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Ways of Reading Donne's St. Paul's Epitaph: Close, Comparative, Contextu[r]al, Concrete*

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The close reading practices of the New Criticism helped to secure Donne's place in the canon of English poetry; but a range of other theoretical frames and methodologies, along with the labors of the Donne *Variorum* and *Oxford Sermons* editors, have strongly influenced applications of practical criticism in contemporary Donne studies.[1] Most Donne scholars continue to close read, though we do so with heightened awareness of how both we and the poems are—as Judith Anderson puts it—"situated." We keep in mind that the texts are products of a manuscript culture, that Donne's writings are embedded in vast intertextual networks, and that every reader (or auditor) reads (or listens) at a particular time and in a particular place. A scholar intent upon acknowledging such issues of textual provenance and reception can, in the case of Donne's poetry, usually begin the work of interpretation by focusing on the *Variorum* text. When that is not yet available, one can work with the text and textual apparatus supplied in editions of Donne's poetry by Shawcross, Dickson, or Robbins. Or one may study a digital facsimile of a seventeenth-century print edition (now readily available via Early English Books Online) and seek what Neil Fraistat calls "contexure": the "texture of resonance and meanings" generated by the "qualities of the poetic collection as an organized book: the contextuality provided for each

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*Reference: Judith Anderson, "Literature, Culture, and Other Redundancies: Close Reading Donne," *Connotations* 27 (2018): 155-66.
For contributions to this debate, please check the *Connotations* website at https://www.connotations.de/debate/close-reading-donne/.

poem by the larger frame within which it is placed, [and] the intertextuality among poems so placed" (3).

But in approaching Donne's St. Paul's epitaph, one finds oneself between a rock and a hard place. The rock is the nineteenth-century marble slab that one sees above Donne's seventeenth-century statue when one visits the south quire aisle of Saint Paul's Cathedral; Volume 8 of the *Variorum*, published in 1995, takes as its copy-text the inscription upon this slab. The hard place is a landmark 2001 *John Donne Journal* article by Richard S. Peterson, which argues that the text inscribed on the nineteenth-century plaque inaccurately reproduces that of the original seventeenth-century plaque. The *Variorum*'s schema of textual relationships (8: 198) conjectures that the current plaque's inscription derives from a lost holograph manuscript; this conjecture is plausible, for the wording of the current plaque does match exactly that of the text as it appears in the earliest print transcription of the original plaque (Holland [E2v-E3]). Peterson, however, presents compelling evidence that Donne's epitaph is most accurately represented in a 1641 drawing by William Sedgwick and a 1658 engraving by Wenceslaus Hollar. If Peterson is correct, the wording and layout shown in these illustrations represent the original plaque and the lost holograph more accurately than do either the nineteenth-century plaque currently positioned above Donne's statue or the various seventeenth-century print transcriptions cited by the *Variorum* editors, any of which could have served as the Victorian engravers' copy-text.[2]

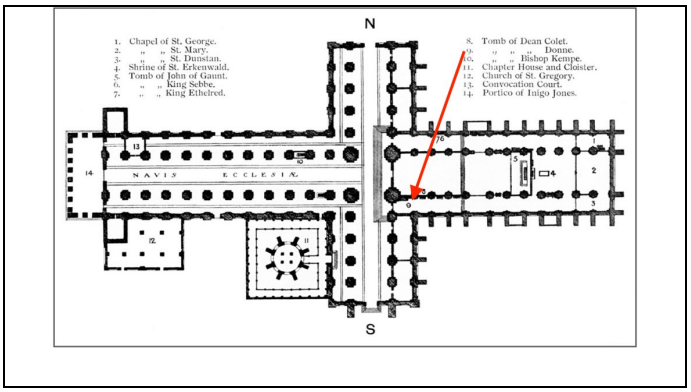
My essay arises from the tight spot between the *Variorum*'s rock and Peterson's hard place.[3] I carry out a situated close reading of the plaque as it appears in the twenty-first-century Saint Paul's while acknowledging that—if Peterson is right, as I believe that he is—today's plaque is an inaccurate facsimile of the one installed in late 1632 or early 1633 and destroyed by the Great Fire of London in 1666. My double-framed response to the epitaph as it appears in St. Paul's today and as it appears in Hollar's engraving and Sedgwick's drawing remains based in the practice of close reading but not limited to it.

I explicate portions of the epitaph's text(s) in some detail, building upon earlier commentary. But I also take into account the poetics of affect addressed by Matthew Zarnowiecki, recounting my own response to the epitaph as defined in part by its location in a particular architectural space, and not shying away from concerns about whether and how readers may be restricted from access to that space.

My first and only visit to Donne's monument took place in July 2017. I had been to St. Paul's before and had seen the fine bust of Donne by contemporary sculptor Nigel Boonham in the south churchyard. But I had never been to the south quire aisle inside the Cathedral to view the seventeenth-century effigy. Why? Because it costs £18 to get into that part of the cathedral, and I am notoriously parsimonious. The Cathedral has good reason to charge; if one visits the sightseeing page of the St. Paul's website and clicks on "Why do I have to pay to enter St. Paul's?" one receives a reasonable answer having to do with the expense of maintaining a popular tourist destination and explaining that there is no charge to attend religious services. It is an excellent rationale. Still, when I visited London in 2014, I told myself that I wanted to see the monument, not as a tourist or "sightseer," but as a Christian and a Donne devotee. I thought that a visit to the monument ought to be a pilgrimage both religious and literary. I thus decided that I would attend Evening Prayer—a service that would not highlight the divide that prevents the intercommunion of Roman Catholics such as I and members of the Anglican Church. I would worship in a context made richer by the history of Donne's ministry as Dean; then, before leaving the building, I would go to the south quire aisle to see the monument. My scholarly and liturgical experiences would overlap, and both would thus be all the more meaningful. So I told myself. But I was spared the rationalization; for as soon as the service was over, everyone was hustled out with an efficiency rarely seen in ecclesiastical settings. When I asked if I might please linger, I was told to return the next day and buy a ticket.

I did not. Instead, I brooded on the experience and read Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction":

"Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art," Benjamin says, "is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be" (220). How far was I, then, from experiencing Donne's epitaph, when all I had to go on were photographs of the current monument and Peterson's images of the seventeenth-century drawings and engravings, all of them grainy-looking in print reproduction. In online digital photographs, I found better resolution and color, especially in images with copyright watermarks. But the distance between these images and the thing itself remained insurmountable. I wanted what Benjamin calls "the aura of the work of art" (221), and I saw how right he was to say that "reproduction as offered by picture magazines and newsreels differs from the image seen by the unarmed eye" (223). At the same time, I began to realize, with a sinking heart, that paying for a ticket would not give me access to the "aura" of the monument as it was experienced by those who viewed it in 1633; not only would I be viewing a nineteenth-century facsimile of the inscription, but I would be encountering both the inscription and the statue in a space long since transformed by fire, by the mind of Christopher Wren, by later architects and artists, and by the economics of late capitalism. Even the position of the statue has changed: while it was located along the north side of the south choir aisle in "Old St. Paul's," it is to be found on the south wall of that aisle in Wren's structure.[4]



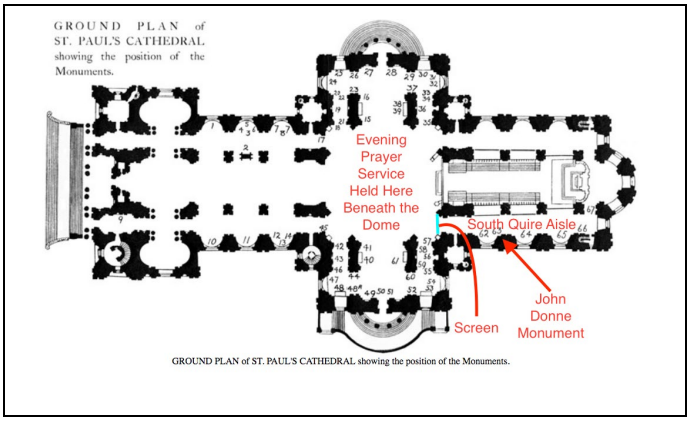


Figure 1. Location of Donne's monument in Old St. Paul's; location in today's Cathedral.[5]

Was there something to be gained in the loss of the previously-existing text and context? One might, I thought, discover something important by viewing the work *as it now exists* rather than as it did in mid-seventeenth-century England, when Donne's statue and epitaph—like "the earliest art works" as Benjamin describes them—"originated in the service of a ritual" (223). In 1633, the monument spoke to visitors with the spiritual authority and religious gravitas of the building's recently deceased Dean. But to whom, and with what kind of authority, does it speak now? Benjamin says: "Works of art are received and valued on different planes. Two polar types stand out: with one, the accent is on the cult value; with the other, on the exhibition value of the work" (224). The monument is now very much an exhibit, part of what tourists pay to see.

Approaching Donne's monument via the St. Paul's website underscores its exhibition value. The site takes advantage of digital technology to move beyond what Benjamin knew as *mechanical* reproduction, inviting virtual "visitors" to "Walk the Cathedral Floor" via an interactive map of its floor plan. If one clicks on the green ⊕ marking "The South Quire Aisle," up pops a photo of the Donne statue's head and upper torso. The accompanying text attempts to serve multiple audiences, touching with awkward poignancy upon church history, art history, literary history, and liturgical function: "The south quire

aisle," one learns, houses "effigies of two Bishops of London" and "a marble effigy of John Donne [...] a Dean of the Cathedral and one of Britain's finest poets, who died in 1631. It is one of the few monuments to have survived the Great Fire of London—scorch marks can be seen on its base." Then, almost as an afterthought: "This aisle is where the clergy and choir gather before services." But the text worked on me—in the wake of my failed attempt to see the monument within a liturgical context—as it was no doubt intended to work. It reinforced my sense that I needed to view the monument in person. In particular, it made me long to see those scorch marks, those residues of the occasion when some of the metaphors inscribed upon the seventeenth-century plaque above Donne's statue were suddenly literalized: "HIC IACET IN OCCIDVO CINERE / ASPICIT EVM / CVIVS NOMEN EST ORIENS."

With some license, and in light of earlier translations, I would translate these words (which appear in Hollar's engraving and in Sedgwick's drawing) so as to juxtapose the extinguished fire of Donne's earthly life with his hope in the name of the risen Son of God: "He lies here, in fallen (or 'western') dust (or 'ashes'); he looks toward Him whose Name is the East (or 'the Rising')." I am particularly indebted to Foxell's rendering of "ASPICIT" as "looks towards," though I find that he protests too much in objecting to Francis Wrangham's translation (printed in Gosse 2: 282). Wrangham's "beholdeth," Foxell argues, implies "that the eyes of Donne's as yet unrisen body can already see Christ." But as Foxell himself goes on to concede, the object of the verb "ASPICIT"—"EVM CVIVS NOMEN EST ORIENS"—implies "'he sees the light,' hence, 'he lives,' thus emphasizing the antithesis of life and death: the essence of the sentence is 'Though his body is dead, it is (*in potentia*) alive'" (7). Given Donne's near obsession with bodily resurrection (which Foxell himself acknowledges [1], and which Ramie Targoff strongly underscores in her study of Donne), the ambiguity is almost certainly intentional. Even more to the point, however, is that the meaning of "ASPICIT"—and of the epitaph as a whole—is not perfectly fixed or determined. Indeed, as

Helen J. Swift points out in exploring the "monumental writing" of medieval French epitaphs:

> The epitaph is a site of tension between fixity and fluidity. On the one hand, it performs a memorialising function: representation of someone at the last, and intended to last; [...]. On the other, it is inherently open to interpretation and response by dint of its audience-oriented nature [...]. Its deictic markers become those of the individual positioned in front of it. (6-7)

No wonder that Donne was so drawn to epitaph; no wonder he wrote his wife's, his own, and those of Elizabeth, Robert, and Anne Drury. No wonder that several of his epigrams are epitaphs or that he incorporated epitaph into a number of his secular lyrics and one of his verse epistles. It is the ideal genre to accommodate both his reader-oriented poetics and his proclivity to ambiguity.[6]

The phrase "IN OCCIDVO CINERE" and the deictic marker "HIC" are at least as interesting as the verb "ASPICIT." Donne's remains were not literally "ashes" or "dust" when the statue was erected, as the dean had been buried, not cremated. Nor was his place of burial precisely "here" in the south quire aisle of St. Paul's; his unmarked grave lay somewhere in the cathedral crypt.[7] Yet the inscription seventeenth-century viewers saw when they went to see the newly-installed effigy encouraged them to imagine Donne's remains "HIC": the most immediate point of reference for that deixis being the urn that forms the base of the marble effigy.[8] In the seventeenth-century illustrations discussed by Peterson, the layout of the text doubles down upon the claim implicit in the phrase "HIC IACET"; for as Peterson points out (21), the epitaph as it appears in Sedgwick's 1641 drawing and Hollar's 1658 engraving is centered, its lines of various lengths thus constituting a concrete poem, urn-like in shape.[9]

IOHANNI DONNE.
SAC: THEOL: PROFESS:
POST VARIA STVDIA QVIBVS
AB ANNIS TENERIBVS FIDELI=
TER, NEC INFŒLICITER INCVBVIT
INSTINCTV ET IMPVLSV SPIR: SCTI:

MONITV ET HORTATV REGIS IACOBI
ORDINES SACROS AMPLEXVS
ANNO SVI IESV 1614 ET SVAE ÆTAT. 42.
DECANATVS HVIVS ECCLES: INDVTVS
27° NOVEMB: 1621.
EXVTVS MORTE VLTIMO DIE
MARTII A. 1631.
HIC IACET IN OCCIDVO CINERE
ASPICIT EVM
CVIVS NOMEN EST ORIENS.

As Heather Dubrow explains, deictics do not function in isolation; on the contrary, they are positioned within what she calls "*deictic chains*" (37) that consist of "a prolonged series of linguistic, cognitive, and possibly even physical events" (2) that work together. In the case of Donne's epitaph, the visual impact of the layout is one link in the deictic chain that creates multiple implications for "HIC." Within its urn-like context, the word elides the distinction between text itself and the urn that forms the base of the effigy, as well as the distinction between the monument and Donne's actual gravesite.[10] It also resonates with the rest of the epitaph to blend spatial and temporal deixis in ways that reflect Donne's faith and that of the English Church as a whole.[11] "HIC" as it functioned for a Christian reader standing before the inscription in Old St. Paul's meant not only "here upon the grounds of this church" ("HVIVS ECCLES[IAE]") with the deanship of which the deceased was invested on a particular day of a particular year). It also meant "here in England" (which is "IN OCCIDVO," in the west, on the occidental fringe of the Old World); and, in its broadest spatial and temporal senses, it meant "here in the *saeculum*, in this mortal life and in the temporal realm where calendrical dates have meaning." The epitaph's "HIC," its *here*, thus stands in implicit contrast with an understood *ibi*—a *there* located somewhere spatially to the east and temporally in the future—a timeless realm into which the late Dean will enter at the coming of the divine "ORIENS" he awaits.[12]

Though the *ibi* of the life-to-come is not explicit in the epitaph, no Christian reader can fail to acknowledge it as implicit. As Swift notes,

both historical epitaphs—those engraved upon tombs—and literary compositions in the epitaph genre prompt readers to appreciate "their active role in constructing an identity for the deceased" (3). Donne's epitaph does just this, both providing the reader with biographical information about the late Dean's life and career, and pointing to his status as a redeemed Christian: a man who, though he lies "here," set like the sun into western dust, nevertheless looks forward to the reunion of his body and soul in the coming of the risen sun/Son whose name is "The East." The phrase "CVIVS NOMEN EST ORIENS" is an allusion to the Vulgate's rendering of Zechariah 6:12 ("Ecce vir, Oriens nomen ejus"; see Scodel 127n36; and Foxell 8). As such, it encourages the reader to recall that the deceased was not only a Christian who believed in the Resurrection of the Body, but also—conversion and English priesthood notwithstanding—the scion of a venerable Recusant family. For only the Vulgate and its Roman Catholic translation, the Douay Rheims Bible, translate the Hebrew צמח (*ṣemaḥ*) into the Latin "Oriens" and the English "Orient." All early sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Protestant translations render that word as "Branch" or "braunch."[13] Thus, the epitaph is—to quote Rachel Eisendrath's excellent description of art in general—"sedimented with the conflicts that society repressed" (56). It declares Donne very much indebted to King James for his place *here* in this life and in the English Church as a priest of that communion, and for his body's burial *here* within the Cathedral; but it makes clear that the deceased Dean of St. Paul's entrusts to a greater King, whose name the Roman Catholic Church translates as "Oriens," his hope in the dawning light of an Easter[n] realm that is, by definition, neither "HIC" nor "IN OCCIDVO."[14]

The "HIC" of Donne's epitaph remains multivalent on the restored plaque, which was created and installed in late 1872 or early 1873 when Nicholas Stone's effigy of Donne in his shroud was finally moved back into the south quire aisle after over two centuries of storage in the cathedral crypt (for the date, see Peterson 19). But the effect of the deixis is undercut somewhat because the text has been

reformatted, the lines being justified into a rectangle rather than centered, and the urn shape thus lost.[15]

IOHANNES DONNE.
SAC : THEOL : PROFESS
POST VARIA STVDIA QVIBVS AB
ANNIS TENERRIMIS FIDELITER NEC
INFELICITER INCVBVIT INSTINCTV
ET IMPVLSV SPIR: SC̃TI MONI-
-TV ET HORTATV REGIS IAC-
-OBI ORDINES SACROS AMPLEX-
-VS ANNO SVI IESV 1614
ET SVÆ ÆTAT 42 DECANATV
HVIVS ECCLESÆ INDVTVS 27°
NOVEMB : 1621 EXVTVS MORTE
VLTIMO DIE MARTII A° 1631.
HIC LICET IN OCCIDVO CINERE
ASPICIT EVM CVIVS NOMEN
EST ORIENS

As this transcription shows, the text of the restored plaque is not only reformatted, but partially reworded; the most startling difference is that the concluding assertion reads not "HIC IACET," "he lies here," but "HIC LICET," "here it is permitted." In an effort to make sense of what would otherwise be a nonsensical construction, Nigel Foxell and others before him (see *Variorum* 8: 439, 443) translate the phrase, "here, though," or "although here"; but as Peterson argues, the "concessive sense" of the verb "licet" meaning "although" is indicated only "when the subjunctive follows," which "is not the case" in the epitaph (22n47). Given the consistent use of "IACET" in the seventeenth-century illustrations of the monument, it seems to me most likely that the epitaph in its original form—and Donne himself in the holograph that was its source—featured the standard epitaphic deixis "HIC IACET": "here lies." As Scott L. Newstok points out, this "locative declaration [...] entails the core statement of all epitaphs" (34), even those that do not explicitly employ the phrase.[16] That said, the "HIC LICET" of the restored plaque creates an interesting effect; the

Latin word "LICET" both looks and sounds more like the English word "LIES" than does the word "IACET." It thus entails a kind of bilingual visual pun, implicitly Anglicizing a Latin epitaphic formula in a way that reflects Donne's own self-translation from the Roman *Ecclesia* to the English Church.

Even when combined with "LICET," however, the "HIC" implies that Donne's remains are somewhere in close proximity to the text. And that implication is, as it turns out, even more misleading today than it was when "HIC" was inscribed upon the original plaque. An 1872 drawing by St. Paul's surveyor Francis Cranmer Penrose shows the floor plan of the Wren cathedral superimposed upon that of the old building: the axis of Wren's structure is skewed south vis-à-vis the axis of the previous structure in such a way that the current south quire aisle and all of the statuary along its south wall are located *outside* the space occupied by the building as it existed in 1633. The current monument is thus located not above the crypt of the old cathedral where Donne is buried, but above an area outside of the old cathedral's walls.

Analyzing the language of Donne's epitaph as I do above does not require setting foot in St. Paul's. And close reading of this kind can be further enhanced by intertextual approaches such as those of Joshua Scodel and Anita Gilman Sherman. Both read the epitaph within the context of Donne's other epitaphic works: the other Latin tomb inscriptions he composed, lyric poems such as "The Paradox" and "A Nocturnall Upon St. Lucie's Day," and a fascinating "Epitaph on Himself" that is appended to one of Donne's verse epistles ("To the Countess of Bedford": "That I might make your cabinet my tomb") (see Scodel 113-29; Sherman 153-68). In addition, Scodel puts Donne's epitaphic writing into conversation with Thomas Carew's well-known elegy on Donne (129-39); and Sherman—who follows Peterson's lead in taking the Hollar and Sedgwick illustrations as her sources for the text of the epigraph—compares and contrasts Donne's and Shakespeare's approaches to epitaph (168-89). Each of these approaches yields rich insights. But something is inevitably missing.

Such readings do not grapple with how a reader's response to the epitaph is shaped by her experience of being in St. Paul's south quire aisle, nor can they account for the affective impact of the Nicholas Stone statue that stands in a niche beneath the epitaph. Whether one is attempting to reconstruct the effect that the epitaph would have had upon readers who encountered it within its original position in Old St. Paul's or monitoring one's own response to the restored epitaph, one must consider the statue's un-reproducible Benjaminian "aura"—the impression made upon the viewer (and toucher) by that hauntingly material shrouded form and that coolly enduring grey-white marble, now partially ochre-colored after its passage through the Great Fire.[17]

But reading with a feel for the poetics of place in turn leaves unresolved the conundrum posed by the textual variants in the restored plaque above Donne's statue. If an epitaph is a concrete poem inseparable from its medium, then its words—graven in stone—ought to be read in person, without the mediating force of mechanical or digital reproduction. What is the good of analyzing a restoration containing dubious variants? One answer, I think, lies in Fraistat's concept of "contexture"; the restored plaque is now the only *concrete* (as opposed to printed, drawn, or engraved) instantiation of the text that one can experience, and today's cathedral is the contextural frame within which that experience takes place. Only within that frame can one be in the presence of the monument as one reads the epitaph.[18] It was with this notion of place-based contexture in mind, then, that I decided—three years after my initial failure to view Donne's memorial—to return to St. Paul's and pay for entry to the areas not used for public worship.

I planned that, in viewing the plaque, I would construct what I thought of as an eclectic edition of the mind. I would collate in my head the text inscribed in the stone and the one I had read in Peterson's article, and I would close read this collation. It seemed a reasonable plan. But I forgot it altogether as soon as I entered the south quire aisle and caught sight of Donne's statue. Tears sprang into my eyes

without warning; I felt them and noticed the blurring of my vision even before I was able to detect the heart-swell of which they were the outward sign. Aura, indeed. I lack the poetry to articulate what I felt. After musing for a time on the marble figure and gently touching the scorch marks I had so longed to see, I sat down on the wooden steps opposite the statue and sketched it.

Figure 2. Donne's monument in St. Paul's Cathedral, present day.[19]

Instead of meditating on the Latin inscription above the statue (or collating it with the text of the Hollar engraving), I found myself watching tourists' responses to the effigy; no one, it seemed, was looking at the plaque above the statue. The shrouded figure is, after all, the main attraction; it is the part of the monument that dates from

the seventeenth century, and responding to it does not require a person to know Latin or to have studied a translation.

Many of the visitors were listening, as I also did before leaving the south quire aisle, to the audio commentary provided by the mobile multimedia guide issued along with our tickets. In the English recording, that commentary is made by the current Dean of the cathedral, the Very Reverend David Ison; and what he says resonates with my experience as a reluctant consumer of the Cathedral-as-Museum.[20] Introducing the Donne monument, Ison explains that, in Donne's time, the Cathedral was funded by the government; he also notes that Donne's principal role as Dean was to preach, defending the English Church against the Roman Church. His own role, Ison says, is to manage the Cathedral as a business and to keep the toilets running. These remarks underscore the relevance of Benjamin's remarks on exhibition value versus cult value. Ison assumed his post in 2012, following the October 2011 resignation of his predecessor, whose stern handling of Occupy London protesters provoked controversy (see "Dean") and "New dean"). In the face of the Occupy Movement, it was no doubt impossible for either man to draw a clean line between the Cathedral as sacred space and the structure as art-space, between its religious function as a place of worship and its socio-economic significance as an iconic building under siege.

Not surprisingly, then, the current environment of Donne's monument encourages the viewer not to attempt any such sharp distinctions. Particularly compelling is the relationship between Donne's epitaph and a work of visual art that one encounters when one continues eastward past Donne's statue. Mounted on the west-facing wall at the extreme east end of the south choir is the permanent video installation *Martyrs* by American artist Bill Viola.[21] A photograph by Peter Mallet on the Mallet's webpage "Bill Viola Studio" shows how Viola's installation is positioned vis-à-vis Donne's effigy. One can see the Donne statue, mounted on its urn, in the extreme foreground along the right edge of the photograph, providing part of the frame for the four plasma screens of *Martyrs*. The photograph brilliantly

captures the way the Donne monument appears as one approaches the installation moving through the south quire aisle from west to east.

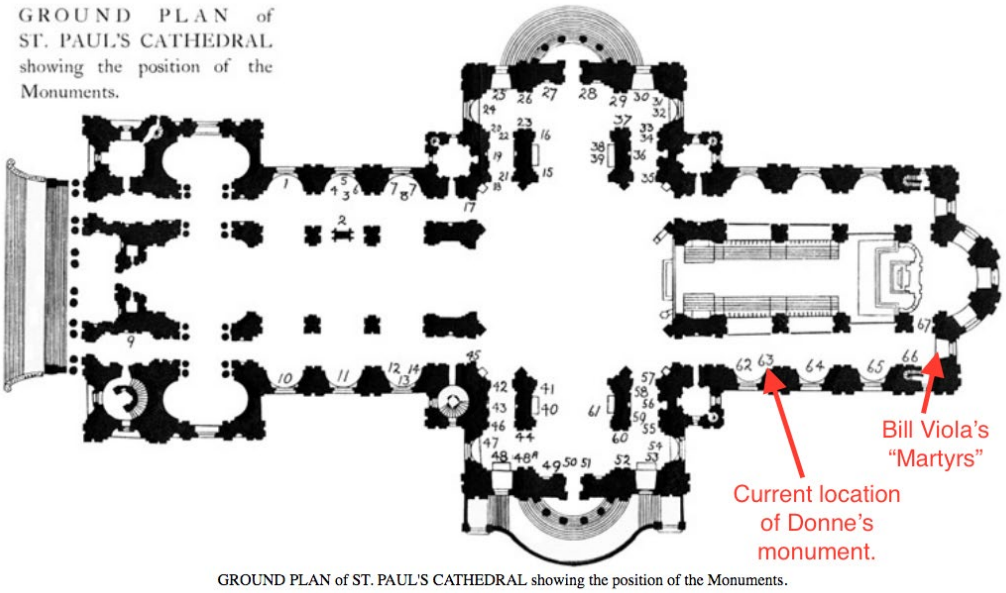


Figure 3. Position of Donne's monument vis-à-vis Viola's *Martyrs*.

Viola's video meditation, which the artist describes as a glimpse of martyrs' inner lives, invites the Donnean viewer to discover new and spiritually challenging ways of understanding the language of Donne's epitaph. First, one is reminded by the title of Viola's piece that Donne was the author of *Pseudo-Martyr* and *Biathanatos*, and that his reflections on the sacrifices of martyrs demonstrate a range of emotions from survivor's guilt to envy and from skepticism to reverence. In addition, Viola's representation of martyrs buffeted by the four elements resonates deeply for a viewer familiar with Donne's divine poems, which are replete with images of earth, air, fire, and water. Finally, reading the words "IN OCCIDVO CINERE" and "EVM / CVIVS NOMEN EST ORIENS" in juxtaposition with Viola's images re-ignites the words' elemental associations.

In the first image of Viola's work, the earth[22] that rises around the body of the human figure is as dry as ash; and though the actor was filmed under a cascade of falling dust, gradually crumpling over to be

buried beneath the accumulated grains, the film runs this action in reverse, showing his gradual rise *out* of the dust. In the next panel, the winds pounding the roped body of the female air-martyr vividly illustrate "the inspiration and shocking impact of the Holy Spirit"—"INSTINCTV ET IMPVLSV SPIR: SCTI:"—to which Donne's priestly vocation is attributed in the epitaph.

Even more relevant to Donne's epitaph are Viola's last two frames: one in which flames descend upon and eventually engulf a seated man and another in which a man is hanged head down, inundated by water, and then slowly pulled up and out of the frame. For a Donne scholar, these two sequences evoke Donne's "litle World, made cunningly / Of Elements" (*HSWorld* 1-2; *Variorum* 7.1: 14) in which the soul is burnt by apocalyptic fire and the body drowned in baptismal waters. But the video images also challenge key words in Donne's epitaph: in the third frame of Viola's piece, a body that has been enveloped and purged by descending flames remains intact, not "IN OCCIDVO CINERE." And in the fourth, the martyr's rising motion is an "ORIENS" that does not distinguish neatly between dying and rising. At the beginning of this sequence, the man lies on the ground in a fetal position; he is slowly drawn upward by a rope tied to his feet, then washed over by a shimmering cascade of falling water. Next, as an unearthly white light illuminates each of the four figures from above and as the first three look upward toward it, the fourth—hanging head down—flexes the muscles of his chest and spreads his arms wide like St. Peter on an inverted crucifix. Finally, he ascends, pulled upward and out of the frame.

Together, the four videos, executed in a medium *composed* of light, using light symbolically, and positioned to the east of Donne's monument, speak of the luminous hope inhering in the epitaph's word "ORIENS." Viola's work thus re-defines the space in which Donne's epitaph is housed and, with it, the experience of the reader who encounters Donne's concrete poem within that space. The light it casts upon the epitaph fruitfully blurs such binaries as cult value and exhi-

bition value, sacred and secular, original and facsimile, text and intertext, close reading and visceral response.

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NOTES

[1]Influential New Critical approaches to Donne include those of Brooks, Sanders, Tate, and Unger. On the methods and implications of the *Variorum* project, see Stringer. On the importance of preaching venue in the Oxford edition of Donne's sermons, see "Editorial Conventions."

[2]See *Variorum* 8: 198-99; the wording found in Holland and on the restored plaque is substantially the same as that in Stow, in Walton, and in Dugdale's transcription (63), which contradicts the wording shown in Hollar's engraving on the page facing the transcription (Dugdale 62).

[3]This essay began as part of a panel at the 2018 MLA Convention: "Donne and/or Close Reading: Rejecting, Reevaluating, Renewing Critical Approaches," which was sponsored by the John Donne Society. I am grateful to the panel organizer and respondent, Heather Dubrow, and to my co-presenters, Judith H. Anderson and Matthew Zarnowiecki, for the fruitful critical exchanges the panel generated.

[4]The original orientation of the effigy is a subject of some debate because Hollar's diagram showing the locations of the various monuments in Old St. Paul's (in Dugdale [plate following p. 159) may be interpreted to imply that the effigy was affixed to the eastern side of a pier at the western end of the south choir and thus faced east (as Foxell believes [5-6]) or to imply that it was affixed to the north wall of the south choir and thus faced south (as Peterson thinks more likely [3n4, 24-25, and Figure 2]).

[5]These illustrations, and the one in Figure 3 below, are screenshots from the Project Gutenberg transcription of Dimock with my annotations in red. I am uncertain of the origin of the illustration for the Wren floorplan reproduced in Dimock's text, but Dimock's image of the Old St. Paul's floorplan is clearly based upon Hollar's diagram in Dugdale.

[6]Cf. Bauer and Zirker for an intertextual study of works by Donne and Shakespeare in which "the grave or monument is the site" of "intense exchange between human actors" as well as of "interaction between the living and the dead" (18).

[7]On the grave as unmarked, see Walton (Sig. [B6v]-C[1]). Ms. Jen Powell, Adult Learning Programme Manager at St. Paul's Cathedral, confirms that the grave is

almost certainly somewhere in the Cathedral crypt: "My colleagues in the Collections Department think John Donne must have been buried in the crypt; he did not have a chamber tomb on the cathedral floor and he was a burial rather than a cremation, so the crypt is where he would have been."

[8]See Newstok, who points out that, through the word "here," an "epitaph claims, explicitly or through indirection," that *it* (the text) is located "in close proximity to human remains. However, this is just ... enough ... space ... to make the epitaph disjoint from the body, and in its very claims to accuracy in location, the epitaphic gesture becomes open to a manipulation akin to metaphor, or even synecdoche—a figure that represents something through a version of indication" (58; the dramatic ellipses are Newstok's). Donne appreciated that the word "lye" is particularly "open to manipulation"—to use Newstok's phrase—in ways that connect recumbent posture to false statements. See, for example, his love lyric "The Paradox," which points to itself as a fabrication that in turn gives substance to that fountainhead of hyperbolic fictions, love: "Once I lov'd and dy'd; and am now become / Mine Epitaph and Tombe. / Here dead men speake their last, and so do I; / Love-slaine, loe, here I lye" (Donne, Shawcross ed. 149). On Donne's punning approach to the verb "lies" in his epigram "A Lame Begger," see DiPasquale, "Donne's *Epigrams*" (336-42).

[9]I have transcribed the text found on Hollar's engraving as shown in the high-resolution digital image at the University of Toronto's Wenceslaus Hollar Collection (see link in text above).

[10]As Eisendrath points out in discussing epitaphs' frequent use of the deictics *hic* (here) and *hoc* (this), "an epitaph claims to overcome the space of referentiality by collapsing the distinction between word and thing" (63).

[11]Cf. Dubrow, who notes that Donne's "deictic practices" tend to stress "the blurrings and the mergings, the distinctions and the indistinction" of what she calls "*prevenient proximity*": "a primarily spatial recording or negotiating of anticipated proximity to the divine" (94); see in particular her analysis of spatial and temporal deixis in Donne's "Hymne to God my God, in my Sicknesse" (103-04).

[12]For a geographical and phenomenological discussion of how "Here implies there, [and] now implies then," and of human life as "a perpetual stepping forward into light," see Tuan (127, 132, 134). For a multi-lingual survey of directional words' origin in terms for the rising and setting sun, see Brown. See also Hanks, who explains that, while both "(inter)subjective context" and a variety of socially-determined power-relations may affect the way deixis works, it may also be understood to function within the broad parameters of "a semantic field" wherein "the meaning of any individual item derives from its contrast with other items in the same domain" so that "the value of a term like 'here' depends upon its contrasts with other related terms including 'there'" (192).

[13]These include the Miles Coverdale Bible of 1535, the 1568 Bishops' Bible, the 1587 Geneva Bible, and the 1611. According to the *Variorum* commentary (8: 443),

Donne's allusion to Zechariah 6:12 was first noted by Lightfoot (222). Foxell, who is my source for the Hebrew term, discusses the allusion at some length (8), explaining that *ẓemaḥ* means 'plant' or 'sprig' and "may also figuratively mean 'dawn.'" This is no doubt why the Clementine Latin Vulgate (1592) translates it as "Oriens," which the Catholic Douay/Rheims Bible (Old Testament published 1582) in turn translates as "the Orient." The only English Protestant translation that is close in spirit to Donne's choice of "Oriens," and to Stone's portrayal in the effigy of Donne's own face emerging from the folds of a shroud, is that of the 1395 Wycliffe Bible: "Lo! a man, Comynge forth, ether Borun [i.e., born], is his name, and vndir him it schal sprynge." Interestingly, the contemporary U.S. Roman Catholic translation (The New American Bible, Revised Edition) follows the early Protestant bibles in translating *ẓemaḥ* as "Branch," an epithet which—as Rose explains—does not adequately account for the fact that *ẓemaḥ* is "a general term for what *sprouts* or *shoots* from the ground" (92); the 1917 Jewish Publication Society translation of the Tanakh translates the name of the prophesied figure as "the Shoot." All links in this note are to the online transcriptions of the cited translations at Studylight.org.

[14]Cf. Foxell's somewhat strained insistence that the epitaph's reference to Christ as "ORIENS" can be construed as "polemically sectarian" and that it implies Donne's preference for the English Church (8-9).

[15]For the nineteenth-century plaque, my sources are the photograph and transcription in the *Variorum* 8: 192-93.

[16]And even, I would add, one mounted above a statue that depicts the shrouded corpse of the deceased in a standing rather than supine posture. Donne's shrouded figure—unlike many tomb effigies in St. Paul's and elsewhere—stands erect; the feet are planted upon the top of the urn as though his body were emerging from it, but the folds of the shroud around his legs are draped as though the body beneath it were recumbent rather than standing. Commenting upon this anomaly, Foxell argues that it "enhances" the meaning of the monument: "the sculpting of the drapery as if the figure were recumbent indicates its position in the grave, and the absence of downward pull facilitates our seeing it as rising as well as descending" (5). On Walton's (very probably embellished) account of how Donne commissioned and posed for the deathbed painting that was (probably) Stone's point of departure for the sculpture, see Peterson (2-6, 25-26).

[17]Sherman comes close to including her own affective response to the effigy: "It literally stands alone in its eccentricity, radiating emotion" (184). More intensely personal are the urgent imperatives in the final lines in Brett Foster's poem "On a Prayer Shawl," written during the last year of Foster's life as he was battling colon cancer. Urging the degree to which he, wearing a prayer shawl given to him as a gift, resembles Donne in his shroud, the poet/speaker urges his reader to "Google Donne's little statue." But "Make no mistake," he then says: "Google can show you only a digital approximation. / It would be best for you to be taken there, to see / the marble close up. See for yourself. Make something of it." As Kimberly

Johnson observes in her discussion of this previously unpublished poem (which she quotes in its entirety), Foster's final directive "interrupts the mortal abstraction of the self from historical entirety to absent idea, reemphasizing the physical as the primary instrumet if meaningfulness" (Johnson 34).

[18]My approach here might also be understood within the context of "critical presentism" as defined by Hugh Grady, especially in his recent work on Walter Benjamin and John Donne (see Grady 1-8, 35-39, 53n10).

[19]Photograph by Aidan McRae Thomson. Reproduced by permission of the photographer.

[20]Though the multimedia guides were first made available to the public in 2010, the recorded remarks on Donne's monument are by the current Dean of the Cathedral, The Very Reverend David Ison (Dean of the St. Paul's, March 2012-present).

[21]On the ways in which contemporary art installations can refine contemporary readers' appreciation for deixis, see Dubrow 23-27.

[22]The *Público* website allows users to proceed to the *Martyrs* videos without logging in, though one must see and hear an advertisement in order to gain access; I recommend muting the sound, as Viola's videos are silent.

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