

Gender, Authority and the Image of Queenship in English and Scottish Ballads

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Abstract: This article uses broadside ballads to show that dynastic right was of central importance to the popular view of the accessions of Mary I and Elizabeth I, as well as that of the foreign king James VI when he acceded to the English throne in 1603. It challenges our view of Tudor iconography by showing that although popular songs were not afraid to tackle the gender implications of queens regnant, the popular image of Elizabeth I was not centred on her femininity. The article compares the positive English view of Mary I's femininity with negative portrayals of Mary Queen of Scots in Scotland, while suggesting that the issue of femininity was not raised in ballads about Elizabeth I because her half-sister had already normalised the idea of a woman on the throne.

In the summer of 1553, England faced an unprecedented event. There were two claimants to the throne, and they were both female. The country would have to come to terms with a queen regnant: a woman who reigned. Issues of legitimacy, legality and dynastic right were at the heart of this contested inheritance. Mary Tudor and Jane Grey both claimed to have right on their side, but a popular movement of support for Henry VIII's daughter swept aside her rival and Mary I was hailed as the 'sweet marigold' who was 'rightful queen'.¹ Nevertheless, amongst the celebrations, popular balladeers were not afraid to address the unusual issues raised by her

¹ Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, Registry guard book CUR 8, *The Ballad of Ioy, upon the publication of Q. Mary, Wife of King Philip, her being with child*, f. 7^{r-v}.

accession. Even her most loyal supporters were forced to acknowledge that a queen regnant 'may seem strange'.²

This article will show that the dynastic legitimacy of a reigning queen's claim to the throne was a challenge for balladeers, who at times struggled to reconcile themselves to the idea of a woman ruler. By demonstrating that hereditary right was at the heart of ballads printed to celebrate the accession of Mary I, Elizabeth I and James VI, as James I of England, and contrasting these songs with those which attacked Mary Queen of Scots, this article will demonstrate that what mattered to the popular audience was first, that the ruler had a rightful title, and second, that the ruler was effective and able to provide stability.

I

Broadside ballads such as those published around the time of Mary I's accession were usually printed in two columns of blackletter type on one side of a single sheet of cheap paper. They were often decorated with attractive borders and sometimes with a woodcut illustration to enhance the sheet's visual appeal. Selling at around 1d each, they were among the most affordable printed material in sixteenth-century England. Although it is fair to say that broadside ballads were very popular, it is difficult to estimate how many were actually in circulation. Figures as high as three or four million copies have been suggested based on the number of surviving broadsides, records from the Stationers' Company, and the estimated size of print

² John Heywood, *A Balade specifieng 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* (London, 1554), STC (2nd ed.) / 13290.3.

runs.³ We can be confident that the survival rate for broadside ballads is relatively low, not least because of the poor quality of paper on which they were printed and the ephemerality of the songs they recorded. They were the pop songs of their day, yet we know little about their authors or performers.

Ballad singers and their performance style are difficult to pin down. They appear in the background of many Renaissance genre paintings, suggesting that they were familiar figures in marketplaces across Europe.⁴ Chris Marsh described at length the effect of licensing laws on the English minstrel, suggesting that itinerant musicians of this type came under increasing pressure during the sixteenth century as they came to be seen as dishonest vagabonds who roamed the country spreading sedition.⁵ Nevertheless, he also noted their capacity to draw crowds and entertain. Hostile contemporary accounts can be read against the grain to show that even the most humble balladeer could 'attract and work the crowd – through gesture, words and music'.⁶ This capacity to attract attention sometimes led to trouble when political ballads were sung in public places. Balladeers and printers found

³ Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety 1550-1640* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 11 & 42; Christopher Marsh, *Music and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 226. Carole Rose Livingston located 288 extant sixteenth-century broadside ballads, and only a few more have been discovered since the publication of her *British Broadside Ballads of the Sixteenth Century: A Catalogue of the Extant Sheets and an Essay* (New York, 1991).

⁴ See Jenni Hyde, 'From Page to People: Ballad Singers as Intermediaries in the Graphosphere' (forthcoming). For a detailed case study, see Henry Chriscinda, 'From beggar to virtuoso: The street singer in the Netherlandish visual tradition, 1500–1600', *Renaissance Studies*, 33/1 (2019), pp. 136-158.

⁵ Marsh, *Music and Society*, pp. 73-9.

⁶ Marsh, *Music and Society*, pp. 239-245.

themselves subject to the various laws intended to control ‘false fond books, ballads and rhymes’, while unsuspecting singers could find themselves, like one Wymberd in 1554, in the pillory for singing seditious songs.⁷

It is certainly true that the Tudor monarchs recognised that many forms of print, including ballads and plays as well as books and treatises, offered the potential to spread messages to the populace. That Mary’s earliest attempt to control the printing presses was a proclamation of 21 August 1553, less than three weeks after her arrival in London, shows how important the issue was to her. In theory, every book, ballad, rhyme, interlude and treatise was supposed to be licensed by the queen; in practice, this process cannot have been feasible. Further injunctions followed in February and March 1554 in the run up to Mary’s marriage to Philip of Spain.⁸ Moreover, repeated provisions to punish the printers and authors of unlicensed works suggest that there was a steady stream of potentially seditious material. This hardly seems to indicate that printers chose always to print works that

⁷ *By the Quene the Quenes Highnes Well Remembrynge...* (London, 1553), STC (2nd ed.) / 7849; *Acts of the Privy Council of England: A.D. 1542-June 1631, 5: 1554-1556*, PC 2/7 f. 195, p. 88, ‘[Meeting] At Westminster, the xiiijth of January, 1554’. For more case studies of seditious ballads and their control, see Jenni Hyde, *Singing the News: Ballads in Mid-Tudor England* (Abingdon, 2018), p. 34, especially chapters 6, 7 and 8.

⁸ Peter W. M. Blayney, *The Stationers’ Company and the Printers of London, 1501-1557*, II (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 825-30.

would please the new regime, despite the attempts of London stationers to obtain a charter of incorporation during Mary's reign.⁹

Most ballads were anonymous, but this should not be taken to suggest that they represented the authentic *vox populi*. Where the authors can be identified, they were usually relatively well-educated individuals.¹⁰ This is unsurprising as, sometimes, they used their songs to influence the way people thought about current affairs. Ballads, with their rhyming texts, simple language and memorable tunes, were used to educate the masses.¹¹ Nevertheless, the songs still had to respond to market forces, because if the printer wanted the ballad to sell, it needed to appeal to its audience. Ballads were therefore both a 'conditioner and mirror of popular attitudes'.¹² Because they used catchy tunes to bring the texts to life, they were accessible to a broad audience. As a 'potent political tool', they sought to shape and respond to the concerns of the population and therefore they can be used to assess popular attitudes to the authority of these new queens.¹³

⁹ It is, however, true that some of the Marian ballads were printed by men whose names were among those of the 97 stationers who appeared in the charter, *viz.* Richard Lant and William Ryddell: see Blayney, *Stationers' Company*, pp. 875 & 881.

¹⁰ Hyde, *Singing the News*, p. 34.

¹¹ Fernando J. Bouza Alvarez, *Communication, Knowledge, and Memory in Early Modern Spain*, trans. Sonia López and Michael Agnew (Philadelphia, 2004), pp. 13-14; Jonathan Willis, "'By These Means the Sacred Discourses Sink More Deeply into the Minds of Men": Music and Education in Elizabethan England', *History*, 94 (2009).

¹² Claude Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad and its Music* (New Brunswick, 1966), p. xi.

¹³ Marsh, *Music and Society*, p. 225.

Many early modern ballads dealt with the big news stories of the day. It was commonplace in these topical songs to mention the king or queen in passing, often in a closing couplet which prayed for the monarch's health or urged their subjects to be loyal.¹⁴ Some songs, however, were more specifically related to the monarchy, especially at the beginning of a new reign. It is undeniable that there were more such ballads at the start of Mary I's reign than that of Elizabeth I or, in the early seventeenth century, would greet the Stuart king of Scotland, James VI, on his accession as James I of England.¹⁵ At least four surviving songs from the first twelve months of Mary I's reign addressed her accession, while several other ballads about the queen are of uncertain date but are clearly contemporaneous with the early part of her reign. All of these pieces draw attention to the queen's skills and abilities. Although several of the balladeers had links to court, there is no evidence of direct patronage. That is, there is no evidence that these balladeers were specifically asked to write songs in support of Queen Mary. Indeed, there is little reason to think that these balladeers were much different to many of the other balladeers who were writing in the sixteenth century. Tudor balladeers habitually praised their monarchs and tackled the issues of the day. Sometimes they simply cashed in on events to make some money, and it seems likely that they saw the accession of the first queen regnant as just such an opportunity.

¹⁴ See for example Thomas Deloney, *A most ioyfull Songe, made in the behalfe of all her Maiesties faithfull and louing Subiects...* (London, 1586), STC (2nd ed.) / 6557.6, which ends with the couplet 'And Lord with hart to thee we pray, preserve our noble Queene, / And still confound her hatefull foes, as they have alwayes been'.

¹⁵ It is difficult to compare Mary I with earlier Tudor monarchs because the survival rate of early Tudor broadside ballads is particularly low.

II

In Mary I's case, the ballads printed after her accession stress that she was the rightful queen and liege lady. This was a particularly important point, considering that the duke of Northumberland, John Dudley, had attempted to stage a coup in order to put his daughter-in-law, Lady Jane Grey, on the throne. Northumberland was Lord President of Edward VI's Privy Council, a title which belies his power and influence over the king, as Edward died when he was only fifteen. Both the king and Lord President were staunch Protestants who wanted to keep the throne in evangelical hands. During the spring of 1553, Edward drew up his device for the succession, which prevented both his sisters inheriting the throne: Mary because she was Catholic and her parents' marriage had been annulled; Elizabeth because her mother, Anne Boleyn, had been adulterous. In Edward's eyes, both Mary and Elizabeth were bastards. This meant that their 'political fortunes were inextricably linked' and it was impossible to restore one to the succession but not the other.¹⁶

Edward's plan also completely ignored the strong claim of the descendants of Henry VIII's elder sister, Margaret, who had married James IV of Scotland. Instead, to avoid the Catholic Stuarts from inheriting, he willed the succession to the as-yet unborn male heirs belonging to the line of Henry's younger sister, Mary. As the child-king's health suddenly failed that summer, realism took over from idealism. He altered the device to accommodate the female heirs of the family too, nevertheless bypassing the next in that line, the duchess of Suffolk. Instead, he promoted the

¹⁶ Paulina Kewes, 'The 1553 Succession Crisis Reconsidered', *Historical Research*, 90 (2017), pp. 469-471, 479 & 483.

claim of the duchess's daughter, Lady Jane Grey, who was married to Northumberland's son, Guildford. Northumberland little wanted the Catholic Princess Mary to inherit the throne, while Jane's accession would consolidate power in Dudley hands. It was, therefore, in Northumberland's interests to concur even if the prime mover was the young king himself.¹⁷

On Edward's death, Jane was proclaimed queen in London and Mary was forced to challenge the Dudley candidate for the throne. While Mary Tudor was well-known and could draw on her father's authority to legitimise her rule, Jane was only Henry's great-niece. As such, Jane's first proclamation was forced to go to some lengths to explain who she was in order to show how she came to claim the title of queen:

we and the Lady Katherine, and the Lady Mary our sisters, being the daughters of the lady Frances our natural mother, and then and yet wife to our natural & most loving father Henry Duke of Suffolk, and the lady Margaret, daughter of the lady Eleanor then deceased sister to the said lady Frances, and the late wife of our cousin Henry Erle of Cumberland, were very nigh of his graces blood, of the part of his father's side our

¹⁷ For a clear overview of the process, see Jennifer Loach, *Edward VI* (London, 1999), pp. 163-5.

said progenitor and great uncle, and being naturally borne here within the realm.¹⁸

The proclamation described in detail the terms by which Edward VI came to bestow the throne on this relative unknown. Judith Richards described it as ‘an extraordinary document by any criteria’, pointing out that the Privy Council’s declaration of Jane as queen was so unexpected that the circumstances surrounding it ‘required a great deal of explanation’. The proclamation was not only ‘atypical’ but also ‘strikingly discursive’.¹⁹ Mary Tudor, by contrast, could simply claim that she was her brother’s rightful heir:

Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God to call unto his mercy the most excellent Prince, King Edward VI, our late brother of most worthy memory, whereby the crown imperial of the realms of England and Ireland, with the title of France and all other things appertaining unto the same, do most rightfully and lawfully belong unto us...²⁰

An outpouring of popular support for Mary I in cheap print acknowledged the validity of her claim to the throne. Likewise, Mary’s dynastic right was central to the ballads which followed her accession, such as Thomas Watertoune’s *A Ninuectyue agaynst Treason*. Printed by William Powell for Roger Madeley, it is probably the earliest of

¹⁸ *Jane, by the grace of God quene of England, Fraunce and Ireland, defendor of the faith... to al our most louing, faithfull, and obedient subiects, and to euery of them greting* (London: 1553), STC (2nd ed.) / 7846.

¹⁹ Judith Richards, ‘Gender Difference and Tudor Monarchy: The Significance of Queen Mary I’, *Parergon*, 21 (2004), p. 44.

²⁰ Paul H. Hughes and James L. Larkin (eds), *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, II (New Haven, 1964-69), p. 3.

the extant Marian ballads.²¹ The song highlighted Mary's 'rightful' inheritance in the face of an implied challenge:

Such mirth was made in every place as the like was
never seen
That god had showed on us his grace in giving a
rightful queen.²²

What is important for us to note is that the word 'rightful' is highlighted by the metre. No music for the ballad survives. Nonetheless the metre gives two stressed beats to the bar, suggesting either common time (4/4) or a compound time signature of 6/8. Either way, the first syllable of 'rightful' would fall on the second accented beat of the bar, giving the word emphasis which is not apparent until the text is read or sung aloud.

Support for Mary Tudor's legal right to the throne can also be seen in prose texts that were published around the time of her accession, including the anonymous libel known as *Poor Pratte*. Gilbert Potter, the libel's subject, was a Londoner who dared to speak out in favour of Mary against Lady Jane Grey, despite the City of London declaring for Northumberland's daughter-in-law. Potter was arrested and placed in the pillory, before his ears were chopped off as punishment for his crime. The Netherlandish Steven Mierdman printed *Poor Pratte* on behalf of Hugh Singleton, who was the only English stationer known to have gone into exile during Mary's reign.²³ Peter Blayney notes that the tenor of the document therefore 'seems

²¹ Blayney, *Stationers' Company*, p. 752.

²² Thomas Watertoune, *A Ninuetyue Agaynst Treason* (London, 1553), STC (2nd ed.) / 25105.

²³ Blayney, *Stationers' Company*, II, pp. 621 & 758.

out of character for both of them'.²⁴ *Poor Pratte* described 'the virtuous Lady Mary' as 'our lawful queen', commenting

And as young Daniel when he was brought before
such a ruler (as that false Duke of Northumberland)
rather than to deny his Lord, would suffer the pains of
imprisonment, and to be cast in the den of lions. Even
so (faithful Gilbert) rather than thou would consent to
their false & traitorous proclamation for Jane, when
thou did hear it, having a clear conscience, would not
consent to the same most traitorous fact.²⁵

Perhaps this reiterates the central problem: even for Protestant reformers such as Singleton and Mierdman, dynastic right trumped religious belief, especially if it had the potential to ingratiate you with the new regime.

III

Broadside ballads were relatively cheap and easy to produce, so they reacted quickly to newsworthy events. What could possibly be more newsworthy than an attempted coup and the accession of the first queen regnant? More surprising is that, in Mary I's case, balladeers accepted that a woman on the throne was strange. As Judith Richards commented, 'If monarchy could not be always simply male, at least the difference should be as understated as possible'.²⁶ The simplest way to deal with

²⁴ Blayney, *Stationers' Company*, II, p. 750.

²⁵ *The copie of a pistel or letter sent to Gilbard Potter...* (London, 1553), STC (2nd ed.) / 20188.

²⁶ Judith Richards, 'Mary Tudor as "Sole Quene"? Gendering Tudor Monarchy', *Historical Journal*, 40 (1997), p. 895.

the issue would have been to pretend it was nothing out of the ordinary. But rather than ignoring Mary I's gender, the balladeers tackled it head on. Not a single surviving accession ballad adopted an understated approach. Certainly, balladeers' first concern was to emphasise Mary Tudor's dynastic right and title as Henry VIII's daughter, but their second was to make her status as a queen regnant acceptable to a patriarchal society.

One tactic was to stress that Mary I retained her feminine virtues even though she had taken on this male role.²⁷ This listing of feminine virtues was not unusual in contemporary texts, and was common, for example, in the sort of encomiastic poetry that was used for broadside epitaphs.²⁸ Here, however, it was being used to foreground Mary's many excellent qualities at the most critical point of her life: her accession. After all, kings had generations of precedent on which to draw when representing their authority, but it was difficult for an English queen regnant to find ways in which to express her inherent power not only because it had never been done, but also because women were not supposed to possess such authority in the first place. The ballads intimate that contemporaries were not sure what to expect from a queen who ruled in her own right, even when it was clear that lineal descent and statute were both on her side.²⁹ The author of one strongly anti-Catholic ballad was clearly loyal to Mary personally even though he opposed her faith. He drew on

²⁷ Hyde, *Singing the News*, pp. 164-5.

²⁸ Jenni Hyde, 'Verse Epitaphs and the Memorialisation of Women in Reformation England', *Literature Compass*, 13 (2016), pp. 701-710.

²⁹ Judith Richards, 'Examples and Admonitions: What Mary Demonstrated for Elizabeth', in *Tudor Queenship*, pp. 34 & 35.

Mary's lineage with a reference to Mary as the rose 'most redolent'.³⁰ The rose was, no doubt, a reference to the Tudor rose, echoing the way Mary's father, Henry VIII, was addressed by balladeers during the immediate aftermath of Thomas Cromwell's fall from grace.³¹

Rather than using the rose, William Forrest's *A New Ballade of the Marigolde* used a different but highly appropriate flower as a metaphor for Queen Mary. As well as combining her name, Mary, with the golden colour of royalty, the marigold's Latin name is *calendula*, a reference to the plant's long flowering season. *A New Ballade of the Marigolde* was one of several ballads printed soon after Mary's accession by Richard Lant, all of which showed sympathy to her Catholic beliefs.³² Nevertheless, while this might be expected if their author and printers wanted to gain favour from the new regime, it is more surprising that they employed her femininity as a central aspect of their songs. The ballads reassured the population that although a woman on the throne was different, she still retained her femininity and, what is more, the running of the country would go on as normal. Forrest described Mary's many qualities fulsomely, to show that she had the talents and abilities needed by a monarch:

Her education well is knowne,
From her first age how it hath wrought;

³⁰ '1553 the 10 of Octobar, Anno Regni Reginae Mariae quenne', in Frederick J. Furnivall, *Ballads from Manuscripts*, I (London, 1868-72), pp. 431-434. The date of the ballad is significant, being only a few days into Mary I's first parliament.

³¹ R. Smyth P., *An artificiall Apologie, articulerlye answerynge to the obstreperous Obgannynges of one W. G...* (London, 1540), Society of Antiquaries, London.

³² Blayney, *Stationers' Company*, II, p. 752; Hyde, *Singing the News*, pp. 162-5.

In singler Vertue shee hath growne
And serving god as well she ought.³³

Furthermore, Forrest commented that 'Her conversation, note who list, / It is more heavenly than terrain'. This line is multivalent: it clearly means that Mary was devout in matters of religion, preferring to speak of spiritual than earthly matters, but it could also mean that her voice and words were neither strident nor excessive. Although this might not seem important at first glance, it reflects the contemporary attitudes to women. The work of scholars including Anthony Fletcher, Pamela Allen Brown or, more recently, Sarah Williams on perceptions of female transgression has revealed that acoustic excesses associated with the female voice, such as scolding, cursing and cacophony, were common features of disorderly women in popular early modern culture.³⁴ Williams pointed out that verbal excess was a 'recurring textual trope in broadsides describing female transgression'.³⁵ It was feared that women's assertiveness in speech might lead to independence in action.³⁶ It might be associated with masculinity or, at the very least, loss of femininity. This reading is encouraged by the next line, which complimented Mary on her meekness. Traditionally, this was a quality which women in masculine roles were thought to lose and, obviously, it had the potential to be a significant problem for a queen regnant.

³³ William Forrest, *A New Ballade of the Marigolde* (London).

³⁴ See Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination* (London, 1995); Pamela Allen Brown, *Better a Shrew Than a Sheep: Women, Drama, and the Culture of Jest in Early Modern England* (London, 2003); Sarah F. Williams, *Damnable Practises: Witches, Dangerous Women and Music in Seventeenth-Century English Broadside Ballads* (Farnham, 2015).

³⁵ Williams, *Damnable Practises*, p. 15.

³⁶ Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination*, p. 401.

The Marian ballads therefore stressed that the queen possessed the skills and character required to be an effective monarch, while retaining her humility and meekness.

The question of Mary I's gender and status as a monarch was even more directly addressed when she married Philip of Spain at Winchester Cathedral on 25 July 1554. Around this time, the playwright John Heywood published a ballad which described the circumstances of the wedding and attempted to unpick the problems facing the reigning queen who chose to marry. Heywood represents an interesting synthesis between the burgeoning print trade and the royal court. His father-in-law was the leading printer John Rastell, while Heywood himself had been a member of the Stationers' Company since 1523.³⁷ Three broadside ballads can be attributed directly to him, while a further nine songs can be found in manuscript.³⁸ Despite being a life-long Catholic, Heywood was involved in entertainments at court until he finally went into exile in 1564. One early ballad, *Geue place, ye ladyes*, was dedicated to Mary when as a princess she was declared illegitimate by her father.³⁹ Later, Heywood was involved in the new queen's coronation pageants.⁴⁰ His loyalty was rewarded by a pension, but there is no direct evidence that the wedding ballad

³⁷ Peter Happé, 'Heywood, John (b. 1496/7, d. in or after 1578)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (4 October 2008), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/13183> [accessed 5 February 2020].

³⁸ Hyde, *Singing the News*, p. 169; John Heywood, *A breefe balet touching the traytorous takyng of Scarborough Castell* (London: 1557), STC (2nd ed.) / 13290.7; John Heywood, *A ballad against slander and detraction* (London, 1562), STC (2nd ed.) / 13290; London, British Library, Add. MS 15233.

³⁹ London, British Library, Harley MS 1703, ff. 108^r-9^r.

⁴⁰ John Stow and Edmund Howes, *Annales, or, a generall chronicle of England. Begun by Iohn Stow: continued and augmented with matters forraigne and domestique, ancient and moderne, vnto the end of this present yeere, 1631* (London: 1632), p. 617.

was a commission. Given that Heywood was also involved in the pageants which celebrated Philip's arrival in London and his marriage to the English queen, it is possible that *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* formed part of those festivities. There is no tune marked on the broadsheet, so in Figure 1 it is set it to 'Passtyme with good companye', a melody which appears in the 1518 music manuscript closely associated with Henry VIII and his court.⁴¹ Indeed, 'Passtyme' is one of the compositions ascribed to the king himself. Although this is a conjectural setting, it reflects the process which we can assume to have been undertaken by contemporaries – if they did not know the tune, they would presumably have either made one up or set the words to a melody with the right metre. In fact, there are very few surviving melodies with the same metre as *A Balade specifienge partly the maner*, because it has an unusual 7-line stanza which includes curious pointing and rhyme schemes. As Heywood was a member of the royal household who received payment as a singer and player of the virginals from 1519 onwards, he would have been a familiar face at court during Henry's reign, when 'Passtyme' was popular.⁴² Although the setting of *A Balade specifienge partly the maner* can only remain conjectural, it is possible that this is indeed the original tune for the song. If so, the implication of the melody might be to reinforce Mary's claim to the throne.

⁴¹ London, British Library, Add. MS 31922, ff. 14^v-15.

⁴² Blayney, *Stationers' Company*, I, p. 207.

A birde, a beast to make to choose Name - lie the beaste most fu - ri - ous It
 5 But marke this li - on so by name Is pro - per - lie a lambe tas - syne No
 The eg - les birde, the eg - les eyre All oth - er birds far sur - mount - ing The
 may seeme straunge, and so it doose And to this birde in - iu - ri - ous It
 9 li - on wilde, a li - on tame No ram - pant li - on mas - cu - lyne The
 crou - nid li - on, mat - cheth feyre Croune vn - to croune, this birde dothe bring A
 semthe a case right cu - ri - ous To make con - struc - tion
 12 lamb - like li - on fe - mi - nyne Whose milde meeke pro - per -
 queene - lie queene, a king - lie king Thus, lyke to lyke here
 in suche sens As may stande for this birds de - fens
 ty a - leurth This birde to light, and him as - seu - rth
 mat - ched is What matche may match more mete - then this

Figure 1: Verses 3-5 of *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 to 'Passtyme with Good Companye'*.

Yet *A Balade specifienge partly the maner* is a fascinating attempt to rationalise the effects of gender on Philip and Mary's mutual power and reputations.⁴³ Like Forrest, Heywood stressed the queen's femininity as 'no lion wilde, a lion tame'; she was, according to Heywood, really a lamb. Yet for Philip to marry a reigning queen was more than just strange; according to Heywood, it could be 'injurious' to Philip's reputation. Not only did the wedding subvert traditional gender roles, but the wedding treaty - ratified by the 1554 Act Touching the Articles of the Quenes Highnes most noble Marriage - had limited Philip's rights and powers as king of England.

⁴³ Heywood, *A Balade specifienge partly the maner, partly the matter*.

Furthermore, the ballad was contradictory, reflecting contemporary confusion about a reigning queen: Heywood claimed that Mary was a king in her own right, being ‘the beast most furious’ and ‘a crowned lion’. This was wholly in line with the recent Act Concerning Regal Power, which stated that

the Kinglye or Regall Office of the realm, and all Dignities Prerogative Royall Power Preheminences Privilegies Aucthorities and Jurisdicc[i]ones thereunto annexed united or belonging, being invested either in Male or Female, are and bee and ought to bee as fully wholly absolutely and [enteerly] deemed judged accepted invested and taken in thone as in thother.⁴⁴

Even so, Heywood suggested that order was restored by Mary’s marriage to Philip because ‘this bird doth bring a queenly queen, a kingly king’. Heywood reinforced the idea that marriage to Philip made up the masculine elements that Mary’s reign as sole queen lacked.⁴⁵

Despite Heywood’s attempts to portray Mary I’s marriage as both normal *and* normative, the song appears to be very much an audience-led ballad which could not ignore topical debate on the queen’s marriage plans. It suggests that popular audiences were interested in whether their queen should marry, and whom, and what would happen to the country in each case. If Heywood had not addressed these issues, the ballad might have been seen as unrealistic or irrelevant. Perhaps it was accidental that Heywood acknowledged the fears and doubts of the masses, but this is unlikely from someone who was close to the regime and was no hack

⁴⁴ *Statutes of the Realm*, I, 4, p. 222.

⁴⁵ Glyn Redworth, “‘Matters Impertinent to Women’: Male and Female Monarchy under Philip and Mary”, *English Historical Review*, 112 (1997), pp. 598-9; Hyde, *Singing the News*, pp. 169-171.

balladeer, especially given the context of the Act Concerning Regal Power and the Act Touching the Articles of the Quenes Highnes most noble Marriage. Heywood's ballad suggests that to publish a song which celebrated the marriage, while ignoring the issues that it raised about the roles of kings and queens, would have been an unacceptable level of propaganda that people simply would not have bought, either in the material or the metaphorical sense.

IV

All this shows that the response of balladeers to a reigning queen was more nuanced than one might at first imagine. Moreover, it serves to challenge our belief that gender was central to popular ideas of monarchical authority in the sixteenth century. Instead, what mattered to the ordinary man or woman on the street was stability. While historians traditionally saw Mary I as lacking judgement and being unduly influenced by others, recent revisionist interpretations of her reign have made the case that she was independent and politically aware.⁴⁶ They describe how Mary developed ceremonies and royal iconography which were recycled by Elizabeth.⁴⁷ They also stress how far Mary shaped her half-sister Elizabeth's inheritance.

Mary Tudor's femininity needed reiteration. The ballads explained that even though she was female, Mary Tudor had both legal right to the title of queen regnant

⁴⁶ David Loades, *The Reign of Mary Tudor: Politics, Government and Religion in England, 1553-58* (London, 1979), p. 86; Alexander Samson, 'Power Sharing: The Co-Monarchy of Philip and Mary' in Alice Hunt and Anna Whitelock (eds), *Tudor Queenship: The Reigns of Mary and Elizabeth* (New York, 2010), p. 166.

⁴⁷ See, for example, the chapters by Judith Richards, Paulina Kewes and Alice Hunt in Hunt and Whitelock (eds), *Tudor Queenship*.

and the exceptional qualities needed to be an excellent ruler despite her gender. Her femininity was addressed and accepted. Moreover, the issue of femininity did not seem to resurface in 1558 when Elizabeth I came to the throne.⁴⁸ Only one surviving song dealt with Elizabeth's right to the throne at any length.⁴⁹ *A songe betwene the Quenes maiestie and Englande* was written by William Birch, a balladeer who appears to have had a short heyday early in Elizabeth's reign.⁵⁰ He specialised in godly and moralising material of dubious quality. Opening with the lines 'Come over the born bessy / come over the born bessy / Sweet bessy come over to me', this is the only one of his extant songs to be directed at the queen. Music for a three-man song entitled 'Come over the Burn Bessy' can be found in the Ritson manuscript, British Library Add. MS 5665. This composite volume contains ninety-six pieces of

⁴⁹ A second song, *In Prayse of Worthy Ladyes Here in by Name and Especially or Queen Elyzabeth so Worthy of Fame* was registered in 1561–2 by Thomas Hackett but is now lost: Edward Arber (ed.), *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London: 1554–1640* (London, 1875–94), I, p. 179.

⁵⁰ William Birch, *A songe betwene the Quenes maiestie and Englande*, (London, 1564), STC (2nd ed.) / 3079. Carole Rose Livingston notes that the song was registered by William Pickering on 4 September 1564, but that it seems unlikely that this was its first edition. While this is possible, *the Quenes maiestie and Englande* is one of five surviving broadsides by Birch, the earliest of which dates from 1562 and the latest from 1571. It is entirely possible that *the Quenes maiestie and Englande* was indeed an earlier composition, and given the subject matter, it is equally possible that it ran to a second edition, but a date of 1564 as it appears in the registers would place it directly in the range of the extant sheets. See Livingston, *British Broadside Ballads of the Sixteenth Century*, p. 259. It is difficult, however, to categorise it confidently as an accession ballad. Birch's ballads bear no comparison to those of the masters of the art, William Elderton and Martin Parker, since the irregular scansion of his lines makes for some difficulty in fitting his words to music.

music including carols, masses, motets, and vernacular song alongside various deeds and receipts, which help to situate the manuscript in the West Country during the late fifteenth or very early sixteenth century. John Stevens further notes that the musicianship of the secular part-songs in particular is rather inept.⁵¹ This is unfortunate, as it is difficult to find a melody line in 'Come over the burn Bessy' which might lead us to a ballad tune appealing enough to last the best part of a century.

Written as a dialogue between Queen Elizabeth and the personification of England, Birch's song described the various trials and tribulations through which Elizabeth had been put during the reign of her half-sister, including her imprisonment at Woodstock. The voice of England suggested, quite implausibly, that

... those mad men did not know
That ye were daughter unto King Harry
And a princess of birth one of the noblest on earth
and sister unto Queen Mary.

Perhaps 'know' in this sense denoted acceptance rather than knowledge. Later Bessy expressed her hope that

...all faithful hearts will play true subjects parts
Knowing me their Queen & true heir by right
And that much the rather for the love of my father
That worthy prince King Henry th'eight.

⁵¹ *Musica Britannica A National Collection of Music XXXVI: Early Tudor Songs and Carols*, ed. John Stevens (London, 1975), xvii-xviii. 'Come Over the Burn Bessy' appears on page 17. Any supposed relationship between this and the Scottish song 'Blink o'er the burn Bessy' seems to be spurious, as the verse structure and scansion of the two songs are very different.

Both the Bessy and England characters stressed that Elizabeth was Henry VIII's daughter. Not only was this important in underlining Elizabeth's right to rule, it might also reflect the fact that Elizabeth was still considered by some to be a bastard. Both Mary and Elizabeth had been removed from the succession by Henry VIII on the grounds that they were illegitimate. Of course, legitimacy was central to the question of hereditary descent. Although both of Henry's daughters were restored by the 1544 Act of Succession, Elizabeth was born before Henry's first wife, Catherine of Aragon, died.⁵² This meant that, in the eyes of Catholics (and even some Protestants), Elizabeth's parents were not married at the time of her birth. Nevertheless, Birch clearly greeted Elizabeth's accession with some relief, presumably because of her Protestantism.

What is conspicuous by its absence from the song, however, is any comment on Elizabeth's femininity. Although *the Quenes majestie and Englande* explained that Elizabeth was Henry's daughter and Mary's half-sister, it did not confirm Elizabeth's right to rule even though she was a woman. In the only ballad we have which deals with Elizabeth's accession, when we might expect her femininity to be an issue, it simply is not mentioned. The trope of singing in England's voice was continued by *The Lamentation of Englande* published in 1584 after the discovery of the Throckmorton Plot, which sought to replace Elizabeth on the throne with Mary Queen of Scots. The song praised Elizabeth as a ruler whom God had made

⁵² For a description of the process by which the Princesses Mary and Elizabeth were first excluded from the succession and then reinstated, see M. H. Cole, 'The Half-Blood Princes: Mary I, Elizabeth I, and their Strategies of Legitimation' in Sarah Duncan and Valerie Schutte (eds), *The Birth of a Queen: Essays on the Quincentenary of Mary I*, (New York, 2016), pp. 73-4.

his Handmaide pure and cleene:
Annoynting her my rightfull Prince,
to reigne a royall Queene.
Indued with wisdom from above,
and storde with knowledge great.⁵³

Again, the song noted her right to rule, in this case God-given. In doing so it emphasised her Protestantism rather than her gender; indeed, the traits ascribed to the queen were neither directly attributed to her gender nor were they implicitly feminine. Even the popular songs published to celebrate the anniversary of her accession day did not place the queen's gender at the centre of their narrative. Topical events were more likely to dominate.⁵⁴ Only one extant song published during Elizabeth's reign concentrated on her feminine virtues, but it was more generalised than those relating to Mary I's accession and, again, it also mentioned that she was 'daughter of a noble King, / desending of a royall race'.⁵⁵

So while scholars have noted Elizabeth's proficient self-fashioning both of herself and her authority as a monarch, a strategy which allowed her to 'capitalise on the expectations of her behaviour as a woman and use them to her advantage',

⁵³ M. W., *The Lamentation of Englande: For the late Treasons conspired against the Queenes Majestie and the whole Realme...* (London, 1584), STC (2nd ed.), / 17155.5.

⁵⁴ Katherine Butler 'Creating Harmonious Subjects? Ballads, Psalms and Godly Songs for Queen Elizabeth I's Accession Day', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 140/2 (2015), pp. 273-312.

⁵⁵ Richard Harrington, *A famous dittie of the ioyful receauing of the Queens moste excellent maiestie...* (London, 1584).

these songs complicate the picture.⁵⁶ Certainly, Elizabeth's sex was a matter of concern to her male counsellors, who took pains to disassociate the person of the queen from the office of king which she inhabited.⁵⁷ While Elizabeth's femininity might have been a central part of her image at an elite level, the ballads suggest that, for a popular audience at least, the gender issue had been settled: as long as the country was stable and government proceeded in an orderly fashion, whether it was a king or a queen who ran the country mattered little.

V

Ballads about Mary Queen of Scots, on the other hand, present a different picture. Mary Stuart had inherited the Scottish throne as an infant, but had spent most of her childhood at the French court. During her absence, Scotland had been ruled by regent then council, and the Reformation had taken hold. When she returned from France in August 1561 following the death of her first husband, the Dauphin, she took her place as the Catholic ruler of a Protestant land.

Unlike Mary Tudor, who married a foreign prince, Mary Stuart chose to marry one of her subjects during the summer of 1565: Henry, Lord Darnley. At the time,

⁵⁶ Carole Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia, 2013), p. 1. See also, for example, Annaliese Connolly and Lisa Hopkins (eds), *Goddesses and Queens: The Iconography of Elizabeth I* (Manchester, 2007); Susan Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation* (Oxford, 1993); and Louis Montrose, *The Subject of Elizabeth: Authority, Gender and Representation* (London, 2006).

⁵⁷ See Ann McLaren, *Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth I: Queen and Commonwealth 1558-1585* (Cambridge, 1999).

this union was so contentious that it provoked the Protestant Hamiltons and the earl of Moray into open rebellion. The marriage also presented a significant challenge to Elizabeth I, since Darnley's claim to the English throne was at least as strong as Mary Stuart's own. As a result, the English refused to recognise the marriage or to address Darnley by his new titles when he was created earl of Ross and then proclaimed king of Scotland. Contemporary experience was a pointed contrast with the 'most sweete and happy bed' portrayed in a later English broadside ballad.⁵⁸ Although she was pregnant only months after the wedding, Mary and Darnley's relationship quickly cooled and, despite his outward appearance of Catholicism, Darnley seems to have enlisted Protestant support for a plot to seize power from his wife in March 1566.

This controversy was illustrated in only the sketchiest of terms by an English ballad published shortly after Darnley's eventual murder, in which, of course, Mary Queen of Scots herself was implicated. *A dolefull ditty, or sorowfull sonet of the Lord Darly* struck a somewhat ambivalent attitude to the Scottish king.⁵⁹ Although it described him as 'Noble Lord Darly' and lauded his virtuous rule over Scotland, the balladeer noted that he was led astray by the promise of wealth and power. When all was said and done, 'He did buy Gold to deare'. This contrasts with the many epitaph ballads printed in the late Tudor period, which eulogised their subjects and presented them as exemplary individuals worthy of emulation. Mary herself received no more enthusiastic treatment from the balladeer. She enticed Darnley to Scotland, then

⁵⁸ *An excellent new ballad, shewing the petigree of our royall King Iames...* (London: [1603]), STC (2nd ed.) / 14423.

⁵⁹ H. C., *A dolefull ditty, or sorowfull sonet of the Lord Darly...* (London, 1579), STC (2nd ed.) / 4270.5.

flaunted her relationship with her chamberlain, David Rizzio: the whole court knew that she 'preferde him wondrous well'. Although the ballad stopped short of suggesting that Darnley delivered the fatal blow, he was clearly involved in the chamberlain's stabbing in March 1566. As a result, the queen made 'a vowe and oth certayne... / That in a tweluemonth and a day, / She would not pleased be'. But before the couple could be reconciled, Darnley was killed the following year. These, however, were English ballads talking about a foreign queen. They never reached the heights of vitriol displayed by the slew of Scottish broadside ballads by Robert Sempill about Mary Queen of Scots. Little is known of Sempill's life, but it seems that he was responsible for entertainments at the Scottish court between 1567 and 1572, during the period when relations between Mary Stuart and her lords completely broke down.⁶⁰ Once the queen's authority had been weakened, her gender became a means to demolish her reputation and popular print such as broadside ballads presented a significant weapon in the hands of her opponents. Sempill's ballads were far more acerbic than anything published in England in the mid-sixteenth century and, moreover, they directly attacked Mary Stuart on account of her gender. Albeit that the worst of them were published after the beleaguered Scottish queen had fled to England, these songs were salacious and provocative in a way that their English counterparts were not:

Than sen that bowdin bludy beist Bothwell,
Hes trayterously in myrk put downe our King:
His wyfe the Quene syne rauyssit to him sell,

⁶⁰ Priscilla J. Bawcutt, 'Sempill, Robert (d. 1595?)' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 September 2004), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/25075> [accessed 2 March 2020].

In fylthie lust throw cullour of wedding.
Thocht sho be witcheit wald in ruttery ring,
The Nobillis sould nether of thir endure,
That lowne to leif, nor hir to be his huire.⁶¹

The author seems not to have feared punishment for his seditious song, but the explanation is simple. Bothwell and Mary had been eclipsed. The nobles took up arms against Bothwell when he side-lined them from government. Mary eventually surrendered while Bothwell went into exile. Deposed in the summer of 1567, Mary was unable to regain her throne despite escaping from Lochleven Castle the following year and uniting with some of her supporters. Fatefully, she fled across the English border, leaving the field open for the earl of Moray to consolidate his position as regent to the infant Prince James and for Sempill to blacken Mary's reputation in popular print. Sempill's printer, Robert Lekpreuik, was the official printer to the Scottish court during James VI's regency, while Scottish print was licensed by the

⁶¹ Robert Sempill, *Ane deeclaratioun [sic] of the Lordis iust quarrell* (Edinburgh: 1567), STC (2nd ed.)

/ 22192. The verse translates into English as follows:

Then afterwards that puffed up bloody beast Bothwell,
Has traitorously in darkness put down our King:
His wife the Queen next ravished to himself,
In filthy lust through pretence of wedding.
That she bewitched ruled in lusty reign,
That nobles should nether of them endure,
That rogue to trust, nor her to be his whore

There were no romantic overtones to the word 'ravished' in this case: it meant 'raped'.

Privy Council.⁶² Rather than taking the standard line of attacking the monarch's counsellors, therefore, Sempill was safe to attack the queen directly. Her own dynastic legitimacy, moreover, was undermined by her sexual behaviour, which put the future of the Scottish throne in danger.

These were not popular ballads analogous to those published in England about Mary I and Elizabeth I. Instead, they were produced by the elite to discredit a failing queen in the eyes of her subjects. The songs doggedly pursued one political objective, and Tricia McElroy has pointed out that Sempill and Lekpreuk 'accomplished something remarkable: they took the broadside ballad and, by exploiting its popular form and capacities for entertainment, moral instruction, and religious debate, transformed it into a viable political tool'. Learning from the example of German Reformation propaganda, or the popular political and religious propaganda deployed by the duke of Somerset against Scotland during Edward VI's minority, these ballads were intended to persuade the Scottish nobles and commons to support the King's Party.⁶³ So whereas Mary I was praised for her feminine virtues, Mary Queen of Scots was derided for her feminine flaws by the men running the Scottish regime. Sempill's language is particularly misogynistic.⁶⁴ His complaints

⁶² Alastair J. Mann, "A Mongrel of Early Modern Copyright": Scotland in European Perspective' in Ronan Deazley, Martin Kretschmer and Lionel Bently (eds.), *Privilege and Property: Essays on the History of Copyright* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 56.

⁶³ Tricia A. McElroy, 'Imagining the "Scottis Natioun": Populism and Propaganda in Scottish Satirical Broadside', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 49/4 (2007), pp. 326.

⁶⁴ In her examination of the problems caused by Mary Queen of Scots' gender and religious beliefs in a Protestant, patriarchal society, Kristen P. Walton notes the anti-gynarchical tone of the King's Party's attacks on the deposed queen, commenting that 'According to the [regent Moray's 1568] proclamation, Mary failed in every aspect of being a female and of being a queen, and, as a result,

about Mary Stuart were related to her gender and reflected contemporary views about women's inability to control their desires. According to Sempill, Mary Stuart was lecherous; she was a ruffians' whore; she had been bewitched by Bothwell, or, given the contemporary appearance of drawings depicting her as a mermaid, perhaps she had bewitched him. She 'cuplit with ane wyffes husband [coupled with any wife's husband]', giving in to the lust for which women were renowned. Sempill's ballad likewise accused Bothwell of murder and rape. The only two English ballads to come close to this aggressive style in challenging Mary Tudor's authority were the anonymous *A tragicall blast of the Papisticall trompette* and William Kethe's verses paraphrasing Christopher Goodman's *How superior powers ought to be obeyd of their subjects*.⁶⁵ Neither of these were broadside ballads, however, as both appeared after prose texts in pamphlets. Although there was a strong culture of reading aloud in the period, pamphlets would still have been less accessible to the illiterate than the single-sheet songs which were particularly easy to learn by ear due to their rhyming texts and memorable tunes.⁶⁶ Even so, *A tragicall blast of the Papisticall trompette*

the Scots should flee from her protection and join the side of the king': Kristen P. Walton, *Catholic Queen, Protestant Patriarchy: Mary Queen of Scots and the Politics of Gender and Religion* (London, 2006), p. 152. The Sempill ballads echo this tone.

⁶⁵ John Bradford, *The cople of a letter, sent by Iohn Bradforth to the Erles of Arundel, Darbie, Shrewsburye, and Penbroke,...* ([Wesel?], 1556), STC (2nd ed.) / 3504.5; Hyde, *Singing the News*, 174; Christopher Goodman, *How superior powers ought to be obeyd of their subjects...* (Geneva, 1558), STC (2nd ed.) / 12020.

⁶⁶ See, for example, Jennifer Richards, *Voices and Books in the English Renaissance: A New History of Reading* (Oxford, 2019) and Jennifer Richards and Richard Wistreich, eds., *Voicing Text 1500-1700*, special issue of *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 82 (2019).

reserved its attacks for Philip rather than Mary I, while we might note that Kethe's venomous verses were, like Sempill's, written by a Scotsman.

Here we can see that, whereas the Scottish ballads were vicious pen portraits of their former queen, English ballads on Mary Queen of Scots took a much less aggressive line. Mary Stuart herself, of course, was implicated in Darnley's murder, it being widely believed in both Scotland and England that she had acted in co-operation with 'Bothwell that bludy Bouchour bauld [bloody butcher bold]'.⁶⁷ By 1577, Holinshed's *Chronicle* was describing how Mary Stuart's marriage to Bothwell shortly afterwards did nothing to diminish rumours that she had been 'privie to the murder'.⁶⁸ The author of *A dolefull ditty, or sorowfull sonet of the Lord Darly*, merely commented, however, that 'Three wights conspired the kings death / Whose names are all well knowne', rather than naming Mary, Bothwell and the third suspected conspirator, Archibald Douglas, parson of Douglas. Only a few years later, Sempill's ballad on the regent earl of Moray's death was translated into English and printed in London by John Awdelay, but no translations of these acerbic anti-Queen of Scots songs seem to have been made.⁶⁹ Perhaps this relates to Elizabeth's famous

⁶⁷ Robert Sempill, *The Kingis Complaint* (Edinburgh, 1567), STC (2nd ed.) / 22200.

⁶⁸ Ralph Holinshed, *The firste [laste] volume of the chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande...* (London 1577), STC (2nd ed.) / 13568b, p. 504.

⁶⁹ Robert Sempill, *Regentis tragedie ending with ane exhortatoun* (Edinburgh, 1570), STC (2nd ed.) / 22205; Robert Sempill, *The tragical end and death of the Lord James Regent of Scotland...* (London, 1570), STC (2nd ed.) / 22210. Intriguingly, John Sampson registered two ballads on the regent's death with the Stationers' Company, but the extant ballad was printed by John Awdelay: see Arber (ed.), *Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers*, I, p. 413. It is also worth noting that Sempill's ballads survive precisely because they were of interest to the English crown: they are preserved in the State Papers.

reluctance to attack her cousin and rival: no-one dared go too far in demonising the putative heir to the English throne, even if she were Catholic in a Protestant land.⁷⁰ It would set a dangerous precedent.

VI

When James Stuart acceded the English throne in 1603, he was the first adult male to inherit the throne in more than fifty years. The popular songs which greeted the new king addressed a different problem to that which had faced his mother and Mary I. Not only did James's accession mark a new era as the Tudor dynasty came to an end, but he was a foreigner to boot. In his case, several ballads helped to ease the transition from the house of Tudor to that of the Stuarts by combining lamentation with welcome. According to *A mournfull Dittie, entituled Elizabeths losse*, the loss of a beloved queen who was 'sprung from that famous King, / King Henry the eight' was eased by James's accession. His arrival, it was hoped, would herald a reign 'more prosperous here on earth / Then was the reign / of late Elizabeth'.⁷¹ Whereas the textual emphasis in *A mournfull Dittie* was on grief for Elizabeth's death, *A new song to the great comfort and rejoycing of all true English harts* switched its weight to words of welcome tempered with regret for Elizabeth's passing.⁷² The melody for *A new song* was 'England's Pride is Gone', better known as 'Welladay'. This was

⁷⁰ See also Amy Blakeway, "'Newes from Scotland" in England, 1559–1602', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 79/4 (2016), pp. 533-559.

⁷¹ *A mournfull Dittie, entituled Elizabeths losse, together with a welcome for King James* (1603), STC (2nd ed.) / 7589.

⁷² *A new song to the great comfort and rejoycing of all true English harts, at our most Gracious King JAMES his Proclamation...* (1603), STC (2nd ed.) / 14426.7.

already a well-known tune. It had been used as far back as 1569 by William Elderton for a song about the rebellion by the earls of Northumberland and Westmorland, but it was probably most famous as the melody for *A Lamentable DITTY made on the Death of ROBERT DEVERUX, Earl of ESSEX*.⁷³ Although no tune title is given for *A mournfull Dittie*, it was probably also set to the same tune. Indeed, the same melody was also used for a song about the execution of Sir Walter Raleigh, suggesting that 'Welladay' became associated with songs relating to Elizabeth I, especially in relation to death.⁷⁴

Meanwhile, the anonymous balladeer who wrote *An excellent new ballad, shewing the petigree of our royall King James ... To the tune of, Gallants all come mourne with me* went to great pains to show that James's heritage was English, despite the fact that he came from Scotland.⁷⁵ There is no extant tune called 'Gallants all come mourne with me', but the English Folk Dance and Song Society's Roud Folksong and Broadside Index reveals a possible candidate. An eighteenth-century broadside ballad called 'The Merchant's Son and the Beggar-wench of Hull' opened with the line 'You gallants all I pray draw near'.⁷⁶ This line has the same number of syllables as *the petigree of our royall King James*, but with an anacrusis.

⁷³ William Elderton, *A ballad intituled, A newe well a daye/ as playne maister papist, as Donstable waye...* (London, 1570), STC (2nd ed.) / 7553.

⁷⁴ *Sir Walter Rauleigh his lamentation: Who was beheaded in the old Pallace at Westminster the 29. of October. 1618* (London, 1618), STC (2nd ed.), 20655.

⁷⁵ *An excellent new ballad, shewing the petigree of our royall King James.*

⁷⁶ English Folk Dance and Song Society Roud Indexes, <http://www.vwml.org/search/search-roud-indexes> [accessed 26 October 2016]; *The merchant's son, and the beggar-wench of Hull* (1727), Early English books tract supplement interim guide / C.20.f.9[774]. There are, in fact, fewer ballads which begin with similar 'come all ye's' than one might imagine.

Thomas Ritson associated 'The Merchant's Son' with a tune called 'The Friar in the Well'. This melody seems to date back at least as early as 1522, when it was referenced in John Skelton's *Colyn Cloute*. It was still current in 1602 when it was mentioned in Anthony Mundy's Robin Hood play, *Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntington*. By the late seventeenth century, the melody had undergone another name change, being known also as 'The Maid Peept out at the Window'.⁷⁷ Although it is by no means an unequivocal identification, the melody is a perfect fit for *the petigree of our royall King James* (Figure 2).

The image shows a musical score for a ballad. It consists of five staves of music in a 6/8 time signature, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes, with line numbers 4, 8, 12, and 14 indicating the start of new lines of text. The lyrics describe the lineage of King James I, starting with a daughter named Margaret who marries the Earl of Lennox, and their son, Henry, who becomes King James I. The ballad concludes with a refrain: 'Tar - ra - ra - ra - ra, tar - ra - ra - ra - ra - ra, ho - ne.'

4 By her he had a Daugh-ter bright, cald by the name of
By whose most sweete and hap - py bed, our sor - rowes now are

8 Mar - ga - ret, To the Earle of Len - ox wed-ded was shee, And bore a son named
quight stroke dead For to Lord Dar - lie she did bring olde Brit-taines hope and

12 Hen - rie, The which was call - ed the Lord Darn-lie, and af - ter wed-ded the
James our king As next of Hen - ries line, 'bove oth - er com - ing both by

14 Scot - tish Ma - rie, O Ho - ne, ho - ni - no - ne - ro,
fath - er and mother.

Tar - ra - ra - ra - ra, tar - ra - ra - ra - ra - ra, ho - ne.

Figure 2: Verses 14 and 15 of *An excellent new ballad, shewing the petigree of our royall King James the first of that name in England. To the tune of, Gallants all come mourne with me* ('The Friar in the Well').

⁷⁷ Simpson, *British Broadside Ballad*, 240-242; William Chappell, *Popular Music of the Olden Times*, I (London, 1855), pp. 273-4.

As the first Stuart king of England, James had to be introduced to his new subjects in the same way that Mary I had been as the first queen regnant. Judith Richards saw this ballad as evidence of the way in which James VI of Scotland was 'domesticated into the English context within the traditional Tudor genealogy'.⁷⁸ The song traced James's ancestry back as far as Edward III:

O let my Pen your eares inchaunt,
to looke unto brave John a Gaunt,
Of Edward the third fourth son was hee,
from whom we draw this petigree:
For he behinde him issue left,
John the Earle of Somerset.
O Hone, honinonero. &c.

Which likewise left a sonne behinde,
called John: of a noble minde:
The which was Duke of Somerset,
so made, for his atchivements great.
The which did win him great renowne:
but heere I leave to set them downe,
O Hone, honinonero. &c.

Which Duke had issue gentle Reader,

⁷⁸ Judith M. Richards, 'The English Accession of James VI: 'National' Identity, Gender and the Personal Monarchy of England', *English Historical Review*, 117 (2002), p. 526.

Margarete, matcht with Edmond Tudor
Which Edmond Tudor had a sonne,
Called Henrie Earle of Richmon:
Which Henrie after Richards death,
espoused faire Elizabeth.
O Hone, honinonero. &c.

This Elizabeth of famous worth,
was daughter to K. Edward the fourth:
And thus by their predestinate bed,
they joynd the White-rose and the Red:
To Englands great unspeakable joy,
And to our enemies sore anoy.
O Hone, honinonero. &c.

The ballad then diverted to look at the lineage of James's father, Henry, Lord Darnley. As dowager queen of Scotland, Henry VIII's sister Margaret had married the earl of Douglas:

By her he had a Daughter bright,
cald by the name of Margaret,
To the Earle of Lenox wedded was shee,
and bore a Sonne named Henrie,
The which was called the Lord Darlie,
and after wedded the Scottish Marie,

*O Hone, honinonero, tarrararara,
tarrarararara hone.*

By whose most sweete and happy bed,
our sorrowes now are quight stroke dead
For to Lord Darlie she did bring
olde Brittaines hope, & James our king
As next of Henries line, 'bove other,
comming both by father and mother.

*O Hone, honinonero, tarrararara,
tarrarararara hone.*

We might also note, however, that the ballad's use of the word Tudor was in itself significant. As C. S. L. Davies pointed out, the Tudors rarely used the word themselves. He commented that 'Far from serving as the proud title of a "dynasty", let alone as the self-description of an "age", the word "Tudor" had little resonance in the sixteenth century'.⁷⁹ Davies identified only a small number of occasions on which Elizabethan propaganda did mention the Tudor family name. In his examples, Elizabeth's lineage was traced as far back as John of Gaunt. Some Tudors, however, were more important genealogically-speaking than others. Although it was the Welsh gentleman Owen Tudor who married the widowed queen of Henry V and thus created the Tudor claim to the throne, as a serving-man rather than a noble he remained something of an embarrassment to the family. It was Edmund Tudor, earl of Richmond and half-brother to King Henry VI, who was mentioned instead. Edmund Tudor's credibility was, if not impeccable, at least undisputed by the middle

⁷⁹ C. S. L. Davies, 'Tudor: What's in a Name?' *History*, 97 (2012), p. 31.

of the sixteenth century. He had been officially recognised by the king and parliament as Henry's legitimate brother in 1453. It seems that *the petigree of our royall King James* also mentioned only Edmund Tudor because it enhanced James's genealogical significance without bringing in to question his ancestry. The ballad also took a familiar line when it whitewashed English attitudes to the marriage between Henry, Lord Darnley, and Mary Queen of Scots. It would not do to remind the king and his new subjects of the scandal which had resulted from the union.

VII

Broadside ballads such as the ones studied here give us an insight into popular opinions and attitudes, even if they cannot speak (or sing) directly for the people. It is easy to see why balladeers might choose to highlight Mary I's dynastic legitimacy, not least because she herself had made it central to her proclamation as queen, but the ballads published on the accession of Elizabeth I and James I reiterate this attention to lineage, suggesting that it was important to rehearse the monarch's claim to the throne.

Nevertheless, popular ballads show that although dynastic right was at the heart of the responses to a new monarch's accession, gender provides a more complicated picture. As the first reigning queen, the case of Mary I was special. Her gender was something that needed acknowledgement rather than being swept under the carpet. By tackling the issue in songs such as those by William Forrest and John Heywood, English balladeers perhaps helped in their own small way to prepare for Elizabeth's smooth, unimpeded accession five years later. On the other hand, the Scottish ballads demonstrate that when a queen failed, her femininity could be weaponised against her. These deceptively simple songs combined a quick

turnaround with entertainment value, putting them in a position to reflect and interpret the difficult situations thrown up by the patriarchal system.