The Manchester Spenser



# A Supplement of the Faery Queene

By Ralph Knevet



EDITED BY

CHRISTOPHER BURLINSON

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By RALPH KNEVET

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### A Supplement of the Faery Queene





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#### Abbreviations and texts used

Eng.	English	
FQ	The Faerie Queene	
Fr.	French	
Gr.	Greek	
It.	Italian	
L.	Latin	
Met.	Metamorphoses	
OE	Old English	
OF	Old French	
OED	Oxford English Dictionary	
SC	The Shepheardes Calender	
SFQ	A Supplement of the Faery Queene	
Sp.	Spanish	
Du Bartas	The Divine Weeks and Works of Guillaume de Saluste Sieur Du Bartas, translated by	
	Joshua Sylvester, ed. by Susan Snyder, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).	
Hamilton	Edmund Spenser, The Faerie Queene, ed. by A. C. Hamilton, 2nd edn (London:	
	Longman, 2001).	
Lavender	Andrew Lavender, 'An Edition of Ralph Knevett's Supplement of the Faery Queene	
	(1635)', 2 vols (New York University doctoral dissertation, 1955).	
Tilley	Morris Palmer Tilley, A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth	
	and Seventeenth Centuries: A Collection of the Proverbs found in English Literature	
	and the Dictionaries of the Period (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950).	

#### Texts used

All quotations from Spenser's poetical and prose works, and from the paratexts originally published with these works, are taken from *The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition*, ed. Edwin Greenlaw et al., 12 vols (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1932-57), and are cited by line number, page number, or book, canto, and stanza numbers, as appropriate. All quotations from Knevet's works other than the *Supplement* are taken from *The Shorter Poems of Ralph Knevet: A Critical Edition*, ed. by Amy M. Charles (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1966), and are cited by line numbers.

References to the following sources will be made throughout the commentary by author and short title, with the exception of occasional references to early modern English translations and editions, the authors and full titles of which will be cited in each instance.

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#### Ralph Knevet: Life and works

Of Ralph Knevet's life the bare facts are well established. He was born to parents Ralph and Alice Knevet shortly before 19 February 1602 - the date of his baptism - in the village of Hardwick, in Norfolk, a poor relation of the established Norfolk families Knyvett and Paston. The seventh of ten children, and the second son, Knevet would be obliged to carve out a life for himself independent of his immediate family's probably small estate. He matriculated at Peterhouse, Cambridge, in 1616, but appears to have remained in Cambridge for only two years. Soon afterwards, he was living back in Norfolk, a gentleman client (and probably tutor) at Oxnead Hall, seat of Sir William Paston (d. 1610), the richest landowner in Norfolk. After Sir William's death, the estate had passed in trust to his grandson Edmund and his wife, the well-known Lady Katherine Paston (1578-1629), daughter of Sir William's friend Sir Thomas Knyvett, Katherine's protestant piety and Norfolk connections were to dominate Knevet's poetic career. Knevet travelled to Italy with his former pupil, Sir William Paston (son of Edmund and Katherine), between 1638 and 1639; Paston himself sailed on from Italy to Egypt and thence to Jerusalem, while Knevet remained behind, later meeting Paston in Venice to return to England in March 1639.2 This extended tour seems to have been driven by causes partly personal, partly political: Paston had lost his young wife, Katherine (née Bertie, daughter to Robert Bertie, earl of Lindsey) in 1636; but he seems also to have wanted to evade the brewing political conflict that had pitted his family's protestant affiliations against its loyalty to the crown.3 As we will shortly see, this is a tension palpable in the Supplement of the Faery Queene, completed a few years before the journey. Following the trip to Italy, little further is known of Knevet's activities until Paston presented him with the living of the parish of St Michael's (originally and now St Margaret's) in Lyng, Norfolk, in 1652. Knevet had been closely associated with the church for about a decade - he deputised for the rector, William Starkey, there between 1643 and 1645, probably during the latter's illness - and he had probably taken orders in the early 1640s. Knevet was confirmed rector of Lyng after his subscription to the Act of Uniformity in 1662, and remained there with his wife Anne, his executrix, until his death in 1671 or early 1672.4

Knevet's first known literary work was published in 1628.  $\Sigma TPATI\Omega TIKON$  [Stratiotikon], Or A Discourse of Militarie Discipline is a poem of just over a thousand lines, which urges its English readers to unite in a common, national resolve to repel a feared attack from Catholic Europe. The poem as published is as distinctive for its paratexts as it is for its stark message, and for the privileged role it accords the poet in galvanizing and ordering his audience. In addition to his dedication to the captain, lieutenant, and company of soldiers garrisonned at Norwich, another prose dedication to the general reader, a pair of dedicatory poems 'To any to whom I write', and a commendatory poem by Robert Wotton, Stratiotikon also includes no fewer than 37 individual dedicatory verses addressed to various Norfolk gentlemen whose support for military or literary achievements Knevet either urges or commends. The volume also concludes with a 'Threnode' mourning the death of two Norfolk gentlemen killed in the Duke of Buckingham's summer 1627 assault on the Isle of Ré (near La Rochelle in France),

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See T. A. Walker, Admissions to Peterhouse, 1615-1911 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>On Knevet's trip to Italy with his patron, see W. M. Merchant, 'Ralph Knevet of Norfolk, Poet of Ciuill Warre', *Essays and Studies*, 13 (1960), 21-35; and 'Knevet's Life', in Amy Charles, ed., *The Shorter Poems of Ralph Knevet: A Critical Edition* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1966), pp. 10-11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Sir William Paston suffered as a Royalist in the 1640s; while he was living abroad, his estates were sequestered, though he afterwards had the sequestration discharged. His first wife's father, the earl of Lindsey, was appointed in 1642 lieutenant-general of Charles I's army, fought at the battle of Edgehill (23 October 1642), and was killed. Notwithstanding these strong Royalist connections, Paston was able (as Amy Charles notes) 'to make peace with the Puritans', and he passed the Interregnum quietly at Oxnead. See Charles, 'Knevet's Life', pp. 12-13; and Merchant, 'Ralph Knevet of Norfolk', p. 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>For further details on Knevet's life, see Alastair Fowler, 'Ralph Knevet', in the *ODNB*; and 'Knevet's Life', in Amy Charles, ed., *The Shorter Poems of Ralph Knevet: A Critical Edition* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1966), pp. 7-15. Knevet's gravestone records his death in the year 1671, but the blanks left for the day and month leave open the possibility that he died between 1 January and 24 March 1672 – still reckoned 1671 according to the old style. The incomplete state of Knevet's gravestone may suggest that his wife Anne died shortly after him.

and a poem 'vpon the death of Sir Ralphe Shelton', also killed on the same expedition. Knevet's transparent aim in constellating around his poem so many patrons, both living and dead, was to organize and mobilize a community of poet-soldiers, in the tradition of Philip Sidney, to pursue their own and their nation's glory. The overriding impact of the work lies in Knevet's idealistic commitment to a practical social and political role for poetry in the communities where it is written and read; as he writes in one of his prefaces, 'if you please to cast a long looke backe to the Troiane warre, you shall find *Calchas* exciting the disheartned Greekes to prosecute the warre. Looke an age more backward, and there you may see *Orpheus* encouraging the Argonautes to the Colchian expedition.' Knevet clearly sees his own role as that of the prophet-poet, steering his people toward heroic glory. As he writes almost immediately in his dedicatory poem to Captain Henry Shelton, 'fame must know | Shee cannot pay those glories, shee doth owe | To great and good deserts, except some aides | Be sent her from the nine Castalian maides.' Or, more explicitly, he writes to Sir Miles Hobart:

Neuer dranke I of *Pegasus* his well,

Nor in *Parnassus* dream't (that I can tell)

Though I write Verse, for I would haue men know it,

The Times [or] good or ill, make me a Poet.

To praise *Vlisses* wise, as much my care is,

As to condemne *Thersites*, or vaine *Paris*.

And as sweete *Orpheus* to his Harpe did set

High tun'd Ditties, great courages to whet;

So euer bee't my taske, to moue great spirits,

And honourable soules, to braue demerits.<sup>7</sup>

The peculiar emphasis upon the moral and political power of the poet, in both *Stratiotikon* and its paratexts, may suggest that Knevet already had Spenser's theory of poetry firmly in mind. And indeed this early poem is marked by distinctively Spenserian touches. The opening of the poem clearly echoes the Proem to Book I of *The Faerie Queene*:

Loe my *Thalia*, that was whilome seene,
Frisking among the Nimphs, in Forrest greene,
To Satyres pipes; and that did sing (long since)
Her morals smooth, to *Pan* the Shepheards Prince:
Is now prest to a farre vnfitter taske;
And like Bellona, arm'd with steely caske;
Powres warlike accents forth, and numbers meete
For trumpets sterne, and stately buskin'd feete. (ll. 1-8)

Here Knevet constructs eight lines on the model of Spenser's opening nine, echoing words and phrases such as 'whilome', 'farre vnfitter taske', and 'trumpets sterne', and defining his own career transition from pastoral to epic on Spenser's Virgilian rota. Like Spenser, too, Knevet cites twice in this work from a famous passage in Virgil's *Aeneid* (6.893-96), in which the Latin poet describes the god of sleep, Morpheus, sending dreams to trouble sleeping minds through gates of horn and ivory (cf. FQ, 1.1.39-44; *Stratiotikon*, ll. 636-38; and 'A Threnode', ll. 19-22) – a double allusion he repeats twice in the *Supplement* (*SFQ*, 7.12.1, 8.5.8). Like Spenser (*FQ*, 4.3.43), too, Knevet imitates Homer in mentioning 'strong Nepenthe' (l. 680), an anaesthetic drink Helen was said to have given to the Greeks (*Odyssey*, 4.219-32); 'Nepenthe soueraigne' also features in the *Supplement* (9.6.49.5, 9.7.14.5-9). More pervasively Knevet's poetry in *Stratiotikon* is marked by Spenser's characteristically scholarly habits of imitation and allusion, which often border on an encyclopedic intensity. For example, when Knevet's narrator

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Knevet, Stratiotikon, ff. A<sub>3</sub>r-A<sub>3</sub>v.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Knevet, Stratiotikon, f. B1r.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Knevet, Stratiotikon, f. B<sub>3</sub>r.

visits a 'strange Land' inhabited by metamorphosed Circean beasts, his ape guide catalogues some of the famous sentient animals bred from that place:

Here was the Ramme bred, that did bring Great Liber Paters Armie to the spring, When they in Africkes deserts were tormented With scortching thirst. Those white Geese th[at] preuented The Gaules from taking of the Capitoll Were some of vs. And that py'd Memphian Bull, For whom the Egyptians fell at deadly iarres Was ours. Sertorius in his Spanish warres, Sought counsell of our Hind. The Asse Of Apuleius; and the Oxe that was Heard speake at Rome. The Epidaurian Snake; And Dogge that dy'd for his deare Masters sake Were bred with vs. The Coblers prating Daw; And Psapho's Birds did here their first ayre draw; And so did Mahomets tame Pigeon, That holpe to found his new religion. I could tell later prankes, till I were hoarce, Of Willoughbyes blacke Cat, and Banckes his horse; This place (I tell thee) is the onely Cell, Where arts enlink'd with rich content doe dwell. (ll. 710-29)

In the margin adjacent to this passage (in a series of glosses worthy of Spenser's own *The Shepheardes Calender*), Knevet points the reader to the Latin text of Pliny's *Natural History*, to Manlius, to Ovid, to Livy, and to others. The density of Knevet's classical references in this passage betrays the kind of commonplacing that, as a household tutor in an age so pervasively influenced by its humanist pedagogical practices, Knevet must himself have practised punctiliously. Although eager to advertise his moral and military project as a Spenserian one, Knevet's style and self-presentation, equally, derive from Spenser's original.

Like Spenser, too, Knevet was an ambitious son from a cadet branch of a famous and established family, and he was keen in his shorter poetry to insinuate himself into their ranks. The dedicatory poems attached to *Stratiotikon* include several to the men of the Norfolk Knyvett and Paston families, including one to Sir Thomas Knyvett of Ashwellthorpe and another to his brother Edmund Knyvett. William Paston, the young heir to the Paston fortune, also receives a dedication, as do Sir John Heveningham (a Paston relation) and Sir Robert Bell (nephew to the elder Lady Katherine Paston). These poems adopt a familiar and an ingratiating tone, unlike that of the other pieces. For example, Knevet builds the dedication to Sir Thomas Knyvett on the latter's interest in astrology, a science that has given him insight into fate and thus (says Knevet) into his own honourable end. The poem dedicated to Paston exhorts him in a tone of delicately deferential advice, the characteristic posture of the tutor; the lesson – the distinction between profligacy and liberality, or that between worldly honour purchased through lavish expenditure and true honour grounded in virtue – would surface several years later when Knevet began composing book 9 of the *Supplement*. Perhaps Knevet had already served as tutor to Paston, as he probably also did to Paston's son; certainly the dedication of *Funerall Elegies* (1637), poems memorializing Paston's wife Katherine, styles him her 'vnworthy beneficiary'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Spenser advertised his connection to the Spencers of Althorpe – 'some private bands of affinitie' – in the dedicatory letters affixed to the poems of *Complaints* (London: William Ponsonby, 1591), f. E2r. There is no evidence that the Spencers rejected this claim; indeed, Spenser notes in his dedicatory letter to *The Teares of the Muses* that Lady Strange (née Alice Spencer, the youngest of the daughters of Sir John Spencer) had acknowledged the relation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Ralph Knevet, Funerall Elegies (London: T. Cotes for Andrew Crooke, 1637), f. Azv. Amy Charles has argued that Knevet seems to have grown more distant from the Pastons over the course of his life, citing his dedication of the manuscript of A Gallery

Knevet's second published work, which exists in two editions from 1631, is ostensibly of a much different kind. *Rhodon and Iris. A Pastorall* is the text of a pageant play produced during the feast of the guild of Florists at Norwich in May 1631. The world of Knevet's pastoral is, as one might expect, largely populated by shepherds, but even here the poet's practical purpose – a moral and political allegory – frequently lunges into salience. Knevet warns the reader in his preface "To his much respected friends, the Society of Florists', that, though he has been accused of 'taxing of some private persons' with satirical personations, his poet's office requires it of him:

I am content to referre this controversie to the arbitrement of any that is ingenious. But this (as I tender my owne reputation, and Truth her selfe) I must tell ye, that should I spye villany shelter her selfe under a Scarlet Gowne, I durst be so bold as to spurne her with the left foot of contempt, though not be so prodigall of that small store the Muses have allotted me, as to spend a line upon so despicable a subject.<sup>10</sup>

The targets of Knevet's satire in *Rhodon and Iris* are probably several, though it is difficult from this distance to gauge the contribution of the overall story of the play to the offence taken. The play centres around the love of the shepherd Rhodon for the shepherdess Iris. Their love is beset by the animosity of Martagon, who has unjustly seized the estates of Rhodon's sister Violetta; and by the jealousy of Eglantine, whom Rhodon has spurned, and who is determined to get him back. Both Martagon and Eglantine are assisted in their nefarious projects by the enchantress Poneria, who cooks up a deadly potion to kill Rhodon, and by her assistant Agnostus. Some aspects of the story seem designed to satirise and expose local targets. For example, Martagon's seizure of Violetta's estates, and the challenge to which Rhodon must in honor hold him, reads as a thinly-veiled attack on some greedy landowner in Stuart Norfolk. The reference is now obscure. But some incidental parts of the satire still strike home with a pretty clear clang, as this almost parenthetical attack on the Caroline soldiery, delivered by Poneria when encouraging Agnostus to take up his new identity as a captain:

Hast wit enough to swallow the dead payes, And to patch up thy Company in a Mustring day: Hast valour enough to weare a Buffe-jerken With three gold laces. Hast strength enough to support a Dutch felt With a flaunting Feather? Can thy side endure to be wedded to a Rapire Hatch'd with gold, with hilt and hangers of the new fashion? Canst drinke, drab, and dice: Canst damne thy selfe into debt among Beleeving Tradesmen; Hast manners enough to give thy Lievetenant, Antient or Sergeant leave to goe before thee Vpon any peece of danger? Hast wit enough, in thy anger, not to draw a sword? These are the chiefe properties that pertaine To our moderne Captaines; and if thou Could'st but be taught these military rudiments, I doubt not but thou mightst prove a very Excellent new souldier. (ll. 1550-69)

to the Temple (composed in the 1640s, but copied fair in the early 1660s) to 'Sir Robert Paston's lady'; as she argues, a poet close to the family might well have dedicated the collection to Paston's wife Rebecca by name – as he had his earlier poems, to earlier Paston ladies. On the other hand, the survival of the manuscript among the Paston papers does, at least, show that Knevet presented the manuscript to his patrons. See n. 14, below.

<sup>10</sup> Knevet, Rhodon and Iris, ff. a1v-a2r.

Knevet's attack on the corruption and abuse of captains echoes other early modern examples, and is consistent with his project to chasten and encourage the Norfolk soldiery in *Stratiotikon*.

One of the most distinctive features of *Rhodon and Iris* is Knevet's unusual diction. Knevet consistently disperses into his writing unusual words, usually of Latin origin. In this he is probably following the witty neologisms and inkhorn terms of the London stage, from Shakespeare and Nashe straight through to Massinger, Marston, and Beaumont and Fletcher. This kind of lexical playfulness rubs directly against the archaising project that Spenser had founded on the linguistic nationalism of John Cheke and Richard Mulcaster. A few examples will give some indication of Knevet's lexical variety:

Such griefe as mine cannot be cur'd by time. But when the gentle fates shall disembogue My weary soule, and that Celestiall substance free From irkesome manacles of clay; then may I finde, If not a sweet repose in blest *Elysium*, Yet some refrigeration in those shades, Where *Dido* and *Hypsiphile* do wander. (ll. 262-68)

Both 'disembogue' ('to discharge or empty', as of a river into the sea) and 'refrigeration' were comparatively new words, but more importantly they were both technical terms, one borrowed from geography and the other from medicine. Here they combine to comical effect with Knevet's metaphysical terminology ('celestiall substance') and heightened classical diction ('blest *Elysium'*). At other occasions he finds opportunity to use words such as 'tresgrand' ('very great'), 'precipicious' ('lofty, precipitous'; a favourite, too, in the *Supplement*), 'spissitude' ('density'; almost certainly from Philemon Holland's translation of Pliny, *History of the World*, I. 611: 'For all the spissitude and thicknesse that they seeme to haue, they admit gently our sight to pierce into their bottome.'), 'cunctations' ('delays'), 'plumbeous' ('leaden, dull'), and 'officine' ('workshop, laboratory'). For the most part these are uncommon, 'inkhorn' words to which Knevet resorts to give his poetry the kind of weight that will appeal to 'those [who] can iudge of high designes'. In some cases, though, Knevet appears actively to coin new words, as in the otherwise unattested 'lustrify' ('make lustrous'). This practice of enriching, heightening, and to some degree unnerving his style with unusual words is, as we will see, one that marks his writing in *A Supplement of the Faery Queene*.

Rhodon and Iris has a few brilliant flashes of wit or eloquence that promise greater things. Typical of these is the shepherd Gladiolus' wittily damning theatrical aside on the maidservant Panace, whose revealing babblings about cosmetic treatments – in passages of encyclopedic materiality that recall Jonson's eponymous Volpone – expose her mistress Eglantine to his ridicule:

The perpetuall motion for which Artists have so labor'd Is discover'd no where so plainly as in her tongue,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>Probably the most extended contemporary discussion of this corrupt practice comes in Spenser's *A view of the present state of Ireland* (written c. 1596, but not published – and that in a heavily censored form – until Sir James Ware's 1633 Dublin edition). Speaking of the 'corrupcion of... Captaines', Eudoxus says that 'thoughe they be placed neuer soe Carefullie and theire Companies fild neuer so sufficientlye yeat maye they if they liste discarde whom they please and sende awaie perhaps suche as will willingelye be ridd of that daungerous and harde service The which well I wotte is theire Comon Custome to doe when they are laide in garrisone, for then they maye better hide theire defaultes then when they are in Campe, wheare they are Continvallie eyed and noted of all men. Besids when theire paie Commethe they will (as they vse) detaine the greatest porcions thereof at theire pleasures by an hundred shiftes that nede not heare be named, thoroughe which they often times deceaue the Soldiour Abuse the Quene and greatley hinder the service So that let the Quene paie neuer so fullie let the muster master view them neuer so dilligentile let the deputye or generall loke to them neuer so exactlie yeat they Can Cozen them all'. See Spenser, *A view of the present state of Ireland*, (ll. 3441-54). The practice was so proverbial in the period that John Donne could cite it derisively in the first of his satires: '... not though a Captaine do come in thy way / Bright parcell gilt, with forty dead mens pay...' See 'Satyre 1', ll. 17-18, in Herbert Grierson, ed., *The Poems of John Donne* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>The comic character of Knevet's adaptation of the first of these two terms, in which he follows John Fletcher's 1625 *Monsieur Thomas* (III.i), is heightened by the word's etymology: derived from Sp. *desembocar*, it literally means 'to come out of the mouth'. Knevet and Fletcher return the metaphor to its source.

Which scarce finds any leisure to rest, No not when she is asleepe ...

At other points *Rhodon and Iris* reaches a pitch of eloquence that suggests why his circle of gentleman friends esteemed Knevet so highly, as in this passage of Martagon's from Act 1, scene 4:

Reare up thy eyes unto the spangl'd cope,
And there behold *Ioves* starre-enchased belt,
The glittering Zodiacke wonderfully chang'd
In a few thousand yeares:
For those fixt stars, which like a Diamond cleare,
Adorne the baudricke of the Thunderer,
Have wander'd from their former stations. (ll. 304-10)

It is significant, though, that at this moment of poetical inspiration, when Knevet's verse hits a high peak of balance and authority, he immediately shifts into a studied, almost slavish imitation of the Proem to Book V of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*:

Witnesse the golden Ram who now is gone astray, And shoulder'd hath the Cretian Bull; and he Those twins of *love* so sore hath butted. That they have crush'd the Crab, and thrust him quite Into the den of the Nemaean Lyon. Thus by the change of these superiour bodies, Strange alterations in the world are wrought, Great Empires maim'd, & Kingdoms brought to naught. And that auspicious lampe, who freely lends His light to lesser fires, the prince of generation, Even Sol himselfe, is five degrees declin'd, Since learned Ptolome did take his height. But if Egyptian wisards we may trust, Who in Astrologie wont to excell; By them tis told, that foure times they have seene That glorious Charrioter flit from his place: Twice hath he rose (they say) where now he sets, And twice declined where he now doth rise. (ll. 311-28)

This is little more than a crude redaction of FQ, 5.Pr.5-8, where Spenser links the decline in terrene justice to a series of apparent shifts in the fixed stars (all caused by the 'wobble' of the earth on its rotational axis, known as the precession of the equinoxes). Knevet's loose rewriting of the passage in some places cuts very close to the Spenserian original (cf. Spenser on the shift in the sun – at 5.Pr.7 – which he says is declined thirty minutes since 'learned Ptolomax his hight did take'). Knevet alters some words and some astronomical details, but the passage is unmistakably Spenser's. And yet this bit of plagiarism seems to reflect not Knevet's theft, but, in Martagon's voice, his villain's grasping penchant for rapine and embezzlement. But if this passage both describes and performs a fall in poetical standards, the spirit of plagiarism that Knevet accuses lingers ready to condemn him for similar moments of weakness, throughout A Supplement of the Faery Queene. At a time when Knevet was setting out on his Supplement, the danger of his own close association with Spenser's great poem must have made him especially sensitive to charges of theft and recycling.

The consensus critical view has long been that Knevet improved as he went along, and the two works that followed his completion of *A Supplement* in 1635 have generally been held to be his best. Only one of them was published: the *Funerall Elegies* of 1637, 'consecrated to the immortall memory, of the Right Honorable the Lady Katherine Paston', memorialize the young wife of Sir William Paston under the

name of Calista (from Greek μαλλίστη, 'the most beautiful'). If the *Supplement* is Knevet's Spenser, the *Funerall Elegies* can probably be called Knevet's Donne. These three poems share with Donne's *Anniversaries* a tendency toward metaphysical conceits, such as this hyperbolic reaction to Paston's death, from Elegy 1:

The golden chaine of causes is dissolv'd, And *Chaos* (that so long hath beene involv'd In the unseene abysse) attempts to rise, And make both Orbes, and Elements his prize. The Worlds soule's fled; the *exit* of her breath, Threatens (I feare) an universall death...(ll. 69-74)

Like Donne's Anniversaries, too, these poems provide both a pattern for grief, and various suggested means for containing it, and channelling it within 'the bankes of Reason' (l. 132). But Knevet's poems differ in two important respects. First, as poems addressed to Lady Elizabeth Bertie, Katherine Paston's sister, they function as a public voicing of passions and arguments more intimately and humanly associated with the poet's own social position than anything Donne composed in the memory of Elizabeth Drury. Knevet knew his patrons well, had spent years in the company of Paston's husband William, and had lionized the family name on many occasions - not least in the Supplement, where Katherine and Elizabeth Bertie's father Sir Robert Bertie, first earl of Lindsay, is commemorated for his career in the Dutch wars during the 1620s (see SFQ, 8.7.51.1). Knevet's intimacy with the family is clear from the fact that the final two items printed in the Funerall Elegies, the 'Inscriptio funebris' and the verse 'Epicedium', are both carved on the stone of Katherine Paston's tomb at St Michael's (or Margaret's), Oxnead, in Norfolk. The emergence of these elegies from Knevet's own personal and social experience gives his poetry a sincerity and authority that Donne's (of course deliberately) lacks. Paston and her husband were Knevet's patrons, but the elegies are more than the dutiful funeral celebrations of a thankful client; they heave with local detail, personal address to members of the family, and apparently sincere expressions of grief and resolve.

But despite this, Knevet's elegies are remarkable for another feature – also distinct from Donne's *Anniversaries* – which pulls in an entirely opposite direction. Having completed *A Supplement* only a few years previously, Knevet seems to have been unable to shake either the form or the manner of Spenser's poetry. Not only is the third of the elegies written in Spenserian stanzas – perhaps inappropriate for Knevet's material – but the elegies frequently digress into long, slightly beguiling narrative material. For example, the first elegy recounts the history of Darius after the loss of his consort:

When great Darius, of his consort deare Deprived was, by Atropos severe, To griefe he renderd up his royall brest, No solace would he take, nor any rest. Then grave Democritus inform'd the King, That he from death, to life his Queene would bring, If he would grant him, what he should entreat, For the effecting of a worke so great: Darius condescends, and bids him aske, What meanes he thought convenient for this taske: Names of three Persons onely he requested, That never had with sorrow beene molested, For losses of a kinsman, or a friend. The King then did strict inquisition send, Through all his Kingdomes, to search out such men: But when they could be no where found nor seene He found his errour, and the fatall law Of unmov'd destinye, and nature saw;

Hence tooke he comfort, and with bounty high; The Wiseman for his cure did gratifie. (ll. 141-60)

The story of Democritus' counsel to Darius, which comes from one of the letters of the Emperor Julian (the Apostate),13 may seem out of place in an elegy marked by its sincere consolations and metaphysical speculations. The story's moral is consistent with the poem's general tenor – the first elegy as a whole takes a strong line on the 'impious stubbornness' of grief for an angelic woman who has been called to better joys in heaven - but the comic derision of 'the laughing philosopher', Democritus, strikes a jarring tone in an otherwise apparently sober work, for all of Knevet's attempt to sanitise the tale by the epithet 'grave'. Moreover, Knevet's tendency to break into inset narratives of this kind fundamentally seems to break decorum: these yarns have pointed morals, but the pleasures of fabling are too conspicuous to ignore – especially when Knevet indulges (in ll. 175-94) in a Spenserian digression, inspired by the Cantos of Mutabilitie, in which Jove dispenses gifts to the goddesses of Olympus, but runs out of store before he reaches Dame-Sorrow, who therefore receives only tears. Knevet's Spenserian habit of narrative digression wrenches these otherwise somber and metaphysical poems out of their erudite piety into a much more playful, and thus painful, hybridity. In this context, Knevet's hyperboles -Paston's death is called, at one stage, 'a greivance epidemicall' - and his highly rhetorical epithets ('Letter-puff'd Pedants', 'Sharp-sighted Speculatists') hit a pitch of derangement that Donne's ironic, speculative verse avoids. Knevet's is the sharper for its tinge of Spenserian madness.

Knevet's latest work of poetry, left unpublished until the twentieth century, reflects his experience with *A Supplement* in a different way. *The Gallery to the Temple* is a collection of devotional poems surviving in a single holograph manuscript, now in the British Library.<sup>14</sup> This collection, as its title suggests, Knevet intended in the style of George Herbert. As he writes in the preface to the work, which like *A Supplement* was probably prepared for publication:

Wee deriue the antiquity of this poesye, which concernes diuine Hymnes, from Moses, if not the first, yet the chiefest of the Prophet[s] who, though Hee pleaded a deficiencye in rhetorique, yet proued himself to bee not onely the antientest, but the best of all Poets... But I wonder not so much at the perfection of this entheated Heroe, as at the inadvertencye of our moderne wittes, who in this maturity of sciences, haue appeared so barren concerning the production, of this most diuine sorte of Poesye, that the species thereof might haue bene number'd among lost Antiquityes if our Pious Herbert (a name which I dare confidently affirme most aptly aggrees with the past and present condition of the person whom it denoted) had not by a religious cultiuation, added new life to the wither'd branches of this celestiall Balme Tree. Whereby Hee hath not onely surpassed those of his owne Nation, but even the haughty Italians, who chalenge a priority in art, as well as deuotions.<sup>15</sup>

Knevet's explicit acknowledgment of Herbert's influence, here, is borne out by the eighty-two poems that follow. In some cases – as in the opening poem, 'The Incarnation' – Knevet's poetry closely engages Herbert's both in form and in thought. Here the refrain, 'Was ever love like thine', follows with litanic regularity at the end of each iambic triplet, clearly echoing the structure of Herbert's 'The Sacrifice' (where the refrain, delivered in Christ's own voice, is 'Was ever grief like mine?'). Herbert's direct influence, too, marks Knevet's poem 'Antiphon', which is composed almost exactly on the model of Herbert's own 'Antiphon (II)'. But by and large Knevet's poems in the *Gallery* respond to Herbert, rather than mirroring his individual poems; although Knevet follows his model in providing poems that will help to stimulate and articulate prayer, and he experiments with verse forms very much in Herbert's creative spirit, nonetheless the character of the collection is Knevet's own. Where *The Temple* provides

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Julian the Apostate, Works, ed. Wilmer Cave Wright, 3 vols (London: Heinemann, 1923), pp. 230-33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>BL Add. MS 27,447. The manuscript – the first volume of two – includes miscellaneous papers belonging to the Paston family dating from between 1520 and 1701. Two editions of the *Gallery* were published in the twentieth century: (i) Giuliano Pellegrini, ed., *A Gallery to the Temple: Lyrical Poems Upon Sacred Occasions* (Pisa: Libreria Goliardica Editrice, 1954); and (ii) Amy M. Charles, ed., *The Shorter Poems of Ralph Knevet* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1966).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> To the Reader', BL Add. MS 27,447, ff. 12r-13r. See also Charles, ed., *The Shorter Poems of Ralph Knevet: A Critical Edition*, p. 280.