

POPULAR PROPAGANDA: JOHN HEYWOOD'S WEDDING BALLAD AND MARY I'S SPANISH MATCH

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If ever there was a royal wedding which needed political spin, it was Mary Tudor's marriage to Philip of Spain in the summer of 1554. It brought an end to a tumultuous first year for England's pioneering queen regnant. Mary's accession to the throne the previous summer had been far from straightforward. She was challenged by a Protestant coup organised by the Duke of Northumberland that sought to place his daughter-in-law, Lady Jane Grey, on the throne. Support for Jane quickly melted away, but the rule of an unmarried queen raised practical constitutional questions that were only made more complex by Mary's determination to marry. The problem was compounded by her choice of husband: rather than marrying a good Englishman, Philip of Spain was the son of Mary's first cousin, the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, and a member of the most powerful family in Europe, with an empire stretching halfway across the globe. Their wedding at Winchester Cathedral on 25 July 1554 took place in the face of fierce opposition. MPs and Privy Councillors had expressed their dismay that Mary had chosen to marry someone from outside her realm. Even her Lord Chancellor, the ever-loyal Stephen Gardiner, had voiced his concerns that Mary should marry one of her own countrymen. Sir Thomas Wyatt, meanwhile, had resorted to open rebellion.

Opponents of the Spanish match feared that, as a female, Mary would become subject to her husband the moment they were wed. The imperial ambassador, Simon Renard, reported the House of Commons' belief that, regardless of any restrictions placed on Philip, once he was married he

would effectively be king, with all the powers that title brought with it. He could subjugate England to imperial authority with impunity, drawing the country into expensive wars and robbing it of its wealth. Any child of the marriage would be entitled to a place in the Spanish succession, while the queen herself might be spirited out of England by ‘husbandly tyranny’.¹

Up stepped John Heywood to help Mary win over her subjects to her cause. A gifted musician and wordsmith, his attachment to the old religion made him her devoted champion. To celebrate the wedding he penned and printed *A Balade specifienge partly the maner, partly the matter, in the most excellent meetyng and lyke mariage betwene our Soueraigne Lord, and our Soueraigne Lady, the Kynges and Queenes highnes*.² Once dismissed by critics as ‘poor in poetry’ and ‘preposterous’ in its imagery, it earns, for example, only one rather disdainful page in Robert Bolwell’s *The Life and Works of John Heywood*.³ While more recent judgements have been less scornful, even Greg Walker, who devotes a chapter of his recent biography of Heywood to the ballad, was ultimately unconvinced of its merits, declaring it to be ‘not wholly successful’.⁴ But such conclusions fail to recognise the work’s true nature: it is a song and as such, it was not intended for recitation but for singing.

¹ Simon Renard to the Emperor, 17 Nov. 1553, in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain, Volume 11, 1553*, ed. Royall Tyler (1916), pp. 363-374, via *British History Online*, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/spain/vol11/pp363-374> [accessed 5 March 2021]

² John Heywood, *A Balade specifienge partly the maner, partly the matter, in the most excellent meetyng and lyke Mariage betwene our Soueraigne Lord and our Soueraigne Lady, the Kynges and Queenes Highnes* (1554), English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC) S3934, <http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/36295/album> [accessed 26 February 2021]

³ Robert Bolwell, *The Life and Works of John Heywood* (New York, 1921), 56

⁴ Greg Walker, *John Heywood: Comedy and Survival in Tudor England* (Oxford, 2020), 396

I

John Heywood was a multi-talented playwright, poet, epigrammist, player of virginals, and singing man. Born around 1496-97, probably in Coventry, it is conceivable that as a child he had sung treble as a chorister in the chapel royal. The first positive link we have between Heywood and the royal court is from 1519, when he was paid a salary as a member of the royal household and by the following autumn, he was receiving payment as one of the king's singing men. Later, he was employed as a player of the virginals and by 1525 he was one of the grooms of the household. For reasons unknown, it appears that he lost his job as a court musician in 1528.⁵ Indeed, at this point he may even have been transferred to Princess Mary's household.⁶

Heywood was certainly consistently loyal to Mary. In 1534, he composed the congratulatory poem *Give place, ye ladies* to praise the princess on the occasion of her eighteenth birthday.⁷ During this period, the king's daughter was ostracised from court. Since Mary was under significant pressure to acknowledge the legitimacy of Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn and reject papal authority, Heywood's composition suggests a genuine allegiance to Mary's cause as much as an attempt to gain patronage and favour. It is only during the late 1530s, however, that we can securely link Heywood with Princess Mary's household. Although his formal role, if indeed he had one, remains obscure, he appears several times in the household accounts.⁸ Heywood also wrote and published at least two other ballads, one a patriotic song on the failure of Thomas Stafford's attempted rebellion in April 1557, *A breefe balet touching the traytorous takynge of Scarborough Castell* and the other a

⁵ For a comprehensive biography, see Walker, *Heywood*.

⁶ Andrew Ashbee, 'Groomed for Service: Musicians in the Privy Chamber at the English Court, c.1495-1558'. *Early Music*, 25:2 (1997), 193

⁷ Walker, *Heywood*, 198-9

⁸ *Ibid.*, 20-22

song of social commentary called *A Ballad against slander and detraction*.⁹ In addition to his songs, Heywood published an extended allegorical poem, *The Spider and the Flie*, in 1556, which celebrated the royal couple as well as providing a political commentary on the defeat of Northumberland's coup and Philip and Mary's controversial religious policy of executing Protestant heretics. He was also called upon to lend a hand in the pageants which had greeted Mary at her coronation in 1553.¹⁰ Alongside his loyalty to the queen, he remained a life-long Catholic. During Mary's reign he was involved with a network of religiously conservative musicians centred around the parish of St Mary-at-Hill, London. Finally, in July 1564 he left England for religious exile on the continent, most likely to avoid taking the Elizabethan oath of allegiance.¹¹

Heywood's political allegiance to the new queen was never in question yet it seems his relationship was personal too. As Walker has reminded us, Heywood knew the queen's tastes and was confident that he could amuse her when others might have shied away. He was comfortable enough to engage the monarch in witty banter. While still technically Supreme Head of the English Church, Mary reimposed priestly celibacy, meaning that priests who had married during Edward VI's reign now had

⁹ *A breefe balet touching the traytorous takyng of Scarborough Castell* (1557), ESTC S3943,

<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/36296/image> [accessed 5 March 2021]; *A Ballad against slander and detraction* (1562), ESTC S118129, <http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/37039/image> [accessed 5 March 2021].

A ballad against slander and detraction can be found in British Library Additional Manuscript 15233, which contains songs which seem to have been in circulation for more than twenty years (Louise Rayment, 'A Note on the Date of London, British Library, Additional Manuscript 15233'. *Notes and Queries*, 59:1 (2012), 32–34). Other songs in favour of the Marian regime were written by William Forrest and Thomas Watertoune, amongst others, although there is little indication of whether these songs had official backing (see Jenni Hyde, *Singing the News: Ballads in Mid-Tudor England* (Abingdon, 2018), chapter 7)

¹⁰ John Heywood, *The Spider and the Flie* (1556), STC (2nd ed.) / 13308; Walker, *Heywood*, 276-7 & 287.

¹¹ Louise Rayment, 'A New Context for the Manuscript of "Wit and Science"'. *Early Theatre*, 17: 1 (2014), 49-73; Walker, *Heywood*, 365

to resign their positions or put aside their wives. Being informed of this by the queen herself, Heywood 'merrily answered, Your Grace must allow them Lemmans [lovers] then, for the Cleargie can not live without sawce'. On another occasion,

He being asked of the saide Queene Mary, what winde blew him to the Court, answered her,
Two specially, the one to see your Maiestie, We thanke you for that, said Queene Mary; But
I pray you, what is the other? That your Grace (saide he) might see me.¹²

That Heywood was a known wit, there is no doubt; but by teasing his sovereign in this way his punchline shamelessly breached protocol and in anyone else would have 'risked causing career-ruining offence'.¹³ Heywood knew his audience and was clearly confident that his sovereign would enjoy the repartee. We can be sure that Heywood's wedding ballad was likewise carefully tailored in all respects to appeal to the queen.

II

Broadside ballads such as *A Balade specifienge partly the maner* were multimedia material objects which exploded in popularity during the sixteenth century.¹⁴ While their affordability can sometimes be overplayed, the fact remains that their price, ranging from ½d to 1d, was within the reach of everyone but the poorest in society, at least occasionally. It is nevertheless difficult to pin down their

¹² William Camden, *Remaines of a greater worke, concerning Britain...* (1605), ESTC S107408, 234

¹³ Walker, *Heywood*, 280-1

¹⁴ Patricia Fumerton and Anita Guerrini, 'Introduction: Straws in the Wind' in *Ballads and Broad sides in Britain, 1500-1800*, ed. Patricia Fumerton, Anita Guerrini and Kris McAbee (2010), 1. See also Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety* (Cambridge, 1993), Christopher Marsh, *Music and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2012), and Patricia Fumerton, *The Broadside Ballad in Early Modern England: Moving Media, Tactical Publics* (Philadelphia, 2021)

intended market. On the face of it, printed broadside ballads appear to have targeted a literate audience. Recent scholarship, however, has noted that even very long texts were intended to be ‘voiced’, or read aloud in some way.¹⁵ Broadside ballads were simple enough to be sung by everyone, so they became potentially accessible to a much wider audience than the literate minority.

Of all the varieties of print in the Tudor marketplace, broadside ballads were some of the cheapest and easiest to produce. This meant that they could be published quickly to capitalise on newsworthy events. Certainly, this was a period when the print trade was undergoing significant change. On one hand, Philip and Mary oversaw the incorporation of the Company of Stationers, which received a royal charter in 1557. Under the charter’s terms, only printers who were members of the Company or who had received a crown privilege were allowed to publish printed material. Although not without problems, this system helped to establish a printer’s rights to a particular work.¹⁶ On the other hand, Mary (and later, Philip) attempted to control the flow of printed material through a series of proclamations, the first of which outlawed printing any texts without the queen’s ‘special licence in wrytinge’.¹⁷ Interestingly, an earlier draft of this proclamation had allowed for this licence to be granted verbally by the queen (something that was impractical to enforce), yet it seems likely that her personal involvement with the licensing process was soon replaced by the use of deputies appointed by the bishops.¹⁸

¹⁵ See, for example, Jennifer Richards, *Voices and Books in the English Renaissance* (Oxford, 2019)

¹⁶ ‘The Stationers’ Company and the London book trade’, *Stationers’ Register Online*, <https://stationersregister.online/about?g=stationersCompany#stationersCompany> [accessed 12 July 2021]

¹⁷ *By the Quene the Quenes Highnes Well Remembrynge...* (1553), ESTC S3751.

¹⁸ Peter W. M. Blayney, *The Stationers Company and the Printers of London, 1501-1557* (2 vols., 2013), II, 826-

Indeed, a second versified description of the wedding was printed in 1554 by royal privilege. Hadrianus Junius's pamphlet, *Philippeis, seu, In nuptias diui Philippi*, printed by Thomas Berthelet, was in Latin throughout, suggesting that it was aimed at an elite and possibly international audience.¹⁹ Heywood's wedding ballad, conversely, was in English and aimed at a domestic audience. It was printed by Wyllyam Ryddell, who the following year would print another panegyric ballad on Mary's supposed pregnancy.²⁰ Ryddell's name appears in the 1558 Stationers' Registers as the printer of several commercial ballads including *The pangas of Love; Be mery good Jone; Hold the ancer fast; and The robbery at Gaddes Hill*.²¹ This indicates that Heywood's wedding ballad was aimed at an equally popular audience.

As a physical object, the single surviving copy of *A Balade specifienge partly the maner* is hardly the world's most alluring broadside. Like many of the broadside ballads before the late 1560s, it has none of the ornamental characteristics which became commonplace by the end of the century, such as illuminated initial letters, woodcut images and decorative borders. Although it is undeniable that few of the surviving ballads from the decade 1550-1560 include these features, it is also true that the majority can be found in the same collection – a single book in the Society of Antiquaries' library in London. The Society of Antiquaries' broadsides appear to have been cropped, however, so any decorative elements could have been removed. Even one of the earliest broadside ballads we have,

¹⁹ Hadrianus Junius, *Philippeis, seu, In nuptias diui Philippi* (1554), ESTC S107903

²⁰ A surviving copy of this song, which indicates that Ryddell was the printer, can be found in manuscript: *The Ballad of Ioy, upon the publication of Q. Mary, Wife of King Philip, her being with child*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, Registry guard book CUR 8, fo. 7

²¹ *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554–1640 A.D.*, ed. Edward Arber (3 vols., 1875), I, 96

An Elegy on the Death of Henry VII, displays many decorative features despite the heavy damage which left it a fragment.²²

Ballad singing was as much a physical and emotional experience, and the residue on the printed page remains the merest sketch of what that performance might have been. They could be sung solo, but sociability is at the heart of the ballad. Both words and tunes were passed on from one person to another by word of mouth. In fact, like many mid-sixteenth century ballads, Heywood's wedding ballad does not even specify the tune to which it was to be sung: instead, it relies on the oral transmission of this information. Oral transmission is hardly ever recorded in the archive, yet it is key to unlocking songs' importance in early modern society: you did not need to be able to read to enjoy singing and hearing a ballad. This made them the perfect means to share and relish exciting news and entertainment.

Heywood's wedding ballad is no exception, as will become clear. His song opens by announcing that the new king, Philip (represented by the symbol of the Habsburg monarchy, the eagle), had travelled to England to be with Mary, who is represented both as England's lion and a lamb. As 'the eagle's heir', Philip flew to the rose 'both red and whight' of England, alighting in 'the lions boure, to bilde his nest' in July. The song goes on to describe the solemnizing of the wedding before 'suche notable nobilitie'. The ballad then finishes with a prayer that everyone should demonstrate their allegiance to the 'lamblyke lyon, and lamblike burde' and to their Catholic faith.²³

Despite its title, there is more to *A Balade specifienge partly the maner* than the simple description of a royal wedding. Heywood was trying to help others come to terms with female rule and the concomitant problem of whom Mary should marry - or if she should marry at all. He was attempting to reassure the queen's subjects that she would not be dominated by her foreign husband. For

²² *Elegy on the death of Henry VII* [1509], ESTC S111375.

²³ For a full analysis of the text, see Walker, *Heywood*, 288-301

Heywood, Mary combined the feminine characteristics of a lamb with the masculine qualities of a lion, and a lion of England too. It was difficult enough for a patriarchal society to accept that a woman might govern the country alone, yet a queen regnant's situation was even more complicated if she chose to marry. The fact that she was part lion, and therefore masculine, meant that she would not, as per the norm, be overcome by her marriage to Philip. Instead, she would be a 'queenlike queene', and he a 'kinglike king'. Heywood's use of allegedly 'preposterous' imagery therefore goes to the heart of the ballad, as he attempts to explain why Mary's marriage to Philip was not only appropriate but also advantageous. It rendered this quixotic marriage safe for the country.

The emphasis on the construction of a nest for the royal couple not only implies that the pair planned to raise children to secure the future of the dynasty, but also that Philip intended to stay in England for the long term. This is echoed by his decision to remain for 'rype right rest'. Heywood presumably intended to set English minds at ease, suggesting that they would not be subject to an absentee sovereign. He emphasised that, despite the opposition to the match, all those who witnessed the event, both Spanish and English, were able to get along without argument:

Nombre so greate, in place so small
 Nacions so manie, so different
 So sodenlie met, so agreed all
 Without offensyve word let fall.²⁴

As Walker has noted, this flies in the face of the extant accounts of the wedding's context, which suggest that there was more than a little rivalry and conflict between the English and the Spanish, not only in the streets but even within the royal court itself.²⁵

²⁴ Heywood, *A Balade specifienge partly the maner*

²⁵ Walker, *Heywood*, 300-301

Heywood went on to make further associations between the ‘lamblike’ sovereigns and the Lamb of Lambs, suggesting that God had blessed the pair’s union ‘That it may lyke that lorde on hie / In healte and welth to prosper theese’. Finally, he urged his audience to ‘Them and their lawes, love and obay’ in order to bring the country together in unity, hoping that in return, the union would be blessed with a child to inherit the throne:

And that between these twayne and one
 The thre and one, one once to sende
 In one to knit us everichone
 And to that one, such mo at ende
 Graunte this good god, adding thie grace
 To make us meete tobtayne this case.²⁶

Heywood’s convoluted imagery was not a sign of lack of inspiration. It was partly the unavoidable result of trying to make sense of the monarchical gender-crossing that resulted from the marriage of a queen who sat on the throne in her own right. In Walker’s words, it was indeed ‘a bold attempt to redefine her relationship with her spouse’.²⁷ Yet it is crucial to note that there were also *genre*-related reasons which resulted from the need to adapt high-flown constitutional ideas to a ballad, a quintessentially popular art form.

²⁶ Heywood, *A Balade specifienge partly the maner*; Hyde, *Singing the News*, 169-171, expanded on in Jenni Hyde, ‘Gender, Authority and the Image of Queenship in English and Scottish Ballads, 1553–1603’. *History* 105 (2020), 758-61; Walker, *Heywood*, chapter 13; Matthew Tibble, *Nicolaus Mameranus: Poetry and Politics at the Court of Mary Tudor* (Leiden, 2020), 71. Walker’s book had not been released before my article in *History* was prepared for publication – any similarities between the readings of this ballad are therefore coincidental

²⁷ Walker, *Heywood*, 289

Far from being an ungainly, and therefore unsuccessful, composition, Heywood's patriotic song is, in fact, the consummate ballad. Despite the seriousness of its content, it is brilliantly successful as a song for an unlettered audience because it skillfully incorporates techniques which help the listener to remember the words. It is purposely repetitive at both a macro and a micro level. First and foremost, the stanza form and prosody repeat throughout. This has obvious advantages in allowing the words to be set to strophic music where the tune repeats over and over again. This in turn reinforces the mnemonic effect. Rhyme is also a form of repetition, when sounds at the ends of lines are repeated. Heywood's chosen rhyme scheme of ababbcc opens with the standard 'ballad' rhyme scheme of abab which would have been familiar to everyone hearing it:

The egles byrde hath spred his wings
 And from far of, hathe taken flyght
 In whiche meane way by no leurings
 On bough or braunch this birde wold light

Of course, we have already seen that themes and images, such as the eagle and lamb, recur throughout the song, but individual words and phrases also recur:

So meete a matche in parentage
 So meete a matche in dignite
 So meete a matche in patronage
 So meete matche in benignite
 So macht from all malignite

Another notable feature of the song is the use of alliteration, itself another form of repetition:

What matche may match more mete then this...

For that they lamblike be concurde

The lamb of lambs, the lorde of lordes

Let us lyke lambs...

Many of these repetitions are deliberately placed on the stressed syllables in the poetic lines and musical phrases in order to impress them on the audience.

Devices such as these were essential to sixteenth-century ballads and indicate that the songs were generally aimed at an audience with limited literacy who relied instead on memory. Another master of the genre, William Elderton, also used them extensively. He too was used to providing entertainment at the Tudor court as well as producing broadside ballads.²⁸ His song *The Lamentation of Follie* regretted that

Flatterie is the Forte of Fame,

and trueth is troden downe:

The innocent do beare the blame,

the wicked winne renowne²⁹

while his *Newes from Northumberland* repeated not only the refrain, but the phrase 'You bragge':

You bragge not of the almighties name,

you bragge not of your Princes fame,

You bragge of never a faithfull knight...

You bragge to see your countrey spoylde,

²⁸ See Hyder E. Rollins, 'William Elderton: Elizabethan Actor and Ballad Writer'. *Studies in Philology*, 17:2 (1920), 199-245; and Hyde, *Singing the News*, 35

²⁹ William Elderton, *The Lamentation of Follie* (1588), ESTC S121788, <http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/32228/image> [accessed 5 March 2021]

you bragge to see poore men begilde,
 You bragge to see your brothers blood³⁰

Not dissimilar to Heywood's use of dynastic imagery, this ballad on the Northern Rebellion of 1571 also invoked extended heraldic metaphors to characterise the high-born rebels, Charles Neville, Earl of Westmorland, and Thomas Percy, Earl of Northumberland.

But what was the point of these repetitive patterns? As propaganda in support of a marriage which not only faced considerable opposition, but also raised unheard-of constitutional questions, it was essential that Heywood use every weapon in his armory to get his message across quickly, effectively and memorably. His song allows us to access 'the 'complex relationships... between popular and learned culture'.³¹ Poetic techniques such as those used by Heywood 'create rhythm (meter, rhyme), emphases and connections (rhyme, anaphora, assonance), and invite comparisons and contrasts (parallelism, stanzas, alliteration)'.³² They also provide 'a way of adding levels of information without adding words'.³³ Moreover, all types of repetition act as constraints, reducing the 'memory load' and helping the audience to recall what it has heard.³⁴ This is critically important for the success of

³⁰ William Elderton, *Newes from Northumberland* (1569-70), ESTC S91819, <http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/36306/image> [accessed 5 March 2021]

³¹ Fumerton and Guerrini, 'Introduction', 8

³² Anna Christina Ribeiro, 'Intending to Repeat: A Definition of Poetry'. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 65:2 (2007), 192. Ribeiro raises an interesting distinction between poetry and song lyrics based on the writer's intent (the poet intends to write poetry, whereas the songwriter intends to write a song, p. 196).

Nevertheless, I believe the intent here was to write a song which drew on poetic techniques to make it memorable.

³³ Ribeiro, 'Intending to Repeat', 200

³⁴ David C. Rubin, *Memory in Oral Traditions: The Cognitive Psychology of Epic, Ballads, and Counting-out Rhymes* (Oxford, 1995), 271

orally-transmitted songs.³⁵ Ballads, in particular, make ‘abundant use of all the kinds of repetition that occur within literary works, not to mention the repetitive features of music’.³⁶ Although printed, Heywood’s ballad remains at its core oral literature and ‘repetition is a direct consequence of [its] oral nature’.³⁷ Heywood had to choose his words carefully, not only to fit his chosen metre, but also to hit home quickly with strong images that his audience could easily assimilate, whether or not they could read and despite the important political messages he needed to get across. He employed familiar heraldic and biblical imagery, made heavy use of repetition and parcelled it up in an entertaining, multimedia experience which explained how and why Philip and Mary’s wedding was a bright, new beginning for England. His wedding ballad might not be good literature, but it was certainly effective orature.

III

Given Heywood’s propensity to repeat ideas of all sorts in the song, it seems possible that the tune he had in mind might also be recycled. Perhaps we should have been alerted to this earlier, as the song has a rather unusual seven-line stanza and metre. It is likely Heywood, like many musicians at both elite and popular levels, drew on an existing melody when he wrote his song, fitting his words to a tune he already knew. Writing words to a pre-existing *tune* is precisely what explains why some

³⁵ Joseph C. Nunes, Andrea Ordanini and Francesca Valsesia, ‘The power of repetition: repetitive lyrics in a song increase processing fluency and drive market success’. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 25:2 (2015), 187-199

³⁶ Gray, ‘Repetition in Oral Literature’, 297

³⁷ Bennison Gray, ‘Repetition in Oral Literature’. *Journal of American Folklore*, 84:333 (1971), 290. ‘Orature’ is defined by the *OED* as ‘A body of poetry, tales, etc., preserved through oral transmission as part of a particular culture, esp. a preliterate one’. ‘Orature, n.’ *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, December 2020, www.oed.com/view/Entry/246701, [accessed 24 February 2021]

have dismissed this ballad as unimpressive as *poetry*. We have misunderstood its genre. Although the text needed to express the appropriate ideas, as words it was their metrical value that was of paramount importance. The process of setting words to music is 'first and foremost a discipline in sound: the poet has to make words to a pattern and, in a strophic song with several verses, to go on repeating that pattern'.³⁸ The resulting poetry was therefore a compromise between textual expression and metrical suitability. Nonetheless, setting new words to an *existing* tune magnifies this process because 'words [were] straightjacketed into the metre of the music'.³⁹ The implication is that words were chosen because they fitted the existing rhythms. While it is true that Heywood, as a talented writer - and musician - was ultimately looking for unity between words and music, the fact that he was prepared to select his words according to the tune's metre - rather than adapting the melody to fit the words - suggests that the melody was itself vital part to the song's message.

Although it was common for sixteenth-century printed ballads not to indicate the tune to which they were sung, it seems that Heywood's chosen melody also had something to say for itself. Only a relatively small number of melodies survive from this period, but the choice of tunes which fit Heywood's words is particularly limited. Very few extant tunes will fit a seven-line stanza and even fewer can confidently be dated to the mid-sixteenth-century or before. William Chappell identified only 33 extant ballad tunes for the reigns of Henry VII to Mary I (1485-1558). Most of these fit stanzas of four, six or eight lines. The eight-bar melody 'Donkin Dargeson', for example, suits stanzas of four lines with four stresses each such as *A Mery New Ballet of the Hathorne Tre*. The popular ballad tune 'The Shaking of the Sheet' takes an eight-line stanza in which each has four stressed

³⁸ Stevens, *Music and Poetry*, 131

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 37

syllables.⁴⁰ Only a single extant tune, *Pastyme with Good Company*, accommodates the more complex seven-line stanza (see Figure 1).⁴¹

>> INSERT FIGURE 1 [Portrait]

The melody is a perfect fit. Often, tunes were substantially adapted in order to fit new sets of words or even to accommodate different numbers of syllables in different verses of the same song. In Heywood's wedding ballad, no compromise was necessary to make the words fit the music. Though at first we might think that a few lines require the musical rhythm to be adapted, if we read Heywood's words as they are written, and not as we might assume they were pronounced, there is an effortless match. In the fourth stanza's final couplet, we should trust Heywood that the final words are in fact the two-syllable expressions 'al-eurth' and 'as-seurth', rather than 'a-lu-reth' and 'as-su-reth'. Likewise, in stanza 8 line 2, it is easy to sing 'solempne' as one syllable, sounding, 'solm', especially as the adjective is repeated immediately as a four-syllable noun, 'solempnite'. Indeed, this has the additional advantage of enhancing the emphasis on 'solempnite' rather than losing the noun in a stream of rushed syllables. Conversely, in stanza 11 line 2, 'prayer' has two syllables, echoing its use in other ballads and poetry of the period.⁴² In fact, the only rhythmic adaptation required to make the wedding ballad fit the melody for *Pastyme* is the simple addition of an anacrusis (upbeat) at the beginning of the first and third lines of each verse – a common adaptation throughout balladry.

⁴⁰ William Chappell, *Popular Music of the Olden Time* (2 vols., 1859), i, 56-97 (see 65 & 85 in particular)

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 56; Hyde, 'Gender, Authority and the Image of Queenship', 751-772

⁴² See for example William Kethe, *A ballet declaring the fal of the whore of babylone intytuled Tye thy mare tom boye* (1548), ESTC S107428, or *The[n]terlude of youth* (1557), ESTC S108291

Although there do not appear to be any direct echoes of *Pastyme*'s previous words in Heywood's wedding ballad, this was by no means unusual. Several sets of mid-Tudor words to the popular tune 'Downright Squire' relate to the theme of men's attitudes to women but there are few if any linguistic resonances.⁴³ Nevertheless, Heywood's song puts his chosen melody to good use. For instance, Heywood's repetition in stanza 6 of the phrase 'so meete a matche' highlights the important similarities between the two monarchs, which are emphasised at the end of the line on the decorated parts of the melody. This verbal repetition is echoed in the melody, which in some versions of the tune not only repeats the first and second phrase exactly but also remains on the same repeated note. In stanza 8, meanwhile, 'Suche honour with suche honeste' places the repetition of the two words which begin with the same syllable on equivalent notes in the repeated phrase. Even the pointing, where commas subdivide the lines, neatly matches the position of the musical phrasing. So while Heywood's verses might seem strained if we look at them as poetry, they are anything but strained when sung.

It is almost impossible to believe that Heywood would not have known *Pastyme*, as it was closely associated with Henry VIII's court. His familiarity with popular song melodies from the Henry VIII's court can be seen from the presence of his song lyrics in British Library, Additional Manuscript 15233, which also includes a moralised version of *The Hunt is Up*, by John Thorne. This song is known to have been popular at the Henrician court and was attributed to 'one Gray', who grew into 'good estimation... with the same king Henry, and afterward the Duke of Sommerset Protectour, for making certaine merry Ballades'.⁴⁴ The sort of music which was popular at Henry's court can also be found in the Henry VIII Manuscript, a collection of English and foreign part songs, rounds,

⁴³ Hyde, *Singing the News*, 89-92

⁴⁴ George Puttenham, *The arte of English poesie...* (1589), ESTC S123166, 12

instrumental pieces and puzzle-canons.⁴⁵ One of those songs is a version of *Pastyme*. Dating the manuscript has proved something of a puzzle. Two studies independently placed the manuscript after 1522, but their findings were challenged by David Fallows who is adamant that ‘it would be hard to date anything [in the manuscript] much later than 1516’. He notes that *Adew adew le company* is the only piece which can be confidently dated, referring as it does to the birth of Henry and Catherine’s short-lived son, Prince Henry. This piece, therefore, dates from between the prince’s birth on 1 January and his death on 22 February 1511, it being highly unlikely that such a celebratory piece would have been copied after the royal parents’ bereavement.⁴⁶

Two further versions of *Pastyme* can be found in the Ritson Manuscript, a music collection compiled over a period of at least seventy years beginning around 1440:

The first, on ff. 136v–137, is a mess: it has passages crossed out and replaced (in one case with entirely wrong material, though it is easy enough to see what was intended), has the middle voice labelled ‘Contra Tenor’ rather than Tenor, and has only a single stanza of text. The second, on ff. 141v–142, is a fair copy with the three voices correctly labelled ‘Triplex’, ‘Tenor’ and ‘Bassus’, all three stanzas underlaid directly below the music, and the annotation ‘The Kynges Balade’ at the end, which—if the ‘kynge’ concerned is Henry VIII rather than any earlier king—means that it was copied there after Henry’s accession in April 1509.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ London, British Library, Add. MS 31922 (Henry VIII’s Book aka The Henry VIII Manuscript); Stevens, *Music and Poetry*, 4. For a facsimile of the manuscript, see the *Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music (DIAMM)*, <https://www.diamm.ac.uk/sources/1238/#/> [accessed 12 February 2021]

⁴⁶ David Fallows, ‘Introduction’, in *The Henry VIII Book (British Library, Add. MS 31922)*, ed. David Fallows (2014), 25

⁴⁷ British Library, Add. MS 5665 (Ritson Manuscript); Fallows, ‘Introduction’, 33. For a facsimile, see the *Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music (DIAMM)*, <https://www.diamm.ac.uk/sources/796/#/> [accessed 12 February 2021].

Fascinating discrepancies between the musical arrangements of *Pastyme* in the Ritson and the Henry VIII Manuscripts suggest that the music circulated widely during the early sixteenth century, yet mainly through aural circulation rather than scribally.⁴⁸

Pastyme certainly 'had resonance in courtly circles for the next several decades', but more widespread familiarity with the songs from Henry's court is demonstrated by the fact that each individual item in the Henry VIII Manuscript appears in a relatively high number of other music manuscripts.⁴⁹ Several pieces, including an instrumental version of *Pastyme* for lute, are also included in Royal Appendix Manuscript 58, a commonplace book of solo songs, virginal pieces, lute songs and part songs, dating probably from after 1551.⁵⁰ So far from being outdated, the music in the Henry VIII Manuscript was still being copied out and imitated into the middle of the century. This suggests that it contained a collection of pieces that any musician who, like Heywood, was plying his trade at the royal court in the 1520s and 30s, was required to know.⁵¹ Various theories to the Henry VIII manuscript's purpose and ownership have been put forward, but one that seems plausible is that it was copied in royal circles and that it perhaps belonged to the king's Master of the Revels, Sir Henry Guildford.⁵² John Stevens has even singled out Heywood as the 'obvious sort of person' to

⁴⁸ Fallows, 'Introduction', 33

⁴⁹ Raymond G. Siemens, 'Henry VIII as Writer and Lyricist'. *Musical Quarterly*, 92 (2009), 141; Dietrich Helms, 'Henry VIII's book: teaching music to royal children'. *Musical Quarterly*, 92 (2009), 119-20

⁵⁰ John Ward, 'The Lute Music of MS Royal Appendix 58'. *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 13 (1960), 117

⁵¹ Helms, 'Henry VIII's book', 119-20

⁵² Raymond Siemens, 'The English lyrics of the *Henry VIII Manuscript*' (dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1997), 92-9, quoted in Fallows, 'Introduction', 24

have owned such a manuscript.⁵³ All in all, it seems entirely reasonable to assume that Heywood would have been familiar with *Pastyme*.

Despite not being named as a tune on any later broadside ballads, *Pastyme* clearly had a life well beyond Henry's immediate circle. In addition to appearing in these sixteenth-century manuscripts, it was mentioned during a sermon as early as 1521, and the song was still in circulation 100 years later, when it appeared in a Scottish songbook.⁵⁴ Although tradition has it that *Pastyme* was Henry VIII's composition, David Fallows argues that 'on balance [we can] now conclude that the melody and the chordal basis already existed', meaning that Henry's contribution was the familiar text.⁵⁵ By the early 1530s *Pastyme* was so firmly connected to Mary's father that it was known as 'The Kynges Ballade'.⁵⁶ Heywood could easily have seen its potential as a melody for his wedding ballad, especially given the associations that the tune would have brought to the song, and not least for Queen Mary herself.

Meanwhile, the influence of court culture on commercial music was visible from the earliest days of print. John Rastell's first extant use of his system of moveable type was for a ballad known as *Tyme to pass*, from his interlude, *The Nature of the Four Elements* (1520). Interludes of this sort were commonly associated with aristocratic entertainments. What is notable is that Henry VIII's compositions were so well known that they could be implicitly referenced in commercial music printing. The musical setting for *Tyme to Pass* was a composition again attributed to Henry VIII, the song *Adew madam et ma mastres*. But while the tune was taken from one of Henry's chansons, the

⁵³ Stevens, *Music and Poetry*, 129-31; London, British Library Royal Appendix MS 58

⁵⁴ Stevens, *Music and Poetry*, 143

⁵⁵ Fallows, 'Introduction', 22

⁵⁶ Ritson Manuscript, fo. 141^v-142

words were also modelled on one of the king's own ballads, none other than *Pastyme with Good Company*.⁵⁷

Given *Pastyme*'s clear association with the royal court, it is important to note that no musical training is needed to sing its melody. David Fallows points out that the music in the Henry VIII Manuscript is suitable for 'enthusiastic amateurs' rather than representing the flowering of elaborate English music, such as that seen in the choral polyphony of the Eton Choirbook.⁵⁸ It has even been suggested that the manuscript might have been intended as an instructional tool for Henry's children, Princess Mary and Henry Fitzroy.⁵⁹ Contemporary accounts do indeed note that the young Mary was a skilled musician. She was a proficient lutenist and, like Heywood, a keen player of the virginals.⁶⁰ She would have begun her musical education in about 1520 at the age of 4, at a time when this music from her father's early court was still very much current, but Fallows notes that a 'fair proportion of pieces [in the Henry VIII Manuscript] should never serve as a model for anybody'.⁶¹ Even if the manuscript were not compiled in order to teach music to Princess Mary, *Pastyme* itself was clearly one of the songs in circulation at court at the time she began her musical studies, before her household was moved to the Welsh marches, away from her parents, in 1525. It seems virtually incontestable that Mary would have been familiar with the tune.

IV

⁵⁷ Matthew Lillo, 'John Rastell's Dramatic Ballad and the Early Tudor Court: Toward a Revised Understanding of Ballad History'. *Studies in Philology*, 117:4 (2020), 683.

⁵⁸ Fallows, 'Introduction', 2

⁵⁹ Helms, 'Henry VIII's book', 118–35

⁶⁰ Anna Whitelock, *Mary Tudor: England's First Queen* (2009), 27

⁶¹ Fallows, 'Introduction', 24

The identification of the melody for the wedding ballad as *Pastyme with Good Companye* now seems inescapable. Christopher Marsh, Una McLivenna and others have demonstrated how early modern listeners were able to make associations between subsequent sets of lyrics to the same tune, and it may be that for Heywood, this tune was too good an opportunity to miss.⁶² The melody would certainly have been known to those in Mary's circle and was in all probability familiar outside the confines of the royal court. Indeed, the many and varied associations which those 'in the know' could make between the two songs serve to substantiate the suggestion that Heywood deliberately drew upon on the past to create a resonant and multivalent song which was calculated to appeal to the queen, and quite likely to a much wider audience.

The first connection that the ballad's audience might be expected to make would be with the queen's father himself, Henry VIII. By using a melody which was so closely associated with the man who many people saw as the towering figure of the Tudor line, Heywood implicitly reinforced Mary's dynastic right to the throne as her father's daughter and his legitimate heir. Likewise, it cast her new husband in the role of the popular and successful monarch by musically linking Philip with that most English of kings, Henry VIII. While it is arguable that connecting Philip to such a strong king might have alienated those who feared his power, it is also true that it would musically reinforce the message that Philip was a 'kinglie king' and that as his wife, Mary had become a 'queenelie queene', thus restoring the natural gender balance.

The early sixteenth century date of the song outlined above can also lead us back to a connexion with a previous Tudor wedding to a Spanish royal. As we have seen, three of the extant manuscript versions of the song can be securely dated to the early years of Henry VIII's rule and the time of his

⁶² Marsh, *Music and Society*, 300; Una McLivenna, 'The Power of Music: The Significance of Contrafactum in Execution Ballads'. *Past & Present*, 229:1 (2015), 47– 89; Una McLivenna, 'The Rich Merchant Man, or, What the Punishment of Greed Sounded Like in Early Modern English Ballads'. *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 79:2 (2016), 279-299; Hyde, *Singing the News*

marriage to Catherine of Aragon. Catherine was first married to Henry's elder brother Arthur, but the pair's life together proved fleeting: Arthur died on 2 April 1502, only months after the wedding, leaving Catherine a widow searching for a role in a foreign court while the young Prince Henry became heir to his father's throne. Henry VII died on 21 April 1509, and shortly after the funeral in early May, the new king announced that he would marry his brother's widow. The couple were married on 11 June, and their coronation took place on 23 June at Westminster Abbey. They appeared to be deeply in love. Both the Ritson Manuscript and Henry VIII Manuscript place the creation of *Pastyme* roughly contemporaneously with the 'honeymoon period' of Henry's relationship with his new wife, and it is difficult not to concur that Catherine 'must have heard it sung often'.⁶³

All this is not to suggest that Henry's songs were necessarily written for Queen Catherine. Despite their composition during the early years of Henry VIII's reign, Raymond Siemens gives several reasons for not reading the lyrics in the Henry VIII Manuscript as 'little poems' written to Catherine of Aragon (or indeed any of Henry's later paramours). Firstly, they were composed in an environment in which 'courtly love' was a commonplace. Secondly, they were performed not by the king alone as a soloist, but often as part of a group of performers, undermining any personal connexion between the singer and the subject of the songs. Finally, even when the songs were sung solo, they were not the private preserve of the singer and his lover, but instead were performed in a public environment, however small or courtly their audience.⁶⁴ Still, it seems that many of the 'small courtly songs were written for specific court festivals... during the years of Henry's courtship of

⁶³ Giles Tremlett, *Catherine of Aragon: Henry's Spanish Queen* (2010), 162

⁶⁴ Siemens, 'Henry VIII as Writer and Lyricist', 140-2. Any association between *Pastyme* and Henry's infatuation with Anne Boleyn has been shown to be spurious - see also Raymond Siemens, 'Revisiting the Text of the Henry VIII Manuscript (BL Add Ms 31,922): An Extended Note'. *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 14:3 (2009)

Katherine of Aragon'. Whether or not they were directly written for Henry's bride, they were certainly associated with this early, happy period of his rule.⁶⁵

Rather than being a love song, *Pastyme* is, of course, what Fallows refers to as a 'lifestyle song' – one which describes or justifies the writer's preferred way of life.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, it is also true that the first two lines ('Pastyme with good companye / I love & shall untyll I dye') place love and courtship at the very centre of this existence. Likewise, Siemens acknowledges that the various songs ascribed to the king in the Henry VIII Manuscript are more intensely personal in feeling than the rest of the lyrics.⁶⁷ It is undeniable that the object of Henry's affections at this time was Catherine of Aragon. The performance of these songs in a public environment therefore serves to bolster the suggestion that *Pastyme* became associated not only with Henry as 'The Kynges Ballade', but also with the queen because it was heard by many people in the context of a court which celebrated the idealisation of love at a time when the king was infatuated with his new wife. By re-using this melody, Heywood may have intended to reiterate the validity of Catherine's marriage to Henry, thereby reinforcing Mary's dynastic right which had been undermined when Henry had cast off his first wife and Mary had been declared a bastard. Mary never stopped believing that her mother was Henry's lawful wife despite her father's actions in putting Catherine aside. Heywood's decision to use *Pastyme* as the melody for the wedding ballad would have been personally pleasing to the newly-married queen. Moreover, the tune would have reminded Mary, and those in the know, of the unity between England and Spain which had existed before the break with Rome and which the marriage to Philip was meant to restore.

Nevertheless, those close to the queen might also have noted some further family associations based on the pre-existing English words to the melody. The third line in *Pastyme*, 'gruch who lust but

⁶⁵ Helms, 'Henry VIII's book', 120

⁶⁶ Fallows, 'Introduction', 22

⁶⁷ Siemens, 'Henry VIII as Writer and Lyricist', 139

none denye' (meaning 'let grudge whosoever will, none shall refuse (it to me)'), was a reference to Margaret of Austria's motto, '*groigne qui groigne et vive Burgoigne*'.⁶⁸ This reference indicates the close political and personal alignment between Henry and the duchess, as well as playing on Philip's own claim to be a future head of the House of Burgundy. Margaret was married in 1497 (albeit briefly) to Catherine of Aragon's brother, Juan, and was later appointed as regent of the Habsburg Netherlands and guardian of the future Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, Philip's father. She was instrumental in uniting England, Spain and the Holy Roman Empire in an alliance against France in 1513, a period which has been seen 'to represent the ascendance of the culture of revelry that characterised Henry's kingship'.⁶⁹ During the siege of Tournai that autumn, Henry and Margaret were frequent visitors, with the duchess's court being famous as a 'centre of courtly love'.⁷⁰

Bearing this in mind, it seems fair to say that *Pastyme*, that most widely circulated of all early Tudor ballads, 'had a strong chance of cueing its audience's cultural knowledge of the king's thoughts about disport'.⁷¹ While contemporary evidence for Henry VIII's court being modelled on the chivalric 'court of love' remains mainly circumstantial, the May games and masques that Edward Hall describes in his Chronicle are strongly redolent of a courtly game of love performed in a social setting and similar to those of Margaret's court. Indeed, they present a rosy picture of these early years of Henry's reign, with the palace hosting chivalric tournament romances or being suddenly overrun by royal mummers, while courtiers often took part in 'disguisings' with singing and dancing. Hall describes how, for example, in the summer of 1510, the king and queen went on a progress

⁶⁸ Siemens, 'Henry VIII as Writer and Lyricist', 140 & 148; Stevens, *Music and Poetry*, 45

⁶⁹ David R. Carlson, 'Skelton, Garnesche, and Henry VIII: Revels and Erudition at Court'. *Review of English Studies*, New Series, 66: 274 (2015), 247

⁷⁰ Steven Gunn, *Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk c.1484-1545* (Oxford, 1988), 29

⁷¹ Lillo, 'John Rastell's Dramatic Ballad and the Early Tudor Court', 689, 697 & 698. See also John Milsom, 'Songs and Society in Early Tudor London'. *Early Music History*, 16 (1997), 235-293

where Henry was to be seen ‘exercisyng hym self daily in shotyng, singing, dauncing, wrasteling, casting of the barre, plaiying at the recorders, flute, virginals, and in setting of songes, makyng of balettes’.⁷² Given the dates around which the Ritson and Henry VIII Manuscripts must have been created, it is easily possible, if not more than likely, that one of these ballads might have been *Pastyme with Good Companye*. Heywood’s choice of tune, then, had plenty of messages of its own, especially for those with knowledge of Henry VIII’s court. It demonstrated Mary’s lineage as a daughter of England, and the queen’s intimate and auspicious links with Spain which set her up as a major player on the European stage.

V

The evidence overwhelmingly suggests that the intended tune for Mary’s wedding ballad was *Pastyme with Good Companye*. Considering the prominence given to heraldry in the ballad, it seems possible that the piece was composed for one of the five pageants which the Court of Aldermen organised for the newlyweds’ entry into the City of London a few days after their wedding at Winchester Cathedral. Heywood had been called upon to lend a hand in planning these pageants, and although it seems that he was not directly involved in their production, he could have contributed a song for the festivities.⁷³ Perhaps *A Balade specifienge partly the maner* was part of the ‘fourth and most excellent pageant of al’ at Cheapside, which focussed on the two monarchs’ genealogy and apparently was ‘throughlye vewed and much comm[en]ded of their maiesties’.⁷⁴ It is certainly tempting to think that the song was written for public performance of this sort. If so, it would suggest that the song was heard not just by the newlywed royals but also, presumably, by

⁷² Edward Hall, *Hall's chronicle; containing the history of England...*, ed. Henry Ellis[?] (1809), 513-6

⁷³ Walker, *Heywood*, 276-7 & 287

⁷⁴ John Elder, *The Copie of a Letter Sent in to Scotland...* (1555), ESTC S126215, Ci^v & Ciii^r.

large crowds at the London pageants. Heywood after all accentuated the fact that Mary and Philip were a 'meete... matche in parentage' and, by the time of the wedding, 'matcheth feyre / Croune unto croune'. This, however, also indicates that the ballad was written after the nuptials, as it was not known until the eve of the wedding that Charles V would raise his son to be king of Naples in order that their marriage would be one of equals.⁷⁵ So even if the pageant was not the song's intended context, its publication as a broadside either for sale or distribution indicates that a wide audience was anticipated. As such, the song was intended to work on many levels. For all those in the know, the melody played on resonances from a pre-Reformation past. Given Heywood's familiar relationship with Mary, his careful choice of music amplified his textual message in numerous ways. At a personal level, he would have expected his chosen melody to please the queen, since *Pastyme with Good Companye* was closely associated with Henry VIII's court at the happiest point in his marriage to Catherine of Aragon.

Yet there was also a strong element of propaganda. For the wider public, the song was a patriotic ballad which attempted to reconcile the difficulties faced by a queen regnant who chose to marry outside the realm, as well as to persuade the civic community to accept Mary, her new husband and their Catholic faith. It was unnecessary for the public to understand every nuance of melodic association in order to enjoy the song, but with its simple tune, repetitive words, and entertainment value, the ballad's powerful central message would be memorable and could be accessed even by those unable to read. By using a melody that was intimately linked to her father, the song had the added bonus of reinforcing Mary's dynastic heritage. At a time of increased tension, using this well-known tune reminded Mary and others of an idyllic period before the upheavals of the Reformation had both soured the relationship between England and Spain, and divided the English along

⁷⁵ Hyde, *Singing the News*, 171; Walker, *Heywood*, 289

confessional lines. It was an integral part of Heywood's attempt to bring the country together, united behind Mary and her new Spanish king.