As Peter Beal has long made clear to interested users of his *Index*, a single hand organized two manuscript books, now at the Folger Shakespeare Library and the University of Nottingham, according to poetic genre. This essay identifies two more books (one in print, one in manuscript) that the scribe used when compiling this pair of poetry anthologies; and it argues that, from one of them, he took not only texts but also an organizational scheme that he extended and adapted for rhetorical and even ethical ends. Its argument thus openly invites scepticism, especially from readers who are inclined to regard the arrangements of all manuscript miscellanies as random, and the relationships of only their sequential texts as possibly significant. How could a compiler relate poems of different genres and from different authors in different parts of a miscellany? Why would he do so? How could he exercise the sort of control over contents that even some manuscript experts reserve for stationers and authors? How could anyone possibly engage rhetoric or ethics just by copying verses? This essay proposes an explanation – yet one that is admittedly based on the most distinctive activity and possibly independent decisions of a therefore quite unrepresentative scribe. To be sure, this compiler engaged in a number of common practices and shared his agency with several other producers of literature: he copied poems as others had composed, ordered, and reproduced them in both manuscript and print, and he could have worked with, or for, others. I have elsewhere addressed his participation in a few particular collective endeavors. This essay, by contrast, focuses on the features that set this scribe’s manuscripts apart from others. It therefore demonstrates one
way – but an idiosyncratic and, so, unrepresentative one – that an early modern verse collector could structure a manuscript miscellany and arrange poetic genres for rhetorical effect.

Working after 1622, and inscribing no date later than 1625, the still-anonymous scribe responsible for these two Folger and Nottingham manuscripts began each section of his anthologies on a recto, with a heading (or drop head) that names the genre that he assigned to that section, rather like a chapter title. He began each book with the same six sections, in the same order: first ‘Laudatory Epitaphs’; then ‘Epitaphs Merry & Satyricall’; ‘Love Sonnets’; ‘Panegyricks’; ‘Satyres’; and finally, in the case of the Folger manuscript, ‘Miscellanea’.

3 Since it appears last in the Folger manuscript, the ‘Miscellanea’ section may look like something of an afterthought, added to accommodate the leftover texts that do not conform to any of the previous five genres. Yet, in the Nottingham manuscript, the compiler added three groups of poems following ‘Miscellanea’: ‘Serious Poemes’; ‘Merry Poems’; and ‘Verses on Crist=Church Play’.

He repeated the name of each genre in running titles (or head titles) in the top margins; these continue for several leaves beyond a section’s last poem, so that he or someone else could later add more texts in their appropriate places. For these titles, the scribe tended to use a careful, upright script full of serifs. The result is a distinctive kind of manuscript verse miscellany that appears to be modelled on printed books, and perhaps on commonplace books.

When looking for particular printed books that could have served as a model for this compiler, one finds only a couple of poetry anthologies with similar arrangements. When Francis Davison issued the first, 1602 edition of his poetry anthology *A Poetical Rapsody*, he featured (on head and running titles, as well as internal title pages) just three sections, each comprising more than one genre: in the first, ‘Pastorals and Eglogues’; next, ‘Sonnets, Odes, | Elegies and Madrigalls’; and finally, an only slightly different group of ‘Sonnets, Odes, Elegies, | and other Poesies’.

Contrasted to our manuscript compiler’s definitions of genres, Davison’s initial groups seem capacious and redundant. To the 1608 edition, Davison added head and running titles for several individual poems (instead of genres), at first making the new edition look even less like the Folger and Nottingham manuscripts. On the other hand, he also included sections for three individual genres: ‘Inscriptions’; ‘Epigrams’; and, in a few separate places,
even more ‘Sonets’.\(^6\) The revised 1611 edition, with which Davison ‘does not seem to have had any connection’, does not feature any new names for genres.\(^7\) The ‘fourth Impression’ of *Dauisons Poems*, though, from 1621, gets much closer to our manuscript compiler’s initial series of six genres. According to the title page, it is:

Deuided into sixe Bookes. The first, contayning Poems and Deuises. The second, Sonets and Canzonets. The third, Pastoralls and Elegies. The fourth, Madrigalls and Odes. The fift, Epigrams and Epitaphs. The sixt, Epistles, and Epithalamions.\(^8\)

Each of these six ‘books’ within the single-volume anthology proceeds orderly from one of its genres to the other, for a total of 12 genres, with no breaks or repetition. Three of these genres overlap with those of the Folger and Nottingham manuscripts. So, by 1621, Davison’s anonymous successor had developed a rather extensive framework of poetic genres that could have influenced the compiler of the Folger and Nottingham manuscripts, if he had ever seen one of Davison’s anthologies. He did not, however, leave behind any evidence that he ever consulted one of Davison’s books.

Nor did he leave any trace suggesting that he drew on the only other printed poetry anthology of his time and place to be organized with generic head or running titles. From at least 1620 to 1638, the printed collection entitled *A Description of Love with certain Epigrams. Elegies. and Sonnets* featured distinct, although repetitious, groups of these three types of poems, but also drop heads or head titles for several individual texts.\(^9\) By contrast, the compiler of the Folger and Nottingham manuscripts featured only one of these genres, and gave no single poem its own section title.

Although he left no sign that he drew on either of these two series of printed poetry anthologies, he made quite clear that he was copying poems directly from another printed book of wider scope. On the first leaf of each miscellany, he placed an epitaph ‘On Queene Elizabeth’ beginning, ‘Kings, Queenes, Mens, Virgins eies / See where your mirrhour lies’.\(^10\) He inscribed immediately below this epitaph in the Folger manuscript two more ‘On the same’. One of them implores its

\(^6\) The head and running titles for the individual poems are ‘Wonders of the world.’; ‘The Lottery.’ or ‘The Lottery.’; ‘A contention betwixt a wife a widow and a maide.’; ‘The Lie.’; and ‘A Complaint.’ *A Poetical Rapsodie* (London, 1608; STC 6374); *A Poetical Rapsodie* (London, 1611; STC 6375).

\(^7\) John Considine, ‘Francis Davison (1573/4–1613x19)’, *ODNB*.

\(^8\) *Dauisons Poems* (London, 1621; STC 6376).

\(^9\) *A Description of Love ... The Second Edition* (London, 1620; STC 6769.7); *A Description of Love ... The fifth Edition* (London, 1625; STC 6770); *A Description of Love ... The sixth Edition* (London, 1629; STC 6771); *A Description of Love ... The ninth Edition* (London, 1638; STC 6772).

\(^10\) Folger MS Va.103, fol. 2r; University of Nottingham MS Portland PwV 37, p. 1.
collective audience to ‘Weepe greatest Isle, and for thy mistreis death / Swimme in a double sea of brackish water’. The other praises Elizabeth as ‘Spaines Rodd; Romes Ruine, Netherlands releife’. He copied the same poems on the first recto of the Nottingham manuscript, plus the most famous, and best, of Thomas Dekker’s epitaphs on the queen: ‘On the remooeall of her body from / Richmond to White-Hall’. He copied the same poems on the first recto of the Nottingham manuscript, plus the most famous, and best, of Thomas Dekker’s epitaphs on the queen: ‘On the remooeall of her body from / Richmond to White-Hall’. In the left margin of the Nottingham manuscript, he annotated each of his last three Elizabeth epitaphs with the marginal initials ‘C.R.’ These must refer to ‘C[amden’s]. R[emaines].’, for the poems appear in the same order in the 1614, 1623, and 1629 editions of the book, as well as posthumous editions.

Later in the Nottingham manuscript he added the same initials beside no fewer than 11 other epitaphs, for a total of 14 poems that he acknowledged copying from Camden. In the Folger manuscript, he copied eight of these epitaphs, annotating three of them with the initials ‘C.R.’ He may have copied more Camden epitaphs than these, without initializing them. The compiler of these manuscripts thus left ample evidence that he transcribed a significant number of texts from Camden, and gave no similar indication that he was drawing so heavily (or even at all) on any other printed book.

He arguably took more than just texts from Camden. First, the manuscript compiler could have found in *Remaines* a distinction that Camden had made

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11 For a little more on these poems, see Eckhardt, *Manuscript Verse Collectors*, pp. 60–62.
12 William Camden, *Remaines, concerning Britaine* (London, 1614; STC 4522), pp. 378–9; *Remaines, Concerning Britaine* (London, 1623; STC 4523), p. 342; *Remaines Concerning Britaine* (London, 1629; STC 4524), p. 338. A version of ‘Kings, Queenes’ appeared in the 1636 edition of *Remaines*, but differs from the copy in the Nottingham manuscript, reading ‘Virgins’ instead of ‘judgements’. Furthermore, the Nottingham copy lacks the ‘C.R.’ annotation. This suggests that the scribe was working with an earlier version of *Remaines* and a manuscript copy of ‘Kings, Queenes’.
13 ‘On S· Philip Sidney / England, Netherland, the Heavens, & the Arts’; ‘On Pope Lucius / Luca dedit Lucem Tibi Luci, Pontificatum’ (University of Nottingham, MS Portland PwV 37, p. 8); ‘On the Lady Mary daughter to K. James / Within this marble casket lies’ (p. 10); ‘On an Usurer / Here lies tenne in the Hundred’; ‘On one that liv’d retired and carelessly / Here lieth Hee who was borne and cried’; ‘On a lascivious gentlewoman / One Stone sufficeth (Io what Death can doe)’ (p. 38); ‘On S· John Calfe / O Deus omnipotens Vituli miserere Iohannis’ (p. 39); ‘On M· Sands / Who would live in others breath?’ (p. 40); ‘On John Croker a Bellows maker of Oxford. / Here lies John Croker a maker of Bellows’; ‘On a yong noble Gentlewoman / Here lies (the Lord have mercy upon her)’; ‘On a Gentleman that quarrelld wth Death. / Here lies the man that madly slaine’ (p. 42).
14 ‘On S· Phyllip Sydnie / England, Netherland, the Heaven and the ar’ts’ (Folger MS V.a.103, fol. 5r); ‘C. R. On the Lady Mary Daughter to King James / Within this marble casket lies’ (fol. 5v); ‘On a usurer. / Here lies tenn in the hundred’ (fol. 21r); ‘C. R. On S· Iohn Calfe / All O deus omnipotens Vituli, miserer Iohannis’; ‘C. R. On a Lasciuious Gentlewoman. / One stone sufficeth (Lo what Death can do,)' (fol. 21v).
15 ‘Mr C.W. On Prince Henry / Reader, wonder thinke it none’ (University of Nottingham MS Portland PwV 37, p. 4; Folger MS V.a.103, fol. 3r; *Remaines* (1614), pp. 381–2; *Remaines* (1623), p. 345; *Remaines* (1629), p. 341).
between those epitaphs that honour, and those that defame or ridicule, their subjects. In the brief paragraphs in which he introduced each of the epitaphs that he had collected, Camden tended to identify and denounce the most slanderous ones as ‘satyrical’ or ‘rude’. For instance, after nearly a page of epitaphs honouring Richard I, he warned his readers of the character of the one negative line that he included on the king: ‘But sharpe and satyrical was that one verse, which by al- / ludding, noted his taking the Chalices from Churches for / his ransome & place of his death which was called Chaluz’.\(^{16}\) He signalled with a series of asterisks the epitaphs on King John ‘bewraying the hatred of the Clergy toward him’, explaining that the last line in particular ‘was most malicious, and proceeded from a vipe- / rous minde’.\(^{17}\) Camden also asterisked the poem on Richard II’s tomb at Westminster, calling it a ‘rude closing Epitaph’.\(^{18}\) Another asterisk leads to ‘two silly verses’ on Henry V, and another ‘sillie one for Sir John Woodcock Mercer & Maior of London, 1405’.\(^{19}\) He called other epitaphs ‘mery’, such as the lines on Sir John Calf, which also feature a fox and an ox, predictably: Camden attributes the verse to ‘A mery mad maker as they call Poets now’.\(^{20}\) After several respectful epitaphs for Elizabeth I, Mary Queen of Scots, and Prince Henry, Camden decided it was time to give his reader a break, explaining:

But I feare now I haue ouercharged the Readers minde, with dolefull, dumpish, and vncomfortable lines. I will therefore for his recomfort, end this part with a few conceited, merry, and laughing Epitaphes, the most of them composed by Master John Hoskines when he was young.\(^{21}\)

Camden thus tended to distinguish the ‘satyrical’, ‘rude’, ‘sillie’, or ‘mery’ epitaphs that he collected from the other, more respectful, serious, and ‘dolefull’ ones that precede them.

The compiler of the Folger and Nottingham manuscripts made very similar distinctions when he entitled his first two sections of poems ‘Laudatory Epitaphs’ and ‘Epitaphs Merry & Satirical’. Either he adopted Camden’s distinctions, or he found in Camden a fellow verse collector who already shared his views on, and his terms for, epitaphs.

In either case, he built on and added to Camden’s Remaines. In doing this, he was demonstrating a tendency that was common among Camden’s readers, several of whom added epitaphs to the backs of their copies of Remaines. Camden’s book effectively invited this practice. The expanded editions that continued to appear even after Camden’s death indicated that its various producers were still adding to the official copies of the book. These new editions of Remaines also held out to the owners of older copies a finite number of additional texts that they now

\(^{16}\) Remaines (1614), p. 358.
\(^{17}\) Remaines (1614), pp. 359–60.
\(^{18}\) Ibid., p. 365.
\(^{19}\) Ibid., p. 366.
\(^{20}\) Ibid., p. 362.
\(^{21}\) Ibid., p. 382.
lacked, and might be able to acquire on the cheap with little more than a book loan, quill, and ink. Moreover, epitaphs constituted the perfect genre to add: people necessarily kept finding occasions to write them; they were short enough to fit in margins; and they were already in the back of the book, where it could be easiest to add text and even paper. Indeed, Camden’s organization of his collection suggested that it was poems, particularly epitaphs, and especially merry ones, that belonged at the back, and so could most appropriately be added there. *Remaines* proceeds from the ‘Inhabitants’, ‘Languages’, ‘Names’, ‘Surnames’, ‘Allusions’, and ‘Anagrammes’ of Britain to its ‘Wise Speeches’, ‘Prouerbs’, ‘Poesies’, and ‘Epitaphs’. After names, prose, wise sayings, and panegyric epitaphs come finally little, merry poems on the deaths of the insignificant and ridiculous.

So this seemed to several owners of the book like a good place to add a few more epitaphs. One Thomas Watts inscribed an epitaph at the end of his copy of the 1614 edition, now at the Folger. Someone added to the end of a Folger copy of the 1623 edition an entire gathering of epitaphs headed ‘Poems by John Philipot’. Philipot did not actually compose these poems, but he did publish them in the 1636 edition of Camden’s *Remaines* after the author’s death. The owner of this copy was trying to keep it up to date. Someone else wrote epitaphs on the last pages of the Huntington copy of this same edition, and even appended a folded broadsheet on the death of Queen Anne. Several owners of Camden’s *Remaines* wanted to keep their copies current and (like the printed series) indefinitely expanding.

The compiler of the Folger and Nottingham manuscripts wanted to do something similar: to continue Camden’s *Remaines*. Yet he collected far too many epitaphs and other poems to fit into the back of a copy of the printed book, so he put them in manuscript books reserved for poems, starting his compilations right where Camden concluded his. He began them with epitaphs that he collected from Camden. He quickly proceeded to epitaphs that Camden did not collect, or left out. His next source for epitaphs, after Camden, must have been either a manuscript in the Bodleian, likely at an early stage in its production, or a manuscript closely related to it. He almost certainly got ahold of at least one of its gatherings long enough to inscribe ‘Epitaphs’ along the top of what appears to have once been its first inscribed page. The strong similarity of the script featured in the ‘Epitaphs’

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22 Folger STC 4522, copy 5.
23 Folger STC 4523, copy 2.
24 Huntington Rare Books 97066.
25 Bod. MS Eng. poet. e.14, fol. 100v rev. Compare Folger MS V.a.103, fols 2r (the second instance of the word, in the phrase ‘Laudatory Epitaphs’) and 20r. In each of these three cases, the top stroke in majuscule E began with the serif and proceeded to the left, way past the stem, with a downward hook; miniscule p began with a long, swooping descender, required a pen lift, and ended with a rounded gesture and an upstroke to i. Each instance of the word looks similar, but they do have differences. The one in the Bodleian manuscript looks like faster, looser work; the scribe was working much more slowly and carefully at the beginning of the Folger sections on epitaphs. In the Folger volume, he made four separate strokes to form majuscule E, making the bottom bar in the same way that he did the top one; he reduced this to three strokes in the Bodleian gathering – starting with the
headings constitutes one of the major pieces of evidence linking these manuscripts – but not the only piece of evidence. Following the initial epigraphs from Camden, he transcribed into both of his anthologies several poems that appear in this Bodleian manuscript, in a similar order. After copying into each of his anthologies well over a dozen poems that also appear in the Bodleian miscellany (in its principal hand), he turned back to Camden’s *Remaines*, again noting ‘C.R.’ in the margins. Then he copied even more poems that appear in the Bodleian miscellany, before adding the same initials to a poem that appears in both Camden and the Bodleian manuscript. The scribe was evidently oscillating between a printed book and a manuscript for texts to begin at least two closely related poetry anthologies.

A fuller account of this scribe’s sources will have to await the textual collation of several of the poems that he copied. The editors of the *Donne Variorum* have begun this work by making the case that he copied the elegy ‘Change’ from the...
more extensive Nottingham anthology into the more narrowly focused Folger manuscript. Nevertheless, even before textual collations of more of the texts in these manuscripts are complete, the initial evidence offers support for David McKitterick’s argument against the common ‘division ... between manuscript and print’. Like McKitterick, this scribe saw written and printed texts as part of the same culture, or at least as part of the same store of textual sources. He opened his anthologies with epitaphs that he copied from a printed book; he proceeded to others that he copied from manuscript; and he then repeated the process. He produced continuations of Camden’s printed books, but he did so in manuscript.

The compiler eventually found a place for epitaphs that were too satirical and libelous for Camden or anyone else to print. He collected not only laudatory but also satirical epitaphs on Sir Walter Ralegh and Sir Robert Cecil. He opened his section of ‘Epitaphs Merry and Satirical’ with two on ‘Lrd Treasurer Buckhurst’, including one by William Drummond. He could have found versions of each of these libels in the oldest parts of the Bodleian manuscript as well, where they closely follow, in a similar order, epitaphs that he deemed ‘laudatory’. This brings up the possibility that the scribe noticed a slight distinction between laudatory and satirical epitaphs, not only in Camden but also in the work of the principal hand of the Bodleian manuscript. The Bodleian manuscript does not now look like the work of people who made careful distinctions. It features several hands, most of them quite casual, if not downright sloppy. It seems to be missing several pages. It now qualifies as a miscellany in virtually every sense of the word. Yet the manuscript could not have looked very disorderly before its second major hand turned it upside-down and started over with Christ Church poems in other genres. Before this, the manuscript featured a single, accomplished secretary hand, which gradually adopted italic letterforms over a gathering and a half of nothing but

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29 “That F4 is copied from NP1 rather than vice versa is indicated by such divergences as F4’s “Yett” in line 3 and “Loving” in line 33, where NP1 evinces the normative readings “Yea” and “leaving”. F4’s insertion of “D. Donne” into the heading is a simple matter of giving more prominence to an attribution that has been relegated to a subscription in NP1’. Gary A. Stringer (gen. ed.), The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne, Volume 2: The Elegies (Bloomington, IN, 2000), p. 204.
31 ‘On the Lrd Treasurer Buckhurst who died• at the / Counsell Table forswearing himselfe against S’ Iohn Luson. // Here lyes hee who by learning and his witt’; ‘On the same. // Immodest Death that wouldst not once conferre’; ‘On the late Lrd Treasurer S’ R. C. // Gibbosus jacet hic parvus, gui voce Richardus’; ‘Translated into English thus. // Here lies little Crookeback’ (University of Nottingham MS Portland PwV 37, p. 37; cf. Folger MS V.a.103, fol. 20r–v); ‘On S’ Walter Rawley. // Essex, thy death’s reveng’d lo here I lie’ (PwV 37, p. 37; V.a.103, fol. 20v).
32 ‘Here lies he who by learning and his wit’; ‘Immodest death that would not once confer’ (Bod. MS Eng. poet. e.14, fol. 96r rev.); ‘Here lies little Robin who justly was reckoned’; ‘Essex thy death’s revenged; lo here I lie’ (fol. 95r rev.).
Camden’s Remaines and a Pair of Epideictic Poetry Anthologies

epitaphs. If the scribe responsible for the Folger and Nottingham anthologies used the Bodleian manuscript at such an early stage of its construction, he would have had good reason to add the heading ‘Epitaphs’ to its first page of text. He could also have perceived in it something like what he saw in Camden: two kinds of epitaphs, separated subtly, and worth distinguishing more carefully.

So he copied several series of epitaphs from either the Bodleian manuscript or another closely related to it, dividing them into two different sections, with blank leaves in between them. By including unprintable libels from manuscript, the scribe was continuing Camden’s series of asterisked epitaphs and intensifying its slanderous character. Indeed, he added the initials ‘C.R.’ to a few satirical libels that appear in both Remaines and the Bodleian manuscript.

This arguably has the effect of assimilating Camden’s rather tame, merry epitaphs to the more dangerous libels that the scribe could have found only in manuscript. But he was not trying to make Camden or his epitaphs appear radical or slanderous. On the contrary, he was using the distinction between laudatory and merry verse that Camden articulated, and which the first hand in the Bodleian manuscript may have also helped to model, in order to mitigate the libelous character of the satirical epitaphs.

These libels get to the point of the scribe’s organizational structure, as well as the point of this essay. This point pertains to the compilers’ series of genres – specifically his placement of those that he described with Camden’s words ‘satirical’ and ‘merry’. Again, he began each manuscript with the same first six sections, beginning with ‘Laudatory Epitaphs’ and proceeding next to ‘Epitaphs Merry & Satyrical’. The scribe reused both of these terms, merry and satirical, to describe other groups of poems: the ‘Satyres’ that appear in both miscellanies and the ‘Merry Poems’ of the Nottingham manuscript alone. The three resultant sections of merry or satirical verse make clear that their compiler shared many of his contemporaries’ interests in satires and any of the amusing, funny, pleasant, or happy poems that they could construe as ‘merry’. Yet, also like many of his contemporaries, the scribe collected not only merry and satirical poems. Moreover,

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33 For a more detailed account of the hands in the manuscript, see Eckhardt, *Manuscript Verse Collectors*, pp. 219–22.

34 ‘C.R. On an Usurer. // Here lies tenne in the Hundred’ (PwV 37, p. 38; V.a.103, fol. 21r; Eng. poet. e.14, fol. 95v rev.); ‘C.R. On one that liv’d retired and carelessly. // Here lieth Hee who was borne and cried’ (PwV 37, p. 38; Eng. poet. e.14, fol. 95r rev.); ‘C.R. On a lascivious gentlewoman. / One Stone sufficeth (lo what Death can doe)’ (PwV 37, p. 38; V.a.103, fol. 21v; Eng. poet. e.14, fol. 94v rev.); ‘C.R. On S’ Iohn Calfe. // O Deus omnipotens Vituli miserere Iohannis // Translated into English thus, and inlarged. // All Christian men in my behalfe’ (PwV 37, p. 39; V.a.103, fol. 21v; Eng. poet. e.14, fol. 94v rev.); ‘C.R. On M’ Sands. // Who would live in others breath?’ (PwV 37, p. 4; Eng. poet. e.14, fol. 94v rev.); ‘C.R. On Iohn Croker a Bellows maker of Oxford. // Here lies John Croker a maker of Bellows’ (PwV 37, p. 42; Eng. poet. e.14, fol. 88v, in a later hand); ‘C.R. On a yong noble Gentlewoman. // Here lies (the Lord have mercy upon her’ (PwV 37, p. 42; Eng. poet. e.14, fol. 93v rev.); ‘C.R. On a Gentleman that quarrelld w’th Death. // Here lies the man that madly slaine’ (PwV 37, p. 42; Eng. poet. e.14, fol. 93v rev.).
he immediately preceded each section of them with verses on praiseworthy or serious subjects: the ‘Laudatory Epitaphs’ that begin each volume; the ‘Panegyricks’ that appear in both miscellanies; and indeed the ‘Serious Poemes’ of the Nottingham manuscript. To put this the other way round, the scribe followed each of his groups of praise poems and serious verses with a section of satirical or merry poems. As a result, his miscellanies alternate between the laudatory and the satirical, between the serious and the merry. These pairs of first positive and then negative poetic subjects – in first respectful and then satirical poems, or in first sober and then amusing verses – gives this scribe’s miscellanies a distinctive structure or organization.

I call this structure epideictic, drawing not only on the long-standing discourse of this ceremonial branch of rhetoric but also, and more specifically, on an argument of David Colclough’s. Epideictic rhetoric involves alternating praise and disgrace, of positive and negative subjects, respectively. Colclough has suggested that early modern readers of libels would have assigned them an epideictic role, recognizing that their slander of blameworthy individuals implied a corresponding appreciation for their praiseworthy counterparts (even if the texts of libels rarely refer to such positive examples). Those same libels that might otherwise make entire manuscript books, or even verse miscellanies in general, appear so radical to some modern readers – these very same libels assume, in Colclough’s argument, an edifying, classical, rhetorical function. Far from simply being slanderous and seditious, libels would have evoked in at least some readers an epideictic appreciation for the good. Such readers remain, in Colclough’s compelling account, implied, ideal readers, as opposed to the few evasive, particular ones who have left traces of their reading practices.35

I suggest that the anonymous compiler of the pair of Folger and Nottingham miscellanies qualifies as an actual individual who read libels precisely as Colclough suggests. Moreover, he was not content to confine his epideictic reception of libels to reading alone. He structured his miscellanies so as to encourage others to read them in the same way. He physically positioned libels’ negative examples in generic sections that follow and contrast with other verses that accord honour to respectable individuals. He placed libels’ blame and slander in those parts of his books where they best heighten the praise and honour that other groups of poems offer to their subjects.

For instance, the three or four laudatory epitaphs on Elizabeth I with which he began his miscellanies became that much more laudatory when he countered them with the ‘merry or satirical’ ones on two successive lord treasurers, Buckhurst and Cecil. By featuring these poems on the title pages of his opposing groups of epitaphs, the scribe clearly contrasted them – even though the Buckhurst libels appear 20 folios later in the Folger manuscript (fol. 20r) and 37 pages later in the Nottingham manuscript (p. 37). Without recognizing the structure of these

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miscellanies, one could plausibly object that the epitaphs on Elizabeth and her courtiers appear too far apart for the scribe to have related them to one another. Yet, regardless of how many leaves he left between them, he positioned these verses where they most clearly oppose one another – and, indeed, where they begin his demonstration of what distinguishes laudatory from satirical or merry poems, and praiseworthy from blameworthy or insignificant subjects.

Even while he used satirical epitaphs of Cecil, as well as of Ralegh, to heighten praise of their monarchs, he also countered their negative representations with laudatory epitaphs on these same courtiers. This may seem contradictory. Why would a single scribe countenance both respect and disrespect for particular courtiers? Given his use of Camden’s Remaines, the scribe likely did so for some of the same reasons that Camden featured both laudatory and satirical lines on individual English monarchs: in order to include the wide range of texts that he had collected while isolating, and counteracting, the libelous ones. Literary historians commonly recognize the literary agency of a print author like Camden, and regularly doubt that of an anonymous scribe such as the compiler of this pair of manuscripts. Nevertheless, these manuscripts show their compiler adopting some of Camden’s texts and habits of thought. Indeed, they show him expanding Camden’s tendencies into an elaborate yet intricate structure for an entire book. Even more than Camden’s brief remarks about libels, this structure accentuates the honour that laudatory epitaphs show to monarchs, and minimizes the slander against their most notorious courtiers. The scribe placed libelous epitaphs on courtiers in the part of this structure where they point back to the positive representations of not only their monarchs but also the same courtiers themselves.

The result is an epideictic setting for libels – one that negates their slander and returns to the praise of virtue. Later on in the Nottingham miscellany, its compiler featured a few other members of royal courts among the ‘Panegyricks’ that he collected. He began with the queen’s champion, ‘S’ Henry Lea his Farewell to the Court’, beginning, ‘His golden locks Time hath to silver turnd’. He also featured King James and his daughter Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, in this section, the latter in both English and Latin versions of Sir Henry Wotton’s ‘Yee glorious trifles of the East’. In the next section, of ‘Satyres’, he arguably magnified Wotton’s praise of Princess Elizabeth with the five libels that he collected on Frances Howard, countess of Somerset. He opened this section with the amazing ‘Satyre entituled the Witch; supposed to bee made against the Lady Francis

36 ‘On S’ Walter Rawly. // Great heart who taught thee so to dy’ (University of Nottingham MS Portland PwV 37, p. 5; Folger MS V.a.103, fol. 3v); ‘On S’ Rob: Cecill Earle of Salisbury. // Oh that such wisdome that could steere a state’ (PwV 37, p. 9; V.a.103, fol. 5r–v); ‘On S’ Walter Raleigh, who was ‘ beheaded a little before the / appearance of the Comet; 1618. // I knew thee but by Fame, and thy brave deeds’ (PwV 37, p. 14; V.a.103, fol. 6v).

37 University of Nottingham MS Portland PwV 37, p. 107.

38 Ibid., pp. 109–11.
Countes of Somersett’ which begins with the memorable line ‘Shee with whom troopes of Bustuary slaves’. 39 Farther on in this section, he devoted most of a page to four other libels on the countess. 40 Unlike Cecil and Ralegh (the second of whom appears among the ‘Satyres’ as well41), the countess of Somerset does not show up in any of the sections of praise poems. She thus qualifies as the scribe’s example of a thoroughly blameworthy noblewoman, fit for satire and, apparently, for no other genre. Nevertheless, the libels on her make the praiseworthy women in these miscellanies appear even worthier. The countess of Somerset provides the negative example that heightens the honour shown to her betters in every sense of the word – Princess Elizabeth and Queen Elizabeth I.

This is especially the case in the fuller Nottingham manuscript, given the expanded role that its compiler assigned Queen Elizabeth in one of the sections that does not appear in the Folger miscellany. He included no Spanish match libels in the Folger manuscript, but added to the Nottingham volume all three of the texts that comprise an exchange between English commoners and a sainted, yet still protestant Elizabeth I.42 Whereas he placed most of the libels that he collected in sections devoted to satires, these verses on the Spanish match he considered ‘Serious Poemes’. The reason for this may be that, even as they reflect negatively on Catholic Spain and its alleged English allies, these poems focus on a most honourable subject – in fact, the miscellanies’ principal example of an honourable subject – Elizabeth I. Considered ‘Serious Poemes’ in this miscellany, the commons’ petitions to Saint Elizabeth and, via her, to Jehovah refer back to the epitaphs on the queen that begin the anthology. Indeed, they assimilate the epitaphs’ proper respect for a recently deceased monarch to polemical idealizations of that monarch composed two decades later.

In other manuscripts, this exchange between Saint Elizabeth and the commons may appear to emphasize other libels’ negative representations of the Spanish Infanta, the Duke of Buckingham, and King James. But this scribe made it difficult to focus for long on the petitions’ criticisms of these figures without ignoring their place in the volume as a whole. The negative example that the exchange makes of James serves to heighten its praise of Elizabeth. And the praise of James back in the ‘Laudatory Epitaphs’ counteracts the criticism of him suggested in the exchange.

Again and again, this scribe’s arrangement of poems turns attention away from the negative representations that it includes, and back toward the praiseworthy subjects who preceed them and now receive greater honour by the comparison. Like their beginning, the end of these miscellanies is to honour virtue, and to do so all the more emphatically by briefly and strategically opposing it to dishonour. Again, I believe that the word for this oscillation (or, just possibly, dialectic) between praise and satire, or serious and merry poems, is epideictic. I think that

39 Ibid., pp. 135–6.
40 Ibid., p. 142.
41 Ibid., p. 140.
42 Ibid., pp. 243–52.
this pair of manuscript miscellanies offers such remarkable examples of epideictic rhetoric in part because they come not from an orator or author or stationer, but from an anonymous scribe – yet also because this scribe appropriated within the epideictic structure of his miscellanies some of the most apparently radical, seditious, and slanderous poems that we still have from early modern England. Nevertheless, by assigning them places in his epideictic anthologies, he imposed on them a classical, edifying, even conservative or ethical role. He chastened them, put them to good purpose. In other words, he put libels in their place – a place where they serve to praise virtue. He may therefore qualify as the most paradoxically radical reader of these radical poems.

As should be needless to say, more remains to be written and asked about these manuscripts. Do the generic sections that I have avoided here (‘Love Sonnets’, ‘Miscellanea’, and ‘Verses on Christ=Church Play’) pertain to the anthologies’ epideictic structure? Might textual collations demonstrate the precise sources from which the scribe copied, and perhaps emended, texts? Did the members of the Smyth (or Smith) family who inscribed their names in the Folger manuscript bear any relation to the Smiths featured in the poems in these manuscripts?43 Might these names, or the one inscribed into the Bodleian manuscript (Henry Lawson or maybe even Lamson or Lanison), lead to other examples of the work, or even the name, of the scribe? Does the copy of Shakespeare’s second sonnet that has been cut out of the Folger manuscript appear in any of James Halliwell-Phillipps’s scrapbooks or boxes?44 This is just a beginning to the questions that these and other manuscript miscellanies can generate. I hope that this essay will serve to inform such questions by acknowledging two of the scribe’s sources as well as his ability to elaborate on the conceptual arrangements that he found in them.

43 ‘M’. St: Clive• On S’ Thomas Smyth. // As Prisoners quitt, to gaine new libertie’ (PwV 37, p. 14; V.a.103, fol. 6v); ‘M’ Tho” Downer. / of S’ Iohns … Prefixed on a Booke … borrowed of a / noble Gentleman (S’ Hugh Smith) … Like an Apostles spoone, whose guilded head’ (PwV 37, p. 153); ‘S’ Thomas Smyth Maior / of Chester, and High-Sheriffe / of Ches-shire // Farewell; itt greives us, and yett must bee so’ (PwV 37, p. 188).

44 V.a.103, fol. 33v; the sonnet appears in a similar place in PwV 37, p. 69.
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