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Robin Hood and Clorinda, Queen of Portugal

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SUMMARY: This article re-evaluates *"Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage,"* arguing for a composition date shortly after 1662 in the early Restoration. The ballad's closing prayer for the royal couple, together with its Christmas setting and pastoral tone, aligns it with celebrations of Charles II's marriage to Catherine of Braganza. The figure of Clorinda, "Queen of the Shepherdesses," reflects contemporary depictions of Catherine as a virtuous shepherdess and skilled archer, visible in court poetry and portraits by Huysmans and Gennari. Read in this context, the poem emerges not as a minor curiosity but as a royalist re-imagining of the Robin Hood legend: the outlaw becomes a loyal celebrant of lawful festivity and restored monarchy. This study thus both refines the dating of the ballad and repositions it as a crucial stage in Robin Hood's transformation from rebel to emblem of Restoration harmony.

INTRODUCTION

The longest Robin Hood poem is the *Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode*, the first extant printing of which was by Richard Pynson, in 1495. It was, at the time of its printing, the poem which came the closest to giving a (admittedly partial) biography of the outlaw, following his exploits in helping a poor knight, meeting the king, and finally meeting his death at the hands of the Prioress of Kirklees and Sir Roger of Doncaster. Several further editions of this poem were printed in the sixteenth century, the most complete surviving examples being those printed by Wynken de Worde and Edward White.

Yet in the seventeenth century, no new editions of the *Lytell Geste* were being printed. The text seems to have been quietly forgotten about, languishing in libraries, unknown to very few save for the author of the "Sloane Life" of Robin Hood and Ben Jonson.[1] But other writers, with their fertile imaginations, stepped forth to fill the gaps in our knowledge of Robin Hood's life and career. Robin Hood would receive a more complete biographical treatment with Anthony Munday's *Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntingdon* and *Death of Robert, Earl of Huntingdon* (written between 1597–98 and published as a quarto in 1601), which tales did largely as they said on

[1] See Stephen Knight, " 'Meere English Flocks': Ben Jonson's *The Sad Shepherd* and the Robin Hood Tradition," in *Robin Hood: Medieval and Post-Medieval*, ed. Helen Phillips (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), 131.

the tin, telling the story of his outlawry and eventual demise. These plays are also responsible for having elevated Robin Hood for the first time to the peerage, which many writers later copied.

The famous ballad writer Martin Parker, taking his cue from Munday, wrote *A True Tale of Robin Hood* (1631), which conferred anew the earldom of Huntingdon on Robin Hood. After 1662, there was a broadside ballad titled "A New Ballad of bold Robin Hood Shewing His Birth, Breeding, Valour and Marriage, at Titbury Bull-running." Four early versions of this ballad survive in broadside form, all of which are tentatively dated from c.1684 onwards. In this new ballad, interestingly, Robin Hood's love interest is not Maid Marian but a humble shepherdess named Clorinda.

THE LITERARY AND PUBLISHING HISTORY OF "ROBIN HOOD'S BIRTH, BREEDING, VALOUR, AND MARRIAGE"

One question which Robin Hood scholars have not yet been able to satisfactorily answer is why a lady called Clorinda appears in the mid-seventeenth century ballad tradition. A warrior woman named Clorinda did appear in *Jerusalem Delivered* (1581) by Torquato Tasso but the lady of this play does not quite match the genteel Clorinda of the Robin Hood tale in her actions, for Jerusalem's Clorinda boldly fights to save her city from the invading Saracens. A rousing tale, indeed it was, and one which had a significant cultural impact in Italy and Europe on its first release. Yet the poem itself was not taken much notice of in Britain and Clorinda herself did not appear in any major sixteenth-century English artistic; even in Handel's later *Rinaldo* (1711), which was based in part on Tasso's work, did not feature her. Thus, we cannot trace Tasso's poem as a source for Clorinda.

A more likely source for the first appearance of an *English* lady named Clorinda, who is also associated with shepherdesses and the pastoral world, in English culture, is Edmund Spenser's minor poem "The Doleful Lay of Clorinda," which appeared in *Astrophel* (1595). Debate exists around Spenser's authorship of the poem, although it did appear Spenser's First Folio (1598).[2] Presumably taking their cue from Spenser, around 1662 several popular songs and poems featured a woman named Clorinda who is associated with the Arcadian pastoral world. Two of these were preserved in the Drexel MS (a commonplace book containing a number of poems from 1659 onwards). The two poems were "As on a day Clorinda faire was bathinge" and "Clorinda when I goe away." Clorinda has therefore, by the 1660s, become a minor ballad figure who owes her existence in English culture to Edmund Spenser.

So we return to "Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage," which was first published as a broadside, or single sheet of paper with song lyrics, selling for a penny or less. Knight and Ohlgren remark that the ballad is "patently a literary confection" and does not appear to have been "popular in its distribution" because it does not appear in the first edition of *Robin Hood's Garland* in 1663, which was a collection of all the thitherto published Robin Hood broadside ballads.[3] To this we might add that "Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage" is "patently a literary confection" because it drew upon the existing popularity of ballad figure named Clorinda.

However, I contend that this "patently literary confection" was, in fact, a favourite among audiences owing, not only to its frequent republication as a broadside from the 1680s but also because of its inclusion in the much higher-class anthologies. The first collection to reprint the ballad was Ambrose Phillips's *Collection of Old Ballads* (1723).[4] Phillips wrote the first, admittedly brief, critical summary of the ballad and remarked that it was "one of the most beautiful" Robin Hood ballads in existence.[5] The ballad was retitled here as "The Pedigree,

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[2] See Charles G. Osgood, "The 'Doleful Lay of Clorinda'," *Modern Language Notes* 35 no. 2 (1920), 90-96.

[3] Knight and Ohlgren, introduction to "Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour , and Marriage," 527.

[4] "The Pedigree, Education, and Marriage of Robin Hood with Clorinda, Queen of Titbury Feast," in *A Collection of Old Ballads*, edited by Ambrose Phillips, vol. 1 (London: J. Roberts, 1723), 64–74.

[5] Phillips, introduction to "The Pedigree, Education, and Marriage of Robin Hood, with Clorinda, Queen of Titbury Feast," in *A Collection of Old Ballads*, vol. I, 66.

Education, and Marriage of Robin Hood with Clorinda, Queen of Titbury Feast." It was under this title that the ballad was printed in several eighteenth-century editions of *Robin Hood's Garland*.

The poem next appeared in the sixth volume of the Dryden-Tonson *Miscellany Poems*. John Dryden (1631–1700) compiled and published several volumes of these *Miscellany Poems*. These works were anthologies of various poetic works by himself and his contemporaries (for an interesting side note: In Dryden and Purcell's opera *King Arthur; or, The British Worthy*, 1691, a lady named Clorinda appears when Arthur encounters the shepherds). After Dryden's death, the publishing of the miscellany poems continued, and still using Dryden's name on the title page, Jacob Tonson published *The Sixth Part of Miscellany Poems* (1727). In recognition of the ballad's age in 1727, Tonson retitled it as "An *Old* Ballad of Bold Robin Hood, Shewing His Birth, Breeding, Valour and Marriage, at Titbury Bull-running: Calculated for the Meridian of Staffordshire, but may serve for Derbyshire or Kent. To a Pleasant Tune."[6] Unlike Cunningham, Tonson did not offer any interpretative or critical remarks on the content and merely reprinted the text following Cunningham's punctuation.

The ballad reappeared in for the first time in the garlands in the edition printed by Cluer Dicey, c.1740 (which is Alexander Kaufman's dating of this edition)[7] where it was listed under Cunningham's title.[8] Interestingly, and perhaps in contradiction of Knight and Ohlgren's assertion that the ballad was not popular "in its distribution" as a broadside, Dicey also issued a new broadside version of it in 1746. Although this broadside version does not survive, its existence was attested to by one Victorian historian. In 1888, a historian writing for *Northamptonshire Notes and Queries*, in an article titled "Curiosities of Northamptonshire Printing," remarked that in the archives of Northampton Museum he had found two items. The first was a complete copy of *Robin Hood's Garland* printed by Cluer Dicey alone. Although no date was printed on the title page, which "is usual in books of this class," our anonymous historian dated it between 1725 and 1750, owing to the fact that it was after the partnership with Robert Raikes but evidently before the partnership with Marshall.[9] The historian, known only as "F.T.," then provided the details of the broadside version which he found:

> The Pedigree, Education, and Marriage of Robin Hood with Clorinda, Queen of Titbury Feast. Supposed to be related by the Fiddler, who play'd at their wedding. Northampton. Robert Dicey, of whom may be had all sorts of old and new ballads, broadsheets, histories, pictures cut in wood, and engrav'd on copper plate, &c. with finer cuts, much better printed, and cheaper than in any other place in England.[10]

I cannot find any Robin Hood scholar so far who has cited this broadside version in their works. It appears to have escaped the notice even of the antiquaries Joseph Ritson, John Mathew Gutch, and Francis J. Child. I have attempted to trace it but to no avail. Northampton Museum's catalogue now contains no record of it, although there is no reason to doubt that it ever existed because Cluer Dicey did on occasion print broadsides even though his main output was books. That Dicey felt it was profitable to print a new broadside version of the song allows us to reconsider its popularity among both the reading public and that section of the public who liked a good song of Robin Hood.

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[6] "An Old Ballad of Bold Robin Hood, Shewing His Birth, Breeding, Valour and Marriage, at Titbury Bull-running: Calculated for the Meridian of Staffordshire, but may serve for Derbyshire or Kent. To a Pleasant Tune" in *The Sixth Part of Miscellany Poems, Containing a Variety of New Translations of Ancient Poets: Together with Several Original Poems by the Most Eminent Hands. Publish'd by Mr. Dryden*, edited by Jacob Tonson (London: J. Tonson, 1727), 276–82.

[7] Alexander L. Kaufman, *Christmastime Texts and the Popularity of the Robin Hood Tradition* (Leeds: Arc Humanities, 2025), 30.

[8] "The Pedigree, Education, and Marriage of Robin Hood with Clorinda, Queen of Titbury Feast," in *Robin Hood's Garland* (London: Dicey, c.1740?), 1–6.

[9] F.T., "Curiosities of Northamptonshire Printing," *Northamptonshire Notes and Queries* 2 (1888), 190. On the history of the Dicey firm see: D. Stoker, "Another look at the Dicey-Marshall publications 1736-1806," *The Library: Transactions of the Bibliographical Society* 15 no. 2 (2014): 111-157.

[10] F.T., "Curiosities of Northamptonshire Printing," 189.

"Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage" next appeared in Thomas Evans's *Old Ballads, Historical and Narrative* (1784), which adopted Hugh Cunningham's title.[11] A more standardised title was established by Joseph Ritson in 1795, in whose collection the ballad was retitled as the simpler "Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage," which is the title that scholars have adopted since.[12]

Few scholars treated the ballad (or poem, depending on how "literary" one views the text) as worthy of critical treatment. Francis J. Child placed it in his appendix of Robin Hood ballads, rather than as part of a main collection.[13] R.B. Dobson and J. Taylor never included it in their *Rymes of Robyn Hood* (1976). Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren only offered cursory remarks. In truth, scholars seem to feel that it has always been an awkward addition to the Robin Hood canon. The reasons for this are as follows: Robin Hood is traditionally conceived of as a figure of the summer time.[14] For instance, the poem of "Robin Hood and the Monk" (1465) opens with a celebration of the summer when "leves be large and long."[15] To the William Copland edition of *A Mery Geste of Robyn Hoode* (c.1560) was appended "The Playe of Robyn Hode, very proper to be played in Maye games" at the opening of the summer festivities.[16] "Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage" ultimately sits outside the Robin Hood tradition proper because of its wintertime setting and its depiction of Christmas Day festivities. Even after its publication, and though it must have been popular with the public, it was hardly treated with any seriousness by scholars who passed over any evidence it might be thought to offer about Robin's life in winter. To provide a conjectural history of the outlaws' wintertime experiences in the forest, Ritson, for instance, in his "Life of Robin Hood," Ritson deferred, not to "Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage" but to Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*:

> "————When they did hear
> The rain and wind beat dark December, how,
> In that their pinching cave, they could discourse
> The freezing hours away!"[17]

Even in the nineteenth-century Robin Hood tradition, when the outlaw appeared as the hero of novels by the likes of Walter Scott, Thomas Love Peacock, and Pierce Egan the Younger, there were no "dark and stormy nights" (to invoke Bulwer Lytton's famous phrase) in Robin Hood tales. Instead, they were tales of summer.

Alexander Kaufman, in 2025, in fact, was the first scholar to discuss the text in depth, so a summary of his remarks is appropriate.[18] The ballad provides a history of Robin Hood's life before he became an outlaw. The actions begins at Christmas at Gamwell Hall when Robin and his mother, Joan, arrive to celebrate Christmas. The Christmas celebrations are far from medieval, however, and are more reminiscent of Tudor and Stuart Christmas Feasts. The Christmas setting would have had extra resonance for a 1660s audience who had recently lived through the return of Charles II and the restoration of the monarchy. Christmas had recently been re-established by the

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[11] "The Pedigree, Education, and Marriage of Robin Hood with Clorinda, Queen of Titbury Feast," in *Old Ballads, Historical and Narrative*, edited by Thomas Evans (London: T. Evans, 1784), 86–95.
[12] "Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage," in *Robin Hood: A Collection of All the Ancient Poems, Songs, and Ballads*, ed. Joseph Ritson, vol. 2 (London: T. Egerton and J. Johnson, 1795), 2–11.
[13] "Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage," in *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, ed. Francis James Child, vol. 5 (Boston: Little, Brown, 1860), 343–52.
[14] Stephen Knight, *Robin Hood: A Mythic Biography* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 14.
[15] "Robin Hood and the Monk," in *Early Rymes of Robyn Hood: An Edition of the Texts, ca. 1425–ca. 1600*, ed. Thomas Ohlgren and Lister M. Matheson (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2013), 7.
[16] "Here begynneth the Playe of Robyn Hoode, verye proper to be played in Maye games," in *Early Rymes of Robyn Hood: An Edition of the Texts, ca. 1425–ca. 1600*, ed. Thomas Ohlgren and Lister M. Matheson (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2013), 228–33.
[17] William Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, III, 3 quoted in Joseph Ritson, "The Life of Robin Hood," in *Robin Hood: A Collection of All the Ancient Poems, Songs, and Ballads*, ed. Joseph Ritson, vol. 1 (London: T. Egerton and J. Johnson, 1795), vii.
[18] Kaufman, *Christmastime Texts and the Popularity of the Robin Hood Tradition*, 30–38.

returned king after the Cromwellian Parliament had banned secular, and admittedly riotous, Christmas celebrations, and issued fines for anyone staging any such Christmas celebrations. The Puritans also applied the ban on supposedly sinful celebrations to Easter and Whitsun. Hence the reason for the games played in "Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage," and it is through these games that young Robin Hood becomes friends with Little John who is a servant in his uncle's household. The pair of them together decide to venture into the woods where they meet Clorinda, the Queen of the Shepherdesses. It is Clorinda who takes up a bow and arrow and kills a deer. Clorinda then invites Robin and Little John to a Christmas feast at Titbury. Along the way, Robin and Clorinda must have fallen in love with Robin (who saves her from being ambushed by foresters) and a parson is called and the pair are married.

Kaufman is correct to state that the ballad's Christmastime setting would have greatly pleased audiences whose memories stretched back to the ban on Christmas and were celebrating the return of the Merry Monarch. Yet, perhaps we can attribute some of Clorinda's appeal to a real-life woman who, from the 1660s, was equated with the elegant shepherdess. The woman in question was Charles II's Portuguese wife, Catherine of Braganza.

QUEEN CLORINDA OF PORTUGAL

It is notoriously difficult to date, precisely, the time that any seventeenth-century broadside ballad was first published, owing to the fact that printers, endeavouring to always have their publications appear "new," avoided placing dates on them. It would be, furthermore, a fruitless task to try and trace the author of a Robin Hood ballad text, for, with the exception of Martin Parker's *True Tale of Robin Hood*, none of them were ever named and, as Sir John Hawkins pointed out in 1776, no one had even pretended to guess who these long-forgotten writers were.[19]

As we have seen, four versions of "Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage" survive, all of which are dated by the Early English Broadside Ballad Archive between c.1684 and 1709.[20] There is no evidence to suggest that any of these four extant pieces were the *first* edition of this text and in light of the succeeding information perhaps the date of its composition can be pushed back twenty years before the earliest extant broadside.

Of the ballad, Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren simply state that it can be dated "soon after the Restoration in 1660."[21] A general statement, to be sure, and just how "soon" after the Restoration is what we aim to discover. I propose that "Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage" must have appeared not long after 1662–63 because it alludes, in passing, to the marriage of King Charles II with Portugal's Catherine of Braganza on April 23, 1662. The ballad's allusion to royal marriage comes at its close, when it asks the audience to

> … pray for the King.
> That he may get Children and they **[the royal couple]** may get more
> to govern and do us some good,
> And then Ill make Ballads in Rob. Hoods bower
> and sing em in merry Sherwood.[22]

[19] John Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, vol. II (London: T. Payne, 1776), 410.
[20] Kaufman, *Christmastime Texts and the Popularity of the Robin Hood Tradition*, 29.
[21] Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, introduction to "Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage," in *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, ed. Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997), 527.
[22] *A New Ballad of bold Robin Hood: Shewing His Birth, Breeding, Valour and Marriage, at Titbury Bull-running: Calculated for the Meridian of Staffordshire, but may serve for Derbyshire or Kent* (London: London: Printed by and for W.O. and are to be sold by the Booksellers, c. 1696-1709?). British Library—Roxburghe C.20.f.7.360-361.

In itself, this is not necessarily a "smoking gun" connecting the ballad with the marriage. To the modern observer, furthermore, the blessing upon the royal couple appears almost random—until, that is, when further factors are considered which strengthen the link between the poem and the royal marriage.

In 1662, Catherine of Braganza was portrayed as Clorinda. Shortly after the royal marriage, in a pastoral play written by one of those closest to her, the queen is depicted a faithful shepherdess who would govern the nation. Speaking to the king, Thomas Belke, urged him to

> Gather lilies, and beautiful carnations,
> Blue violets, and jasmine; rob all the gardens' splendour
> To weave the garlands for them
> Your wife Clorinda will combine the colours,
> She knows the mystical order of the flower
> We will instruct the songbirds
> To announce these dear names
> Their joyful songs, and tender chirping:
> Until this forest around us appears
> To have all become a grove of song.[23]

The Portuguese queen approved of the association between herself and a humble shepherdess. To celebrate the marriage in 1662, a new portrait was commissioned of Catherine of Braganza in the habit of a shepherdess. The painting, by Jacob Huysmans, currently in the King's Dining Room at Windsor Castle, was completed by 1664. To quote from the Royal Collection's catalogue entry:

> Catherine is dressed as a shepherdess and is sitting by a stream. She has a sprig of orange blossom, traditionally associated with love, marriage and fruitfulness, in her hair. She rests her left hand on the head of a lamb which may represent the virtues of innocence, purity and humility, brought to her by a cupid with his arms full of flowers. Other small cupids play among the trees in the background. The artist made a number of changes to the composition. The shepherdess's crook, which is now behind her, seems originally to have been supported in Catherine's right arm and there also seem to have been changes to the draperies round the Queen's left shoulder and arm […] As one of Huysman's most important portraits of his patroness it served as the source for some of his smaller portraits of her.[24]

Nor was Hyusman's painting the only one to depict the queen as a shepherdess. When she was older, a new portrait was commissioned Benedetto Gennari titled *Queen Catherine of Braganza as a Divine Shepherdess* (1681). The queen, who never renounced her Catholic faith upon her marriage to the king, cuts a more Catholic figure in this painting. She has lost some of her youthful beauty and remains an austere figure, seated, her hands touching what looks like a holy book; the one tender aspect of the painting remains the lamb who is about to kiss her hand. The association between the royal bride and the figure of a shepherdess was evidently a trope in popular consciousness around the time of the ballad's appearance.

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[23] Thomas Belke quoted in Susana Varela Flor, "Queen Catherine, a Bragança in Seventeenth-Century London: Cultural legacy, identity, and political individuality," in *Representing Women's Political Identity in the Early Modern Iberian World*, ed. Jean Andrews and Jeremy Roe, 293–319 (London: Routledge, 2020), 309.

[24] Royal Collection Trust, "Jacob Huysmans's Catherine of Braganza (1638-1705) c. 1662-64: RCIN 405665," (2022), https://www.rct.uk/collection/exhibitions/charles-ii-art-power/the-queens-gallery-buckingham-palace/catherine-of-braganza-1638-1705 accessed 13 May, 2025.

Figure 1: JACOB HUYSMANS (C. 1633-96) Catherine of Braganza (1638-1705) c. 1662-64 (Royal Collection)

The ballad writer had further reasons to connect the royal couple with Robin Hood motifs (and in the ballad, of course, Robin Hood commits no crime and remains firmly on the side of the law). Charles II was, just like the merry men of the Robin Hood tradition, a skilled archer and was credited by one Georgian historian as singlehandedly responsible for the sport's revival in England.[25] As for the character of Clorinda the archer-shepherdess, we can make a further connection which might explain the royal reference in a ballad of Clorinda and Robin Hood. Charles's Portuguese queen, in real life, was, just like Clorinda, a skilled archer. At a visit to Blickling Hall at Michaelmas in 1671, she impressed all spectators by managing to hit the bullseye.

Catherine was also patroness of the Honourable Fraternity of Bowmen. In the Victoria and Albert Museum's holdings resides a surviving copy of "The Catherine of Braganza" shield which she awarded to members of the fraternity which was produced by the Belgian John Cooqus who had been given special permission to practice his trade in England in 1661. The shield features a bowman in the centre with the following inscription (translations of which are provided from the V&A):

[25] Ely Hargrove, *Anecdotes of Archery* (1792. Rept. York and London: Hamilton, Adams, 1845), 62.

The shield is inscribed as follows: HONI SOIT QUI MAL Y PENSE [the motto of the Order of the Garter] / DIEU ET MON DROIT [the royal motto] / REGINAE CATHARINAE SAGITARY [a reference to the Queen, Catherine of Braganza, as a patron of archery] /ED HUNGERFORD OF.Y. HON ORDER OF. Y. BATH K [a reference to a Knight of the Order of the Bath who served as Steward]/ASHFIELD GENTSTUARDS [a reference to another Gentlemen Steward]/ANNO DOMINI 1676 [date].[26]

Figure 2: The Catherine of Braganza Archery Shield (Victoria and Albert Museum)

CONCLUSION

Although the factors pointed out above are admittedly speculative, it is clear that the association of Catherine of Braganza with Clorinda the shepherdess, and archery, deserves our attention. "Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage" has long appeared an anomaly within the outlaw canon: a genteel, courtly piece that sits uneasily beside the rougher, more popular ballads of Sherwood. Yet when read within the political and cultural atmosphere of the early Restoration, it reveals itself to be a pointed act of royalist re-imagination. The figure of

[26] Victoria and Albert Museum, "Archery Shield (made 1676)," (n.d.), https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O78407/archery-shield-cooqus-john-gerard/archery-shield-cooqus-john-g%C3%A9rard/ accessed 13 May 2025.

Clorinda, previously treated as a generic pastoral fancy, appears as a Restoration attempt to honour the new Queen of England, who enjoyed the esteem of the nation, with Arcadian imagery. In the wake of the repeal of Cromwellian prohibitions on festivity, the ballad's Christmas setting and pastoral pageantry re-assert a joyous, lawful sociability under the returned king.

By connecting Clorinda to the virtuous figurative shepherdess and patron of archery, Queen Catherine of Braganza, the ballad transforms the Robin Hood legend from an expression of outlawry into an allegory of reconciliation and legitimate festivity. Its blessing upon the royal couple, its emphasis on lawful sport, and its depiction of Clorinda's skill with the bow all position the text within a broader programme of cultural renewal under Charles II. Recognising the ballad's allusions to Catherine of Braganza and its participation in the politics of Restoration pastoralism not only recovers its contemporary resonance but also helps to date it more precisely. The ballad appeared after 1662, not "soon after the Restoration." The association also challenges the entrenched critical view that post-medieval Robin Hood texts are derivative curiosities. "Robin Hood's Birth, Breeding, Valour, and Marriage" emerges instead as a vital moment in the myth's long reinvention—where the outlaw of the greenwood becomes, briefly, the loyal celebrant of a restored order.

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