JOHN DONNE IN CONTEXT

John Donne was a writer of dazzling extremes. He was a notorious rake and eloquent preacher; he wrote poems of tender intimacy and lyrics of gross misogyny. This book offers a comprehensive account of early modern life and culture as it relates to Donne’s richly varied body of work. Short, lively, and accessible chapters written by leading experts in early modern studies shed light on Donne’s literary career, language, and works as well as explore the social and intellectual contexts of his writing and its reception from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century. These chapters provide the depth of interpretation that Donne demands, and the range of knowledge that his prodigiously learned works elicit. Supported by a chronology of Donne’s life and works and a comprehensive bibliography, this volume is a major new contribution to the study and criticism of the age of Donne and his writing.

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JOHN DONNE IN CONTEXT

EDITED BY

MICHAEL SCHOENFELDT

University of Michigan
To Patrick
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2. Miniature by Isaac Oliver, watercolour and bodycolour on vellum laid on card, 1616, Royal Collection Trust. © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2013.

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8. Donne in his shroud, frontispiece portrait engraved by William Marshall, from the Devotions (1638). Reproduced by permission of Cambridge University Library.

9. Donne in his shroud, frontispiece portrait engraved by Martin Droeshout, from Deaths Duell (1632). Reproduced by permission of Cambridge University Library.
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My thanks, finally, go to all the contributors, who invariably brought such fresh insights to Donne studies, and showed great patience as life interrupted the production of this volume. I am so glad it is “done.”

Acknowledgments

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Chronology

Kentston Bauman

1534 Henry VIII completes his break with Rome; Parliament’s Act of Supremacy establishes Henry as head of the Protestant Church of England.

1535 Thomas More, Donne’s maternal relative, executed for refusing to acknowledge Henry VIII as the Supreme Head of the Anglican Church; the Coverdale Bible published, the first complete Modern English translation of the Bible.

1539 The Great Bible published, the first authorized edition of the Bible in English; Andreas Vesalius publishes De Humani Corporis Fabrica, his groundbreaking human anatomy based on dissection; Copernicus publishes De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium, which argues for a heliocentric, rather than a geocentric, universe.

1547 Henry VIII dies; Edward VI, age nine, becomes king and institutes more radical Protestant reformation.

1549 Book of Common Prayer introduced.

1553 Edward VI dies; Mary I becomes queen and marries the Catholic Prince Philip of Spain (later Philip II of Spain); the Spanish Michael Servetus publishes Christianismi Restitutio, the first published description of pulmonary circulation.

1554 Mary I returns the English church to Roman Catholic jurisdiction; Heresy Acts revived, leading to the Marian persecutions of Protestant reformers; many Protestants choose exile to the European continent.

1558 Mary I dies; Elizabeth I becomes queen.


1560 The Geneva Bible published, the primary Bible used by Donne and Shakespeare.
1562 Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville’s *The Tragedy of Gorboduc* performed, the first English play in blank verse.

1563 John Foxe publishes *Acts and Monuments* (*Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*).

1564 William Shakespeare born in Stratford to John and Mary Arden Shakespeare.

1566 Donne’s maternal uncle Ellis Heywood accepted into the Society of Jesus in Bavaria, becoming a Jesuit priest.

1567 Mary Queen of Scots imprisoned on suspicion of murdering her husband, Lord Darnley; her infant son is crowned James VI of Scotland; John Brayne builds the Red Lion, England’s first professional theater, in Whitechapel.

1568 The Bishops’ Bible published; the 1602 edition served as the base text for the Authorized Bible of 1611.

1569 The German-Flemish cartographer Gerardus Mercator publishes a world map which represents sailing courses of constant bearing as straight lines, a cartographic innovation still employed today.

1570 The Flemish cartographer Abraham Ortelius publishes his *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, the first modern atlas.

1571 The Thirty-Nine Articles, which defined the doctrine of the Church of England in relation to Calvinist and Roman Catholic practices, finalized.

1572 Donne born in Bread Street, London, to John, warden of the Ironmongers’ Company, and Elizabeth Donne; the third of six known children; Ben Jonson born.

1573 The Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe publishes *De Nova Stella*, his observations of a supernova, a “new star” that suddenly appeared on November 11, 1572.

1576 Donne’s father dies; mother marries Dr. John Syminges; James Burbage constructs the Theatre, London’s first permanent amphitheater, in the suburb of Shoreditch.

1577 Donne’s sister Elizabeth likely dies; the first edition of Ralph Holinshed’s *The Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* published.

1577–80 Sir Francis Drake circumnavigates the globe, the second such endeavor (behind the 1519–22 Magellan-Elcano voyage).
1580 Robert Persons and Edmund Campion establish a Jesuit mission in England in the hopes of reconverting the nation to Catholicism.

1581 Donne’s maternal uncle, the Jesuit priest Jasper Heywood, assumes control of the Jesuit mission when Campion is executed and Persons exiled to the continent; Donne’s sisters Mary and Katherine die.

1583 Sir Humphrey Gilbert lays claim to Newfoundland.

1584 Donne matriculates at Hart Hall, Oxford University, with his younger brother Henry; Anne More born, May 27; Jasper Heywood indicted for treason for being a Catholic priest; Donne and his mother likely visit his uncle in the Tower of London in December.

1585 Donne possibly travels abroad with Henry Stanley, Earl of Derby; his sister Anne marries Avery Copley (who dies in 1591); Jasper Heywood exiled to the continent, eventually dying in Naples in 1598; Sir Walter Ralegh sends John White to found England’s first New World colony at Roanoke Island, in modern North Carolina.

1586 Sir Philip Sidney, age 31, dies of a gunshot wound suffered in the Battle of Zutphen against the Spanish.

1587 Mary Queen of Scots executed for plotting to assassinate Elizabeth I; Sir Francis Drake raids the ports of Cádiz and Corunna, destroying 37 Spanish ships; Philip Henslowe builds The Rose theater at Bankside; Thomas Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy* most likely first performed; the two parts of Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine the Great* first performed.

1587–90 Donne’s movements uncertain, possibly at Cambridge University, or, more likely, traveling abroad.

1588 Dr. John Syminges, Donne’s stepfather, dies; the Catholic Philip II of Spain attempts to invade England and overthrow the Protestant Elizabeth I; the English defeat the Spanish Armada.

1590 James VI marries Anne of Denmark; Sir Philip Sidney’s *Arcadia* published; Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*, Books I–III published.

1590–91 Donne’s mother marries Richard Rainsford.
Chronology

1591
Donne likely attends Thavie’s Inn, an Inn of Chancery designed to prepare students for law school; Sir Philip Sidney’s *Astrophel and Stella* published.

1591–92
Shakespeare’s first plays performed, including *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and 2 and 3 *Henry VI*.

1592
Donne studies law at Lincoln’s Inn, one of London’s Inns of Court, until 1595 or 1596; while there, Donne likely composes and circulates some verse letters, the first two satires, most of the elegies, and some of the *Songs and Sonnets*; Philip Henslowe begins his diary, which keeps detailed records of his theatrical business transactions; continued until 1604; Christopher Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* first performed.

1592–94
London’s theaters frequently closed during the summers because of the plague.

1593
Donne serves as Master of the Revels at Lincoln’s Inn; receives part of his inheritance in June; Donne’s brother Henry is caught harboring William Harrington, a Catholic priest, in his rooms at Thavie’s Inn; Henry imprisoned at Newgate under horrific conditions where he dies from the plague a month later; the Anglo-Irish Nine Years’ War, the largest conflict fought by England in the Elizabethan era, breaks out; George Herbert born in Wales.

1594
Donne receives an additional portion of his and Henry’s inheritance; the Catholic priest William Harrington hanged, drawn, and quartered; James VI’s first son, Henry, born.

1595
Sir Walter Ralegh, looking for the golden city of El Dorado, explores Guiana in northern South America; Hugh O’Neill, Earl of Tyrone, joins the Irish rebels against the English.

1596
Donne joins the successful military campaign of the Queen’s favorite, Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, to Cádiz; the city sacked and burned, and the Spanish fleet destroyed; James VI’s daughter, Elizabeth, born; James Burbage opens the Blackfriars indoor theater; Edmund Spenser’s second edition of *The Faerie Queene*, now including Books IV–VI, published.

1597
Donne joins the unsuccessful military campaign of the Earl of Essex and Sir Walter Ralegh to the Azores Islands; the
English suffer heavy losses, and fail to destroy the Spanish fleet or capture any treasure ships; Donne writes “The Storm” and “The Calm” about this expedition; upon returning, Donne becomes secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, at York House in the Strand.

King Henry IV of France signs the Edict of Nantes, which ends France’s religious wars and provides toleration for Protestants.

The Earl of Essex leads a force of 16,000 troops to Ireland; after failing to crush Hugh O’Neill’s rebellion and concluding an unfavorable truce, Essex returns to England without the Queen’s permission and is confined to house arrest for desertion of duty; Donne’s friend, Sir Thomas Egerton the younger, accompanied Essex on this military campaign, dying from wounds suffered in a skirmish; Donne participates in funeral procession by bearing Egerton’s sword; John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Richard Bancroft, Bishop of London, sign an order banning satires and other offensive books; some copies rounded up and burned, including works by Thomas Nashe, John Marston, and John Davies; The Theatre closes after the Lord Chamberlain’s Men fail to secure a new lease; the Globe Theatre, partially built with timber from The Theatre, opens at Bankside.

Elizabeth I charters the East India Company; James VI’s second son, Charles, born; Edward Alleyn and Philip Henslowe construct the Fortune Theater for the Lord Admiral’s Men; William Gilbert publishes De Magnete, Magneticisque Corporibus, et de Magno Magnete Tellure, which argues that the earth itself is magnetic.

Shakespeare’s Hamlet and Twelfth Night likely first performed.

Donne serves as a Member of Parliament for Brackley, Northampton, in the autumn, the seat in the gift from Egerton; composes Metempsychosis, and, most likely, some of his prose Paradoxes; clandestinely marries Anne More, ward and niece to his employer Egerton, in December; Deprived of office, influence, and revenue streams, the Earl of Essex leads a rebellion into London to force an audience with the Queen; the uprising fails, and Essex is
convicted of treason; Essex beheaded on Tower Green, the last person to be executed at the Tower of London.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1601–03</td>
<td>Shakespeare’s <em>Othello</em> likely first performed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1602</td>
<td>Donne’s father-in-law, Sir George More, incarcerates Donne in Fleet prison in February after Donne finally writes to him of the elopement; Christopher Brooke, who gave the bride away, and Samuel Brooke, who performed the ceremony, also imprisoned; Donne released after a few days to house arrest in London; his service to Egerton terminated; the Court of Audience upholds the validity of the marriage on April 27; after Sir George refuses to support the new couple, Donne and Anne move to Pyrford, Surrey, staying in a house owned by Anne’s cousin Francis Wolley; the Bodleian Library at Oxford University opens with a catalogue of around two thousand books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1603</td>
<td>Donne’s daughter Constance born, the first of twelve children; Elizabeth I dies on March 24; James VI of Scotland, Elizabeth I’s cousin, becomes king as James I; despite James I’s mother’s Catholicism, England remains Protestant; Sir Walter Ralegh imprisoned in the Tower of London for his involvement in the Main Plot against James I; released in 1616; Hugh O’Neill surrenders in Ireland in March, signing the Treaty of Mellifont and thus ending the Nine Years’ War; John Florio’s English translation of Montaigne’s <em>Essays</em> published.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1603–04</td>
<td>Donne prepares a legal opinion for Sir Robert Cotton on Valdesius’ <em>De Dignitate Regum Regnorumque Hispaniae</em>; the plague closes London’s theaters from mid-1603 to mid-1604.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1604</td>
<td>Donne’s second child, John, born; signing of the Treaty of London, which concludes the nineteen-year Anglo-Spanish war; passage across the Atlantic now much safer for England’s colonizing interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1605</td>
<td>Donne travels to the continent with Sir Walter Chute, visiting Paris and possibly Venice; while abroad, Donne’s third child, George, born; discovery of the Gunpowder Plot, a plan by radical Catholics to blow up Parliament and the royal family during opening ceremonies on November 5; Ben Jonson’s <em>The Masque of Blackness</em> performed in the Banqueting Hall of Whitehall Palace on January 6, the</td>
</tr>
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first of many entertainment collaborations between Jonson and the stage designer Inigo Jones.

1605–06 Shakespeare’s *King Lear* likely first performed.

1606 Donne returns to England in April; moves family to a cottage in Mitcham, Surrey; in the wake of the Gunpowder Plot, Parliament passes the Popish Recusants Act, which requires citizens to take a new Oath of Allegiance that denies the Pope’s authority over the king; James I charters the London and Plymouth Companies (collectively known as the Virginia Company) to colonize Virginia.

1607 Donne’s fourth child, Francis, born; writes Latin commen-datory verses for print edition of Jonson’s *Volpone*; Hugh O’Neill and Rory O’Donnell, Earl of Tyrconnell, fearing arrest, flee to the continent with their families; this marks the end of the power of Ireland’s Gaelic aristocracy; the London Company establishes Jamestown, England’s first permanent New World colony.

1607–11 Donne keeps lodgings in London in the Strand; fruitlessly attempts to gain civil employment, including a vacant position in Elizabeth I’s household (June 1607), a secretaryship in Ireland (November 1608), and a secretaryship with the Virginia Company (February 1609).

1608 Donne’s fifth child, Lucy, born; writes the controversial *Biathanatos*, his defense of suicide; John Milton born in Bread Street, London; Han Lippershey, a German-Dutch eyeglass maker, produces the first known telescope, which he fails to get a patent for.

1608–09 Donne ill during the winter with chronic neuritis; writes poem sequence *A Litany*; likely writes most of the Holy Sonnets; “The Expiration” published.

1609 Donne’s sixth child, Bridget, born; James I determines to secure northern Ireland for the Crown; encourages English and Scottish Protestants to move to Ulster, onto land confiscated from its Gaelic Catholic inhabitants; *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* published; the German Johannes Kepler publishes his first two laws of planetary motion, which improve upon Copernicus’ heliocentric theory.

1610 Donne publishes his anti-Catholic polemic *Pseudo-Martyr*, which argues English Catholics should take the Oath of Allegiance and those that refuse should not be called
martyrs; dedicated to the Protestant James I; Donne awarded an honorary MA from Oxford University; Elizabeth Drury, daughter of Donne’s patrons Sir Robert and Lady Drury, dies; Ben Jonson’s *The Alchemist* first performed; Galileo publishes *Sidereus Nuncius*, the first scientific work based on observations of stars and planets made through a telescope.

1611
Donne’s seventh child, Mary, born; publishes, anonymously, the anti-Catholic polemic *Ignatius His Conclave* in both Latin and English; publishes, anonymously, the elegies *The First Anniversary* and “A Funeral Elegy,” both written for Elizabeth Drury; travels to France with the Drurys, lodging in Amiens; Anne and the children stay with her younger sister Frances on the Isle of Wight; Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Tempest* first performed; Aemelia Lanyer publishes *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*; the Authorized Bible (the King James Bible) published.

1611–12
English cartographer John Speed publishes *The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine*, a collection of 67 maps of England, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, including the first set of individual English and Welsh county maps.

1612
Donne and the Drurys travel to Paris, where Donne falls ill, and then to Germany and the Low Countries; while abroad, Anne gives birth to a stillborn child, their eighth; Donne returns to England and moves family to London, staying in a house on Drury Lane owned by the Drurys; publishes the *First and Second Anniversaries* and “Break of Day”; James I’s eldest son, Prince Henry, dies of typhoid fever.

1613
Donne publishes “Elegy, On the Untimely Death of the Incomparable Prince, Henry”; writes an epithalamion for the Valentine’s Day marriage of Princess Elizabeth to Frederick V, Count Palatine of the Rhine; commemorates his visit to Sir Henry Goodyer at Polesworth in “Goodfriday, 1613”; offers his services to Robert Carr, Viscount Rochester (later Earl of Somerset); Donne’s ninth child, Nicholas, born; dies within a year; the Globe Theatre burns down during a performance of Shakespeare’s *Henry VIII*; Elizabeth Cary publishes *The Tragedy of Mariam, the Fair Queen of Jewry*. 
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1614
Donne unsuccessfully petitions the Earl of Somerset for the ambassadorship to Venice; serves as a Member of Parliament for Taunton, Somerset; Donne’s daughter Mary (May) and son Francis (November) die; the Globe Theatre reopens after being rebuilt; Ben Jonson’s *Bartholomew Fair* first performed; John Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi* first performed; John Napier publishes *Mirifici Logarithmorum Canonis Descriptio*, the first description of logarithms.

1615
Donne takes Anglican orders and is ordained deacon and priest on January 23 in St. Paul’s by John King, bishop of London; appointed a Royal Chaplain; attends James I on visit to Cambridge, where he is awarded an honorary doctorate of divinity; preaches his first surviving sermon, at Greenwich on April 30; has a cipher entrusted to him for encrypting and decrypting diplomatic correspondence; Donne’s tenth child, Margaret, born.

1616
Donne becomes vicar at Keyston in Huntingdon in January and Sevenoaks in Kent in July; Donne’s eleventh child, Elizabeth, born; appointed as Reader in Divinity at Lincoln’s Inn in October; Shakespeare dies on April 23, in Stratford; George Chapman completes his translations of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, the first complete English translations, publishing them in *The Whole Works of Homer*; Ben Jonson publishes his *Works*, the first folio edition to include commercial plays.

1617
Donne preaches his first sermon at the outdoor pulpit of Paul’s Cross on March 24; Anne Donne, age 33, dies on August 15, five days after giving birth to a stillborn baby, their twelfth child; Donne preaches her funeral sermon at St. Clement Danes, his parish church; writes Holy Sonnet 17 (XVII) (“Since she whom I loved”); pardoned by James I, Sir Walter Ralegh conducts a second expedition to South America in search of El Dorado; men under his command attack a Spanish outpost on the Orinoco River; Ralegh’s son, Walter, fatally shot during the raid.

1618
The Defenestration of Prague ignites the Bohemian Revolt, which marks the beginning of the Thirty Years’ War, a deadly conflict between Protestant and Catholic states in the Holy Roman Empire; Sir Walter Ralegh publicly
executed for violating the terms of his pardon and the Treaty of London, an act to appease Spain.

1618–19
The Synod of Dort upholds Calvinism, rejecting Arminian views that challenged reformation standards.

1619
Donne becomes chaplain to James Hay, Viscount Doncaster, and travels with him to Germany, part of an embassy from James I to mediate peace between the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II, a staunch Catholic, and the Bohemian Protestants; in Heidelberg Donne preaches a sermon to Frederick V and Princess Elizabeth; preaches at the Hague, where he is given a medal commemorating the Synod of Dort; writes “A Hymn to Christ, at the Author’s Last Going into Germany”; the first record of Africans, as indentured servants, arriving in British North American colonies, in Jamestown; Frederick V and Princess Elizabeth elected King and Queen of Bohemia in November; Johannes Kepler publishes his third law of planetary motion.

1620
Donne returns to London with Doncaster’s embassy on January 1; preaches at the wedding of Sir Francis Nethersole and Lucy Goodyer in February; Ferdinand II defeats Frederick V in the Battle of White Mountain on November 8; Frederick and Elizabeth deposed, and sent into exile; The Mayflower lands in Massachusetts in November; the Pilgrims explore Cape Cod before founding Plymouth Colony on the mainland in December; Francis Bacon publishes Novum Organum Scientiarum, which outlines a new scientific method of acquiring natural knowledge.

1621
Donne elected and installed as Dean of St. Paul’s on November 22; moves from Drury Lane to the deanery of St. Paul’s; resigns vicarship at Keystone; The Anniversaries republished; Lady Mary Wroth publishes her prose romance The Countess of Montgomery’s Urania and sonnet sequence Pamphilia to Amphilanthus; Willebrord Snellius, a Dutch mathematician, discovers Snell’s Law, the law of refraction of light.

1622
Donne resigns from his readership at Lincoln’s Inn on February 11; appointed Rector of Blunham, Bedfordshire, in the gift of the Earl of Kent; preaches at Hanworth before Doncaster, the Earl of Northumberland, and the Duke of
Buckingham; made an honorary member of the Virginia Company (May 22) and its Council (July 3); appointed a Justice of the Peace for Kent and Bedford, and as judge in the Court of Delegates (an appointment he would regularly fill in subsequent years); James I, to thwart clerical criticism of his policies, issues his “Directions to Preachers,” which severely restricts the subjects clergy could address from the pulpit; Donne preaches at Paul’s Cross on September 15 in support of this action; James I, impressed with the sermon, orders it published, the first of Donne’s sermons to see print; Donne preaches, on November 5, the annual Gunpowder Plot sermon at St. Paul’s, which James I also looks at but does not have printed; Donne delivers a sermon before the Virginia Company on November 13 at St. Michael Cornhill, which subsequently becomes Donne’s second sermon printed.

1623

Donne preaches a sermon at the consecration of the new chapel at Lincoln’s Inn, which he then publishes; gravely ill during the winter; writes Devotions upon Emergent Occasions, a series of twenty-three meditations and prayers on sickness, health, and spirituality; arranges the marriage between his daughter Constance and Edward Alleyn, the famous Elizabethan stage actor and founder of Dulwich College, on December 3; Andrew Marvell born; The first edition of Robert Burton’s The Anatomy of Melancholy published; members of the King’s Men publish Shakespeare’s plays and poems in the First Folio.

1624

Donne publishes Devotions upon Emergent Occasions; appointed Rector at St. Dunstan-in-the-West in March.

1625

Donne composes “A Hymn to the Saints, and to Marquess Hamilton,” one of his last poems; James I dies on March 27; his son Charles I becomes king; Donne delivers the first sermon before the new king on April 3; quarrels with his son-in-law Edward Alleyn over part of the wedding settlement, a supposedly-promised £500 loan; falls ill again and leaves London to escape the plague, staying with Sir John and Lady Danvers in Chelsea; while there writes out many of his sermons; Captain John Powell lands in Barbados and claims the uninhabited island in James I’s name; returns two years later to establish a colony.
Chronology

1626  Donne chosen as prolocutor (president of the lower house) for Charles I’s first ecclesiastical Convocation; delivers the annual Lent sermon at court, which subsequently sees print at Charles I’s suggestion; becomes governor of the Charterhouse, a London almshouse and school; Constance and Alleyn’s wedding settlement revised in June; Edward Alleyn dies on November 21.

1627  Donne’s daughter Lucy, age 18, dies; Donne’s longtime friends Goodyer (March 18), Lady Bedford (May 31), and Lady Danvers (early June) also die; Donne preaches Lady Danvers’ funeral sermon, which is soon printed; William Laud, the influential Dean of the Chapel Royal, has Charles I scrutinize Donne’s April 1 sermon for criticism of Laud’s ceremonial innovations; Donne cleared; preaches at the wedding of Lady Mary Egerton, daughter of the Earl of Bridgewater, and Richard Herbert, son to Lord Herbert of Cherbury.

1628  William Laud becomes Bishop of London; William Harvey publishes De Motu Cordis, the first detailed account of the circulation of the blood.

1629  Charles I, outraged at the passage of three resolutions condemning his financial and religious policies, dissolves Parliament on March 10, thereby instituting eleven years of “personal rule.”

1629–33  John Ford’s Tis Pity She’s a Whore likely first performed.

1630  Donne listed as a candidate for next available bishopric; daughter Constance marries Samuel Harvey in June; Donne and his mother stay with Constance at Aldborough Hatch, Essex; terminally ill, possibly with stomach cancer, writes his will on December 13.

1631  Donne’s mother dies in January; Donne returns to London and, on February 25, preaches his last sermon, Deaths Duell, before the king’s court at Whitehall; poses in his shroud for his monument by Nicholas Stone, which is the only sculpture at St. Paul’s to survive, intact, the Great Fire of 1666; Donne dies, age 59, at the deanery on March 31; buried in St. Paul’s on April 3; survived by six of his twelve children.

1632  Donne’s Deaths Duell published; the Puritan William Prynne publishes Histriomastix, a critique of professional theater and actors.
1633  Poems by J.D., Donne’s first edition of his poetry, published; Donne’s Juvenalia: Or Certain Paradoxes and Problems published; both of these are pirated printings not authorized by the Donne estate; William Laud appointed Archbishop of Canterbury; vigorously attempts to impose uniformity on the Church of England through service reforms and persecution of Puritans and other religious dissidents; George Herbert dies; his collected English poetry published as The Temple.

1635  The second edition of Donne’s Poems published, still unauthorized, which includes an engraving of Donne, age 18, by William Marshall.

1637  John Donne the Younger, Donne’s eldest son and his literary executor, petitions Archbishop William Laud to help him gain control of his father’s literary property; the French philosopher René Descartes publishes Discourse on the Method.

1639–40  The Bishops’ Wars, a series of political and military conflicts that serve as a prelude to the Civil War, take place between England and Scotland over the type of governance of the Church of Scotland; Charles I and William Laud favor the episcopacy (a hierarchical rule with bishops and archbishops, who are often seen as ministers of the Crown), while much of Scotland favor a Presbyterian system (each local church is governed by an assembly of elected elders).

1640  Donne’s LXXX Sermons published by his son, the first of three folio volumes containing all one hundred and sixty surviving sermons; includes the first printing of Izaak Walton’s “The Life of Dr. John Donne,” the first biography of an English poet; Parliament meets for the first time in eleven years for three weeks in the spring, the so-called Short Parliament; the Long Parliament, which lasts until 1660, begins in the fall; Parliament impeaches William Laud, who is arrested and accused of being an anti-Calvinist Arminian who harbors secret Catholic sympathies.

1641  Rebellion breaks out in Ireland in October; several thousand English and Scottish Protestant settlers killed; Milton publishes his pamphlet Of Reformation Touching Church
Discipline in England, his first polemic arguing against the episcopacy.

1642
The English Civil War breaks out when Charles I raises his standard on Castle Hill at Nottingham on August 22, summoning his loyal subjects to join him against his enemies in Parliament; Parliament orders the closure of London’s public theaters in September; Isaac Newton born.

1643
On September 15 Charles I signs a ceasefire with Catholic insurgents in Ireland; on September 25 the Parliamentarians enter into an alliance with the Scots; the Italian physicist and mathematician Evangelista Torricelli invents the mercury barometer; the torr, a unit of measurement of pressure, named after him.

1644
Donne’s son enters the second volume of his father’s sermons at Stationers’ Hall, but holds off on publication for fear of persecution from Parliamentarian forces.

1645
William Laud executed for high treason and trying to return England to Rome; Parliament establishes the “New Model Army” to defeat the Royalists, led by Sir Thomas Fairfax and Oliver Cromwell; Milton publishes his Poems.

1646
Donne’s *Biathanatos* published for the first time, by his son; Charles I surrenders to the Scots, who eventually hand him over to the Parliamentarians; Parliament abolishes the episcopacy.

1647
Beaumont and Fletcher’s collected plays published in two folios.

1648
Colonel Thomas Pride purges the Long Parliament on December 6 of all members opposed to the New Model Army’s plans to try and execute Charles I; remaining members called the Rump Parliament.

1649
Donne’s *Fifty Sermons* published by his son; Charles I executed for high treason, January 30; Parliament abolishes the monarchy and establishes a republic, the Commonwealth of England.

1650
Donne’s son finally secures the rights to his father’s Poems, publishing an edition.

1651
Donne’s *Letters to Several Persons of Honour* and *Essays in Divinity* published by his son; Thomas Hobbes publishes *Leviathan*, his seminal work on the structure of society and legitimate government.
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1652  Donne’s *Paradoxes, Problems, Essays, Characters* published by his son.

1653  Oliver Cromwell appoints himself as Lord Protector, with powers akin to a monarch.

1658  Oliver Cromwell dies on September 3; his son, Richard, succeeds him as Lord Protector.

1659  Richard Cromwell is overthrown and resigns his position as Lord Protector on May 25.

1660  Donne’s *XXVI Sermons* published by his son; Restoration of the monarchy; Charles II crowned king; London’s public theaters reopen.

1661  John Donne the Younger dies at his home in Covent Garden; bequeaths his father’s manuscripts to Izaak Walton.

1662  Parliament passes the Act of Uniformity, which re-establishes the episcopal Church of England; Margaret Cavendish prints *Plays*, her first collection of dramatic works; Robert Boyle discovers Boyle’s Law of Ideal Gas, which states that, under controlled conditions, the pressure of a gas is inversely proportional to the volume occupied by it.

1665  England invades Jamaica and seizes it from Spain, who had ruled it since 1509.

1665  From March to December, the Great Plague of London kills more than 100,000 people, a quarter of the city’s inhabitants; Robert Hooke, observing a cork slice under a primitive compound microscope, discovers a honeycomb-like structure; coins the term “cell” to describe these compartments.

1666  The Great Fire of London destroys nearly two-thirds of the city.

1667  The first edition of Milton’s *Paradise Lost* published.

1669  Donne’s *Poems* published, which now include previously omitted elegies; Francesco Redi, an Italian biologist, becomes the first scientist to challenge the theory of spontaneous generation, demonstrating that maggots come from fly eggs; the Danish scientist Nicolas Steno publishes his *Dissertationis Prodromus*, which outlines the four defining principles of stratigraphy, the science of studying rock layers.
Abbreviations

Unless otherwise indicated, all citations and line numbers for Donne’s poetry, as well as the elegies written for him after his death, are taken from Bell, *Collected*.

Bald, *Life*  

Bell, *Collected*  

Carey, *Mind*  

Carew, “Elegy”  
Thomas Carew, “An Elegy upon the Death of the Dean of Paul’s, Dr John Donne.”

*CCJD*  

*Critical Heritage*  

“Goodfriday, 1613”  
Donne, “Goodfriday, 1613. Riding Westward.”

Holy Sonnet 2  
Donne, Holy Sonnet 2 (IV) (“O my black soul”)

Holy Sonnet 3  
Donne, Holy Sonnet 3 (VI) (“This is my play’s last scene”)

Holy Sonnet 4  
Donne, Holy Sonnet 4 (VII) (“At the round earth’s imagined corners”)

Holy Sonnet 10  
Donne, Holy Sonnet 10 (XIV) (“Batter my heart”)

Holy Sonnet 13  
Donne, Holy Sonnet 13 (I) (“Thou hast made me”)

Holy Sonnet 18  
Donne, Holy Sonnet 18 (XVIII) (“Show me, dear Christ”)

Holy Sonnet 19  
Donne, Holy Sonnet 19 (XIX) (“O, to vex me”)

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List of Abbreviations

JDJ John Donne Journal

Letters

Marotti, Coterie

Marotti, Manuscript


Pseudo-Martyr

Sermoons

Soliciting

Walton, Lives