

A STUDY OF THE DEVIATIONS IN THE SONNET  
FORM IN SIXTEENTH CENTURY ENGLAND

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## PREFACE

During the sixteenth century the English sonnet acquired the basic rhyme forms that it has exhibited since that time. The sonnet came into England as an Italian form and quickly became adapted to the poetic forms and ways of thought of the English poets. This thesis is a study of the forms that the sonnet acquired during the century.

The years that have been studied are divided into convenient periods. The first period, from the time of the introduction of the sonnet into England until the sonnet revival, concerns the initial adaptations made in the sonnet form. The latter period, extending until 1602, concerns the developments in sonnet rhyme form after the sonnet had become established.

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

The present-day student of English literature recognizes three major types of the sonnet. These are the Petrarchan, the Shakespearean, and the Spenserian. But at the time that Sir Thomas Wyatt introduced the sonnet into England in the 1530's there was but one form, the Petrarchan. Considered in relation to the length of time during which the sonnet had been in existence, the two English forms were not long in developing. The Shakespearean (so-called) first appeared in Tottel's Miscellany in 1557, and Spenser's adaptation appeared just before the close of the century, in 1595. The intervening years were marked by experimentation in all forms of verse, most of which were of foreign extraction. This investigation is an inquiry into the forms that the sonnet took between the date of Wyatt's return from Italy and the date of publication of the last miscellany of the period, A Poetical Rhapsody, in 1602.

At this point a definition of the sonnet should be given. To the sixteenth century English makers, the word "sonnet" indicated almost any short lyric poem. According to Rollins, up to 1591 the words "sonnet" and "lyric" and "song" were convenient synonyms.<sup>1</sup> The fourteen-line poem in

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<sup>1</sup>H. E. Rollins, ed., Brittons Bowre of Delights, 1591 (Cambridge, U. S. A., 1933), p. xxi.

iambic pentameter that came to be called the sonnet, however, has definite characteristics. The Petrarchan sonnet is divided, both in rhyming and content, into an octave and a sestet. The octave rhymes a b b a a b b a, the sestet usually c d e c d e or c d c d c d, although many variations in the sestet have seemed to make no difference in the retention of the name. The octave poses a question or problem or develops a thought or feeling, and the sestet solves the problem or resolves the thought.

The Shakespearean sonnet consists of three quatrains and a couplet, rhyming a b a b c d c d e f e f g g. Although obviously looser in rhyming, this type usually sustains a thought or feeling throughout the three quatrains and brings the poem to an epigrammatic close with the couplet. The use of "usually" gives a key to the further loosening of the sonnet form during the sixteenth century: the use of the couplet for its "closing" quality was not consistent until Shakespeare's command of the form gave it his name. (In the body of the study, whenever a sonnet is termed "regular," the Shakespearean form is indicated.)

The Spenserian sonnet may be an adaptation of the Spenserian stanza, of The Faerie Queen, to a fourteen-line poem. It rhymes a b a b b c b c c d c d e e. The rhyme scheme, more closely knit than the Shakespearean, suggests the obvious: the first twelve lines sustain the thought, and the couplet accomplishes the same purpose as it does in its sister form.

The sonnet came into England during the time of the early English Renaissance. To an interest in things classical, and, more especially, things Italian, can be imputed, probably, the interest in the sonnet. According to one student of the period, the Italian influence in England had a two-fold effect: (1) It taught new forms and stood for precision, balance, polish, a greater consciousness of the poet's art and dignity, and demanded deeper learning and scholarship. (2) It created a fresh atmosphere for the poet's life.<sup>2</sup> Certainly an important aspect of this new atmosphere was the interest in Petrarch, who was much translated, referred to, and imitated.

Although Italian influence was strong, the classic sonnet form apparently did not find the English atmosphere congenial. Wyatt, in the use of the sonnet form, broke away from his master, and Surrey made the break much wider. Probably, in rhyme scheme, the language difference was a factor. Possibly, in content, a wish for more nearly direct contact with the objects of their desires than the Italians had evidenced induced the English sonneteers to make a break.<sup>3</sup> At any rate, the break came, and the manner in which it came will be shown in Chapter II.

Between 1557 and 1602 there appeared eight poetical miscellanies. One of these, Very Pleasaunt Sonnettes and

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<sup>2</sup>L. Einstein, The Italian Renaissance in England (New York, 1902), p. 316.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 337.

Storves in Myter (1566), is apparently lost, and is known only in the form of A Handefull of Pleasant Delites (1584), which contained no sonnets as now defined. The remaining six are Tottel's Miscellany (1557), The Paradyce of Daynty Devyses (1576), A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions (1578), The Phoenix Nest (1593), Englands Helicon (1600), and Davisons Poetical Rapsody (1602).

The years between 1557 and 1602 fall into two convenient periods, with the year 1582 marking the division. Until the publication of Watson's Hecatompattia (1582), sonnets were published in the poetical miscellanies and in a few scattered collections of individual authors, and remained, for the most part, of the type that the Earl of Surrey had established in Tottel's Miscellany (1557). But with the publication of Watson's sequence in 1582 the sonnet revival began, and the last two decades of the century were marked by experimentation in the form of the sonnet.

Since this investigation is not an exhaustive study of sixteenth century English sonnet poetry, it has been found necessary to limit the material with which the study will be concerned. The first three miscellanies, with the sonnets of George Gascoigne (who is included because of his definition of the sonnet as well as his contributions to the form), furnish the principal material for the study of the first period. The study of the second period centers around Watson's Hecatompattia and the sonnet sequences reprinted in Sir Sidney Lee's Elizabethan Sonnets, with brief reference



to the remaining miscellanies.

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## CHAPTER II

The sonnets under consideration in the first period appeared in the miscellanies published during that period and in the works of George Gascoigne. The first sonnets in English were published in Tottel's Miscellany (1557). It contained sonnets by Wyatt, Surrey, Nicholas Grimald, and "uncertain" authors. The other miscellanies and the works of Gascoigne were published between 1557 and 1582. This last date marks the end of the first period of sonnet development.

From Italy, after his journey there in 1527, Sir Thomas Wyatt brought new poetic forms,<sup>1</sup> among which was the Italian sonnet. It was thus introduced for the first time into England in sonnet form (Chaucer had rendered a sonnet of Petrarch into three rhyme royal stanzas in Troilus and Criseyde).<sup>2</sup> The influence of the Italians can be seen most readily in the twenty-one translations, in whole or in part, among the thirty-two sonnets that Wyatt is known to have written.<sup>3</sup>

But through either misinterpretation or necessity due

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<sup>1</sup>A. C. Baugh, et al., A Literary History of England (New York, 1948), p. 341.

<sup>2</sup>L. C. John, The Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences (New York, 1938), Note 3 to Introduction, p. 203.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 5-6.

to differences in language, Wyatt did not write any of his sonnets in strictly Petrarchan manner, although twenty-seven of his sonnets have the Petrarchan octave. It was in the sestet that Wyatt began to deviate. Here again Wyatt had a precedent in the Italians.<sup>4</sup> Twenty-two sonnets have sestets of c d d c e e. This third quatrain and closing couplet show the direction in which the sonnet was to go. Since, however, there was a precedent in the Italians for this construction, it is a deviation only from the "strict" Petrarchan form.

The important deviations occur in the octave construction. In one sonnet Wyatt has an octave of a b b a b b a a.<sup>5</sup> In another, with still further loosening, he uses a b b a a c c a.<sup>6</sup> And in the sonnet of his which most closely approximates the Shakespearean construction, the

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., Note 19, pp. 205-206. In this note, John refers to Walter L. Bullock, "The Genesis of the English Sonnet Form," PMLA, XXXVIII (1923), 740-43, thus: "Bullock believes that Wyatt knew the Italian anthology published in Florence in 1527 called the Raccolta dei Giunti, where there are seven sonnets with tercets of xyy xyy. Bullock thinks that Wyatt may have considered the second x as a final line of a third quatrain: xyyx yy. Five of these sonnets are by Cino da Pistoia and one is by Cavalcanti. All have parallels in Wyatt. Bullock thinks, too, that Wyatt may have known (either in manuscript or from the 1527 printed form) the work of Benedetto Varchi, who also used the form which Wyatt twice employed of new rhymes for the couplet. Varchi has sestet schemes such as xyyx zz and xyxy zz."

<sup>5</sup>James Yeowell, ed., The Poetical Works of Sir Thomas Wyatt (London, 1898), "The Wavering Lover Willeth, and Dreadeth, to Move His Desire," p. 4.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., "The Lover, Having Dreamed Enjoying of His Love. . .," p. 4.

scheme is a b a b a b a b a b c c.<sup>7</sup> All that now remains to set the stage for the true Shakespearean rhyme scheme is the introduction of a sonnet with seven rhymes, and that is done in the double sonnet entitled "The Lover Describeth His Restless State."<sup>8</sup> This is a compromise with Petrarch, rhyming a b b a c d d c e f f e g g. The sonnet is now beginning to change its nationality.

The closing couplet, which Wyatt never fails to use, seems to be the key factor in the break with Petrarch, for the four lines thus left between the octave and the couplet can do little else than become a quatrain, and the octave is already in a form that falls easily into quatrains in the mind.

Among conjectures offered as reasons for the adoption of the couplet should be listed that of Harold H. Child, who says:

Wyatt was possibly induced to adopt this form partly by the existence of the favorite Chaucerian rime royal stanza of seven lines, riming a b a b b c c.<sup>9</sup>

It has also been suggested that Wyatt did not feel at home in the rigid form, with its too many restraints for his technical skill and proficiency--could not reproduce the construction of the successive steps which built up the

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., "To His Lady, Cruel Over Her Yielding Lover," p. 12.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>9</sup>A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller, edd., Cambridge History of English Literature (Cambridge, England, 1909), Vol. III, p. 169.

Petrarchan sonnet.<sup>10</sup> Whether there is any definite, definable reason, it does seem logical that English forms, English ways of thought, even English temper, all figured in the domestication of the sonnet. Indeed, it is a favorite practice of the English people to take a foreign form or idea, put it through a period of "laboratory" testing and experimentation, and make it, in the end, thoroughly English. The years between Wyatt's return and the publication of the last of the miscellanies seem to be just such a period.

Fourteen of Surrey's sixteen sonnets, including the doubtful one,<sup>11</sup> appeared in Tottel's Miscellany in 1557. The remaining two, from manuscript sources, have been reprinted by Padelford.<sup>12</sup>

It would seem that Surrey began deviating at the point at which Wyatt stopped. "A Spring Lament"<sup>13</sup> rhymes a b a b a b a b a b a a. This gives some evidence that Surrey's conception of the sonnet, from the first,<sup>14</sup> was of three

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<sup>10</sup>Einstein, op. cit., p. 326.

<sup>11</sup>F. M. Padelford, ed., The Poems of Henry Howard Earl of Surrey, Vol. V of the University of Washington Publications in Language and Literature (Seattle, 1928), Note 7, p. 59: "In Ms. A. this sonnet, lacking vs. 10 and 12, is assigned to Lord Vaux."

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., Sonnet No. 44, p. 97 and Sonnet No. 47, p. 99.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 56. (These are Padelford's titles for Surrey's sonnets.)

<sup>14</sup>It is presumed that the order of composition in Wyatt and Surrey cannot be known.

quatrains and a couplet. Two sonnets, "A Nocturnal Lament"<sup>15</sup> and the doubtful one, follow Wyatt with a b a b a b a b a b a b c c, and one is similar to these last, but with the third quatrain rhyming a c a c.<sup>16</sup> Then, with but one more reflection of Wyatt, a sonnet rhyming a b b a c d d c e f f e g g,<sup>17</sup> Surrey's wavering is at an end. This poem of seven rhymes, with an almost nostalgic echo of Petrarch, seems to end the experimentation. The remaining eleven sonnets are in true Shakespearean form.

Thus, if we were to name the English sonnet for its originator rather than its most brilliant exponent, we should label it Surreyian rather than Shakespearean. And if influence is to be a criterion, the claim is strengthened. The form is used in eight of the sonnets in Tottel other than those of Wyatt and Surrey; thus the influence of Surrey in establishing the form began early. The scheme is a predominating one in sonnets after 1557, and despite Sidney was the predominating one in the Elizabethan sonnet.<sup>18</sup>

It remains to treat of the other sonnets in Tottel. As has been said, eight of them are Shakespearean (including the three written by Nicholas Grimald). Those of uncertain authorship, other than the five Shakespearean, number four:

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<sup>15</sup>Padelford, op. cit., p. 56.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., Number 9, p. 60.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., Number 3, p. 57.

<sup>18</sup>John, op. cit., p. 8.

one regular Petrarchan,<sup>19</sup> one with a scheme of a b b a a b b a c d d c e e,<sup>20</sup> echoing Wyatt, one echoing both Wyatt and Surrey with a b b a c d d c e f f e g g,<sup>21</sup> and the last with a b b a c a a c d e e d d d.<sup>22</sup>

From Tottel's Miscellany until The Paradyce of Daynty Devyses (1576) the only miscellany that appeared was the lost one in 1566, and, if we may judge by its successor, A Handefull of Pleasant Delites (1584), it contained no sonnets.<sup>23</sup> But George Gascoigne's works appeared in the interim, and, for his contribution to sonnet criticism, if for nothing else, Gascoigne should be mentioned. He defined the sonnet thus:

. . . then have you Sonnets, some thinke that all Poemes (being short) may be called Sonets, as in deede it is a diminutive worde derived of Sonare, but yet I can beste allowe to call those Sonets whiche are of fouretene lynes, every line conteyn- ing tenne syllables. The firste twelve do ryme in staves of foure lines by crosse meetre, and the last twoo ryming together do conclude the whole.<sup>24</sup>

This definition, published only eighteen years after Tottel's Miscellany, reflects Gascoigne's own practice in

<sup>19</sup>H. E. Rollins, ed., Tottel's Miscellany (2 vols.; Cambridge, U. S. A., 1948), Vol. I, Number 241, p. 188.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., Number 218, p. 169.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., Number 233, p. 180.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., Number 219, p. 170.

<sup>23</sup>Hugh Macdonald, ed., Englands Helicon (Cambridge, U. S. A., 1950), p. xvii.

<sup>24</sup>George Gascoigne, The Posies, Vol. I of The Complete Works of George Gascoigne, ed. John W. Cunliffe (2 vols.; Cambridge, England, 1907), in "Certayne Notes of Instruction," pp. 471-72.

sonnet writing, as well as that of his time. Of the thirty-six sonnets that Cunliffe prints in his edition of the Works, three are commendatory sonnets, apparently by other hands.<sup>25</sup> Of those that Gascoigne presumably wrote, thirty are regular Shakespearean sonnets. The three fugitives are rather queer. One rhymes a b b a c d d c d e e f d f,<sup>26</sup> one a a b c b c d d e f e f g g,<sup>27</sup> and one a b b a c d d c e f g e f g.<sup>28</sup> The first and last are reminiscent of Petrarch, the second of nothing whatever.

There were but two miscellanies between 1575 and 1582 and the sonnet representation was sparse. The Paradyce of Daynty Devyses (1576) contained one, and that one Shakespearean.<sup>29</sup> A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions (1578)<sup>30</sup> contained five, three of them regular.<sup>31</sup> The two

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., "M. C. commending the correction of Gascoignes Posies," Vol. I, p. 19; "R. S. In prayse of Gascoignes Posies," Vol. I, p. 20; "Nicholas Bowyer in commedation of this work," Vol. II, p. 139.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., "The introduction to the Psalme of De profundis," Vol. I, p. 59.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., in "The pleasant Fable of Ferdinando Jeronimi and Leonora de Valasco," a prose work, Vol. I, p. 394.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., "To The French Littleton," Vol. II, p. 558.

<sup>29</sup>H. E. Rollins, ed., The Paradyce of Daynty Devyses (Cambridge, U. S. A., 1927), "Being trapped in Love he complayneth," p. 31.

<sup>30</sup>H. E. Rollins, ed., (Cambridge, U. S. A., 1926).

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., "The Lover in the prayse of his beloved and comparison of her beauty," p. 56; "How to choose a faythfull freende," p. 69; and an untitled section of "The History of Pyramus and Thisbie," p. 108.



irregular ones are "A true description of Love,"<sup>32</sup> rhyming a b b a a b b a a b b a b b, and a section of "Pyramus and Thisbie," rhyming a a a a b c b c d e d e f f.<sup>33</sup>

Thus can be seen the birth and establishment of the sonnet form that has come to be called Shakespearean. There are other sonneteers in this period, but a study of their sonnets is not necessary to the purpose of this investigation. The sonnet had acquired various forms, to be sure, since its introduction into England. But the form which was to be used by the majority of the writers of sonnet sequences had become well established during the first period, as indicated by the frequency of its appearance among the sonnets published in the miscellanies and in the works of Gascoigne.

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 111. There can justifiably be doubt as to this sonnet's claim to the name. There is no definite break from the preceding verse. However, John, op. cit., p. 210, note 53, identifies it by page number. Rollins, Gorgeous Gallery, p. xxv, lists but four sonnets, omitting the one on page 111, although he invites us to compare it with the ones he lists as sonnets.

### CHAPTER III

After the establishment of the Shakespearean form during the first period, the next major development in the evolution of the sonnet was the sonnet sequence.

In 1582 the first effort in the direction of the sonnet sequence came from the press. Thomas Watson's Hecatompathia (1582)<sup>1</sup> seems to have given the cue to the sonneteering movement in England.<sup>2</sup> "Watson became the most popular poet of his time, and probably to him more than anyone else was due the fashion of the sonnet in England."<sup>3</sup> John states that Watson and John Soowthern published the first experimental cycles in 1582 and 1584.<sup>4</sup> But if Watson provided the "cue," he did so in a singular way. The "passions," as Watson called them, are eighteen-line poems consisting of three stanzas of the type used by Shakespeare in "Venus and Adonis." This was a distinct deviation from the sonnet of Surrey and the position taken by Gascoigne. Einstein states that Watson added a four-line stanza in an effort to improve the form.<sup>5</sup> But a statement to the effect that the poet had

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Watson, printed in English Reprints; Thomas Watson, Poems, ed. Edward Arber (Westminster, 1895).

<sup>2</sup>Lee, op. cit., p. xxxvii.

<sup>3</sup>Einstein, op. cit., p. 332.

<sup>4</sup>John, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>5</sup>Einstein, op. cit., p. 332.

added two couplets would be more nearly correct. The "passions"<sup>6</sup> rhyme thus: a b a b c c d e d e f f g h g h i i. By using Einstein's approach, and reversing the process, one could state that Watson "subtracted" two couplets in order to achieve the regular sonnets in his Tears of Fancie, published in 1593. The "subtraction," if the process may be so labelled, resulted in definite improvement in unity and conciseness, for the couplets of Hecatopathia tend to close each section and thus make definite breaks in the thought. This is not to malign Watson's eighteen-line poems. Judged upon their merits, the poems are smoothly executed variations of Petrarchan themes and are worth the reading, if the reader does not grudge the conceits and classical allusions. But they are not sonnets. Here is a sample:

Myne eyes dye first, which last enjoyed life,  
 Not hurt by bleared eies, but hurt with light  
 Of such a blazing starre as kindeleth strife  
 Within my brest as well by day as night:  
 And yet no poysned Cockatrice lurk't there,  
 Her vertuous beames dissuade such foolish feare.  
 Besides, I liue as yet; though blinded nowe  
 Like him, that sawe Mineruaes naked side,  
 And lost his sight (poore soule) not knowing howe;  
 Or like to him, whome euill chance betide,  
 In straying farre to light vpon that place,  
 Where midst a fount he founde Dianaes grace.  
 But he alone, who Polyphemus hight,  
 Trewe patterne was of me and all my woe,  
 Of all the rest that euer lost their sight:  
 For being blinde, yet loue possest him so,  
 That he each how'r on eu'ry dale and hill  
 Sung songes of loue to Galataea still.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>These number ninety-four, including an atrocious acrostic on pages 117-118. This number excludes the few Latin poems.

<sup>7</sup>Watson, op. cit., Number X, p. 46.

The "passions" point the way to Tears of Fancie. The "crosse meetre" and multiple rhymes are in the tradition of the Surreyan innovation, and may be considered as only a temporary step away from the Shakespearean sonnet.

The sonnets of Soowthern are characterized by poor rhyming, irregular meter, and "grotesque rusticity and plagiaristic habit."<sup>8</sup> Here is Sonnet 2 of Pandora:

The Greeke Poet to whome Bathill was the guide,  
 Made immortall, by that which he did sing:  
 And (were it so I knowe not but) of Corine,  
 We faine the patrone of the Latine Ouide,  
 And since them (Petrarque) a wise Florentine,  
 Hath turnde his Mistres into a tree of Baye.  
 And he that soong the eldest daughter of Troye,  
 In Fraunce hath made of her, an astre Divine.  
 And lyke these knowne men, can pour Soothern,  
 write too:  
 And as long as Englishe lasts, immortall you.  
 I the peane of Soothern will my fayre Diana,  
 Make thee immortall: if thou wilt give him fauour:  
 For then hee'll sing Petrark, Tien, Ouide, Ronsar:  
 And make thee Cassander, Corine, Bathyll, Laura.<sup>9</sup>

Such were Soowthern's sonnets. Insofar as can be told, his fourteen sonnets in Pandora follow the same rhyming, a b b a c d d c e e f g g f.<sup>10</sup> This is a variation of a transitional form between Petrarchan and Shakespearean, with the couplet occurring immediately after the first two quatrains. In a good sonnet this would be detrimental to unity; in Soowthern's sonnets it merely adds to the pain.

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<sup>8</sup>Lee, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup>The Facsimile Text Society, (New York, 1938), B i recto.

<sup>10</sup>"Four Epytaphes," Ibid., C iv verso and recto, credited to the Countess of Oxford, are in similar rhyme.

Watson and Sir Philip Sidney appear to have set to work on sonnet sequences about the same time.<sup>11</sup> Astrophel and Stella, however, was not published until 1591, five years after Sidney's death; hence Hecatompattia had a nine year advantage in circulation.

The sonnets in Astrophel and Stella<sup>12</sup> number 108, with sixteen different rhyme schemes. Nine of these schemes occur but once, two twice, one five times, and one six times. Here is a table, numbered for ease of reference, of Sidney's rhymes in Astrophel and Stella:

1.	a b b a	a b b a	c d c d	e e . . .	56
2.	a b a b	a b a b	c d c d	e e . . .	18
3.	a b b a	a b b a	c c d e e d	. . .	10
4.	a b a b	b a b a	c d c d	e e . . .	6
5.	a b a b	a b a b	c c d e e d	. . .	5
6.	a b a b	b a b a	c c d e e d	. . .	2
7.	a b b a	b a a b	c d c d	e e . . .	2
8.	a b b a	a b b a	c d d c	e e . . .	1
9.	a b b a	a b b a	c d d e c e	. . .	1
10.	a b b a	a b b a	c c d c c d	. . .	1
11.	a b b a	a b b a	a b a b a b	. . .	1
12.	a b b a	a b b a	c d c d c d	. . .	1
13.	a b b a	b a a b	c d d c e e	. . .	1
14.	a b a b	a b a b	c d e c d e	. . .	1
15.	a b a b	a b a b	c d d c e e	. . .	1
16.	a b a b	a b a b	c c d c c d	. . .	1

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One can tell at a glance that Astrophel and Stella is generally Petrarchan in rhyming. The major scheme uses the Petrarchan octave but has a sestet of a quatrain and the all-important couplet. Even the skillful Sidney did not use the

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<sup>11</sup>Lee, op. cit., Vol. I, p. xxxvii.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 11-65.

regular Petrarchan sestet except in two poems, numbers 12 and 14 in the above table. It must be said, however, that there was precedent among the Italians for the major form<sup>13</sup> --if Sidney required it. The major rhyme scheme, then, utilizes elements of both Petrarchan and Shakespearean forms.

Rhyme scheme number 2 is looser in octave construction and uses the three quatrains and the closing couplet. The element that holds this type back from Shakespearean form is the presence of only two rhymes in the first eight lines.

The distinguishing quality of scheme number 3 is the placement of the couplet, which is so placed in nineteen of Sidney's sonnets in the sequence, and is reminiscent of Soowthern.

The remainder of the forms are but variations and have little significance other than their existence as such, with the possible exception of numbers 4 and 6, with their prophecy of Spenser. The rhymes are five except in four sonnets, those with forms 10, 11, 12, and 16. The sequence seems isolated in its adherence to Petrarchan forms. In the sonnets published in the 1598 edition<sup>14</sup> of the poet's works, however, there were five regular Shakespearean sonnets.

A singular sidelight of Sidney is his use of hexameter. Sonnet I<sup>15</sup> (except the last line), Sonnets LXXVI<sup>16</sup> and

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<sup>13</sup>See note 4, Chapter II, p. 7.

<sup>14</sup>Lee, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 109-135.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 49.

LXXVII<sup>17</sup> are in lines of six feet.

After Astrophel and Stella, except for Spenser's works, the sonnets of Elizabethan England that have been examined in this study were for the most part Shakespearean. In 1591 there appeared, in the surreptitious edition of Sidney's Arcadia, twenty-seven sonnets of Samuel Daniel's Delia,<sup>18</sup> twenty of them regular Shakespearean. The other seven were largely variations of the type, although two<sup>19</sup> were strict Petrarchan with sestets of c d c d c d. The remaining poems of Delia, printed in 1594, number thirty-six, twenty-eight of them Shakespearean. Six of the remaining eight are, again, Shakespearean variations with no consistent pattern. Two are Spenserian, printed the year before Amoretti.

Watson's Tears of Fancie, Barnabe Barnes' Parthenophil and Parthenophe, Thomas Lodge's Phyllis, and Giles Fletcher's Licia appeared in 1593.

Tears of Fancie<sup>20</sup> contained sixty sonnets, fifty of them regular. In two of the irregular ones<sup>21</sup> the poet seems to anticipate Spenser with the rhyme scheme a b a b b c b c d e d e f f. Two sonnets are of eighteen lines,<sup>22</sup> though

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., Sonnet X, p. 93 and Sonnet XXVII, p. 102.

<sup>20</sup>Watson, op. cit., pp. 177-208.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., Number 6, p. 181, and Number 29, p. 193.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., Number 49, p. 203, and Number 59, p. 208. These consist of four quatrains and a couplet.

unlike the poems in Hecatompethia. The remainder are Shakespearean variations.

The sonnets of Barnes number 105 in Parthenophil and Parthenophe.<sup>23</sup> Thirty-five are regular Shakespearean, and forty-four are Shakespearean and Petrarchan variations, including seven examples of Sidney's major form. But the remaining twenty-six are highly singular, occurring rarely in the later sequences. These consist of fifteen lines each, rhyming thus: a b a b c d c d e f e f f g g. They are Shakespearean with one line added. But they are more: the poems fall naturally into two quatrains and a rhyme royal. This form occurs, as has been said, twenty-six times in the sequence, and there are no other fifteen-line poems in Parthenophil. Because of this, it is possible to state that Barnes originated a poetic form that no great writer used. True, the form is an adaptation and is not, strictly speaking, a sonnet form. But the extra line of f, from the viewpoint of sonnet criticism, only suspends the fall of the gg couplet a bit longer. It does not necessarily detract from effectiveness. The form, however, seems to have died with Barnes. Here is Sonnet XXXIV:

And thus continuing with outrageous fire,  
My sun, proceeding forward (to my sorrow!),  
Took up his Court; but willing to retire  
Within the Lion's den, his rage did borrow.  
But whiles within that Mansion he remained,  
How cruel was PARTHENOPHE to me!

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<sup>23</sup>Lee, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 165-316.



And when of my great sorrows I complained,  
 She lion-like, wished "they might tenfold be!"  
 Then did I rage; and in unkindly Passions,  
 I rent mine hair, and razed my tender skin;  
 And raving in such frantic fashions,  
 That with such cruelty she did begin  
 To feed the fire which I was burnéd in.  
 Can woman brook to deal so sore with men?  
 She, man's woe! learned it in the Lion's den!<sup>24</sup>

Phyllis<sup>25</sup> contains thirty-eight poems in sonnet form, twenty-six of them Shakespearean. The remaining twelve seem to be unsuccessful attempts at the regular form. Rhyme royal appears once more in the sonnet. Sonnet XI consists of two rhyme royal stanzas.<sup>26</sup>

Licia<sup>27</sup> presents no problem in classification. Of the fifty-two sonnets, only three<sup>28</sup> fail to attain the regular form.

Henry Constable, whose Diana<sup>29</sup> was printed before 1594, has variations very similar to those of Sidney; indeed, his major form is Sidney's. Here, also, a table will be of

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<sup>24</sup>Lee, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 189.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 1-22.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 8. This poem appeared first in The Phoenix Nest, (1593), ed. H. E. Rollins (Cambridge, U. S. A., 1931), p. 60. Rollins, though noting the presence of rhyme royal in a different poem in the miscellany, merely speaks (Intro. p. xxxviii) of the poem as being a "sonnet with the peculiar rhyme scheme of a b a b b c c d e d e e f f." It is probable that the poem was not intended as a sonnet, but was placed in the sequence because of its Petrarchan theme.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., pp. 23-27.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., Numbers XIX, p. 44, XXIII, p. 46, and XXV, p. 47.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pp. 75-114.

assistance:

1.	a b b a	a b b a	c d c d	e e . . .	23
2.	a b a b	c d c d	e f e f	g g . . .	20
3.	a b b a	a b b a	c d c e	d e . . .	5
4.	a b b a	a b b a	c d d c	e e . . .	3
5.	a b a b	c d c d	e f e f	f g g . . .	2
6.	a b b a	a b b a	c c d e	d e . . .	2
7.	a b b a	a b b a	c d c d	c d . . .	1
8.	a b a b	b c b c	c d c d	e e . . .	1
9.	a b a b	c d c d	e f e f	a a . . .	1
10.	a b a b	c d c d	e f e f	b b . . .	1
11.	a b a b	c d c d	e f e f	c c . . .	1
12.	a b a b	c d c d	e f e f	d d . . .	1
13.	a b b a	c d d c	e f f e	g g . . .	1
14.	a b a b	c b c b	d e d e	f f . . .	1
15.	a b b a	a b b a	b c b c	d d . . .	1
16.	a b a b	c a c a	a d a d	e e . . .	1
17.	a b a b	a c a c	d a d a	e e . . .	1
18.	a b b a	a b b a	c d c d	b b . . .	1

The sequence is credited as coming from the pens of H. C. and others. If this be true, it would be difficult to know the authorship of each poem. It is probable, however, that Constable followed Sidney in rhyming. The Sidney rhyme scheme is predominant in the early decades, the Shakespearean in the latter. But whatever the authorship, the existence of the twenty Shakespearean rhymes indicates the popularity of the form at that time.

William Percy's Coelia<sup>30</sup> and the anonymous Zepheria,<sup>31</sup> both published in 1594, were predominantly Shakespearean. Fourteen of the twenty sonnets in Coelia and twenty-one of the forty in Zepheria (insofar as can be determined) are regular. The irregular ones, in both cases, are Shake-

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., pp. 137-151.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., pp. 153-178.

spearean variations.

The sonnets in Michael Drayton's Idea<sup>32</sup> were printed in four editions between 1594 and 1619.<sup>33</sup> In the 1594 edition, consisting of eighteen sonnets, seven were Shakespearean, and the other eleven were variations of a blend of Petrarchan and Shakespearean. But by 1619 the poet's sixty-four sonnets included forty-five regular Shakespearean ones.

Spenser's Amoretti,<sup>34</sup> published in 1595, presents no problem in classification. Five sonnets only of the total of eighty-eight fall short of the Spenserian rhyme. Four of these vary only in the closing couplet: two have aa,<sup>35</sup> two bb.<sup>36</sup> The fifth is Shakespearean.<sup>37</sup> Sonnet XLV<sup>38</sup> betrays the influence of an earlier work. The poet ends the poem with an alexandrine.

In 1596 three predominantly Shakespearean sequences were published. These were Bartholomew Griffin's Fidessa, Richard Linche's Diella, and William Smith's Chloris. Fidessa<sup>39</sup> contains sixty-two sonnets, of which forty-seven are

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., pp. 179-212.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 180. Lee's note.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., pp. 212-260.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., Number XI, p. 222, and Number XLIV, p. 238.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., Number V, p. 219, and Number XII, p. 222.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., Number VIII, p. 220.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 239.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pp. 297-320.

regular. Diella<sup>40</sup> contains thirty-eight sonnets, thirty-four of them regular. And of the forty-nine in Chloris,<sup>41</sup> forty-five are Shakespearean. Again, the irregular ones are Shakespearean variants.

The last sequence to be considered is Robert Tofte's Laura,<sup>42</sup> published in 1597. By this time the reaction against sonneteering had begun, and this was the only cycle to appear in that year.<sup>43</sup> The position of the sonnets, at the end of the period, limited their influence and their importance. The rhymes of Tofte are radical adaptations of the prevailing form, but they are adaptations. Two rhyme forms occur alternately throughout the sequence, which is in three parts of forty poems each. The odd-numbered poems consist of two quatrains and two couplets, thus: a b a b c c d e d e f f. The even-numbered poems are of two quatrains and one couplet: a b a b c d c d e e. There are scattered variations in rhyming, usually consisting of repetition of a rhyme.

With Tofte, this survey of the Elizabethan sonnet sequences ends. There were other sequences in the period, but they were either concerned with themes other than Petrarchan (usually religious) or were not published until the next

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., pp. 297-320.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., pp. 321-349.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., pp. 351-424.

<sup>43</sup>John, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

century.

The sonnets which were published in the last three miscellanies are few in comparison with the large number of sonnets in the sequences. The sonnets in the miscellanies embody no new forms. In The Phoenix Nest (1593),<sup>44</sup> eleven of the total of fifteen sonnets are Shakespearean. In Englands Helicon (1600),<sup>45</sup> seven of the total of twelve are Shakespearean. The sonnets in Davisons Poetical Rapsody (1602)<sup>46</sup> total fifty-one. Thirty are Sidneyan variations, nine are regular Shakespearean, and fourteen are Shakespearean variations. These sonnets reflect the forms used in the later Elizabethan sequences.

During this period new developments in the sonnet form occurred within the sequences. But even though Sidney and Spenser contributed to the popularity of the sonnet, the Shakespearean form remained the predominant one in the sequences.

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<sup>44</sup>H. E. Rollins, ed., (Cambridge, U. S. A., 1931).

<sup>45</sup>Macdonald, op. cit.

<sup>46</sup>H. E. Rollins, ed., A Poetical Rapsody (2 vols.; (Cambridge, U. S. A., 1931)).

#### CHAPTER IV

When the sonnet entered England, it did so as an Italian form in an English mind. This concept will help one to understand the subsequent development of the sonnet. It is not so much that difference of race, whatever that difference may have been, would have prejudiced conformity to the Petrarchan "norm." But the differences in poetic forms, degree of literary development, the other less definable factors such as temper of mind, climate, ways of thought--in short, the difference in culture--dictated the deviation.

The arbitrary division of the years of the English sonnet development into two periods was chosen because the sonnet form that came to be called Shakespearean was originated and established during the first period. This first period, since it is one of innovation and pioneering, numbers few sonnets in comparison with the second. The wealth of material in the second period is a corollary reason for the division, since the existence of such a large amount of sonnet poetry, because of the different view it would give of the material, would necessarily require a separation. And, of course, the nature of the presentation of the sonnets of the second period further demands the division.

During the early years of the first period of sonnet development in 16th century England, the deviations from the Petrarchan rhyme scheme seemed to follow a pattern of devel-

opment; at least, a pattern can be imposed by the arrangement of the sonnets of Wyatt and Surrey into a logical progression. In the absence of reliable dates, such an arrangement is permissible.

As has been shown, Wyatt seems to have misunderstood the use of the Italian sestet, for the pattern of deviation can be traced to his misuse of it. Had a Sidney been in the place of Wyatt as pioneer, the Petrarchan form might have been retained intact. Indeed, deviations might conceivably have been so discountenanced as to forbid their subsequent development. But Wyatt, starting with the supposed initial misconception, began a pattern of deviation that, it appears in retrospect, led necessarily to the Shakespearean form.

Another contributing cause of deviation is probably the relative difficulty of rhyming in a Germanic tongue as compared to a Romance language. This would explain why Wyatt to a very small degree and Surrey to a much greater used as many as seven rhymes rather than the Petrarchan four or five. In the Petrarchan sonnet there are two sounds that must be used four times each. In the Shakespearean sonnet each sound is repeated once.

The development of the Shakespearean sonnet form was startlingly rapid. Since Wyatt left for Italy in 1527 and Surrey was beheaded not later than 1547,<sup>1</sup> it can be safely

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<sup>1</sup>Ward and Waller, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 175.

said that the form had been born and had begun to flourish within a period of less than twenty years. There is nothing else in the development of the sonnet during the first period that approaches the importance of the Surrey innovation. After Surrey the sonnets that were written during the period may be considered merely as further examples of forms already in use, although there were minor variations.

The practice of collecting the sonnets into sequences is the most readily apparent and most important development of the second period of sonnet development. Watson began this with Hecatopathia, and from 1582 until the end of the century the practice prevailed. The sonnets, so-called, of Watson's Hecatopathia appear to constitute a momentary arrest to the progress of the Shakespearean form. They may be considered, however, to be a variation of a variation. The Shakespearean form, however, had become so entrenched as to repudiate the use of such terminology. The eighteen-line poems are certainly not directly connected to Petrarch in rhyming. By reason of their singularity and number, they can be considered to be a definite pattern, apart from the trend.

The rhyme form of which Sidney made most use in Astrophel and Stella is another form which deserves recognition as a major one, especially since it was the most popular form with Constable as well. The only explanation for its use seems to be that it suited the needs of the poet; beyond that it is difficult to go.



The combination of two quatrains and the rhyme royal stanza used by Barnes in twenty-six of his poems in Parthenophil and Parthenophe is the result of an experiment that could have changed the development of the sonnet if a more skilful sonneteer had adopted it. Although this did not happen, the form deserves recognition for its merit and the number of examples. And, of course, the Spenserian sonnet form has long been considered a major one.

Consideration of the so-called "break" in the sonnet has been postponed until this point. The turning-point in the Petrarchan sonnet occurs at the ninth line, or beginning of the sestet. With the development of the sonnet in England, the turning necessarily began to move toward the couplet, for there, in the epigrammatic close, was the natural place for it. And so it did move. It would not be possible, however, to trace the movement of the break in the 16th century sonnet apart from the rhyme scheme. The rhyming moved away from the Petrarchan origin; the break followed the rhyming, as it must.

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