



"Part three: MS 228, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Pestell papers" in "A survey of the poetry collection in manuscript of the Noble family of Huntingdon"

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PART THREE:
MS 228, HOUGHTON LIBRARY,
HARVARD UNIVERSITY,
PESTELL PAPERS

As noted in the introduction, a volume of manuscript poems “by the Rev. Thomas Pestell (1613–1701 [*sic*]), vicar of Packington” was recorded among the Rawdon-Hastings papers.⁷³ This manuscript would have belonged to the Huntingdon papers, rather than the Rawdon or the Bramhall papers, since the senior Thomas Pestell (1586 [baptism]–1667)⁷⁴ served as rector of Coleorton under the patronage of Sir Thomas Beaumont.⁷⁵ The senior Pestell allegedly succeeded to the vicarage of Packington with the help of Elizabeth, countess of Huntington, wife of Henry, fifth earl. Hannah Buchan notes that Pestell may have obtained this living from the fifth earl, with whom he attended Queens’ College, Cambridge.⁷⁶

The senior Pestell was followed into the ministry by two of his sons, Thomas and William, and all three contributed to the volume *Lachrymae Musarum* on the death of Henry Hastings in 1649. Caught up in the political chaos of the Civil War, which took a heavy toll on Leicestershire, the elder Pestell was imprisoned. He took as his pseudonym “Perditus,” thus the title of the Pestell collection at Harvard University in Houghton MS Eng 228: *Perditi Poemata*.⁷⁷

3.1. Perditi Poemata

The Pestell manuscript, a small quarto of fifty-seven pages in Pestell’s italic hand, contains over seventy poems written between 1620 and 1634 and includes (on fols. 19v–21r) an *Elegie on the Countesse of Huntingdon* on the death of his patroness in 1633. The manuscript was acquired by Houghton Library of Harvard

73 HMC Hastings, 4:358.

74 According to the *ODNB*. The Harvard University catalog (Hollis) gives the dates as 1584?–1659?.

75 Gordon McMullan, “Pestell, Thomas (*bap.* 1586, *d.* 1667),” in *ODNB*. The younger Thomas Pestell, also a clergyman and poet, was born in 1613 and died in 1690, which accounts somewhat for the conflation of dates with the elder Pestell.

76 Hannah Buchan, introduction to *The Poems of Thomas Pestell: Edited with an Account of His Life and Works*, ed. Hannah Buchan (Oxford: Blackwell, 1940), xxix.

77 A complete list of the poems in this manuscript is accessible online in the Union First Line Index.

University in 1926 from Maggs Bros. (catalog no. 481).⁷⁸ In 1940, as already noted above, Hannah Buchan used this manuscript along with Bod. MS Malone 14 to prepare her edition of Pestell's poems.⁷⁹ (See figures 3.1A and 3.1B.)

MS Eng 228

78 Maggs Bros., *English Literature & Printing from the 15th to the 18th Century*, Part II (London: Maggs Bros, 1926): 549–550, lot #1496. It was entered into the Harvard collection in November 1926. I am most grateful to Elizabeth A. Falsey of Houghton Library for her assistance in locating this information (letter to author, December 17, 1990).

79 See also Allan Pritchard, "Unpublished Poems by Thomas Pestell," *English Literary Renaissance* 10 (1980): 133–147. Philip J. Finkelpearl adds information about Pestell as he ascribes the "Coleorton Masque" to Pestell. See "The Authorship of the Anonymous 'Coleorton Masque' of 1618," *Notes & Queries* 40, no. 2 (June 1993): 224–226 and "The Fairies' Farewell: The Masque at Coleorton (1618)," *The Review of English Studies* 46, no. 183 (1995): 333–351.

E. of Es.

(Whose brauer Brothers haight, no muse affyre
To reach, a subject only for my Lyre.
These faire Inuestid thus; if more you find
Right Heires of victur & of ARDENs kind
Then Consecrate lett all thaise sisters bee
Stil & the newe ORDER of Saneet Dorothee.

Elegie on the Countesse of Huntingdon. 1633.

Dutymely muse what art thou tampering here,
Regardlesse of thy weabues, & my feare,
Darest thou resume a Lustie Conquering rage,
Cross-winchled now, both with Contempt & Age?
Alas thy mercurie & subtile flame,
Is frist, & quencht; & my Sepulchred name,
Appearing on his Venerable horse
Thou waight in teares, & wrapt in sheets of vaine,
Woud hideous seeme to all the race that came
From royall Decies of this Heroique Dame:
And him offend, whose blood with his entwines,
A double twist of two most princely Lynes.
Or if it not displeas, it yet will shrow
A vile attempt, to laye his name so lowe;
To wynd his glories vp; His Greattie
In thaise rough knotth of ragged portrie.
Call God-like Sydney from Elizian shade
(So might a noble Epitaph be made)
Then let the Gentle Beaumont rise; & hee
Of whom all pöety hold in Capite,
Black prince of wit, the most illustrious Dume,
To make newe seas of praise that vpwards runn
(Not like th' old Ocean in Earths durty holie)
To thwart the Zodiaque, & new belt the poles.
Wherem for Mermaids, let bright Angells sing
To his renowne some newe triumphant thing.
Which Caries glad muse (for he still suckes
And holds the Lease of Glorie for fower Lines, In lo =

Figure 3.1A. Thomas Pestell. "Elegie on the Countesse of Huntingdon" in *Perditi Poemata*. Manuscript, 1620–1634, fol. 19v. Houghton Library, MS Eng 228. Gift in memory of Lionel de Jersey Harvard, 1926.

In copie faire, will soone devine from thence,
(For she wth heaven holds Intelligence)
And woyning to the guyes about hir voyce
make all good Soules in heav'n, & ravel reioice:
To which my heart (Hell cannot this Confute)
Is consonant; Autho my tongue be mute.

A Second Elegie on the same.

I first was dead; Now this glad vantage have
Thus first to rise, & walk about hir grave
In a white sheet; & bearing in this hand
A scourge of Steele, in this a flaming brand;
Which apparition frights to quicke Retire
All sinfull offenders of Unhallow'd fire:
Stoppes wide dull Nostrills that would here presume
To shread Lowe rimmes in Lamentable Rhyme:
Restrains their gleyades of froath, that fall
An extreme vinctiō after Funerall.
Whose short-lived Lyres, are lost infinitie,
Each single wad innumerable is.
Goe shoot at common Byrds wth easie Bolts
Ruin your rough Verses wheele wchumps & iouls
Or wombes of Ad. Men, out-faid in brasse,
With here he Lyes, & just so old he was.
But this Glad Monument wherin she sits
The Crownd quene of witt & wath; admitts
No tongue, but such as can the Language speake
To melt mens eyes, & womens hearts to breake
In generall thawe, & in the whole Land flood
Steaming from all, that are or great, or good.
Ore which all Learned Fancies high may sitt
Episcopall, upon an Arch of witt.
This is my taste, for this abroad I except
Awhile, & then returne to former sleep
In grave obsurd: which ere I will efface
Once more I write. Be all prophane away.

Hence =

Figure 3.1B. Thomas Pestell. "A Second Elegie on the Same" in *Perditi Poemata*. Manuscript, 1620–1634, fol. 20r. Houghton Library, MS Eng 228. Gift in memory of Lionel de Jersey Harvard, 1926.

Contributors

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