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Chapter 9. Robert Herrick, Clipsby Crew, and the Politics of the English Epithalamium in 1625

Robert Herrick's reputation as a singularly festive and staunchly pro-Stuart poet is emblazoned in the argument of his *Hesperides*, where he writes:

> I sing of *Brooks*, of *Blossomes, Birds*, and *Bowers*:
> Of *April, May*, of *June*, and *July*-Flowers.
> I sing of *May-poles, Hock-carts, Wassails, Wakes*,
> Of *Bride-grooms, Brides*, and of their *Bridall-cakes*.[1]

Allusions to the traditional holiday pastimes run throughout the collection, signalling Herrick's support of James and Charles' efforts to protect the English Church from Puritan innovations. By the time of its publication in 1648, *Hesperides* could be viewed as a requiem for the royalist cause; Herrick had recently been expelled from his vicarage at Dean Prior in Devonshire, and the next year the King would be tried and executed by his own people. Yet the volume, which experiments with a stunning variety of forms through the course of its 1402 poems, does not cut along partisan lines as easily as it might at first seem — or perhaps it would be more apt to say that those lines are not as clearly drawn as the proverbial Whig narrative of the English Civil War would suggest. In 1990 Ann Baynes Coiro edited a special issue of the *George Herbert Journal* on Herrick that stressed the tensions and contradictions behind the work's winsome expression of cavalier ideals.[2] Leah Marcus, who in *The Politics of Mirth* (1986) enshrined

1 *The Complete Poetry of Robert Herrick*, ed. by Tom Cain and Ruth Connolly, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), vol. 1, p. 7. All references to Herrick's poetry are from this edition and subsequently will be cited in the text by line number unless otherwise noted.

2 See Ann Baynes Coiro, 'Robert Herrick and the *Hesperides*: On the Edge of the Renaissance', *George Herbert Journal*, 14 (1990), i-vi. In this introduction to the special issue on Herrick, Coiro notes that 'there are voices from almost every mid-seventeenth-century political perspective here, undercutting any univocal argument we may want to construct' (i). Other essays in the issue that speak to the political elusiveness of *Hesperides* include Jonathan F. S. Post, 'Robert Herrick: A Minority Report', 1–21, and Mary Thomas Crane, 'Herrick's Cultural Materialism', 21–50. Post warns against overestimating the pro-Laudian impetus behind the references to ritual pastimes in *Hesperides*, noting that Herrick's political intentions pale beside those of contemporaries such as Richard Corbett. Crane posits Herrick's relation to material culture (namely, his early apprenticeship as a goldsmith) as an overlooked context for understanding the poet's ambivalent class consciousness.

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The Wedding of Charles I and Henrietta Maria, 1625: Celebrations and Controversy, ed. by Marie-Claude Canova-Green and Sara J. Wolfson, European Festival Studies: 1450–1700 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), pp. 221–240
BREPOLS PUBLISHERS 10.1484/M.EFS-EB.5.119192

Herrick's reputation as an apologist for Laudian ceremonialism, acknowledged in a later essay that 'despite the pro-Caroline frame of the collection, Herrick's verses construct a varied gallery of luminaries that cut across the broad ideological divisions of the pre-war period'.[3] Recent criticism of *Hesperides* has continued to chip away at the collection's royalist veneer. John Creaser, citing the numerous parliamentary supporters honoured in *Hesperides*, claims that 'Herrick puts friendship and esteem before ideological consistency without a second glance, and this typifies his tolerance, even his relish and cultivation, of contradictions of all kinds'.[4] Syrithe Pugh, who maintains that the work's open espousal of divine right paints Herrick as an 'ultra-royalist', nonetheless acknowledges that he never in fact took up arms for the King.[5]

The unsettled relationship between Herrick's work and his politics is especially salient in the poems that he wrote in the decade prior to his appointment to Dean Prior in 1629, well before the tensions between parliament and the crown erupted into armed conflict.[6] Herrick's precise stake in the affairs of state in the 1620s is unknown, as are most of the details of his life during this time. He was an avid Londoner, who frequented the literary circle of Ben Jonson. He was ordained in 1623, although he was evidently not appointed to a particular parish. He became chaplain to George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, in 1627, and accompanied the Duke to the Isle of Rhé on an ill-fated crusade to support the besieged Huguenots. One of the few poems in *Hesperides* that can be dated with reasonable certainty to this time is also one of its longest: 'A Nuptiall Song, or Epithalamie, on Sir Clipseby Crew and his Lady'. The publication of *Hesperides* marked the first print appearance of the poem, which had circulated in manuscript in a longer version simply titled 'Epithalamium'.[7] Clipsby Crew made Herrick's acquaintance at St John's College, Cambridge in the mid-1610s, and sat for Downton in the parliaments of 1624 and 1625, and for Callington in 1626. He may have owed his seat in the Commons to William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, who held considerable clout in

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3 Leah Marcus, 'Robert Herrick', in Thomas N. Corns (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to English Poetry, Donne to Marvell* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 171–82 (p. 177). Marcus paints a more partisan portrait of Herrick in 'Churchman among the Maypoles: Herrick and the *Hesperides*', chap. 5, in *The Politics of Mirth: Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Marvell, and the Defense of Old Holiday Pastimes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

4 John Creaser, '"Jocond his Muse was": Celebration and Virtuosity in Herrick', in Ruth Connolly and Tom Cain (eds), *'Lords of Wine and Oile': Community and Conviviality in the Poetry of Robert Herrick* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 39–64 (pp. 43–44).

5 Syrithe Pugh, *Herrick, Fanshawe and the Politics of Intertextuality: Classical Literature and Seventeenth-Century Royalism* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2010), p. 4.

6 John Creaser, in '"Times trans-shifting": Chronology and the Misshaping of Herrick', *English Literary Renaissance*, 39 (2004), 163–96, argues that Herrick's pre-Devonshire lyrics, because they often lack the expressly political bent of the later works, have been unfairly overlooked. Additionally, Creaser faults critics for reading Herrick's poems inordinately through the lens of the civil wars and thus for dating many of them to this period based on insufficient evidence.

7 Cain and Connolly include an early copy text and a brief manuscript history of 'A Nuptiall Song', in *Complete Poetry of Herrick*, vol. 2, pp. 75–82.

parliamentary elections.[8] Herrick's 'Nuptiall Song' was originally composed to celebrate Crew's marriage to Jane Pulteney, which took place on 7/17 July 1625, less than two months after the nuptials of King Charles and Princess Henrietta Maria of France were first celebrated at Paris.

The date is significant in parliamentary history. In 1624, the royal chaplain Richard Montagu published *A New Gagg for an Old Goose*, a defence of Anglican doctrine against the 'Catholique Limitors' and 'Romish Rangers' who had lately sought to proselytize members of his Essex parish.[9] *A New Gagg* was nominally a response to a pamphlet by the Catholic apologist John Heigham, but its break with the tenets of Calvinism drew the ire of Puritans in the English Church, who pressed the Lower House to investigate the matter. The controversy escalated in 1625 with the publication of *Appello Caesarem*, in which Montagu singled out the two 'unjust informers' who had targeted his work for its perceived papist and Arminian sympathies. Citing the backing of the late King, who had authorized him to answer his critics and referred the manuscript for licensing to the esteemed Francis White, Dean of Carlisle, Montagu derides '*those* Classicall Puritans, *who were wont to passe all their Strange Determinations, Sabbatarian Paradoxes, and Apocalypticall Frensies under the Name and Covert of* The True Professors of Protestant Doctrine'.[10] In the Commons meeting of 7/17 July 1625, the report from the committee appointed to investigate Montagu's books declared *Appello* 'a factious and seditious Book, tending manifestly to the Dishonour of our late King, and to the Disturbance of our Church and State'.[11] Among the grievances listed in the report was the book's disregard for the Calvinist consensus maintained by James and upheld at the Synod of Dort. Even though Montagu categorically disavowed Arminianism in *Appello*, the committee determined 'the Fire, kindled in the Low Countries by Arminius, like to be kindled here likewise by this Man', and alleged that 'the whole Frame of this Book is a great Encouragement of Popery'.[12] The Commons called on Archbishop George Abbot to suppress the book and announced plans to meet with the Lords to discuss punishments for Montagu's contempt, setting the stage for a series of attempts to silence and prosecute Montagu that would last throughout the decade.[13]

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8 See Robert E. Ruigh, *The Parliament of 1624: Politics and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971); and Violet A. Rowe, 'The Influence of the Earls of Pembroke on Parliamentary Elections, 1625–1641', *English Historical Review*, 50 (1935), 242–56. While Ruigh believes that Crew 'probably owed his seat to Pembroke' (p. 128), Rowe states that there is 'no evidence' for this fact (244).

9 Richard Montagu, 'To the Reader', *A Gagg for the New Gospell? No: A New Gagge for an Old Goose, Who Would Needes Vndertake to Stop All Protestants Mouths for Euer, with 276 Places out of Their Owne English Bibles* (London: T. Snodham, for M. Lownes and W. Barret, 1624).

10 Richard Montagu, *Appello Cæsarem. A Ivst Appeale from Two Vniust Informers* (London: M. Lownes, 1625), sig. a^{2}v.

11 See *Journals of the House of Commons* [hereafter *CJ*], 1547–1714, 17 vols (London, 1742), vol. 1, p. 805.

12 *CJ*, vol. 1, p. 805.

13 For an overview of Montagu's skirmishes with the Lower House from 1624 to 1629, see Nicholas Tyacke, 'Richard Montagu, the House of Commons, and Arminianism', chap. 6, in *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism c. 1590–1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987). According to Tyacke,

The Montagu controversy was a flashpoint in the Calvinist-Arminian debates of the 1620s as well as a harbinger of the anti-Catholic paranoia that would shadow Charles I and his French Catholic Queen. Cyndia Clegg credits Montagu's works for drawing the battle lines between the Calvinist and anti-Calvinist factions in the English Church,[14] and Nicholas Tyacke goes so far as to state that *A New Gagg* was 'without precedent' in its damning equation of Calvinism with Puritanism.[15] While Crew sat in the Commons for much of the *Appello* dispute, his participation in the campaign against Montagu is uncertain. The sole evidence of his direct engagement in the religious controversies of the day exists in his appointment on 8/18 August 1625 to a committee that conferred with the Lords to discuss concerns over the King's recent pardons of Catholic recusants.[16] The conference took place amid a flurry of activity on the recusant issue, during which the King responded to the 'petition concerning religion' that had been presented to him by both houses on July 8/18. The petition submitted eight causes and sixteen remedies for the recent influx of Catholics into the King's dominions, with frequent veiled references to the influence of Charles' new Queen.[17] One month later the King formally responded to the petition, assuring both houses that he would attend to their concerns. Buckingham added that the King was acting 'not to draw us on, but out of his own Conscience, and in Performance of his Father's last Will; which was, that, when he was married,

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by the time *Appello* was suppressed by royal proclamation in 1629, the case 'paled into insignificance beside the growing body of evidence that a general Arminianisation of the English Church was in process' (p. 162).

14 For a discussion of Montagu's role in the polarization of the English Church that would occur under Charles I, see Cyndia Susan Clegg, 'Ecclesiastical Faction, Censorship, and the Rhetoric of Silence', chap. 6, in *Press Censorship in Jacobean England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Clegg argues that ecclesiastical divisions in the late Jacobean era split along political rather than strictly theological lines, with Bishop Richard Neile's circle at Durham House supporting James' attempts to forge a Stuart–Habsburg alliance and Archbishop George Abbot's Lambeth Palace faction pursuing a more aggressive foreign policy. Montagu's writings, according to Clegg, exploited the virulent anti-Catholic stance of Abbot and his peers 'to expose the Abbot circle as controversialists who not only intended to disturb the peace of the English Church but whose control over ecclesiastical licensing also authorised controversy' (p. 202).

15 Nicholas Tyacke, 'The Rise of Arminianism Reconsidered', chap. 6, in *Aspects of English Protestantism c. 1530–1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 165. Tyacke asserts that anti-Catholic polemic prior to Montagu respected the prevalence of Calvinism among English clergy: 'The concept of "doctrinal Puritanism", as deployed by Montagu to describe Calvinism, was a neologism of therefore revolutionary significance' (p. 165). Tyacke's perennial critic, Peter White, questions the notion of an essential conflict between Calvinism and Arminianism that came to a boil under the Stuarts. 'This is by no means to deny the existence of polarities', White maintains, 'but rather to suggest that they were concurrent and evolutionary rather than abruptly linear, that there was development within a continuing spectrum, a development to which theologians of contrasting churchmanship contributed, in spite of their indulgence from time to time in the language of polemic against each other'. See Peter White, *Predestination, Policy and Polemic: Conflict and Consensus in the English Church from the Reformation to the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 11.

16 *CJ*, vol. 1, p. 812.

17 The full petition on religion, including the King's responses to each of the articles contained therein, is included in *Proceedings in Parliament 1625*, ed. by Maija Jansson and William B. Bidwell (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 155–60.

he should so respect Religion here, that he should marry her Person, and not her Religion'.[18]

The coincidence of Crew's marriage to Pulteney and the commencement of the case against Montagu — and the vicinity of both events to the celebrations for the royal wedding — brings into sharp relief the tense political atmosphere against which the Crew–Pulteney nuptials took place. That tension was fuelled in large part by the confessional divide between the newly crowned King and Queen. Not enough is known about Crew and Pulteney to determine if their marriage was similarly fraught, although there is evidence that the two came from conflicting religious and political backgrounds. The bride's father, Sir John Pulteney of Misterton, Leicestershire, served as MP for Wigan in 1601 and 1604. His father, Gabriel Pulteney, was a suspected recusant whose forced confession of faith is recorded in the Elizabethan Calendar of State of Papers in 1580.[19] John Pulteney's exclusion from local office suggests that he, too, may have been a practising Catholic.[20] Crew, meanwhile, belonged to a family of staunch Puritans and parliamentary supporters, most famously his father Sir Ranulph Crew, who in November 1626 was ejected from his seat as lord chief justice for opposing Charles' Forced Loan.[21] The younger Crew's Puritanism is further suggested by his association with Pembroke, a leader of the anti-Spanish faction in James' court and the probable patron of numerous anti-Catholic works.[22]

However much or little 'A Nuptiall Song' may speak to the particulars of the Crew–Pulteney pairing, the topical resonance of the poem derives chiefly from its appearance in the aftermath of the royal wedding and attendant negotiations. In this paper I consider the ways that 'A Nuptiall Song' resonates with the religious and political tensions surrounding the marriage of Charles and Henrietta Maria: first by looking at some of the works expressly produced to celebrate the occasion, then by approaching Herrick's epithalamium as an alternative to those 'authorized' accounts. The poem invites comparison with the epithalamia composed for the royal nuptials, not only for its close proximity to the event but also for its uncommonly frank depiction of the tensions involved in aristocratic matrimonial politics. Herrick's poem is not overtly political, nor is it specifically *about* Charles and Henrietta Maria. Yet its unflinching dramatization of the power negotiations between bride and groom, as coded

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18 See *CJ*, vol. 1, p. 813.

19 See *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I, Addenda, 1580–1625; Preserved in Her Majesty's Public Record Office*, ed. by Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Longman & Co., 1872), pp. 34–35.

20 See 'Pulteney, Sir John', in *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604–1629*, ed. by Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris, 6 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), vol. 5, p. 781.

21 See 'Crewe [Crew], Sir Randolph', in H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: In Association with the British Academy: From the Earliest Times to the Year 2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 14, pp. 173–74.

22 On Pembroke's associations with Puritan clergy and MPs, see Margot Heinemann, *Puritanism and Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 264–81. For a general overview of his patronage activities, see Brian O'Farrell, *Shakespeare's Patron: William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke, 1580–1630: Politics, Patronage and Power* (London: Continuum, 2011).

in its deft appropriations of Catullan erotic epithalamia, voices uncertainties over the Stuart–Bourbon union with an urgency that is generally absent from the literature formally produced for the occasion.

The epithalamia issued on the marriage of Charles and Henrietta Maria celebrated what was, in fact, a precarious alliance between the kingdoms of Britain and France. Failed negotiations for the hand of the Spanish Infanta had foiled King James' best hope for the peaceful restitution of the Palatinate to his son-in-law, Frederick V, and had polarized the English court into rival war and peace factions. Initial talks with the French threatened to break down over the same issue that had finally doomed the Spanish match: toleration for English Catholics. A compromise was reached in the form of a provision separate from the marriage treaty in which James privately agreed to increase liberties for his loyal Roman Catholic subjects.[23] Two months after the treaty was signed, including this separate provision, the papal dispensation for the marriage arrived, but with renewed demands that the policy of toleration be declared and codified publicly. The King baulked at these demands, though in retrospect they seem justified; enforcement of the new protections was irregular, particularly after the King's death on March 27.[24] Stuart–Bourbon relations were further strained by the German commander Count Ernst von Mansfeld's abortive campaign to recover the Palatinate. Mansfeld was key to Buckingham's plans to secure French support for the English military effort, but the expedition was not properly financed or coordinated. Louis XIII reneged on his vow to allow Mansfeld's troops passage through French territory, and James refused Louis's request to divert troops to the defence of Breda. As the two sides sparred over strategy and objectives, infection and desertion thinned Mansfeld's ranks below their capacity to serve either cause. The first test of the Stuart–Bourbon alliance ended in failure before the marriage compact was sealed.[25]

Meanwhile, plans for the royal wedding went forward: Charles and Henrietta were married in Paris on 1/11 May 1625, with the Duke of Chevreuse standing in for the absent King. The bride disembarked at Dover on 12/22 June, and after the marriage contract was publicly renewed at Canterbury, the royal party set off to London. A festival book of the nuptial celebrations describes the thunderous welcome the new King and Queen received as they sailed up the Thames. The peals of cannon were reportedly so loud 'that nothing could be heard for the terror of the noice', the smoke so thick that it 'enterposed betwixt

23 For the full text of the '*Escrit particulier*', see Philip Yorke, 2nd Earl of Hardicke (ed.), *Miscellaneous State Papers. From 1501 to 1726* (London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1778), vol. 1, pp. 546–47.

24 See Michael C. Questier (ed.), 'Introduction', *Stuart Dynastic Policy and Religious Politics 1621–1625*, Camden Society, Fifth series, 34 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Questier describes the situation of English Catholics in early 1625 as a 'somewhat unstable state of partial de facto toleration' (p. 113), not unlike what they had experienced at varying points throughout James' reign.

25 See W. B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 354–56.

the earth and the Sunnes brightnesse making an Euening at Noone day'.[26] A mob of enthusiastic spectators capsized a ship docked along the route of the royal procession. Amid the fanfare,

> the King and Queene stood publiquely in the open Barge, and not onely discouered themselues to euery honest and chearefull beholder, but also with all Royall affabilitie and grace distributed their fauours to all those which came to admire them, so that there was not a liuing soule which did not in heart conclude and say with the Poet,
>
> *Qua[m] bene co[n]ueniunt et in vna sede mora[n]tur*
> *Maiestas & Amor.*[27]
>
> [Majestic power and erotic love get on together very well, and they linger long in the same place].

'The Poet' here is Ovid, whose oft-quoted maxim from the *Metamorphoses* is revised to affirm rather than deny the compatibility of majesty and love. The facile reversal of Ovid's original meaning is emblematic of how neatly the politics of the royal match could be swept beneath the fanfare. One could not genuinely partake of the spectacle of Charles and Henrietta's arrival at London and doubt the prospects of the Stuart–Bourbon union.

The propagandist tenor of the festival books was shared by the larger body of literature issued in observance of the royal nuptials. Oxford and Cambridge both published collections of epithalamia, mostly in Latin, commemorating the historic union of the lily and the rose.[28] William Browne, Robert Burton, Richard Busby, and William Strode were among the prominent names to pen verses for the Oxford volume; notable Cambridge contributors included Samuel Collins, Thomas Randolph, and James Stewart, Duke of Lennox, who leads the collection with a poem hailing the deliverance of France and England from a bloody, competitive past to a peaceful, cooperative future. A verse broadside entitled *England and France, Hand-in-Hand* likewise glances at the troubled history between the two nations before concluding optimistically: 'Bonfieres call people forth, and let them sing, / England on France bestowes a Wedding

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26 *A Trve Discovrse of all the Royal Passages, Tryvmphs and Ceremonies, observed at the Contract and Mariage of the High and Mighty Charles, King of Great Britaine, and the most Excellentest of Ladies, the Lady Henrietta Maria of Burbon, sister to the most Christian King of France* (London: John Haviland for Hanna Barret, 1625), sig. E2v. [See Appendix 1].

27 *Trve Discovrse*, sig. E3r. The actual line from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* reads, '*Non bene convenient, nec in una sede morantur, Majestas et amor*' [Majestic power and erotic love do not get on together very well, nor do they linger long in the same place]. The English translation of the line is from Ovid, *Metamorphoses: A New Translation*, trans. by Charles Martin (New York: Norton, 2005), p. 86.

28 See *Epithalamia Oxoniensia in auspicatissimum, potentissimi monarchae Caroli, Magnae Britanniae, Franciae, et Hiberniae Regis, &c. cum Henretta Maria, aeternae memoriae Henrici Magni Gallorum Regis filia, connubium* (Oxford: J. Lichfield and G. Turner, 1625); and *Epithalamium illustriss. & feliciss. principum Caroli Regis, et H. Mariae Reginae Magnae Britanniae, &c. A musis Cantabrigiensibus decantatum* ([Cambridge]: Cantrellus Legge, 1625).

Ring'.[29] The political implications of the match are expressed more directly in *A Relation of the Glorious Triumphs and Order of the Ceremonies*, a brief tract which pairs a glowing account of the Paris ceremony with the text of Louis XIII's proclamation banning commerce with the kingdom of Spain.[30]

Charles' one-time tutor Walter Quin added to the revels with a short collection of wedding poems in Latin, English, French, and Italian, prefaced by an emblem of the lily mating with the rose with the caption: '*Iuncta magis florent*' [They prosper greater together]. The sexually provocative image of the two flowers doubly intertwined is tempered by the collection's chaste rendering of conjugal accord [Figure 9.1]. For example, Quin's 'A Nuptiall Song, of the union of the Roses and Lillies in this Royal Couple' retains a narrow focus on the companionate aspect of marriage:

> His Royall vertues doe resemble well
> The Roses beauty, and their fragrant smell:
> The Lillies colour white, and free from staine
> Is of her vertuous mind an Emblem plaine.
> No wonder then that these respects doe moue
> Him, honour of the Roses, her to loue;
> And her, the Lillies Ornament, incite
> His loue with mutuall loue for to requite.[31]

The lily and the rose are venerable tropes in Renaissance verse, frequently invoked in tandem as a figure of Petrarchan *discordia concors*. Shakespeare's Tarquin beholds the 'silent war of lilies and of roses'[32] in the face of Lucrece, while Ford's Giovanni plies Annabella with similar blandishments: 'The lily and the rose, most sweetly strange, / Upon your dimple cheek do strive for change'.[33] In Spenser's seminal 'Prothalamion', lilies and roses fill out a spectrum of love's forms, from chaste to carnal:

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29 *England and France, Hand-in-Hand: Triumphing, for the happy & Royall Contract of Mariage, made betweene the High and Mightie Charles, Prince of Great Brittaine, and the most excellent Princesse of France, Madame Henrica Maria, Sister to Lewis the thirteenth King of France* (London: J. Trundle, 1624).

30 *A relation of the glorious triumphs and order of the ceremonies, obserued in the marriage of the high and mighty Charles, King of Great Brittaine, and the Ladie Henretta Maria, sister to the most Christian King of France Together with the ceremonie obserued in their troth-plighting, performed in the castle of the Louure, in his Maiesties chamber there. As also the Kings declaration containing a prohibition vnto all his subiects to use any traffique or commerce with the kingdome of Spaine. Published in the Parliament of Paris, the 12. of May, 1625. Whereunto the originall French copie is added* (London: Thomas Snodham for Nathaniel Butter, 1625). [See Appendix 2].

31 Walter Quin, *In nvptiis principvm incomparabilivm, Caroli, Britannici Imperi Monarchae potentissimi, et Henriettae Mariae, Henrici Magni, Galliarum Regis Filiae, gratulatio quadrilinguis Gualteri Quinni* (London: G. Purslow, 1625), p. 6.

32 William Shakespeare, 'The Rape of Lucrece', *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. by G. Blakemore Evans and J. J. M. Tobin (Boston, MA: Wadsworth, 1997), p. 1817.

33 John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, in *Five Plays*, ed. by Havelock Ellis (New York: Hill and Wang, 1957), p. 97.

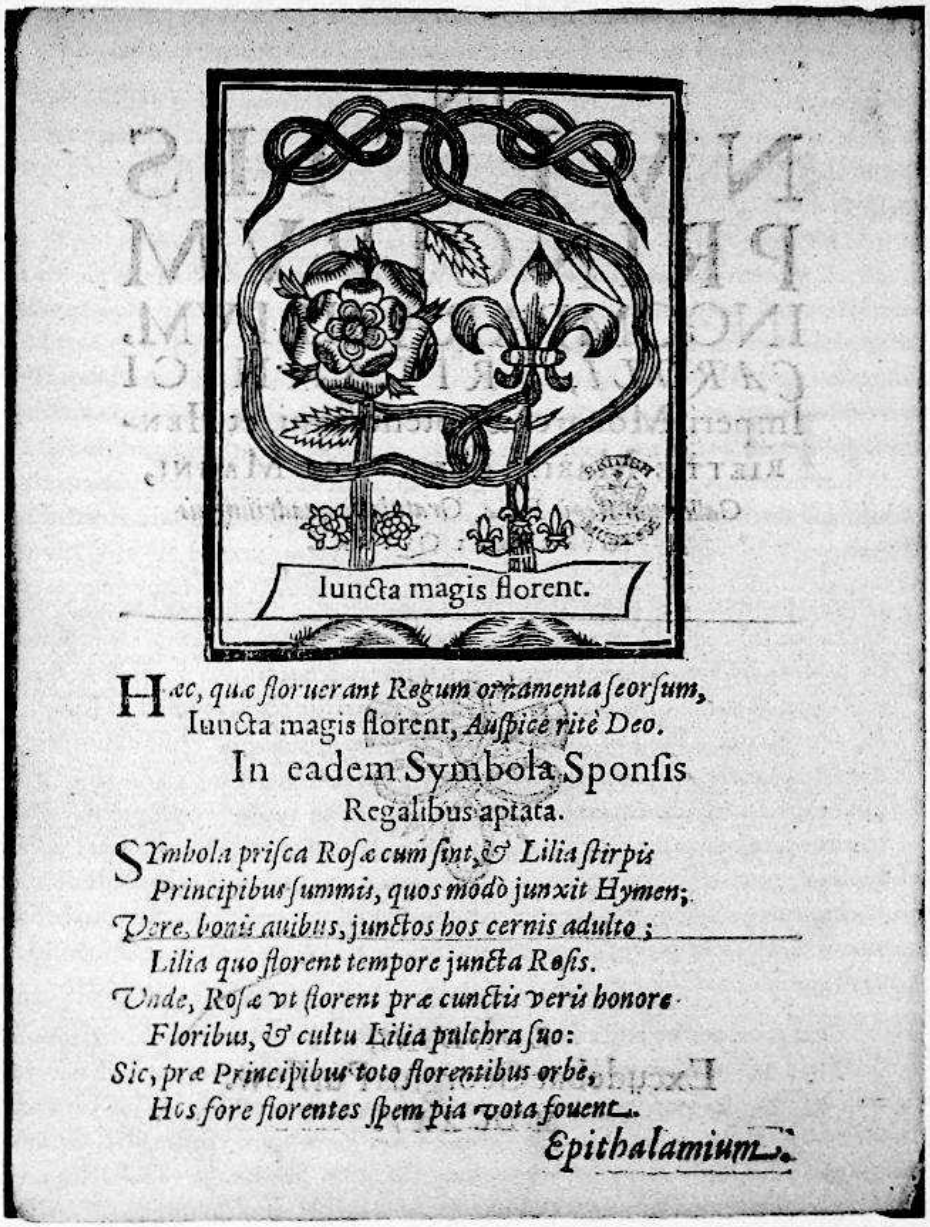

FIGURE 9.1. Walter Quin, *In nvptiis principvm incomparabilivm, Caroli, Britannici Imperi Monarchae potentissimi, et Henriettae Mariae, Henrici Magni, Galliarum Regis Filiae, gratulatio quadrilinguis Gualteri Quinni* (London: G. Purslow, 1625). The British Library Board, General Reference Collection C.28.g.8.(4.).

Of every sort which in that meadow grew
They gathered some: the violet pallid blue,
The little daisy that at evening closes,
The virgin lily and the primrose true,
With store of vermeil roses,
To deck their bridegrooms' posies
Against the bridal day, which was not long:
Sweet Thames run softly, till I end my song.[34]

The symbolic range of Quin's poem pales in comparison. He stresses the complementary nature of love by joining Charles' royal virtues, represented by the roses, with Henrietta Maria's moral virtues, represented by the lilies. The correspondence is so fast, the equilibrium so carefully wrought, as to suppress any implied erotic frisson.

The conservative sensibility of Quin's collection reflects a larger pattern that Heather Dubrow observes in her study of the Stuart epithalamium. According to Dubrow,

> [p]erhaps the single most revealing decision made by the authors of Stuart epithalamia [...] is their rejection of the erotic wedding tradition exemplified by poems by Pontano, Marino, and Johannes Secundus [...] The open eroticism of some Continental epithalamia, like the open conflict of Catullus 62, represents a kind of negative identity for the Stuart epithalamium, a road not taken: one can cite some telling exceptions, but by and large that unabashed and uncontrolled sexuality is not the value Stuart poems wish to advocate but rather the threat they attempt to control [...] Stuart poets typically envision marriage as public, a source and a symbol of an orderly and harmonious society; their poems are concerned not only with the couple but also with the community, not only with sexual politics but also with politics in the more customary sense.[35]

The context provided by Dubrow's analysis helps to explain how the epithalamium had evolved, under the sway of Reformation marriage discourse, into a natural vehicle for expressions of political ideology. The implications of this turn are illustrated vividly in George Marcelline's *Epithalamium Gallo-Brittanicum*, which includes dedicatory letters seeking the joint patronage of Charles and Buckingham and declares on its title page that the pending nuptials of Charles and Henrietta Maria portend no less than

> the destruction and ruine of Antichrist, *the establishment of the true Faith*, the propagation of the Gospell, the restitution of the *Palatinate*, the ouerthrowing

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34 Edmund Spenser, *Selected Shorter Poems*, ed. by Douglas Brooks-Davies (London: Longman, 1995), pp. 392–93.

35 Heather Dubrow, *A Happier Eden: The Politics of Marriage in the Stuart Epithalamium* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 48–49.

> of the Enemies designes, the erection of *Peace, the increase of Plentie, and the general well-fare of all Christendome.*[36]

Marcelline's prose work, over 150 pages in length, gives concrete expression to concerns that are muted or altogether silent in the lyric epithalamia, in particular the concern over Henrietta Maria's Catholicism and the effects it will have on the Caroline court. Marcelline gives numerous assurances that the new Queen will not attempt to impose her faith on her husband. 'She knowes that She may be the crowne of the head', he writes, 'but She will not presume to be the head of the body' (p. 111). Marcelline compares Henrietta Maria to her father, Henri IV, who outwardly professed Catholicism as a matter of political expediency even though 'his heart was with God' (p. 114). Henri was assassinated at the hands of a Catholic zealot harbouring delusions of sainthood. It is inconceivable, states Marcelline, that the trauma of his murder will not alert Henrietta Maria to the error of her ways and win her to the true faith.

The political slant of Marcelline's epithalamium is reflected somewhat more artfully in its treatment of one of the classical conventions of the genre: the encouragement of fertility. According to Marcelline, Henrietta Maria's birth was itself a dual testament to providence and procreation. After Henri IV had been graced with four sons to fortify the French kingdom against its enemies, God sent him a daughter so that Charles and Louis together might 'satisfie their thirstie blades with the bloud of Tyrants, and die their swords with the death of the enemies to truth and equitie' (p. 107). The fruition of these hopes depends on the love that Henrietta Maria's beauty and virtue inspire — that is, on her marriageability. As Marcelline explains,

> had She all these rare endowments and aptitudes of mariage, and yet had no inclination to wedlock, her rare gifts would be like precious iewels, which lose their luster for want of wearing, like fragrant flowers in a most delightfull garden, which are neuer gathered, but finde their tombe where they had their birth, like a root buried vp in the ground, which neuer brancheth: if She were resolued not to make an exchange of virginall for coniugall chastity, She should doe the world too much injurie in cloistering vp Christendomes ioyes, whose hopes are chiefly in Her, with Herselfe. (pp. 107–08)

Marcelline proceeds to itemize what would be wasted if Henrietta Maria chose not to produce an heir: her virtue, her noble blood, her education, her dowry, and finally, her beauty. The faded jewels and unpicked flowers that he invokes to mourn her hypothetically wasted attributes are familiar topoi of the *carpe diem* lyric, in which the speaker raises the spectre of Time in order to wheedle

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36 George Marcelline, *Epithalamium Gallo-Britannicum or, Great-Britaines, Frances, and the most parts of Europes vnspeakable ioy, for the most happy vnion, and blessed contract of the high and mighty Prince Charles, Prince of Wales, and the Lady Henrette Maria, daughter to Henry the fourth, sirnamed the Great, late King of the French and Nauarre, and sister to Levvis the thirteenth: now king of the said dominions* (London: T. Archer, 1625). Marcelline's work is hereafter cited in the text by page number.

his mistress into sex. Yet here as in Quin's poem, the consummation ritual is drained of sexual tension. Marcelline substitutes for the image of the reluctant maid the committed celibate, who has made a principled choice between two lifestyles; she shall be neither cajoled nor coerced into marrying. Henrietta Maria's choice to wed, in turn, is driven by public interest, not private desire. It is an exchange of one form of chastity for another, 'virginall for coniugall'; there is no threat of female sexuality to be contained.

The determinedly chaste representation of marriage that emerges across the epithalamia composed for the wedding of Charles and Henrietta Maria scarcely seems a product of the genre whose first iterations in antiquity were unashamedly sexual, as expressed in the Greek word 'epithalamium', which translates to 'at the bridal chamber'. The epithalamia of Catullus, which were the most widely imitated poems of their kind in Renaissance Europe, luxuriate in descriptions of the bride's ambivalence prior to consummation.[37] *Carmina* 61 comprises a veritable spectacle of erotic anticipation, as the groom conspires with Venus to initiate his halting bride into the rites of love. For each delay she is admonished to advance to the marriage bed, where awaits the promise of untold amorous licence. *Carmina* 62 pictures at its centre a young bride whose qualms about marriage prompt a debate over the merits of virginity. Through the course of the poem her untouched body becomes a contested space over which the two sides may stake their respective claims. A chorus of maidens decries the cruelty of tearing the young bride from her parents and subjecting her body to defilement; a chorus of youths responds that it will become sterile and futile if not duly mated. In the end, the maidens and youths concur that the bride's virginity is not hers to control, and she is bid no longer to resist the inevitable.[38]

Herrick's 'A Nuptiall Song' enlists the dramatic and erotic tension of the Catullan model to capture the volatile state of English marriage politics in 1625. In place of the ideal of chaste, companionate marriage, Herrick's poem submits the image of a faltering, perhaps conniving bride who must be weaned from her coy pretensions. The passions she inflames are so intense that the marriage bed becomes the site of potential conflagration. Blessings for the couple are underlaid with fears of cataclysmic discord, in ways that call to mind the more momentous nuptials that had taken place two months prior. In fact the first lines of the poem, which herald the bride's approach in characteristically florid language, would not be out of place in the reportage of Henrietta Maria's arrival in London:

> What's that we see from far? the spring of Day
> Bloom'd from the East, or faire Injewel'd May
> Blowne out of April; or some New-

37 On the Catullan influence in early modern epithalamia, see Virginia Tufte, *The Poetry of Marriage: The Epithalamium in Europe and Its Development in England* (Los Angeles: Tinnon-Brown, 1970); and more recently, Jacob Blevins, *Catullan Consciousness and the Early Modern Lyric in England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

38 See *The Poems of Catullus*, trans. by Peter Green (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 106–27.

Star fill'd with glory to our view,
Reaching at heaven,
To adde a nobler Planet to the seven? *(ll. 1–6)*

In the second stanza anticipation bursts into euphoria as the bride comes into full view and her glories are paraded for all to behold. Yet at the end of the third stanza there emerges a darker side to the spectacle. The response it elicits turns from breathless admiration into a kind of wanton self-immolation. The bride's onlookers breathe air so intoxicatingly sweet that it leads them to make altars of their own lust:

Who therein wo'd not consume
His soule to Ash-heaps in that rich perfume?
Bestroaking Fate the while
He burnes to Embers on the Pile. *(ll. 27–30)*

The passions kindled by the bride threaten to consume all who enter her path, and by the fourth stanza, they have evidently claimed their first victim: the bridegroom, whose 'eyes do turne / And roule about, and in their motions burne / Their balls to Cindars' (ll. 37–39).

The erotic subtext of the ceremony is made further explicit in early manuscript versions of the poem, which contain as many as seven stanzas that Herrick evidently deleted from the 1648 print version. In the first of these stanzas, the groom's implosive reaction to the sight of his bride is preceded by a description of her blushing face; the rabid desire that she stokes is juxtaposed against the wary pace at which she proceeds:

Leade one fayre *Paranimphs* the while hyr eyes a
(guilty to somwhat) ripe the strawberies
and cherryes in hyr cheekes; ther's creame
alredy spilte, hyr rayes must gleame
gently thereon
and soe begett luste and temptation
to surfett and to hunger
helpe one hyr pace *and* though she lag yet stir
hyr homwards, well she knowes
hyr harts at home, how ere she goes.[39]

Herrick enlists the dynamic of modesty and display to dramatize the bride's uneasy place in the midst of the wedding proceedings. Even as her guilty eyes, blushing cheek, and lagging step betray her ambivalence towards her fate, we are assured that 'hyr harts at home' — presumably, with her bridegroom. Yet he is noticeably absent from this description; the gaze to which she is subject is collective and indiscriminate. The 'luste and temptation' that she fuels, it appears, exceed the chaste confines of the

39 *Complete Poetry of Herrick*, vol. 2, pp. 76–77.

marriage bed; well before consummation 'ther's creame alredy spilte'. The speaker's refusal to impute these wanton lusts to one particular person casts doubt that the bride can be truly possessed by her husband. Even while comporting herself with due restraint she is made the object of anonymous, boundless erotic projection.

The bride is summarily admonished to cool the flames she has fanned. Her path is diverted to the 'banks of Virgins' (l. 41), where her incendiary powers are methodically doused: she is showered with roses, sprinkled with wheat, drowned with a flowery spring. The bride becomes the object of ritual praises, blessings, and divinations, and hence for the moment reclaims her status as an object of chaste veneration. The poem's retreat from the overt eroticism of the prior stanzas culminates in the last two lines of the fifth stanza, where the imperative to reproduce is foisted upon the bride in the humblest of terms: 'And thousands gladly wish / You multiply, as doth a Fish' (ll. 49–50). The ruthlessly functional simile, with its embedded allusion to the miracle of the loaves and fishes, jars with the florid ceremonialism that surrounds the arrival of the bride and her presentation to her bridegroom. Moreover, it flattens her incendiary sexuality into a rote vessel of collective wish fulfillment: she is urged to propagate, not procreate.

What emerges through the course of Herrick's poem is a series of ever more laboured attempts to control and contain the bride's sexuality. To this point she has been a cipher, an object of enthusiastic projection by stock admirers. But in stanza six she is endowed with bona fide agency and therewith entrusted to play her part in the conjugal performance:

> And beautious Bride we do confess y'are wise,
> In dealing forth these bashfull jealousies:
> In Lov's name do so; and a price
> Set on your selfe, by being nice:
> But yet take heed;
> What now you seem, be not the same indeed,
> And turne *Apostate*: Love will
> Part of the way be met; or sit stone-still.
> On then, and though you slow-
> ly go, yet, howsoever, go. *(ll. 51–60)*

The bride is deemed wise for having plied her groom with coyness and thus made herself a rare and precious commodity. But the time has come for her to meet him halfway, and this can only be achieved by renouncing allegiance to her reliable coquetries. The command to 'turne *Apostate*' raises an enticing parallel to Henrietta when we recall Marcelline's suggestion that the Princess, like her father, was a closet Protestant. But I am not sure that Herrick uses the language to comment on religious faith *per se*. It is fairer to say that the phrase reflects the pressurized state of aristocratic marriage politics, where mutual love does not emerge from some mythopoeic merging of the lily and the rose but rather requires radical agential force, something akin to

apostasy.[40] The bride's movements are choreographed with painstaking precision, particularly in the halting lines that complete the stanza: 'On then, and though you slow- / ly go, yet, howsoever, go'. She is allowed to proceed forward, but only at a pace so deliberate that it guarantees her abject compliance.

The precautions taken to ensure an orderly procession *en route* to the wedding chamber are accordingly vigilant. As the bride is guided to her chamber, the poem's speaker orders her to 'let the Young-men and Bride-maids share / Your garters; and their joynts / Encircle with the Bride-grooms Points' (ll. 78–80), a sanitized version of the ill-mannered (albeit apocryphal) custom of stealing the bride's garters and the groom's points after the wedding ceremony. The bride can prevent a fracas by giving up her garters before they are taken. The erstwhile eager young men who would have them, in turn, are charged

> that no strife,
> (Farther then Gentlenes tends) gets place
> Among ye, striving for her lace:
> O doe not fall
> Foule in these noble pastimes, lest ye call
> Discord in, and so divide
> The youthfull Bride-groom, and the fragrant Bride. *(ll. 82–88)*

The seemingly innocuous custom of the garter becomes the site of a powerful twofold anxiety. It threatens not only to cause strife between the bride and groom but also to rupture the communal bonds that their marriage is meant to forge.

Over the next five stanzas, the speaker goes to considerable lengths to see that the consummation endure no such insult. The bride is neatly stripped of her flowery mantle. Throngs of sirens, cherubim, and Cupids are hastened to canopy the marriage bed, a billowy haven that tempts the young couple to drown themselves 'in floods of Downe' (l. 120). A celebratory toast of sack-posset is shared; according to one legend, the sack makes a man lusty, the sugar makes him kind.[41] Yet even amid this impeccably designed scene of consummation, the threat of the bride's unpredictable sexuality remains a constant presence. Stanzas 10 and 11 both glance nervously at how the wedding night might play out if the preparatory rituals are not strictly observed. If the bride's maids do not undress her, for example, someone else will: 'Then strip her, or unto her / Let him come, who dares undo her' (ll. 99–100). The next stanza hints at another distressing possibility. If she is not bedded at once, her flames of desire might burn out and she won't be 'undone' at all: 'To Bed; or her they'l tire, / Were she an Element of fire' (ll. 109–10).

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40 The phrase 'turne Apostate' also appears in 'The Welcome to Sack' and 'The Farewell to Sack', which circulated in manuscript in the early 1620s. In the companion poems, Herrick playfully addresses sack as an object of holy veneration. In abandoning it, he turns Apostate 'to thy love'; in idolizing it, 'to the strickt command / of Nature'. See *Complete Poetry of Herrick*, vol. 2, pp. 68–73.

41 See John Brand, *Observations on Popular Antiquities: Chiefly Illustrating the Origin of Our Vulgar Customs, Ceremonies, and Superstitions*, ed. by Henry Ellis, 2 vols (London: Charles Knight & Co., 1841), vol. 2, p. 109.

Fears of the bride's recalcitrance are expressed most bluntly in the penultimate stanza of the poem, where the groom is authorized to take her by force:

> But since It must be done, dispatch, and sowe
> Up in a sheet your Bride, and what if so
> It be with Rock, or walles of Brasse,
> Ye Towre her up, as Danae was;
> Thinke you that this,
> Or hell it selfe a powerfull Bulwarke is?
> I tell yee no; but like a
> Bold bolt of thunder he will make his way,
> And rend the cloud, and throw
> The sheet about, like flakes of snow. *(ll. 141–50)*

The bronze tower that held Danae did not keep her safe from Zeus, nor will this groom be denied access to his bride. He is instructed first to erect a barrier to his pleasure, then to tear it down, violently — and he is goaded to build it with rock or brass, materials that fortify nothing so much as the myth of his robust heroism. All that remains in the poem's final stanza is to survey the spoils of victory:

> All now is husht in silence; *Midwife-moone,*
> With all her *Owle-ey'd* issue begs a boon
> Which you must grant; that's entrance; with
> Which extract, all we can call pith
> And quintiscence
> Of Planetary bodies; so commence
> All faire *Constellations*
> Looking upon yee, That two Nations
> Springing from two such Fires,
> May blaze the vertue of their Sires. *(ll. 151–60)*

After a brief post-coital reprieve, the young couple is once again subject to surveillance. They are urged to let in the light of the moon and stars, in the hopes that the propitious effects thereof will be seen in the children they bear. The poem casts a glance to the dynastic implications of the royal match in its reference to 'two Nations' that will 'blaze the vertue of their Sires'.

Such allusions notwithstanding, it is ultimately a confluence of factors that explains the topicality of 'A Nuptiall Song' in the context of the Stuart–Bourbon match. If Herrick did not set out to write the story of a beautiful, somewhat petulant Catholic princess triumphantly won to the true faith by her prince's sexual prowess, he undeniably exploits the proximity of the two nuptials by casting Pulteney and Crew in the image of the newly crowned royals — and by imagining both pairings to be of dynastic consequence. The poem's resonance with the circumstances of Charles and Henrietta Maria's marriage stems from its coincident appearance and radical dissonance with the works issued to observe that marriage. Herrick gives voice to anxieties that were inadmissible

in the authorized discourses of the royal wedding and soon borne out in the dissolution of Stuart–Bourbon relations, all the while celebrating the marriage of a friend for whom he evidently felt the warmest of affection.[42] His epithalamium, like the best examples of its kind, respects the strict protocols, strange customs, and strenuous negotiations that conspire to create a vision of marital harmony.

42 Herrick dedicates several poems in *Hesperides* to Crew, including 'A Hymne to Sir Clipseby Crew', 'To Sir Clipsebie Crew' and 'An Ode to Sir Clipsebie Crew', as well as an epitaph on the death of his wife, 'Upon the Lady Crew'.

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