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Imported Popular Song in *The Humorous Magistrate*: ‘The Noble Acts of Arthur of the Round Table’ and ‘Come heere, Lady Muses’

Near the end of act 2 in the Osborne version of *The Humorous Magistrate*, the aging widow Mistress Mumble entertains a visit from a suitor, Strife the lawyer. At this point in the play, it is established that the widow is landed and that Strife’s motivations are suspect. As she prepares for the encounter, Mistress Mumble sings a line from a popular ballad. Here is the scene:

GODFRY Mr. Strife the lawyer is come to see you forsooth.

MISTRESS MUMBLE Bid him come in Godfry, bid him come in.*Exit* GODFRY.
but do not tell him I go with a staff, *throws the staff away*
a handkercher girl, me thinks my nose drops, and my lips are
clammy.

*She wipes her mouth [and] sings the next line
to the tune of K. Arthur*

Now lawyer I desire thee do thy worst.¹

Mistress Mumble quotes from ‘The Noble Acts of Arthur of the Round Table’, printed in Thomas Deloney’s *The Garland of Good Will*, a collection of thirty songs of various lengths, many of which offer quasi-historical, legendary subject matter.² The song was also printed as a broadside³ and both forms were notably popular during the seventeenth century.⁴ References to ‘The Noble Acts’ occur in several plays including Marston’s *The Malcontent* (1604), Heywood’s *Rape of Lucrece* (1608), Fletcher’s *Monsieur Thomas* (1639), and Beaumont and Fletcher’s *The Little French Lawyer* (1647).⁵ More famously, Falstaff comically misquotes the song in *2 Henry IV*, 2.4:

Enter FALSTAFF [singing]

FALSTAFF When Arthur was first in court —
 Empty the Jordan —
 And was a worthy king —
 How now, Mistress Doll?⁶

The ‘jordan’ is the chamber pot and its interpolation here between lines of this famous chivalric ballad underlines the notion that, as a knight, Falstaff is far from exemplary.

Mistress Mumble’s line ‘I desire thee do thy worst’ is found in every extant edition of ‘The Noble Acts’ and is spoken by Sir Lancelot as he duels to free ‘threescore knights’ imprisoned by ‘Tarquin’. Here is an excerpt:

They wounded were, and bled full sore,
 For every breath they both did stand,
 And leaning on their swords awhile,
 Quoth Tarquin, Hold thy hand!

And tell me what I shall ask:
 Say on, quoth Lancelot though;
 Thou art, quoth Tarquin, the best knight
 That I ever did know,

And like a knight that I did hate;
 So that thou be not he,
 I will deliver all the rest
 And eke accord with thee.

...

His Name is Sir Lancelot du Lake,
 He slew my Brother dear;
 Him I suspect of all the rest,
 I would I had him here:

Thy wish thou hast, but yet unknown,
 I am Lancelot du Lake,
 Now Knight of Arthurs Table Round,
 King Hauds Son of Suewake:

And **I desire thee, do thy worst,**
 Ho, ho, quoth Tarquin tho,

One of us two shall end our lives
 Before that we do go:⁷

Once the source is recognized, one finds Mistress Mumble comically portraying the wooing Strife as the dreaded, insatiable Tarquin seeking to vanquish her.⁸

It is also possible to legitimately supply music for Mistress Mumble's line. All extant printings of the 'The Noble Acts' include the direction 'to the tune of Flying Fame' and while music under that title is lost, Claude Simpson argues that the 'Flying Fame' tune is probably the antecedent of another: 'Chevy Chase'.⁹ Simpson believes the earliest extant version of *this* tune to be 'an untitled air and bass, coupled with the opening stanza of the "Chevy Chase" ballad ... c. 1650–1675'.¹⁰ Below is the tune in its entirety (figure 1). As Mistress Mumble's line is the first of a stanza, it is not difficult to assemble a setting (figure 2).



Fig. 1. Earliest extant version of 'Flying Fame' / 'Chevy Chase', c 1650-75.

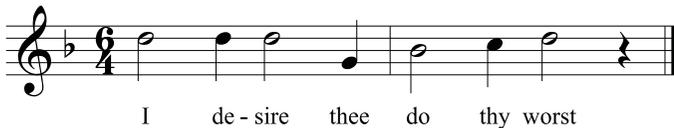


Fig. 2. Conjectural setting of Mistress Mumble's line in *The Humorous Magistrate*

'The clean contrary way': 'Come heare, Lady Muses'

Just after the lovers have separated in the woods in act 4 of *The Humorous Magistrate*, the King of the Shepherds and his retinue enter for the first time and prepare for a celebration. Shortly thereafter, a company of fiddlers enters with an offer of musical services prompting the following exchange:

KING How dare you trauell that are rogues by th' statute!

MUSICIAN A very good new song, if you'l heare it.

KING Songs! no I thank you, we i'the cuntrye take songs to be parlous things, they say such as you haue bene whipt for songs

MUSICIAN That was for singing the cleane contrarye way; we will not do so, but you shall heare a staff or two on liking.¹¹

The musician's reference to 'the cleane contrarye way' alludes to an enormously popular ballad, the first line of which reads, 'Come heare, Lady Muses, and help mee to sing'.¹² The song targets George Villiers, duke of Buckingham (1592–1628), the controversial favourite of Charles I. Below are the first two stanzas:

Come heare, Lady Muses, and help mee to sing,
Come love mee whereas I lay
Of a Duke that deserves to bee made a King
The cleane contrary way
O the cleane contrary way.

Our Buckingham Duke is the man that I meane
Come love mee &c
On his shoulders the weale of the Kingdome doth leane
The cleane contrary &c
O the cleane contrary &c¹³

In 1627, three musicians were convicted at the court of the star chamber for singing libellous songs against Villiers, one of which contained the refrain 'the clean contrary way' and was almost certainly 'Come heare, Lady Muses'. The men, known to us now by their surnames, Moseley, Markehall, and Greene, were consequently whipped and pilloried, first in Cheapside and then in their hometowns of Ware and Staines, the idea being to send a far-reaching policy message.¹⁴

Typical of the contemporary ballad tradition, ‘Come heare Lady Muses’ adapts an older work currently lost.¹⁵ It has been argued elsewhere¹⁶ that a fragment or at least an echo of the antecedent appears in Webster and Dekker’s *Northward Ho* (1607), in which the adulterous Kate declares of her husband,

I’ll make him do a thing worse than this:
Come loue me where I lay.
...
He shall father a child is none of his,
O, the clean contrary way.¹⁷

Alistair Bellany suggests a source for Kate’s lines:

A complete version of the song was printed and reprinted in a number of post-Restoration miscellanies under the titles of “The Tyrannical Wife” or “The Old-Man and Young Wife.” The song begins, “There was an Old-man and a Jolly Old-man, / Come love me where as I lay, / And he would marry a fair young Wife / The clean contrary way.” The lyric then continues to describe an upside-down marriage, in which the wife bullies the husband, neglects her housework—making him “go wash and wring” — and finally cuckolds him, making him father of a child that “was none of his.”¹⁸

Bellany argues further that ‘Come heare, Lady Muses’ is probably an adaptation of this song, ‘reinforc[ing] a number of the themes of its attack on Buckingham, in particular the complaint against the inversion of the proper socio-political order’.¹⁹

While it is possible that ‘The Tyrannical Wife’²⁰ is somehow part of its past, ‘Come heare, Lady Muses’ evidently possesses a fundamentally different pedigree. I say this because the particular verbal function of its refrain ‘the clean contrary way’ — arguably the principal attraction of ‘Come heare, Lady Muses’ — is not present in ‘The Tyrannical Wife’. For comparison, here are the first two stanzas of ‘The Tyrannical Wife’:

There was an Old-man and a Jolly Old-man
Come love me where as I lay,
And he would marry a fair young Wife
The clean contrary way.

He Woo'd her to wed, to wed
 Come love me where as I lay,
 And after she kick't him out of the bed
 The clean contrary way.²¹

In this ballad, the 'clean contrary way' line communicates to the reader that the actions of the song's characters are contrary to contemporary decorum. Reading 'Come heare, Lady Muses', however, one finds the 'clean contrary way' refrain operating entirely differently. Here again is stanza two:

Our Buckingham Duke is the man that I meane
 Come love mee &c
 On his shoulders the weale of the Kingdome doth leane
 The cleane contrary &c
 O the cleane contrary &c²²

Here, the refrain introduces the literary trope of irony, or as George Puttenham nicknamed *ironia*, 'the Dry Mock'.²³ Put simply, *this* use of 'the clean contrary way' creates a 'surprise reversal', an interposing instruction to the reader/listener that he/she should infer the exact opposite to what the preceding lines appear to mean. This distinction is important because, as I will show, it links 'Come heare, Lady Muses' solidly with a branch of song tradition quite separate from ballads like 'The Tyrannical Wife'.

'Egus Contrarium Verum Est'

The motif of appending a 'clean contrary way'-type refrain to words of praise — thus making them words of censure — is very old. The earliest evidence of the practice in English is a poem entitled 'Of All Creatures Women Be Best / *Egus Contrarium Verum Est*' (Latin for 'the clean contrary way') contained in a manuscript dated c 1550. This manuscript was lost but not before it was edited and published in the nineteenth century by the Percy Society.²⁴ Here are the first two of ten stanzas:

In every place ye may well se,
 That women be trew as tyrtyll on tre;
 Not liberal in langag, but ever in secrete,
 And gret joy among them is fore to be.

The stedfastness off women wil never be don,
 So gentyll, so curtes thei everichon,
 Mek as a lambe, styll as a stone;
 Crockyd ne crabbyd fynd ye none.²⁵

Importantly, the song's title was understood by insiders to function implicitly as a refrain, 'secretly' altering the meaning of the stanzas below. This 'quiet burden', as J.W. Ebsworth calls it, was designed

to guard against destruction at the hands of the shrieking sisterhood, in case they found it, by the poem being written in affected laudation of them: a golden key to the mystery having been wisely concealed in Latin at the beginning. Latin was supposed to be unintelligible to the petticoated clamjamfrie but it warned the initiated that every verse was to be understood *the clean contrary way*.²⁶

Hence, while it may have been influenced by other works, 'Come heare, Lady Muses' evidently descends directly from a specific and enduring song tradition, one that in fact continues long after the time of George Villiers.²⁷ *Songs and Other Poems by Alex. Brome* (1664), for instance, contains a republican song dated 1643 entitled, 'The Saint's Encouragement', the first stanza of which reads,

Fight on brave Souldiers for the Cause,
 Fear not the Cavaliers,
 Their threatnings are, as senseless as
 Our jealousies and fears.
 'Tis you must perfect this great Work,
 And all Malignants slay,
 You must bring back the King again
 The clean contrary way.²⁸

'Animadversions on the Lady Marquess ...', a post-Restoration ballad with a more specific political target, appears to be an even clearer echo of 'Come heare, Lady Muses':

The Lady Marquess and her gang,
 are most in favour seen;
 With Coach and Men on them to tend,
 as if she were a Queen:
 But if she be, 'tis of the Sluts,

for all her fine Array,
Whose Honour reaches to the Skies,
But the clear contrary way.²⁹

The fiddlers in *The Humorous Magistrate* are, to a significant degree, representations of infamous characters from an infamous ‘real-world’ story. The song they mention is part of a long tradition of employing a particularly clever and evocative verbal trick in a work of socio-political censure. It is also evident from the number of similar songs subsequent to ‘Come heare, Lady Muses’ that the harsh and very public punishments of the real fiddlers inadvertently brought the song’s compelling structure to the attention of numerous authors who found in it particular inspiration.

Readers may notice the absence of discussion regarding the song performed by the King of the Shepherds, Tib, Madge and the rest (act 4). Presently there is no evidence of the song existing anywhere beyond *The Humorous Magistrate*. This lack of evidence along with its idiosyncratic metrics suggest the song is probably original. For a conjectural setting for the song provided by Dr Ross Duffin, see figure 3.³⁰

‘The clean contrary way’, *The Humorous Magistrate*, and *The Emperor’s Favourite*

Understanding the particular structure and operation of ‘Come heare, Lady Muses’ and its ‘clean contrary’ refrain illuminates an intriguing connection between *The Humorous Magistrate* and one of the three manuscript plays discovered with the Arbury Hall version of the play in the library of the Newdigate family.³¹ In the recent Malone Society reprint of *The Emperor’s Favourite*, Siobhan Keenan notes,

A reference to acting ‘the cleane contrary way’ (line 3017) in the opening scene of Act 5 between Datus and Pronus³² also suggests that the play dates from the late 1620s, when the same words featured as a refrain in an anti-Buckingham ballad known to be circulating in late spring and early summer of 1627. ‘Come heare, Lady Muses, and help me to sing’.³³

Keenan’s suspicions are ultimately correct, but in a far more substantial way than her note suggests. The presence of ‘the clean contrary way’, by itself, does not guarantee a link to popular song; the phrase as an idiom is an

The image shows a musical score for a song. It consists of six staves of music in a single system, with lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics are: "While harmless shep-heards watch their flocks In mirth and jol - li - tye The sound - ing ec - choes of the rocks In - crease their har - mo - ny No trou - bleous or tor - ment - ing care Can e - clipse the gen - iall day Ap - poin - ted to re - ceave the faire In - vi - ters of their play. Tib, Madge, Bess, Kit, Tib and Kate Las - ses of the downe Ev - ery one of which Sticks a flower, and takes a stitch In the king of shep-heards crowne." The music is in a simple, folk-like style with a clear melody and accompaniment.

While harmless shepherds watch their flocks
 In mirth and jollitye
 The sounding echoes of the rocks
 Increase their harmony
 No troubleous or tormenting care
 Can eclipse the geniall day
 Appointed to receive the faire
 Inviters of their play.
 Tib, Madge, Bess, Kit, Tib and Kate

*Lasses of the downe
 Every one of which
 Sticks a flower, and takes a stitch
 In the king of shepherds crowne.*

We need no Ladies of the Court,
 That laugh their Lords to scorne
 Who to afford their servants sport
 Make their husbands wear the horne.
 Our homely wenches of the downes
 Are more delightsome farr,
 And wear their comely pleated gownes
 More hanesom, and these are
 Tib, Madge, Bess, Kit, Tib and Kate

We need no city tradesmens wives
 They looke too much in glasses,
 And lead themselves such Ladys lives
 They make their husbands asses.
 Our sweet breath'd wenches looking glass
 Is a cleare open spring,
 Where every one surveyes her face
 While her sweet heart doth sit and sing
 Tib, Madge, Bess, Kit, Tib and Kate

Fig. 3. Conjectural Setting of “While harmless shepherds” to the tune of “Hey ho, for a husband” By Ross W. Duffin

English Renaissance commonplace.³⁴ A far more stable and elaborate connection to ‘Come heare, lady muses’ in *The Emperor’s Favourite* emerges upon close reading the exchange between Datus and Commodus just before Datus’s noted reference. As I will show, the notorious verbal operation of ‘the clean contrary way’ in ‘Come heare, Lady Muses’ is signified repeatedly during this exchange through a combination of words and gesture, as signalled by stage directions.

Act 5 opens with Datus, Nero's 'ex' master of the revels, soliciting Commodus to ask his patron Crispinus (the Roman Buckingham) to aid in Datus's return to Nero's favour. Commodus, remembering all too well how Datus had publicly satirized his lord,³⁵ begins the following exchange:

COMMODUS My obligacion to my Lord will not suffer me to heare him abus'd & if you stand vpon these terms farewell I can assure you Ile speake to my Lord for you, but it shall be **this way, this way**

Points ouer his shoulder.

DATUS Nay doe not vse thy authority tyrannically *Commodus*. Come come all friends as I am a *Roscius* I honour thy Lord.

COMMODUS I will let him know you doe **but thus**

Points vt sup.

Nay his noble Lordship shall command me in any thing I and you'l perform his iniunctions **thus, thus**

Points &c

DATUS Still in a tone, I think this fellow is the womans son that sayd no to all questions. Theres no good to be done vpon him without abusing him.

COMMODUS you are ith' right, & you will die for greefe if you be not maisteroth' reuells. you shall be master of the reuells but it shall be this way this way.

*Points againe.*³⁶

From here, Datus replies that he will 'goe to work with [Commodus], this way / this way' (2975–6, emphasis mine) and subsequently threatens to publicly expose Commodus's humble beginnings as a horse trainer. 'You must preuale so with your Lord that I may come / in fauour again', Datus declares,

or else when you are knighted which I heare is to be done very sodaynly, Ile call you nothing but Sir Commodus Jocky, & beseech the heralds by petition to giue you no other coate but a brush & a curricombe (2991–5).

Threats continue until Commodus finally agrees:

COMMODUS Well vpon these terms I may be ouerintreated

DATUS And will you preuaile with my Lord de'say?

COMMODUS Ile doe my best.

DATUS But **not the cleane contrary way not this way** *Commodus*
(3014–18, emphasis mine).

This operation of words and what was probably a well-known gesture — similar in meaning to the present practice of crossing one's fingers when telling a lie — in the text of *The Emperor's Favourite* clearly mimics the verbal operation found in every stanza of 'Come heare, Lady Muses' — an affirmation punctuated with a 'surprise reversal'. And if the audience has failed to notice, Datus, at the last, effectively supplies what Ebsworth describes above as a 'golden key', a signal that Commodus's gestures during the exchange represent a not-so 'quiet burden': '*Ejus contrarium verum est*' or, in English, 'The clean contrary way'.

Conclusions

The incorporation of 'The Noble Acts of Arthur of the Round Table' and 'Come heare, lady Muses' into *The Humorous Magistrate* suggests a number of things about the play's author and its intended audience. First, there is every indication that the author is familiar with contemporary professional dramatic practices. When it came to importing popular song, the overwhelming trend of professional playwrights was to incorporate, for obvious reasons, the most popular and enduring specimens of the corpus; clearly this playwright follows suit. Beyond this general observation, if one accepts the arguments of T. Howard Hill³⁷ and others in this volume that *The Humorous Magistrate* and *The Emperor's Favourite* were probably written by the same author, John Newdigate III of Arbury (an avid playgoer, poet, musician, and later member of parliament³⁸), it appears that 'Come heare, Lady Muses' was something of a favourite. Beyond simply the choice to use the song in two of his plays,³⁹ its incorporation into *The Emperor's Favourite* suggests a genuine affinity with 'Come heare, Lady Muses' and in particular with its verbal operation as evidenced by the considerable effort spent converting it from song text into play action. Supporting this evidence are two manuscript copies of 'Come heare, Lady Muses' that locate the song specifically within the Newdigate circle. The first was purchased from the Newdigate family in the 1950s and is now preserved at the Brotherton Library, Leeds University.⁴⁰ The second is extant among the papers of John Newdigate's long time friend Gilbert Sheldon.⁴¹ While their provenance is still unclear, these copies nevertheless suggest that the song circulated at least within the Warwickshire social sphere, whose elite

families, as Alan Somerset, Margaret Jane Kidnie, Julie Sanders, and others argue, constituted a sizable group of cultured, educated patrons of the arts, many of them intimate with the London political and cultural scene.⁴²

Finally, it is intriguing that while both of the imported songs in *The Humorous Magistrate* were clearly popular within song culture, ‘The Noble Acts of Arthur of the Round Table’ was, as we have seen, something of an ‘old standby’ with playwrights while, beyond *The Humorous Magistrate* and *The Emperor’s Favourite*, I have yet to find clear reference to ‘Come heare, Lady Muses’ in any other play. Further, for a song as popular as ‘Come heare, Lady Muses’ appears to have been, it is also interesting that all extant versions are manuscripts rather than printings.⁴³ This, of course, suggests that in the fiercely competitive literary and theatre markets of London, where authors searched voraciously for contemporary trends to exploit, ‘Come heare, Lady Muses’, at least at the time that *The Emperor’s Favourite* was composed, was still too dangerous a song to offer explicitly to the London public. Perhaps, then, the song was just ‘cool’ enough for careful, clever display to a circle of cultured, friendly associates of similar tastes and, perhaps, similar politics. If *The Humorous Magistrate* was performed for such an audience, its author’s use of imported song appears both thoughtfully appropriate and thoughtfully daring.

Notes

I would like to extend special thanks to Dr Mary Polito and Professor David Lindley for their comments and suggestions.

- 1 Anon., *The Humorous Magistrate*, ed. Jacqueline Jenkins and Mary Polito (Manchester, 2011), 2.760–6.
- 2 The editors of the Percy Society edition (London, 1882, vii) believed the first *Garland* to have been published ‘around 1586’. While the earliest extant edition is dated 1631, Thomas Nashe mentions the collection in his *Haue With You to Saffron-Walden* (London, 1596), *Early English Books Online*, N3r. There also appears to have been a surge of interest in the Deloney’s collection in the last quarter of the seventeenth century and beyond.
- 3 Entitled ‘The Noble Acts Newly Found of Arthur of the Table Round’, it was first registered in 1603 and it is possible that Deloney imported it from an even earlier source. See entries 1951, 2107, and 2915 in Hyder Rollins, *Analytical Index to the Ballad Entries in the Stationers’ Register 1557–1709* (Hatboro, 1967). An extant

- broadside version of the ballad has been dated c 1620 and there are numerous copies of the ballad dating between 1663 and 1680 printed alongside another entitled 'The Jolly Pinder of Wakefield'. See 'The Noble Acts Newly Found, of Arthur of the Table Round' (London, c 1620), *EEBO* and, for example, 'The Jolly Pinder of Wakefield' (London, c 1663–1674), *EEBO*.
- 4 Broadside printings are listed in note 3. For estimates of the first edition of *The Garland*, see note 2. There are currently five extant editions of *The Garland* from three different printers before 1700. Non-dramatic incorporations include a five-stanza parody of the ballad beginning 'When *James* in Scotland first began' with the direction 'To the tune of When Arthur first in Court Began' found in 'R.P.', *Choyce Drollery, Songs & Sonnets* (London, 1656), *EEBO*, 70–2.
 - 5 See John Marston, *The Malcontent* (London, 1604), *EEBO*, Dv. There are at least five printings of Heywood's *Lucrece* between 1608 and 1638, all of which contain the reference. See, for example, Thomas Heywood, *The Rape of Lucrece* (London, 1614), *EEBO*, Cv. See John Fletcher, *Monsieur Thomas* (c 1611) (London, 1639), *EEBO*, I2r. Lastly, see Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *The Little French Lawyer* (c 1619), in *Comedies and Tragedies Written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher* (London, 1647), *EEBO*, 58.
 - 6 See *The Second Part of Henrie the Fourth* (London, 1600), *EEBO*, D3r and *Mr. VVilliam Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies*, (London, 1623), 82.
 - 7 Emphasis added. For the rest of the ballad, see Thomas Deloney, *The Garland of Good Will* (London, 1678), *EEBO*, C6r–8v. It is likely that the writer of *The Humorous Magistrate* imported Mistress Mumble's snatch of song from Deloney's *Garland* and not from a broadside ballad. This is because, in all extant broadside printings of the song, the line reads 'I *defie* thee, do thy worst' rather than 'I desire thee', the version found in all but one of the numerous printings of *The Garland*. Admittedly, the vast majority of extant copies of Deloney's collection are dated 1678 or later, yet it is intriguing to note that the only extant copy printed near the time of *The Humorous Magistrate* is the 1631 printing mentioned earlier which contains the phrase, 'I defie thee'. It appears then that 'I defie' changes to 'I desire' in *The Garland* sometime after this date, which subsequently suggests that the playwright was incorporating the ballad into his play sometime after 1631.
 - 8 It is also intriguing to note that Sextus Tarquinius, son of Tarquin king of Rome, raped Lucretia, the wife of a Roman aristocrat in 509 BC. Lucretia's subsequent suicide initiated a revolt against the Tarquins and the founding of the Roman republic. The story is described in Ovid's *Fasti* (trans. John Gower [Cambridge, 1640], 42–6) and Livy's history of Rome (trans. Philemon Holland [London, 1600], 40–2). It is

- also the subject of a Jacobean tragedy by Thomas Heywood entitled *The Rape of Lucrece* (London, 1607) and, of course, the poem by Shakespeare (London, 1594).
- 9 'We may conclude either that the older tune virtually died with the seventeenth century or that the great popularity of the "Chevy Chase" ballad produced a new name for the tune which gradually displaced the old name. The latter seems more probable'. Claude Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad and Its Music* (New Jersey, 1966), 98–9.
- 10 'Edinburgh University Library ms Dc.1.69, f 113 (reversed)'. See Simpson, *British Broadside Ballad*, 96.
- 11 Jenkins and Polito, *The Humorous Magistrate*, 4.1444–52.
- 12 See Jean-Sébastien Windle and Mary Polito, "You see the times are dangerous": The Political and Theatrical Situation of *The Humorous Magistrate* (1637)', *Early Theatre* 12.1 (2009), 93–118; see also Siobhan Keenan, 'Introduction', in *The Emperor's Favourite* (Manchester, 2010), xxiii. For evidence of the ballad's popularity, see "'Rayling Rymes and Vaunting Verse": Libellous Politics in Early Stuart England, 1603–28', *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (Stanford, 1993), 289.
- 13 For the full song and a list of sources, see 'Early Stuart Libels: An Edition of Poetry from Manuscript Sources', ed. Alastair Bellany and Andrew McRae, *Early Modern Literary Studies* Text Series I (2005), O116 http://www.earlystuartlibels.net/htdocs/buckingham_at_war_section/O116.html.
- 14 For a full account of the proceedings and punishments, see Alastair Bellany, 'Singing Libel in Early Stuart England: The Case of the Staines Fiddlers, 1627', *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 69.1 (2006), 177–93. In addition to the echo of the event here, another reference to the fiddler's fate and its political affect occurs in a poem attributed to John Eliot (1592–1632) entitled 'The Fiddlers That Were Committed for Singing a Song Called, The Clean Contrary Way' contained in *Poems, or, Epigrams* etc. (1658) where one reads:

The fiddlers must be whipt, the people say,
 Because they sung *The clean contrary way*;
 Which, if they be, a crown I dare to lay,
 They then *will* sing, the clean contrary way.
 And he that did those merry knaves betray,
 Wise men will praise (the clean contrary way);
 For whipping them no envy can allay,
 Unless it be the clean contrary way;
 Then, if they went the people's tongues to stay,

Doubtless they went the clean contrary way.

- Interestingly, the editor of the collection, presumably Henry Brome, states that the various works, 'were given me neer sixteen years since by a Friend of the Authors'. This appears to fit with the attribution to Eliot, a member of parliament at precisely the time of the fiddler's trial and a notable opponent of George Villiers. See John Eliot, *Poems, or, Epigrams, Satyrs, Elegies, Songs and Sonnets, Upon Several Persons and Occasions* (London, 1658), *EEBO*, 81–2; and Conrad Russell, 'Eliot, Sir John (1592–1632)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford and New York, 2004-), doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/8630.
- 15 Fairholt writes that the song 'is adapted to a popular air of the period' yet, regretably, does not provide specifics. See Frederick W. Fairholt, *Poems and Songs Relating to George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham* (London, 1850), 10.
 - 16 Bellany, 'Singing Libel', 189–90.
 - 17 Thomas Dekker and John Webster, *North-vvard Hoe* (London, 1607), *EEBO*, Hv.
 - 18 Bellany, 'Singing Libel', 190. For the full song, see W.N., 'The Tyrannical Wife', *Merry Drollery, Or a Collection of [Brace] Jovial Poems, Merry Songs, Witty Drolleries Intermix'd with Pleasant Catches / Collected by W.N., C.B., R.S., J.G., Lovers of Wit* (London, 1661?), *EEBO*, 95–6; and Henry Playford, *Wit And Mirth, an Antidote Against Melancholy* (London, 1682), *EEBO*, 17–18.
 - 19 Bellany, 'Singing Libel', 190.
 - 20 As Bellany points out, 'The Tyrannical Wife' and 'The Old-Man and Young Wife' contain identical lyrics. For concision, I will henceforth use the title 'The Tyrannical Wife' to designate the 'two-titled' ballad.
 - 21 Playford, *Wit and Mirth*, 17.
 - 22 For the full song and a list of sources, see 'Early Stuart Libels: An Edition of Poetry from Manuscript Sources', Alastair Bellany and Andrew McRae (eds), *Early Modern Literary Studies* Text Series I (2005), Oi16 http://www.earlystuartlibels.net/htdocs/buckingham_at_war_section/Oi16.html.
 - 23 See George Puttenham, *The Art of English Poesy* (London, 1589), *EEBO*, 157–8.
 - 24 In *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, William Chappell writes, 'After the Percy Society had printed the Songs [speaking of *Songs and Carols*, cited below], I was to have the opportunity of transcribing *all* the Music; but, in the mean time, the bookbinder to whom this rare ms was entrusted, disappeared, and with him the manuscript, which is, perhaps, already in some library in the United States'. William Chappell, *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, 2 vols (London, 1859), 1.43n.
 - 25 Thomas Wright (ed.), 'Songs and Carols of the Fifteenth Century', *Early English Poetry, Ballads and Popular Literature of the Middle Ages* 23 (1847), 88.

- 26 *The Roxburghe Ballads*, J. Woodfall Ebsworth (ed.), 9 vols (Hertford, 1885), 5.58.
- 27 ‘Come heare, Lady Muses’, moreover, may mark a turn from social themes found in ‘Of All Creatures Women Be Best / *Egus Contrarium Verum Est*’ to those more political, for all later songs employ ‘the clean contrary way’ and its particular ironic operation for their own contemporary political discourse.
- 28 Alexander Brome, *Songs and Other Poems by Alex. Brome* (London, 1664), *EEBO*, 162–4. In this edition of the song there is included below the title the following: ‘Written in 1643’. An adaptation of this song surfaces again in the 1680s amidst more revolutionary rumblings. See ‘An Excellent New Hymn, exalting the Mobile to Loyalty, etc. To the Tune of, “Forty-One”’, *A Choice Collection of 120 Loyal Songs ...*, Nathaniel Thompson (ed.) (London, 1684), *EEBO*, 6–8.
- 29 ‘Animadversions on the Lady Marquess ...’ (London, 1680–1?), *English Broadside Ballad Archive* http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/search_combined/?ss=Animadversions+on+the+Lady+Marquess. Ebsworth remarks that the ‘lady’ slandered here was very likely one (or indeed perhaps all) of Charles II’s mistresses: ‘we may apply it to [Hortense Mancini, Duchess of] Mazarine, [Barbara Palmer, 1st Duchess of] Cleaveland, or [Louise Renée de Penancoët de Kérouaille, Duchess of] Portsmouth at pleasure without belying any one of them’. See *The Roxburghe Ballads*, J. Woodfall Ebsworth (ed.), 9 vols (Hertford, 1885), 5.59.
- 30 Ross Duffin adds this comment (personal email): ‘The question, of course, is what the “Tib, Madge” line is doing. Is it part of the song? Including it makes the number of lines and the versification just about impossible to connect with any existing melody, whereas without it, the text would fit several double-stanza ballad tunes. Also, is the “Lasses of the down” stanza a refrain to the song? The subsequent stanzas give “Tib, Madge” etc., although that could be meant as the opening of the refrain. All in all, it makes a very tricky piece to create a musical setting for. I have here set all of the text to “Hey ho, for a husband” which seems to match the spirit of the text fairly well, and the melody about as well as anything from the repertoire. You can find the “Hey ho” song in my book [*Shakespeare’s Songbook*, (New York, 2004)]. I might mention also that the text is reminiscent of the “With a Fading” song, also found in my book, though its melody doesn’t fit this text.’
- 31 See T.H. Howard-Hill, ‘Another Warwickshire Playwright: John Newdigate of Arbury’, *Renaissance Papers* (1988).
- 32 Datus’s interlocutor in this scene is Commodus, not Pronus.
- 33 Anon., ‘Introduction’, Siobhan Keenan (ed.), *The Emperor’s Favourite* (Manchester, 2010), xxiii.
- 34 As ‘*Egus Contrarium Verum Est*’ (noted above) suggests, the idiom was likely at play in various forms of discourse long before surfacing in English print in the 1530s.

- For an early example, see Marsilius of Padua (d. 1342?), *The Defence of Peace: Lately Translated Out of Laten in to Englysshe. with the Kynges Moste Gracyous Priuilege*, trans. William Marshal (London, 1535), *EEBO*, 103–4.
- 35 Keenan, ‘Touching’, suggests that the character of Datus may be loosely based on Ben Jonson.
- 36 Kennan, *The Emperor’s Favourite*, 91 (5.1.2658–74). All further quotations from the play will be from this edition, with act and scene number cited in the text.
- 37 See T.H. Howard Hill, ‘Another Warwickshire Playwright’.
- 38 *Ibid.*; see also Alan Somerset, ‘“Beginning in the Middle ...”: Warwickshire Locations and Families, as Audiences for Early Modern Music and Drama’, *Medieval English Theatre* 20 (1998).
- 39 The practice of using what appears to be a favourite popular song in multiple plays is not uncommon. Shakespeare, for example, references ‘A Song of a King and a Beggar’ (c1595) in at least four of his plays. See Ross Duffin, *Shakespeare’s Songbook* (New York, 2004), 235–40.
- 40 See Brotherton Library, Leeds, ms Lt q11, f 12r.
- 41 See Bodleian Library, Oxford, Add. ms C302, ff 18r-v.
- 42 Somerset, *passim*. See also Margaret Jane Kidnie, ‘Near Neighbours: Another Early Seventeenth-Century Manuscript of *The Humorous Magistrate*’, *English Manuscript Studies, 1100–1700* 13 (2007), 187–211; and Julie Sanders, *The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama, 1620–1650* (Cambridge, 2011). For a detailed examination of the Newdigate family and its various social connections in the seventeenth century, see Vivienne Larminie, *Wealth, Kinship and Culture: the Seventeenth-Century Newdigates of Arbury and Their World* (Woodbridge, 1995).
- 43 Other known sources include: Bodleian Add. ms C.302, f 18r; Bodleian Rawl. Poet. ms 26, f 61r; BL Add. ms 58215, f 173v; Rosenbach ms 1083/16, 196.