

## CHAPTER 5

## Tempe Restored: *exile/dispossession/restitution*

In 1632, Ben Jonson was replaced as royal masque writer by the little-known Aurelian Townshend, who, to add insult to injury, was paid £10 more by the queen than was his predecessor.<sup>1</sup> Kevin Sharpe has suggested that Townshend attached himself to Henrietta Maria's circle in the late 1620s, and suggests that he might have been introduced to her by her close associate, the earl of Holland.<sup>2</sup> The poet was a gifted linguist and had spent a considerable time in France in the company of Sir Edward Herbert, the future Lord Herbert of Chisbury.<sup>3</sup> This places him at the side of an extremely cultured man who was respected by Henrietta Maria's French family: a fact that can only have helped to advance him with his new mistress.<sup>4</sup> That said, very little evidence remains of the literary grounds for his appointment, although Peter Beal has uncovered an earlier entertainment which provides evidence of his familiarity with the masque form.<sup>5</sup> I strongly suspect that it was because of his links with Holland that Townshend received his commission and suggest, furthermore, that *Tempe Restored* reflected the political concerns of the earl and his circle.

Before addressing the political and religious aspects of the masque, though, I wish to consider the notion of female voice. *Tempe Restored* has persistently been seen by critics as a statement of the queen consort's femino-centric court fashion, not least because it is deemed to have included the first two professional female singers to perform on the courtly masquing stage. The first part of this chapter will investigate the significance of these singers, suggesting that they have been misrepresented and that, therefore, the critical notion of the masque's proto-feminist agenda has been exaggerated. Alison Shell has cautioned that the 'historian sensitive to conscience ought never to assume that any individual in early modern Europe endorsed philosophical and theological systems for entirely self-interested reasons', adding, nonetheless, that those systems had incidental benefits in individual cases.<sup>6</sup> Taking this

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[More information](#)

into account, the chapter will re-evaluate *Tempe Restored*'s meanings, investigating it first as a production that had to negotiate a tricky political moment, and then arguing, in accordance with Shell's observation about religious conscience, that its femino-centrism is linked more with the queen's religion than anything else.

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The masque was performed in the Banqueting House at Whitehall on 14 February 1632, having been postponed from Twelfth Night because of Henrietta Maria's ill health. It took as its main source Baltasar de Beaujoyeulx's *Balet Comique de la Royne*, an entertainment performed in 1581 at the Valois court by the French queen, Louise de Vaudemont, for the wedding of her sister to the duc de Joyeuse.<sup>7</sup> *Tempe Restored* follows the opening of the French ballet very closely, figuring Thomas Killigrew, one of Charles's pages and the son of Henrietta Maria's vice chamberlain, as a Fugitive Favourite, fleeing from Circe's clutches. Circe, enacted by a certain 'Madame Coniack', has a strong vocal part in the masque, lamenting the loss of the young man and commanding a series of barbarous anti-masque dances, before being superseded on the stage by Harmony, played by 'Mistress Shepherd'. Harmony heralds the arrival of Henrietta Maria and her ladies, who, as Divine Beauty and her stars, reform Circe's excesses and to whom the sorceress finally voluntarily submits.

Sophie Tomlinson has noted of *Tempe Restored* that Circe's combination of 'musical and sexual allure' was 'especially associated with continental women' such as the French Madame Coniack.<sup>8</sup> Both she and Melinda Gough also draw attention to the *Balet Comique de la Royne*, observing that the role of Circe in the former production was played by a woman and noting that the casting of Madame Coniack in the English masque deliberately drew attention to the different codes governing female performance at the French and Italian courts.<sup>9</sup> James Knowles, taking this idea further, has suggested that Madame Coniack's casting as Circe was a deliberate response to criticism of Henrietta Maria's French-influenced theatrical endeavours and that it served 'to mount a defense against those who regarded female actors as "whorishly impudent"'.<sup>10</sup> He argues that Madame Coniack, as Circe, stood 'as the symbol of dangerous femininity, performance, and even Catholicism' in a manner that was 'almost directly a public gesture of defiance'.<sup>11</sup> All three critics base their observations on two assumptions: first, that the woman employed to play Circe was a French professional singer; and, second, that this was the first

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Karen Britland

Excerpt

[More information](#)

time an adult female singing voice had been heard in an English court masque. While I agree that the figure of Circe opens up some interesting questions about *Tempe Restored*'s presentation of female voice, I would like to add a note of caution, particularly about reading the production as a radical expression of 'defiance'.

The idea that Circe was performed by a French professional singer was put forward in 1997 by Roy Booth who suggested that Madame Coniack was the subject of Thomas Randolph's poem, 'Upon a very deformed Gentlewoman, but of a voice incomparably sweet' (alternatively titled in various locations as 'Upon the French Woman . . . that sings in Masques at Court', and 'On a ffrench woeman, one of the Queenes Chapple').<sup>12</sup> Booth recognises that the poem is 'a hyperbolically witty variant upon "Ugly Lady" poems' in which a lovely voice is set off against a foul appearance, but is nevertheless convinced that its subject is Madame Coniack and that she was a professional vocalist.<sup>13</sup> His work is persuasive, but it has led, I believe, to a misconception both about Henrietta Maria's household and about *Tempe Restored*. I have searched extensively but have found no other reference to professional female singers at the queen's court.<sup>14</sup> The variant title that Booth cites, which names the French singer as 'one of the Queenes Chapple', does not necessarily indicate the existence of a female choir, but simply those women who shared Henrietta Maria's religious beliefs and accompanied her to services. In sum, if Coniack was a professional singer, like the famous Angélique Paulet of the Parisian *salons*, then her name would surely be recorded in more places than the quarto of *Tempe Restored*.

Instead, I believe Madame Coniack was one of Henrietta Maria's ladies. Indeed, it seems reasonable to associate her with the Elizabeth Coignet who was a member of the new queen's household in 1625 and who is likely to have performed alongside her in the French pastoral, *Artenice*. She is also likely to have been one of the ladies who performed in the entertainment observed by Katherine Gorges on her visit to court in November 1625. As I discussed in chapter 1, this entertainment probably consisted of a series of disparate entries danced in different costumes, possibly with the inclusion of female song. Significantly, one of the alternative titles of Randolph's poem on the French female singer asserts that she performed in '*Masques* [plural] at court', so it is entirely likely that *Tempe Restored* was not the first entertainment in which this Frenchwoman's voice was heard.

If this is the case, the masque ceases to look like quite such a departure from earlier Caroline productions. Although it obviously engaged with

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Karen Britland

Excerpt

[More information](#)

the issues of female dramatic performance, juxtaposing Circe's vocal histrionics against Divine Beauty's silent dancing, it figured a woman who is likely to have been familiar to the court audience and who had already very probably taken a singing part on the stage. As a gentlewoman, not a noblewoman, her role in the anti-masque was similar to that of Thomas Killigrew, the royal page who played the part of the Fugitive Favourite. Indeed, on the level of class, rather than gender, her performance was perhaps less shocking than the duke of Buckingham's anti-masque impersonation of a fencing master in 1626.

Nevertheless, given Madame Coniack's likely history as an actor on the court stage, Circe's histrionics must certainly have reminded watchers of the kind of criticisms that were directed at court theatricals and Catholic women. Indeed, only the previous year, Nathaniel Richards's poem 'The Vicious Courtier' had condemned court 'Masques', 'Musicke' and 'Banquets' as activities which 'affright the blood of *Chastitie*' and 'Turne *Virgin Loue*, to hot Lust's Plurisie'.<sup>15</sup> The poem made evident that the theatrical display of female bodies led to degradation and sinfulness, and also registered an anxiety about Catholicism in its observation that 'Neuer was any great Arch-mischief done, / But by a Whore, or a Priest, first begun'.<sup>16</sup> In the light of Richards's verses, the Catholic Frenchwoman cast in the role of Circe might certainly have stood for some as 'the symbol of dangerous femininity, performance, and even Catholicism', although, as I will show, this representation is more satirical than defiant.

Gough has suggested that the casting of Mistress Shepherd as Harmony was a deliberate attempt to counteract the audience's recognition of 'the conjunction between Circe's gender and the gender of the singer-actress performing her'.<sup>17</sup> In other words, by including a female Harmony who sings a song that was 'not her own but the queen's', the masque posited that 'queenly voices [could] be lustful, as was Circe's, but also categorically ethereal and chaste, as is Divine Beauty's Harmony'.<sup>18</sup> As Gough astutely notes, the equation of female song with unrestrained passion is modified by Harmony's presence, disrupting the binarism that says women's continence and chastity can 'only be embodied in women's silence'.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the close association between the Frenchwoman playing Circe and the Frenchwoman who is Divine Beauty is somewhat weakened by the mediating force of the female Harmony (figure 5.1).

Harmony's place in the masque is certainly important for it marks the moment of transition from the disruptive anti-masque to the masque proper. However, again, I think her role has been misread because of the prevalent assumption that she was a professional singer, and because



Figure 5.1. Inigo Jones's sketch of 'Harmony' for *Tempe Restored* (1632).

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Excerpt

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*Tempe Restored* has been interpreted as a kind of female-centred renovation of previous Stuart masquing practice. Gough, noting that Harmony appears nowhere in *Tempe Restored*'s source, traces her to a 1589 Florentine *intermedii* in which Doric Harmony, sung by the professional vocalist Vittoria Archilei, performed a prologue 'from the Highest Spheres'.<sup>20</sup> Gough also notes that Harmony sang alongside Henrietta Maria in the 1623 ballet, *Les Fêtes de Junon la Nopcière* (although it is not certain whether this performance figured a male or female singer). *Tempe Restored*, she concludes, incorporated motifs from French productions with which Henrietta Maria was familiar and thus had an encomiastic function because it emphasised her royal status as a princess of France and an English queen.<sup>21</sup>

Mistress Shepherd's casting was certainly a departure from the norm at the Stuart court, although the figure of Harmony was not. She had appeared relatively recently alongside Apollo and 'the spirits of music' in Prince Charles's *Fortunate Isles and Their Union* (1625), and should have entered on stage in the company of Apollo, Mercury and the Muses in the unperformed *Neptune's Triumph* (1624). Nevertheless, there is no reason to believe that she was not intended to be played by a man in these productions. It certainly seems, therefore, that *Tempe Restored* deliberately promoted a female singer as Harmony, not least to counteract the disruptive elements of the Circean song and to stand as both the herald of, and voice for, Henrietta Maria as Divine Beauty. However, I suggest that, like Madame Coniack, Mistress Shepherd was not a professional singer and that a consideration of her possible identity links *Tempe Restored* to a tradition of Stuart masquing practice that complicates assumptions about the masque's presentation of female voice.

Harmony arrives on stage after the voluntary departure of the histrionic Circe and her nymphs. She is attended by a chorus of music and has 'under her conduct' fourteen influences of the stars, played by noble children.<sup>22</sup> Tomlinson has noted that her singing part in the masque was as large as Circe's.<sup>23</sup> However, I would like to suggest that her solo responsibility was actually significantly shorter. Circe sings three solo quatrains punctuated by couplets sung by her nymphs, and then, at the end of the masque, performs nine lines in dialogue with Cupid, Pallas and Jove. Harmony sings a solo five-line stanza on her first entry, and then performs three solo lines in a song with the chorus of the spheres. Although she participates in other songs, it is always with the support of other voices. Circe therefore has thirteen more solo lines than Harmony, nearly double her part. On one level, this serves to emphasise

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0521847974 - Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria

Karen Britland

Excerpt

[More information](#)

96

*Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria*

Circe's self-centred love passion by juxtaposing her single, imperious voice against Harmony's integration within a group. However, it might also indicate that Mistress Shepherd's voice could not sustain a substantial vocal part – in other words, it might suggest that she was not, after all, a professional adult. Indeed, I would like to suggest that she was not an adult at all, but a child.

At first glance, this seems a bit bizarre, but it is to be remembered that Harmony enters on the masquing stage in the company of the fourteen influences of the stars, played by noble children. Furthermore, she associates herself with these children through the very first words she sings:

Not as myself, but as the brightest star  
That shines in heaven, come to reign this day;  
And these the beams and influences are  
Of constellations, whose planetary sway,  
Though some foresee, all must alike obey. (lines 155–9)

Harmony describes herself as the representative of Divine Beauty ('the brightest star'), introducing her young companions as the representatives of the other ladies who will descend with the queen. An analogy is therefore drawn between her position and that of the children who accompany her.

The children who played the influences were all born between 1619 and 1623 (giving an age range of about nine to thirteen years).<sup>24</sup> They included Lady Alice Egerton and her brother John, Lord Ellesmere, who, two years later at the ages of fifteen and eleven respectively were to undertake substantial dramatic parts in Milton's *Masque at Ludlow*. (Thomas, their nine-year-old brother, would also take part in this later entertainment as well as performing in King Charles's masque, *Coelum Britannicum*, in February 1634.) It is, therefore, not absolutely beyond the bounds of possibility that Harmony was played by a child, in which case the argument that *Tempe Restored* drew heavily on continental precedents needs to be re-examined.

I would like to suggest one candidate for the role of Harmony, primarily to interrogate the assumption that *Tempe Restored*'s singers were professional women. In the late 1630s, a certain Anne Sheppard was part of the circle of Philip Herbert, fourth earl of Pembroke and the king's lord chamberlain.<sup>25</sup> She was painted by Van Dyck around 1637 with Mary Villiers Herbert, daughter of the late duke of Buckingham and wife of Pembroke's eldest son.<sup>26</sup> Both Mary and Charles Herbert, who were married in 1635, performed as influences in *Tempe Restored* alongside

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0521847974 - Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria

Karen Britland

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Harmony. They were about ten and thirteen years old respectively at the time. Their companion, Sheppard, was later married to Richard Gibson, the miniaturist, in the presence of Charles and Henrietta Maria at St Pancras, Soper Lane, on St Valentine's day 1641.<sup>27</sup> At the time of *Tempe Restored* she was around eleven or twelve years old. She was also a dwarf who never grew beyond 3 feet 10 inches tall.

There is, of course, a strong tradition of male dwarves performing in Stuart court masques. For example, the year before *Tempe Restored*, Jeffrey Hudson, Henrietta Maria's servant, had performed a large and histrionic part in *Chloridia* as a 'Dwarfe-Post from Hell'.<sup>28</sup> He was then about twelve years old and was evidently thought capable of delivering a long and complicated prose speech. In addition, as Lucy Munro and others have examined, the professional early modern English stage was no stranger to plays performed by boys aged as young as ten.<sup>29</sup> Performances by young women, though, were more unusual, although a precedent does exist.

In 1617, Lucy Harrington Russell, Anna of Denmark's most prominent female courtier, organised an entertainment for the queen at her court at Greenwich. This production, *Cupid's Banishment*, was undertaken by students from the Ladies Hall at Deptford and included a speech that appears to have been uttered by one 'Mistress Ann Watkins' who acted Fortune, as well as a song sung by eight wood nymphs, also female students at the school.<sup>30</sup> Other participants in the entertainment included the young Elizabeth Cranfield, daughter of Sir Lionel Cranfield, James I's lord treasurer, as well as the musician Charles Coleman, who later contributed to the children's masque at Richmond, presented by Prince Charles to Henrietta Maria in 1636. These figures not only provide a link between Jacobean and Caroline productions, but, in the case of Coleman, show a continued involvement in children's theatre. In addition, it is notable that two of Lucy Harrington's nieces, Anne and Mary Russell, took to the stage with Henrietta Maria in *Tempe Restored*.

Clare McManus points out that *Cupid's Banishment* pre-dated Madame Coniack and Mistress Shepherd's songs in *Tempe Restored* by fifteen years, and notes, moreover, that one later moment of comparison is to be found in Milton's *Masque at Ludlow*, which, she says, is 'remarkably similar' to *Cupid's Banishment* 'in terms of their performers' age'.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, she suggests:

It is possible that the youthfulness of Ann Watkins and Alice Egerton granted a degree of impunity similar to that exploited by the earlier children's theatre companies, an impunity less available to those who no longer stood beneath the control of a father, a family or a school.<sup>32</sup>



Cambridge University Press

0521847974 - Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria

Karen Britland

Excerpt

[More information](#)

In other words, the youth of the performers in both *Cupid's Banishment* and *Tempe Restored* secured the impression of their innocence, reducing the potentially transgressive nature of their performances. Moreover, their participation in the productions was validated as it was a means of both gaining and displaying social skills in dancing and singing, and bringing them to the attention of potential patrons, sponsors or marriage partners.

If *Tempe Restored's* female singers were not professionals, but instead a gentlewoman and a child, then the masque may be seen to engage with the limits of *permitted* female performance. Although innovative, Mistress Shepherd's role was not particularly shocking, but was instead intricately linked to Henrietta Maria's status as the mother of the Stuart heirs. While Circe is characterised as an inconstant and overly passionate woman, Harmony and her companions demonstrate that the proper end of desire lies in marital alliance and the chaste generation of children. Therefore, rather than allowing Henrietta Maria to 'participate vicariously in the . . . vocal virtuosity of women singers', Shepherd stands more as the voice of the uncontaminated future promised by the Caroline royal union.<sup>33</sup>

*Tempe Restored*, then, certainly does privilege the role of women upon the stage, both through its presentation of female singers and through its celebration of the queen consort as Divine Beauty. Nevertheless, as Shell has cautioned, it should not be interpreted as a self-interested declaration of women's agency. Rather than being almost a gesture of defiance, the masque pushes at the limits of female performance already sanctioned at court. Like *Chloridia*, it locates Henrietta Maria as the mother of the Stuart line, uniting her influence with that of her husband. More significantly, although the queen consort here maintains a sense of her own national identity, the masque sees a movement from French-inflected imperialism (figured in Madame Coniack's Circe) to the queen consort's harmonious appearance on the stage surrounded by her new countrywomen and their offspring.

It is to these children that I now want to turn in a discussion of the masque's political implications, investigating the significance of the courtier families represented on the stage. Although, as Veevers has suggested, aspects of *Tempe Restored* have strong Catholic, and even Marian, undertones, a large number of those who took part in the entertainment came from families of a firmly Protestant persuasion.<sup>34</sup> In the light of this, I want to examine the masque's presentation of harmony in the context of its political milieu, before concluding with an exploration of how, nonetheless, *Tempe Restored* registered an indebtedness to Henrietta Maria's Catholic faith.

Cambridge University Press

0521847974 - Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria

Karen Britland

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Tempe Restored: exile/dispossession/restitution*

99

\*

If *Chloridia* shadowed the events on the continent that led to Marie de Médicis's expulsion from France, then it seems likely that Henrietta Maria's next masque would again engage with European politics. In September 1631, Marie arrived in Antwerp in the Spanish Netherlands, while her son Gaston and his followers, who had supported Marie in her grievances, fled to Nancy in Lorraine where they were promised military aid by the duke. Louis and Richelieu proceeded to exact punitive measures against the rebellious noblemen, charging them with the crime of *lèse majesté* and confiscating their lands and titles.<sup>35</sup> By mid-winter 1631, under the severe threat of invasion from France, the duke of Lorraine was finally forced to expel Gaston from his lands, but not before the prince had strategically married his sister. Gaston travelled to Brussels to rejoin his mother in a move that was to realign Henrietta Maria's family allegiances, leading her, by the summer of 1632, to become involved in a cabal that sought to overthrow the chief ministers of both France and England.

Given the political upheaval within France in 1631/2, the choice of Beaujoyeux's entertainment as the source for *Tempe Restored* is an interesting one. The production celebrated the union of Marguerite de Lorraine, sister of the Valois queen, to the duc de Joyeuse, the king's favourite, and its use emphasised the historical, dynastic links between France and the duchy now threatened by Richelieu. Furthermore, the *Balet Comique* text also foregrounded the notion of healing, drawing attention, in its dedicatory epistle to Henri III, to the wars that had wracked the Valois kingdom, and praising the monarch and Catherine de Médicis, his mother, for resolving them. As Thomas M. Greene has suggested, Beaujoyeux obviously 'understood his fable to have a specific political application, and wanted the application to be recognised'.<sup>36</sup> The entertainment's printed text makes no bones about its status as a political allegory, locating Circe as a symbol of disorder vanquished by the virtuous French king.

In light of this, *Tempe Restored*'s opening scene, drawn almost directly from the *Balet Comique*, takes on additional resonance in its presentation of the Fugitive Favourite seeking sanctuary at Charles I's feet. I have argued that *Chloridia* promoted the queen consort as a vehicle through which conflict might be resolved, positioning her as a mediator between Richelieu and her mother. *Tempe Restored*'s impulse is very similar, seeing Circe's disorders reformed through the mediating presence of Charles and his wife who are preferred by the sorceress over Jove and Cupid. It would,