the manner of his life intricately shaped the manner of his writings" (11). It is with this same approach to biography that the lives of Penshurst poets are incorporated into the analysis of the Penshurst poems.

Chapter 5: Ben Jonson's "To Penshurst" (1616): Success and Discontentment in Early Seventeenth-Century Patronage and Print Cultures

Along with his reputation as "perhaps the most spectacularly successful patronage poet of his era" (Evans 32), Ben Jonson is equally renowned for his innovative and influential publication of *The Workes of Benjamin Jonson* (1616) and for his successes in the public theatre as an independent playwright. While Jonson achieved immense popularity among his patrons and the public alike, he struggled throughout his literary career to find a sense of personal contentment: As a patronage poet, Jonson desired freedom from aristocratic dependency; and as a professional writer, Jonson coveted a coterie audience instead of his diverse and often "newly literate" (Herendeen 117) supporters. Jonson's much-studied patronage poem, "To Penshurst"—written for his patron, Robert Sidney, and later published in his *Workes*—leads the group of Penshurst poems and illustrates that within the predominant patronage economy of the early seventeenth century, literary works simultaneously circulated in the marketplace. And while "To Penshurst" is a paragon of patronage poetry, this laudatory poem and the folio in which it is published express (explicitly and obliquely) Jonson's conflicting ideals regarding socioeconomic divisions, aristocratic patronage, personal independence, and literary authority—ideals and contestations shared by many writers during this two hundred-year period of literary and economic change.

Ben Jonson (1572-1637), the stepson of a bricklayer, learned at an early age that in order to live a dignified life he would need to attract and rely on the support of wealthy aristocrats (Evans 31-32). With the support of William Camden, Second and later Headmaster of Westminster School, Jonson attended the renowned Royal College of St.

Peter in Westminster, where he learned the importance of education and gained a love for poetry, theatre, and the Classics.¹ As a student and friend of Camden's, Jonson was introduced to several of Camden's influential friends and scholarly contemporaries.

Biographer Ian Donaldson writes,

It was perhaps through Camden's mediation, for example, that Jonson first became personally acquainted with members of the Sidney family, with his future patron, William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, and with scholars such as Sir Henry Savile (Provost of Eton, Warden of Merton College, editor of St Chrysostom, translator of Tacitus) and the great Dutch classist and poet Daniel Heinsius. When Jonson in 1616 saluted Camden as that 'most reverend head, to whom I owe / All that I am in arts, all that I know / (How nothing's that)?' (*Epigrams*, 14.1-3), he acknowledged the deep intellectual debts that he had incurred at Westminster School. (79)

Jonson's humble upbringing and childhood experience at Westminster School made him sensitive to societal divisions and complicated his position within the patronage system. According to Robert C. Evans, "[Jonson] sought patronage for the same reasons others did—to enhance his social and financial security—but he had the extra motive of winning back some of the status and self-esteem his father's death and his mother's remarriage had denied him" (32). While Jonson sought the comforts and prestige wealth provided, he also

¹ Westminster School catered to children from all socioeconomic classes and focused on intellectual merit rather than birth and wealth (Donaldson 71). The claim that William Camden financially supported Jonson at Westminster cannot be substantiated. Ian Donaldson proposes that in addition to Camden, a teacher or churchwarden at St. Martin's School (Jonson's elementary school) may have negotiated Jonson's admission to Westminster (68-69). Other than their introduction at Westminster, previous relationships between Jonson and Camden are undetermined.

criticized the greed, excessiveness, and pretense within the aristocratic society. In *Discoveries*, published posthumously in 1641, Jonson calls attention to the extravagance and feigned honour of the elite, and—as in “To Penshurst”—uses architectural details to support his claims of decadence:

What difference is between us and them, but that we are dearer fools,
coxcombs at a higher rate? They are pleased with cockleshells, whistles,
hobby-horses, and such like; we with statues, marble pillars, pictures, gilded
roofs, where underneath is lath and lime, perhaps loam. Yet we take pleasure
in the lie, and are glad we can cozen ourselves. Nor is it only our walls and
ceilings, but all that we call happiness is mere painting and gilt, and all for
money: what a thin membrane of honour that is! And how hath all true
reputation fallen, since money began to have any! (qtd. in Donaldson 338)

Jonson’s direct and implied criticism toward wealth and greed extends to other works including his comedies *Volpone* (1606), *The Alchemist* (1610), and *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), and to his famous laudatory poem, “To Penshurst.”

By his mid forties—and upon the death of Shakespeare in 1616—Jonson had become England’s leading patronage writer: “House-guest of well connected nobles, perennial author of holiday masques, recipient of royal grants of money and sack: he had become by middle age a fixture at the Jacobean court” (Evans 32). Jonson’s illustrious patrons included Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury; William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke; Sir Robert Wroth and Lady Mary Wroth (née Sidney); Elizabeth Manners (née Sidney), Countess of Rutland; William Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle; Sir Thomas Egerton; Sir Francis Bacon; and—most importantly—King James I. The relationship between Robert Sidney and Jonson is not fully

understood; however, Jonson's reputation as a patronage poet, Jonson's close association with members of the Sidney family, and the laudatory nature of "To Penshurst" indicate that these men engaged in a patronage relationship, and, perhaps, in a friendship.

Sidney and Jonson's relationship presumably began through their association with the court and on account of Jonson's patronage relationships with other members of the Sidney family. J.C.A. Rathmell suggests that during Sidney's position as Lord Chamberlain to Queen Anne (1603 -1619), he assisted in the staging of Jonson's numerous court performances and was likely present at Jonson's January 1605 production, "Masque of Blackness," in which his daughter Mary Wroth performed alongside the Queen (250). Although the De L'Isle and Sidney Manuscripts offer an abundance of information regarding the affairs of the Sidney household, references to Jonson (or Johnson) appear on only two, brief occasions. In a letter to Robert Sidney, dated August 24, 1637, William Hawkins (Sidney's solicitor) reports the death of the great poet: "Our great Poet, Ben Johnson, is lately dead and was buried on Wednesday last here at Westminster" (De L'Isle U1457 C132/43). And, in an earlier letter written to his wife on July 25, 1611, Robert Sidney expresses his pleasure with their son's tutor and education: "I am glad to hear of Will Sidney's care to follow his book. If he list he may do himself much good with Mr. Johnson, and he cannot any way please me better" (Rathmell 251).¹ It is not certain if the Mr. Johnson of Sidney's letter refers to the poet Ben Jonson; however, Jonson's "Ode to Sir William Sidney, on His Birthday" suggests that Jonson was present at William Sidney's twenty-first birthday (November

¹ From 1604 onwards, the poet preferred "Jonson" for the spelling of his surname rather than the common spelling, "Johnson." If, in fact, Ben Jonson was William's tutor, Robert Sidney's epistolary spelling of "Johnson" would not be unusual (Donaldson 56).

10, 1611) and that Jonson and the young Sidney shared a close relationship (Rathmell 251).

Rathmell argues,

Whether or not the tutor in question was the poet, Jonson certainly lodged at Penshurst at some date before September 1612 (by which time he was in Paris as tutor to Sir Walter Raleigh's son) and knew Penshurst quite intimately, for in addition to the various references in his poem to topographical features of the estate, there are several details indicating close knowledge of the affairs of the household. (251)

As is the nature of patronage poetry, several details regarding Penshurst and the Sidney family are exaggerated in "To Penshurst"; however, Jonson's admiration and intimate knowledge of the estate and family contribute to the authenticity of Jonson's detailed descriptions and poetic praise.

Jonson's "To Penshurst" begins with an address to the estate and praise for what Penshurst is not:

Thou art not, PENSHURST, built to envious show
Of touch, or marble; nor canst boast a row
Of polish'd pillars, or a roofe of gold:
Thou hast no lantherne, whereof tales are told;
Or stayre, or courts; but stand'st an ancient pile. . . . (1-5)

Jonson's poem suggests that unlike the owners of newly built or remodeled country estates, such as Knole's Earl of Dorset, Sidney resists the fashionably extravagant polished pillars, lantern-towers, and spectacular stairs, and takes pride in the nature that surrounds the estate and in Penshurst's ancient architecture and history:

Thou joy'st in better marks, of soyle, of ayre,
Of wood, of water: therein thou art faire.
Thou hast thy walks for health, as well as sport:
Thy Mount, to which thy Dryads doe resort,
Where Pan and Bacchus their high feasts have made,
Beneath the broad beech, and the chest-nut shade;
That taller tree, which of a nut was set,
At his great birth, where all the Muses met. (7-14)

As a means to emphasize the close relationship between nature and the estate, Jonson makes use of his knowledge and fondness of the Classics and introduces mythological figures—specifically those associated with nature—into the Penshurst landscape. Like Jonson's woodland spirits and deities, members of the Sidney family are also used to symbolize the bond between the estate and nature: the Sidney Oak celebrates Sir Philip Sidney's "great birth"; "thy Ladies oke / Thy coppes ,too, nam'd of Gamage" (18-19) refers to the oak under which Barbara Sidney (née Gamage) allegedly went into labour; and the coppice woodlands in which Barbara frequently strolled (Wayne 59).¹

According to Don E. Wayne, Jonson represents Penshurst "as a place where everything that is natural and good is in abundance; this abundance is administered by a family which is, in turn, represented as the epitome of everything that is humanly natural and good" (39). The abundance of "painted partrich," "fat aged carps," and "woolly peach[es]" is a result of Sidney's attention and respect for nature. Similarly, the orderly and virtuous

¹ Penshurst's coppice woodlands are still maintained and in use today.

management of the estate is a result of Sidney's attention and respect for his tenants, servants, family, and the entire Penshurst community:

There's none, that dwell about them, wish them downe;
But all come in, the farmer and the clowne;
And no one empty-handed, to salute
Thy lord and lady, though they have no sute. (47-50)

J.C.A. Rathmell asserts that the relationship between Sidney and his tenants was "a reciprocal one of duties and responsibilities on both sides, freely and gladly entered into" (164). Moreover, "there was a marked tendency for the great man to make much more use of intermediary officials in his dealings with tenants and servants, and in this way to cut himself off from direct contact with the humbler day-to-day activities of the estate" (161). Jonson's poem praises Sidney's involvement in the day-to-day activities and the De L'Isle and Sidney Manuscripts indicate that although Sidney was frequently away on long stints at court, he maintained a keen interest in the management of the estate through his numerous epistolary correspondences with his wife.

In his praise of Penshurst and Robert Sidney, Jonson commends Sidney's wife, Barbara, for her proficient management of the estate, for her devotion to her family, and for her hospitality and prudence—particularly in regards to the unannounced visit from King James and the prince:

What (great, I will not say, but) sodayne cheare
Did'st thou then make 'hem! and what praise was heap'd
On thy good lady, then! who therein reap'd
The just reward of her high huswifry;

To have her linnen, plate, and all things nigh,
When shee was farre; and not a roome, but drest,
As if it had expected such a guest! (82-88)

With the exception of Jonson's poem, no evidence confirms the king and his son's unexpected visit to Penshurst; however, the alleged royal visit is significant in that it emphasizes Barbara's "high huswifry" as well as Sidney's prestigious and desirable affiliation with the king.

While Jonson's inclusion of the King's visit is ostensibly intended to compliment the Sidneys, it also provides the poet with an opportunity for self-promotion. Regardless of Jonson's relationship with the Sidney family—guest, patronage poet, or both—Jonson describes the generous hospitality he receives at Penshurst akin to that of other guests and even to the king:

Where the same beere and bread, and self-same wine,
That is his Lordships, shall be also mine.

.....

Thy tables hoord not up for the next day,
Nor, when I take my lodging, need I pray
For fire, or lights, or livorie: all is there;
As if thou then wert mine, or I raign'd here:
There's nothing I can wish, for which I stay.

That found King JAMES, when hunting late, this way. . . . (63-64, 71-76)

Wayne observes that Jonson strategically aligns himself with the king in the structure of lines 75 and 76 (77). While Jonson concludes his self-reference on line 75, he continues the

second line of the rhyming couplet with an introduction to the king. These lines suggest that upon leaving Penshurst, it is the king who fills Jonson's seat at the lord's table, or—inversely—it is Jonson who fills the king's seat. Although Jonson places himself in close proximity with the king, his use of negatives in reference to his own experiences and wishes clearly differentiates himself from the king, who literally reigns at Penshurst and everywhere throughout his kingdom: "As if thou then wert mine, or I raig'n'd here: / There's nothing I can wish, for which I stay." According to Wayne, Jonson's negative construction "points to desire or longing for something that is felt to be lacking" (77). While his praise is genuine and there is nothing he can wish for during his stay at Penshurst—companionship, comfort, or security—Jonson is conscious of his patronage position and aspires for the independence and influence most patronage poets lack and professional poets venture to obtain.

Unlike other patronage poets and playwrights, Jonson insisted on a certain degree of independence and avoided the confines that a single, dedicated patron or theatre company imposed. The Earl and Countess of Pembroke, for example, were patrons of both Jonson and poet Samuel Daniel; however, the relationships between these poets and patrons were significantly different. According to W. H. Herendeen, "Daniel was a member of the Herbert household, enjoying the protection and support granted other liveried servants." Jonson, in contrast, refused to wear livery and enjoyed "the rivalry that came with the reins of power" (54). The dichotomy between his desire for literary authority and his need for aristocratic patronage helped establish Jonson as one of the most successful patronage and commercial writers of the seventeenth century. Like its creator, "To Penshurst" also made its mark in both the patronage and print cultures.

Because no dedications or original manuscripts (autograph or presentation) of “To Penshurst” exist, little is known about the poem’s production or about the patronage relationship and value exchange between Jonson and Sidney. “To Penshurst” was written between 1603 and 1612—during Sidney’s position as Lord Chamberlain and before Prince Henry’s death—and was likely written during the summer of 1611 when Jonson was assumedly a tutor and guest at the estate. The earliest known appearance of the poem is in Jonson’s 1616 folio, *The Workes of Benjamin Jonson*, published by William Stansby.¹ Jonson’s *Workes* consists of 1015 folio pages of nine plays and their dedications, 133 epigrams, a collection of fifteen poems (including “To Penshurst”) under the subtitle “The Forrest,” and a number of masques, entertainments, and other works. According to David L. Gants,

Jonson’s folio *Workes* marked the first time that the popular literature of the stage received a printed treatment usually accorded only works of the highest status. While contemporaries mocked Jonson’s efforts, the impressive volume established a publishing precedent later followed by the Shakespeare Folio of 1623 and Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher’s 1647 collected *Comedies and Tragedies*. (Gants 269)

Jonson personally managed the selection and arrangement of his works, and, in addition to editorial and press revisions and corrections, rewrote and revised many of his texts—particularly his earlier plays (Donovan 25). Without an original manuscript, one can only

¹ Stansby was a high-quality, early seventeenth-century printer who printed works by Ben Jonson; Jonson’s mentor, William Camden; Richard Hooker; Francis Bacon; Sir Walter Raleigh; William Shakespeare; and John Donne among others (Gants 266).

speculate to what extent Sidney's "To Penshurst" endured authorial, editorial, and press revisions.

Along with the selection, arrangement, and works themselves, the folio's prefatory material—a frontispiece, gratulatory poems, dedications to plays and epigrams, and (perhaps most noticeably) an absence of a dedicatee for the book—is part of a single, literary body, which strategically displays Jonson's artistry, independence, and theoretical concerns for art. According to Harendeen, "Jonson was committed to the principle of the inseparability of art and life," and "through the preliminary material he succeeded in making the lives of his contemporaries and himself part of his art and, conversely, in making art comment on his world [—a recurrent principle found throughout his works]" (46). While enforcing his ideas about the interconnectedness of reality and art, the prefatory material also illustrates Jonson's literary independence and his favourable position among the social, political, and literary elite. Instead of a single dedication for Jonson's folio, gratulatory poems are presented to the author himself. Jon Seldon, Edward Heyward, George Chapman, Hugh Holland, John Donne, Edmund Bolton, and Francis Beaumont praise Jonson for his literary achievements and provide support for his literary controversies. Patrons, friends, lawyers, and institutions are the dedicatees of Jonson's plays and epigrams, and, unlike conventional patronage dedications, Jonson's dedications offer gratitude for past service and payment for past debts. In his appropriately titled essay, "A New Way to Pay Old Debts," Harendeen claims,

... the Jonsonian dedication is not a nostalgic affirmation of feudal hierarchy based on tenets of *noblesse oblige*. It hardly offers rank and respect in return

for patronage; it speaks from within a social and economic system but refuses to abandon the critical independence by which one asserts separateness. (39)

Herendeen also asserts that although some of the dedications elicit further support, “far more obtrusive is the reiterated and strongly felt claim that the dedications are made in payment for services rendered, a publishing receipt” (47). In his dedication of “Poetaster,” for example, Jonson thanks his friend and barrister, Richard Martin, for his “noble and timely undertak[ing], to the greatest Justice of this kindgome.” The “Poetaster” was appropriately dedicated to Martin, as it was he that argued on behalf of Jonson for the rights to stage this controversial play (Donaldson 171).

The inscription found on the folio’s frontispiece reads, “neque, me ut miretur turba, laboro: Contentus paucis lectoribus” (“I do not work so that the crowd may admire me, I am contented with a few readers”; Herendeen 62). Although Jonson sought independence as a commercial writer, he also desired a coterie audience, which—most importantly—included the king. According to Herendeen, Jonson recognized and feared that print had the ability to turn his work into a commodity and allow every reader to read his work—even “newly literate citizens from culturally marginal groups” (117). Again, Jonson’s paradoxical ideals regarding class, independence, and patronage became problematic: Jonson’s desire for independence required a larger and perhaps less cultured audience, yet a patronage relationship and elite audience resulted in aristocratic dependency. Unlike Sir Philip Sidney and Edmund Waller, who were born into social and economic security, Jonson struggled throughout his career and lifetime to find a contented balance between patronage and print cultures.

Chapter 6: Edmund Waller's Sacharissa Poems (1645) and Thomas D'Urfey's "The Peroquette" (1719): Deviant Species of Patronage and Literary Praise

In *Literary Patronage in England, 1650 – 1800*, Dustin Griffin writes, "The system of patronage was never simply a form of *noblesse oblige* or disinterested generosity. It was in effect an 'economic' arrangement that provided benefits to both parties" (10). Commonly, patronage arrangements involved an exchange of the poet's literary services and laudatory works—celebrating (and promoting) the patron's virtues and accomplishments—for financial and social security from the patron. Not all patronage relationships, however, engaged in such conventional forms of exchange. Edmund Waller's three Sacharissa poems (1645) and Thomas D'Urfey's "The Peroquette" (1719) deviate from the patronage tradition in respect to their approach and purpose of praise, and in their choice of subject matter: Waller's love poems use romantic praise as a means to court his beloved and win over her father, D'Urfey's poem uses libertine praise as a means to amuse his rakish patron, and both Waller's and D'Urfey's poems focus on Penshurst women instead of the patron or estate. An examination of Waller's romantic poems alongside D'Urfey's licentious ode may at first seem peculiar; however, it is because of these poems' respective peculiarities and deviations that make them compatible and set them apart from other Penshurst poems and laudatory texts in general. Regardless of their deviations, Waller's and D'Urfey's works emphasize the interdependence of literary praise and patronage, as well as the poets' continued reliance on aristocratic patronage throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Of Waller's twenty Sacharissa poems, only three belong to the Penshurst group: "To My Lord of Leicester" and two entitled "At Pens-hurst." While these poems meet the criteria

of a Penshurst poem, Waller's poems do not praise Penshurst itself—architecture, economy, tradition, or virtuous country life—but instead use Penshurst's landscape and natural surroundings as a means to emphasize Waller's admiration for Dorothy Sidney (Sacharissa), to flatter and influence Dorothy's father, and to flaunt the poet's own literary talent. In "At Pens-hurst" [Had Dorothea liv'd when Mortals made], the personified gardens admire and respond to Sacharissa's exceptional grace and beauty:

Her presence has such more then humane grace

That it can civilize the rudest place:

And beauty too, and order can impart,

Where nature ne're intended it, nor art.

The plants acknowledge this, and her admire

No lesse then those of old did Orpheus Lire:

If she sit down, with tops all towards her bow'd,

They round about her into arbours crowd.

Or if she walke, in even ranks they stand

Like some well marhall'd and obsequious band. (7-16)

In heroic couplets, Waller skillfully incorporates ancient stories and mythological gods to create fanciful conceits for his then modern-day arguments. Like Orpheus—the ancient Greek musician and prophet who could charm all things (even stones) with his music—Sacharissa's presence turns woods into gardens and enchants admiring trees into a "well marshall'd and obsequious band." In addition to mythological gods, Waller predictably addresses the Sidney Oak, which symbolizes the birth and legacy of Dorothy's great-uncle, Sir Philip Sidney, whose virtuous reputation is also based in part on legend:

Goe boy and carve this passion in the barke
Of yonder tree, which stands the sacred marke
Of noble Sidneys birth, when such benigne,
Such more then mortall making stars did shine;
That there they cannot but ever prove
The monument and pledge of humble love:
His humble love, whose hope shall ne're rise higher,
Then for a pardon that he dares admire. (25-32)

In an attempt to liken himself to the esteemed poet and courtier—in literary talent and familial bonds—Waller carves his own mark on the sacred tree, pledging his everlasting love for Sacharissa and his professed alliance with Sir Philip Sidney.

“To My Lord of Leicester” was written ostensibly for Robert Sidney, second Earl of Leicester with intent to win Sidney’s favour and the hand of his daughter. As a form of flattery and praise, Waller imitates Jonson’s “To Penshurst” in the use of negatives and in the description of nature’s self-sacrificing devotion to the lord:

Not that thy trees at Pens-hurst growe
Oppressed with their timely load,
And seem to make their silent moan,
That their great Lord is now abroad:
They to delight his taste or eye
Would spend themselves in fruit and dye.
Not that thy harmlesse Deere repine,
And thinke themselves unjustly slaine

By any other hand then thine,

Whose arrows they would gladly slaine. (1-10)

Along with the ripe and bountiful fruit trees described in both Jonson's and Waller's poem, "To My Lord of Leicester" tells of the deer that gladly take an arrow for their lord, and in "To Penshurst," "the painted partrich lyes in ev'ry field" (29) ready to be killed for the lord's table. From 1636 to 1641, Sidney served in France "Wherein there meet the divers laws / Of publique and domestique care" (15-16), and during his long absences from Penshurst, Waller observes it is not the oppressively bountiful orchards or the unjustly slain deer that require Sidney's presence, but the "one bright Nymph our youth contends / And on your prudent choice depends" (17-18). In the final lines of his poem, Waller beseeches Sidney to return to Penshurst and choose Dorothy's future husband among the rival suitors: "O fix this flame, and let despaire / Redeem the rest from endlesse care!" (29-30).

The circumstances of Waller's relationship with the Sidney family are unclear; however, both Waller and Robert Sidney sat in the House of Commons in 1624 and 1625, and, although Sidney was often away on diplomatic duties, both Waller and Sidney would have attended court functions until Sidney's withdrawal in 1644 and Waller's exile in 1645. In 1636, two years after the death of his wife, Waller began to court Sidney's oldest daughter, Lady Dorothy Sidney, and use his poetic talents to influence and impress both father and daughter. In *Sacharissa. Some Account of Dorothy Sidney, Countess of Sunderland, Her Family and Friends*—the most comprehensive biography on Dorothy Sidney—Julia Mary Cartwright Ady claims, "As a distinguished man of letters and the friend of the most eminent scholars of the day, Lord Leicester naturally took pleasure in Waller's company

and welcomed his visits" (32). Although Sidney enjoyed Waller's company, he and his wife, Dorothy Sidney (née Percy), held high marital ambitions for their daughter and at no time considered "Waller or any other untitled man and were intent on finding a peer of very high principles" (Gilbert 19). Perhaps young Dorothy admired Waller's skillfully written lyrics, and her mother enjoyed knowing Waller's praise was heard by the "ladies and wits of Queen Henrietta's court" (Ady 46); however, Dorothy rejected Waller from the onset. Regardless of whose decision it was that Dorothy decline Waller's proposals, Dorothy affectionately and suitably married Henry Spencer, Earl of Sunderland in 1639.

In the second "At Pens-hurst" poem, Waller again turns to nature as reinforcement for his romantic argument; however, in this later Sacharissa poem, nature does not bow to Sacharissa in admiration, but instead aligns with Waller and his complaint of unrequited love:

While in this Parke I sing, the listning Deere
Attend my passion, and forget to fear.
When to the Beeches I report my flame,
They bow their heads as if they felt the same:
To Gods appealing, when I reach their bowrs
With loud complaints, they answer me in showrs. (1-6)

Penshurst's deer, trees, and gods sympathize with Waller in his attack against Sacharissa's cruel heart and poor judgment. Biographer Jack G. Gilbert claims, "The poet in this case knows he is overreaching and doomed; thus he is at once ingenious in his assertion and tentative, self-protective" (41). Instead of Sacharissa, Waller assumes the role of Orpheus with the intent to charm Sacharissa's heart: "Thy heart no ruder then the rugged stone / I

might like Orpheus with my numerous moan/ Melt to compassion; . . ." (25-27). With great concern, the Greek god Apollo—"President of verse" (34)—advises Waller to hang his lute on the Sidney tree and find refuge at sea, where the "windes and tempests" (43) are milder than "her cold neglect" (44). Although Waller's final Sacharissa poem portrays Dorothy as an enemy to love, Chernaik observes that Sacharissa's unwillingness to love is proof of her perfection and is worthy of admiration and praise (*Limitation* 54).

Along with many other gallants, Waller's pursuit to win the heart and hand of the beautiful and highborn Dorothy Sidney was likely genuine; however, the passion in Waller's poetry is questionable and critics debate whether this passion—particularly in his later poems—is an expression of Waller's love for Sacharissa or of his love for art and his own literary works. According to Chernaik,

. . . all the poet-lover is interested in, [Waller] protests, is Sacharissa. But the protests are clearly disingenuous—it is clear that Waller is happier with the poems (and the praise) than he would have been with the girl. . . . As F.W. Bateson has observed, though by implication the poet is 'blowing his own trumpet,' the tone of the poem absolves him from possible charges of egoism. (*Limitation* 86)

While Waller's initial motivation would "have been about the girl," after years of unsuccessful courtship and admiration from other women, it is not unreasonable that Waller trim his passion and poetic praise for a broader, more receptive audience. Ady claims,

It is impossible to feel much sympathy for a love which found expression in such cunning conceits, or much pity for the failure of a courtship that was

conducted in so public a manner. The whole thing is too artificial, too deliberate. We can hear the applause of the listening courtiers as Mr. Waller recited one copy of verse after another in the presence of an admiring circle.

(34)

Although Waller's poems did not award him with a wife or a legendary great-uncle, the Sacharissa poems brought Waller poetic fame and made him "supreme among the singers of his age" (Ady iii).

While Jonson and other seventeenth-century poets wrote laudatory works with the prospect of financial and social advancements, Waller—"the king of panegyrists" (Chernaik, *Limitation* 115)—already maintained a large fortune and was an amiable politician and courtier prior to his literary accomplishments. Instead of financial and social security, Waller used literary praise and patronage as a means to flaunt his literary talents and influence and gain favour (and romance) from his powerful literary subjects, such as Robert and Dorothy Sidney. Appropriately, Waller is regarded as the "first English poet for whom panegyric [was] the very center of his poetry" (Chernaik, *Limitation* 123), and also "a Trimmer of the most shameless effrontery, offering his allegiance to whatever power chanced to be in the ascendant—a courtier with the most flexile knees and the most supple vertebrae" (Kent 211). Within his personal and political writings, Waller developed a pattern of praising and trimming¹ that coincided with his changing personal, political, and patronage motives, and contributed to the sense of fickleness and insincerity identified in

¹ Throughout the seventeenth century, the term "trimmer" was used pejoratively in relation to Waller's character. Like a sailor who trims his sails to the prevailing wind, Waller modified or changed his political allegiances according to the prevailing party in power. Chernaik argues that although Waller changed allegiances, his beliefs of moderation and peace consistently remained the same (*Limitation* 15).

his laudatory texts. The sequence of Sacharissa poems—initially intended for Dorothy and Robert Sidney, then for a coterie audience of Waller’s admirers—offers a brief though revealing instance of Waller’s deviant pattern of praising and trimming, which is consistent with Waller’s fluctuating patronage relations and with many of the events in Waller’s long and privileged life.

Throughout his life (1606-87), Waller enjoyed great wealth, was associated with the most powerful people in England, and was both a participant and witness to one of the most turbulent times in British history. In 1616, Waller inherited his father’s extensive estates, and, in 1631, married wealthy heiress Anne Banks, who died three years later in childbirth. Waller became a member of the House of Commons at the early age of sixteen and was often in attendance at court (though held no formal position), where he was admired as a wit, masterful speaker, and gifted poet (Chernaik, *Limitation* 7). Like most facets of seventeenth-century England, Waller’s literary works are divided into two distinct eras: Waller’s early lyrical poems—before the Restoration and his political exile—and his later state poems. Under the reign of Charles I, Waller and other Cavalier poets¹ wrote mostly occasional poems of praise, love, and courtly society, which were intended for a coterie audience and—most importantly—the king and royal family (Chernaik, *Limitation* 60). Under the reign of Charles II and James II, Waller wrote elaborate and moralistic panegyrics that were in praise of the state and almost always had “a concrete political

¹ Cavalier poets make up the broad group of seventeenth-century poets who were loyal to Charles I during the civil war and wrote works that specifically pleased the king. Cavaliers considered their writing as “a part-time occupation, one of the many concerns of a gentleman” (Chernaik, *Limitation* 60). Cavaliers followed a classical model of writing, often focused on nature’s beauty, and wrote with the ideal of *carpe diem*.

intention lying beneath the smooth and carefully elaborated surfaces” (Chernaik, *Limitation* 41).

In 1643, during the English Civil War, Waller and other conspirators organized a peace plan that would allow the king’s army into London with the prospect of moderation and reconciliation between the crown and parliament. When the plan—known as Waller’s Plot—turned violent, parliamentary leaders arrested and imprisoned Waller and his fellow plotters. In order to escape execution, Waller pleaded guilty and freely implicated his allies. After one year in prison and a £10 000 fine, Waller was permitted to go into exile (Chernaik, *Limitation* 34). Upon his pardon by Cromwell in 1651, Waller returned to England and wrote and published his most famous poem, “A Panegyric to My Lord Protector” (1655), with the intent to muster support for Cromwell’s regime, as well as regain favour from those in parliament. With the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, Waller trimmed his allegiances back to the crown and wrote “To the King, Upon His Majesty’s Happy Return” in praise of the returning king. Again, in 1661, Waller was re-elected to parliament where he served until two years before his death (Gilbert 30). Although “the poet again became a favorite at court and a leading member of the House of Commons” (Chernaik, *Limitation* 9), Waller was greatly criticized for his sycophantic behavior during and immediately after the civil war. Samuel Johnson, for example, commented on the character of panegyrists and—presumably—on Waller in particular: “He that has flattery ready for all whom the vicissitudes of the world happen to exalt must be scorned as a prostituted mind that may retain the glitter of wit, but has lost the dignity of virtue” (qtd. in Gilbert 124). While Waller was able to win over parliament and court

with his wit and literary praises, his attempt to beguile the beautiful and intelligent Dorothy Sidney proved to be more difficult.

The Workes of Edmond Waller was published in 1645 and consisted of Waller's lyrical poems, three parliamentary speeches, and poems to the king and queen. Waller's collection was published while in exile and likely without his authorization. Gilbert notes that such a collection would have been of little advantage to Waller (the poet and politician) because of his opposing compliments to both court and parliament: "The flattering poems to the king and queen could hardly mollify his parliamentary enemies, and the speeches would neither please the royalists nor help their cause" (20). With the exception of his later political panegyrics, Waller published only a small number of his poetic works and parliamentary speeches. Money and a large readership did not motivate Waller to write in his earlier years, but instead he used his literary and oral talents to receive patronage in the form of a favourable position at court and parliament, admiration and companionship from men and women of power, and the unforeseeable pardon from execution. Waller's great wealth made him an anomaly in both the patronage system and in the literary marketplace, and unlike Jonson—who so greatly desired literary independence—Waller had the ability to choose the subject, occasion, audience, and presumed outcome of his own literary works.

While Waller's societal position and literary motives set him apart from other Penshurst poets, it is Thomas D'Urfey's poem, "The Peroquette," that is the most ambiguous and unusual of the Penshurst poems: Instead of praising the lord for his virtuous character and family, "The Peroquette" draws attention to the lord's libertine behavior and rakish companions. In order to interpret this sixteen-line verse in relation to praise and patronage, one must first become acquainted with D'Urfey's literary style and his life as a

writer. Little is known about D'Urfey's early life except that he joined the Drury Lane theatre as an actor at the age of twenty-three and wrote three plays before his mid-twenties (McVeagh 3). Charles II and the Duke of Ormond's attendance at D'Urfey's first comedy, "Madam Fickle" (1676), helped launch the playwright, poet, and songwriter's long and varied career. According to biographer Jonathan Pritchard, "it was through [D'Urfey's] talent for composing and singing witty songs that he became one of the king's intimates; his resonant baritone voice, impudent, vulgar wit, and good-natured willingness to play the buffoon suited the temper of the court." James II did not appreciate D'Urfey's work; however, under the reign of William and Mary, D'Urfey reclaimed courtly support and gained new patrons and literary and social companions, who largely consisted of wits and rakes. Charles II; James Butler, Duke of Ormond; Charles Montague; Sir Charles Sedley; Charles Sackville, sixth Earl of Dorset and later Lionel Sackville, Duke of Dorset; Philip James Wharton, Duke of Wharton; and likely Philip Sidney, third Earl of Leicester were among D'Urfey's numerous patrons. D'Urfey's literary circle (though not all in favour of D'Urfey and his works) included William Congreve, John Dryden, Thomas Shadwell, George Etherege, Henry Higden, Joseph Addison, and Richard Steele among many others. Although D'Urfey's literary style was popular among the wits and rakes, "sentimental morality [was becoming] a fashionable theme" in the late seventeenth century and audiences began to criticize and reject libertine comedy (McVeagh 142). John McVeagh claims,

After 1700 [libertine comedy] had lost support among the broad mass of playhouse spectators who preferred a mellower and more optimistic view of human nature. As this happened the rakish outlook which underlay licentious comedy was being slowly replaced by its opposite—the moralistic outlook of

reforming comedy such as Steele's and Cibber's. It was in this context that D'Urfey wrote his last four or five plays. . . . He had scant sympathy for the newly correct 'virtue' which deadened creativity and curtailed the dramatist's old freedom to entertain. Though he had included flashes of sentimental moralism in libertine comedies, when sentimentality came into vogue he found working with it impossible. (142)

"The Modern Prophets" (1709) was D'Urfey's last staged production; however, in the final decades of his life, D'Urfey continued to write songs, poems, and unstaged plays, which were then published in his *Wit and Mirth, or Pills to Purge Melancholy* (1719). D'Urfey's commitment to licentious writing and the social and literary circles in which he belonged help account for the seemingly paradoxical relationships between D'Urfey's life's writing and his public and patronage supporters who were often the subject of his works.

"The Peroquette," which first appears to be a poem about a beautiful parakeet, is—instead—a licentious verse about an opportunistic mistress "belonging" to Philip Sidney, third Earl of Leicester. The ode's playful, suggestive, and perhaps insolent introduction objectifies the main subject as both a creature of nature and a household possession: "An ODE; occasion'd by the seeing a very beautiful one, belonging to the Right Honourable the Earl of Leicester; with a small Remark upon his Lordship's fine Seat at Penshurst." Philip Sidney (1619-98), brother to Dorothy, Algernon, and Henry Sidney, was known to live a "lewd, infamous, and Atheisticall life" and was greatly disfavoured by his father, Robert Sidney, second Earl of Leicester (Firth). In 1652, after seven years of marriage, Sidney's young wife, Catherine Cecil, died during childbirth. According to biographer C.H. Firth, Sidney never remarried, yet he engaged in romantic liaisons with sisters Grace Saunders

(née Pensac) and Jane Highems (née Pensac), with whom he fathered and financially supported four illegitimate children. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was not uncommon for aristocratic men to maintain a mistress or several mistresses, and because Sidney was widowed at a young age, his unwed relationships would not appear publicly scandalous, yet proved to be an amusing and licentious topic for wits such as D'Urfey.¹

Around the same time D'Urfey wrote "The Peroquette," Henry Higden wrote and preformed his stage comedy "The Wary Widdow, or Sir Noisy Parrat" (1693), which was dedicated to the Earl of Dorset—a libertine companion and patron to D'Urfey. Similar to "The Peroquette," Higden's main character, Sir Noisy Parrat, is described as a "a prating whimsical fool." Although Higden's production ran only once because the drunken cast was jeered off the stage (Baldwin), D'Urfey was likely aware of his contemporary's work and the reference to a prating parrot. Since the exact date of "The Peroquette" is unknown, it is uncertain if D'Urfey's parakeet or Higden's parrot came first. Regardless, Higden's production helps support the assertion that D'Urfey's parakeet is a prating mistress and not merely a plummy bird.

Typically in D'Urfey's comedies, such as *Madame Fickle*, female characters take center stage and acquire a commanding rakish role. McVeagh claims "a Durfey character mark is to focus on libertine heroines as well as libertine heroes and this places a query over stock

¹ In *Aristocratic Vice*, Donna T. Andrew supports the opinion that Restoration and mid-eighteenth-century sexual conduct and adultery was regarded as "gallantry . . . and formed a part of the [fashionable] mores of a privileged group in society" (128). While Sidney would not have received public criticism for his licentious behavior, "female adultery was seldom condoned or left unpunished" (130). Because the identity of the parakeet is unknown, it is undetermined if D'Urfey's poem is a commentary on Sidney, a particular mistress, or Sidney's mistresses in general.

notions about gender difference" (57). In "The Peroquette," Sidney's mistress fills the libertine role as she seeks out vulnerable widows¹ who will caress her ego and appease her licentious desires:

Well mayst thou prate with mirthful Cheer,
And pick thy plummy green,
Who in delightful Penshurst here,
Art seated like a Queen.
Thou call'st upon a Widow oft,
Tho few of them are known;
With Look so sweet, and Touch so soft,
Dear Creature, as thy own. (1-8)

Although the widow's mistress finds great comfort and merriment at Penshurst, D'Urfey asserts that the ancient and noble estate only welcomes the "Dear Creature" to the confines of the lord's intimate company:

Others, *sic siti*,² may express,
Possess'd with Fancy vain,
Thou, only in thy Bower of Bliss
That Phrase canst well maintain. (13-16)

With an allusion to the seductress's Bower of Bliss in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*,¹ D'Urfey's closing quatrain depicts the mistress's power of seduction and the lord's

¹ Although "widow" commonly refers to a woman, this term may also refer to a man whose wife has died.

² According to the ode's accompanying footnote, "*sic siti*" refers to the Latin motto "*Sic siti lætantur Lares*": "Thus situated the household gods rejoice."

weakness to vice. And while Sidney's and his family's honour may not be challenged by his libertine actions and companions, the household gods seek to maintain the virtue of Penshurst.

In the absence of a dedication or other supporting documentation, it is uncertain for whom and under what conditions "The Peroquette" was written. It is conceivable that D'Urfey received some form of patronage support from Philip Sidney since—in his later years—Sidney had become a patron of literature and D'Urfey was a frequent visitor at Sidney's home in London and at Penshurst (Pritchard). As social criticism and satire were popular among Restoration and early eighteenth-century writers, D'Urfey's friendly and perhaps patronage relationship with Sidney problematizes the seemingly satirical nature of "The Peroquette." In *Thomas Durfey and Restoration Drama*, John McVeagh ventures to explain the ambiguous intent of D'Urfey's work in relation to his audience:

[D'Urfey's] libertines find themselves, in some plays, in a puzzle brought on by their own conduct, which might invite us to interpret them as pointing up a 'moral' lesson. But it is hard to pin any theoretical programme on Durfey beyond that of wishing to amuse his audience. To amuse, he must keep his audience interested. To keep his audience interested, he must keep it guessing. . . . Neither challenging the libertine comic convention nor, later, challenging the sentimental attitude need be interpreted as wanting to

¹ In a 1681 letter to "The Right Honourable George Earl of Berkeley," D'Urfey expresses his admiration for Edmund Spenser: "Fancy! The brightest Jewel of Poetry, of which the *Famous English Spencer* was the great and only Master" (qtd. in Cummings 211). Following his accolade, D'Urfey provides Berkeley with a quote from *The Fairie Queene*, which illustrates his keen interest in the poet and poem.

corrupt his audience or to instruct it. Rather he wrote to surprise people and make them laugh. He was an entertainer. (15)

Because Sidney and D'Urfey were amused by and inclined to the same libertine tendencies, it is likely that "The Peroquette" was written to entertain Sidney and that it was received in good humour. It is also possible—though less likely—that Sidney never read or heard D'Urfey's ode and that it was written with judgment and condemnation.

Twenty-one years after Philip Sidney's death, "The Peroquette" made its first public appearance in Volume 1 of *Wit and Mirth: or Pills to Purge Melancholy*¹—D'Urfey's 1719 collection of songs and poems.² At the time of publication, Philip Sidney's grandson, John Sidney, sixth Earl of Leicester, was lord of Penshurst. D'Urfey dedicates his collection to "the Right Honourable the Lords and Ladies, and also to the Honoured Gentry of both kinds, that have been so Generous to be Subscribers." In support of McVeagh's claim, D'Urfey's dedication does not attempt to instruct or persuade his readers in moral, political, or religious matters, but hopes to "add to your Pleasure, and divert your Hours, when your Thoughts are unbended from the Times, Troubles, and Fatigues."

Twenty-three years after Sidney's death, D'Urfey published "A Funeral Poem, Sacred to the Memory of the late Right Honourable, and never enough admir'd and lamented Philip, Earl of Leicester . . ." in his *New Opera's, With Comical Stories, and Poems, on Several Occasions, Never Before Printed* (1721). In contrast to his lewd and playful works, this five-page elegy is written in a sober tone that praises Sidney as "Learning's Patron" and

¹ "The Peroquette" also appears in D'Urfey's *Songs Compleat, Pleasant and Divertive*, which was published in the same year, by the same printer, and contains the same content, including the dedication, as *Pills to Purge Melancholy*.

² While "The Peroquette" falls within the category of songs in *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, no musical notation is appended and—with its introduction, four quatrains, and no chorus—the printed ode presents like a poem.

commends his patience, kindness, and bounty. In a footnote to his poem, D'Urfey remarks specifically on Sidney's hospitality towards gentry and poets: "Five Days in the Week, all the Year, he treated the Lords and Gentry, and every Saturday the Poets" (332). Among his description of Sidney's tearful mourners, D'Urfey dedicates twenty-nine lines to a "weeping Maid" who is "related nearly to [Sidney's] noble Blood." As with "The Peroquette," the identity of this woman is uncertain; however, since his only daughter predeceased Sidney, the woman who receives a "paternal Blessing" may refer to Sidney's illegitimate daughter, Philadelphia Saunders. While many questions remain regarding D'Urfey's "The Peroquette," "A Funeral Poem" suggests that the relationship between Sidney and D'Urfey was one of mutual admiration and patronage, and—as a consequence—"The Peroquette" was written for the purpose of lewd—yet benign—entertainment, regardless of its intended patronage or public audiences.

Chapter 7: Francis Coventry's "Penshurst" (1750) and "Inscription For an Oak in
Penshurst Park" (1761): Praise for Penshurst's Past

Nearly 150 years after the publication of Ben Jonson's "To Penshurst," Francis Coventry writes and publishes "Penshurst"—a 289-line topographical poem dedicated to his patrons William and Elizabeth Perry (née Sidney), lord and lady of Penshurst. While Coventry's poem shares many characteristics with the much-studied and anthologized "To Penshurst," "Penshurst" receives little to no scholarly attention—a likely consequence of Coventry's short life (1725-1754) and literary career, to the "flat and cliché-ridden" quality of the poem (Day xxxv), and to Coventry's more commonly known profession as a clergyman. Despite the poem's obscurity, however, "Penshurst" is one of the most significant of the Penshurst poems in regards to patronage and—specifically—the patron-poet relationship. In addition, "Penshurst" marks the turning point in the Penshurst group for which praise is no longer directed toward the present inhabitants of the estate, but to Penshurst's statesmen, warriors, poets, and beauties of the past:

GENIUS of Penshurst old!
Who saw'st the birth of each immortal oak,
Here sacred from the stroke;
And all thy tenants of yon turrets bold,
Inspir'd to arts or arms;
Where Sidney his Arcadian landscape drew,
Genuine from thy Doric View;
And patriot Algernon unshaken rose
Above insulting foes;

And Saccarissa nurs'd her angel charms. (1-10)

"Penshurst's" unconventional laudatory focus, which praises subjects other than the patron and lord of the estate, illustrates an important change in the roles, expectations, and obligations within the patronage system; the poet's intention and ability to work within both the patronage culture and the literary marketplace; and the change in attitude toward the eighteenth-century aristocratic landowner.

Unlike any other Penshurst poem, a considerable amount of original documentation regarding the circumstances of Coventry's "Penshurst" is extant. More than thirteen letters written by Coventry to William Perry are archived in the De L'Isle and Sidney Manuscripts and are dated September 1743 to July 1751. These letters, which have remained as obscure as Coventry's poem, reveal the origin of "Penshurst," as well as the relationship between poet and patron. Despite Robert Adams Day's claim that Coventry was a relative of William and Elizabeth Perry (xxxvi), no familial link can be identified and the De L'Isle correspondences indicate that their relationship was based on friendship and patronage. In a letter written on May 6, 1748, Coventry discusses his aristocratic relatives in a manner that clearly suggests the Coventry and Perry families were unrelated:

I beg pardon for not inclosing my Letter in a frank, but I am not worth one, and I believe I am the only person that has a mighty Earl for my Unkle and another for my cousin that gets so few franks of them as I have, but there is the distance of fifty miles between us in land, [and] fifty thousand in ceremony. (U1500 C66/1)

In several correspondences, Coventry describes his troubled relationship with his uncle, William Coventry, fifth Earl of Coventry, who appears to have had significant control over

Coventry's financial and educational activities (the whereabouts and influence of Coventry's parents are unknown). In contrast, Coventry's letters also describe the hospitality, friendship, and financial support he receives from Penshurst and the Perry family. In a letter dated December 26, 1749, Coventry writes,

Remembering to have heard you express some desire of King Edward's picture, I have taken care to preserve it from the ruins of Mill-End house and must beg the favor of your accepting it as a very trifling acknowledgment of the many obligations I owe you. (U1500 C66/2)

And, in a letter written on September 9, 1750, Coventry expresses his genuine fondness for Penshurst:

I do not write to thank you for the civilities I received at Penshurst merely because custom prescribes a letter after a visit, but I always bring away a pleasing remembrance from Penshurst and as it happens to departed spirits my soul is unwilling to quit its former abode, and so I write to you because I think about you. (U1500 C66/6)

In the closing of this particular letter, Coventry playfully offers well wishes to Perry and—inadvertently—provides an important link to the Perry-Coventry relationship: "... I hope you have by this recovered the loss of your blood and likewise the loss of your money at the EO Tables.¹ If Miss Egerton plays again, I wish her better success than befell her while I was

¹ E.O. tables (Even-Odd), similar to roulette tables, were popular among eighteenth-century women because of the simplicity and excitement of the game. In the resort town of Tunbridge Wells, six miles southeast of Penshurst, fashionable ladies "went to take the waters, [and] an E.O. casino was set up in 1739 [as] part of the cure" (Faites Vos Jeux). In a letter dated August 9, 1750, Coventry comments on the popularity of the Wells and asks Perry to "make my compliments to my cousin when you see him [at the Wells]" (U1500 C66/9).

her Steward" (U1500 C66/6). Coventry's Miss Egerton likely refers to the unwed Henrietta Egerton—a second cousin to Elizabeth Perry (née Sidney). Since no other connection can be identified, it is possible that Coventry's employment with Miss. Egerton is the original source of his relationship with Perry and Penshurst.

Regardless of his familial relationship with the Earl of Coventry, Coventry sought and found mediatory, financial, and academic support from his friend and patron, William Perry. In a letter dated October 1743, for example, Coventry expresses his difficulties with his uncle regarding attendance at Cambridge: "The design of my expedition to Twickenham was to use my cousin as a mediator between my Uncle and self, in order to heal the difficulties which has so long oppos'd my removal to Cambridge" (U1475 C240/2). With the "infliction of losing [his] education," Coventry requests from Perry an academic exhibition¹ and states, "If you therefore shall think the proposal practicable, I shall look upon you as my greatest benefactor, and always retain the most lively sense of the favour." It is not until March 20, 1744 that Coventry reveals his aptitude for writing and responds to Perry's request to write a poem on "the beauties of Penshurst":

Indeed I have dabbled a little in Rhymes, but no to [sic] deserve the Title Mr. Stevens has partially bestowed upon me. . . . You accuse me of concealing from you that I was a poetaster, but I have reasons besides the abovementioned which forbid me to discover my scribbling faculty; for first I have heard you declare a dislike to poetry, and in the next Place, I could not but reflect on Virgil's fate, who tells us than when he was preparing to sing of

¹ Coventry's "exhibition" refers to a form of academic scholarship. While the *Oxford English Dictionary* states an exhibition is a "fixed sum given for a term of years from the funds of a school, college, or university," Coventry's letter indicates that an individual patron may also be the source of an exhibition.

Palaces and Kings, Apollo gave him a box on the ear. If the King of Poets was thus rigorously treated, what must I expect if I were to attempt the same subject? However since 'tis your request, I will endeavour to describe the beauties of Penshurst, upon condition that you promise not to expose my verses to many People. . . . I must beg you not to be in hast for the Performance, for I have lately been engaged in work of this nature by Dr Rondrick, which I have not long finished, and therefore must get the Ideas of the first, out of my mind before I begin a second. With my sincere compliments to Mrs. Perry and the young family. (U1475 C240/3)

As the dates of these letters indicate, Perry was a patron to Coventry prior to their literary relationship and Coventry did not actively seek patronage support for his literary pursuits. On the contrary, Coventry wrote independent of his friend and patron with the intent to publish and circulate his works in the literary marketplace. In a letter written in November 1750, Coventry announces,

I am writing a Romance more romantic than ever was romanced, which I am resolved to finish by Christmas against the filling of the Town. My own constitution is like to suffer by this means, and my horses want exercise, but I am determined to go thro it, and I scribble from morning to night. I must beg the favor of you to let this be a secret, till it publishes itself from the press. (U1500 C66/7)

In 1751, Coventry's satirical and highly successful novel, *The History of Pompey the Little*, was printed for Mary Cooper; yet, surreptitiously published by Robert Dodsley.¹ The first two editions were published anonymously and many readers favourably attributed the writing to Henry Fielding (Day xii). While the third edition contains a dedication to Fielding, in which Coventry expresses his admiration, Coventry does not address a particular patron. It is uncertain if Coventry's novel is the "Romance" described in his letter to Perry; however, *Pompey the Little* was Coventry's longest work and was published at the same time as his intended romance.

Although Coventry wrote "Penshurst" in response to his patron's request, the poem's praise and focus on Penshurst's virtuous past—and not on the patron himself—suggests that Coventry wrote the poem not only for his patron, but also for a larger reading audience. Unlike the exemplary qualities of Philip, Robert, Dorothy (Sacharissa), and Algernon Sidney, William Perry, Esq. was known primarily for his ownership of large quantities of land, which were inherited from his mother's estate and from his wife's inheritance of Penshurst. Little is known about Perry except that he was the largest landowner (though non-resident) in the County of Radnorshire, Wales and was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Radnorshire in 1746, until he was replaced in 1755 due to "mental instability" (Radnorshire).² While property determined a family's status, wealth, and

¹ Robert Dodsley and Mary Cooper shared a unique trade relationship that included more than two hundred publications. Dodsley's arrangements with trade publishers, such as Mary Cooper, allowed Dodsley to retain his copyrights and—for various purposes of anonymity—choose not to attach his name to his works (Tierney 42). Particular to Coventry's *The History of Pompey the Little*, Dodsley paid £52.10.0 for the copyright in 1751 and another £30 for revisions in the third edition in 1752 (Tierney 513).

² Archived in the De L'Isle and Sidney Manuscripts, two custody patents validate Perry's mental instability: "Patent granting custody of William Perry (a lunatic) to Elizabeth Perry his wife" (U1475/F12), and "Patent granting custody of William Perry's estates to Elizabeth

influence, property did not guarantee a virtuous landowner or a praiseworthy literary subject. Coventry's letters indicate that Perry was a generous and kind patron and friend; however, as a topic for patronage and marketplace success, Perry's seemingly minor reputation gives way to Penshurst's celebrated and virtuous past.

For Coventry, Penshurst's virtuous past was not only a topic for poetic reflection, but also an ideal in which to contrast and critique society and the eighteenth-century country estate and landowner. Unlike the sensationalist poetry of the Restoration (and the occasional eighteenth-century verse, such as those by Thomas D'Urfey), literature of the eighteenth century reflected (or satirized) society's desire for moral behavior, sensibility, good taste, and politeness. The satirical works of Pope, Fielding, and Swift, for example, criticize the hypocrisy, false taste, and lack of moral behavior within all facets of society. In *Culture in Eighteenth-Century England: A Subject for Taste*, Jeremy Black claims, "In the eighteenth century, genteel manners and sensibility were extolled as the desirable norm, contributing powerfully not only to the developing idea of the gentleman but also to the extent to which it was not restricted to the landed elite" (124). In order to address these notions of "genteel manners and sensibility," Coventry uses Penshurst as a model of virtue in contrast to society's "tricks" and "follies":

I shun the voice of Party loud,
I shun loose Pleasure's idle crowd,
And monkish Academic cell,
Where science only feigns to dwell,
And court, where speckled vanity

Perry" (U1475/F13). Both patents were issued in 1756 and are sealed with King George II's Great Seal of the Realm.

Apes her tricks in tawdry dye,
And shifts each hour her tinsel hue,
Still furbelow'd in follies new.
Here nature no distortion wears,
Old Truth retains his silver hairs. (24-33)

While nature and truth are found at Penshurst, Coventry emphasizes that it is “old” truths that sustain Penshurst’s virtue—truths that pertain to Penshurst’s by-gone people, traditions, and way of life.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the country estate experienced significant changes and landownership took on different forms. The aristocratic landowner, for example, spent considerable time away from his country estate to take pleasure in fashionable destinations and distractions. Coventry observes that instead of his country estate, the landowner gives his time, attention, and loyalty to the city:

Ere yet they grew refin'd to hate
The hospitable rural seat,
The spacious hall with tenants stor'd;
Where mirth and plenty crown'd the board;
Ere yet their Lares they forsook
And lost the genuine British look,
The conscious brow of inward merit,
The rough, unbending, martial spirit,
To clink the chain of thralldom gay,
And court-idolatry to pay;

To live in city smoaks obscure,
Where morn ne'er wakes her breezes pure,
Where darkest midnight reigns at noon,
And fogs eternal blot the sun. (54-67).

Because little is known about his patron, it is uncertain if Coventry's critique directly applies to Perry, and—like Jonson's gentle warnings and instruction in "To Penshurst"—if "Penshurst" was intended as a didactic verse for Perry and other landed elite. Throughout the poem, Coventry's narrator encourages the "Genius of Penshurst old" to guide him and his hosts, William and Elizabeth Perry, through the "haunts" and "magic" of Penshurst's past. Although Perry is "The Lord who rules this ample scene" (222), as well as friend and patron to Coventry, the poem's narrator neither turns to Perry for guidance nor includes him in Penshurst's exemplary circle: Perry is merely a walking companion who—like the narrator—receives instruction on Penshurst's old truths.

In 1750, Dodsley published (and Cooper sold) Coventry's anonymous poem in the form of a pamphlet. "Penshurst" was again published in 1755 in Dodsley's *Collection* (Volume 4) and was attributed to "the late Mr. F. Coventry" (50). The 1750 publication is inscribed to Coventry's patrons; however, no detailed dedication, preface, or laudatory prose is offered. While Coventry's poem does not explicitly praise the Perry family in prefatory material or within the poem itself, the large-print inscription on the title page, which appears to be part of the title—*Penshurst. Inscribed to William Perry, Esq; and The Hon^{ble}. Mrs. Elizabeth Perry*—publicly affirms the Perrys' aristocratic power and status as noble patrons. In addition to appeasing his aristocratic patrons, the conspicuous inscription serves as a celebrity endorsement for Coventry's potential marketplace patrons.

This circular relationship between poet, patron, and public clearly illustrates and supports Arthur F. Marroti's claim that literary patronage helped contribute to "the transition from manuscript culture to print culture" (45-46) throughout the eighteenth century and beyond.

In 1761, seven years after Coventry's death, "Inscription For an Oak in Penshurst Park" was published in Volume 9 of *The London Chronicle* and later published in numerous anthologies including the June volume (Volume 6) of *The Poetical Calendar* (1763). It is unknown when "Inscription For an Oak" was written or if it was written for Coventry's patron, William Perry; however, in a letter dated February 1750, Coventry remarks on the poetry he intended to give Perry: "I should have sent you down one of my trumpery poems, if Mrs. Perry had not been before-hand with me" (U1500 C66/12), and Coventry and Perry likely maintained a friendly relationship until Coventry's untimely death in January 1754.¹ Due to their literary connection and on-going friendship, it is probable that "Inscription For an Oak" was written for Perry and—in keeping with Coventry's interest in the literary marketplace—also for commercial publication.

Like Coventry's "Penshurst," "Inscription For an Oak" focuses on Penshurst's laudable past and—specifically—on Penshurst's renowned poet and soldier, Sir Philip Sidney:

Stranger kneel here! to age due homage pay!
When great Eliza held Britannia's sway
My growth began—the same illustrious morn,
Joy to the hour! saw gallant Sidney born:
Sidney, the darling of Arcadia's swains!

¹ Coventry's last archived letter to Perry is dated July 1751, 2½ years before Coventry's death.

Sidney, the terror of the martial plains! (1-6)

Instead of the “Genius of Penshurst old,” who tells of bygone days in “Penshurst,” Coventry employs the Sidney Oak to reflect upon the past—when Queen Elizabeth reigned and men, such as Sidney, were noble and brave. The Sidney Oak, which was planted on the day of Philip Sidney’s birth, appears in five of the Penshurst poems as a symbol of “noble Sidney’s birth” (Waller, “At Penshurst” 26) and of Penshurst’s harmonious relationship with nature. Unlike the celebrated “immortal oaks” (2) in “Penshurst,” “Inscription For an Oak” presents a somber and finite view on the ancient oak and on Sidney’s legacy:

He perish’d early; I just stay behind
An hundred years; and lo! My clefted rind,
My wither’d boughs foretell destruction nigh;
We all are mortal; oaks and heroes die. (7-10)

Although Coventry could not have known its fate, the Sidney Oak still lives in Penshurst Park today and its acorns have been sent around the world as gifts from the Sidney family. And, while Philip Sidney no longer lives, Penshurst, the Sidney Oak, Sidney’s works, and the literary works of others keep Sidney’s legacy of virtue and genius alive: “Sidney’s fame Endureth in his own immortal works” (Southey, “For a Tablet” 20-21).

Robert Adams Day writes of Coventry, “Nephew of the fifth earl of Coventry and cousin of the sixth, he was no stranger to ‘Life as it is now acted in London’, and his education had given him the insouciant grace of expression and the aristocratic bias...” (x). Coventry’s youth, education, and close proximity to aristocracy enabled him to critically observe and maneuver within elite society. While Coventry benefited from his aristocratic relationships, his accomplishments as a Cambridge graduate and published writer

illustrate that he was not—as a writer—reliant on patronage support, but utilized patronage in order to gain success and independence through other means. Coventry's "Penshurst" and "Inscription For an Oak in Penshurst Park" are the last of the Penshurst poems written for the lord or other inhabitant of Penshurst. As is evident in the poems that follow Coventry's, the ancient estate and its exemplary people continue to be a topic of intrigue and praise for poets, publishers, and reading public of the late eighteenth century, regardless of patronage support from the Sidney family.

Chapter 8: Penshurst and the Romantic Sonneteers: Reflecting on Penshurst's Past and the Poet's Self—Charlotte Turner Smith, Edward Hamley, and Egerton Brydges

Throughout the eighteenth century, Penshurst witnessed a total of eight different owners and became the property of twelve-year-old John Shelley-Sidney in 1783. Until the young Sidney came of age, Penshurst was managed by trustees and allowed to fall into a dilapidated state. In the early nineteenth century, however, John Shelley-Sidney assumed the domestic pride his early ancestors possessed and engaged in a major restoration of the ancient estate (Brennan, *The Sidneys* 169). During the time of Penshurst's fall, Romanticism swept across Europe and—specific to British literature—the sonnet form was revived.¹ The sonnets of the Romantic era covered a variety of topics and were distinctively marked by the poet's personal emotion, a connection to nature, the use of natural language, and a sense of the poet's self-interest. The four Penshurst sonnets, written between 1788 and 1799 by Charlotte Turner Smith, Edward Hamley, and Egerton Brydges, encompass these romantic elements as they reflect upon and praise Penshurst's virtuous past and emphasize the poet's ability to defy time and preserve history. While the absentee lord and dilapidated condition are evident reasons for the poets' praise of the past instead of the present, in keeping with the economic and laudatory trends displayed by the Penshurst group of poems, praise for the past also reflects the poets' attention to the tastes of the reading public and to the changing attitudes toward the aristocratic landowner. Despite Penshurst's neglected state, the Romantic sonnets by Smith, Hamley, and Brydges illustrate

¹ The sonnet was first made popular by Italy's Dante and Petrarch in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, then by England's Wyatt and Surrey, Sidney, Shakespeare, Spenser, and Milton in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* (1591) began the tradition of sonnet sequences: a group of thematically unified sonnets that together create a single work.

Penshurst's continued literary appeal, the opportunities and independence offered by the literary marketplace, and the continued importance and changing roles of the literary patron.

Charlotte Turner Smith (1749-1806) is one of the lesser-known poets of the Romantic era; yet, her significant contributions heralded "the introspective, nature- and memory-based poetry of the later [Romantics]," including Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey (Labbe, *Works* xii). In his *Poetical Works*, Wordsworth remembers Smith as "a lady to whom English verse is under greater obligations than are likely to be either acknowledged or remembered" (qtd. in Zimmerman), and credits Smith for revitalizing the English sonnet. In addition to her innovative and carefully crafted compositions, Smith's late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century success was due equally in part to her enterprising use of print culture, and—as a result—to her strategically obtained support from both aristocratic subscribers and bookstall patrons. Jacqueline M. Labbe writes,

Fully occupied with the compositional process, equally concerned with the market; writing difficult poetry in an accessible genre; engaged on all levels with her readers to the extent that her notes are as much a part of the poems as her rhyme schemes, and her prefaces and dedications revelatory: Smith is both a fully professionalized writer who needed to make a living, and a poet who 'knows the Poetry is good.' (*Works* xix)

As a young child, Smith enjoyed the wealth and status that came with her family's position among the landed gentry; however, after the early death of her mother, legal disputes and financial debts, an unhappy marriage, poor health, and twelve children, Smith became keenly aware of the life she desired and the reality of her hardships. Without the financial

or social support of a traditional patronage relationship,¹ Smith wrote for and relied on the literary marketplace for her much-needed income and her desired reputation as a genteel poet. *Elegiac Sonnets*—published in ten editions between 1784 and 1811—is not only a collection of Smith’s poetry, but also a compilation of the possibilities of print. The use of engaging and innovative compositions, self-representation as both a poet and struggling mother, prefaces and dedications, engravings, aristocratic endorsements, subscription sales, and other literary and marketing conventions helped Smith interact with her diverse audience and—ultimately—encourage maximum sales while maintaining “a devotion to the artistry of her poetry” (Labbe, *Works* vii).

“Sonnet XLVI: Written at Penshurst, in Autumn 1788”—first published in the fifth edition of *Elegiac Sonnets* (1789)—provides a clear example of Smith’s interaction with her intended audience, as well as her self-representation as a poet of gentility and importance. Unlike the earlier poets in the Penshurst group, Smith did not have a direct association with Penshurst or its inhabitants and, therefore, no literary obligation to the Sidney family. Instead, Smith’s “Sonnet XLVI” was written for a broad readership and for an aristocratic audience in particular—an audience who shared in Smith’s mournful celebration of Penshurst’s past; who reflected Smith’s “status as a gentlewoman poet” (Zimmerman); and whose endorsement had the potential to attract further subscribers and buying public.

¹William Hayley, poet and biographer, is occasionally referred to as a patron of Smith. Throughout their ten-year friendship, Hayley provided Smith with editorial support and was an intermediary for Smith and her publishers (Pickering 217). Smith’s dedication to Hayley is published in her first through seventh edition of *Elegiac Sonnets*.

In an echo of Jonson's "To Penshurst," Smith's sonnet addresses the noble estate and calls attention to Penshurst's many natural hallmarks, such as the woods, walks, and wildlife:

Ye Towers sublime deserted now and drear,
Ye woods, deep sighing to the hollow blast,
The musing wanderer loves to linger near,
While History points to all your glories past:
And startling from their haunts the timid deer,
To trace the walks obscured by matted fern,
Which Waller's soothing lyre were wont to hear,
But where now clamours the discordant heron! (1-8)

Unlike Jonson's ancient pile, however, Smith's Penshurst is in a state of disrepair while held in trust for young John Shelley-Sidney (son of Sir Bysshe Shelley and uncle to Percy Bysshe Shelley). Penshurst's fern-covered walks are no longer available "for health, as well as sport" (Jonson 9); the deer that once roamed fearless and in plenty have become timid and hidden; and the herons—Robert Sidney's pride (Rathmell 255)¹—have become noisy and awkward in their surroundings. While the condition of Penshurst is no longer laudable, Penshurst remains a symbol of virtue and its "glories past" are accentuated by the palpable absence of virtue—the absence of cultivated nature, plentitude and prosperity, and hospitality and housewifery.

¹ In approximately 1605, Robert Sidney, Earl of Leicester built heronies at Penshurst and placed eels in the nests so "that at first the herons may have theyr meate easily" (qtd. in Rathmell 255). Jonson refers to the eels in "To Penshurst": "Bright eeles, that emulate them, and leape on land / Before the fisher, or into his hand" (37-38).

With Smith's adherence to the traditional sonnet format, the tone and attitude in "Sonnet XLVI" turns in the final couplet (volta)¹ from melancholy to consolation:

The spoiling hand of Time may overturn
These lofty battlements, and quite deface
The fading canvas whence we love to learn
Sydney's keen look, and Sacharissa's grace;
But fame and beauty still defy decay,
Saved by the historic page—the poet's tender lay! (9-14)

Smith argues that regardless of Time's spoiling hand, the fame and beauty of Penshurst's exemplary people, such as Algernon and Dorothy Sidney, defy decay and remain preserved by "the poet's tender lay." Not only does the volta mark a change in the poem's tone, but also in its praise. Following her praise for Penshurst and the Sidney family, Smith commends the poets and their powerful ability to bestow eternal fame upon their laudable subjects and stresses that not even a painter's canvas can preserve fame and beauty like "the historic page." Smith further emphasizes the importance and power of the poet by altering the poem's final line from iambic pentameter to the longer, Spenserian hexameter (alexandrine).² While Smith's sonnet begins as a mournful celebration of Penshurst's past, it ends with a focus on the power of the poet—Penshurst poets in particular: Jonson, Waller, and Smith herself. Smith aligns herself with the renowned seventeenth-century

¹ In the English or Shakespearean sonnet, the volta—turn or shift in emotion or thought—typically begins with "but" or "yet" and occurs at line nine or line thirteen.

² The Spenserian hexameter, also known as an alexandrine, is a twelve-syllable verse line usually separated by a medial caesura (line break) and located at the end of a stanza. The Spenserian hexameter is named for the final line of the Spenserian stanza found in Spenser's "The Faerie Queene." The Spenserian stanza contains eight lines in iambic pentameter followed by a ninth line in iambic hexameter. Byron, Keats, and Shelley revived the Spenserian stanza in the early nineteenth century (Baldick 241).

writers, reminding readers that she too has the power, skill, and gentility to guard off time and help preserve the revered Sidney family legacy.

Although “Sonnet XLVI” depicts poets as influential and optimistic, *Elegiac Sonnets* is veiled by Smith’s self-conscious biography and melancholy. In the preface of her sixth edition, Smith states, “I wrote mournfully because I was unhappy” (x)—a sentiment that resonates throughout most of her works. Angela Keane claims, “the purpose of Smith’s work is not just to represent misery but to enact and recoup the emotional material losses of her life” (3). While “Sonnet XLVI” is ostensibly an elegiac reflection on Penshurst’s former glories, it may also be a personal allusion to Smith’s genteel past in comparison to her troublesome present. In this regard, “the poet’s tender lay” is not only used for the survival of history, but in Smith’s case, for the survival of her family and self. Due to her adverse circumstances, Smith’s autobiographical unhappiness appears genuine; however, the “proximity between the autobiographical unhappiness and its textual performance” is questionable (Keane 3).

Smith’s mournful poetry was not only a means to “enact and recoup the emotional material losses of her life,” but it was also a carefully crafted, literary product that harnessed and capitalized on the late eighteenth-century’s interest in morality, melancholy, and sensibility. Smith composed her individual poems, as well as other components of *Elegiac Sonnets*, to play on the sensibilities of her audience—an audience that included both aristocratic and bookstall readers. According to Jeremy Black, “manners of sensibility and the sensibility of manners embraced more than one tranche of [eighteenth-century] society” (124).

Although the melancholic tone of *Elegiac Sonnets* is directed at all her readers, Smith's publication—particularly the fifth edition—contains elements that separately address commercial culture and the aesthetic tastes of the elite. *Elegiac Sonnets* opens with an unadorned portrait of a reflective and familiar "Mrs. Charlotte Smith," which Jacqueline M. Labbe suggests "creates a sense of intimacy that relies on understanding the writer as a 'real' woman" (*Charlotte* 1). Following Smith's portrait is an image of a fashionable woman, who apathetically observes the splendor of the landscape. This plate, in comparison to the first, is representative of the readers Smith hopes to attract and the intended gentility of her work. Between the two images is a sparse and commercially pragmatic page that offers a shortened title of the book—*Elegiac Sonnets, &c.*—and its price per copy—"10S. 6d." (ten shillings and 6 pence). A more complete title page is on the fourth page and includes the full and refined title of Smith's collection—*Elegiac Sonnets, By Charlotte Smith. The Fifth Edition, With Additional Sonnets and Other Poems*—plus the standard publication and bookseller's information—"London: Printed for T. Cadell, In the Strand. M.DCC.LXXXIX." A brief dedication to her friend and supporter, William Hayley, is included in the first seven editions and is signed in the customary, subservient fashion: "I am, Sir, Your most obedient and obliged servant, Charlotte Smith." According to biographer Loraine Fletcher, although they had not yet met, Hayley (poet and patron of poets) agreed to be the dedicatee of Smith's poems in order to help Smith publish her collection (65). Following the dedication is a succession of prefaces that defend her use of the sonnet format, express her sonnets' unpublished and published popularity, and thank her "many noble, literary, and respectable" supporters and friends. Lastly, covering thirteen pages is a subscribers' list of 815 names and their number of purchased copies. This extensive list illustrates Smith's

broad yet cultivated readership, which is comprised of royalty, titled nobility, gentry, and others who could afford the ten-shilling expense. While her dedication, prefaces, and subscribers' list allowed Smith to acknowledge and thank her aristocratic and commercial patrons, they were also a tool in which to promote her works through the collective endorsement of her elite and fashionable readers. Moreover, the subscribers' list was strategically included in order to attract those potential subscribers who sought societal acceptance and advancement through their printed inclusion among royalty and other distinguished subscribers (Griffin 267).

Because of her personal experiences and literary ambitions, Smith often straddled the opposing worlds of past and present, gentility and poverty, the elite and laboring poor, male dominance and female subservience, commercial output and aesthetic quality, and patronage and print cultures. *Elegiac Sonnets* is a fusion of these opposing worlds, which awarded Smith with the status of "literary and aesthetic elite" (Zimmerman). Although the eighteenth-century expansion of the literary marketplace offered writers opportunities and advantages that did not exist in a predominantly patronage economy, the "glories past" continued to be a prevalent subject of praise for Smith and the subsequent Penshurst poets.

Of all the Penshurst poets, Edward Hamley (1764-1834)—not to be mistaken with the renowned army officer and military writer, Sir Edward Bruce Hamley—has received the least scholarly or critical attention. In a one-paragraph biography, Hamley is described as an Oxford graduate, a temporary resident at the Inner Temple in London, a published poet, and a rector from 1806 until his death. Hamley did not marry nor have any known children (Boase). Between 1789 and 1809, Hamley published two sonnet collections, anonymous translations, and other minor works. While little is known about Hamley's personal and

professional life, his publications impart a brief account of his relationship with the literary marketplace, as well as his perception and praise for Penshurst (past and present).

Like Smith's sonnet, Hamley's two Penshurst poems—"Sonnet XII: Written at Penshurst" (1789) and "Sonnet XLIV: Written at Penshurst" (1789)¹—mournfully celebrate Penshurst's virtuous past; however, in contrast to Smith's sonnet, they offer little consolation for Penshurst's present condition. In "Sonnet XII," the speaker-poet addresses the estate and recalls the gallant and patriotic Sidneys of bygone days:

Where erst the gallant Sidney sought repose,
And lest for song the fields of bloody fate,
The bard admitting at his social gate:
And he, who fir'd with ancient learning rose,
To save his country from ideal woes,
Free as his teachers, ev'n in ruin great. (3-8)

While the first eight lines praise Penshurst's noble past and lost heroes, the ninth line (volta) begins a denunciation of Penshurst's present, uninhabited state:

How art thou chang'd! beside the murm'ring fall
Of some lone rill, that seems in fairy ground,
No gentle bard now hears the Muse's call;
With no proud hospitality refund
The rafter'd roofs of yon deserted hall,
With helms and formidable lances crown'd. (9-14)

¹ In Hamley's 1795 collection, *Poems of Various Kinds*, the poems are respectively numbered "Sonnet XVI" and "Sonnet XXIV."

According to Hamley's final lines, not even the once esteemed "helms and formidable lances" have the ability to instill virtue in the late eighteenth-century estate, since they—among other relics—reside neglected and irrelevant in the deserted halls of Penshurst.

"Sonnet XLIV" extends its laudatory focus to Waller and Sacharissa; yet, as in "Sonnet XII," Penshurst is callously reminded "No bard explores you now" (8). At the ninth-line volta, a slight consolation is offered as the speaker-poet proposes to take the place of bygone poets and reflect on Penshurst's "rural sweet" in "woods and pathless vales":

Yet suffer me to breathe your vernal gales,
No lofty bard, but of that gentle train,
Who love to mark in woods and pathless vales
Each rural sweet; and wand'ring o'er the plain,
Deeds of old prowess and romantic tales
To muse, and hear the nightingale complain. (9-14)

Regardless of Penshurst's nature and enduring tales of bravery and romance, the nightingale's complaint reflects the speaker-poet's continued displeasure of the then-present Penshurst. Unlike the other ten Penshurst poems (including D'Urfey's "The Peroquette"), Hamley's sonnets convey a tone of condemnation for the present estate and appear reluctant to nurture Penshurst's virtuous legacy. Hamley's association with Penshurst and the Sidney family is unknown; however, from the contemptuous tone of his poems, one can conclude that Hamley did not maintain a personal or professional relationship with the young John Shelley-Sidney or with other members of the Sidney family. Ironically, Hamley's poetic attention to the estate (in not one, but two poems)

contributes to the list of Penshurst poems, and—consequently—helps foster the Penshurst and Sidney family legacies.

Because of the limited information regarding Hamley's personal and professional circumstances, Hamley's patronage and marketplace relations are uncertain. The absence of dedications and subscribers' lists in his two sonnet collections is a strong indication, however, that Hamley did not engage in traditional patronage relationships and, therefore, was reliant on the literary marketplace for the circulation of his works. Hamley's first collection, *Sonnets* (1789), was published anonymously by the lesser-known publisher-bookseller G.G.J. and J. Robinson (on Paternoster Row), and his second collection, *Poems of Various Kinds* (1795), was printed and sold by the popular T. Cadell and W. Davies (on the Strand), as well as J. Cooke (Oxford). In the preface of his second collection, Hamley writes in a third-person narrative and describes his works as "trifles" and "with some few exceptions, were the casual unambitious amusements of his early youth." Hamley also claims "he was always too conscious of his inability as a poet, to suffer employments of this kind to occupy more than a small proportion of his time." Hamley died at the age of seventy and published no works in the last twenty-five years of his life. In Hamley's brief biography, G.C. Boise notes that at the time of his death, Hamley had no debt and left the sum of £1000 to a niece, which suggests Hamley did not rely on his literary works to live out a financially comfortable life. While very little is written about Hamley's life or his works, *British Critic* (1979)—a literary and theological quarterly review—claims Hamley's work denotes his "love of liberty" and his "strong poetic spirit" (431). *British Critic* also playfully states, "We confess ourselves tired to death with sonnets, yet we have little to object to the forty that we find here except that they are sonnets" (432).

Egerton Brydges (1762-1837) is the last of the Penshurst sonneteers and, like Smith, was an innovative and engaged participant of print culture, whose prolific works were commonly autobiographical and a means for self-promotion. “Sonnet, Written at Penshurst” first appeared in Brydges’s semi-autobiographical novel, *Arthur Fitz-Albini* (1798)—a novel Jane Austen¹ claims carries “more internal evidence of its author” than any other book (qtd. in Brownstein 129), and *Gentleman’s Magazine* describes as “a mere biographical fantasy” (qtd. in Brownstein 130). Through the character of Arthur Fitz-Albini, Brydges describes in both prose and verse Penshurst’s illustrious past and its fallen glories:

Fitz-Albini could scarcely walk over this stately building, now so chilly and deserted, without being overwhelmed with melancholy . . . The recurrence to his mind of so many illustrious names, Sir Philip Sidney, Spenser, Ben Jonson, Algernon Sidney, and Waller, almost confounded him with the fullness of his ideas (*Arthur* 73-74).

Like Smith’s sonnet, Brydges’s verse holds “Time” accountable for Penshurst’s fall:

Behold thy triumphs, Time! What silence reigns

Along these lofty and majestic walls!

Ah! Where are regal Sidney’s pompous trains?²

Where Philip’s tuneful lyre, whose dying falls

Could melt the yielding nymphs and lovesick swains? (1-5)

¹ Brydges was a temporary tenant at Deane Parsonage—a benefice held by Jane Austen’s father, Reverend George Austen. Brydges was also a frequent visitor of his sister, Anne Lefroy, who lived in Austen’s neighbouring village of Ashe (Brownstein 131). Despite their age difference, Lefroy was Austen’s close friend and mentor. Austen criticizes *Arthur Fitz-Albini* because of Brydges’s inclusion of identifiable neighbours, who were “not tenderly treated” (qtd. in Brownstein 131).

² In an appending note to his sonnet, Brydges indicates “Sidney” refers to “Sir Henry Sidney, Lord President of the Marches, who kept his court at Ludlow Castle” (75).

While the narrative and verse convey Brydges's praise, admiration, and familiarity with Penshurst's past, it also suggests Brydges's association with Penshurst and the Sidney family. Although remote, Brydges boasted familial ties with the Sidney family and wrote of Penshurst through personal experience and pride. Brydges's mother, Jemima Brydges (née Egerton), was born at Penshurst and was the daughter of Penshurst's rector, Reverend William Egerton (Brydges, *Autobiography* 41, 151). In addition, Lady Elizabeth Sidney (née Egerton), sister to Brydges's great grandfather, married Robert Sidney, fourth Earl of Leicester in 1672. According to *Arthur Fitz-Albini*, Brydges occasioned Penshurst as a child; however, his distant relationship with the absent lord of Penshurst (John Shelley-Sidney) required that Brydges obtain special admittance in order to visit the grounds and estate: "As he had not surveyed [Penshurst] for many years, he determined to hasten into the valley, and view it again. He enquired for the old housekeeper, who had shewn it to him, when a boy; but she was not still in her office" (72). Because of his financial and social positions—though often in debt and shamed by his contemporaries—Brydges did not require patronage support from the Sidney family or other aristocrats; instead, Brydges's literary works were often a means for self-promotion and a platform in which to establish himself as a man of titled and ancestral importance.

According to Rachel M. Brownstein, Brydges—like his autobiographical character—"holds on stubbornly to the old order and his extensive ancestral demesne" (131), and is against "the dangerous new philosophy of egalitarianism coming from France and, more locally from the radical author of *Political Justice*, William Godwin" (130). While "Sonnet, Written at Penshurst" describes the loss of Penshurst's virtuous inhabitants and former splendor, it is also representative of England's eroding peerage:

And are they fled! Their day's for ever past!

Heroes and poets moulder in the earth!

No sound is heard but of the wailing blast

Through the lone rooms, where echoed crowded Mirth! (9-12)

Brydges's rhetoric assertions, "And are they fled! Their day's for ever past!", express his concern for the deterioration of hereditary titles and—in Brydges's opinion—social morality. Although he was related to several noble families through his mother's lineage, Brydges and his older brother spent much of their adult years in an attempt to claim the barony of Chandos. In 1789, the barony had become extinct after the death of the last male descendant; however, Brydges and his brother claimed they were distant descendants and successors of Sir James Brydges. The House of Lords determined that not only were the brothers unrelated to this noble family, but were "descended from an obscure family of yeomen and grocers" (Manley). Regardless, Brydges styled himself "Per legem terrae, Baron Chandos" (By the law of the land, Baron Chandos) and purchased the derelict Sudeley Castle—previous home to the first Duke of Chandos. For his incredible claims and pretentious actions, Brydges and his family were publicly humiliated. After the death of his brother and intense pressure on the House of Lords, however, Brydges was eventually created an English baronet in 1814 (Manley).

Brydges was a passionate and prolific writer, though most of his works received only "a lukewarm reception" (Manley) and were written with his own interests in mind.¹

Brydges's publications consist of a variety of genres and subjects, which include poetry

¹ In his autobiography, Brydges admits, "for the purpose of vendibility [of literature], the public taste and appetite must be consulted" (372). Brydges also claims, however, "it is better to live on bread and water than to suppress the free vigour of the mind" (373).

collections; two novels; reproductions of “long-forgotten works of literature” (Manley); a nine volume, augmented edition of Arthur Collins’s *Peerage of England*; books concerning topography, genealogy, antiquities, and biographies; and a two-volume autobiography entitled *Autobiography, Times, Opinions, and Contemporaries of Sir Egerton Brydges* (1834). Other than the details offered on the title page of his works, little is known about Brydges’s relationships with his publishers, and the absence of dedications and subscribers’ lists suggests Brydges did not maintain patronage relationships. In several of his early sonnet collections, Brydges provides a sentimental, verse dedication to his mother, “Mrs. Brydges of St. Lawrence House, near Canterbury,” and thanks her for her support and guiding judgment (*Sonnets* i). While Jonson and Smith were very active in the production of their publications, Brydges is the only Penshurst poet to publish and print his own works. In 1813, with the assistance of an experienced pressman and compositor, Brydges established the Lee Priory Press—a small, private printing press located in a spare room of his son’s home in Lee Priory. As the owner of his own press, Brydges had the ability to publish what and how he desired (while in accordance with copyright laws).¹ According to biographer K.A. Manley, “print-runs were purposely small, and copies were sold at high prices.” Manley also notes, “Brydges rendered an important service to English literature by reprinting over thirty rare works; [however,] considerable expense was incurred, and the press was given up in 1823.” Because of his excessive real estate and literary expenses, Brydges left the country in 1818 to avoid financial embarrassment and his debtors. Brydges died in

¹ As a Member of Parliament (1812-18), one of Brydges’s main objectives was to amend the Copyright Act of 1814 with intent to extend authors’ rights and remove the library deposit provision: “the obligation on publishers to supply free copies of books to nine institutions except in respect of the British Museum” (Murphy).

Switzerland at the age of seventy-four and, contrary to his lifelong ambition to emulate praiseworthy and virtuous nobility, left his family in financial shame and debt (Manley).

Chapter 9: Robert Southey “For a Tablet at Penshurst” (1799): Concluding the Penshurst Group of Poems

Nearly two hundred years after Jonson’s “To Penshurst,” the Penshurst group of poems comes to a close with Robert Southey’s “For a Tablet at Penshurst”—a poem that fittingly concludes the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century evolution of literary praise (as it pertains to the Penshurst group of poems) and the gradual shift from a patronage economy to the literary marketplace. To borrow Raymond Williams’s metaphor of the escalator,¹ one can visualize the Penshurst poems situated alongside the moving track called “Time,” with Jonson’s poem and aristocratic patronage located at the start and Southey’s poem and the literary marketplace found at the escalator’s terminus. As time moves forward the poetic allure of Penshurst does not change; however, literary praise shifts as a result to the changes associated with the decline in aristocratic patronage and the growth in the literary marketplace: the earlier Penshurst poems praise the poet’s respective patron and lord of Penshurst as the result of the poet’s aristocratic dependency, laudatory obligation, and coterie audience; and, the later Penshurst poems praise Penshurst’s laudable past as a result of the poet’s literary authority, commercial opportunities, and broad and anonymous readership. Although the escalator moves in a linear path, aristocratic patronage does not disappear, but changes in form and function as it moves toward a predominantly commercial economy. Moreover, the literary marketplace does not suddenly appear in 1799 with Southey’s poem, but begins—with a smaller presence—in 1616 with Jonson’s “To Penshurst.” While Southey’s poem concludes the Penshurst group of poems and the evolution of praise, it also retraces and pays tribute to

¹ In *The Country and the City*, Raymond Williams uses the metaphor of an escalator to help describe the “problem of perspective” (11-12).

Penshurst's long literary journey, exemplifying the interconnectedness of Penshurst, praise, patronage, and the literary marketplace.

Of all the Penshurst poems, "For a Tablet at Penshurst" is the only poem that directly addresses the reader, as well as acknowledges Penshurst's laudable past as a topic of literary appeal. In comparison to Jonson's renowned patronage poem (written for Jonson's patron, Robert Sidney, Earl of Leicester), Southey's address and nostalgic reflection denote the poet's absence of intimacy with his audience and the ancient estate, yet suggests Southey's desire to connect with his anonymous readers and both guide and appease their literary tastes.

Are days of old familiar to thy mind
O Reader? hast thou let the midnight hour
Pass unperceived, whilst thou in Fancy lived
With high-born beauties and enamour'd chiefs,
Shared all their hopes, and with a breathless joy
Whose eager expectation almost pain'd,
Followed their dangerous fortunes? . . . (1-7)

Although Southey writes with elevated language and archaism,¹ the blank verse form (unrhymed lines of iambic pentameter) and direct address make the first half of the poem read like an informal inquiry—an inquiry into the reader's fancy for stories about England's virtuous and exemplary past. As with many of his works, Southey functions as a

¹ Archaism refers to the use of words or constructions that are generally no longer in use at the time of writing (Baldick). During the Romantic era, poets began to write in the language used by the common person; therefore, Southey may have used elevated diction as a means to appease his readers' penchant for the past, impart a tone of grandeur to the Sidney story, and retrace the poetic language used by Sir Philip Sidney.

mediator between the past and the present—more specifically, a mediator between past and present literature. Unlike Jonson’s firsthand knowledge regarding Penshurst and the Sidney family, William Hazlitt, Southey’s critic and contemporary, describes Southey as “rather the recipient and transmitter of knowledge, than the originator of it” (qtd. in Fairer 5). Southey’s “high-born beauties” and “enamour’d chiefs,” for example, are likely allusions to Waller’s Sacharissa and the poetically celebrated Sir Philip and Algernon Sidney.

Following Southey’s poetic inquiry, “For a Tablet at Penshurst” begins a transmission of the more than two hundred years of poetry (including works by Sir Philip Sidney) that helps maintain Penshurst’s virtuous past:

... if such lore

Hath ever thrill’d thy bosom, thou wilt tread,

As with a pilgrim’s reverential thoughts,

The groves of Penshurst. . . (7-10)

In the second half of the poem, the speaker narrates the story of Sir Philip Sidney and the symbolic oak, and praises the foregone poet and soldier for his “delightful genius” and “courteous courage.” While the oak and Sidney are no longer alive, the speaker asserts that Sidney’s fame lives forever in poetry: “. . . That stately oak / Itself hath moulder’d now, but Sidney’s fame / Lives and shall live, immortalized in song” (19-21). In the later edition of “For a Tablet at Penshurst” (1823), Southey changes the poem’s final lines to read “. . . but Sidney’s fame / Endureth in his own immortal works.” Although Southey claims Sidney’s fame lives in Sidney’s own works, he also implies—as indicated in the earlier edition—that subsequent poets and poetry help maintain the Sidney family and Penshurst lore. In his essay “Southey’s Literary History,” David Fairer argues,

Southey remain[s] acutely conscious of the many tracings and retracings of literary history, and he continue[s] to associate the formation of his own character with the character of the nation's poetry. For Southey, a text will survive the rigours of time if it is ingrained in that firmly rooted organism.

(17)

While Southey's poem is a tribute to the virtuous Sir Philip Sidney, it is also a tribute to the organic character of poetry (the "tracings and retracings of literary history") and to the interdependent relationship between poet, reader, and England's laudable past.

Two hundred years separate the lives and literary works of Jonson and Southey; yet, both writers struggled throughout their careers to achieve a contented degree of literary independence: Jonson desired financial and social security, independent of aristocratic patronage; and Southey desired independence in the form of freedom of expression without censorship. Although "To Penshurst" and "For a Tablet at Penshurst" are situated at opposite ends of the metaphorical escalator, praise, patronage, and the lives of Jonson and Southey appear—in many respects—to exist on a track that runs full circle.

Robert Southey (1774-1843) began writing poetry by the age of ten and published his first volume of verse in 1795. During his time at London's Westminster School—where Jonson attended two hundred years earlier—Southey established and contributed to the school magazine, *The Flagellant*, and read and wrote in copious amounts. According to Mark Storey, author of *Robert Southey: A Life*, "Southey was already beginning to enjoy the sheer range and variety that writing could bring him, and to recognize his own peculiar virtues as a writer" (14). Although he made attempts to study religion, medicine, and law, Southey finally succumbed to his passion for literature and pursued writing as a profession.

In 1794, during his studies at Balliol College at Oxford, Southey met Samuel Coleridge, who became a quick friend and literary companion. Amid their literary, political, and emigration schemes, which were mostly idealistic and unsuccessful, Southey and Coleridge married sisters Edith and Sara Fricker, respectively (Storey 7). The two young families lived at Greta Hall in Keswick, where they soon met William Wordsworth from nearby Grasmere. Because these men collectively lived and wrote in the Lake District of England, Southey, Coleridge, and Wordsworth later became known as the “Lake Poets.” Although Southey maintained substantial sales and favourable reviews for his published works, life as a professional writer and father of six was economically difficult. To add to his financial burdens, Southey became responsible for Sara and her three children after Coleridge abandoned them to “restless wanderings” in England and abroad (Carnall).

For much of his early life, Southey was plagued with financial concerns and career uncertainty; however, Southey’s life was also filled with family and friends who inadvertently helped him become one of the most popular writers of the Romantic era and—as a result—helped Southey eventually maintain a comfortable living for himself and his family. Southey was born to a struggling linen draper and at the age of two was placed in the care of his wealthy, maternal aunt in Bath. Although his early upbringing was void of affection and regular childhood play, his aunt exposed him to the local theatre and to a variety of literature (Storey 2). At the age of fourteen, his maternal uncle, Rev. Herbert Hill, financed Southey’s education at the prestigious Westminster School in the hopes that Southey would advance to Christ Church and a career in the church (Storey 7). At Westminster, Southey met Charles Watkin Williams Wynn—the son of a Welsh baronet—who became one of Southey’s most important friends: “Southey later said that he owed

everything to Wynn” (Storey 8). In 1797, when Wynn began to make a sufficient income as a Member of Parliament and later a Cabinet Minister, Wynn provided Southey with a modest annuity on the condition that Southey study law. In 1808, Wynn arranged a government pension for Southey in place of the annuity (Carnall). Southey dedicates his epic poem *Madoc* (1805) to Wynn “As a token of sixteen years of uninterrupted friendship.” Grosvenor Charles Bedford was another close and influential friend from Southey’s days at Westminster, who had useful connections, access to impressive libraries, and an “innate friendliness and affection” (Storey 9). While the literary marketplace predominantly supplanted aristocratic patronage in the eighteenth century, financial, social, and political support from friends, family, and contemporaries supplemented the efforts of the professional writer, such as Southey. Dustin Griffin writes,

Patronage in the later eighteenth century depended relatively less than previously on wealthy peers like Dorset and Halifax, and relatively more on other forms of support such as subscription and employment in church or civil service, but in many respects the patronage system of 1800 was similar to that of 1700: it never involved an exclusive and dyadic arrangement between a patron and a loyal client; it always involved job-related patronage and relatively small grants; it almost always provided not primary but supplementary income. (10)

Regardless of the invaluable support from friends/patrons like Wynn, Southey’s primary income came from his own pen and the literary marketplace. In a letter to Mary Barker in July 1802, Southey writes, “Necessity sends some men to the gallows—some to prison. Me it always sends to the press” (qtd. in Storey 155).

While Southey's relationships with patrons and the press clearly illustrate that patronage and the literary marketplace simultaneously existed during the late eighteenth century, these relationships also illustrate that in some instances patronage and the press were one and the same. In 1794, Southey and Coleridge met the young, Bristol author and publisher, Joseph Cottle. While London publishers dismissed the works of Southey and Coleridge, Cottle saw great potential in these young and talented writers. For four years Cottle published Southey's works and—until Southey's death—generously supported Southey both personally and professionally. Among many acts of friendship and patronage, Cottle helped finance Southey's wedding ring and marriage fees, and housed Edith Southey while Southey spent six months with his uncle in Lisbon (Dowden 97). In an April 1808 letter, Southey refers to Cottle as “my dear old friend and benefactor” (qtd. in Dowden 97). Although Cottle's career as a publisher spanned only eight years, his patronage and professionalism were instrumental in launching the literary careers of Southey, Coleridge, and Wordsworth (Spencer 66).

Southey's prolific output (poems, plays, essays, reviews, travel books, translations, and biographies) and national popularity made him an apt candidate for the post of England's poet laureate, which Southey assumed in 1813.¹ While this honorary position—appointed by King George III on the advice of the Prime Minister—was a prestigious tribute to Southey and his work, Southey quickly determined “in accepting the office, I am conferring a favour rather than receiving one” (qtd. in Storey 226). Beginning with his

¹ Walter Scott was originally solicited for the position as poet laureate; however, Scott declined and recommended Southey in his place (Carnall). Two hundred years prior, in 1616, Ben Jonson was appointed poet laureate by James I.

contributions to *The Flagellant*,¹ Southey endeavored to exercise his freedom of expression and his literary independence. In his new role as court poet, however, Southey's political views and desire for independence were met with opposition. Southey's first laureate poem, "Carmen Triumphale," was duly censored and his views on the tyrannous Bonaparte softened or removed. Southey's political friend, John Rickman, advised Southey that in order to keep his position in office, "I think you should identify yourself very much with the government. Be as ample in praise as you please, but do not treat an enemy as though never to become a friend" (qtd. in Storey 228). Like Jonson, who also served the king and nation, Southey struggled to find a balance between literary independence, patronage obligations, and poetic integrity. Southey claims in a letter to Bedford, "everything that is fashionable in England tends to dwarf the intellect, to deaden the feelings & debilitate the race" (qtd. in Storey 229). For the remainder of his laureateship (and life), Southey wrote the necessary laudatory odes for court celebrations and engaged more in biographies and historical writing, such as his three-volume book, *History of Brazil* (1810-19). Upon the death of Southey in 1834, Wordsworth succeeded to the position of poet laureate; however, he did so with the condition that "nothing would be required of him" (Gill).

The prevalence of print culture and the literary marketplace provided writers with unlimited opportunities and an independence that was not attainable in traditional, patronage relationships. No longer were writers required to compose laudatory works for their patron, but instead praise subjects they felt worthy and their readers deemed

¹ *The Flagellant* was established as an opinion magazine, which satirically commented on social issues of the day. In 1792, Southey was expelled from Westminster because of his essay that attacks corporal punishment in the education system. Westminster's headmaster ensured that Southey not return to Westminster nor receive a place at Oxford (Storey 10-12).

fashionable. For nearly two hundred years, the Penshurst poets—from Jonson to Southey—praised the Sidney statesmen, warriors, poets, and beauties; yet, only Jonson, Waller, D’Urfey, and Coventry were engaged in a patronage relationship with the lord and were intimately familiar with the virtues of Penshurst. In the absence of a relationship (patronage or otherwise), the later Penshurst poets—Smith, Hamley, Brydges, and Southey—reflected on Penshurst’s exemplary past through the retracing of literature that had become part of the Penshurst legacy. And while this study examines the twelve Penshurst poems from 1616 to 1799, later poems, such as Edward Hovell-Thurlow’s “Sonnet, On Beholding the Portraiture of Sir Philip Sidney, In the Gallery at Penshurst” (1821), Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s “The Picture Gallery at Penshurst” (1833), and Fredrick William Faber’s “XLIV. The Groves of Penshurst” (1857), further affirm Penshurst’s poetic allure, and the poet and reader’s fascination and praise for Penshurst’s illustrious past.

Although this thesis focuses on the changing literary economy as the primary source for the shift in literary praise, other contributing factors must also be considered in order to provide a comprehensive analysis on the evolution of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century laudatory praise in relation to the Penshurst group of poems. In reference to the genre of country-house poetry, which comes to an end at the same time the shift in literary praise occurs in the Penshurst poems, G.R. Hibbard claims, “After 1660 [country-house poetry] was no longer written, because the way of life that it reflects, and out of which it grows, was on the decline” (159). This decline in “the way of life” may also contribute to the shift in literary praise that follows Jonson’s and Waller’s patronage poems: no longer were the present-day lords and estates worthy of poetic praise or were they a fashionable topic

for commercial readers. Jonson's "To Penshurst" praises Penshurst's early seventeenth-century moral economy, communal living, relationship with nature, hospitality, housewifery, family virtues, and the lord's inhabitation of and concern for his estate. In contrast, Coventry's "Penshurst" (1750)—regardless of patronage support from William Perry—suggests the discontentment of the rural aristocrat and his lack of attention and management of his country estate:

Ere yet they grew refin'd to hate
The hospitable rural seat,
The spacious hall with tenants stor'd;
Where mirth and pleny crown'd the board;
Ere yet their Lares they forsook;
And lost the genuine British look. (59-65)

As discussed in Chapter 7, Perry's management of Penshurst is unknown; therefore, it is possible Coventry's poem is a reflection of Perry's neglect and/or of the growing trend among the rural aristocracy.¹

A significant change that altered the communal spirit and functionality of the country estate was the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century transformation in architectural design. Architectural elements, such as the centralized great halls, gave shape to the social function and utility of the house; however, newly built or renovated homes were no longer designed for the communal gathering of family, servants, and tenants, but—instead—were built for their stately esthetics and as a symbol of the owner's self-importance (Hibbard 160).

¹ With the exception of young John Shelley-Sidney's early inheritance of Penshurst and the frequent change in lords (eight in total) throughout the eighteenth century, documentation regarding the changes in the management and community at Penshurst is minimal.

Regardless of their elaborate country estates, many wealthy aristocrats spent much of their time in London and at court—reserving their country homes for show and for the occasional place of leisure. In the early eighteenth century, a growing number of country houses, such as the Duke of Chandos's Cannons, became tourist attractions for paying visitors to explore and admire (or criticize) (Hibbard 162). A consequence of the lord and family's frequent absence from the estate was the decay in relationships between the family and the tenants and servants: intermediaries were required to engage in the day-to-day activities of the house. Jonson's "Penshurst," as well as the letters from Robert Sidney to his wife, conversely illustrate the close and reciprocal relationship between the lord and the community at Penshurst.

More so than the esthetics or function of the country house, land (size and profitability) awarded the rural aristocrat with wealth, power, and social influence; yet, throughout the turbulent seventeenth century, the instability of the nation's monarchy, parliament, and church resulted in increased taxation, fines, and land confiscation and sequestration, which affected even the wealthiest landowners (Mingay, *The Gentry* 64).¹ While parliamentary land enclosures and agrarian capitalism increased the wealth and social standing of many rural elite, the distribution and new use of land, according to Raymond Williams, was "seen as the destroyer of a traditional and settled rural community" (97). Not only were the landowners affected by this complex reworking of land, but all those who "directly or indirectly derived his main income from the land, [such as the] farmers and the labourers employed in husbandry, but also the country clergy and

¹ In 1643, Parliament "ordered the immediate sequestration of Penshurst and other Sidney estates," on the claim that Robert Sidney, 2nd Earl of Leicester neglected his duties in Ireland. After strong lobbying by the countess and her brother, Earl of Northumberland, Parliament finally rescinded the order (Brennan, *The Sidneys* 148).

rural professional classes of attorneys and bankers, the village craftsmen such as blacksmiths and wheelwrights, and tradesmen like maltsters, brewers and carriers“ (Mingay, *English Landed* 4). Because these changes impacted a large segment of society, it is likely the literary marketplace—to some degree—also witnessed these changes and felt their effects.

While the country estate and its inhabitants experienced many changes through-out the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, perspective also played a role in how English society perceived the past in comparison to the present, and how literary praise may have shifted because of the poet’s idealized perspective on the past. Williams states, “Is it anything more than a well-known habit of using the past, the ‘good old days’, as a stick to beat the present?” (12) and “What we have to inquire into is not, in these cases, historical error, but historical perspective” (10). Coventry calls upon “Genius of Penshurst old,” Smith refers to “glories past,” Hamley addresses Penshurst with “How art thou chang’d,” Brydges describes “the faded splendour,” and Southey returns to “days of old” to compare the “good old days” with eighteenth-century Penshurst, country houses, and, perhaps, aristocratic society in general. The last seven poems in the Penshurst group reflect upon a happier and more virtuous past, when poets, like Sir Philip Sidney, were also noble courtiers and brave soldiers; when poets dined at the same table with the lord and his family; and when the lord took pride and pleasure in managing his country estate. Whether these changes were based on historical fact or on perception, the literary marketplace and the independence from aristocratic patrons enabled poets to reflect upon these changes and openly share them with their reading public. Coventry’s “Penshurst,” is an anomaly among the Penshurst poems, however, as it mindfully reflects on Penshurst’s virtuous

past—the celebrated statesmen, warriors, poets, and beauties of days gone by—regardless of patronage support from the present lord.

To summarize the significance of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century patronage and print culture in relation to praise and Penshurst, one must only return to Julia DeVaynes's 1882 query: "None of our fine old family county seats can rival Penshurst in poetic celebrity, and it is a question to whom for this it is the most deeply indebted" (764). Penshurst's poetic celebrity is equally indebted to the exemplary Sidneys of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including Sir Philip Sidney, Robert and Barbara Sidney, Dorothy Sidney (Sacharissa), and Algernon Sidney; to the Penshurst poets who celebrated and immortalized the Sidney and Penshurst virtues; to the aristocratic and commercial patrons who inspired and supported the making of the Penshurst poems; to the literary marketplace, which provided opportunities and platforms for poets and readers to sustain Penshurst's legacy; and finally to Penshurst itself—Jonson's ancient pile—where the virtues of old and the present-day lord dwell.

Appendix A: The Lords and Ladies of Penshurst

	1552-54	Sir William Sidney (1482-1554) and Anne Pakenham (?-1543)
son	1554-86	Sir Henry Sidney (1529-86) and Mary Dudley
son	1586-1626	Sir Robert Sidney, 1 st Earl of Leicester, Viscount Lisle, and Baron Sidney of Penshurst (1563 -1626) and Barbara Gamage (1562-1621)
son	1626-77	Robert Sidney, 2 nd Earl of Leicester and Viscount Lisle (1595- 1677) and Dorothy Percy (1598-1659)
son	1677-98	Philip Sidney, 3 rd Earl of Leicester (1619-98) and Catherine Cecil (1628-52)
son	1698-1702	Robert Sidney, 4 th Earl of Leicester, 4 th Earl of Leicester (1648- 1702) and Elizabeth Egerton (1648-1702)
son	1702-05	Philip Sidney, 5 th Earl of Leicester (1676-1705)
brother	1705-37	John Sidney, 6 th Earl of Leicester (1680-1737)
brother	1737-43	Jocelyn Sidney, 7 th Earl of Leicester (1682-1743)
nieces	1743-44	Mary Sidney and Elizabeth Sidney. Daughters of Thomas Sidney (1681-1729), son of Philip Sidney, 5 th Earl of Leicester.
	1744-57	Elizabeth Sidney (1713-83) and William Perry (?-1757)
daughter	1757-83	Elizabeth Jane Perry (?-1781) and Sir Bysshe Shelley (1731- 1815), grandfather of Percy Bysshe Shelley
son	1783-1849	John Shelley-Sidney, Baron Sidney of Penshurst (1771-1849) and Henrietta Hunloke (?-1811). John (12 years old) inherited Penshurst from his grandmother, Elizabeth Sidney. He added

		"Sidney" to his name.
son	1849-51	Philip Sidney, Lord De Lisle and Dudley (1800-51) and Sophia FitzClarence (1796-1837). He dropped "Shelley" from his name.
son	1851-98	Philip Sidney, Lord De Lisle and Dudley (1828-98) and Mary Foulis (?-1891)
son	1898-1922	Philip Sidney, Lord De Lisle and Dudley (1853-1922) and Elizabeth Maria Vereker (?-1958)
brother	1922-45	Algernon Sidney, Lord De Lisle and Dudley (1854-1945)
brother	1945-45	William Sidney, Lord De Lisle and Dudley (1859-1945) and Winnifred Aneta York Bevan (?-1959)
son	1945-91	William Sidney, Lord De Lisle and Dudley, 1 st Viscount De L'Isle (1909-91) and Jacqueline Vereker (1914-62), then Margaret Shourbridge
son	1991-	Philip Sidney, 2 nd Vicount De L'Isle (1945-) and Isobel Tresyllian Compton

Appendix B: Penshurst Poems

To Penshurst

Ben Jonson, *The Workes of Benjamin Jonson*. London, 1616.

Thou art not, PENSHURST, built to envious show
Of touch, or marble; nor canst boast a row
Of polish'd pillars, or a roofof gold:
Thou hast no lantherne, whereof tales are told;
Or stayre, or courts; but stand'st an ancient pile,
And these grudg'd at, art reverenc'd the while.
Thou joy'st in better markes, of soyle, of ayre,
Of wood, of water: therein thou art faire.
Thou hast thy walkes for health, as well as sport:
Thy *Mount*, to which thy *Dryads* doe resort, 10
Where PAN and BACCHUS their high feasts have made,
Beneath the broad beech, and the chest-nut shade;
That taller tree, which of a nut was set,
At his great birth, where all the *Muses* met.
There, in the writhed barke, are cut the names
Of many a SYLVANE, taken with his flames;
And thence, the ruddy *Satyres* oft provoke
The lighter *Faunes*, to reach thy *Ladies oke*.

Thy coppes ,too, nam'd of GAMAGE, thou hast there,
 That never failes to serve thee season'd deere, 20
 When thou would'st feast, or exercise thy friends.
 The lower land, that to the river bends,
 Thy sheepe, thy bullocks, kine, and calves do feed;
 The middle grounds thy mares and horses breed.
 Each banke doth yeeld thee coneyes; and the topps
 Fertile of wood, ASHORE and SYDNEY'S copp's,
 To crowne thy open table, doth provide
 The purpled pheasant, with the speckled side:
 The painted partrich lyes in ev'ry field,
 And for thy mess is willing to be kill'd. 30
 And if the high swolne *Medway* faile thy dish,
 Thou hast thy ponds, that pay thee tribute fish,
 Fat, aged carps that runne into thy net,
 And pikes, now weary their owne kinde to eat,
 As loth, the second draught or cast to stay,
 Officiously at first themselves betray.
 Bright eeles, that emulate them, and leape on land,
 Before the fisher, or into his hand.
 Then hath thy orchard fruit, thy garden flowers,
 Fresh as the ayre, and new as are the houres. 40
 The early cherry, with the later plum,

Fig, grape, and quince, each in his time doth come:
 The blushing apricot, and woolly peach
 Hang on thy walls, that every child may reach.
 And though thy walls be of the countrey stone,
 They are rear'd with no mans ruine, no mans groan;
 There's none, that dwell about them, wish them downe;
 But all come in, the farmer and the clowne;
 And no one empty-handed, to salute
 Thy lord, and lady, though they have no sute. 50
 Some bring a capon, some a rurall cake,
 Some nuts, some apples; some that thinke they make
 The better cheeses, bring 'hem; or else send
 By their ripe daughters, whom they would commend
 This way to husbands; and whose baskets beare
 An embleme of themselves in plum, or peare.
 But what can this (more than expresse their love)
 Adde to thy free provisions, farre above
 The neede of such? whose liberall boord doth flow
 With all, that hospitalitie doth know! 60
 Where comes no guest, but is allow'd to eate,
 Without his feare, and of thy lords owne meate:
 Where the same beere, and bread, and self-same wine,
 That is his Lordships, shall be also mine.

And I not faine to sit (as some this day,
 At great mens tables) and yet dine away.
 Here no man tells my cups; nor standing by,
 A waiter, doth my gluttony envý:
 But gives me what I call, and lets me eate,
 He knows, below, he shall finde plentie of meate; 70
 Thy tables hoord not up for the next day,
 Nor, when I take my lodging, need I pray
 For fire, or lights, or livorie: all is there;
 As if thou then wert mine, or I raign'd here:
 There's nothing I can wish, for which I stay.
 That found King JAMES, when hunting late, this way,
 With his brave sonne, the Prince; they saw thy fires
 Shine bright on every hearth, as the desires
 Of thy *Penates* had beene set on flame,
 To entertayne them; or the countrey came, 80
 With all their zeale, to warme their welcome here.
 What (great, I will not say, but) sodayne cheare
 Did'st thou then make 'hem! and what praise was heap'd
 On thy good lady, then! who therein reap'd
 The just reward of her high huswifry;
 To have her linnen, plate, and all things nigh,
 When shee was farre; and not a roome, but drest,

As if it had expected such a guest!
These, PENSHURST, are thy praise, and yet not all.
Thy lady's noble, fruitful, chaste withall. 90
His children thy great lord may call his owne;
A fortune, in this age, but rarely knowne.
They are, and have been taught religion; Thence
Their gentler spirits have suck'd innocence.
Each morne, and even, they are taught to pray,
With the whole household, and may, every day,
Reade in their vertuous parents noble parts,
The mysteries of manners, armes, and arts.
Now, PENSHURST, they that will proportion thee
With other edifices, when they see 100
Those proud, ambitious heaps, and nothing else,
May say, their lords have built, but thy lord dwells.

At Pens-hurst

Edmund Waller, *The Workes of Edmond Waller Esquire*. London, 1645.

Had *Dorothea* liv'd when Mortals made
Choice of their deities, this sacred shade
Had held an altar to the power that gave
The peace and glory, which these alleys have
Embroydred so with flowers where she stood,
That it became a garden of a wood:
Her presence has such more then humane grace
That it can civilize the rudest place:
And beauty too, and order can impart,
Where nature ne're intended it, nor art. 10
The plants acknowledge this, and her admire
No lesse then those of old did *Orpheus* Lire:
If she sit downe, with tops all towards her bow'd,
They round about her into arbours crowd.
Or if she walke, in even ranks they stand
Like some well marshall'd and obsequious band.
Amphion so made stones and timber leap
Into faire figures from a confus'd heape:
And in the symetry of her parts is found
A power like that of harmony in sound. 20

Ye lofty beeches tell this matchless dame
That if together ye feed all one flame;
It could not equalize the hundred part
Of what her eyes have kindled in my heart.
Goe boy and carve this passion on the barke
Of yonder tree, which stands the sacred marke
Of noble *Sidneys* birth, when such benigne,
Such more then mortall making stars did shine;
That there they cannot but for ever prove
The monument and pledge of humble love: 30
His humble love, whose hope shall ne're rise higher,
Then for a pardon that he dares admire.

At Pens-hurst

Edmund Waller, *The Workes of Edmond Waller Esquire*. London, 1645.

While in this Parke I sing, the listning Deere
Attend my passion, and forget to fear.
When to the Beeches I report my flame,
They bow their heads as if they felt the same:
To Gods appealing, when I reach their bowrs
With loud complaints, they answer me in showrs,
To thee a wilde and cruell soule is given,
More deaf then trees, & prouder then the heaven.
Loves fo profest, why dost thou falsely faine
Thy selfe a *Sidney*? from which noble straine 10
He sprung, that could so far exalt the name
Of love, and warme our Nation with his flame:
That all we can of love or high desire,
Seems but the smoak of amorous *Sidneyes* fire:
Nor call her mother who so well doe prove,
One breast may hold both chastity and love:
Never can shee, that so exceeds the spring
In joy and bounty, be suppos'd to bring
One so destructive, to no humane stock
We owe this fierce unkindnesse; but the rock, 20

That cloven rock produc'd thee, by whose side
Nature to recompence the fatall pride
Of such stern beauty, plac'd those healing springs
Which not more helpe then that destruction brings,
Thy heart no ruder then the rugged stone,
I might like *Orpheus* with my numerous moan
Melt to compassion; now my traitrous song,
With thee conspires to do the singer wrong:
While thus I suffer not my selfe to lose
The memory of what augments my woes: 30
But with my owne breath still foment the fire
Which flames as high as fancy can aspire.

 This last complaint th' indulgent ears did pierce
Of just *Apollo* President of verse
Highly concerned, that the Muse should bring
Damage to one whom he had taught to sing:
Thus he advis'd me on yon aged tree,
Hang up thy lute, and high thee to the sea,
That there with wonders thy diverted minde
Some truce at least may with affection finde. 40

 Ah cruell Nymph from whom her humble swaine
Flies for reliefe unto the raging maine:
And from the windes and tempests doth expect

A milder fate then from her cold neglect:
Yet there hee'le pray that the unkinde may prove
Blest in her choice, and vows this endlesse love
Springs from no hope of what she can confer
But from those gifts which heaven has heap'd on her.

To My Lord of Leicester

Edmund Waller, *The Workes of Edmond Waller Esquire*. London, 1645.

Not that thy trees at Pens-hurst growe
Oppressed with their timely load,
And seem to make their silent moan,
That their great Lord is now abroad:
They to delight his taste or eye
Would spend themselves in fruit and dye.

Not that thy harmlesse Deere repine,
And thinke themselves unjustly slaine
By any other hand then thine,
Whose arrows they would gladly slaine: 10
No nor thy friends which hold too deare
That peace with France which keeps thee there.

All these are lesse then that great cause,
Which none exacts your presence here,
Wherein there meet the divers laws
Of publique and domestique care.
For one bright Nymph our youth contends,
And on your prudent choice depends.

Not the bright shield of *Thetis* son,
For which such sterne debate did rise, 20
That the great *Ajax, Telemon*
Refus'd to live without the prize.
Those Achave¹ Peers did more engage,
Than she the gallants of our age.

That beam of beauty which begun
To warme us so when thou wert here,
Now scorches like the raging sun
When Syrius does first appeare.
O fix this flame, and let despaire
Redeem the rest from endlesse care! 30

¹ Waller's "Achave" likely refers to the ancient Greek region of Achaea, home of the mythical Greek hero Ajax and his father, Telamon, as described in Homer's *The Iliad*.

The Peroquette

Thomas D'Urfey, *Wit and Mirth; Or, Pills to Purge Melancholy*. Vol. 1. London, 1719.

An ODE; occasion'd by the seeing a very beautiful one, belonging to the Right Honourable the Earl of Leicester; with a small Remark upon his Lordship's fine Seat at Penshurst.

Well mayst thou prate with mirthful Cheer,
And pick thy plummy green,
Who in delightful *Penshurst* here,
Art seated like a Queen.

Thou call'st upon a Widow oft,
Tho' few of them are known;
With Look so sweet, and Touch so soft,
Dear Creature, as thy own.

Thus too in Groves, and Gardens fair,
Of Old, the *Sylvan* Gods, 10
Perfum'd with Breeze of fragrant Air,
Contriv'd Divine Abodes.

Others, *sic siti*,* may express,
Possess'd with Fancy vain,

Thou, only in thy Bower of Bliss
That Phrase canst well maintain.

*Sic siti lætantur Lares.

Penshurst

Francis Coventry, *Penshurst. Inscribed to William Perry, Esq; and the Hon^{ble}. Mrs. Elizabeth Perry*. London, 1750 (Pamphlet).

GENIUS of Penshurst old!

Who saw'st the birth of each immortal oak,

Here sacred from the stroke;

And all thy tenants of yon turrets bold,

Inspir'st to arts or arms;

Where Sidney his Arcadian landscape drew,

Genuine from thy Doric View;

And patriot Algernon unshaken rose

Above insulting foes;

And Saccarissa nurs'd her angel charms: 10

O suffer me with holy shade;

Bid smoothly-sliding Medway stand,

And wave his sedgy tresses bland,

A stranger let him kindly greet,

And pour his urn beneath my feet.

And see where Perry opens his door,

To land me on the social floor;

Nor does the heiress of these shades deny

To bend her bright majestic eye,

Where beauty shines, and friendship warm, 20

And honor in a female form.

With them in aged groves to walk,

And lose my thoughts in artless talk,

I shun the voice of Party loud,

I shun loose Pleasure's idle crowd,

And monkish Academic cell,

Where science only feigns to dwell,

And court, where speckled vanity

Apes her tricks in tawdry dye,

And shifts each hour her tinsel hue, 30

Still furbelow'd in follies new.

Here nature no distortion wears,

Old Truth retains his silver hairs,

And Chastity her matron step,

And purple health his rosy lip.

Ah! on the virgin's gentle brow

How innocence delights to glow?

Unlike the town-dame's haughty air,

The scornful eye and harlot's stare;

But bending mild the bashful front 40

As modest fear is ever wont:

Shepherdesses such of old

Doric bards enamour'd told,
While the pleas'd Arcadian vale
Eccho'd the enchanting tale.

But chief of virtue's lovely train,
A pensive exile on the plain,
No longer active now to wield
Th' avenging sword, protecting shield,
Here thoughtful-walking Liberty 50
Remembers Britons once were free.
With her would Nobles old converse,
And learn her dictates to rehearse,
Ere yet they grew refin'd to hate
The hospitable rural seat,
The spacious hall with tenants stor'd;
Where mirth and plenty crown'd the board;
Ere yet their Lares they forsook,
And lost the genuine British look,
The conscious brow of inward merit, 60
The rough, unbending, martial spirit,
To clink the chain of thralldom gay,
And court-idolatry to pay;
To live in city smoaks obscure,
Where morn ne'er wakes her breezes pure,

Where darkest midnight reigns at noon,
And fogs eternal blot the sun.

But come, the minutes flit away,
And eager fancy longs to stray;
Come, friendly Genius! lead me round 70
Thy Sylvan haunts and magic ground;
Point ev'ry spot of hill or dale,
And tell me, as we tread the vale,
"Here mighty Dudly once wou'd rove,
"To plan his triumphs in the grove;
"There looser Waller, ever gay,
"With Sacchariss in dalliance lay;
"And Philip, side-long yonder spring,
"His lavish carols wont to sing."

Hark! I hear the echoes call, 80
Hark! the rushing waters fall;
Lead me to the green retreats,
Guide me to the Muses seats,
Where ancient bards retirement chose,
Or ancient Lovers wept their woes.
What Genius points to yonder oak?
What rapture does my soul provoke?
There let me hang a garland high,

There let my muse her accents try;
 Be there my earliest homage paid, 90
 Be there my latest vigils made;
 For thou wast planted in the earth
 The day that shone on Sidney's birth.
 That happy time, that glorious day
 The Muses came in concert gay;
 With harps in tune, and ready song,
 The jolly Chorus tript along;
 In honour of th'auspicious morn,
 To hail an infant genius born:
 Next came the Fauns in order meet, 100
 The Satyrs next with cloven feet,
 The Dryads swift that roam the woods,
 The Naiads green that swim the floods;
 Sylvanus left his silent cave,
 Medway came dropping from the wave;
 Vertumnus led his blushing spouse,
 And Ceres shook her wheaten brows,
 And Mars with milder look was there,
 And laughing Venus grac'd the rear.
 They join'd their hands in festive dance, 110
 And bade the smiling babe advance;

Each gave a gift; Sylvanus last
Ordain'd, when all the pomp was past,
Memorial meet, a tree to grow,
Which might to future ages shew,
That on select occasion rare,
A troop of Gods assembled there:
The Naiads water'd well the ground,
And Flora twin'd a wood-bine round:
The tree sprung fast in hallow'd earth, 120
Co-aeval with th'illustrious birth.

Thus let my feet unwearied stray;
Nor satisfied with one survey,
When morn returns with doubtful light,
And Phebe pales her lamp of night,
Still let me wander forth anew,
And print my footsteps on the dew,
What time the swain with ruddy cheek
Prepares to yoke his oxen meek,
And early drest in neat array 130
The milk-maid chanting shrill her lay,
Comes abroad with morning pail;
And the sound of distant flail
Gives the ear a rough good-morrow,

And the lark from out his furrow
Soars upright on matin wings,
And at the gate of heaven sings.

But when the sun with fervid ray
Drives upwards to his noon of day,
And couching oxen lay them down 140
Beneath the beachen umbrage brown;
Then let me wander in the hall,
Round whose antique-visag'd wall
Hangs the armour Britons wore,
Rudely cast in days of yore.
Yon sword some heroe's arm might wield,
Red in the ranks of Chalgrave field
Where ever-glorious Hampden bled,
And Freedom tears of sorrow shed:
Or in the gallery let me walk, 150
Where living pictures seem to talk,
Where beauty smiles serenely fair,
And courage frowns with martial air;
Tho' whiskers quaint the face-disguise,
And habits odd to modern eyes.
Behold what kings in Britain reign'd
Plantagenets with blood distain'd,

And valiant Tudor's haughty race,
 And Stuarts, England's worst disgrace.
 The Norman first, with cruel frown, 160
 Proud of his new-usurped crown,
 Begins the lift; and many more,
 Stern Heroes form'd of roughest ore.
 See victor Henry there advance,
 Ev'n in his look he conquers France;
 And murtherer Richard, justly slain
 By Richmond's steel on Bosworth plain;
 See the tyrant of his wives,
 Prodigal of fairest lives,
 And laureat Edward nurs'd in arts, 170
 Minerva school'd his kingly parts:
 But ah! the melancholy Jane,
 A soul too tender for a queen!
 She sinks beneath imperial sway,
 The dear-bought scepter of a day!
 And must she mount the scaffold drear?
 Hard-hearted Mary learn to spare!
 Eliza next salutes the eye;
 Exalt the song to liberty,
 The Muse repeats the sacred name, 180

Eliza fills the voice of fame.
From thence a baser age began,
The royal ore polluted ran,
Till foreign Nassau's valiant hand
Chac'd holy Tyrants from the land:
Downward from hence descend apace
To Brunswick's high, illustrious race;
And see the canvass speaks them brave,
An injur'd nation born to save,
Active in freedom's righteous cause, 190
And conscious of a just applause.

 But chiefly pleas'd, the curious eye,
With nice discernment loves to try
The labour'd wonders, passing thought,
Which warm Italian pencils wrought;
Fables of love and stories old,
By Greek or Latian poets told;
How Jove committed many a rape,
How young Acteon lost his shape;
Or what celestial Pen-men writ, 200
Or what the painter's genuine wit
From fancy's store-house could devise;
Where Raphael claims the highest prize.

Madonas here decline the head,
With fond maternal pleasure fed,
Or lift their lucid eyes above,
Where more is seen than holy love,
There temples stand display'd within,
And pillars in long order seen,
And roofs rush forward to the fight, 210
And lamps affect a living light,
Or landscapes tire the trav'ling eye,
The clouds in azure volumes fly,
The distant trees distinguish'd rise,
And hills look little in the skies.

When day declines, and ev'ning cool
Begins her gentle, silent rule,
Again, as fancy points the way,
Benignant leader, let me stray:
And wilt thou, Genius, bring along 220
(So shall my Muse exalt her song)
The Lord who rules this ample scene,
His consort too with gracious mien,
Her little offspring prattling round,
While Eccho lisps their infant sound.
And let good-nature, born to please,

Wait on our steps, and graceful ease;
Nor mirth be wanting as we walk,
Nor with to season sober talk;
Let gay description too attend, 230
And fable told with moral end,
And satire quick that comes by stealth,
And flowing laughter, friend to health.
Meanwhile attention loves to mark
The deer that crop the shaven park,
The steep-brow'd hill, or forest wild,
The sloping lawns, and zephyrs mild,
The clouds that blush with ev'ning red,
Or meads with silver fountains fed,
The fragrance of the new-mown hay, 240
And black-bird chanting on the spray;
The calm farewell of parting light,
And ev'ning fad'ning into night.
Nor wearied yet my roving feet,
Tho' night comes on amain, retreat;
But still abroad I walk unseen
Along the star-enlighten'd green;
Superior joys my soul invite,
Lift, lift to heav'n the dazzled fight;

Lo, where the moon enthron'd on high, 250

Sits steady empress of the sky,

Enticing nations to revere,

And proudly vain of Pagan fear;

Or where thro' clouds she travels fast,

And seems on journey bent in haste,

While thousand hand-maid stars await,

Attendant on their queen of state.

'Tis now that in her high controul,

Ambitious of a foreign rule,

She stirs the ocean to rebel, 260

And factious waters fond to swell

Guides to battle in her carr,

'Gainst her sister earth to war.

Thus let me muse on things sublime,

Above the flight of modern rhyme,

And call the soul of Newton down,

Where it sits high on starry throne,

Inventing laws for worlds to come,

Or teaching comets how to roam:

With him I'd learn of every star, 270

But four-ey'd pedantry be far,

And ignorance in gard of sense,

With terms of art to make pretence.

Hail happy foil! illustrious earth!

Which gav'st so many heroes birth;

Where never wand'ring poet trod,

But felt within th' inspiring God!

In these transporting, solemn shades

First I salute th' Aonian maids.

Ah lead me, Genius, to thy haunts, 280

Where Philomel at ev'ning chants,

And as my oaten pipe resounds,

Give musick to the forming sounds.

A simple shepherd, yet unkown,

Aspires to snatch an ivy crown,

On daring pinions bold to soar,

Tho' here thy Waller sung before,

And Johnson dipt his learned pen,

And Sidney pour'd his fancy-flowing strain.

Inscription for an Oak in Penshurst Park

Francis Coventry, *The London Chronicle*. Vol. 9. London, 1761.

Stranger kneel here! to age due homage pay!
When great Eliza held Britannia's sway
My growth began—the same illustrious morn,
Joy to the hour! saw gallant Sidney born:
Sidney, the darling of Arcadia's swains!
Sidney, the terror of the martial plains!
He perish'd early; I just stay behind
An hundred years; and lo! my clefted rind,
My wither'd boughs foretell destruction nigh;
We all are mortal; oaks and heroes die. 10

Sonnet XLVI: Written at Penshurst, in Autumn 1788

Charlotte Turner Smith, *Elegiac Sonnets, by Charlotte Smith. The Fifth Edition, With Additional Sonnets and Other Poems*. London, 1789.

Ye Towers sublime deserted now and drear,
Ye woods, deep sighing to the hollow blast,
The musing wanderer loves to linger near,
While History points to all your glories past:
And startling from their haunts the timid deer,
To trace the walks obscured by matted fern,
Which Waller's soothing lyre were wont to hear,
But where now clamours the discordant heron!
The spoiling hand of Time may overturn
These lofty battlements, and quite deface 10
The fading canvas whence we love to learn
Sydney's keen look, and Sacharissa's grace;
But fame and beauty still defy decay,
Saved by the historic page—the poet's tender lay!

Sonnet XII. Written at Penshurst

Edward Hamley, *Sonnets*. London, 1789.

PENSHURST, whose moss-grown tow'rs in hoary state
Frown o'er the meads, where silent Medway flows;
Where erst the gallant Sydney sought repose
And lest for song the bloody fields of Fate,
The bard admitting at his social gate:
And he, who fir'd with Roman learning rose
To save his country from ideal woes,
Free as his teachers, though mistaken, great:
How art thou chang'd! beside the murm'ring fall
Of some lone rill, that seems in fairy ground, 10
No gentle bard now hears the Muse's call;
With no proud hospitality resound
The rafter'd roofs of yon deserted hall,
With helms and formidable lances crown'd.

Sonnet XLIV. Written at Penshurst

Edward Hamley, *Sonnets*. London, 1789.

YE walls, for gallantry and knighthood fam'd,
Which oft with sounds of social pleasure rung;
Ye groves and lawns, where Waller's tuneful tongue
To gales and murm'ring streams his love proclaim'd,
And each wild echo Sacharissa nam'd;
Your white cascades, with foamy tumult slung
Down the steep slope, and glades so sweetly sung;
No poet now explores with feet unblam'd.
Yet suffer me to breathe your vernal gales,
A poet, no! but of that gentle train, 10
Who love to mark in woods and pathless vales
Each rural sweet; and, wand'ring o'er the plain,
Deeds of old prowess and romantic tales
To muse, and hear the nightingale complain.

Sonnet, Written at Penshurst

Egerton Brydges, *Arthur Fitz-Albini, A Novel*. Vol. 1. London, 1798.

Behold thy triumphs, Time! what silence reigns
Along these lofty and majestic walls!
Ah! where are regal Sidney's pompous trains*?
Where Philip's tuneful lyre, whose dying falls
Could melt the yielding nymphs, and lovesick swains†?
Ah! where th' undaunted figure, that appalls
E'en heroes? Where the lute, that on the plains
The bending trees‡ round Sacharissa calls?
And are they fled! Their day's for ever past!
Heroes and poets moulder in the earth! 10
No sound is heard but of the wailing blast
Through the lone rooms, where echoed crowded Mirth!
Yet on their 'semblance Melancholy pores,
And all the faded splendour soon restores.

*Sir Henry Sidney, Lord President of the Marches, who kept his court at Ludlow Castle.

†Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia.

‡Alluding to Waller's lines, written at Penshurst.

For a Tablet at Penshurst

Robert Southey, *The Annual Anthology*. Vol. 1. Bristol, 1799.

Are days of old familiar to thy mind,
O Reader? hast thou let the midnight hour
Pass unperceived, whilst thou in Fancy lived
With high-born beauties and enamour'd chiefs,
Shared all their hopes, and with a breathless joy
Whose eager expectation almost pain'd,
Followed their dangerous fortunes? if such lore
Hath ever thrill'd thy bosom, thou wilt tread,
As with a pilgrim's reverential thoughts,
The groves of Penshurst. Sidney here was born, 10
Sidney, than whom no gentler, braver man
His own delightful genius ever feign'd,
Illustrating the vales of Arcady
With courteous courage and with loyal loves.
Upon his natal day the acorn here
Was planted. It grew up a stately oak,
And in the beauty of its strength it stood
And flourish'd, when his perishable part
Had moulder'd dust to dust. That stately oak

Itself hath moulder'd now, but Sidney's fame 20

Lives and shall live, immortalized in song.

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