Although the poetry of the earlier period is more generally representative of its time than is that of the later, the Manuscript as a whole nevertheless affords opportunity for study in changing taste and poetic development from about 1540 to 1600. The later additions to the Manuscript, though lacking the planned order of the earlier poems, are of literary interest both for the new poems among them, such as Nos. 170, 188, 230-33, and for versions of known poems, some of which appear to be earlier than the printed copies, as with Nos. 201-21 by Constable, who is more fully represented than any other of the later poets. AH has earlier versions of Sir John’s epigrams Nos. 91, 197, 222 than those given in MS. Add. 12409; and for epigrams 56 and 226 AH gives the only manuscript copies. Other epigrams, or sentences, among Nos. 24-63, not so far known as Sir John’s, must be his or his father’s, as are Nos. 26, 28, 35.¹

Of literary importance are Sir John’s copies of No. 234 by Daniel and No. 229 by Sidney, which show interesting variations from the printed copies. I have called attention to the significance of his headings for Nos. 201-21, 223, 225.² In view of the extensive collection of Elizabethan plays which Sir John had in his library, among them several by Shakespeare,³ it is somewhat surprising that the AH MS. does not have copies of some of the songs, especially since there are a number of Elizabethan songs in the Manuscript. Puzzling also, in view of his own translation of the Orlando, which has so many points of interest in connection with The Faerie Queene, is Sir John’s inclusion of only one poem by Spenser, the experimental lines of No. 185. This omission may indicate that the witty epigrammatist did not care for the work of his serious mellifluous contemporary; or it may arise from lack of personal association.⁴ That such courtly

¹ See above, p. 30.  
² See above, p. 33.  
³ British Museum MS. Add. 27632, fol. 43r. ⁴ See McClure, Letters and Epigrams, p. 44.  
⁴ Professor H. R. Walley suggests that Sir John’s manuscript collection of verses was likely to be drawn from unpublished poems, therefore not in his library, as were the plays of Shakespeare, and probably the works of Spenser.
INTRODUCTION

makers as Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Walter Ralegh, the Earl of Oxford, Sir Edward Dyer, and Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, are represented is no more than we might expect. It is pleasant to have Sir John's dictum on Oxford's poem No. 179, with its heading in Sir John's hand, "The best verse that ever th'author made." Sir John's Rabelaisian interests are indicated not only in some of his own epigrams, but also in the "libels," Nos. 180-83, the first by Stephen Valenger, whom he may have known at Cambridge, the setting for the episodes related.

The unpublished poems among both the earlier and the later compositions are on the whole of the same general style and content as those already known in each period, but several of the earlier ones are of particular interest. Sir John Cheke's poems and the anonymous one following, Nos. 282-86, are written in unrhymed hexameters, affording additional examples of the attempt to adapt the classical measures to the English line. The delightful No. 266 can take its place with "Phyllida was a fair maid" as an example of the early pastoral. No. 295, by George Blage on Lord Wriothesley in 1546, is a not altogether unworthy bit of personal invective. No. 274, in general written in the manner of the poems in Tottel's Miscellany, yet is remarkable in its opening lines for the expression of essentially Platonic concepts on the androgynous nature of man and the pre-existence of the soul. These are combined with the tenet of faithful service in the old chivalric code to honor love. There is nothing quite like these lines in other poetry of the Tottel period, and they foreshadow ideas later elaborately expressed by Spenser. It is probable that this is another of the poems which John Harington addressed to Isabella Markham.

To the two John Haringtons of Stepney and Kelston for their labor of love in preserving the Wyatt autograph manuscript and in forming their two contemporary poetry miscellanies, the AH and the P MSS., we are very much in debt for our knowledge of the progress of English verse as it struggled upward through four Tudor reigns. Without these manuscripts our understanding of early and mid-Tudor poetry would be more imperfect than it now is, and our knowledge of the later poetry less complete.

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