

## ARE WYATT'S POEMS IN EGERTON MS 2711 IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER?

Egerton MS 2711, in the British Library, contains a good many poems by Sir Thomas Wyatt. The authorship of a number of the poems conventionally thought to be his has been called into doubt,<sup>1</sup> but most scholars appear to remain convinced that the Egerton (E) poems published in such editions as the one by Kenneth Muir and Patricia Thomson,<sup>2</sup> or by me,<sup>3</sup> are indeed Wyatt's. I do not intend to re-open debate about this matter here. Rather, I intend to consider the question whether the poems are in chronological sequence.

The idea that they are has of late become distinctly old-fashioned. Thus, for example, Muir and Thomson say (xi-xii): 'Most of E was copied in 1537, or earlier, before Wyatt left for Spain. There is no reason to think that the poems were copied in the order of composition. But the later poems, including those in Wyatt's hand, were written in Spain and afterwards, between 1537 and 1542'. Inasmuch as the editors would allow a distinction between a pre-1537 section and a later one, this statement seems more moderate than one by Richard Harrier, who claims that 'the poems in *E* are *not* entered in order of composition'.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Wyatt's latest editor, R. A. Rebholz, finds 'unwarranted' (in general, anyway) 'the assumption that the order of the poems in the Egerton MS corresponds to the order of their composition'.<sup>5</sup>

It would, I think, be reasonable to argue that such an assumption is unwarranted if no claim to the contrary had been advanced. But it had, by A. K. Foxwell in *A Study of Sir Thomas Wyatt's Poems*.<sup>6</sup> At the end of her book, Foxwell gives as 'Appendix D' (147-52) a table of poems in the Egerton MS 'Showing Chronological Order' and comments about the chronology of the poems are offered *passim* elsewhere in her study.

Of course, one must admit that Foxwell's table looks a little extreme. Thus she dates the first four poems as approximately 1527-28, postulates that the next group of poems dates 1528-32, and so on. I do not wish to assert that the manuscript consists of sections quite as neat as this, or that dates can be so confidently assigned. Indeed, Foxwell seems to invalidate her own belief that the poems show chronological order when she dates 'What no, perdie, ye may be sure' as written around 1526-27 although according to her own approach

<sup>1</sup> See particularly Raymond Southall, *The Courtly Maker* (Oxford, 1964), chapter I and appendix A.

<sup>2</sup> *Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt* (Liverpool, 1969).

<sup>3</sup> *Sir Thomas Wyatt: Collected Poems* (Oxford, 1975).

<sup>4</sup> *The Canon of Sir Thomas Wyatt's Poetry* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), 4.

<sup>5</sup> *Sir Thomas Wyatt: the Complete Poems* (Harmondsworth, 1978; repr. New Haven, 1981), 12.

<sup>6</sup> London, 1911; repr. New York, 1964.

it would in that case be an impossible oddity in a section which she considers to have been written between 1533-36.

Nevertheless, I think there is a serious risk that modern scholars have too readily rejected the position which Foxwell adopted in 1911, and I am particularly worried by the fact that the possibility that Foxwell was right — or at least largely so — has not been examined. The question is, after all, one of considerable importance. If the poems are in chronological order, we would have an opportunity for studying Wyatt's development as a poet, while otherwise that opportunity is denied to us (no primary source other than E is considered to offer it). I therefore propose to examine the relevant evidence here, so as to determine as nearly as possible whether Foxwell was right or wrong.

Little can be deduced from the make-up of the manuscript in terms of hands, although that is not to say that in this regard E reveals nothing.

The sequence of the poems in E is adhered to fully by Harrier. Muir and Thomson's edition also presents the poems in the order of the manuscript, except that the following minor changes have been introduced: the three satires (CV-CVII) have been disengaged from their context, as in E they appear after LXXIV, LXXVI, and LXXXIII respectively; the Penitential Psalms have been likewise set apart in the edition, where they are offered as CVIII although in E they precede Muir and Thomson's CIV. The arrangement in my edition follows that of Muir and Thomson's, although if I edited the poems again I would print them in the sequence of the manuscript. I think that if even there is only a *possibility* that the order of the manuscript reflects that of composition, it is disadvantageous to change the sequence of the primary source. Rebholz, who prints the poems largely according to the genres they belong to, prevents the reader from seeing what may well be a significant pattern in the manuscript.

The following are the important hands in the manuscript as far as the question of chronology is concerned:

1. Hand A. This is the hand of a secretary, who has copied ff. 4<sup>r</sup>-49<sup>v</sup> (Behold, Love, thy power how she despiseth' — the end of 'Mine own John Poyntz, since ye delight to know').<sup>7</sup> After being interrupted by Wyatt on f. 50<sup>r</sup> (assuming that Wyatt did not later use space left blank here by the scribe), this secretary went on to copy ff. 50<sup>v</sup>-50<sup>r</sup> ('My mother's maids, when they did sew and spin' — 'Unstable dream, according to the place'). Wyatt subsequently used f. 54<sup>v</sup>. Then the secretary copied further poems into ff. 55<sup>r</sup>-62<sup>r</sup> (Process of time worketh such wonder' — the end of 'Lo what it is to love').

*Comment.* Essentially, this scribe copied out a very large number of poems in E which were no doubt given to him as one group. It may well be that the scribe was meant to copy even more poems than he did before another secretary took over at the bottom of f. 62<sup>r</sup>, and yet another on f. 64<sup>r</sup>. I think we must

<sup>7</sup> I refer to poems by their first lines as they appear in my edition, to facilitate the process of finding them in any edition of Wyatt. Normally, I quote poetry from this (modernized) edition. To indicate the order of poems in the Egerton MS, I also refer to folio pagination there.

note with interest that hand *A*'s labour was uninterrupted from f. 4<sup>r</sup> until f. 49<sup>v</sup>. The likely reason is that the scribe was given a collection of Wyatt's foul papers to copy as 'neat work' (which it certainly is). There is in principle no good argument against the assumption that those foul papers were in the order in which the poems were composed.

2. Hand *B*. Hand *B* is Wyatt's hand. Wyatt has provided many of the *E* poems with the marginal sign `Tho' — undoubtedly for 'Thomas'. He used this abbreviation also when signing such documents as letters, and I agree with Harrier (11) that the hand is his. I list the `Tho' signs in my edition, including a number of instances omitted by Harrier. `Tho' first accompanies the first poem; after that it occurs intermittently; it only becomes frequent after 'Like to these unmeasurable mountains' (f. 24<sup>r</sup>) and occurs for the last time in the margin of 'If waker care, if sudden pale colour' (f. 66<sup>v</sup>). Wyatt has also corrected many of the poems which he did not write out himself. His corrections only occur at a fairly late stage in the manuscript: the first poem unmistakably corrected in his hand is 'Who hath heard of such cruelty before' (f. 29<sup>r</sup>), and the last poem revised by Wyatt is again 'If waker care, if sudden pale colour' (f. 66<sup>v</sup>). There are also a number of poems entered by Wyatt himself. These occur at quite an advanced stage in *E*. The first two poems in Wyatt's hand, both on f. 50<sup>r</sup>, are 'Desire, alas, my master and my foe' and 'Venomous thorns that are so sharp and keen'. After further entries by hand *A*, Wyatt then wrote two poems on f. 54<sup>v</sup>: 'In doubtful breast, whilst motherly pity' and 'Of Carthage he, that worthy warrior'. After several other entries, Wyatt's hand occurs again on f. 66<sup>r</sup>, entering 'From these high hills as when a spring doth fall' and 'Prove whether I do change, my dear'. The next poem ('If waker care, if sudden pale colour') was not written out by Wyatt, but he starts again on f. 67<sup>r</sup> with 'So feeble is the thread that doth the burden stay' and continues with 'Tagus, farewell, that westward with thy streams' (f. 69<sup>r</sup>), 'Of purpose Love chose first for to be blind' (f. 69<sup>r</sup>) and 'What rage is this? What furor of what kind' (f. 69<sup>v</sup>), as well as 'From thought to thought, from hill to hill love doth me lead' (f. 70<sup>r</sup>). The next poem, 'Vulcan begot me, Minerva me taught' is not written in Wyatt's 'italic holograph' as Harrier claims (213), but, as has been thought by others, by the person who also copied (immediately after this poem) two letters written by Wyatt to his son. Wyatt's hand occurs again after a long gap, writing out 'Love to give law unto his subject hearts' on f. 86<sup>r</sup> and continuing with his version of the Penitential Psalms until f. 98<sup>v</sup>. He then concluded the volume with 'When Dido feasted first the wandering Trojan knight' (ff. 100<sup>r</sup>-101<sup>v</sup>).

*Comment.* The evidence suggests strongly that Wyatt came to involve himself more and more actively in proceedings as time went on. It may well be that it had been his original plan to make the volume something like a 'finished product' when scribe *A* started his work. If so, the original plan perhaps became harder and harder to carry out. As this became apparent to the extent that scribe *A* was not going to see it through, Wyatt first wrote out two poems himself on f. 50<sup>r</sup>, then allowed the scribe to continue on ff. 50<sup>v</sup>-54<sup>r</sup>, whereupon

he entered another two poems, then left the scribe to copy the poems on ff. 55<sup>r</sup>-62<sup>r</sup>. After this, for whatever reason, scribe *A* ceased his efforts. Although other scribes went on, they never copied as much, and Wyatt increasingly came to write out the poems themselves — either copying them from foul papers or composing them directly into the manuscript. Presumably it remained his ambition to finalize the poems as much as possible. It is very likely that some of the least revised poems, at least, such as 'Venomous thorns that are so sharp and keen', had already been perfected in Wyatt's foul papers before he copied them out. The poem immediately preceding this, 'Desire, alas, my master and my foe', has been heavily revised, but probably because Wyatt did not like the version which he first wrote out (as a copy) rather than that we have to suppose that he had not composed the poem before. In other words, the revisions would seem to be aimed at perfection and permanence rather than the product of a process of composition starting in *E* itself.<sup>8</sup> I am inclined to believe that the main significance of the 'Tho' signs is that Wyatt supplied his 'Tho' whenever he thought a poem was in principle completed to his satisfaction. The signs presumably become more abundant after 'Like to these unmeasurable mountains' because earlier poems had, with some exceptions, not yet been so carefully checked. This version of events would seem to be indicated by the fact that the first definite signs of revision and the first 'Tho' occur at much the same point -- f. 29<sup>v</sup> and f. 24<sup>r</sup> respectively. It would be a mistake to think that Wyatt did not use 'Tho' when he had copied out a poem in his own hand: thus it accompanies his first entries, for example, on f. 50<sup>r</sup>. However, where towards the end of the manuscript 'Tho' does not accompany Wyatt's entries, as in the case of 'Prove whether I do change, my dear' (f. 66<sup>r</sup>), it is very probable that he did not yet see the poems as necessarily satisfactory -- indeed, this poem is a fragment, ending with the incomplete line 'And if ye find ...' Thus the entire weight of the evidence appears to favour the assumption that *E* reflects a historical process: the poet first had earlier poems copied out, then increasingly put in later poems himself, and used 'Tho' wherever he felt that the poems were in principle satisfactory, although many of the earliest and last poems never received this sign of approval. We may fairly confidently assume that Wyatt did not find time to go thoroughly through early poems not marked 'Tho', and that he died before he had managed to revise (and to 'sign') the last poems in his own hand.

3. Hand *C*. This secretary hand (which is much less fine than hand *A*) is responsible for poetic material occurring on f. 62<sup>r</sup>-f. 63<sup>v</sup> ('I lead a life unpleasant, nothing glad' — stanza four of 'Most wretched heart, most miserable').

4. Hand *D*. This secretary hand took over from hand *C* on f. 64<sup>r</sup>, starting with stanza five of 'Most wretched heart, most miserable', and finished on f. 66<sup>v</sup>, with 'If waker care, if sudden pale colour', although interrupted by Wyatt, who

<sup>8</sup> Some of the later poems in Wyatt's hand, however, were undoubtedly composed directly into the manuscript, as I point out further on in my paper.

entered 'From these high hills as when a spring doth fall' and 'Prove whether I do change, my dear' on f. 66<sup>r</sup>.

*Comment.* Harrier (9) is wrong in thinking that 'If waker care, if sudden pale colour' was entered by hand *C*. Comparison with e.g. 'You that in love find luck and abundance' (f. 64<sup>v</sup>) shows clearly that both poems were entered by the same scribe. It looks as though things were getting somewhat unsettled at this point: after the leisurely elegance of hand *A*, the work of hands *C* and *D* looks comparatively untidy, and neither scribe appears to have been in Wyatt's employment for long. After them, the manuscript's essentially scribal portion is at an end, and Wyatt's hand becomes the main one in the volume.

Other hands in *E* are probably of no importance in trying to establish its chronology. The most interesting of them is (5) Hand *E*. This is the italic hand which entered 'Vulcan begot me, Minerva me taught' on f. 70<sup>r</sup>, followed by Wyatt's two letters to his son, on ff. 71<sup>r</sup>-73<sup>r</sup>. The first of these letters is headed 'from him out of spayne to his son then xvii yeres old'. Clearly both the poem and the letters were copied by someone who knew that *E* was a volume of Wyatt poems, hence the reference to 'him'. Quite possibly the material was added by this person after Wyatt was dead: such is suggested not only by the heading just quoted, but also by the text of 'Vulcan begot me, Minerva me taught', which is, as I explain in my edition (241), sufficiently like that of *T* (Tottel's Miscellany) to make it possible that in this instance the *E* poem was copied from that text, which was first published in 1557 (Wyatt died in 1542). The poem also occurs in the British Library's Harleian MS 78, in a version which appears to be both better and earlier. Another hand (*F*) which seems to be post-Wyatt is that of the poet Nicholas Grimald, who not only is responsible for a number of unauthorized revisions, but who also added on f. 7<sup>v</sup> a poem which looks like a variant of Wyatt's 'The restful place, reviver of my smart'. The lines by Grimald are unmistakably an insertion in *E*, and not part of its original plan. Likewise, on f. 24<sup>v</sup>, following 'Madame, withouten many words', another hand (*G*: perhaps a woman's) has added an 'Aunswer' which again in no sense seems to be part of *E*'s original make-up.<sup>9</sup>

Basically, then, the disposition of hands in the manuscript does suggest that, at least to an extent, the poems may well be in the order of composition. If the question is only viewed in terms of hands, however, this conclusion is not altogether inescapable. Let us for example consider the relationship between the first group of poems entered by *A* (on ff. 4<sup>r</sup>-49<sup>v</sup>) and the two poems which Wyatt wrote out on f. 50<sup>r</sup>. It is tempting to think that Wyatt had first instructed the scribe to copy out earlier poems, and then copied some recent ones into *E* himself. However, it is theoretically possible that the two poems which he wrote out were *not* recent, and that he was merely copying (and in part revising) poems composed long ago. But this reasoning does not seem to tally with the

<sup>9</sup> Before the Penitential Psalms, yet another hand has entered Surrey's 'The great Macedon ...' on f. 85<sup>v</sup>; this hand may be that of John Harington the Elder.

weight of the evidence in its totality, and in particular it does not accord well with what some of the poems themselves suggest — or sometimes firmly indicate — about their dates of composition. It may not be immediately obvious why we should think (*pace* Muir and Thomson) that the first two poems in Wyatt's hand (on f. 50<sup>r</sup>) are part of a section of 'later' poems 'written in Spain and afterwards'. But the situation changes when we come to f. 54<sup>v</sup>. Here, one of the two poems in Wyatt's hand ends with the line: 'At Monçon thus I restless rest in Spain'.

Wyatt was sent to Spain as ambassador for Henry VIII in 1537. In October, he wrote a letter to Lord Lisle from Barbastra, 'bysydes Mountzon'. At that time, then, he must also have written 'Of Carthage he, that worthy warrior', which contains the reference to Monçon. Although we cannot determine the exact date, it is obvious that the poem can in any case not have been written before 1537.

It would still be theoretically possible, of course, that all the poems which precede this one in E were written at a later date. We do not know when scribe A did his copying. But in practice I think we may feel sure that, whenever the copying took place, the poems in the section ff. 4<sup>r</sup>-49<sup>v</sup> bear clear marks of composition prior to 1537.

Those marks as such have little to do with the question of hands. Rather, the date of several of the poems can be established with some (or occasionally with complete) confidence on the basis of (a) references within them (which think is the most telling evidence), and (b) our knowledge of the sources from which the poems derive. I shall consider each of these two matters in turn.

The first wholly unambiguous reference to a historical event occurs in 'Who-so list to hunt: I know where is an hind'. The poem describes how the poet is one of those chasing the deer/dear, but gives up his futile pursuit, as

... grayen with diamonds in letters plain  
There is writtten her fair neck round about:  
'Noli me tangere, for Caesar's I am,  
And wild for to hold, though I seem tame.'

'Caesar's I am' must mean 'I am Henry VIII's', as there is no other Caesar Wyatt can have in mind, and, unless he is alluding to a Caesar who is alive, the word 'Caesar' seems pointless.

In my edition, I concur with the view of William H. Wyatt, according to whom, as I say (xv) 'the intimacy between the poet and Anne Boleyn probably began in 1525 or 1526. When he discovered that he had a rival in the King himself, and when in the late summer of 1527 the Court knew that Henry intended to marry Anne, Wyatt presumably confessed his former illicit affair to the King'. Obviously, then, the poem was written around 1527. The poet is only just giving up his pursuit, but he cannot avoid doing so, as his rival is 'Caesar' himself, who has definitively staked his claim.

I see it as by no means fanciful to suppose that a line in 'Alas the grief and deadly woeful smart' refers to the same incident at the same time. Here, Wyatt

writes in line 24 that 'price hath privilege troth to prevent' (E has *trouth*; although I modernized this into *truth* in 1975, I now prefer *troth*). The poet is saying that Henry VIII, because of his wealth, is privileged enough to be able to buy Anne Boleyn's affection, to the detriment of Wyatt's loyal devotion (although *trouth* no doubt also means 'true love', which makes *truth*, too, a legitimate modernization). It is clearly useful to read these two poems in relation to each other, as well as in relation to what we know about Wyatt's life. And I think that these two early poems in E (poems V and VII, on ff. 5<sup>v</sup>-6<sup>v</sup> and f. 7<sup>v</sup>) may well indicate that the poems in this manuscript were composed from about 1527 (even if A's copying was much later). We shall work on this hypothesis unless we find a poem further on in the manuscript which incontrovertibly has an earlier date.

To suggest that the earliest (and first) poems in E date from c. 1527 is not to suggest that Wyatt wrote no poems before that date. He may well have done, and possibly they survive. In Devonshire MS Add. 17492 (British Library) there is a poem 'Is it possible', which contains the intriguing lines; 'As men wed ladies by licence and leave / All is possible' (29-30). The expression 'by licence and leave' is an allusion to the wedding ceremony, but also to the woman's lawlessness and her dismissal of her husband. Wyatt may here be referring to his wife, Elizabeth Brooke, whom he married in 1520 but later left because of her unfaithfulness to him. If so, the poem is likely to be earlier than the two E poems just considered, as his sense of desertion there evidently is caused by Anne Boleyn. But my concern is with the poems in E and their sequence, not with poems Wyatt may have written at an earlier time. One may well believe, as I do, that Wyatt wrote poems prior to 1527, but that does not affect our assumption that the first poems in E date c. 1527 and that other poems in it which we can date are later.

References to Anne Boleyn abound in Wyatt's poems, but our discussion cannot do justice to them all, as for our purpose only the allusions which allow us to establish dates are important. In this respect, useful evidence is provided by 'Mine old dear enemy, my froward master', a large portion of which occurs in E from f. 8<sup>r</sup> on. The poem presents a debate between Cupid and Wyatt in the court of Reason. In the penultimate stanza, Cupid declares that he gave Wyatt a woman, 'his only wealth and bliss'. This is followed by:

And at this word, with deadly shrigh and cry,  
 'Thou gaye her me', quod I, 'but by and by  
 Thou took her straight from me, that woe worth thee!  
 'Not I', quod he, 'but price that is well worthy.'<sup>10</sup> 140

In my notes on line 140, I first of all drew attention to the fact that the use of the word 'price' here echoes that of 'Alas the grief and deadly woeful smart', where I take it that Henry's 'price hath privilege truth to prevent' (line 24). As, apart from the brief fragment 'But sithens you it essay to kill', the only poem

<sup>10</sup> The form 'worthy' is an editorial emendation; the manuscript has 'worth'.

which intervenes between the two which I see as connected is 'Whoso list to hunt: I know where is an hind', I think it safe to conclude that Cupid is here making the point (accepted by Wyatt) that it is not he who has taken Anne Boleyn away from Wyatt, but that Henry VIII did so. That also means that very probably this poem, too, was written c. 1527. The two references to a superior 'price' might be a little puzzling by themselves, but their sense is obvious once we remember that they occur immediately before and after 'Caesar's I am'.

A pre-occupation with a rival seems to be a marked feature of these early poems. That is not to say, of course, that we do not find it anywhere else in Wyatt's work. It occurs in 'The answer that ye made to me, my dear' (f. 63<sup>r</sup>-63<sup>v</sup>), which, if the order of poems in E reflects that of composition, cannot be early. But it is interesting to observe the nature of the reference to 'another' (line 9) in this poem. In the poems we have considered, Wyatt is found complaining about desertion by the woman. Here, however, he says (lines 6-7): 'I have no wrong where I can claim no right / Nought ta'en me fro' where I nothing have had'. In other words, a significant difference is that there has not been any commitment on the lady's part which she has broken. There is therefore no reason for thinking that this poem refers to a similar set of circumstances. The underlying situation is quite unlike the one which appears to have prompted the examples we have examined. By contrast, other poems close to those examples in E do seem to confirm our thinking. One such is 'For to love her for her looks lovely' (f. 14<sup>r</sup>). Here, Wyatt trusted 'by truth to have had redress' (line 3), but he finds that instead the woman 'hath made another promise' (line 4), where 'another'<sup>11</sup> means 'to another' — very likely again Henry VIII. If so, we can well understand why the poet concludes with the view that 'perils appear to abundantly / For to love her'; he has just said (line 13) that 'at this time too great is the press', and he no doubt considers that he has even more to fear from the King than from Anne Boleyn. If the word 'press' refers to a 'throng' of rivals, the reference may have been accurate with regard to Anne Boleyn's behaviour, or perhaps Wyatt deliberately diverted attention from the King as his chief competitor. This last possibility would seem to fit in well with what Wyatt says about his heart in 'Though I myself be bridled of my mind' (f. 21<sup>r</sup>): that 'Though other be present, thou art not all behind' (line 8). We may here note that poems of this nature (alluding to Henry VIII as a rival) are not confined to E. A striking example — probably by Wyatt, although not in his hand or ascribed to him — occurs in the Devonshire manuscript: 'Alas, poor man, what hap have I'. Addressing his heart, he says, 'Unwise thou were to desire place / Whereas another is possessed' (lines 11-12). That the other lover is again Henry VIII appears to be indicated by the last two lines of the poem: 'I was unhappy, and that I prove, / To love above my poor degree'. An intriguing poem in Tottel's Miscellany begins as follows:

<sup>11</sup> E has 'an othre' (two words).



I see that chance hath chosen me  
Thus secretly to live in pain,  
And to another given the fee  
Of all my loss to have the gain.  
By chance assigned thus do I serve,  
And other have that I deserve.

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Here there is no reference to the poet's loving above his 'poor degree', but the reference to 'another' could easily again refer to the King, and there is presumably significance in Wyatt's use of the word 'secretly' and his shift from 'another' to 'other' in the final line.

Very likely these poems, too, belong to much the same date as the ones in E which allude to 'another' who has taken away a woman who seemed loyal but who, once 'price' showed its weight, was willing to forsake the poet. Of course, some of these poems may well have been written some time after 1527; but they do appear to refer to the same situation, and thus to constitute some sort of group composed in 1527 or not much later. As we shall see, however, it would be wrong to conclude from this, either that Wyatt was obsessed with Anne Boleyn to such an extent that he gave no attention to other women or, on the other hand, that Anne absorbed his mind only around 1527, and not much later.

An example of a poem probably fairly early but not concerned with Anne Boleyn's yielding to Henry VIII is 'Madame, withouten many words' (f. 24<sup>v</sup>). In the c. 1527 poems we have considered, the relationship between the woman and 'another' is viewed as an inevitable *fait accompli*. Here, however, such a relationship is seen as a possibility for the future. Wyatt asks the lady to give him yea or nay; if the answer is 'nay' they will be 'Friends as before': 'Ye shall another man obtain, / And I mine own, and yours no more'. This conclusion still keeps open the possibility that the lady will say 'yea', and if, instead, she chooses to obtain 'another man', there is no indication here that that person would be Henry VIII. In other words, Wyatt is writing about another woman, and another situation. It is, of course, unlikely that -- however intense his involvement with Anne Boleyn -- he did not seek the company of other women once her commitment to the King became definite. We may find a reference to Mary Souche, one of Jane Seymour's maids of honour, in 'Marvel no more although' (f. 35<sup>f</sup>-35<sup>v</sup>). And very much later in the manuscript 'If waker care, if sudden pale colour' shows both former involvement with Anne Boleyn and a new relationship with another woman. But we shall examine that poem with more care at the appropriate moment.

Meanwhile, the earlier poems not only continue to allude to Anne Boleyn, but can sometimes be specifically dated. However, we must deal with one line, in 'Love and fortune and my mind remember' (f. 31<sup>f</sup>), which may seem to belie the argument advanced so far. In line 11, Wyatt states that 'more than the half is run of my course'. If we take this literally, we would have to conclude that Wyatt was probably over thirty-five (traditionally half a life-span) when he wrote this poem. In that event, we would here suddenly have a poem written after 1538. It is of course conceivable that so late a poem does occur in E at

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this point. But we do not have to take the statement as literally indicating Wyatt's age. The poem is, after all, a translation of one by Petrarch. Presumably Wyatt translated the poem because he thought it a good one. He may well have found it at the same time a convenient vehicle for conveying something about his own plight. If so, he perhaps decided that he had no real cause for eliminating from his translation a line which only in a narrow physical sense did not fit his own position. We may remember that it is not uncommon for poets who suffer to regard (or present) themselves as older than they are. And I am inclined to attach more importance to the evidence supplied by 'Sometime I fled the fire that me brent' (f. 40r), which, so far as we know, is not a translation, and which is therefore more likely to be 'autobiographical' in its allusions. It is worth quoting in full:

Sometime I fled the fire that me brent  
By sea, by land, by water and by wind;  
And now I follow the coals that be quent  
From Dover to Calais against my mind.  
Lo how desire is both sprung and spent!  
And he may see that whilom was so blind,  
And all his labour now he laugh to scorn  
Meshed in the briers that erst was all to-torn.

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As the sense of the poem continues to give difficulties (see Rebholz's punctuation and comments), it is perhaps useful to paraphrase the poem first, as follows: 'At one time I ran away from the fire which burnt me by sea, by land, by water and by wind, while now I reluctantly follow the extinguished coals from Dover to Calais. Look how desire can be both brought on and exhausted! And he who was at first torn to pieces while he was entangled in the briers can now laugh contemptuously about all the painful energy he has wasted.' Wyatt compares his former feelings for Anne Boleyn with those he experiences while accompanying her (and Henry VIII) from Dover to Calais in October 1532. What was once a fire has now been reduced to extinguished coals, and the poet is no longer bothered by briers which first tore him to pieces but which have now ceased to exist: his passion for Anne has vanished (or so he claims).

Thus, if we are to believe Wyatt's own declarations, his feelings for Anne Boleyn changed remarkably between about 1527 and 1532. That the woman alluded to is indeed Anne Boleyn we need not doubt; she did cross the Channel in 1532, and there is simply no argument in favour of the assumption that Wyatt, in writing the poem, was thinking of anyone else. It is striking that, despite his assertion that his desire was 'spent', he obviously still felt sufficiently involved with Anne Boleyn to write a poem about her. We shall see that this is not his last reference to Anne Boleyn. And a poem probably not written long before makes plain the ambivalence of his feelings to her: 'What word is that, that changeth not' (f. 33<sup>v</sup>). But ambivalence is not the same as total dedication, and it seems that Wyatt's attitude in 1532 (not long before Anne Boleyn's marriage to the King) was different from that in 1527 — a change quite compatible with such interests in other women as are evident from poems like 'Madame, withouten many words' discussed above.

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The total picture which emerges is that so far we have, for all these poems copied by scribe A, a starting date of about 1527, and a terminal date of 1532. We have now considered poems from f. 5<sup>v</sup> ('Alas the grief and deadly woeful smart') to f. 40<sup>r</sup>. It is impossible to say with certainty that all of the poems in this section were written between 1527 and 1532, but all such evidence as we have favours the assumption that they were. That does not mean, of course, that all the poems between f. 5<sup>v</sup> and f. 40<sup>r</sup> are in chronological order, but, again, there appear to be better grounds for believing that they are than that they are not.

The next poem in E ('He is not dead that sometime hath a fall' — also on f. 40<sup>r</sup>) is sometimes taken as alluding to Wyatt's imprisonment in the Fleet (1534), but, although the poem obviously relates to some disaster, its references are so general as to make it impossible to date the poem. In fact, it consists of a series of proverbial statements skilfully brought together. The first poem after this which by contrast does necessitate our paying attention to it is the first satire, 'Mine own John Poyntz, since ye delight to know' (f. 49<sup>r</sup>-49<sup>v</sup> in E, following 'Comfort thyself, my woeful heart'). The E version is incomplete, commencing at line 52, 'Praise him for counsel that is drunk of ale'. Unfortunately, lines 1-51 are missing because the leaf in E is torn, but we can determine from other sources what they must have been like. In other words, we are justified in considering the whole poem (in such an edition as Muir and Thomson's or mine) in attempts to date it.

It is generally agreed that the poem was written either after Wyatt's first imprisonment in the Tower (1536), or his second (1541). Some scholars hold very strong views about either the one date or the other, but the consensus is clearly that the matter has not been resolved except insofar as these two, and no others, are the likely dates. The position of the poem in E would obviously favour the earlier date, and I intend to argue that there is no evidence against supposing that the poem was written in 1536, and perhaps stronger evidence for considering that 1536 was indeed the date of composition. But, even if the evidence for either assumption was equally strong, I would press the claim for the earlier date because it is much easier to believe that the poem was written *before* those composed in Spain which occur soon after in E than that this satire was written in 1541, *after* the Spanish poems but somehow managing to precede those in the manuscript. If this poem was written in 1536 one would expect it to occur in E before poems written after Wyatt left for Spain in 1537; if it was written in 1541, one would look for it in a place where it is not found, namely towards the end of the manuscript (Wyatt died in 1542).

The most tempting evidence to support 1541 is found in lines 89-99, 'I am not now in France ... night and day', where Wyatt mentions that he is neither in France, nor in Spain, nor in Flanders, nor in Rome. For example, if he wrote the poem in 1536, he would refer to Spain as someone who had not been there, while in 1541 he would have had the authority of first-hand experience. However, it would be nothing extraordinary for an Englishman writing in 1536 to make contemptuous remarks about any foreign country. Again, as in the case of 'Love and fortune and my mind remember', we must be careful not to

take statements too literally; and on this occasion, too, what looks like a personal statement is found in Wyatt's source (Alamanni, Satire X), where 'Francia' etc. are explicitly mentioned ('Germania' is aptly enough translated as Flanders'). Thus there is no need to postulate that this passage was prompted by extensive personal experience.

The following lines, by contrast, do contain personal elements not found in the source:

No man doth mark whereso I ride or go,  
In lusty lease at liberty I walk,  
And of these news I feel nor weal nor woe, 85  
Saye that a clog doth hang yet at my heel --  
No force for that, for it is ordered so  
That I may leap both hedge and dike full well.

One can hardly 'leap both hedge and dike full well' if one literally has a clog hanging at his heel. Nevertheless, Wyatt's proverbial expression in line 86 — which is not found in Alamanni, as neither are lines 87-88 — do allude to an actual impediment. He is not, of course, writing the poem from prison, but he does have in mind that his 'liberty' was restricted. Wyatt had been released from prison in June 1536, but only to live on parole to his father at Allington Castle, the family home. While there may have been certain conditions attaching to his release in 1541, too, those conditions are less clear and fit the expression about the clog less well.

While we shall later look at the matter of sources in relation to that of chronology, I should here like to mention that Wyatt on the whole appears to have used as sources works that he had read fairly recently rather than long ago, and in this respect, too, 1536 seems a logical date, as Alamanni's *Opere Toscane* had appeared 1532-3.

I conclude, therefore, that the weight of the evidence suggests that the first satire was written in 1536, after Wyatt had been released from the Tower, and obviously before he went to Spain in 1537 (in line 100 he says that he is 'in Kent', changing his source to adapt it to his own circumstances).

This poem finishes an uninterrupted section of entries by hand A. The next two poems were entered by Wyatt himself, 'Desire, alas, my master and my foe' (f. 50<sup>r</sup>) and 'Venomous thorns that are so sharp and keen' (f. 50<sup>r</sup>). Although the first of these was heavily revised, it is not safe to conclude that the poem was directly composed into the manuscript, while the second is so neat that it seems probable that it was copied into the manuscript from an earlier, perfected draft. There are no internal hints in the poems which enable us to date them. It is, of course, possible that Wyatt at this stage was preparing for his Spanish journey, and that scribe A could not be used all of the time. The next poem which *may* give us some indication of when it was written is 'Though this thy port, and I thy servant true' (ff. 53<sup>v</sup>-54<sup>r</sup>). It is conceivable that Wyatt wrote this when crossing the Channel in April 1537, and that the mistress to whom the poem is addressed is that of his later years, Elizabeth Darrell. If so, the two intervening poems in E, the second satire, 'My mother's maids, when they did

sew and spin' (ff. 50<sup>v</sup>-52<sup>v</sup>) and 'To cause accord or to agree' (f. 53<sup>r</sup>) must have been written before that date. This is not to say that they were necessarily also copied into E immediately after they were composed. These last three poems were copied into E by scribe A, who may have accompanied Wyatt to Spain and who apparently proceeded to copy a number of poems there.

That this happened would seem to be a likely conclusion from the fact that hand A went on to copy some more poems, but was interrupted on f. 54<sup>v</sup> by Wyatt himself, who entered two poems, one of which, 'Of Carthage he, that worthy warrior', was actually written in Spain. It may, indeed, have been composed directly into the manuscript, although we cannot be sure. At all events, both poems were no doubt written into the manuscript while that was in Spain, and we now find several poems, entered by hand A and others, which are associated with that country. All of these poems — whether directly alluding to events in Spain or not -- are likely to be later than October 1537, the date of 'Of Carthage he, that worthy warrior'.

The next poem of definite date is 'Tagus farewell, that westward with thy streams' (f. 69<sup>r</sup>) which was written in or shortly before early June 1539 when -- after a much longer stay in Spain than he liked — Wyatt was allowed to return to England. Using this poem as our *terminus ad quem* and 'Of Carthage he, that worthy warrior' as our *terminus ab quo*, we can with some confidence date several of the intervening poems in E.

Thus, not long after the earlier of the two poems, we have 'To seek each where where man doth live' (f. 59<sup>r</sup>), a New Year's gift poem. In line 3, 'Spain' is explicitly mentioned, although it does not occur in any of the poems adduced as possible sources for Wyatt's poem. Foxwell's suggestion that the poem was written in Spain for the new year of 1538 or 1539 seems to the point, but the earlier date is the likelier one, especially as 'Most wretched heart, most miserable' (ff. 63<sup>v</sup>-64<sup>v</sup>) probably refers to the troubles Wyatt was having with his enemy Bonner in 1538 (not 1541, as I previously thought) and as Foxwell herself considered 'You that in love find luck and abundance' (f. 64<sup>v</sup>) to have been written in May 1538, an opinion in which William H. Wyatt correctly supports her (see my edition for more details). The date of May 1538 seems particularly appropriate if we take it that Wyatt is referring to *new* trouble he is experiencing at this time (with Bonner), and that this is now to be included amongst 'the haps most unhappy' (line 6) that have a habit of plaguing him in May, and of which his imprisonments in May 1534 and 1536 were earlier examples.

Other poems cannot be related to such specific dates, but that is not to say that we cannot say anything useful about when they are likely to have been written. 'From these high hills as when a spring doth fall' (f. 66<sup>r</sup>) has been thought to refer to the Pyrenees. While that is perfectly possible, it seems to me more pertinent to note that the poem is in Wyatt's hand, and that this time we can feel confident that he was composing the poem directly into E. That this is so seems to me plain from the fact that at the end of line 7 Wyatt first finished with the word 'deny'. (The poem was drastically revised.) As there is no word to rhyme with this anywhere in the poem, we must conclude that

when Wyatt put down 'deny' he was contemplating a rhyme which he came to reject *during* the act of composition. This in turn shows how the manuscript was increasingly becoming something quite different from what it had been at first: then, it was meant to be a beautiful album, but at this late stage Wyatt was using it more and more as a notebook to compose his poems into, and that is what it remained until the end. Thus, although we cannot precisely date this poem, we can at least say that it typically belongs to a late stage of development in the manuscript, and the hesitation about rhymes which I have drawn attention to is characteristic of the late poems, such as the Penitential Psalms.

The last poem which (apart from 'Vulcan begot me, Minerva me taught') later on) is not in Wyatt's hand is 'If waker care, if sudden pale colour' (f. 66<sup>v</sup>). But, although Wyatt did not write out the poem himself, he introduced a significant revision into it. Line 8 originally read (I modernize): 'Her that did set our country in such a roar', and, as the lady is also designated as 'Brunet' in line 10, there can be no doubt that she was Anne Boleyn, and very probably, as the past tense is used, she was already dead when the poem was copied into E — so that, at any rate, the poem must date later than 1536, when Anne was executed. But Wyatt obviously felt that the line could too readily be construed as a reference to the late Queen, and therefore changed it into 'Brunet that set my wealth in such a roar'. He thus made the poem less political and more personal. He compares the qualities of Brunet and Phyllis, and it is not difficult to see that, as he now sees Phyllis as having him firmly in her grace, 'Phyllis' must be the mistress of his later years, Elizabeth Darrell. We know, indeed, that he visited her in June 1538, when he was briefly allowed to go back to England. It seems very possible that this poem was written then, or not long after. The next poem, which Wyatt headed 'In Spain' and wrote out himself, is one which expresses a much less buoyant mood: it is 'So feeble is the thread that doth the burden stay' (ff. 67<sup>r</sup>-68<sup>v</sup>), and I agree with Muir and Thomson that Wyatt's insistence (not in his source) that he is staying in Spain 'At other will' (line 88) makes it likely that he wrote the poem early in 1539, when he very much wanted to return to England but the King would not yet let him. That did not happen until early in June 1539, and, as we have already seen, 'Tagus farewell, that westward with thy streams' (f. 69<sup>r</sup>, following the poem I have just discussed) was written to celebrate the departure.

In this Spanish section, then, we can observe a very close match between events in Wyatt's life and the chronology of the poems. The first poem which unmistakably was written in Spain is on f. 54<sup>v</sup>, 'Of Carthage he, that worthy warrior', and 'Tagus, farewell, that westward with thy streams' is the last, on f. 69<sup>r</sup>. It should be observed that this is a substantial portion of the manuscript. More importantly, however, we may well conclude that it is to some extent accidental that the evidence for the assumption that the poems are in chronological order is so prominent in this section of E: there is no basis for assuming that the situation elsewhere in the manuscript is in principle different, and the accumulation of the evidence suggests strongly that — at least predominantly — the poems occur in E in the order of their composition. We cannot expect

clues to be equally strong at all times, but the clues which we have all point in the same direction.

Wyatt presumably composed the next few poems directly into the manuscript, and may have done so back in England. The last two lines which he wrote before a large gap occurs in E were at the top of f. 70: 'From thought to thought, from hill to hill love doth me lead; / Clean contrary from restful life these common paths I tread'. His hand does not return until he starts the Penitential Psalms on f. 86<sup>r</sup>.

We do not know why he left so many pages blank. He may well have intended to use the intervening space at a later stage, for smaller poems. Or he may have planned to copy into it a longer poem already in draft of which he knew approximately how much space it would occupy, and which he wished to put before the Psalms. There is every likelihood, however, that he only took this decision after he had already written down 'From thought to thought, from hill to hill love doth me lead'. There is no need to suggest, as some do, that Wyatt wrote the Psalms in 1536, and decided at that time that he was going to leave a gap — which would have been much larger, and the length of which would patently have been even harder to estimate. Above all, there is no argument anyway which must lead us to favour 1536 as the date of composition for the Psalms.

But, before turning to them, we must consider some relevant material which occurs immediately after the last two lines which Wyatt wrote, starting on f. 70<sup>r</sup> with 'Vulcan begot me, Minerva me taught' followed by (in the same hand) two letters to Wyatt's son (ff. 71<sup>r</sup>-73<sup>v</sup>). I have already explained why I think that this material was inserted later, quite possibly after Wyatt's death. But, again, the date of entry should not be confused with the date of composition.

The two letters have interesting headings. The first of these is 'from him out of spayne to his son then xvii yeres old', and the second says 'Again unto his son out of spayne about the same time'. These headings were not written by Wyatt, and neither is it probable that his son referred to himself in the third person (as well as his father), and would have been vague about the exact dating of the letters.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, although I think that the first heading contains 'xvii' the figure is not easy to decipher. Yet there is no doubt that the first letter was written on 15 April 1537, from Paris: whoever copied out the letter was apparently oblivious of the fact that both Paris and the 15th of April are mentioned at the end of the letter<sup>13</sup> although these facts are left out of the copy in E. The copyist was presumably a friend of the family, but not, so to speak, close to the action. He or she did copy from Wyatt material, but the material was not necessarily fully authentic, and almost certainly the copying took place some considerable time after the original material was written. There is therefore nothing that allows us to date 'Vulcan begot me, Minerva me taught'

<sup>12</sup> The first letter, at least, counsels young Thomas how to behave now that he has got married, and surely he would not afterwards have forgotten the date of his wedding.

<sup>13</sup> See the version in Kenneth Muir, *Life and Letters of Sir Thomas Wyatt* (Liverpool, 1964), 38-41.

within the chronology of Wyatt's life. Possibly it was written in 1537, at the same time as the letters, but it may also be earlier or later.

As for the Psalms, we can be reasonably confident that they must date from 1539 (after 'Tagus farewell, that westward with thy streams') or later. Most scholars believe that Wyatt's references to enemies and imminent death within the poem (I look upon the Psalms as one, unified work) indicate that he probably wrote it in either 1536 or 1541. In view of the poem's position in E, the later date is the more probable one. I would further say that the nature of the revisions in E is such as to convince me that Wyatt composed the poem into the manuscript, which is characteristic of what happens at the end of E; and that there is some likelihood that Wyatt used the Great Bible of 1539. I veer more towards this view than Rebholz, but even he admits that Wyatt's line 275, 'Mine eye shall take the charge to be thy guide', may derive from the Bible's 'I will guide thee with mine eye'. Although Rebholz says (465) that this fact is the only piece in favour of the contention that the 1539 Bible was one of Wyatt's sources (which seems to me an exaggeration), it cannot be summarily dismissed as irrelevant.

The last poem in E is the unfinished 'When Dido feasted first the wandering Trojan knight' which occurs on ff. 100<sup>r</sup>-101<sup>r</sup>, although the Psalms had ended on 98<sup>v</sup>. Wyatt may, quite simply, have left some interval between two longer poems to show to whoever read them (or subsequently was to copy them) that they were quite separate works.

More than one reason has been advanced why the last poem in E was left unfinished, but surely the most plausible one must remain that the poet never managed to complete it because he was unable to, as death prevented him in October 1542. He may, of course, have stopped his labour some time before he died, but that would not diminish the case for believing that he never returned to it because he did not live long enough to do so.

If we now turn to the sources underlying the poems, we shall find that they tell us less but do not contradict the conclusions reached thus far. They have to be used with a degree of caution in attempts to date the poems. For one thing, it is impossible to assert that if a source dates, say, 1525, a poem derived from that source was written soon afterwards. The poem may have been written years later. But, of course, the date of the source may give us a *terminus ab quo*. Here, again, we must be careful however. Wyatt wrote at a time when much material which would now almost immediately get into print often stayed in manuscript for years. One is reminded of this fact when one considers that the source of 'In doubtful breast, whilst motherly pity' (f. 54<sup>v</sup>) was actually found in a manuscript in Spain — not a printed book. Wyatt probably only knew the source from a manuscript version, and it is very likely that many of the poems which he translated or otherwise used as a source were known to him in manuscript before they were printed. In the present instance, the source may, as it occurs in a Spanish manuscript, indicate that this poem, like its immediate successor ('Of Carthage he, that worthy warrior'), was written in Spain, but we cannot determine its date from the manuscript in which the source is found — only (more or less plausibly) from its proximity to a poem



of which we know that it was written in October 1537 (and in Spain at that). In other cases, it would be unsafe to assume that, if a source is found in a printed book dated 1525, Wyatt cannot have known that source at an earlier date. Therefore, the concept of a *terminus ab quo* must be handled with this consideration in mind.

There is only one instance amongst all the poems in E of a source with an unlikely *terminus ab quo*, at first sight. This is the source for 'Madame, withouten many words' (f. 24<sup>v</sup>). Whatever the shortcomings of the Muir and Thomson edition (and they are considerable), it is very informative on the matter of sources. The source of this poem is one by Dragonetto Bonifacio. The source was first printed c. 1535, and this comes as somewhat of a surprise, as the poem occurs in E well before 'Sometime I fled the fire that me brent', which must have been written in 1532. However, Bonifacio died in 1526, and Wyatt may well have known his poem in a manuscript version: this becomes the more likely as we read in Muir and Thomson that he 'left a collection of poems in a Venetian MS. of c. 1530' (297). It would be by no means unusual for a poet like Wyatt to have known the poem some five years before it was printed. Indeed, I would suggest that he became acquainted with it before 1532, but possibly after the appearance of the source for 'Like to these unmeasurable mountains' (f. 24<sup>r</sup>, immediately before), which occurs in an edition of Sannazaro's *Le Rime* dated 1531. It is quite possible, however, that Wyatt knew the Bonifacio poem before he came across the one in the Sannazaro edition — and indeed he may have known that one, too, before 1531.

But, in general, if we use the printed edition of a source as the *terminus ab quo*, we shall find that the dates of the sources fit in remarkably well with what we have found out about the dates of the poems so far. If we start at the beginning of the manuscript, we find that the first poems are also those most heavily under Italian and French influence. Wyatt visited France in 1526, and again a few years later; he went on a mission to Italy in 1527. I have argued that the earliest (and first) poems in E were written from 1527 on, and I find that date very compatible with the foreign journeys mentioned — they may at least have re-inforced an interest in the literatures of Italy and France, even if they did not first awaken it. I also find it significant that Wyatt used Vellutello's edition of Petrarch, which was published in 1525. It is surely remarkable that Petrarch provided the source for 17 out of 32 poems at the beginning of E, but for only seven out of the next 76. (I have in mind poems with definite Petrarchan sources, not poems in which Petrarchan elements turn up here and there.) If we were to suppose that 'Like to these unmeasurable mountains' was not written before 1531, then the testimony of E would indicate that the chief period of Petrarch's influence on Wyatt was between c. 1527 and c. 1531. French influence is often harder to detect and has almost certainly been underestimated in recent years, but poems written under the influence of Jean Marot, for example, like 'If it be so that I forsake thee' (f. 15<sup>v</sup>), also belong to this period.

The influence of Serafino, it must be admitted, is less clearly localized, but it is much slighter than that of Petrarch anyway. The fact that Serafino's *Opere*

appeared in 1516 does not give us a very helpful *terminus ab quo*. Other authors do, however. Thus, for example, 'Where shall I have at mine own will' (f. 36<sup>r</sup>-36<sup>v</sup>) is derived from a poem published in Giusto de Conti's *Rime* of 1531. That date fits in exactly with what one would expect, as the poem occurs after 'Like to these unmeasuarable mountains' (probably translated from the 1531 Sannazaro edition), but before 'Sometime I fled the fire that me brent' (1532).

I have already argued that I believe that 'Mine own John Poyntz, since ye delight to know' (f. 49<sup>r</sup>-49<sup>v</sup>) was written in 1536, rather than 1541, and it will now be obvious why I mentioned that Wyatt on the whole appears to have used as sources works that he had read fairly recently rather than long ago: the evidence examined with respect to the sources so far — where those sources can be specifically determined — supports my earlier assertion, then made with reference to the connection between this first satire and Alamanni's *Opere Toscane* (1532-3). Of course, there is no absolute rule, and in any case we may well expect some years to occur between the date of Wyatt's source and the time when he wrote his poem. Nevertheless, the correlation is persuasive enough. Thus, I would date 'Although thou see the outrageous climb aloft' (of which lines 1-36 appear on f. 65<sup>v</sup>) to 1538, and this date is not incompatible with the fact that Wyatt used for his main source the Campensis-Zwingli *Enchiridion Psalmorum* (1532-33), certainly in the original, and possibly also in the English translation of 1535. Similar views can be advanced for the last two works in E: the Penitential Psalms, which I think Wyatt wrote in 1541 and for which he certainly drew on George Joye's translation of Zwingli (1534)<sup>14</sup> and possibly on the Great Bible of 1539; and 'When Dido feasted first the wandering Trojan knight', for which he used Johannes de Sacrobosco's *De Sphaera*, first published in 1527, but again in 1534 and 1538.

Thus the evidence provided by the sources is less striking than that by the allusions, but the sources, too, encourage the view that the poems in E are in chronological order. We do not, for example, find poems at the beginning of E which cannot have been written before 1534 as far as their sources are concerned (as is the case with the Penitential Psalms), nor do we find a whole group of poems derived from Petrarch towards the end of E. There is, clearly, a correlation between the dates of the poems and the dates of the sources which is reflected by the order in which the E poems occur, and that order is also consonant with the dates of events to which the poems allude.

Substantially, then, Miss Foxwell was right: the poems in E are, at least insofar as we can determine on the basis of such evidence as we have, in chronological order. That scholars in recent decades have argued otherwise is an unfortunate indication of the tendency of academics to reject the view that the most simple solution may also be the correct one. I must plead guilty myself,

<sup>14</sup> Wyatt also definitely used a paraphrase of the Psalms by Pietro Aretino, but that fact does not give us a different *terminus ab quo*. Two books would give us a slightly later one viz. the English Bible translated by Miles Coverdale (1535) and the English translation of Joannis Campensis's paraphrase of the Psalms (which also appeared in 1535). But, although I think it almost certain that Wyatt consulted both of these, his debt to them is not definitely identifiable.

in that, for example, I was in the past too much inclined to think that poems were written during Wyatt's imprisonment in 1541 which I now believe to be the product (at least in part) of his imprisonment in 1536. As I now see the situation, the Egerton manuscript reflects chronological development in quite a logical way. The first substantial portion of E was the work of a scribe, copying out poems by Wyatt in the order of composition -- presumably not while they were being composed, but after Wyatt had completed most or all of them. Then Wyatt himself started writing out poems into E, and, although at first he had the assistance of scribes, he increasingly composed directly into the manuscript. The last poem in E is unfinished because it is the last chronologically and Wyatt never got time to complete it before his death in 1542. The manuscript thus gives us an adequate picture of Wyatt's poetic development from c. 1527 to 1542 or just before, and, within this timespan, the date of composition can be determined with reasonable confidence and accuracy for all the poems within the manuscript.

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