

J. Christopher Warner. *The Making and Marketing of Tottel's Miscellany, 1557: Songs and Sonnets in the Summer of the Martyrs' Fires.*

Catholic Christendom, 1300–1700. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013. xiv + 250 pp. \$109.95. ISBN: 978-1-4094-5745-9.

Richard Tottel's *Songes and Sonettes*, first published in 1557, was reprinted at least a dozen times over the next thirty years. It stands as by far the most popular collection of English Renaissance secular verse — but why? The obvious answer is that it provided readers with a substantial collection of the poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey (effectively ending the circulation of their verse in manuscript). Through a detailed analysis of the first edition's historical and cultural context, J. Christopher Warner shows that many aspects of Tottel's Miscellany other than the works of these famous courtier poets contributed to its popular appeal.

Warner aligns his study with the publisher's own claims for the book: it proves, Tottel claimed, that "Englishe eloquence" can successfully compete with the achievements of "diuers Latines, Italians, and other," and that "the unlearned" can learn from its pages "to be more skilfull, and to purge that swinelike grossnesse" that is all too characteristic of what passes for poetry at present ("The Printer to the Reader," sig. A1v).

In chapter 1, Warner analyzes the popular anthologies of Italian, French, and Spanish secular verse that began appearing as early as 1508. Tottel perceived that an English version of these anthologies might lead to similar commercial success (which indeed was the case). Moreover, the Spanish influence was transmitted directly to England in 1554 when Philip II arrived to become Mary I's king consort. In the arena of poetic achievement and "eloquence," Anglo-Iberian cultural rivalry came to the fore when Nikolaus Mameranus, poet laureate of the Hapsburg Empire, published in London three volumes of his Latin verse in the very year that Tottel brought out the *Songes and Sonettes*.

In chapter 2, Warner sets forth the first systematic analysis of the technical forms found in the miscellany. His meticulous assessment reveals that the book offered solutions to the two major problems confronting English poets, problems that had to be solved before a great national poetry could be created. First, Tudor poets had inherited a limited number of medieval stanza forms; nearly all of their works before 1557 are restricted to just a half dozen different rhyme schemes. Second, during the fifteenth century, English poets lost the ability to write regular accentual-syllabic verse. Warner establishes that the miscellany presented a greater variety of forms than any English book up to that time or long afterward. And while Tottel may have regularized much of Wyatt's verse, he in fact left thirty of Wyatt's lyrics in rough accentual meter. The regular rhythms of the great majority of the miscellany's poems, however, provided a model for the future of English prosody.

Chapter 3 explores the question of how Tottel acquired the texts he published, especially the poems added to the second edition (Q2) that also appeared in the summer of 1557. Warner surveys the themes developed in the anthology's poems,

including the paltry three anonymous works that are explicitly religious and the one topical poem that seemingly alludes to Thomas Stafford's rebellion of April 1557. Warner develops here the plausible argument that Tottel's most likely source for the poems he added in Q2 were the Inns of Court gentlemen with whom he was necessarily acquainted by virtue of his exclusive patent for printing law books.

In this chapter Tottel's collection is further defined as avoiding controversial issues, especially religion, to emphasize the rhetorical and technical proficiency of its secular verse, accomplishments necessarily of interest to gentlemen at the Inns of Court. The chapter concludes with the suggestion that the miscellany purposely humiliated John Hall, who had attacked love poetry and "bokes of lecherous Ballades" in his *Prouerbes and Psalmes* of 1550. Two of Hall's "humorless, moralistic" verses appeared, anonymously, in Q2, followed immediately by a lover's lament and the woman's response, the only overtly bawdy poems in the collection (205). Thus Hall found himself represented alongside just the kind of poetry he had vigorously condemned and would condemn again in print with the publication of his *Courte of Vertue* in 1565.

In a postscript, Warner considers the printing history of the *Songes and Sonettes* in the context of Tottel's overall printing career, and then the sequence of printed verse miscellanies that followed his. In conclusion, he aligns the influence of the *Songes and Sonettes* with the poetics of Sir Philip Sidney and the contrivers of that later, golden Elizabethan verse, which superseded the theory of poetry Tottel set forth in "The Printer to the Reader" and illustrated with the poems that followed.

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