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# Translating Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in Tudor Balladry

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*This article provides the first sustained overview and analysis of the reception of Ovid's "Metamorphoses" in sixteenth-century English ballad culture. It highlights a significant tradition of translating materials from this ancient Roman source into the stuff of vernacular song—a phenomenon that can be traced back as far as 1552. Positing that popular music must have played a crucial role in shaping Tudor ideas about the "Metamorphoses," this study draws attention to the textual, visual, aural, and kinetic dimensions of the Ovidiana that was regularly read, seen, heard, sung, and even danced to by early modern consumers of mythological ballads.*

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## INTRODUCTION

IN ACT 4, scene 1 of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (ca. 1595) by William Shakespeare (1564–1616), Nick Bottom awakens from a conspicuously Ovidian dream—a fantastical, hazily recalled vision involving his own partial transformation into an ass à la Midas of *Metamorphoses* 11.<sup>1</sup> Notably, his first instinct upon returning to consciousness is to commission “Peter Quince to write a ballad” that will, appropriately enough, be entitled “Bottom’s Dream.”<sup>2</sup> Intended to chronicle the humble weaver’s transformative adventures, this piece would, or so Bottom believes, perfectly complement the production of *The Most Lamentable Comedy and Most Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisbe* being rehearsed by the “rude mechanicals” in the Athenian forest.<sup>3</sup> To this effect, Bottom suggests it might well be performed at the play’s “latter end.”<sup>4</sup> Seeking to shed new light on the *Metamorphoses*’ place in early modern

A preliminary version of this study was presented at the “Ovid across Europe” conference organized by Marta Balzi and Gemma Pellissa Prades at the University of Bristol in 2017. I am grateful to *Renaissance Quarterly*’s anonymous readers for their valuable commentary. English translations of Ovid’s Latin throughout this essay are drawn from the Loeb editions.

<sup>1</sup> Dates provided for dramatic works throughout this study adhere to probable years of first performance (rather than first printing) as identified in Wiggins and Richardson.

<sup>2</sup> Shakespeare, 885 (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* [hereafter *MND*] 4.1.207–08).

<sup>3</sup> Shakespeare, 855, 870 (*MND* 1.2.9–10, 3.2.9).

<sup>4</sup> Shakespeare, 885 (*MND* 4.1.209). Presumably Bottom here imagines “Bottom’s Dream” as a type of jig. For recent work on the relationship between ballads and jigs, see Clegg.

musical culture, this article reveals Bottom's identification of Ovidiana as excellent fodder for a ballad to be far from unique. This is a conviction that seems to have been shared by many of Shakespeare's antecedents and contemporaries: though this phenomenon has passed largely unremarked in prior scholarship, from the 1550s onward, mythological episodes from Ovid's ancient *perpetuum carmen*, or everlasting song, were recurrently being set to new tunes in early modern England.<sup>5</sup> This article seeks to uncover the secret history of the *Metamorphoses'* reception in Tudor balladry.

Let me lay the groundwork for this discussion with a few further examples. During the masked ball in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* (1598), there is another "nod to ballad culture" that simultaneously functions as an allusion to Ovid's Roman work.<sup>6</sup> As they interact, perhaps flirtatiously, during the masquerade dance, Don Pedro and Hero compose a set of impromptu lyrics based on the story of Philemon and Baucis from *Metamorphoses* 8:

DON PEDRO	My visor is Philemon's roof. Within the house is Jove.
HERO	Why, then, your visor should be thatched.
DON PEDRO	Speak low if
	you speak love. <sup>7</sup>

This Shakespearean pair here rattles off an "alternation of tetrameter and trimeter lines" in a verbal exchange that, as Philip D. Collington has observed, "replicates the common ballad stanza form."<sup>8</sup>

Such intersections between early modern Ovidianism and early modern musical culture are not exclusive to the well-studied Shakespearean comedies of the 1590s. In *Apius and Virginia*, a dramatic work possibly written by Richard Bower (fl. 1545–61) that antedates *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Much Ado About Nothing* by at least thirty years, the play's titular heroine and her parents advertise their collective virtue by singing a mythological ditty illustrating—as its refrain rather gratingly reminds us—the moralizing precept that "The trustiest treasure in earth as wee see, / Is man, wife and children in one to agree."<sup>9</sup> Their cautionary exempla are decidedly Ovidian, with two deriving

<sup>5</sup> For Ovid's characterization of the *Metamorphoses* as "*perpetuum . . . carmen*," see Ovid, 2004, 2 (*Metamorphoses* [hereafter *Met.*] 1.4).

<sup>6</sup> Collington, 41.

<sup>7</sup> Shakespeare, 1426 (*Much Ado About Nothing* 2.1.80–82).

<sup>8</sup> Collington, 41.

<sup>9</sup> R. B., 280–81 (lines 141–42, 149–50, 155–56, 165–66, 171–72). It is difficult to precisely date *Apius and Virginia*. The play was entered in the Stationers' Register in 1567–68, though the earliest printed edition now surviving dates to nearly a decade later: Arber, 1:357. It might well have been performed several years before its entry in the Stationers'

(like Hero and Don Pedro's aforementioned Baucis and Philemon reference) from *Metamorphoses* 8:

MATER	When time King Nisus would not let his daughter [Scylla] to be taught, Of any one correcting hand to nurture to be brought, She, void of duty, cut his lockes and golden tresses cleare, Whereby his realme was overrun, and she was payd her hier, .....
VIRGINIA	When Dedalus from Creete did flie With Icarus his ioy: He, naught regarding fathers words, Did seeke his owne anoy. He mounted up into the skies, Wherat the Gods did frowne, And Phoebus sore his winges did frie, And hedlonge flings him downe. <sup>10</sup>

Ovidiana likewise permeates the lyrics of “The panges of loue and louers fl[i]ttes” (fig. 1), a song that first appeared near the start of Elizabeth I’s reign (r. 1558–1603) and was destined to remain “perhaps the most widely imitated ballad” in England for decades to come.<sup>11</sup> Generally assumed to be the work of William Elderton (fl. 1559–92), the era’s best-known composer of ballads, “The panges of loue” is comprised, like the song in *Apius and Virginia*, of a succession of legendary exempla. These classical citations are designed to convince the implicitly male narrator’s beloved to give him “The graunt of [her] goodwill.”<sup>12</sup> Alongside learned-sounding references to Solomon, Paris, Troilus, and Leander, several examples of love’s supposed “blisfulnesse” are drawn from books 4, 9, and 14 of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*: “Priamus / That promised his love to mete / And founde by fortune marveilous / A bloudie cloth before his feete”; Jupiter who “by learned lore / . . . changed his shape . . . / . . . To

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Register, however. Notably, its probable author Bower was Master of the Chapel Royal from 1545 to 1561: Sanders et al., 122.

<sup>10</sup> R. B., 281 (lines 151–64).

<sup>11</sup> Rollins, 1919b, 51. On this ballad’s popularity (as well the broader trajectory of Elderton’s career), see Rollins, 1920. This ballad appears in the Stationers’ Register in 1558–59 and seems to have been reregistered some years later: Arber, 1:96, 127.

<sup>12</sup> Only one broadside copy printed in 1559 now exists. Although the lyrics that appear on this broadsheet have been printed without musical direction, information on the tune can be found in Simpson, 410–12; Duffin, 245–47. The tune itself became widely known as “King Solomon,” due to the prominent mention of this biblical figure in the first line of this ballad’s lyrics. An audio recording of this ballad is available online at the English Broadside Ballad Archive (hereafter EBBA).

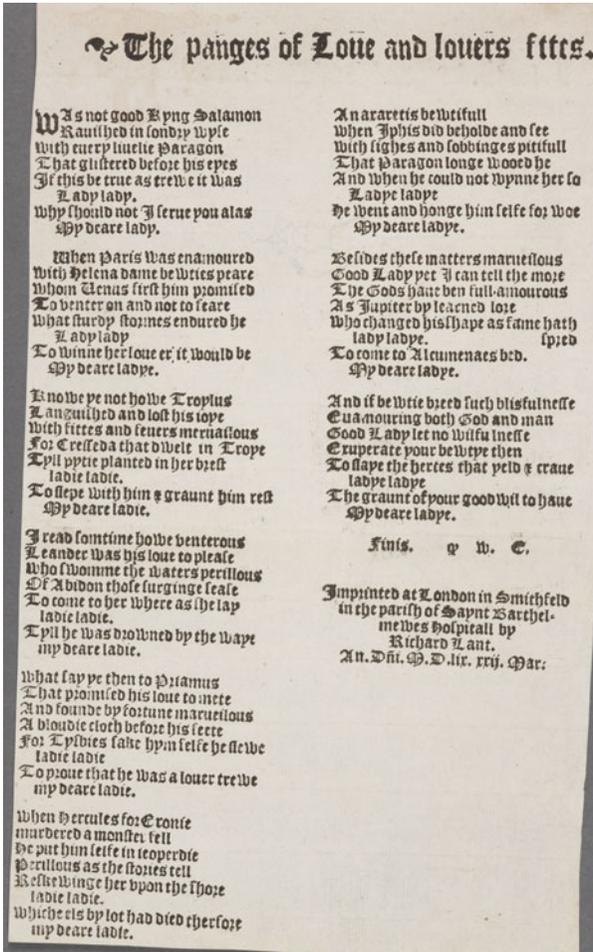


Figure 1. William Elderton. "The panges of loue and louers fittes," London, 1559. RB 18292. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

come to Alcumenas bed"; Hercules who "for Eronie / murdered a monster fell"; and "Anaxaretis bewtifull" whom "Iphis did beholde and see / with sighes and sobbinges pitifull."<sup>13</sup>

As long ago as 1939, Herschel C. Baker made the pertinent observation that "the ballads of the late sixteenth century are fairly studded with allusions to

<sup>13</sup> I cite the lyrics of Elderton's single-sheet ballad from Huntington Library, Britwell 18292; see Elderton.

ancient literature.”<sup>14</sup> And yet—even though individual tales from the *Metamorphoses* were being disseminated to English audiences in ballad format even before the appearance of Arthur Golding’s much-vaunted 1567 translation of Ovid’s full text—little has been made of this fact in more recent surveys and investigations of early modern Ovidianism. This represents, I would suggest, the coalescence of multiple scholarly trends. First, although, as attested by the publication of the five-volume *Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature* (2012–16), classical reception is a flourishing subfield within English studies, the vast majority of work conducted in this area remains purely textual in nature.<sup>15</sup> This tendency is similarly felt in more narrowly focused collections such as John F. Miller and Carole E. Newlands’s *Handbook to the Reception of Ovid* (2014) or Charles Martindale’s *Ovid Renewed* (1988), which devote limited space to Ovid’s place in postclassical visual culture and even less to the aural or kinetic facets of this Roman author’s reception.<sup>16</sup> Second, much of the existing work on early modern English Ovidianism focuses heavily upon the period after 1590 and disproportionately concentrates on locating and explicating allusions, adaptations, and appropriations within the individual canons of major authors or across high-profile genres, such as the late Elizabethan epyllion. Third, in the wake of influential studies such as Jonathan Bate’s *Shakespeare and Ovid* (1993) and Lynn Enterline’s *The Rhetoric of the Body from Ovid to Shakespeare* (2000), recent considerations of Ovid’s reception in sixteenth-century England have tended to read early modernity’s literary engagements with Ovidiana through the lens of idealized pedagogical practice: they typically begin by referencing the rhetorical exercises of the grammar schools and the ancient poet’s canonical status in the bilingual humanist curriculum.<sup>17</sup> The convergence of these tendencies has led to a current neglect of sixteenth-century England’s spate of Ovidian ballads—songs which began to emerge in the 1550s, were often anonymously composed, and must have been calculated to appeal to an array of socially and educationally variegated audiences.

In drawing fresh attention to a tradition of mythological balladry that can be traced back as far as the reign of Edward VI (r. 1537–53), this article develops

<sup>14</sup> Baker, 981.

<sup>15</sup> See Hopkins and Martindale.

<sup>16</sup> Miller and Newlands; Martindale. An analogous weighting toward the textual facets of Ovid’s postclassical afterlife can be found, for instance, among the essays grouped in the “Literary Receptions” section of *A Companion to Ovid* (2009) or in those collected in the “Receptions” section of *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid* (2002): Knox, 397–484; Hardie, 249–367.

<sup>17</sup> Both Bate’s and Enterline’s studies, in turn, were heavily reliant upon the earlier work of T. W. Baldwin.

the argument that there were other prevalent modes of interpreting and interacting with Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in sixteenth-century England that extended far beyond the metaphorical walls of the humanist schoolroom. This could include, for instance, the literal walls of the domestic and commercial spheres. As Juliet Fleming's work on early modern material culture has demonstrated, "Tudor and Stuart methods of interior decoration included . . . cloth hangings; 'wall papers' produced specifically for the purpose by printers who recycled spoiled pages by printing decorative patterns . . . on their backs; and painted cloths," as well as tapestries and wall paintings—all of which media sometimes served as visual conduits for the dissemination of Ovidiana.<sup>18</sup> What Catherine Belsey has called the "widely unacknowledged" yet "rich visual culture of early modern English households" could also encompass mythologically inspired masonry, plasterwork, tableware, metalwork, carved furniture, and embroidery.<sup>19</sup> Printed ballads, which functioned "not simply [as] poems or songs but . . . aesthetic artefacts," represent another such material channel through which knowledge of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* must have spread in early modern England, infiltrating the "shops of Artificers" and "cottages of poore husbandmen" just as readily as the "houses of great Personages."<sup>20</sup> At some times, the lyrics and tune indications for such ballads could be found collected in printed miscellanies. At others, they were mass produced in a single-sheet broadside format that, as the sixteenth century drew to a close, increasingly tended to feature accompanying woodcut illustrations. In this latter form, they were sold at the relatively affordable price of one or two for a penny and pressed into utilitarian service as "material for lining tins, fuel for the fire, and toilet paper," as well as common decorative objects enlivening the surfaces of private dwellings and public venues alike.<sup>21</sup>

Fundamentally intermedial in nature, the early modern printed ballad—whether independently issued as a folio-sized broadside or anthologized in the pages of a more substantial book—is simultaneously imbued with not only textual and visual, but also aural and kinetic dimensions. Lyrics were often presented alongside an indication that they were meant to be sung "to

<sup>18</sup> Fleming, 60. See also Watt, 179–253; Jenkinson.

<sup>19</sup> Belsey, 180. In addition, Continental editions of the *Metamorphoses* were often lavishly illustrated; many of these images became, in turn, popular design models for artists working in other media. In the English context, imported prints from the Netherlands, Germany, France, and Italy were habitually used as sources of inspiration for a wide range of Elizabethan material artifacts. On this latter point, see Wells-Cole. For an overview of Ovidian prints in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, see Andreoli.

<sup>20</sup> Fumerton, 498; Bownd, sigs. Ii1<sup>r</sup>–Iir<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> Marsh, 2004, 171.

the tune of” one of the many popular melodies in current circulation, and, like tunes, woodcuts (when used) were often recycled, thus rendering the ballad a “multi-media production . . . pulsat[ing] with cross-references and associations” that are only now beginning to be explored in contemporary scholarship.<sup>22</sup> What is more, despite their indisputably pervasive physical presence in early modern English culture, ballads also crossed apparent boundaries between materiality and immateriality in performance. Memorized songs could and did spread independently of their printed forms: words, tunes, and accompanying dance steps were transmitted from body to body, and sometimes these various elements even moved from the aural and kinetic back to the textual again—as when, for example, lyrics or melodies from ballads in print circulation were recopied by hand into manuscript miscellanies.

“What lacke ye, what Is’t ye lack, what lacke ye? Come along and buy nothing: fine Ballades, new Ballades, what lack ye?”<sup>23</sup> Thus calls out a fictive vendor in *The three lordes and three ladies of London* (ca. 1588), a play that depicts “fine Ballades” being advertised alongside such other wares as “fine Canuas,” “fine Holland cloath,” and “fine kniues.”<sup>24</sup> Despite—or perhaps because of—their marketplace ubiquity, such “fine Ballades” frequently appear as objects of mockery or scorn in sixteenth-century writing. Thomas Nashe (ca. 1567–1601) was only one in a long line of early modern English authors to complain about the alleged dearth of aesthetic merit in those “babbling Ballets . . . which euery rednose Fidler hath at his fingers end, and euery ignorant Ale knight will breath foorth ouer the potte.”<sup>25</sup> Though, as Hyder E. Rollins noted a century ago, “much of this abuse must be taken *cum grano salis*,” these lingering associations of balladry with vulgarity may also go some way toward explaining the popular music lacuna in studies of early modern Ovidianism.<sup>26</sup> The time, however, is ripe for reassessment. Recent digitization projects, including, most notably, Patricia Fumerton’s English Broadside Ballad Archive (EBBA), have made the detailed and comparative study of ballad texts, images, and tunes increasingly feasible for researchers in our own era.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the ongoing interdisciplinary work of scholars

<sup>22</sup> Marsh, 2015, 96. The literature treating ballads’ social functions, cultural meanings, and historical modes of circulation is vast and continues to rapidly expand. Works that I have found particularly helpful include (among others in my bibliography): Rollins, 1919a; Rollins, 1924; Poulton; Sternfeld; Würzbach; Watt; Smith, 1999, 168–205; Livingston; Marsh, 2004; Marsh, 2010, 225–327; McShane; Williams; Fumerton, 2018.

<sup>23</sup> Wilson, sig. C3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> Wilson, sig. H3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> Nashe, 1589, sig. B4<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> Rollins, 1919a, 301–02.

<sup>27</sup> EBBA can be accessed online at <http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu>.

including Bruce R. Smith, Christopher Marsh, and Sarah F. Williams is suggestive of the ways in which balladry was both more semiotically sophisticated and more thoroughly imbricated in early modern literary and performance culture than has been traditionally acknowledged. I seek to further such conversations by considering how, as ballads, mythological tales from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* must have been read, seen, heard, sung, and danced to throughout sixteenth-century England. The works here under consideration were indubitably accessed by audiences both literate and nonliterate, reaching, by various means, all levels of society: the "Porter," the "Oyster wife," the "cutpurse ready with a Knife," the "cuntry Client," the "Cunstable," the "whore," the "Serieant," and the "debtor poore," as well as more socially eminent or educationally exclusive groups.<sup>28</sup> These multimedia works circulated not only in London's print- and theater-saturated environs, but also (with the help of petty chapmen and itinerant ballad-mongers) in considerably more far-flung locales, for the "singing and selling of ballads" transpired in "euery corner of Cities & market Townes of the Realme."<sup>29</sup> In what follows, I first identify exemplars and then codify the general characteristics of Tudor songs in which episodes from the *Metamorphoses* were themselves metamorphosed into the stuff of popular balladry.

#### LOCATING OVIDIAN BALLADS

While the broadside ballad has been identified as "by far the most printed medium" in early modern England, the relative fragility and ephemerality of this format makes uncovering the history of Ovid's sixteenth-century musical reception challenging.<sup>30</sup> One invaluable source of information, however, is the Stationers' Register.<sup>31</sup> Titles preserved within these records provide a tantalizing glimpse into a trove of lost material. Take, for instance, the entry for a "ballett intituled *VOLCON and VENUS*" entered in 1562–63 and presumably related to the events of *Metamorphoses* 4.169–89.<sup>32</sup> This ballad, which seems to have appeared

<sup>28</sup> Elizabethan balladry's range of audiences are thusly enumerated in "In Philonem" (1599): Davies, C4<sup>v</sup>–D1<sup>r</sup>. Notably, illiteracy did not prevent consumers from enjoying broadside ballads in various ways. Indeed, one late sixteenth century commentator noted the existence of "many" who, "though they cannot reade themselues, nor any of theirs, yet will haue *many Ballades* set vp in their houses": Bownd, sig. Ii1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> Chettle, sig. C1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> Fumerton and Guerrini, 1. For a similarly phrased claim, see Jackson, 131.

<sup>31</sup> Granted its charter in 1557, the London Stationers' Company began in that year to keep comprehensive records; its licensing mechanism was the Stationers' Register in which all ballads as well as books were meant to be entered prior to their printing.

<sup>32</sup> Arber, 1:215; Ovid, 2004, 190.

in print as “A mery dema[nde and answe[r] therunto] betwene Vu[lc]an and Venus],” now exists only in fragmentary form: a shred of tattered paper bearing only a single column of its (admittedly, rather loosely Ovidian) text survives in the collections of the Exeter Cathedral Library (fig. 2).<sup>33</sup> A spate of additional, now fully lost ballads entered in the 1560s were probably likewise derived, whether directly or indirectly, from the *Metamorphoses*. Indeed, something of an Ovidian trend in balladry seems to have been occurring in this decade. The Stationers’ Register includes such entries as “a Dytty in the prayse of a high and mighty prynce &c / ORPHEOUS and his wyf” and a “ballett intituled no man could gett ATALANTA by Runnyng,” both very plausibly drawn from *Metamorphoses* 10.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, a “ballett intituled the mesyrable state of kynge MEDAS” and a “ballett intituled the vnfortunate ende of IPHIS sonne vnto TEUCER kynge of Troye” suggest themselves as likely musical translations of material from *Metamorphoses* 11 and 14, and “a ballett intituled ACRYSIOS” might well have been based on events recounted in *Metamorphoses* 3–5.<sup>35</sup> It is also worth observing that, if the Stationers’ Register for the succeeding period of mid-1571 to mid-1576 still survived, we would likely find more entries for ballads similarly based on Ovidian mythology.

Not every ballad printed in sixteenth-century England was duly licensed and recorded in the Stationers’ Register, however.<sup>36</sup> This situation is additionally complicated by the fact that, as Carole Rose Livingston has observed, in the extant corpus of sixteenth-century broadside ballads “secular fictions of all sorts . . . are severely underrepresented.”<sup>37</sup> Such pieces, she supposes, were simply “read to bits” as a direct “consequence of their popularity.”<sup>38</sup> This means

<sup>33</sup> Livingston, 252–53. This reconstruction of the ballad’s full title is based upon evidence from the surviving fragment in conjunction with the apparent re-registration of this ballad in 1564–65, at which point it was alternatively called “a balett intituled the mery Demande and answe[r] thervnto”: Arber, 1:260.

<sup>34</sup> Arber, 1:312, 416.

<sup>35</sup> Arber, 1:401, 403, 386. It is possible that the second of these refers to Thomas Hedley’s ballad on the judgment of Midas discussed later in this article.

<sup>36</sup> Estimates on ballad registration rates vary. Whereas Rollins submits that a mere half of all ballads were entered and Livingston proposes that perhaps even “fewer” than this “were ever licensed or otherwise recorded,” Watt has more recently posited that the number was closer to two-thirds: Rollins, 1919a, 281; Livingston, 38; Watt, 42. In any event, noncompliance rates were relatively high. It has been observed that “the temptation to print without license must have been strong, for the fine inflicted upon detection was usually not severe, while there was always the chance of evading the law”: Rollins, 1919a, 283.

<sup>37</sup> Livingston, 817.

<sup>38</sup> Livingston, 818.



that, in all likelihood, there were many more musical translations of the *Metamorphoses* in wide circulation—being sold from the shops and stalls of London booksellers, hawked on street corners and “in euery Faire and Market,” peddled door to door throughout the countryside, vocalized by singers standing “vpon benches and barrels heads,” used to entertain “co[m]mon people at Christmasse diners & brideales,” and hung as artwork or memorial aids “in tauernes & alehouses and such other places of base resort”—than we now possess direct evidence for.<sup>39</sup>

One might consider that, though no corresponding entry seems to appear in the Stationers’ Register, several late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century sources mention an Ovidian-sounding ballad known as “In Crete When Dedalus,” or often simply “In Crete.” This ballad is known to have been written prior to 1570, given that audiences were instructed to sing another ballad printed in that year to its tune.<sup>40</sup> Passing references to “In Crete” often crop up in other texts, as well. The *Fearfull and lamentable effects of two dangerous comets* (ca. 1590) refers to “Ale-knights” enjoying “*In Créete when Dedalus, ouer a cup,*” and it was once joked that Gabriel Harvey (ca. 1552–1631) found this song as delectable as “food from heauen, and more transporting and raushing, than *Platoes* Discourse of the immortalitie of the soule was to *Cato*.”<sup>41</sup> Mentions of “In Crete” also appear in early modern drama. In *Monsieur Thomas* (ca. 1615), for example, a fiddler first advertises his ability to sing ballads including “*In Creet when Dedimus first began*” and then proceeds to belt out the following lines: “The loue of Greece and it tickled him so, / That he devised a way to goe.”<sup>42</sup> And in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607), when Old Merri-thought sings “When earth and seas from me are reft, / The skyes aloft for me are left,” he is quoting this same song.<sup>43</sup> Yet an example like “In Crete” again points to the vagaries of ballad survival. However widely this song may have circulated (if the above mentions are any indicator), there is no extant printed text of “In Crete” that can be dated to the early modern period.

<sup>39</sup> Bownd, sig. Ii1<sup>v</sup>; Puttenham, sig. M1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> Howell, sig. F4<sup>r</sup>. Information on the tune “In Crete” can be found in Simpson, 362–65; Duffin, 215–17.

<sup>41</sup> *Fearfull and lamentable effects*, sig. B1<sup>v</sup>; Nashe, 1596, sig. L1<sup>r</sup>. It is worth also noting the possible relationship of “In Crete” with the mythological ditty in R. B.’s *Apus and Virginia*. Virginia’s portion of the family’s shared song opens with the similar sounding “When Dedalus from Creete did flie”: R. B., 218 (line 157). As Rollins has noted, it was not uncommon in this period for “two or three stanzas from a popular ballad” to be “borrow[ed] . . . and insert[ed] in a new one”: Rollins, 1919a, 284.

<sup>42</sup> Beaumont and Fletcher, 4:476, 478 (3.3.41, 88–89).

<sup>43</sup> Beaumont and Fletcher, 1:27 (1.415–16).

Current knowledge of its lyrics, which retell the events of *Metamorphoses* 8.184–233, comes only via a handful of manuscript sources.<sup>44</sup>

An even more ghostly example is a ballad based on *Metamorphoses* 1.502–58 that begins “When Daphne from faire Phoebus did flie.”<sup>45</sup> Though no Tudor imprints survive and it does not appear to have been registered in the era, this is a ballad that almost certainly had its origins in the sixteenth century; its melody, at least, is known to have been popular in the Elizabethan period.<sup>46</sup> Two stanzas of verse are preserved in a musical manuscript compiled between 1615 and 1626, and the full lyrics describing the nymph’s pursuit by Apollo and transformation into a bay tree (a metamorphosis here achieved via the intervention of Diana, rather than Daphne’s father) can be found in early seventeenth-century printed broadsides, where it is described as “A pleasant new ballad of Daphne” (fig. 3).<sup>47</sup>

The lyrics of another Ovidian song with Tudor origins may be partially preserved in the text of *Cupids whirligig* (1607), an early Jacobean play usually attributed to Edward Sharpham (1576–1608) that was originally performed by the Children of the King’s Revels. As act 3, scene 1 of this drama opens, the Young Lord Nonsuch strolls onstage singing:

*Venus* lay where *Mars* had found her,  
And in warlike armes he bound her,  
*Cupid* cride, and *Vulcane* spide:  
And thereon threw the Sciclops,  
But his horne, begatte his scorne,  
With all the little Gods mockes.<sup>48</sup>

This song, like “A mery dema[nde and answere therunto],” invokes the tale of Venus’s capture in flagrante delicto by Vulcan in *Metamorphoses* 4. And, though

<sup>44</sup> Ovid, 2004, 418–22. Two of these manuscripts are incomplete, preserving only two and four stanzas of lyrics, respectively; only one known version contains a full nine stanzas of lyrics. The two-stanza version appears in the British Library’s Harley MS 7578 and is described and transcribed in Sidgwick. Noting also the existence of four-stanza version in the Bodleian Library’s Tanner MS 306, Rollins, 1927, provides a full transcription of the nine-stanza version found in the Bodleian Library’s MS Rawlinson Poet. 112, which he dates to approximately 1592.

<sup>45</sup> Ovid, 2004, 36–42.

<sup>46</sup> Payne, 27. The music (sans lyrics) is included, for instance, in the Dowland Lutebook, so-called for its associations with John Dowland (ca. 1563–1626). This manuscript, now in the Folger Shakespeare Library’s collections (Folger V.b.280), is dated to the 1590s. Information on the tune of “Daphne” can be found in Simpson, 163–64; Duffin, 119–21; Ward, 1967, 36.

<sup>47</sup> Earle, 86–87. Seventeenth-century imprints include “A pleasant new ballad of Daphne,” Roxburghe 1.388. An audio recording of this ballad is available online via EBBA.

<sup>48</sup> Sharpham, sig. E3<sup>r</sup>.

The Shepherds Delight.  
To the Tune of Frog Galliard.



A pleasant new Ballad of Daphne  
To a new Tune.

**W**hen Daphne from faire heebis did flee  
the West winde most sweetly  
D to blow in her face:  
Her liken & carle scarce shadowed her eyes,  
The Oak creech, & pittie, and held her in chase,  
Sway R. Rumph. Sway R. Rumph, cryes Apollo,  
Carry and caie thee, sweet R. Rumph say,  
L. ion no? T. yger both thee follow:  
T. utue thy faire eyes and look this away.  
D. urne & pittie carret,  
& no let our red Rys meet:  
Pittie & Daphne, pittie & pittie me.  
pittie & Daphne pittie me.

She gaue no care unto his cry,  
But still did neglect him the more he did moe,  
He still did encreas, she still did deme,  
And earnestly prayes him to leaue her alone,  
A cur neuer cryes Apollo.  
V. nlesse to loue thou do consent:  
But st. ll with my voice to hallovi,  
He erie to thee while life he spent,  
But if thou turn to me,  
I will praise thy felicitie  
Pittie & Daphne, pittie & me,  
pittie & Daphne, pittie me.

Away like Venus Dowe she flies,  
The red blood her buskins did run all adowne,  
He is laintiffloue she now denies  
Crying, help help Diana and save my retournes  
Wanton wanton lust to neare me.  
Cold and chast Diana aid,  
Let the earth a Virgin heare mee:  
D. y detourne me quick a maid:  
Diana heard her pray,  
And turned her to a Bay,  
Pittie & Daphne, pittie, & pittie me,  
pittie & Daphne, pittie me,

Amazed stood Apollo then,  
When he beheld Daphne turn'd as the desired,  
A curst I am aboue Gods and men,  
With grife and laments my fences are tired,  
Farwel false Daphne most unkinde,  
My loue is buried in this graue,  
Long haue I sought loue, yet loue could not finde,  
Therefore chis is my Epitaph  
This tree doth Daphne couer,  
That neuer pittied lober,  
Farwel false Daphne that would not pittie me  
though not my Loue, yet art thou my Tree.

FINIS. 45. 6. 28. 34.

Printed by the Assignes of Thomas Symcocke.

Oh wonder full there springs a flower,  
faire befall chose daintie sweets,  
And by that flower there stands a bower,  
where all the heavenly Rutes meetes,  
And in that Bower there stands a Chappre,  
fringed all about with gold,  
And therein lies the fairest faire,  
that ever did mine eyes behold.

It was Phillida faire and bright,  
and the Shepheards onely top,  
She whom e Venus most did spight,  
and the blindef little Boy.  
It was she the wisest rich,  
whome all the world did top to see.  
It was Ipha, que the which,  
there was none but onely she

Thou art the Shepheards Queene,  
pittie me thy wo full swaine.  
For by thy vertue haue been seene,  
dead men restord to life againe:  
Look on me now with thy faire eyes,  
one smiling tooke and I am gone.  
Looke on me for I am he,  
thy poore afflicted Corridon,

Dead am I to all delights,  
except thy mercy quicken me  
Ohan oh Queene, or else I die,  
a salte for chis my maladye,  
The while we sing with cherefull noyse,  
wood Rymthes and Satyres all may play,  
With liker sounding spulicks voice,  
reioycing at this happy day.

Figure 3. "A pleasant new ballad of Daphne" appears alongside "The shepherds delight," London, ca. 1619–29. © British Library Board. Roxburghe 1.388.

—again—we possess no early modern imprint that preserves this piece in full and cannot trace its origins through the Stationers' Register, it is nevertheless conceivable that the mythological ditty sung by the Young Lord Nonsuch would have been familiar to its earliest audiences of Sharpham's play by virtue of having earlier circulated in printed form.

My above examples hardly represent the first English attempts to musically translate material from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, however. Despite the odds being stacked against their survival, some sixteenth-century printed copies of ballads based on tales from the *Metamorphoses* do still exist. The earliest exemplar is a broadside of ca. 1552 beginning "Of such as on fantesye decree & discus: on other me[n]s works, lo Ouids tale thus."<sup>49</sup> Written by Thomas Hedley (fl. 1552–67), this work presents material from *Metamorphoses* 11.153–79 similar in character to what one imagines the fanciful Shakespearean ballad of "Bottom's Dream" might contain: the tale of how Midas finds "two eares, as hath an Asse / Newly growen out wher as hys own eares stode."<sup>50</sup> The metamorphosis is here precipitated, as in the *Metamorphoses*, by Midas's faulty adjudication of a musical competition between Pan and Apollo, though Hedley significantly streamlines Ovid's account of the circumstances leading to Midas's fateful judgment (in which the aesthetically challenged and recurrently imprudent king professes to prefer the music of Pan). Hedley's work omits any reference, for example, to Ovid's Tmolus, the mountain god who is, rather than Midas, intended to be the official judge of the competition in *Metamorphoses* 11. Instead, this ballad implies that Midas, who "stode by to Iudge and to decre," was intended or invited to do so. It also makes the foolhardy king's aesthetic rejection of Apollo more emphatic: "But yet thought *Midas* thys musycke lykes not me." The narrative ends directly after Midas's physical transformation, with the ballad's narrator abruptly claiming "I know no more," thus omitting the ending of Ovid's tale wherein Midas unsuccessfully attempts to keep his transformation

<sup>49</sup> I cite the lyrics of Hedley's single-sheet ballad from Short Title Catalogue (STC) 18969.5. No tune is known for Hedley's ballad. Although, as Brown and Taylor, 61–62, have recently remarked, this piece in heroic couplets "has received very little attention as an example of Tudor Ovidianism," scholarship has occasionally identified it as the earliest instance of a standalone tale from the *Metamorphoses* to have been printed in England. See, for example, Oakley-Brown, 2001, 82n24.

<sup>50</sup> Ovid, 1999, 130–32. We know much about the particular circumstances of this ballad's original composition, as it served as a piece of literary commentary on a poetic flyting that raged between Thomas Churchyard (ca. 1523–1604) and Thomas Camell (fl. 1551–52) in the early 1550s. Having been published individually in 1551 and 1552, fifteen poems associated with this flyting were later collected and reprinted together as *The contention betwyxte Churchyard and Camell vpon Dauid Dycers dreame* (1560). On the Churchyard/Camell controversy, see Woodcock, 68–85; Maslen, 2009, 294–99; Livingston, 829–33.

a secret—a part of the *Metamorphoses* memorably misquoted by the Wife of Bath in *The Canterbury Tales* a century and a half earlier.<sup>51</sup>

The survival rates for sixteenth-century books are considerably better than those for single-sheet broadsides, so it is perhaps unsurprising that my next examples derive from three printed miscellanies: *Songes and sonettes* (1557), *A handefull of pleasant delites* (ca. 1566), and *Newe sonets and pretie pamphlets* (1570). In all three of these mid-Tudor collections ballads can be identified that are based upon episodes from the *Metamorphoses*. As Eric Nebeker has persuasively argued, the permeable “links between miscellanies and broadside ballads,” while rarely acknowledged, are nonetheless profound: “the ballad and the lyric were not clearly distinguished early on in literary history,” and we possess “good evidence of crossovers between the two mediums.”<sup>52</sup> Thirteen of the poems printed in *Songes and sonettes*, for instance—a frequently reissued lyric anthology first printed by Richard Tottel (ca. 1528–93)—are known to have been later registered individually for broadside publication.<sup>53</sup> All of this would seem to confirm the often-quoted observation of William Webbe (fl. 1566–91) that it was common among his contemporaries for the lyrics of “poetical ditties” to be “framed according to the numbers” of well-known melodies, “some to Rogero, some to Trenchmore, to downe right Squire, to Galliardes, to Pauines, to Iygges, to Brawles, to all manner of tunes which euerie Fidler knowes.”<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Chaucer, 118 (*Canterbury Tales* [Fragment 3], 950–82).

<sup>52</sup> Nebeker, 991. On the more general relationships between early printed miscellanies and musical culture, see also Maynard, 7–38; Doughtie, 10–20.

<sup>53</sup> Following the initial publication of *Songes and sonettes* (a work better known to many in our own era as Tottel’s *Miscellany*), two further editions of this lyric anthology appeared in 1557. This enormously popular collection spawned a host of later imitations and was itself reprinted in 1559, 1565, 1567, 1574, 1585, and 1587—as well as, quite plausibly, other editions for which evidence no longer survives. For various theories about who was responsible for initially compiling and editing this miscellany, see Rollins, 1965b, 2:85–94, 334–35; Powell. For overviews of its vast impact and influence, see May; Lerer. On the poems from *Songes and sonettes* that were later reprinted as broadsides, see Nebeker, 999; Maynard, 9–13; Doughtie, 13–14; Ward, 1992, 1:81–83. As discussed in both MacFaul and Lerer, one of these poems-cum-ballads even went on to later reemerge on stage in the final act of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* (ca. 1600), where it is sung in a variant form by one of the gravediggers.

<sup>54</sup> Webbe, sig. F4<sup>v</sup>. Just over two decades prior, in *The Court of Virtue* (1565), John Hall had made a similar suggestion. He censoriously notes that those among his contemporaries who “in carnall loue reioyce” were known to gather “Trim songes of loue” and consult “A booke also of songes” to “sinfully with tune and voice / syng their songes in pleasant stile”: Hall, 15. This is a practice that seems to date back at least as far as the reign of Edward VI, for in William Baldwin’s *Canticles or balades of Salomon* (1549), reference is made to “baudy balades of lecherous loue that commonly are indited and song of idle courtiers in princes and noble mens houses”: W. Baldwin, 1549, sig. A3<sup>v</sup>.

Chronologically, the earliest example of an Ovidian song preserved in a printed miscellany is “The Tale of Pigmalion with conclusion vpon the beauty of his loue,” a work of uncertain authorship that appears in Tottel’s *Songes and sonettes*. This piece succinctly retells the events of *Metamorphoses* 10.247–97, though it cuts off prior to the statue’s transformation and makes a few additional adjustments to the Ovidian narrative.<sup>55</sup> Here, the “conning” artist Pygmalion is vested with a novel motive for creating with his “learned hand a woman fayre” of “Yuorie white.”<sup>56</sup> Unlike his Ovidian precursor who specifically sets out to make a perfect female image, this Pygmalion wants to create a piece of art that will “make his fame endure” beyond his own life-span.<sup>57</sup> Accordingly, before settling on the form of a woman, he considers other options that might “amaze all Greece,” including “some foule, or fish” or a “courser faire . . . barbd for the field” and bearing “on his back a semely knight.”<sup>58</sup> In all likelihood, these anonymously penned lyrics, like a number of other pieces from *Songes and sonettes*, were later reissued in broadside format. It is probable that these lyrics were later reproduced as the “ballett intituled *PYGMALYN*” that was registered just over a decade later by Richard Jones (fl. 1564–1613), a bookseller and printer who published and sold a wide array of ballads and lyric anthologies—often with an Ovidian flavor—in the 1560s and 1570s.<sup>59</sup>

Further instances of ballads with links to the *Metamorphoses* can be found in *A handefull of pleasant delites*, an Elizabethan miscellany with a complex publication history. This work was a collaboration between Clement Robynson (fl.1566), who likely compiled and perhaps also authored some of the collection’s material, and the same Jones mentioned above as the printer of the “ballett intituled *PYGMALYN*.” Though known to have been repeatedly reissued in the late sixteenth century, *A handefull of pleasant delites* now survives in a single copy of ca. 1584—a copy that, regrettably, is missing a single but crucial leaf. Evidence suggests, however, that there were likely at least two earlier editions of this miscellany: one printed in ca. 1566, in which year the Stationers’ Register records the entry of “a boke intituled of *very pleasant Sonettes and storyes in myter* by CLAMENT ROBYNSON,” and one in ca. 1575, of which only one leaf

<sup>55</sup> Ovid, 1999, 82–84.

<sup>56</sup> Rollins, 1965b, 1:125–26.

<sup>57</sup> Rollins, 1965b, 1:125.

<sup>58</sup> Rollins, 1965b, 1:125–26.

<sup>59</sup> Arber, 1:383. No tune is known for this “ballett intituled *PYGMALYN*,” which is not to be confused with another ballad of the era depicting strife between Apelles and Pygmalion. The latter can be found on a broadsheet of 1566 entitled “The fantasies of a troubled mannes head.” On Jones’s career as printer, see Melnikoff.

remains.<sup>60</sup> *A handefull of pleasant delites* makes its associations with musical culture clear. The volume's paratexts describe its contents as "Newly deuised to the newest tunes that are now in vse" and specifically advertise the fact that its lyrics are, as John M. Ward has observed, "written to be sung to *cantus prius facti*."<sup>61</sup> "[E]uerie Sonet," the title page declares, has been "orderly pointed to his proper Tune."<sup>62</sup> The thirty-two ballads represented in the 1584 edition of *A handefull of pleasant delites* (most if not all of which had been previously printed as broadsides) are predominantly amatory in nature. Particularly relevant to this discussion of Ovidian music are "A new sonet of Pyramus and Thisbie," attributed to the otherwise unknown I. (presumably John) Tomson and meant to be sung to the tune of "The Downright Squire," and a ballad narrating "The historie of Diana and Acteon" set to "The Quatre Branles."<sup>63</sup>

Tomson's ballad, which begins in pseudo-epic fashion with the narrator calling upon those "Dames . . . that climbe the mount of *Helicon*" to help him "giue account" of his tale, proceeds to retell, with numerous elisions and omissions, the basic series of events in *Metamorphoses* 4.55–163.<sup>64</sup> A pointedly high-born sounding Pyramus and Thisbe are said with little elaboration to have formed a "great loue" for one another, and their plan to rendezvous alfresco is described in rather risqué terms: they will "their loue vnclouthe" and hope to "louingly

<sup>60</sup> Arber, 1:313. Intriguingly, the Records of the Court of the Stationers' Company indicate that this anthology was banned in August of 1576, at which point 225 copies were confiscated from Jones by the Queen's Commissioners, though these volumes were subsequently "Redeliu'ed" to the printer in June of 1577: Greg and Boswell, lvii and 86–87. One is left to speculate about the precise reason for this apparent ban and also as to whether the existing 1584 edition might represent a censored version of the earlier work (with the purportedly offensive material omitted or replaced). At any rate, this legal hiccup did not prevent *A handefull of pleasant delites* from being reprinted again in the Elizabethan era, likely in many more editions than now survive.

<sup>61</sup> Ward, 1957, 152.

<sup>62</sup> Strictly speaking, the title page's boast is not true: only twenty-six of the thirty-two ballads in the collection have named tunes (though the missing leaf means this number might originally have been twenty-seven). In contrast to *A handefull of pleasant delites*, it has been suggested that "the compiler of the manuscript or manuscripts Tottel was drawing on" when *Songes and sonettes* was assembled "was primarily interested in making a collection of verse, not in assembling a song-book": Maynard, 13.

<sup>63</sup> Information on the tune of "The Downright Squire" can be found in Simpson, 194–96; Duffin, 318–20. Information on the tune of "The Quatre Branles" can be found in Simpson, 586; Duffin, 124–26; Ward, 1957, 155.

<sup>64</sup> Rollins, 1965a, 35; Ovid, 2004, 182–90. Though beyond the scope of this current study (as there is no reason to suppose it is ultimately of Tudor origin), it is worth remarking that another ballad on this subject appeared in broadside format in the seventeenth century: "Pyramus and Thisbe: or love's master-piece," Pepys 3.346.

imbrace, / in loues delight.”<sup>65</sup> No real consideration is given to the parental opposition to their match that features so prominently in Ovid’s version of the tale. Gone, too, are both the wall with its famous chink and the final mulberry tree metamorphosis of Ovid’s text, though a few new details creep in, including the assertion that the “wretched wight” Pyramus “slew certaine” the tale’s lion with “his bright blade” in a misguided attempt to avenge his beloved Thisbe’s presumed death prior to turning the sword upon his own breast.<sup>66</sup>

“The historie of Diana and Acteon” contained in *A handefull of pleasant delites* is unfortunately incomplete, as the sole copy of this book has a single missing leaf that cuts off its ending. The lyrics that remain correspond fairly closely, however, to the events of *Metamorphoses* 3.155–97.<sup>67</sup> The virgin goddess “and her darlings deare” wander through the woodlands until they find “a place, / of waters full cleare” where they decide to “dainteously . . . bathe” and “sport.”<sup>68</sup> They are interrupted when Actaeon “chauns[es] to come by: / And vewe[s] their bodies bare.”<sup>69</sup> Unlike her Ovidian counterpart, who explicitly does not have her arrows at the ready, Diana in this ballad takes her “bowe in . . . hand” and shoots at the “vnluckie” man for a few lines before “Chang [ing] . . . *Acteons* shape” into that of “a hugie Hart.”<sup>70</sup> It is at this point in the narrative, which we are told “is as true as strange,” that the lyrics are cut off by the absence of the next leaf.<sup>71</sup> What we do possess is a complete variant version of this ballad’s lyrics as found in multiple seventeenth-century broadsheets (figs. 4 and 5). These alternative lyrics—titled “A new sonnet shewing how the goddess Diana transformed Acteon into the shape of a hart”—identically begin with the line “Diana and her Darlings dear,” and the song’s narrative sequencing follows the ballad in *A handefull of pleasant delites* fairly closely. Set to “Roger” rather than “The Quatre Branles,” however, “A new sonnet” has been, as Ward puts it, “recast in sturdy, four-line units,” apparently to fit a new and far simpler metrical pattern.<sup>72</sup> At what precise historical moment this revised set of lyrics first appeared is open to debate, though it is not impossible

<sup>65</sup> Rollins, 1965a, 35–36.

<sup>66</sup> Rollins, 1965a, 37.

<sup>67</sup> Ovid, 2004, 134–38.

<sup>68</sup> Rollins, 1965a, 25.

<sup>69</sup> Rollins, 1965a, 25.

<sup>70</sup> Rollins, 1965a, 26.

<sup>71</sup> Rollins, 1965a, 26.

<sup>72</sup> Ward, 1957, 159. I here cite from “A new sonnet,” Roxburghe 1.386–87. Information on the tune of “Roger” can be found in Simpson, 612–14; Duffin, 122–24; Ward, 1967, 70–71; Ward, 1957, 159. An audio recording of this ballad is available online via EBBA.

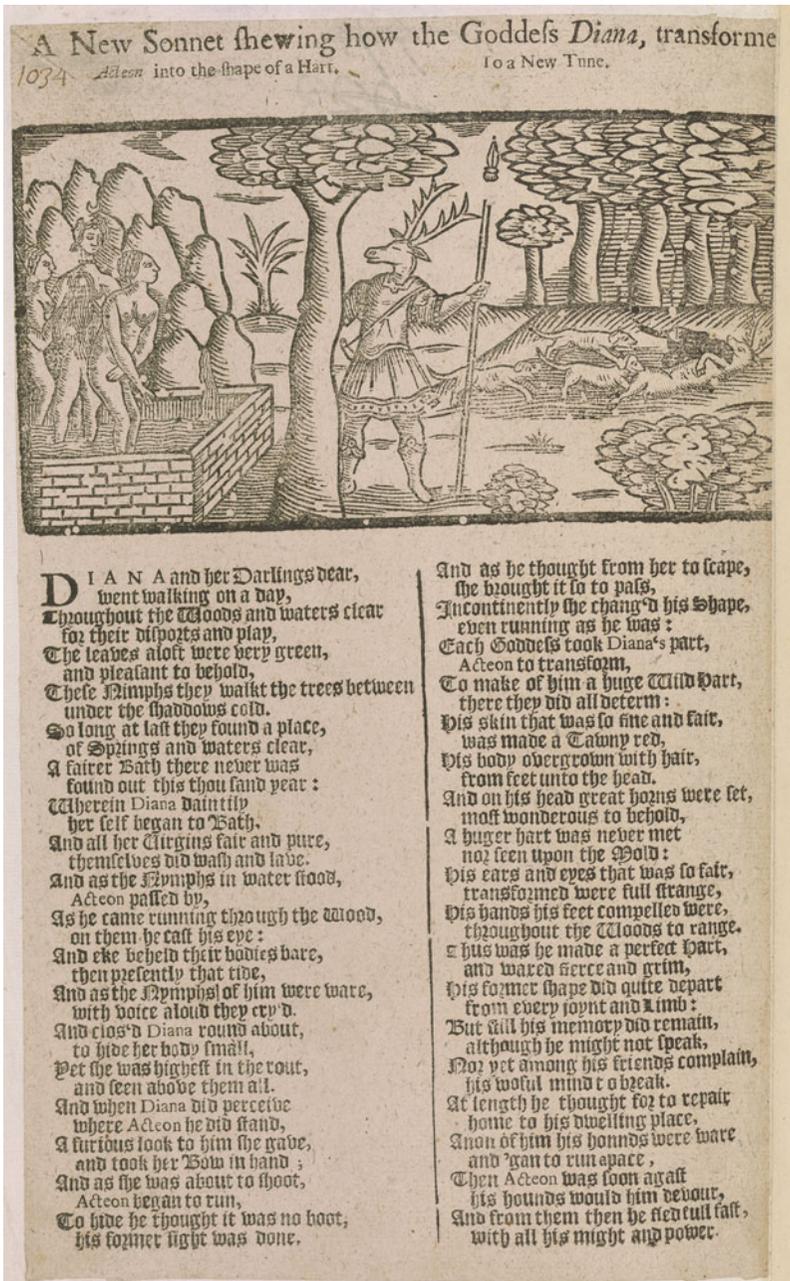


Figure 4. The first part of “A new sonnet shewing how the goddess Diana transformed Acteon into the shape of a hart,” London, ca. 1684–86. Pepys 1.480. By permission of the Pepys Library, Magdalene College, Cambridge.

**A new Sonnet, shewing how the Goddesse Diana**  
Transformed *Acteon* into the shape of a Hart.  
to a New Tune.



**D**IANA and her Darlinges bear,  
went walking on a Day,  
throughout the Wood and Waters clear,  
for their delights and play,  
The leasys aloft were very green  
and pleasant to behold,  
These Nymphs they walkt the trees between,  
under the shadowes cold,  
So long, as last they found a place  
of Springs and Rivers clear,  
A faine Bath there never was  
found out this thousand Year;  
Wherin Diana danceth,  
her self began to bathe,  
And all her Virgins faire and pure,  
themselbes did wash and late,  
And as the Nymphs in water stood,  
ACTEON passed by,  
As he came running through the Wood,  
on them he cast his Eye,  
And eke beheld their bodies bare,  
then presently that tide,  
And as the Nymphs of him were ware,  
with noise aloud they cry'd,  
And clos'd Diana round about,  
to hide her body small;  
But she was highest of the Rout,  
and seen above them all,  
And when Diana did perceive  
where Acteon did stand,  
A fusions look to him she gave,  
and took her Bow in hand,  
And as she went about to shoot,  
Acteon began to run,  
To hide he thought it was no boot,  
his former sight were done.

And as he thought from her to scape,  
she brought it to to pass,  
Incarnent changing his shape,  
even running as he was;  
Each Goddess took Diana's part,  
Acteon to transform,  
To make of him a huge wild Hart,  
there they did all determine;  
His Skin that was so fine and fair,  
was made a tawny Red,  
His body overgrown with hair,  
from feet unto the head;  
and on his head great Horns were set,  
most wondrous to behold,  
a larger Hart was never met,  
nor seen upon the Field;  
His Ears and Eyes that were so fast,  
transformed were full strange,  
His Hands and feet compelled were  
throughout the Woods to range.  
Thus was he made a perfect Hart,  
and ward fierce and grim;  
His former shape did quite depart  
from every joint and limb;  
but still his Memory did remain,  
although he could not speak,  
For ever among his friends complain,  
his woful mind to break,  
at length he thought so to repair  
home to his dwelling place,  
anon of him his Hounds were ware,  
and gan to cry apace:  
When Acteon was lost again,  
his Hounds would him devour;  
and from them then he fled full fast,  
with all his might and power.

Figure 5. The first part of "A new sonnet shewing how the goddess Diana transformed Acteon into the shape of a hart," London, ca. 1686–93. © British Library Board. Roxburghe 1.386.

that they also date to the sixteenth century.<sup>73</sup> In addition to greatly expanding the description of Actaeon's transformation found in "The historie of Diana and Acteon," the broadsheet version also narrates the mortal hunter's terminal encounter with his overzealous hunting dogs.

*A handefull of pleasant delites* also contains the partial lyrics of a third ballad of interest for this discussion, only the latter half of which (again, due to the volume's pesky absent leaf) now survives. An apparent imitation of "The panges of loue," it reproduces the refrain of Elderton's ballad and also adopts its comically ineffectual use of classical exempla.<sup>74</sup> Where the lyrics pick up in mid-song, one finds what has been called "a version of the 'love-juice' story Shakespeare . . . familiarized in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*."<sup>75</sup> Venus, having borne witness to the "sorrowes importunate" of a knight suffering at the hands of a "mercillesse" lady, decides to perform an "exchange" to make "this Ladie faithfully, / . . . loue this Knight aboute all other" while "he vnto the contrarie, / . . . hate[s] her . . . aboute all measure."<sup>76</sup> "Besides these matters meruelous," the ballad's narrator promises to tell his audience of "One other thing" and next launches into the story "Of one whose name was *Narcissus*."<sup>77</sup> This section recounts, with some significant emendations, the tale of Narcissus from *Metamorphoses* 3.407–510, in which the beautiful youth—in a distinctly non-Ovidian twist—dons "womans attire."<sup>78</sup> Catching a fateful glimpse of "his own shadow" in the water below as he crosses "ouer a bridge," Narcissus mistakes his cross-dressed reflection for "A Ladie faire" and eventually drowns in the river after attempting this phantom "Ladie to imbrace."<sup>79</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Intriguingly, in 1565–66, the Stationers' Register records the licensing to Thomas Colwell (who would later go on to print *Newe sonets and pretie pamphlets*) of "a ballet intituled *the Cater bralles bothe Wytty and mery*," which could possibly be an antecedent to the version of "A new sonnet shewing how the goddess Diana transformed Acteon" that appears set to "The Quatre Branles" in *A handefull of pleasant delites*: Arber, 1:298. Later that same year, Alexander Lacy registered "a ballet intituled the goddess DIANA &c": Arber, 1:313. It is, perhaps, possible that this second entry refers to the reworked set of lyrics found in "A new sonnet shewing how the goddess Diana transformed Acteon."

<sup>74</sup> This may be one of the imitations of "The panges of loue" that was entered into the Stationers' Register in 1561–62 or 1564–65: Arber, 1:181, 270. The lyrics were meant to be sung to the tune of "King Solomon" popularized by Elderton's ballad: Ward, 1957, 160.

<sup>75</sup> Rollins, 1965a, 97.

<sup>76</sup> Rollins, 1965a, 29.

<sup>77</sup> Rollins, 1965a, 29.

<sup>78</sup> Ovid, 2004, 152–60; Rollins, 1965a, 30. For Narcissus's wider associations with transvestitism in early modern English culture, see Reid 163–98.

<sup>79</sup> Rollins, 1965a, 30–31.

My final example hails from *Newe sonets and pretie pamphlets*, a collection of short works authored by Thomas Howell (fl. 1560–81).<sup>80</sup> First printed in 1570 by Thomas Colwell (fl. 1556–75), it was reissued at least once thereafter, in 1575.<sup>81</sup> Essentially an auto-miscellany, *Newe sonets and pretie pamphlets* includes a relevant piece entitled “The lamentable historie of Sephalus with the unfortunat end of Procris.” This ballad, which is set to the tune of “Appelles,” recounts narrative material that corresponds roughly to the latter part of Cephalus and Procris’s tale in *Metamorphoses* 7.836–62.<sup>82</sup> Beginning with a long, non-Ovidian prelude describing Cephalus’s many physical virtues and the manner in which he fell in love with Procris, Howell’s ballad evinces what Sarah Annes Brown has identified as “a wider pattern of early modern cross-contamination between Cephalus and Procris and Pyramus and Thisbe.”<sup>83</sup> It seems, in fact, to owe something to Tomson’s earlier ballad on that subject. Apparently “conflat[ing] the two tales together,” his narrator reports that “Fayre Procris Parents were so hard, / That she as Byrde in Cage was barde.”<sup>84</sup> Cephalus, here able to communicate with his lady love only via epistolary means, sends a letter telling her to meet him at an “apoynted place” in “a Forest bye a pace.”<sup>85</sup> The Ovidian couple’s mutual jealousies and the presumed adulteries of the classical Cephalus (i.e., his encounters, or rumored encounters, with both Aurora and “Aura” in *Metamorphoses* 7) find no place in this ballad, which attributes the death of Procris and ensuing suicide of Cephalus to a series of lethal mistakes made by two faithful, unmarried lovers. Arriving early for their intended assignation, Procris hides herself among the forest’s trees. Both “for feare of foes” and because she is “loth . . . his sport to spill,” she fails to identify herself when Cephalus appears hunting with “Boowe” and “arowe” (rather than his Ovidian *iaculum*, or javelin).<sup>86</sup> And, as in *Metamorphoses* 7, Procris dies at Cephalus’s hands: “when he espy[es], / The leaues” nearby “to wagge and bowes to shake,” the hunter assumes “some beast” to be the source of the motion.<sup>87</sup> One can also sense a slight echo of the Ovidian tale of Callisto in *Metamorphoses* 2 (in which the hunter Arcas very nearly kills his mother, who has been metamorphosed into ursine form)

<sup>80</sup> Howell has sometimes been assumed to be the same T. H. who wrote *The fable of Ouid treeting of Narcissus* (1560), another early Elizabethan translation of material from the *Metamorphoses*.

<sup>81</sup> On Colwell’s career as a printer and bookseller, see Hale.

<sup>82</sup> Ovid, 2004, 400–02.

<sup>83</sup> Brown, 163.

<sup>84</sup> Brown, 169; Howell, sig. F2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>85</sup> Howell, sig. F2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>86</sup> Howell, sig. F2<sup>v</sup>; Ovid, 2004, 388 (*Met.* 7.673).

<sup>87</sup> Howell, sig. F3<sup>r</sup>.

here, as well, for Howell's Cephalus sees the "coler darke" of her hidden form and subsequently "nayle[s] Procris to the grownde" while operating under the unfortunate assumption that she must be "an ouglie Beare."<sup>88</sup> Following the death of his beloved, Howell's Cephalus ends his own life "with bloody knyfe"—in an act that more closely resembles the legendary suicide of Pyramus than the perseverance of his Ovidian precursor.<sup>89</sup>

### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF OVIDIAN BALLADS

At this juncture, I want to ask what generalizations (in terms of their lyrics, visual presentation, and tunes) can be made about the somewhat diverse group of early modern musical translations that I have enumerated above. First, and perhaps most obviously, extended passages of description found in the corresponding episodes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* are often cut or severely truncated in sixteenth-century ballad adaptations, which tend to compress the length of the tales they retell. Consider, for instance, that "The Tale of Pigmalion" turns Ovid's lengthy account of the artist's delusional attempts to woo his statue with flowers, trinkets, birds, clothing, and jewelry—an account that runs from *Metamorphoses* 10.259–66—into "To [the statue] he honour gauē, and deckt with garlandes swete. / And did adourn with iewels rich, as is for louers mete."<sup>90</sup> Similar abbreviations abound. "In Crete" transmogrifies the twelve-line depiction of Daedalus ingeniously constructing wings from twine, feathers, and wax as Icarus looks on from *Metamorphoses* 8.188–200 into the succinct "By skillfull arte he framed than, / Wings for him self and for his sonne."<sup>91</sup> And, later in this same ballad, the geographically evocative depiction of the duo's ill-fated flight that extends from 8.212–28 in Ovid's Latin text is pithily summarized as: "But Jcarus gan fly alooft. / The sonne when he did mount soe hye, / His waxen wings began to frye."<sup>92</sup>

Despite this general tendency toward condensation or abbreviation of the *Metamorphoses*, it is not unusual to find passages in this group of ballads that bear striking similarities to Ovid's original Latin phrasing. Apollo's words in the "Epitaph" that closes "A pleasant new ballad of Daphne" ("though not my Love, yet art thou my Tree"), for instance, directly mirror the Ovidian Apollo's declaration when he informs the arborified nymph: "Since thou canst not be my bride, thou shalt at least be my tree."<sup>93</sup> Likewise, in both

<sup>88</sup> Howell, sig. F3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>89</sup> Howell, sig. F3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>90</sup> Ovid, 1999, 82; Rollins, 1965b, 1:126.

<sup>91</sup> Ovid, 2004, 418–20; Rollins, 1927, 336.

<sup>92</sup> Ovid, 2004, 420–22; Rollins, 1927, 336.

<sup>93</sup> "A pleasant new ballad of Daphne," Roxburghe 1.388; Ovid, 2004, 40 (*Met.* 1.557–58): "at quoniam coniunx mea non potes esse, / arbor eris certe . . . mea!"

“The historie of Diana and Acteon” and “A new sonnet shewing how the goddess Diana transformed Acteon,” the moment when Actaeon’s presence is first apprehended by Diana’s followers is represented in ways that specifically recall the language and imagery of these ballads’ Ovidian source text. In the former, one hears:

But when the Nymphs had perceiued him,  
aloud then they cried,  
Enclosed her, and thought to hide her skin,  
which he had spied:  
But too true I tell you,  
She seene was,  
For in height she did passe,  
Ech Dame of her race.<sup>94</sup>

And in the latter, these same lines are rendered:

And as the Nymphs of him were ware,  
with voice aloud they cryd;  
And closd *Diana* round about,  
to hide her body small;  
But she was highest of the Rout,  
and seen above them all.<sup>95</sup>

Both sets of lyrics here closely replicate the phrasing of the following passage from the *Metamorphoses*:

The naked nymphs smote upon their breasts at the sight of the man, and filled all the grove with their shrill, sudden cries. Then they thronged Diana, seeking to hide her body with their own; but the goddess stood head and shoulders over all the rest.<sup>96</sup>

What is more, careful consideration of the lyrics of “In Crete” suggests that its anonymous author was also working with an edition of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* at his side, as evinced by how closely the construction and imagery of the opening lines replicate material from *Metamorphoses* 8. The relevant Ovidian lines read:

<sup>94</sup> Rollins, 1965a, 26.

<sup>95</sup> “A new sonnet,” Roxburghe 1.386.

<sup>96</sup> Ovid, 2004, 136 (*Met.* 3.178–82): “nudae viso sua pectora nymphaea / percussere viro subitisque ululatus omne / inplevere nemus circumfusaesque Dianam / corporibus texere suis; tamen anterior illis / ipsa dea est colloque tenus supereminet omnis.” The depiction of Actaeon’s transformation and its effects in “A new sonnet shewing how the goddess Diana transformed Acteon” is also remarkably close to the description at 136–38 (*Met.* 3.193–205).



*Mydas* henceforth lo thus to the I wyll  
 Thou shalte haue eares to shewe and tell I wys:  
 Both what thy skylle and what thy reason is.  
 Whych on thy heade shall stande and wytnes be:  
 Howe thou haste iudged thys rurall God and me.<sup>100</sup>

Along similar lines, though Thisbe's mourning speech of *Metamorphoses* 4.147–61 is omitted from the end of Tomson's "New sonnet of Pyramus and Thisbe," the bereaved Pyramus is given new dialogue.<sup>101</sup> Whereas in *Metamorphoses* 4 Pyramus's only pre-death exclamation, addressed to Thisbe's discarded cloak, is "drink now my blood too," by contrast, the last words of Tomson's Pyramus are:

Now art thou in a wofull case  
 for *Thisbie* bright:  
 Oh Gods aboue, my faithfull loue  
 shal neuer faile this need:  
 For this my breath by fatal death,  
 shal weaue *Atropos* threed.<sup>102</sup>

This tendency toward preserving and expanding dialogue is also evinced in the lyrics of "A new sonnet shewing how the goddess Diana transformed Acteon." In the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid had poignantly represented the moment when, following Actaeon's transformation, words fail him: the transformed stag yearns to call out to his threatening hunting dogs "I am Actaeon! Recognize your own master."<sup>103</sup> This sentiment is greatly elaborated in this early modern ballad, where one is provided with a full eight lines' worth of further words that Actaeon would have called out if only he could still speak.<sup>104</sup>

Despite the close relationship between the *Metamorphoses*' Latin phrasing and the English lyrics of many of the examples discussed above, Hedley's, the earliest of my examples, is the only ballad in which I have found Ovid directly cited as a source: it opens with the assertion "lo Ouides tale thus."<sup>105</sup> That said, the narrators in a number of other ballads, in more subtle ways, make related claims that they are retelling known tales already in common circulation. The lyrics in "The historie of Diana and Acteon," for instance, relay "Thus

<sup>100</sup> Hedley.

<sup>101</sup> Ovid, 2004, 188.

<sup>102</sup> Ovid, 2004, 186 (*Met.* 4.118): "accipe nunc . . . nostri quoque sanguinis haustus!"; Rollins, 1965a, 37. A parallel example can be found in Howell's ballad, where Cephalus delivers a remarkably similar set of lines just prior to committing his own (non-Ovidian) act of suicide.

<sup>103</sup> Ovid, 2004, 140 (*Met.* 3.230): "Actaeon ego sum: dominum cognoscite vestrum!"

<sup>104</sup> "A new sonnet," Roxburghe 1.387.

<sup>105</sup> Hedley.

goeth the report,” and “A new sonnet shewing how the goddess Diana transformed Acteon” calls attention to what the existing “story telleth plain.”<sup>106</sup> Other examples are more explicitly textual in nature. Howell’s ballad contains the phrase “I reade some time,” and the narrator in *A handefull of pleasant delites*’ Narcissus ballad claims to have “reade of manie a woman faire,” who “c[a]me this *Narcissus* to see,” and “perished . . . / Through his default.”<sup>107</sup>

It is also worth observing that, in a number of sixteenth-century Ovidian ballads, one finds signs that their authors were mingling classical and postclassical source materials and apparently reading episodes from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* through the lens of prior vernacular literature. When Howell’s narrator, for instance, makes the claim that he has previously “reade” of Cephalus and Procris, one wonders if he is thinking of the *Metamorphoses* or the mythological content of the *Metamorphoses* as refracted through later English sources—or both. This question becomes especially pertinent if taken in conjunction with Glyn Pursglove’s observation that “Howell’s revisionist view of Procris as a lover (not a wife) of unquestioned faithfulness” seems to resonate more strongly with the depiction of her character in an earlier, anonymous poem found in Tottel’s *Songes and Sonettes* than with her ancient treatment by Ovid.<sup>108</sup> Another clear instance of such vernacular mediation can be detected in the partially preserved ballad that retells Narcissus’s Ovidian tale in *A handefull of pleasant delites*. Consideration of this “Panges of loue” imitation reveals its very close relationship to *A bytyle treatyse called the image of idlennesse* (ca. 1555), an epistolary text that was very likely authored by William Baldwin (fl. 1547–63).<sup>109</sup> In one of the work’s fictive letters, an inept bachelor attempts to woo a resistant widow by listing numerous exempla illustrating how “the Goddesse Venus punisheth ryght sharpely the bodyes that are repugnaunt to her louynge lawes.”<sup>110</sup> This includes a brief narrative about “a knyght named Permalides that loued most hartely the Lady Agglarose.”<sup>111</sup> Though this lady initially takes no interest in him, the directions of their romantic desires are reversed by “the greate mercy of Venus, who by playne miracle, pyteinge to se her faythfull seruaunt so tormented with the crueltie of a mercilesse Lady, made an exchange of both theyr desyres.”<sup>112</sup> *The image of idlennesse*’s story of

<sup>106</sup> Rollins, 1965a, 25; “A new sonnet,” Roxburghe 1.387.

<sup>107</sup> Rollins, 1965a, 30.

<sup>108</sup> Pursglove, 116.

<sup>109</sup> On Baldwin as probable author of *The image of idlennesse*, see Flachmann, 8–10; Maslen, 2000.

<sup>110</sup> W. Baldwin, 1555, sig. B8<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>111</sup> W. Baldwin, 1555, sig. B8<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>112</sup> W. Baldwin, 1555, sig. B8<sup>v</sup>.

Permalides and Agglarose is, quite obviously, the same tale as that of “the Knight . . . sore opprest” and “mercillesse” lady whose roles of pursued and pursuer have been likewise swapped by Venus at the point where the incomplete Narcissus ballad in *A handefull of pleasant delites* picks up.<sup>113</sup> So, too, does the derivative ballad appear to share the satirically tinged didactic purpose of the epistle in *The image of idleness*: “Loe, hereby you may perceiue, / How Venus can, and if she please, / Her disobedient Subiects grieue.”<sup>114</sup> It comes as little surprise, then, to discover that the ballad’s exemplum on the amatory disobedience of Narcissus borrows its non-Ovidian details of the beautiful youth’s transvestitism and drowning directly from this same midcentury English source.<sup>115</sup>

It is not only roughly contemporaneous texts like *Songes and sonettes* and *The image of idleness* that inflected and helped to shape the mythological content of Tudor England’s Ovidian ballads. Recent scholarship’s increasing interest in exploring the facets of early modernity’s so-called medievalisms has begun to draw attention to the ways in which the intermediary poetry of authors such as Geoffrey Chaucer (ca. 1340–1400) and John Gower (ca. 1330–1408) continued to function as medieval “conduit[s] to the ancient world” for those writing in the sixteenth century and beyond.<sup>116</sup> The ongoing hermeneutic influence of late medieval English Ovidianism upon Tudor Ovidianism is arguably discernible in Tomson’s “New sonet of Pyramus and Thisbie,” which may well bear traces of both Chaucer’s tale of Thisbe in *The Legend of Good Women* and Gower’s rendition of the same narrative in book 3 of the *Confessio Amantis*. The song’s opening assurances that Pyramus is a “noble Knight” and son of “a Lord of high renowne” and Thisbe the dazzlingly “bright” daughter of a similarly “noble Prince” recall Chaucer’s assertions at opening to the Legend of Thisbe that “There were dwellyng in this noble toun / Two lordes, whiche that were of gret renoun,” one of whom “hadde a sone / Of al that lond oon of the lustyeste” and the other of whom “hadde a doughter, the fayreste / That estward in the world was tho dwellynge.”<sup>117</sup> They are, however, equally reminiscent of Gower’s near-contemporary representation of the respective fathers of Pyramus and Thisbe as “Above alle othre noble and grete” and his description

<sup>113</sup> Rollins, 1965a, 29.

<sup>114</sup> Rollins, 1965a, 31.

<sup>115</sup> For *The image of idleness*’s tale of the cross-dressed Narcissus, see W. Baldwin, 1555, sig. C1<sup>f</sup>. At least one other printed sixteenth-century ballad likewise derived its narrative content from another story anthologized in *The image of idleness*. On this latter point, see Rollins, 1934.

<sup>116</sup> Lerer and Williams, 400.

<sup>117</sup> Rollins, 1965a, 35; Chaucer, 606 (*Legend of Good Women* [hereafter LGW] 710–18).

of the star-crossed lovers themselves as “a lusti bachelor” who is without “pier” and a high-born lady so beautiful that “In al the lond that for to seke / Men wisten non so faire as sche.”<sup>118</sup> Additional details in the lyrics of “A new sonet of Pyramus and Thisbie” further suggest its affiliations with the *Confessio Amantis*: when the lovers agree “to meet at prime, / by *Minus* [here presumably a misprint for Ninus] well” instead of “*ad busta Nini* [at Ninus’s tomb],” as in the *Metamorphoses*, this replicates the arrangement of Gower’s Pyramus and Thisbe to meet at “a welle under a Tree” rather than any *busta* (tomb), for instance, and Tomson’s gender reassignment of the Ovidian episode’s *leaena*, or lioness, to male lion is also found in Gower’s earlier text.<sup>119</sup>

One of the more noteworthy features of this group of Tudor ballads is their tendency to close by offering audiences, with varying degrees of irony and sincerity, hermeneutic rubrics with which to interpret the Ovidian narratives they have recounted.<sup>120</sup> As previously mentioned, the incomplete Narcissus ballad of *A handefull of pleasant delites* derives its final message from *The image of idlenesse*, informing audiences of Venus’s ability to make “Her disobedient Subiects grieue,” and it concludes with the narrator’s caution that his own lady should not “rebel” against love lest a fate even “worse than this” befall her.<sup>121</sup> Hedley’s ballad, too, ends on a mockingly admonitory note. There are, he cautions, many “that lyue at thys day yet / Whych haue [Midas’s] skyl, hys iudgement and his wit” and who are therefore equally deserving of “hys fayre longe eares.”<sup>122</sup> In a similar vein, Tomson’s ballad closes with an unequivocal appeal to “You Ladies all.”<sup>123</sup> His female audience is instructed to “peruse and see, / the faithfulness” of “these two Louers [who] did agree, / to die in distresse.”<sup>124</sup> Howell’s ballad concludes by calling upon both “Ladies” and “Lordynges” to “take a vewe” and “marke” the ballad’s fatalistic moral that “Eche one to lyfe

<sup>118</sup> Gower, 176 (3.1337, 1343–44, 1346–47).

<sup>119</sup> Rollins, 1965a, 36; Ovid, 2004, 184 (*Met.* 4.88, 97); Gower, 177 (3.1381, 1392, 1398). Tomson would also have found precedents in both Chaucer’s and Gower’s late medieval English retellings of *Metamorphoses* 4 for his ballad’s aforementioned expansion of Pyramus’s pre-death speech: Chaucer, 607 (*LGW* 833–44); Gower, 178 (3.1431–43).

<sup>120</sup> This practice is consistent with the rhetoric of early modern balladry, more generally (in which narratives often explicitly function as behavioral object lessons); it also parallels a tendency seen in longer literary translations dating to the early Elizabethan era (such as Golding’s full rendition of 1567 or T. H.’s *Fable of Ouid treting of Narcissus*), in which the text of the *Metamorphoses* is paratextually framed with a layer of moralizing commentary.

<sup>121</sup> Rollins, 1965a, 31.

<sup>122</sup> Hedley.

<sup>123</sup> Rollins, 1965a, 37.

<sup>124</sup> Rollins, 1965a, 37–38.

must say adue, / And to the earthe her owne repaye.”<sup>125</sup> With a dash of *memento mori*, the narrator remarks “There is no choise we see it so, / When death doth call we needs must go.”<sup>126</sup> Though they also conform to this general pattern, the closing lines of “A new sonnet shewing how the goddess Diana transformed Acteon” are slightly less proscriptive: “Hunters all that Range the woods” are told to “beware” lest they come too “nigh the Flood / where Virgins use to bathe.”<sup>127</sup> As to whether Actaeon “had right or wrong,” though, the narrator ambivalently professes he will “let all true Virgins judge”—a move that perhaps also gestures back toward *Metamorphoses* 3, where Ovid’s tale concludes with disagreement about the defensibility of Diana’s actions: “Common talk wavered this way and that: to some the goddess seemed more cruel than was just; others called her act worthy of her austere virginity: both sides found good reason for their judgment.”<sup>128</sup>

It is unlikely that any of the Ovidian songs here under discussion were accompanied by woodcuts in the earliest years of their dissemination. None of the examples that survive in printed miscellanies (i.e., *Songes and sonettes*, *A handefull of pleasant delites*, *Newe sonets and pretie pamphlets*) were presented with corresponding illustrations; moreover, it was generally uncommon for musical broadsheets in the sixteenth century to feature decorations beyond the occasional ornamental border. Typical in this respect is Elderton’s “Panges of loue,” which simply represents the ballad’s lyrics in columns of black-letter type (fig. 1). That said, in the final years of Elizabeth I’s reign, it became increasingly *de rigueur* to include images on musical broadsheets, and printed seventeenth-century versions of “A pleasant new ballad of Daphne” and “A new sonnet shewing how the goddess Diana transformed

<sup>125</sup> Howell, sig. F3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>126</sup> Howell, sig. F3<sup>r</sup>. The endings of other Ovidian ballads twist this formula slightly, with the narrators offering slightly perverse readings of the mythological tales they have just recounted designed to reflect upon their own presumable experiences in love. “Since that this ymage dum enflamde so wyse a man,” reasons the speaker in “The Tale of Pigmalion,” it is little “wonder” that he loves his own “dere” mistress in “whom hath nature set the glory of her name”: Rollins, 1965b, 1:126. An even more curious reading concludes the distinctly nonamatory tale of Icarus’s death in “In Crete.” The speaker here likens himself to Daedalus and his female beloved to a “wiser” Icarus, romanticizing how they might fly away “Ffrom Jealus eyes” and “worke [their] ioyes at will” someplace “Where [their] desyres should haue their fill / At large.” This pseudo-Daedalus would, the ballad’s narrator swears, “clipp” her “winges” to make sure that his female lover “should never slipp” away from him: Rollins, 1927, 336.

<sup>127</sup> “A new sonnet,” Roxburghe 1.387.

<sup>128</sup> Ovid, 2004, 142 (*Met.* 3.253–55): “Rumor in ambiguo est; aliis violentior aequo / visa dea est, alii laudant dignamque severa / virginitate vocant: pars invenit utraque causas.”

Acteon” give us a sense of how Ovidian ballads with sixteenth-century origins were visually represented as these songs transitioned from the Tudor era into the Jacobean and beyond.

Surviving seventeenth-century imprints of “A pleasant new ballad of Daphne” consistently pair this song with another entitled “The shepherds delight” (fig. 3). This latter ballad depicts standard pastoral fare: “poore afflicted Corridon” attempts to woo the apparently unaffected “Shepherds Queene” Phillida.<sup>129</sup> The logic of juxtaposing these particular songs on a single sheet speaks to the thematically complementary nature of their lyrics. Not only are Coridon’s pleas that Phillida “Look on [him] . . . with [her] faire eyes” broadly reminiscent of Apollo’s stance as he attempts to woo the unrelenting Daphne, but Coridon’s very words when he cries “pittie me” also directly correspond to the refrain in “A pleasant new ballad of Daphne”: “Pittie O Daphne, pittie O pittie me.”<sup>130</sup>

The single woodcut that graces surviving broadsides containing “A pleasant new ballad of Daphne” and “The shepherds delight” portrays a sumptuously dressed woman holding a fan; she stands posed in an outdoor setting with flowers growing up around her feet. In this respect, it follows the “majority of seventeenth-century ballad illustrations,” which most typically, as Marsh observes, “depict individual human figures, either male or female, in little black boxes.”<sup>131</sup> He explains: “the beauty of such generic images was that they enabled publishers and printers to shuffle them around, reusing old pictures in new configurations on dozens of different ballads, thereby saving themselves the costs associated with commissioning new artwork.”<sup>132</sup> It is this habitual reuse of images that led most twentieth-century scholars to conclude, along with Claude M. Simpson, that early modern ballad printers incorporated woodcuts “with only the loosest regard” for context.<sup>133</sup> As Marsh and others have more recently proposed, however, even when generic, the woodcuts that ballad printers selected from their stock to illustrate broadsides were far from random choices and fulfilled a sophisticated range of hermeneutic functions. Not only were “early modern consumers . . . skilled at deciding whether to integrate or ignore apparent inconsistencies between text and picture,” but their own “earlier engagement[s] with a picture play[ed] a vital role in conditioning subsequent encounters.”<sup>134</sup> This particular image of the woman with the fan was

<sup>129</sup> “The shepherds delight,” Roxburghe 1.388.

<sup>130</sup> “A pleasant new ballad of Daphne,” Roxburghe 1.388.

<sup>131</sup> Marsh, 2016, 245.

<sup>132</sup> Marsh, 2016, 245.

<sup>133</sup> Simpson, x.

<sup>134</sup> Marsh, 2016, 261.

used frequently in the early seventeenth century by the printer Thomas Symcock (fl. 1619–29) and his assigns to generically signal amatory content. Indeed, most of the other ballad sheets on which this image appears are complementary in theme with “A pleasant new ballad of Daphne” and “The shepherds delight.” That is, they often incorporate unrequited love (as in “A louer forsaken of his best beloved” and “An inconstant female with a reward of her disdain in equalitie”) or feature male-voiced attempts to persuade a mistress (as in “A louers desire for his best beloved”).<sup>135</sup> In some of these cases there are also subtle verbal correspondences in the ballads’ lyrics that reinforce the cross-connections among this group. The male wooer in “A louer forsaken of his best beloved,” for instance, echoes both Coridon in “The shepherds delight” and Apollo in “A pleasant new ballad of Daphne” when he, too, requests of his hard-hearted mistress: “pitty me.”<sup>136</sup> And the lamenting narrator in “An inconstant female with a reward of her disdain in equalitie” saliently refers to his erstwhile lover, who regrettably “fled . . . / with swiftest wings,” as “my Daphne.”<sup>137</sup>

Extant broadsheets suggest that two distinct patterns existed for illustrating “A new sonnet shewing how the goddess Diana transformed Actaeon.” Some imprints, including an exemplar now held by the Pepys Library in Magdalene College, Cambridge (fig. 4), feature what appears to be a custom-designed woodcut illustration. This narrative tableau centrally depicts Actaeon—ostensibly caught in mid-metamorphosis—as a human-animal hybrid with the head of a stag and body of a man. To the left are the naked figures of Diana and her bathing nymphs as they stand in a shallow pool modestly, yet vainly, attempting to obscure their bodies from sight; to the right are Actaeon’s hunting dogs, who are shown turning viciously upon their former master. This composition seems to have been closely modeled upon an earlier depiction of this same scene by Virgil Solis (1514–62)—a print of Continental origins that, as Susan Frye has argued, also inspired a piece of English embroidery by Bess of Hardwick (ca. 1527–1608) in the late sixteenth century (fig. 6).<sup>138</sup> Undoubtedly due to the specificity of its iconography, the

<sup>135</sup> “A louer forsaken,” Roxburghe 1.224; “An inconstant female,” Roxburghe 1.455; “A louers desire,” Roxburghe 1.200–01.

<sup>136</sup> “A louer forsaken,” Roxburghe 1.224.

<sup>137</sup> “An inconstant female,” Roxburghe 1.455.

<sup>138</sup> Frye, 63–67. For other recent discussions of Bess of Hardwick’s Ovidian needlework, see Oakley-Brown, 2006, 127–34; Lafont 48–53. Solis’s suite of nearly 200 woodcuts illustrating tales from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* first appeared in 1563. His cuts were subsequently adopted and adapted to illustrate a wide array of Continental editions in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Solis’s Actaeon image (like many in his Ovidian series) was, in turn, closely based upon the earlier portrayal of this same mythological scene by Bernard Salomon (1506–61) in his 1557 series of prints illustrating the *Metamorphoses*.

OVIDII METAM. LIB. III.  
Actæon in Ceruum. IIII.

40



**D**Iana, cum in ualle Gargaphiæ, æstiuo tempore, assiduo uenationis labore defatigata, se ad fontem perlueret, Actæon Aristæi & Auto- noes filius, eundem locum petens, ad refrigerandum se & canes, quas exercuerat feras persequendo, in conspectum eiusdem Dææ incidit, qui ne hanc ipsam rem diuulgere possit, in Ceruum ab ea conuersus est.

ENARRATIO.

**D**Um quondam nemorum cultrix conitata puellis,  
Pandeat timidis retia lata feris:

Figure 6. Virgil Solis's woodcut depicting the transformation of Actæon in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Frankfurt am Main, 1563). From a copy owned and annotated by Gabriel Harvey. \*EC.H2623.Zz563o. Houghton Library, Harvard University.

bespoke woodcut image gracing the Pepys copy of “A new sonnet shewing how the goddess Diana transformed Acteon” does not seem to have been repurposed elsewhere to illustrate other seventeenth-century songs. Moreover, I surmise that the expense indubitably incurred by the printer who originally commissioned this piece of artwork attests to the ongoing appeal and predicted saleability of this Ovidian song.

Something rather different is found in another seventeenth-century copy of “A new sonnet shewing how the goddess Diana transformed Acteon,” now held by the British Library (fig. 5), which alternatively illustrates this Ovidian ballad with two discrete woodcuts. The first features a male standing alongside a riverbank; two additional bathing figures, at least one of whom is fully nude and both of whom seem to be female, are visible in the distance behind him. The second, signed with the initials A.M., shows a resting stag. Taken together, this pair of illustrations speaks to two distinct moments in this mythological narrative: the fateful juncture when Actaeon first comes across Diana and her nymphs bathing and the point at which the mortal hunter finds himself punitively turned from man to beast. Both of these woodcuts were liberally reused to illustrate other seventeenth-century broadsides, with the resting stag typically employed to evoke (as in “The loyal forrister” and “Robin Hood’s progress to Nottingham”) a woodland milieu.<sup>139</sup> Though the man at the water’s edge sometimes seems to have been used to establish a riverside setting for lovers’ laments or conversations (as in “Parthenia’s complaint” and “The happy lovers pastime”) and was even once to illustrate a distraught male lover’s suicide by drowning (in “Loves lamentable tragedy”), it was an image that most often accompanied ballads whose lyrics described bathing women surprised by male voyeurs (as in “The Kentish frolick,” “The fair maid of Dunsmore’s lamentation,” and “The swimming lady”)—a scenario that directly echoes the mythological tale of Diana and Actaeon.<sup>140</sup>

In considering the characteristics of Ovidian ballads, it is important to remember that these were performance pieces, as well. Such songs, as Tessa Watt reminds us, “could be chanted out by petty chapmen, performed by travelling players, danced to at bride-ales, harmonized, or shouted as insults.” Furthermore, the “relationship between the singer and the printed text could take many forms, from direct reading or singing from a broadside, to improvisation from half-remembered verses heard from a minstrel at the alehouse.”<sup>141</sup>

<sup>139</sup> “The loyal forrister,” Euing 156; “Robin Hood’s progress,” Crawford 1031.

<sup>140</sup> “Parthenia’s complaint,” Crawford 1223; “The happy lovers pastime,” Pepys 4.4; “Loves lamentable tragedy,” Pepys 3.352; “The Kentish frolick,” Pepys 3.242; “The fair made of Dunsmore’s lamentation,” Roxburgh 2.170–71; “The swimming lady,” Pepys 4.20.

<sup>141</sup> Watt, 37.

Language found in the lyrics of many Ovidian ballads underscores the fact that most of these songs were expressly written to be sung. “The historie of Diana and Acteon” begins “*Diana* and her darlings deare, / Walkt once as you shall heare,” and includes other hortatory language like “I tell you” and “Harke then *Acteons* case.”<sup>142</sup> “I tel you true” and “I say,” asserts Tomson’s narrator as he recounts the tragic events of “A new sonet of Pyramus and Thisbie,” while the speaker in the partially preserved Narcissus ballad elsewhere in *A handefull of pleasant delites* likewise uses phrases like “I wil you tell,” “as you shal heare,” and “harken how it came to passe.”<sup>143</sup> What is more, these ballads circulated in a historical context in which tunes were constantly evolving, recycled, and recurrently recontextualized and in which novel sets of lyrics were habitually applied to or written for older, preexisting melodies. Indeed, the British Library’s late sixteenth-century Harley MS 7578, a manuscript that preserves two stanzas of the lyrics for “In Crete,” offers a potent visual reminder of such practices. The music there provided seems to have originally had religious lyrics set to it, for lines beginning “Christe ys rysynge” have been crossed out and replaced with the first two stanzas of the Ovidian ballad (fig. 7).

One would do well to ask what Ovidian mythology usually sounded like in sixteenth-century musical culture. In those cases where the lyrics of Tudor England’s Ovidian ballads can be linked to information about their intended tunes, the results can prove to be somewhat surprising. While the tune of “Appelles,” to which Howell’s “Lamentable historie of Sephalus” is set, has been lost to the ravages of time, it seems to have been widespread in the early Elizabethan era. A set of lyrics found in *Eglogs, epytaphes, and sonettes* (1563), an auto-miscellany authored by Barnabe Googe (1540–94), was set to this same tune, for instance, as was a (non-Ovidian) ballad in *A handefull of pleasant delites* and “a ballett intituled *kynge POLLICENTE*” registered in 1565–66.<sup>144</sup> Intriguingly, evidence also suggests that “Appelles” must have been a dance tune. The very lyrics of “The lamentable historie of Sephalus” appear to confirm this fact, for the ballad’s narrator instructs those “Deare Ladies” among his audience: “steppe your foote to myne / To mourne with me your hartes inlyne.”<sup>145</sup>

<sup>142</sup> Rollins, 1965a, 25–26.

<sup>143</sup> Rollins, 1965a, 35, 29–30.

<sup>144</sup> Googe, sig. H5<sup>r</sup>; Rollins, 1965a, 55–56; Arber, 1:298. The Stationers’ Register also records entries in that same year for both “a ballett intituled *a songe of APPELLES*” and “a ballett intituled *of APPELLES and PYGMALYNE to the tune of ye first APPELLES*”: Arber, 1:307, 312.

<sup>145</sup> Howell, sig. F3<sup>r</sup>. This unambiguous reference to dancing in the lyrics of Howell’s ballad merits special consideration, for “few surviving ballads explicitly invoke dance by cuing it or even describing it”: Smith, 2016, 324.

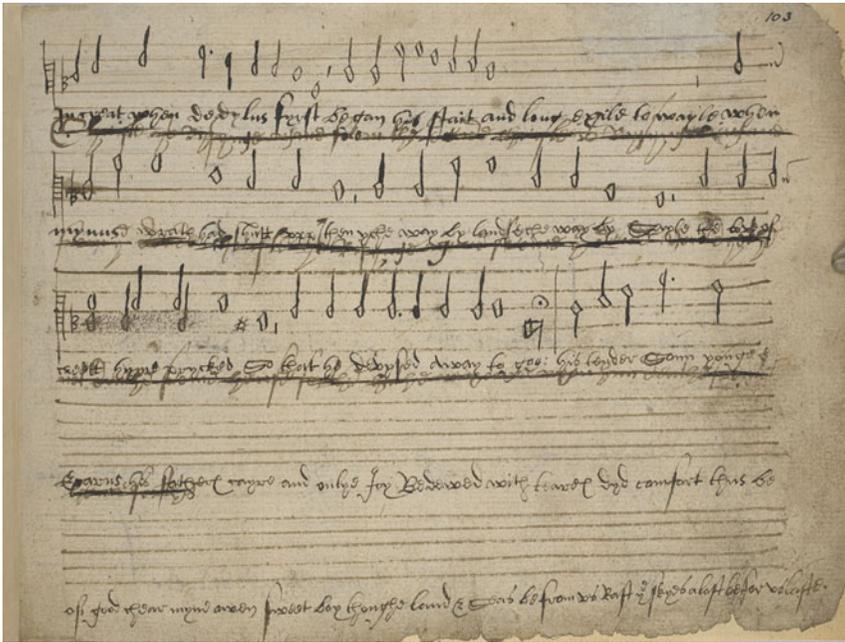


Figure 7. Lyrics of a song beginning “Christe ys rysyng” have been crossed out and replaced with those for “In Crete.” © British Library Board. Harley MS 7578, fol. 103<sup>r</sup>.

Regarding the type of melody to which it was set, Howell’s “Lamentable historie of Sephalus” was no outlier. The tune associated with “A pleasant new ballad of Daphne” was so popular for dancing that it was recorded, along with a number of other so-called country dances, in John Playford’s *The English dancing master* (1651), where its steps are also duly described (fig. 8). Both “The Downright Squire” and “The Quatre Branles,” to which “A new sonnet of Pyramus and Thisbie” and “The historie of Diana and Acteon” are respectively attached, also had their origins as dance tunes. And when the lyrics of “The historie of Diana and Acteon” from *A handefull of pleasant delites* were revised in “A new sonnet shewing how the goddess Diana transformed Acteon,” they were set to the enormously popular “Rogero.” Contemporary references confirm that this, too, was a dance tune. To wit, in *Haue with you to Saffron-walden* (1596), “Rogero” is cited as an example of a melody to which one might dance “with foote out and foote in, and as busie as might be,” and in *A Woman Killed With Kindness* (1603), Jack Slime—after declaring he has “come to dance, not to quarrel” at Anne Frankford’s wedding festivities—asks his interlocutors: “Come, what shall it be? ‘Rogero?’”<sup>146</sup>

<sup>146</sup> Nashe, 1596, sig. T1<sup>r</sup>; Heywood, 11 (2.28).

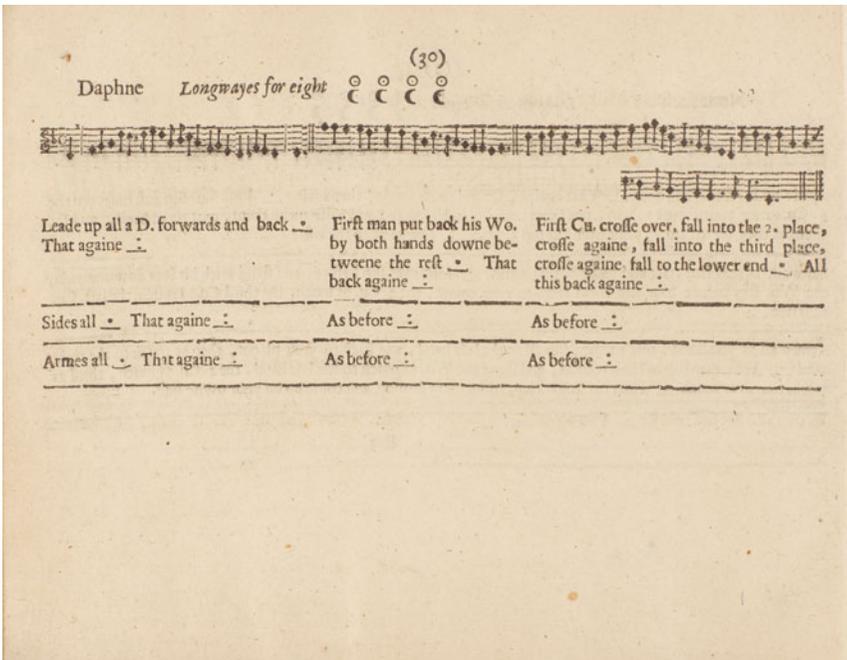


Figure 8. The music and instructions for dancing to “Daphne” are provided in John Playford’s *The English dancing master* (London, 1651). RB 14238. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

There existed what Watt has called a “two-way flow of influence” in the early modern period, whereby “some dance tunes inspired broadside ballads and shaped their structure” and “other tunes first popularized by ballads were formed into new dances.”<sup>147</sup> The recent scholarship of Smith has drawn attention to the fact that, like *ball* and *ballet*, the word *ballad* has etymological roots in “the Old French *baler*, to dance—a term derived in turn from the postclassical Latin *ballare*,” and he has advanced some suggestive preliminary conjectures about how dancing may have “remained . . . a *vestigial* presence in ballads, even in ballads that present themselves exclusively as affairs of words and music.”<sup>148</sup> In light of such research, it is worth pondering the distinct probability that the lively rhythms of dance tunes like “Appelles,” “The Quatre Brules,” “The Downright Squire,” “Roger,” and “Daphne” activated particularized bodily associations and memories for Tudor consumers of mythological

<sup>147</sup> Watt, 35. On the prevalence of dance tunes throughout *A handefull of pleasant delites*, see Ward, 1957.

<sup>148</sup> Smith, 2016, 323–24.

ballads—a tantalizing, kinetic dimension of early modern Ovidianism about which, over four hundred years later, we can now only speculate.

### CONCLUSION

The fifteenth and final book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* famously concludes with the word *vivam* (I shall live), a pointed choice of vocabulary that speaks to the ambitious set of literary predictions directly preceding it:

When it will, let that day come which has no power save over this mortal frame,  
and end the span of my uncertain years. Still in my better part I shall be borne  
immortal far beyond the lofty stars and I shall have an undying name.  
Wherever Rome's power extends over the conquered world, I shall have men-  
tion on men's lips, and, if the prophesies of bards have any truth, through all  
the ages shall I live in fame.<sup>149</sup>

Although he was not the only ancient poet to have made such claims about literary works' capacity to confer immortality upon their authors, it was Ovid—who likewise advertised the certainty of his own enduring fame in the *Amores*, *Tristia*, and *Epistolae ex ponto*—whom early modern English audiences habitually identified as the locus classicus for this frequently imitated conceit.<sup>150</sup> Beloved by sixteenth-century sonneteers both within and beyond England, this Ovidian trope of textual durability is one that also received a comic send-up in the second part of *The Return from Parnassus* (ca. 1602). In this university drama, the self-styled literary critic Judicio quips:

Who blurs fair paper, with foul bastard rhymes,  
Shall live full many an age in latter times;  
Who makes a ballad for an ale-house door,  
Shall live in future times for ever more.<sup>151</sup>

<sup>149</sup> Ovid, 1999, 466 (*Met.* 15.875–79): “parte tamen meliore mei super alta perennis / astra ferar, nomenque erit indelebile nostrum, / quaqua patet domitis Romana potentia terris, / ore legar populi, perque omnia saecula fama, / siquid habent veri vatum praesagia, vivam.”

<sup>150</sup> It is telling, for instance, that when Ben Jonson (1572–1637) revived Ovid onstage in his *Poetaster* (1601), the first words of dialogue uttered by the Roman author were a set of thematically complementary lines: “Then, when this body falls in funeral fire, / My name shall live, and my best part aspire”: Jonson, 77 (1.1.1–2). Jonson's fictive Ovid here translates from Ovid, 2002a, 378 (*Amores* 1.15.31–42). For additional instances of this poetic immortality topos in Ovid's Latin canon, see Ovid, 2002a, 362 (*Amores* 1.10.59–64); Ovid, 2002b, 36 (*Tristia* 1.6.35–36); Ovid, 2002b, 114 (*Tristia* 3.3.77–84); Ovid, 2002b, 450–52 (*Epistolae ex ponto* 4.8.45–51).

<sup>151</sup> *Return from Parnassus*, 11 (1.2.71–74).

Judicio's tangible reappropriation of *Metamorphoses* 15's concluding sentiments in these lines may represent more than just a cynically tinged, au courant observation regarding the perceived triviality of balladry and clichéd status of Ovid's poetic immortality topos by the late Elizabethan era. Rather, underpinning his facetious linkage of an august, stereotypically Ovidian conceit with the fragility of "fair paper" and the often disparaged medium of the "ballad [made] for an ale-house door," there may also lie a veiled reference to the considerable visibility, audibility, and tangibility of ballad culture's frequent interactions with Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in the decades leading up to *The Return from Parnassus*'s composition.

It has been my intention throughout this article not only to identify instances of Tudor ballads that translated materials from the *Metamorphoses* into popular song and to identify trends and commonalities among this group. Rather, I have also sought to represent something of the social and commercial contexts from which such works emerged and within which they circulated. Functioning both as physical objects and as performance pieces that, in turn, invited embodied modes of enactment, printed ballads were omnipresent in early modern England. I wish to conclude, then, by observing that songs such as "In Crete," "A new sonet of Pyramus and Thisbie," or "A pleasant new ballad of Daphne"—as well as a host of other ballads, both surviving and now lost—must have played no small part in the verbal, aural, visual, and kinetic spread of knowledge about the *Metamorphoses* throughout Tudor England. The sixteenth century's vibrant musical culture undoubtedly helped to shape prevailing attitudes toward and perceptions of Ovid's poetry during this period. Indeed, attending to mythological balladry's propinquity with other forms of literature and performance may well offer new avenues for reconceptualizing the character and scope of early modern English Ovidianism.

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