SIR THOMAS WYATT'S RONDEAUX: EARLY MODERN PERCEPTION DURING AND AFTER THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

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This paper examines the implications of Sir Thomas Wyatt's use of the rondeaux during the English Reformation and the reception and editorial emendations of that French poetic form in subsequent anti-Reformation publications. The first chapter, "Contemporary Publications and Controversy," explores the two texts by which Wyatt's works would have been disseminated to the public, namely, Tottel's *Songes and Sonettes* (or *Miscellany*) and *The Court of Venus*. In addition to these texts, I also consider the relationship between Wyatt and his deeply Protestant patrons, Sir Thomas Cromwell and Anne Boleyn, and how these relationships would have influenced the public perception of Wyatt and his work during the reinstatement of Catholicism during Mary I's reign.

In the second chapter, "French Influence and Religious Connotations," I consider the French origin of the rondeau form. The medieval rondeau form was regularized by the French poet Clément Marot. Although Marot claimed that he was not a supporter of Martin Luther, his opposition to the Catholic church identified him as a Protestant sympathizer. His religious exile in Italy and later work with John Calvin in Geneva ties him and his work to Protestantism. Because Wyatt likely learned this form, which was obscure in England, from Marot himself, Wyatt's rondeaux would have been connected to Marot, and, subsequently, Marot's Protestant reputation. This Protestant connection would have become a liability for Wyatt's later editors during the resurgence of
Catholicism in Marian England, and is, I believe, responsible for the significant changes that occurred to Wyatt's rondeaux.

The third chapter, "Anne Boleyn and the Courtly Context," explores the domestic, biographical context of the rondeaux, focusing on the relationship between Wyatt and Boleyn. Anne Boleyn spent much of her early life in France and was seen as French by both the French and English people. Since the two were alleged and commonly believed to have had an affair, Wyatt's rondeaux – romantic poetry in a distinctly French form – would have likely underscored the existing connection between himself and Boleyn. Wyatt's choice to work with the rondeau form would have associated him with Boleyn, the estranged stepmother of Mary I, and Protestantism.

Keywords: Wyatt, Marot, Tottel, rondeau
To Rory and my parents, Ron and Susan.
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INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I examine Sir Thomas Wyatt's rondeaux, specifically the rondeaux included in the mid-sixteenth-century publication of *Songes and Sonettes*, the first major anthology of English poetry. Thomas Wyatt's diplomatic experience exposed him to continental poetic forms, such as the Italian sonnet. Wyatt's introduction of the sonnet to England ushered English poetry into the early Renaissance; however, Wyatt's work with new poetic forms is not limited to the sonnet. As an ambassador for Henry VIII, Wyatt lived in France and likely met the French poet credited with the modernization and regularization of the rondeau form, Clément Marot. Marot's changes to the form – including a central refrain, 15-line length, eight- and five-line stanza structure – are found exactly in Wyatt's work, evidence of his influence over Wyatt (Lee 123-124).

Interestingly, Wyatt's rondeaux do not retain their original form in the 1557 edition of Wyatt's poetry, published by Richard Tottel as *Songes and Sonettes*; instead, Tottel altered Wyatt's poetry, changing the rondeaux into very imperfect approximations of sonnets. While Wyatt's introduction and development of the Italian sonnet was welcomed and frequently imitated in England, his work with the rondeau was in this particular publication either unappreciated or intentionally hidden. Tottel may have been simply unfamiliar with the French form; however, because the rondeau form was connected to a whole constellation of potentially explosive issues – ranging from Anne Boleyn to radical
Protestantism – it seems likely that Tottel, working during the reign of Catholic Mary I, transformed the rondeau into a "safer" poetic form: the sonnet.

The cluster of associations that I believe early modern readers would have made with the rondeau are not easily recognizable to modern eyes. Since we know that early modern writers would have used other forms to create a certain set of connections in the minds of their readership, it is logical to assume that the rondeau, too, would have had its own web of associations. For example, epics like *The Faerie Queene* are tied to the concept of nation-building, sonnets are connected to the idealization and marginalization of women (that frequently has a hidden political meaning), and pastoral poems commonly include veiled critiques of court. Authors take advantage of these sets of associations and presuppositions that audiences have about their chosen forms. For example, Shakespeare broke the traditional convention of the sonnet and, instead of writing to a woman as his readership might expect, he wrote to a young man. Similarly, the rondeau form carried with it several broad associations that made it appealing to Wyatt and, in turn, a liability for Tottel.

In his discussion about types of genres and the connotations that they carry, Thomas O. Beebee explains that "we simply do not know what to do with texts without the 'user's guide' that genre provides" (12). Beebee quotes artificial-intelligence expert Douglas Hotstadter who claims that "all messages are really composed of three 'layers.' These are (1) the message itself, (2) a message about how to decode the message, and (3) a message that tells us 'This is a message'" (Beebee 12). Marot's rondeau style is, in this sense, a genre, and the web of religio-political circumstances with which Wyatt's intended audience would have been familiar are the "user's guide," to borrow Beebee's phrase, that
helps us understand the full significance of the genre. In order to unlock the meaning of Wyatt's rondeaux, we must first consider the "message about how to decode the message." In other words, we need to examine the multifaceted connections that an early modern English reader would have had with the rondeau form or "genre," connections ranging from domestic to international, from political to religious concerns.

These connections are the focus of Stephen A. Hamrick's article on Tottel's Songes and Sonettes and the English Reformation. He explains that critics have ignored the fact that Petrarchism and the Reformation appeared in England at roughly the same time, making Tottel's Songes and Sonettes, "the premier conduit of Petrarchan poetry," "a key site at which to read the cultural impact of the Reformation" (Hamrick 329). Hamrick attempts to do what he claims critics have not: that is to situate the anthology within a religious and cultural framework. Although Hamrick's article focuses on Catholic shades of meaning in Songes and Sonettes in specific and Petrarchism in general, he does note that Songes and Sonettes "incorporated poetry that did 'comment' upon [. . . ] Protestantism, and the English Reformation" (Hamrick 330). My argument dovetails with Hamrick's. He argues that scholars have acknowledged the existence and importance of religious language to medieval poetry and ignored the Catholic overtones in and Catholic context of Songes and Sonettes. Similarly, I explain how Tottel's decision to change the rondeau form to the sonnet was a result of his religio-historical context since he was publishing during the reign of Catholic Queen Mary I and the rondeau would have been connected to a whole constellation of troublesome Protestant issues. The connection between the rondeau form and Protestantism would have made Wyatt's rondeaux potentially dangerous for Tottel to publish in Marian England.
My first chapter, "Contemporary Publications and Controversy," addresses a cluster of domestic concerns that all fall under the umbrella of English Protestantism. Wyatt would have been associated with Protestantism because of his connections to Thomas Cromwell and Anne Boleyn, but also because the earliest publication of his poems, *The Court of Venus*, included a virulently anti-Catholic narrative poem called *The Pilgrim's Tale*. *The Court of Venus* connected Wyatt to John Bale, a Protestant apologist whose works were explicitly outlawed in 1555, only two years before Tottel's *Songes and Sonnettes* appeared in print. The first chapter touches on a number of Reformation-related connections attached to Wyatt's poetry in general and to his rondeaux in specific.

The second chapter, "French Influence and Religious Connotations," situates Wyatt's work in an international context, first examining the reason why his sonnets, inspired by the Italian Petrarch, have received so much critical attention while the French rondeaux have not. My goal in this chapter is to show that, like Wyatt's sonnets, which have long been understood to use romantic language tacitly to critique the English court, the rondeaux can participate in these same kinds of negotiations. Because the form was synonymous with Clément Marot, a man who had deeply Protestant connections, I argue that the form, after being transplanted from France to England, would have carried these Protestant resonances with it, allowing for a multiplicity of meaning.

In my third and final chapter, "Anne Boleyn and the Courtly Context," I sketch out the numerous connections between Wyatt and Boleyn, including but not limited to Protestantism and French culture. The links between Wyatt and Boleyn are only reinforced through Wyatt's use of a Janus-faced kind of form that both looks across the Channel to France and French culture at the same time that it invites associations with
English Protestantism. Furthermore, I argue that Wyatt's use of the rondeau form, which highlights Wyatt and Boleyn's commonalities, would not have allowed him to present neutral poetic content because the form was so steeped in contextual meaning for early modern readers. In addition to their Protestant associations, Wyatt and Boleyn's alleged affair would have further connected them together in the minds of an English readership.

Ultimately, I hope to show that Wyatt's use of the rondeau form was not merely an exercise in translation or an aesthetic experiment that his readers simply failed to appreciate. Instead, the form allowed him to tap into a cluster of associations, in the same way that his use of the sonnet allowed him to experiment with Petrarchism. Although the rondeau was certainly an appealing poetic challenge for Wyatt since its form is ill-suited for English meter, Wyatt's rondeaux cannot be fully understood through formalist criticism because he used the rondeau form to make subtle religio-political statements. Furthermore, the set of associations that early modern readers would have had with the rondeau form would have only expanded and developed, even after Wyatt's death, because of the tumultuous English religious landscape in the years following the English Reformation. The rondeau would have been linked with English and French Protestantism as well as with Anne Boleyn, all of which were dangerous associations for a poetic form to carry during the reign of Catholic Mary I, when Tottel published *Songes and Sonettes*. This web of connections infused Wyatt's rondeaux with depth and complexity, but it also made printing them during Mary's reign a risky endeavor. Tottel side-stepped this risk by altering the poems and converting them to sonnets.
CHAPTER 1

CONTEMPORARY PUBLICATIONS AND CONTROVERSY

Wyatt is not known to have authorized the publication of a volume of his poetry during his life, so it is unsurprising that the first printed editions of his poetry differ greatly from the earlier manuscript versions. Because Wyatt likely exercised no authorial control over these publications, it is difficult to gauge the relationship between his poems as he intended them to appear in manuscript and the revised, later poems. Although Wyatt may have had little direct influence over *The Court of Venus*, a very fragmented collection of his first published poetry ranging from 1537-1565, and certainly exercised no influence over *Songes and Sonettes*, which was published after his death, the editorial changes to his poetry in these volumes implicate Wyatt in religio-political concerns, specifically with the radical Protestantism that would have been associated with his patrons, Anne Boleyn and Sir Thomas Cromwell. Just as an examination of Wyatt's immersion in continental poetry can help us distinguish Italian and French influences in his writing, a historical examination of the early publications of Wyatt's poetry can shed light on the English perception and reception of Wyatt's work.

A key player in the dissemination of Wyatt's work was Richard Tottel, the editor of *Songes and Sonettes*.¹ While many have argued that Tottel's changes were the result of artistic preference or poetic ignorance, I believe that Tottel was torn between the desire to

¹ Tottel is the known publisher of *Songes and Sonettes* and is often referred to as its editor. For the purposes of this paper, Tottel will be credited as both the editor and publisher.
present Wyatt to the English people through publication and the fear of being associated with Protestantism during the Catholic reign of Queen Mary I. Tottel's significant editorial changes were his attempt to avoid a significant cluster of Protestant ties to the first publication of Wyatt's poetry in the Douce fragment of *The Court of Venus*.

*The Court of Venus*

*Songes and Sonettes*, also called Tottel's *Miscellany*, is usually credited with being the first anthology in the English language as well as the first major publication of Wyatt's poetry. Given the status of *Songes and Sonettes*, the earlier collection of Wyatt's poetry in *The Court of Venus* has often been neglected. While *Songes and Sonettes* is certainly an important piece in the development of poetry during the English Renaissance, *The Court of Venus* – the collective name for three individual groups printed over thirty years – also provides commentary on the political and religious landscape of the sixteenth century. *The Court of Venus* simply receives less critical attention than *Songes and Sonettes* because it is an inferior collection of poetry, comprised of three very different fragments.\(^2\) The fragments of *Court* are generally referred to as Douce, published as *The Court of Venus* with *The Pilgrim's Tale*, which dates from 1537-1539; Stark, published as *A Boke of Balettes*, which dates from 1547-1549; and Folger, published as *The Courte of Venus*, which dates from 1561-1565 (Caldwell *DLB*).\(^3\)

Since many of the poems in *The Court of Venus* are incomplete, poor in quality and style, and scattered variously across three different fragments which were published

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\(^2\) In *The Court of Venus*, the poems attributable to Wyatt are generally incomplete and inferior in quality when compared to *Songes*, which is itself a collection of poorly edited poetry.

\(^3\) For more information about the fragments within *The Court of Venus*, see Fraser 12-26.
at various times, it is difficult to pinpoint the importance of the collection as a whole, much less the individual fragments. Kenneth Muir and Patricia Thomson write that *The Court of Venus* is a "carelessly printed book," and the texts within are "manifestly inferior" (437). To dismiss the publication as "carelessly printed" pigeonholes *The Court of Venus* as a simply unsuccessful collection of Wyatt's poetry. Russell A. Fraser explains that the reason *Songes and Sonettes* has been unfairly privileged above *Court* is simply because of its superior preservation. He claims that *Court* was just as popular in sixteenth-century England, and that if it had been preserved intact, modern scholars would be able to attribute far more to *Court's* influence than they are able to do now (76-77). I agree with Fraser in his acknowledgement that *Court* is an important text; however, I also think that the poems in *Court* are able to stand on their own merit because they allow us to infer what sixteenth-century readers knew of Wyatt's connection to and sympathies with Protestantism.

Since the second (Stark – 1547-1549) and third (Folger – 1561-1565) *Court* fragments have received more attention due to their superior quality and preservation, I will primarily examine and attempt to situate Douce, the first fragment, in its original historical context. This first fragment is the most perplexing for several reasons: length, content, and surrounding poetry. Only two of Wyatt's poems are found within Douce, and both are very different from their alleged Devonshire (the main manuscript of Wyatt's work, compiled during the 1530s-1540s) counterparts. The second poem really only shares the phrase "Driven by desire," a few similar words, and an overall "feel" of Wyatt disdain.

Regarding Douce, there are two primary veins of criticism: those who, like Kenneth Muir, Patricia Thomson, and Charles A. Huttar, deny that Wyatt was the author (or
believe that the fragment's poor quality obscures his authorship to such a degree that the fragment can possess little value), and those who, like Russell Fraser and E.K. Chambers, believe that Wyatt's poems do appear in the Douce fragment of *The Court of Venus.*

Muir and Thomson's notes imply that Wyatt's manuscript poetry differs from Douce because the Douce fragment is either an incredibly poor copy of Wyatt's actual poetry or is, in fact, an imitation piece, a "knock-off" of Wyatt's famous jaded, unhappy-in-love style.

Similarly, Charles A. Huttar questions Wyatt's presence altogether in the early *Court,* although he does agree with Fraser's belief that *Court* has been neglected (191). Fraser, whom Thomson and Muir praise for his edition of *Court* (xviii), suggests that there is a direct historical/biographical explanation for the discrepancies between Douce and the superior Devonshire MS. He writes that the difference in content is possibly due to Wyatt's attempt to disassociate himself from the newly deposed Anne Boleyn. Fraser writes that Wyatt's poetry in Douce was actually closer to an imaginary "original" text than any other extant manuscript or published edition, but, in the wake of Anne Boleyn's May 17, 1536 execution, Wyatt altered his work for his own protection, leading to the drastically revised "Dryven bye desire" in the Devonshire manuscript, as well as in the later *Miscellany* (Fraser 43). This view advocates that *The Court of Venus* should be included in the Wyatt canon not necessarily on the grounds of the quality of the poems con-

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4 In *Sir Thomas Wyatt and Some Collected Studies,* Chambers discusses the authorship of *Court,* as well as its relationship to the other manuscripts. Chambers writes that "it is difficult to distinguish, especially through bad texts, between a great poet, not at his greatest, and a smaller man under his influence," but, ultimately, he seems to support the idea of Wyatt's authorship of most of the *Court* poems – including the two fragments in Douce (111-119).

5 See Muir and Thomson's *Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt.*
tained within it, but rather because of what changes to the poems imply about the context in which Wyatt was writing.

While Fraser uses the Douce fragment to look at what Wyatt's original poetic intent might have been, I believe that this same fragment is also evidence of Wyatt's Protestant sympathies. Both Fraser's and my views operate upon the assumption that Wyatt is indeed the author of the *Court* fragments. Although some would disagree, they cannot fully account for the controversy caused by *The Court of Venus.* Hallett Smith writes that, "Indeed the *Court of Venus,* for reasons which are not now clear, stirred up a storm of protest. Reformers and godly divines denounced it as a book of lecherous ballads" (323-4). Since the poems created such a stir, Wyatt's authorship should not be so easily dismissed because it is possible that his connection to radical Protestantism in the 1530s and 40s might help explain the negative Douce reception. Also, since it is widely accepted that Wyatt had some influence on the Douce fragment, whether in direct authorship or in a more general sense, such as another poet's imitation of his style, the question is not whether Wyatt influenced the poems in Douce, but rather, to what degree Wyatt influenced the poems. Numerous claims have been made based on the short, problematic Douce text and the similarities (and differences) when compared to the manuscripts, particularly the Devonshire; however, critics have not explored the juxtaposition of Wyatt's poetry with the other texts in Douce. The intertextual relationship in Douce presents compelling evidence that Wyatt and his work should be read in a Reformist context.
The Douce Fragment: *The Pilgrim's Tale* and Wyatt's poetry

Wyatt's connection with *The Pilgrim's Tale* in the Douce fragment of *The Court of Venus* has strong religious implications that tie Wyatt to radical Protestantism that was temporarily acceptable during the 1530s until the tide turned against his patron, Sir Thomas Cromwell, the earl of Essex, minister to the king, and enforcer of Protestantism. In addition, the Douce fragment's editor, Thomas Gybson, is also believed to have had Protestant sympathies.⁶ Understanding the historical and religious contexts and implications of Douce can help explain both its negative reception and Wyatt's relationship to the English Reformation; additionally, a religio-political consideration of the text can have larger ramifications for Wyatt's poems as they appear in Tottel's *Songes and Sonettes*. The constellation of Reformist influences surrounding the Douce fragment from *Court–Cromwell, The Pilgrim's Tale* and its author, as well as Anne Boleyn, and Douce's ostensibly Protestant editor - connects Wyatt and his poetry to extremist Protestantism that might ultimately help to explain the changes wrought upon his poetry in the form of Tottel's *Songes and Sonettes* during the Catholic reign of Queen Mary I.

Wyatt's two poems in the Douce fragment appear just before a long, satirical pilgrimage poem called *The Pilgrim's Tale*, believed to have been written by Robert Singleton, a priest who was hanged for treason.⁷ This poem is a critique of the October 1536 Pilgrimage of Grace, a religious insurrection in the North of England sparked by the Dissolution of Monasteries and the nation's general movement away from Roman Catholicism. As a Protestant polemic, *The Pilgrim's Tale* features a priest who challenges the Pope and upholds the King's authority as "God's intended head of the Church on earth”

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⁶ See Fraser for more information about Gybson's Protestant sympathies (5).
⁷ Singleton is also called "Shyngleton."
(Harrier 81). The speaker passionately iterates the central themes of the Reformation like *solus Christus*, "our redeemer is crist alon," and *sola fide* "which is nought whan we do best. / exceptyd only our faith in christ" (Harrier 81). He also derides Catholic veneration of relics as "rottyn bons" and the clergy as "a great incomberment" (Harrier 81).

Although Wyatt's Douce fragments are certainly not as overtly anti-Papist as the *Tale*, there are hints of Protestant language.\(^8\) The first stanza of the second poem in Douce appears as follows:

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Dryuen by dissyr to set affection.
   a great way alas aboue my degre
   chosen I am I thinke by election.
   to couet that thing that will not be.
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Of course one interpretation could be that Wyatt is referring to his love for Anne Boleyn, who is "aboue [his] degre," but the Protestant language of the poem, subtle though it is, is present (and, incidentally, not at all at odds with the idea that the poem is about Boleyn). The Protestant overtones of Wyatt's poem hinge on the words "chosen" and "election."

The word "chosen" has two possible meanings: "taken by preference, selected, picked out" and "chosen of God, elect" (*OED "chosen" a.1,2*). It appears in the same line as "election," which also has two relevant meanings: "the formal choosing of a person for an office, dignity, or position of any kind" (*OED "election" 1.a*) and "the exercise of God's sovereign will in choosing some of His creatures in preference to others for blessings

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\(^8\) In addition to this possible allusion to Protestantism, there are other examples of words that serve a two-fold purpose (piety hidden by romance) in the two fragments of Wyatt's poems. In the fragment of the first poem, the words "faithfully" (3) and "pyte" (10), which could be read as "pity," but also as "piety" are found. In the second poem, the speaker is compelled to act against his will (a kind of corrupted version of election) (18). Also, language like "couet" (15, 19, 24) is used repeatedly.
temporal or spiritual" (OED "election" 3.a). The idea of a "chosen" people or of an elect, predestined people has obvious resonances in Protestant theology, having been espoused by the apostle Paul, St. Augustine, and John Calvin, men whom English Protestants would look to and claim as their own. These words signal an encoded Protestantism in the text and subtly tie Boleyn (if she is indeed the subject of the poem) to Wyatt and Protestant reform; moreover, Wyatt's use of the word "election" in a negative context (ie: the lady is "above [his] degree") is provoking because he not only refers to the Protestant idea of election, he suggests that election is responsible for his romantic transgression. In other words, Wyatt's use of the word "election" is decidedly Protestant; however, the actual poetic context gives the word a radically different meaning. Wyatt's suggestion that he is elected to love the wrong woman turns the traditional understanding of the word (that someone is elected to love God) on its head. But more significantly, perhaps, the Protestant timbre of Wyatt's poems in Douce complements Singleton's strongly anti-Catholic work, which suggests that Wyatt's work, particularly "Dryuen by dissyr" is Protestant in its content and also by its juxtaposition with Tale.

Furthermore, Wyatt and Singleton's connection extends beyond the joint-publication of their work into the patronage relationships that both men secured. Singleton was fortunate to obtain the patronage of the powerful Sir Thomas Cromwell in 1533, only one year after Wyatt. Also, Singleton and Wyatt both had relationships with Anne Boleyn during the years in which she was married to Henry VIII: Singleton as her chaplain, beginning in 1535, and Wyatt as her admirer, humanist courtier, and would-be lover.

9 Calvin's Institutes Vol. 2 III.xxii.5-7 provides a general explanation of election and its application to Israel and the church; III.xxii.1-9 offers a continued explanation as well as Calvin's understanding of Pauline and Augustinian election.
Wyatt and Singleton, then, had close relationships to the same very public figures: Anne Boleyn and Sir Thomas Cromwell. Both Boleyn and Cromwell would have in many ways been the face of Protestantism in England at the time due to their roles (albeit very different ones) in the dissolution of Henry VIII's marriage to Katherine of Aragon, the termination of England's religious allegiance to Rome, and the development of England's particular brand of Christianity under her new head, Henry VIII.

The Connection to Cromwell

Singleton's and Wyatt's connection to Cromwell is significant because of his role as the minister to the king and enforcer of Protestantism. Furthermore, the relationship that Wyatt, in particular, had with Cromwell suggests his willingness to be associated with Protestantism. This very public relationship further implicates Wyatt and his poetry, both the manuscripts and later published editions, in radical Protestantism.

Cromwell's Protestant religious zeal is particularly evident in the role he played in arranging Henry VIII's marriage to Anne of Cleves. Cromwell initially claimed that the connection to Cleves and her family would link England to non-heretical Protestants as well as the Lutheran Schmalkaldic League, an important coterie of Lutheran princes united against the religious attacks of the Holy Roman Empire (Beckingsale 133). However, Cromwell's argument lost much of its force when parliament, with the support of the king, created the Act of Six Articles. The Articles supplanted Cromwell's efforts by reinstating elements of Catholicism: the celibacy of priests, vows of chastity, the real presence of the sacrament, and the necessity of confession, to name a few (Beckingsale 135). This setback forced Cromwell to change tactics in his marriage negotiations; in-
stead of using an argument of religious sympathy, he claimed that England would benefit from a connection to German states where Henry might be able to wield a "moderating influence on religious extremism" (Beckingsale 135). Henry's short-lived marriage to Anne was annulled and gave way to his infatuation with and marriage to Catherine Howard, the candidate put forward by powerful Catholic sympathizers. Additionally, the alliance with the Duke of Cleves became an annoyance for Henry when Cleves called upon him for help in his conflict with the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. The king's Protestant zeal diminished because of the combination of the frustrating religio-political alliance that Cromwell forged with Cleves and the attraction he felt for the Catholic Catherine Howard, and ultimately resulted in Cromwell's rapid downfall and execution on the grounds of treason and heresy on July 29, 1540 (Beckingsale 140-143).  

Before Cromwell arranged Henry's marriage to Anne of Cleves and fell out of the king's favor, he had pursued English reform at his pleasure because of the extensive powers granted to him as the vicar-general and vicegerent (Solt 30). He was the architect behind the Act of Restraint of Appeals, the Supremacy Act of 1534, and the Dissolution Act of 1536. He was responsible for the collapse of the religious orders and monastic shrines, relics, and images (Beckingsale 72). Although he was largely unsuccessful in his

10 Henry's religious sympathies would continue to vacillate during the remainder of his life. Six months after Cromwell's execution, he claimed that "by false accusations they made me put to death the most faithful servant I ever had" (Beckingsale 143). In marriage, Henry also continued to waffle between Catholic and Protestant wives. Catherine Howard was executed on grounds of adultery, charges that were brought forward by powerful Protestants. Henry's next (and last) wife, Catherine Parr, had strong Reformist convictions.  

11 The Act of Restraint of Appeals defines and outlines England's break from Rome, and is, according to Solt, the "single most important piece of legislation passed by the Reformation Parliament" (22). The Supremacy Act of 1534 declared Henry VIII the head of the Church of England (Solt 29). The Dissolution Act of 1536, among other things, dissolved the religious orders.
attempt to produce a state-endorsed English Bible (Beckingsale 74-75), he was able to stifle rebellions that arose in opposition to Protestantism. His passion for English reform is famously epitomized in his role in crushing the Catholic rebellion of the Pilgrimage of Grace in the north of England, the first real show of opposition to Protestantism (Parker 62). The Dissolution Act led to the Pilgrimage of Grace rebellion because Lincolnshire, the northern county in which it occurred, had a large number of monasteries. In addition to the primarily religious motivation of the rebellion, Lincolnshire rebels (or "pilgrims") were also concerned about how the Dissolution Act might "siphon off monastic rents and first fruits and tenths [which] would create poverty in the north" (Solt 33). Additionally, the powerful Catholic framers of the rebellion, wealthy Northern nobles, were motivated by their opposition to Boleyn, Protestant heresy, and Cromwell (Solt 33), as well as their fear of government centralization and their inevitable loss of power (Parker 86). Cromwell's defeat of the Pilgrimage of Grace is particularly important because of the multifaceted nature of the rebellion: the dissidents, from diverse social strata, were motivated by religion, economics, and politics. Cromwell's victory over a rebellion that infected a large part of Northern England, then, established his dominance over the three areas – religion, economics, and politics – that animated the insurrection.

Cromwell's role in the Pilgrimage of Grace uprising closely connects him to The Pilgrim's Tale, which is, like the rebellion, set in "lincolnshyr" (13). One of the most visible demonstrations of his rapid rise to power was his crushing of this rebellion, which the Tale has strong resonances with. There is a kind of web of interconnectedness between the Tale; Singleton, the Tale's author; and Cromwell because of the common theme of the northern rebellion. This interconnectedness extends to Wyatt and implicates
him in the same radical Protestantism as Singleton and Cromwell by virtue of the publication of his work alongside of *Tale* and his patronage relationship with Cromwell.

The link between Wyatt and Cromwell is a significant one for two reasons. The first is that Cromwell likely had a key role in saving Wyatt from sharing the same fate as Anne Boleyn's alleged lovers. At the time of the October Lincolnshire rebellion, Wyatt, who had been charged with the task of gathering 350 men to aid in defeating the northern rebels, had been in prison less than five months prior for possibly nothing more than being too close to the Boleyn family (Thomson 5, 43). Wyatt, whose home was near the Boleyns' and who certainly admired the Queen, was still in danger even if he did not seem as guilty as the other accused men and was likely freed, in large part, because of Cromwell's influence. Secondly, after Cromwell reinstated Wyatt to his post as ambassador, he wrote to Wyatt, and his writings show that he relished informing his ambassador of his role in the defeat of the northern rebellion. This fact suggests that the two shared a desire to quell Catholic uprisings and expand the influence of Protestantism. One of Wyatt's letters to Cromwell prompted him to reply in even greater detail, supplying information on the execution of the Pilgrimage rebels (61). E. K. Chambers writes that

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12 There is some uncertainty over the degree of influence that Cromwell exercised in Wyatt's release. Burrow writes that Wyatt was only freed because of Cromwell's influence (*DNB*), but Thomson believes that Wyatt was first exonerated by the testimony of Boleyn's female servant, much to Cromwell's delight. Only after observing Wyatt's innocence did Cromwell act as his advocate to Henry VIII (38). Regardless of the timeframe, it is clear that Cromwell did use his position to help Wyatt. This is evident in the letter that he wrote to Henry Wyatt, Thomas Wyatt's father, informing him of his son's forthcoming release.

13 In Cromwell's first letter, dated June 6, 1537, he writes Wyatt for the purpose of discussing the Princess Mary's possible marriage, the rebellion in the north, as well as other details like the Queen's pregnancy (Merriman 58-61). In the second letter, dated July 8, 1537, Cromwell updates Wyatt on the events in the north, writing that "the traytours have ben executed [. . .] so that as ferre as we can perceyve all the cancred hertes bee wyded
the letters show "[t]here is clearly a bond of friendship between [Cromwell] and Wyatt" (103).

The connection between Wyatt and Cromwell in particular – a connection that would certainly tie Wyatt and his writing to Protestantism – was even further developed after the publication of Douce. Cromwell's pursuit of continual reform caused him to become a burden to Henry in several ways, the most serious being his desire to unite Henry VIII with Anne of Cleves. After gravely mishandling the disastrous and short-lived marriage, Cromwell was arrested, imprisoned, and ultimately beheaded. He was famously supposed to have mentioned Wyatt at his execution:

Amongst all these gentlemen he noticed Master Wyatt, the gentleman who had been imprisoned for the affair of Queen Anne; and he called him, and said, "Oh, gentle Wyatt, good-bye, and pray to God for me." There was always great friendship between these two, and Wyatt could not answer him for tears. All these gentlemen marvelled greatly to see that Master Wyatt was in such grief, and Cromwell, who was a very clever man, noticing it, said out loud, "Oh, Wyatt, do not weep, for if I were no more guilty than thou wert when they took thee, I should not be in this pass." Everybody was very fond of Wyatt, so they pretended not to notice; but if it had been anyone else they might have arrested him. (Chronicle 104)

This account is puzzling because on the one hand, Cromwell's reckless display of emotion would have certainly endangered Wyatt, but on the other hand, this account also shows the affection that existed between Wyatt and Cromwell. Certainly it would have

awaye" (63). (Cromwell's spelling of "wyded" likely refers to the word "wind," a word which, according to the OED, suggests various types of forcible movement).
been normal for affection to develop in a patronage relationship with close, frequent correspondence; however, this public display for Cromwell, who was being executed on charges of heresy and treason, could be proof of Wyatt's willingness to be associated with Protestantism. If this is the case, which it certainly seems to be, the idea that Harrier suggests, that Wyatt would not have wanted to be associated with something as religiously divisive as *The Pilgrim's Tale*, cannot be true. Furthermore, Wyatt's willingness to be associated with Cromwell adds to the difficulty that Tottel would later face while revising *Songes and Sonettes* for publication under Mary I. In other words, although the Douce text was already in print, the very public development of the Wyatt-Cromwell relationship is important because of its Protestant overtones and the effect it likely had upon Tottel and the revisions that he later made to *Songes and Sonettes*.

Further Evidence of Protestant Radicalism: Douce's Publisher

Tottel may have been further burdened by the association of the Douce fragment with its religiously radical publisher, Thomas Gybson. Gybson is believed to have printed Douce, and he also printed – and maybe even wrote – *The Concordance of the New Testament*, the first concordance printed in the English language. Such an aid to religious study would certainly have been associated with the Protestant reformation, despite the fact that the Church of England had not officially licensed or approved of an English Bible (much to Cromwell's dismay). Gybson, too, was likely guilty of knowingly publishing questionable texts for purposes of religious propaganda. Speaking generally of editors in the sixteenth century, Sidney Lee observes that "[t]he religious element in the English atmosphere seems to have impaired the printers' enthusiasm for pure scholarship and
learning" (88). Lee's claim that religious radicalism influenced how printers presented (or withheld) information in the texts that they produced is supported in Gybson's work. Gybson likely knew that Robert Singleton adopted a pseudo-Chaucerian style in his writing of the *Pilgrim's Tale* in order to avoid censorship problems. Fraser writes that Gybson condoned the fraud because of "his strongly Protestant and patriotic emotions" (28). Gybson, then, used his position as a printer to circulate inaccurate and fraudulent anti-Catholic material.

Protestant radicalism accompanies Wyatt's poetry in the Douce fragment in many ways. His two poems appear alongside a wildly anti-Catholic tale. He and the *Tale's* author share the same strongly Protestant patrons. And, finally, the *Tale* and Wyatt's poems were published by Gybson, who likely knew the true identity of the *Tale's* author as well as the purpose of the *Tale*, yet chose to publish it anyway. Wyatt's life dangled by a thread during the years surrounding the release of Douce since he was imprisoned first in 1536 and again in 1541, only a few years after the initial publication of *Douce*. The Boleyn scandal, as well as the anger Catholics would have felt over Cromwell's actions and Singleton's *Tale*, suggest that the Douce fragment would have identified Wyatt's poetry with Protestantism to such an extent that Tottel could only hope to overcome it by severe editing.

14 Because Chaucer's works were excepted from the rigors of censorship, Singleton adopted an "archaic" kind of writing style in the vein of Chaucer that would permit him to covertly criticize Catholic priests (Fraser 33).
Tottel's Songs and Sonettes

Unlike the uncertainty surrounding The Court of Venus, Wyatt is indisputably credited with writing some of the poems in Songs and Sonettes, the 1557 anthology published by Richard Tottel. This anthology, later called Miscellany, contains variations of poems written by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, Sir Thomas Wyatt, Nicholas Grimald, and other, unknown poets. Sergio Baldi writes that "[u]ntil 1579, when Spenser published his Shepheardes Calendar, Tottel's Miscellany remained almost the sole school of poetry for English writers" (5). While Wyatt's poetry was important as it circulated in manuscript form in the court of Henry VIII as well as the three editions of The Court of Venus, it was primarily disseminated to the public through Songs and Sonettes. Due to its popularity, it was through this work that Wyatt was known to the public and imitated by other poets.

But not only is Tottel's Songs and Sonettes significant by virtue of its identity as the first anthology of English poetry, but also because of the substantial liberties that the editor exercised in the publication of this work. Because this collection was published in 1557, fifteen years after Wyatt's death, the editorial changes may appear arbitrary and unworthy of study since Wyatt obviously had no control over them. While critics argue that the changes are either the result of Tottel's artistic preference or simply of his ignorance, it seems likely that Wyatt's life and Protestant connections, as well as the rebellion that Wyatt the Younger led against Queen Mary, provided the most significant reasons for Tottel's changes.
Guilty by Association: the Connection to Boleyn

Cromwell's and Boleyn's influence upon Wyatt can provide important contextual clues for the Douce fragment, and *Songes and Sonettes* is no different. Some believe that the rumors about Wyatt's romantic relationship with Boleyn might have been both responsible for textual changes as well as the sales of the book. Retha Warnicke suggests that Wyatt's connection to Boleyn might have caused Tottel "to create titles for some of the verses and to include other inaccurate information in the edition in an attempt to reinforce [. . . ] the prevailing gossip that the poet and Anne had been lovers" ("Eternal" 576). References to Boleyn and Wyatt's alleged affair would have, of course, created interest around the publication. Even Tottel's changes to the rondeaux titles seem to support this idea as well: "What Vaileth Truth?" was changed to the juicier "Complaint for True Love unrequited"; "Go Burning Sighs" became "The louer sendeth sighes to mone his sute,"; and "Behold Love," was retitled "Request to Cupide, for reuenge of his vnkind loue." In each case, Tottel's revised title amplifies the romantic content of the poem.

Although Warnicke is certainly justified in saying that Boleyn and Wyatt's alleged affair would have generated interest in the text, this view does not acknowledge the very delicate situation that would have arisen for Tottel had he used the Boleyn affair as a way to publicize his text. Even though there is evidence in support of this view, the idea that Tottel used the Wyatt/Boleyn romantic relationship to promote his book does not take into account the religious climate of Marian England and the myriad Protestant associations that Wyatt's work would have had. The motivation behind Tottel's editorial changes is more complicated than the tabloid-esque illicit romance explanation that Warnicke offers. I believe that any association of Boleyn with Wyatt – along with the implicit tie to
Cromwell and *The Pilgrim's Tale* from the Douce fragment – would have openly associated Wyatt's work with Protestantism during the violent Catholic restoration under Mary I.\(^{15}\)

Given the strict censorship laws, particularly those regarding Protestant material, it would have been dangerous (but probably too tempting to completely resist) for Tottel to capitalize on the interest in the Wyatt/Boleyn affair in order to sell copies of *Songes and Sonettes*.\(^{16}\) Tottel's changes to the content, a shift from the philosophical to the romantic, as well as to form, from the rondeau to the sonnet, perhaps suggest that he thinly veils the romantic and Protestant associations, in the language and form of Petrarchan love poetry. This move would have allowed Tottel's publication to resonate with the public on several different levels – religious, literary, and romantic – while safely avoiding the more obvious Protestant overtones which were attached to Wyatt's use of the rondeau.

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\(^{15}\) The reinstatement of Catholicism in England began in 1554 with her appointment of Cardinal Reginald Pole. While Pole was responsible for peaceful endeavors such as developing an education program for clergy, issuing appropriate doctrinal materials (ie: catechisms), and recovering pre-Reformation art and music, his pursuit of heresy has left the most profound effect on our understanding of Marian Catholicism (Weikel *DNB*). After first reinstating fourteenth-century heresy laws in order to execute Protestant leaders, Pole and Mary were responsible for the deaths of almost 300 individuals who were deemed to be heretics and a threat to Catholicism (Solt 60). Accompanying Mary's rise to the throne was a mass exodus of around 800 Protestant clergymen, teachers, and students (Cross 47; Solt 63).

\(^{16}\) Skura writes that many of Tottel's editorial changes seem to be motivated by a desire to smooth out Wyatt's rough and, at times, unclear poetry. One such change was made to the manuscript poem beginning, "What wourd is that that chaungeth not, / Though it be tourned and made in twain? / It is myn *answer*, god it wot." Tottel capitalizes on the idea that Wyatt and Boleyn were lovers in his changes to the third line, "It is mine *Anna*, god it wot" and the title, "Of His Love Called Anna." (42). This evidence does not undermine my claim because "Of His Love Called Anna" is not a rondeau. It is specifically the rondeau form and the constellation of Protestant figures associated with it that led Tottel to revise Wyatt's rondeaux so heavily.
Literary and Religious Context of *Songes and Sonettes*

Of Wyatt's nine rondeaux, three appear in Tottel's *Songes and Sonettes*, but they are no longer in the rondeau form. "What Vaileth Truth?," "Go Burning Sighs," and "Behold, Love," instead appear in a modified sonnet form and under new titles in *Songes and Sonettes*. The rondeau style was an obscure form of poetry in England even by 1557 when Tottel significantly altered the form of the poem, reducing it to the length and approximate rhyme scheme of a sonnet, but Wyatt was not the first to experiment with the French form. Lydgate and Chaucer had also written in the rondeau form. Although the form was not common in English poetry, it seems unlikely that Tottel was simply ignorant of it, like W. E. Simonds and Hallett Smith claim. Others argue that Tottel knew of the form and made the changes to Wyatt's rondeaux out of aesthetic preference instead of misunderstanding. Kenneth Muir's important work *The Life and Letters of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, provides a similar (albeit, only one-sentence) explanation; he attributes Tottel's editorial changes to "the interest of smoothness" (220). In another chapter, he notes that "Tottel was dissatisfied with poems other than sonnets," in an attempt to explain why he changed the form of some of the poems in *Songes and Sonettes* (231).

However, it seems likely that these changes, while perhaps precipitated by some degree of artistic preference or editorial misunderstanding, were principally the result of Tottel's desire to disguise the more controversial elements of the poetry. Tottel, after all, was publishing in 1557 during Mary I's reign (1553-1558). Generally speaking, Tottel's

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17 Simonds writes that Tottel's unfamiliarity of the form is why he "set himself straightaway to reduce the unfamiliar rondeau form to a certain semblance of the sonnet type, which he evidently thought preferable" (89). Hallett Smith notes that the changes to the form of the rondeaux "show a strange misunderstanding of the nature of the poem" (324).
revisions of Wyatt's rondeaux, a form linked to Boleyn by virtue of its French style and content, into irregular sonnets, suggests that his editorial decisions are tied to his desire to distance his text from Mary's Protestant step-mother, Anne Boleyn. Boleyn was a woman whom Mary resented deeply since her affair led England to sever its Catholic ties with Rome, which Mary had to acknowledge by renouncing allegiance to the papacy; caused Mary's separation from her banished Catholic mother; and resulted in the Act of Succession, which stripped Mary of her title as princess and declared her to be illegitimate (Solt 57). The sonnet was preferable to the rondeau because it would have been associated with the Petrarchan love tradition instead of the French.

More specifically, though, Tottel's changes could also be the result of the proclamations made by Philip II and Mary I. One, made in 1555, targets books "filled both with heresy, sedition, and treason, [which] have of late, and be daily brought into this realm, out of foreign country's" ("Whereas dyuers books" 94). The proclamation goes on to state that subjects who are found with or who do not destroy "any of the sayd wicked and seditious booke[es] [. . . ] shall without delaye be executed for that offence, according to thorder of martiall law" ("Whereas dyuers books" 94). It would have been risky, then, for Tottel to publish a book of poetry based on the work of a known French reformer.

Similarly, a second proclamation, also made in 1555, decrees that the "authors, makers, and wryters of books" and "such, as shall haue, or keaue any suche books or wrytings" will be subjected to "greate punyishment" ("Whereas by the Statute" 94). This proclamation also specifically forbids the publication or possession of works by men like William Tyndale, John Calvin, and John Bale (95). Although Wyatt's work is not ex-
pressly prohibited, the connections that it had to the contraband texts would have only increased Tottel's motivation to disguise the Protestantism inherent in Wyatt's texts.

Wyatt and his use of the rondeau linked him to John Bale, whose Protestant religious writings were outlawed by the aforementioned 1555 decree. At the time of the decree, Bale was living in exile in Basle, Switzerland, in the same community as John Foxe (King *liv*). Bale's claim in his work *Vocacyon* that he was another St. Paul attracted the attention of James Cancellor, chaplain to Queen Mary, who publicly denounced him (Skura 56). Bale's other writings, which connect him to several Protestant figures, also help to explain why his work was outlawed in Marian England. Bale edited Princess Elizabeth's translation of Marguerite de Navarre's *Godly Meditations of the Christian Soul*. Marguerite de Navarre, the queen consort of King Henry II of Navarre and the sister of Francis I, received the censorship of the Sorbonne for this work, ostensibly for her reliance on the translations of Clément Marot, a Protestant sympathizer and developer of the rondeau. Bale's translation of this work would have connected him to a whole host of Protestant figures – Boleyn, de Navarre, and Marot – who also had connections to Wyatt and the rondeau form.

Besides these more general Protestant associations, Bale is also responsible for first identifying Chaucer and then later Robert Singleton as the author of *The Pilgrim's Tale*. Furthermore, the change of attributed authorship probably happened because Bale and Gybson, the *Court* publisher, were friends, and Gybson probably revealed the

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18 Elizabeth's translation of *Godly Meditations* was named *The Glasse of the Synnefull Soule* and given as a gift to Catherine Parr. Elizabeth had access to a copy of the work probably because Marguerite de Navarre herself gave a copy to Anne Boleyn.
author's true identity to Bale.\footnote{19 Bale first identified Chaucer as the author in \textit{Illustrium mariois Britanniae Scriptorum Summarium} (1548) and then Singleton in \textit{Index Britanniae scriptorum} (1549) (Fraser 3-5).} Also, like Wyatt and Singleton, Bale enjoyed the protection and patronage of Cromwell, which enabled him to write anti-papist drama like \textit{King John} (Skura 53). Bale was so closely connected to Cromwell that the latter's fall prompted Bale's relocation to the Low Countries (Happé 11). Although \textit{The Pilgrim's Tale} and works by Wyatt are not named in Mary and Philip's proclamation, they are in the same constellation of works, like those by Bale, that were explicitly prohibited. This suggests that the Protestant and Huguenot overtones implicit in Wyatt's poems, particularly his rondeaux (by virtue of the form's association with Marot and later Boleyn), would have been very dangerous for Tottel, as a printer, to disregard when the religious climate of Mary I's rule was so volatile.

\textbf{Domestic Politics: Wyatt the Younger's Rebellion}

Although the Protestant connections that Wyatt's work might have been enough to precipitate the editorial changes in \textit{Songes and Sonettes}, there are two political reasons that also could have motivated Tottel's changes. The traditional critical explanations that the \textit{Songes and Sonettes} editor simply did not like or understand Wyatt's experimental forms and meter fail to acknowledge (or even consider) that these changes might be a result of these two contemporary political circumstances. The first reason is that Mary I, having been persuaded by her husband Philip II of Spain, joined the Spanish in their war
against the French. The overtly French form of the rondeau would obviously have been an unwise connection for Tottel to have maintained during Mary and Philip's reign given that both monarchs' nations, England and Spain, were at war with France.

However, a second and even more compelling political motivation for Tottel's changes might have been the rebellion led by Thomas Wyatt's son. Songes and Sonettes appeared in 1557, just three years after Thomas Wyatt the Younger, Wyatt's son, was executed for leading an unsuccessful rebellion against Queen Mary in an effort to thwart her marriage to Philip of Spain. Despite Wyatt the Younger's claim that his rebellion against Queen Mary's marriage to Philip II of Spain in 1554 was to protect England from Spanish rule, the rebellion inevitably gained a religious flavor and was associated with Protestantism. Malcom Thorp writes that the

Wyatt rebellion was not a religious crusade of the same magnitude as either the Pilgrimage of Grace of 1536-1537 or the Prayer Book uprising of 1549, but it is hard to conceive of the affair as a strictly secular and political revolt. With but few exceptions, the leading conspirators were Protes-

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20 This Italian War (1551-1559) was started by Charles II of France in order to establish French dominance in Europe. It ended with the English loss of Calais in 1556 (to the French), but an overall Spanish victory.
21 For a contemporary account of Wyatt's rebellion, see Proctor's *Historie of Wyate's Rebellion*. For a political explanation of the personages and motivations of the rebellion, see Robinson.
22 Dekker and Webster's 1602 play *Sir Thomas Wyat* primarily portrays Wyatt the Younger's uprising as a patriotic act, meant to protect England from Spain; however, there are very strong religious overtones in the play that, at times, give the rebellion a Protestant cast. T. M. Parker recounts a story that a Kentish gentleman who joined Wyatt's rebellion supposedly said to Wyatt, "I trust you will restore the right religion again" (132). Even though Wyatt goes on to claim a more religiously neutral stance, the idea that the rebellion was associated with reinstating Protestantism and defeating Catholicism clearly existed.
tants, and religious concerns were an important part of their decision to oppose Mary [and her marriage to Phillip II]. (380)

Regardless of his claim to religious neutrality, Wyatt's rebellion would have had a religious veneer because of the Protestant makeup of the rebel forces and their Catholic combatants, but also because of the Protestant connections that his father, Sir Thomas Wyatt, had. Loades observes that because of Wyatt the Elder's relationship with Cromwell and Boleyn, it "is unlikely that Wyatt the younger was brought up in the conservative tradition" (16-17); this also means that it is unlikely that Wyatt the younger was seen as a neutral religious figure. Regardless of his claim that the rebellion was primarily politically motivated, action against a Catholic queen by a man whose father had such deeply Protestant connections against a Catholic queen would have superimposed a religious motivation on the rebellion.

John Foxe conflates politics and religion in his assessment of the union, writing that Mary's marriage "was very evil taken of the people, and of many of the nobility, who for this and for religion [ . . . ] made a rebellion" (6.413). The rebellion that Wyatt the Younger led against Mary and her marriage launched him to fame; sympathizers dipped their handkerchiefs in his blood at his execution (Loades 115-116), and even his head was stolen as a martyr's relic (Archer DNB). The rebellion and Wyatt the Younger's very public demise only three years before the publication of Songes and Sonettes would have added to the complexity of the situation: Wyatt's poems in the anthology would certainly
be able to create salacious public interest, but Tottel had to balance this public interest with a healthy respect for the religious priorities and politics of Queen Mary. 23

Conclusion

*The Court of Venus* and *Songes and Sonettes* should be seen as records of the English perception of Wyatt's work and his ties to Protestantism. His connection to the two most significant Protestant figures of his lifetime, Thomas Cromwell and Anne Boleyn, caused a sort of domino effect that resulted in the publication of his poetry next to *The Pilgrim's Tale* in *The Court of Venus*, as well as the changes that were made to his works in *Songes and Sonettes*. Additionally, the rondeau form that he wrote in created an added French resonance that would have associated his work with Clément Marot and other French reformists as well as Boleyn, something that will be addressed more fully in the following chapter. After his death, the Protestant weight that his family name carried following his son's rebellion would have further necessitated the changes that Tottel made to *Songes and Sonettes*. The myriad connections that Wyatt's work had to Protestantism had to be muted during Mary I's reign because of the strict censorship laws that were in place regarding works with anti-Catholic themes or associations. This is, at least in part, why Wyatt's poetry appears so dramatically altered in these "inferior" publications when compared to the more reliable Devonshire and Egerton manuscripts.

23 The rebellion is credited with influencing Tottel and the changes made to *Songes and Sonettes*, but this influence is of varying degrees. Muir believes that the rebellion might be why Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, has a more prominent position on the cover, but he does not credit it with any of the changes to the actual text (220). Warnicke writes that the rebellion might have indirectly caused some of the emendations to the text since it would have, like the Boleyn affair, created buzz around the Wyatt family name ("The Eternal" 576).
CHAPTER 2  
FRENCH INFLUENCE AND RELIGIOUS CONNOTATIONS  

Surrey's testimony that the persecution of Wyatt enriched his personality and performance corroborates the pattern that we have seen in Marguerite and Marot: that talent may often have been tempered to genius in the turbulent waters of Reformation politics. 

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Just as the various incarnations of Thomas Wyatt's poetry in contemporary publications are, to some extent, a result of the sixteenth-century religious climate in England, the editorial changes to Wyatt's poems tacitly respond to the politics and religious conflicts in the English Reformation. Publications like The Court of Venus, where Wyatt's poems appear alongside the virulently anti-Catholic The Pilgrim's Tale and Tottel's Songes and Sonettes, likely heavily edited so as to avoid negative attention during Catholic Mary I's reign, suggest a set of associations formed in the Reformation mind, associations that are somewhat camouflaged for modern readers. 

Like the sonnet form, the rondeau also participates in what Louis Montrose calls the "poetics of power," but while Wyatt's sonnets have been examined thoroughly in their religio-political contexts, the rondeaux have not (180). As I argue below, the rondeaux are full of connections to the French writer Clément Marot, the French Reformation, and Wyatt's experiences at court. The rondeaux are not simply exercises in French form and translation. Wyatt's adept use of the sonnet – also an unusual form in England at the time
shows that he was capable of formal experimentation and translation concurrent with tailoring Italian works to his specific English context. It stands to reason, then, that the same attention that has been paid to the sonnet should be given to the rondeau. The rondeaux are more than experiments in a French form, just as sonnets are more than experiments with an Italian one, because the rondeau, like the sonnet, is loaded with immediate religious and political implications.

The rondeau form was closely associated with its regularizer and modernizer, Clément Marot, who, in addition to being a poet, was also seen as a Protestant sympathizer. Wyatt's own use of the poem during the tumultuous religious climate in England during the 1530s has an even richer significance because the rondeau form seems to be circumstantially connected to French Protestantism. Wyatt was not the only English writer to draw upon Marot and his Protestant connection. Annabel Patterson notes that Edmund Spenser draws upon Marot in his Shepheardes Calender, a man whom Spenser admired for his "status as an early supporter of the Reformation in France [. . . ], for his verse paraphrases of the Psalms for the Geneva psalter[,] and for his personal history as a Lutheran exile" ("Re-opening" 45). 24 Marot was known, both in England and in France, as a writer whose Protestant sympathies made his name and work synonymous with the movement.

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24 Prescott notes that Spenser may have first encountered Marot when he used his translation of Petrarch's Standomi Un Giorno for his Theatre for Worldlings. Spenser also includes Marot among his models for The Shepheardes Calendar, particularly in November and December ("French Renaissance" 320).
Competing Influences: Italy and Music

This connection between Wyatt and Marot has been frequently overlooked because of the more obvious and, arguably, more significant Italian influence, evident in Wyatt's translation of Petrarch and his introduction of the sonnet to England. Wyatt's adaptation of the sonnet to speak to sociopolitical circumstances in England provides a model for his treatment of the rondeau. Some critics argue that the sonnet itself is both a product of and commentary on the state of England and the court during Wyatt's life. James Simpson, writing about Wyatt's sonnet "The piller pearisht" (CCXXXVI) which Tottel renamed "The lover laments the deth of his loue," argues that the sonnet form is capable of conveying political as well as romantic themes. Tottel's new title highlights the association between the sonnet form and the romantic, despite the fact that the poem is about the execution of Cromwell, Wyatt's patron – hardly a romantic topic. Simpson explains how the veiling of the sonnet in love-language can hide a more complicated political and social meaning:

The intensity of desire is expressed by the strategic use and deflection of political and historical matter: the elegiac lover is always at the same time the courtly lover, and he formulates the experience of love in exactly the terms of courtly manoeuvre. The social condition of the lover always parallels, and is often indistinguishable from, that of the isolated, threatened, and unrequited suitor for courtly recognition. (157)

Wyatt's use of the sonnet, then, is not simply for romantic purposes; instead, he uses the language of love, the traditional language and topic of the sonnet, to jockey for political influence.
Poets use the sonnet because of its ability to speak in romantic terms, but also because of its potential to mask and tacitly negotiate political interests, an ability that only grows more pronounced during the Elizabethan era. Louis Montrose sees a similar dynamic in the use of pastoral elements employed in praise of Elizabeth I and explains that "the makers of Elizabethan culture exploited an affinity between pastoral form and the feminine symbolism that mixed Marian and Petrarchan elements with a Neoplatonic mythography of love" (166). This same cult of love that Montrose discusses is equally valid for sonnets as it is for pastoral because poets continually explored the love language that Elizabeth used to explain her relationship to the English people; however, Montrose admonishes us to see past this language of love to the political posturing and negotiating that it concealed. Using the Sudeley entertainment given in Queen Elizabeth I's honor as an example, Montrose shows that the seemingly "benign" entertainments and tokens given to the Queen in the name of love are really the Queen's host's attempt to secure favors and negotiate power (178). The same can be said of the sonnet form, which, like the pastoral that Montrose discusses, participates in this "poetics of power," showing respect for (and anxiety about) Elizabeth at the same time that the poet bridges the gulf between Queen and subject through loving praise and intimacy (Montrose 180).

Critics have studied sonnets like "Whoso list to hounte" (VII), "You that in love find lucke and habundance" (XCII), and "If waker care" (XCVII) because Wyatt used and developed an Italian form that would become a hallmark of the English Renaissance and also because of the embedded meaning that the sonnet would acquire in specific socio-political contexts. The similarities between Wyatt's "Whoso list" and Petrarch's *Rime CXC*, for example, reveal his indebtedness to the Italian poet. More interestingly, Wyatt's
changes to Petrarch's poems show his awareness of the complicated social world in which he lived, allowing Wyatt's poems the ability to provide commentary on English affairs and politics. Scholars like E. K. Chambers and Sergio Baldi explain that, while "Whoso List" is certainly a translation of *Rime CXC*, where the poems diverge, we can find commentary about Wyatt's life in the court of Henry VIII and his possible relationship with Anne Boleyn. Similarly, the identity of the "Brunet" (who is not found in Petrarch's *Canzoniere* 224) famously mentioned in "If Waker Care" is hotly contested (10); some believe she is Elizabeth Darrell, Wyatt's long-time mistress, while others think she is Anne Boleyn (Muir and Thomson 335). Regardless of who she is, it is clear that the "Brunet" is an example of the space that is created for biographical criticism through the study of Wyatt's sonnets.

Wyatt's ambassadorial experience under Henry VIII, in France as well as Italy, greatly shaped the style and form of his poetry, and, like the "Brunet," his service to Henry VIII also animates biographical criticism of his poetry. About Wyatt's style, Stephen Greenblatt writes that "[e]ven the formal skill involved in the structuring of [Wyatt's poetry] may derive in part from diplomacy, for beyond imparting a sensitivity to doubleness, Wyatt's ambassadorial experience shaped his consciousness of calculated effect, above all through the manipulation of language in the game of power" (144). Wyatt is frequently credited with infusing a continental style into English poetry, and, as Greenblatt posits, certainly the poet's background as an ambassador enhanced his ability to negotiate patronage politics by writing in a nuanced and subversive manner. This continental style is also evident in Wyatt's incorporation of foreign poetic forms, the sonnet from Italian and the rondeau from French – both frequently noted effects of Wyatt's ambassa-
dorial appointment. From the earliest reception and criticism of Wyatt's poetry, a strong Italian influence has been acknowledged. For example, George Puttenham, author of *The Arte of English Poesie* writes:

In the latter end of the same king's reign sprung up a new company of courtly makers, of whom Sir Thomas Wyatt the elder and Henry, Earl of Surrey, were the two chieftains, who, having traveled into Italy and there tasted the sweet and stately measures and style of the Italian poesy, as novices newly crept out of the schools of Dante, Ariosto, and Petrarch, they greatly polished our rude and homely manner of vulgar poesy from that it had been before, and for that cause may justly be said to be the first reformers of our English meter and stile. (148)

This excerpt reveals that the bias towards Wyatt's Italian work existed in the sixteenth century, just as it does today. Wyatt's work with "sweet and stately [ . . . ] Italian poesy" certainly transformed English poetry; however, the critical interest in the Italian influence upon Wyatt's poetry frequently overshadows the poetic experience he gained while serving as an ambassador in France. Wyatt's introduction of the sonnet to England, as well as the frequency with which he used the sonnet form in his writing, makes this form linked to Wyatt more than any other. However, a strong French influence does exist, and while it may not be as pronounced as the Italian, it is still significant, in large part because it connects Wyatt so clearly to Protestantism. This French influence is most obvious in Wyatt's use of the rondeau, which was a very unusual form of poetry in England, as well as difficult to adapt for use in English.
Studies of Wyatt's rondeaux have been almost exclusively formalist in nature, analyzing the rondeaux in terms of either their form and meter only or their possible musical context. Because of this preoccupation, critics have neglected the actual implications of Wyatt's decision to write in this form. Traditionally, the rondeau, as one of the three French *formes fixés*, was accompanied by music, as were the other two forms, the ballade and virelai. This musical element of the rondeau is absent in Wyatt's poetry and has proven to be a distraction, luring scholars away from the actual textual evidence and into rampant speculation about how Wyatt's rondeaux might be interpreted were they still accompanied by some kind of musical arrangement, even though no significant corpus of musical settings exists.\(^\text{25}\) For example, Winifred Maynard examines whether or not Wyatt intended his lyrics to be vocalized in song (and tries to determine if they actually were), while H. A. Mason argues that Wyatt's pieces are actually not contributions to the musical culture of Henry VIII's court.\(^\text{26}\) A. K. Foxwell believes that "Wyatt's ear was particularly sensitive to refrains and catches of songs" because he was a musician, which is why he experimented with the musical refrains of the rondeau (68). C. S. Lewis explains that Wyatt's inconsistent meter, a blend of rougher English medieval and smoother Romance languages, is sometimes plain or "drab" because "we are reading songs; richness and deliciousness would be supplied by the air and the lute and are therefore not wanted in the words" (*English* 221, 238). It is difficult, however, to appreciate the relationship between Wyatt's rondeaux and music because, as Ivy Mumford notes, only one poem has a surviving musical tune (315). Although critics have considered the potential implications of

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\(^{25}\) Robert Kehler writes that the increasingly important poetic component of the rondeau had superceded the musical component, in terms of importance, by the beginning of the sixteenth century (41-31).

\(^{26}\) For a fuller explanation of Maynard's argument, see 1-13. See also Mason 172.
musical accompaniment as well as of formal structure, too little has been said about other possible contexts of this form of Wyatt's poetry. The French context, which connects Wyatt's rondeaux to Marot and French Protestantism, is both underexamined and valuable because of what it is able to reveal about Wyatt's use of the form and the ramifications that form would have had with an English readership.

Marot and Protestantism

Clément Marot experimented with poetic forms, revising, altering, and modernizing several types of French poetry. Marot revised and developed French forms like the complaint, epitaph, ballad, chanson, epistle, and, of course, the rondeau. After the epistle, which Marot used extensively, the rondeau is the most common form found in his writing. He was evidently quite pleased with his use of and modifications of this form, judging from his poem "En Ung Rondeau," a rondeau written to instruct a poet on how to successfully use this poetic structure (Griffin 246).

Wyatt's use of this form of poetry would have connected him to Marot, the modernizer of the form, just as his use of sonnets would have associated him with Petrarch. Wyatt likely learned the rondeau form from Marot himself while serving as an ambassador in France during 1526. Wyatt experimented with the form in his translations of French rondeaux as well as in his creation of original English poems. Lee writes that Marot's changes to the rondeau – the central refrain, the 15-line length, and the eight and five

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27 The epistle (or epistre) occurs some 327 times. The rondeau is used 77 times, followed by the epitaph, the next frequent, at 43 times.
line stanza structure – are found exactly in Wyatt's work, evidence of Marot's instruction and influence upon Wyatt (123-124).  

Wyatt and Marot also share other similarities besides the experimentation with the rondeau form. Both England and France were experiencing great religious change during the sixteenth century – England through the state establishment of Protestantism and Henry VIII as the new head of the church, and France through the state's intensified commitment to Catholicism and the rejection of Calvinists and other so-called heretics. Marot was frequently associated with heretics, called "Luthériens," a derogatory term for anyone who held unorthodox or heterodox beliefs, theology contrary to that which was espoused by the Catholic church. Marot's contact with the Reformer Thomas Malingre in 1527 – only one year after his likely encounter with Wyatt – placed him in the reformist camp (Griffin 118). Marot's name appears high on a 1535 list of luthériens believed to be supporters of a movement against the Mass and who "in the event of their failure to appear before the authorities, were to be sentenced in their absence to banishment, forfeiture of their possessions, and death at the stake" (Smith 19). Marot's possessions were subsequently confiscated by the Parliament, and despite his claim that he was not a Lutheran sympathizer, he was suspected of and linked to others known to be guilty of heresy.

Marot denied embracing heretical theology, going as far as to denounce both Martin Luther specifically and Reformation sympathizers generally as "certains folz" (certain madmen); however, his attempts to clarify his religious position are curiously vague and

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28 Françon explains that while nine of Wyatt's poems are clearly rondeaux, attributable to Marot's influence, Wyatt does exercise some degree of creativity in the form of his poems (342).
"leave room for speculation as to what that position actually was" (Prescott French Poets 3). Patterson describes his religious convictions as "budding Protestantism" ("Re-opening" 49). It is clear, though, that Marot was far from a model Catholic. For instance, he insisted that "Mary should be venerated for her miraculous role and purity, gratia plena, but not as the mater dei participating in the power of the godhead" (Griffin 122). Regardless of his claims to orthodoxy, Marot had a reputation to the contrary – he was, after all, exiled to Ferrara in 1535 because of his perceived religious convictions (Screech 98).29 Six years after being allowed to return to France, Marot, once again, was forced to relocate in 1543, following the Sorbonne's creation of a list of heretical works, four of which were Marot's. By December of that year, Marot had fled to Geneva, a Protestant haven where fellow Frenchman John Calvin had sought religious sanctuary. While in Geneva, Calvin and Marot collaborated on a Huguenot psalter (Screech 150).30 Marot's religious convictions, however, are unclear even in his work with a famous reformer: while Calvin's own introduction to the Geneva Psalms essentially acts as a platform for explaining his own religious "conversion from Catholicism to evangelism," Marot's introduction does not (Ahmed 155). Regardless of Marot's personal religious convictions, his work with Calvin would certainly have secured his reputation as a reformer, or, at the very least, a reformist sympathizer.

Marot's translations of Scripture not only associated him with the famous reformer, Calvin, but they were also likely a source of trouble for Marguerite de Navarre, his patroness and the sister of Francis I. Marguerite de Navarre has often been associated

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29 Prior to his exile to Italy, Marot was imprisoned for violating Lent.
30 For more information about Marot's translation of the Psalms, work with Calvin, and religious identity, see Ahmed.
with the Reformation in France because of her role in harboring anti-Catholic thinkers (like Marot and Rabelais), her own writing, and her efforts to mediate between Protestants and Catholics, while at the same time attempting to reform (but not reject) Catholicism.  

The 1533 edition of Marguerite's work *Le Miroir de l'âme pécheresse* was controversial enough to receive the temporary censure of the Sorbonne. While the grounds for the condemnation of this work are not entirely clear, Melanie Gregg speculates that one possible reason is the author's close association with Marot, whose Hebrew based (versus Latin) translation of Psalm 6 was incorporated in her text (35).  

*Le Miroir* obviously carried its Protestant resonance to England where eleven-year-old Elizabeth Tudor translated the work (which had likely been given to her mother, Anne Boleyn, by Marguerite herself). *Le Miroir*, which Elizabeth retitled *The Glasse of the Synnefull Soule*, was a gift for Catherine Parr, her stepmother and a woman known to have been very interested in Protestantism (Ostovich et al 466).

Marot's Religious and Literary Reputation in England

It is clear that Marot's influence – in his writing, religious convictions, exile, association with Calvin, and the incorporation of his biblical translations used by Marguerite de Navarre – would have made him, to a some extent, the face of French Protestantism in England. Wyatt, believed to have introduced Marot's work to England, would

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31 Smith writes that "humanists and reformers gravitated even more willingly perhaps to the entourage of Marguerite de Navarre. Not only was she more intelligent than her brother, more reserved and cultured too, she was also more deeply and personally committed to their cause" (*Clément Marot* 49).

32 Marot's translation and versification of fifty of the Psalms, were, after being set to music, deemed too popular and likely to incite heresy by the Sorbonne, a crime for which Marot was, again, exiled (Lee 114).
have also been connected to French Protestantism, particularly since the poem that he brought to England was a very anti-clerical epigram of Marot's called "Frère Thibault." This epigram, which is found written in the Egerton manuscript of Wyatt's poetry, is about a monk who "tries to drag his girl all the way through the window and of his angry frustration when her bottom sticks" (Prescott French Poets 3). In addition to importing Marot's amusing verse on "loose-living monks," to borrow Prescott's description, Wyatt also wrote in the rondeau form which would have been closely identified with Marot, the form's regularizer and modernizer. Although the majority of Marot's rondeaux were written before 1527, well before his years in exile, the form that he developed would have been inseparable from his reputation in England as a religious dissenter.

Marot's very reputation as a Protestant causes Hugh M. Richmond to note that "sixteenth-century English educators favored Marot's works, often for reasons of religious sympathy" (95). In other words, Marot was not popular in England in spite of his Protestant reputation, but, rather, because of it. Marot's seemingly Protestant convictions would have resonated with many of the English, who were themselves generally opposed to the Pope, and, at the same time, not at all devoted to Luther and the German Reformation, evident in the Anne of Cleves debacle. Marot, Richmond writes, was "less a convinced Lutheran than an enemy of Catholicism" (216).

33 Anne of Cleves was pursued by Thomas Cromwell on behalf of Henry VIII in marriage negotiations. Cleves' father, Duke John of Cleves, "had, like Henry, thrown off the papal authority without adopting an avowedly heretical doctrine and who was father-in-law to the Elector of Saxony, the leading member of the Lutheran Schmalkaldic League" (Beckingsale 133). This union would connect England to other Protestants without, as Beckingsale observes, tying England down to heretical allies (133).

34 Richmond refers to lines 89-92 from Epîstres XXXVI:

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\begin{align*}
\text{Luther pour moy des cieux n'est descendu} \\
\text{Luther en croix n'a poinct esté pendu}
\end{align*}
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admirer of Luther, his more pronounced dislike for Catholicism would have been attractive to English Protestants during the first decades of the English Reformation. During the reinstatement of Catholicism during Mary I's reign, it would also have been an extreme liability for a poet, printer, or reader to be associated with Marot or for men like Wyatt, who clearly emulated him.

The similarities between Marot and Wyatt would not have been beyond the ken or exposure of the reading English. "Marot was perfectly well-known to the literate English public, [. . . ] his reputation was very great, and [. . .] in the end he probably exercised more influence on English literature than any other poet of the French Renaissance" (Richmond 95). Wyatt may be part of the reason Marot gained such popularity in England since the English poet introduced Marot's work during a time when his religious ideals would have made him a sympathetic character for English Protestants in the sixteenth century.

Marot and Wyatt share not only their apparently similar religious convictions but also the Petrarchan stance that gave their poetry a more refined style. P. M. Smith, as well as many others, believes that Marot's reliance on Italian forms differentiates his poetry from that of earlier French poets. This Italian influence allows Marot to write with "a

Pour mes pechez: & tout bien advisé,
Au nom de luy ne suis point baptize. (216)

This poem was addressed to the King and written in Italy during Marot's exile, possibly as an attempt to curry favor since Marot wanted to return to his native France. Within the poem, however, Marot not only rejects Luther, but he also openly criticizes the Sorbonne, calling them "ignorante" (40).

Richmond is referring generally to Dana Bentley-Cranch.

Robert Griffin also notices a "Petrarchan strain" that appears in Marot's earliest poems and continues until around 1538 (26). Also, Marot translated seven of Petrarch's sonnets. See Oeuvres Poétiques Complètes Vol. 2 (494-498).
preciosity and a refinement in analysis, together with a certain sensuality which the native tradition had not conferred in the same degree upon the *chansons*" (Smith 142). However, Marot's use of Italian elements in his rondeaux should not cause readers to see him simply as a "transitional figure," in Robert Griffin's words, a bridge between the medieval and the Renaissance, the French and Italian. Instead, Griffin suggests that Marot is "part of a broader experiment with language" that is a reflection of the changes of court taste. Marot is an integral part of this experiment in French literary expression (193). However, this experiment in language could, as William J. Kennedy suggests, be a part of a larger attempt to resituate himself and his religious reputation in the French court:

Marot's quick and greedy gravitation to a courtly Petrarchism may have been calculated to repair the king's estimate of his reform-minded interests. The years between the dedication of Calvin's Latin *Institutes* (1536) to Francois I and the rededication of his French *Institutes* (1541) to the king proved full of reversals and counter-reversals for the Evangelical movement embraced by the king's sister and Marot's early patron, Marguerite de Navarre. (Kennedy 110)

Griffin importantly connects Marot's infusion of Petrarchism in French poetry with religious reform. This is noteworthy because the rondeaux are not religious in nature; however, the poems can – and, I believe, should – be viewed in the context of Marot's unique position in the French court and, in a larger sense, the French Reformation. When viewed from this perspective, Marot shares many similarities with Wyatt: both men in-

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Some of the Italianate qualities found in Marot's rondeaux are the tortured lover (Rondeau XXVI), the "physical and moral perfection of the lady" (Rondeau XLVI), the beautiful but unattainable lady (expressed in various incarnations in Rondeau XLVI, LI, and XLIII), and the use of antithesis (P. Smith 144-145, 148).
roduced the sonnet to their respective countries; they advanced and experimented with poetic form; they offered a more refined poetic style, made so by the incorporation of Petrarchism; and they were also connected to the Protestant movement in myriad ways. Marot's regularization of the rondeau and Wyatt's later use of the form connects the two, as does their use of Petrarchan conventions, and while neither Marot's nor Wyatt's rondeaux are overtly religious in nature, the works of both men are connected, to some extent, to Protestantism.

The Protestant connection between Marot and the rondeau form seems to have resulted in the absence (or extreme revision of) the rondeau form in mid-sixteenth-century publications of Wyatt's work. While it is possible that Tottel and other editors were not familiar with the rondeau form, it is also plausible that perhaps the form, linked so heavily to Protestantism, was simply too dangerous to print, particularly during the reign of Catholic Mary I. Furthermore, Wyatt and Marot also share similarities such as an intimacy with royalty in their respective nations as well as an association with Protestantism that caused trouble for both men during their lives. Because of the events of Wyatt's own life and his use of a French form so closely associated with Marot, Wyatt's rondeaux would not have been seen as a meaningless experiment in French poetry; instead, Wyatt's use of the rondeau is freighted with religious meaning, evident in the publication of The Pilgrim's Tale alongside of his poems in The Court of Venus and the changes to Songes and Sonettes during the reign of Mary I.
Conclusion: Accrued Meaning in Wyatt's Poetry

Although Wyatt's 1541 imprisonment and 1542 death would have obviously precluded his knowledge of Marot's 1543 flight to Geneva and subsequent collaboration with Calvin, in the eyes of early modern readers, these events would only have magnified the connections between Wyatt, Marot, and Protestantism. Patterson calls such associations "extratextual reverberations," "conditions of meaning that have accrued to [works] since they were first written because of what history has subsequently wrought upon their subjects" (Censorship 127). The connections that Marot had to French reform would have been well known to Wyatt. Although some elements of Marot's life-long involvement in Reformation were unknown to Wyatt, they would not have been incompatible with what he did know of Marot; furthermore, these events would have intensified the "accrued" meaning in Wyatt's poetry.

Wyatt would have had enough of an understanding of Marot's religious convictions that any reference in Wyatt's work to Marot would have implicated Wyatt in some degree of Reformist sympathy. Wyatt's use of the rondeau form is an example of what Patterson calls "functional ambiguity," a kind of encoding (possibly through form) that allows a text to speak on multiple levels (Censorship 18). I would argue that, based on what we can see from Marot's life and the Protestant association that his name, work, and style would confer, Wyatt's use of a form so closely associated with the French poet during the English Reformation is an example of this same functional ambiguity. The rondeau is then, in and of itself, a kind of encoded message, speaking to the religio-political undercurrent in England in a functionally ambiguous way. Wyatt's use of Marot's pet form, although inconspicuous or innocuous to modern readers, was likely more obvious
to his contemporaries. Patterson refers to Leo Strauss, who notes that writers, although desirous of protecting themselves, cannot be too subtle or else "they would have defeated their purpose, which was to enlighten an ever-increasing number of people who were not potential philosophers" (34). The seemingly innocent experimentation with a French poetic form could have been an attempt to show his own respect for Marot, sympathy for the Protestant movement, or even his own feelings for the French-educated Anne Boleyn.
CHAPTER 3

ANNE BOLEYN AND THE COURTLY CONTEXT

The biographical context linking Wyatt's poetry to his role as a writer in Henry VIII's court and to Anne Boleyn is another reason to conduct a more in-depth study of the changes made to French-influenced rondeaux that appeared in *Songes and Sonettes*. Wyatt served as esquire of the king's body, clerk of the king's jewels, and royal ambassador in France and Italy, but his courtly life is most often connected with Anne Boleyn. There is a danger, as Sergio Baldi observes, of making too much of Wyatt's alleged relationship with Anne Boleyn in an effort to replicate the relationship between Petrarch and his muse, Laura (13-14). However, I would argue that because Wyatt scholarship has been focused on his imitation of Petrarch, particularly Petrarch's sonnets, too little has been said about what other non-sonnet forms, such as the rondeau, suggests about Wyatt's relationship with Anne Boleyn.

The rondeau, as a distinctly French form of poetry, would have been easily connected to Anne Boleyn by virtue of her French upbringing. As E. W. Ives writes, an informed contemporary later said of Boleyn that "no one would have ever taken her to be English by her manners, but a native-born Frenchwoman" (*Life* 45). Since Boleyn would have been strongly identified with France and French style and manner in Henry VIII's court, it seems likely that Wyatt's decision to write in the French rondeau form was in some way influenced by her. Because such mystery surrounds Wyatt and Boleyn's relationship, it is unclear whether or not Wyatt's use of the form was precipitated by the de-
sire to pay poetic homage to an illicit romance or whether it was the more general result of both the strategic language of courtly love and a queen whose courtiers would have, for all intents and purposes, associated her with the French more than the English. While there is enough evidence that Wyatt wrote to Boleyn for W. E. Simonds to have constructed a chronological framework of Wyatt's poetry based upon their interactions and alleged affair (Muir 15), I will be examining the more general effect of Wyatt's use of a French poetic form in the court of Anne Boleyn rather than attempting to use the poetry to prove that Wyatt and Boleyn did, in fact, have an affair. Furthermore, whether Wyatt's use of the rondeau is the specific romantic or general courtly result of Boleyn's influence, the effect would have been to link the two in the mind of the public during the years following their deaths. The French connection between Boleyn and Wyatt would have been only one strand in a cord that already connected the two – particularly their Protestant sympathies: Wyatt's patronage by both Cromwell and Boleyn and the connection that both Boleyn and Wyatt had to Protestant French radicals.

Connections between Wyatt and Boleyn

The idea that Wyatt and Boleyn were lovers was propagated by Wyatt's own grandson and biographer, George Wyatt, and has, understandably, long been fodder for scholarly discussion and speculation.38 Whether or not Wyatt and Boleyn actually did

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38 Although some believe the affair may never have actually occurred, many do think there is some truth to the claim. For example, G. R. Elton writes that "[Wyatt] fell for Anne Boleyn at the wrong time and at the last saw all his old friends done to death in the palace revolution of 1536 when Cromwell's friendship saved him from sharing their fate" (163). Kenneth Muir suggests that because there are several documents which suggest that Wyatt informed the King that he had had an affair with Boleyn, who was therefore
have an affair, however, is ultimately immaterial to this argument since it is widely accepted that Boleyn did influence and appear in Wyatt's poetry. Wyatt has some poetry that seems to refer in no uncertain terms to Boleyn. For example, "If Waker Care" refers to "her ded set our country in a rore," and since Wyatt changed the previous line to "Brunet," the argument for the brown-haired Boleyn's influence is strong. Likewise in "Whoso list to hunt," the diamond-wearing female deer that is Caesar's is generally believed to be Boleyn. Even scholars like Retha Warnicke, someone who is skeptical of a Wyatt/Boleyn affair, accepts that at least one of Wyatt's poems seems to refer to Boleyn. In addition to the poetry, many legends – some clearly fictitious, others at least rooted in some kind of historical event – continue to circulate around Wyatt and Boleyn. While the poetry seems to refer quite clearly to Boleyn, the actual historical events are difficult to separate from legends and rumors. For example, Kenneth Muir records

unsuitable to be Queen, that, in fact, it seems likely that the two did have a romantic relationship ("Life and Letters" 19-20). For more information about George's role in crystallizing Wyatt and Boleyn's relationship, see Thomson 273.

Although this is peripheral to my argument, it seems likely that Wyatt and Boleyn were, in fact, not lovers since Wyatt did not share the same fate as the other imprisoned men. E. W. Ives notes that not only were none of Anne's ladies in waiting punished, but they were allowed to serve the next queen. Since Anne's alleged crimes could not have easily been conducted in the claustrophobic Tudor court without the help of one or more ladies, this is a significant observation. Furthermore, Wyatt's association with Cromwell, who fell out of favor with the king and was executed does not seem to be a likely connection to help protect Wyatt if Henry indeed believed him to have committed adultery with his second wife.

See Powell's article for an explanation of this poem in a historical/biographical context. Warnicke stringently limits Anne's influence to one poem and discounts the possibility of a romantic attachment entirely. She also argues that because Anne's interest in Wyatt is unsubstantiated, and since Wyatt's poem "Whoso List to Hunt" (the only poem Warnicke believes to be about Boleyn) is about a woman who does not want to be pursued, the only option is to assume that Wyatt and Boleyn never had an affair. Warnicke believes that the "eternal triangle" of Wyatt, Boleyn, and Henry VIII is a "myth" that obscures any facts that may still be lingering about Anne Boleyn's true identity ("The Eternal" 579).
George Wyatt's story (related by Anne Gainsford, one of Boleyn's maids) that explains how Wyatt fell in love with Boleyn, who rejected him on account of his marriage but accepted his friendship (15-16). Muir also includes three independent sixteenth-century accounts that show that Wyatt told either the King or council that since Boleyn had been his mistress, she was not suited for the office of Queen (19-20). Wyatt's actual history and relationship with Boleyn is certainly confusing and opaque at best; however, there is clear evidence that rumors about Wyatt and Boleyn's relationship circulated at court.42

Wyatt would have been even more publicly connected to Boleyn through his imprisonment. He was imprisoned on May 5, 1536 along with the court musician, Mark Smeaton; Boleyn's brother, Lord Rochford; Sir Henry Norris; Sir Francis Weston; Sir Richard Page; and Sir William Brereton – all of whom were thought to have had affairs with Boleyn. While Smeaton, Rochford, Norris, Weston, and Brereton were executed along with the Queen for their crimes, Wyatt escaped unscathed, as promised by Cromwell in a letter to Wyatt's father. Regardless of whether or not Wyatt and Boleyn did have an affair, it is clear that Wyatt was imprisoned for possible involvement with and proximity to Boleyn.

Although it seems probable that Wyatt and Boleyn were not lovers, the scandal that they were (or might have been) would have made for interesting court (and later national) gossip, especially after Boleyn's and her alleged lovers' executions for treason. Consequently, attempts to vilify Boleyn as an adulteress and a "heretical seductress who had corrupted Henry and let loose all the evils which had befallen the faith" became more popular, evident in later publications like Nicholas Sander's 1585 The Origin and Pro-

42 Warnicke believes the "brunet" is actually Wyatt's estranged wife and the "countryside" refers to Kent, their home, instead of to the nation of England (The Rise 253).
gress of the Anglican Schism (Ives "Anne"). Wyatt, a poet who was imprisoned for his association with Boleyn and who was a known libertine, would have been all too easily connected with the deposed queen within the court and without. Although the question of Boleyn and Wyatt's relationship has plagued and fascinated readers for centuries, a more appropriate (and more answerable) question would consider how the two were perceived and connected in English national consciousness. Clearly, the association of Boleyn's rapid downfall with the English Reformation and French Reformists, as well as to French humanism and culture would have indelibly imprinted and linked their names in the minds of the English people.

"That Sweet Enemy": Anglo-French Relations

In sonnet 41 of *Astrophel and Stella*, Philip Sidney called France "that sweet enemy," a statement which encapsulates Anglo-French relations in the sixteenth century. Following the Treaty of London in 1518, Henry VIII and Francis I met at what would be later known as the Field of the Cloth of Gold because of the copious amounts of gold thread used in the tents. There was no diplomatic understanding reached at the meeting, nor were the monarchs united in the bonds of "perpetual friendship," the goal of both the treaty and the Field meeting (Russell 1). Instead, the Field of the Cloth of Gold was essentially an excuse for a massive party with each monarch trying to out-do the other. This meeting is important in terms of a historical consideration of Anne Boleyn and French culture because it shows an existing cultural connection (and competition) between France and England that Boleyn, as a hybrid French-English queen, would have only intensified. The competition between Henry and Francis at the Field of the Cloth of Gold
manifested itself through huge sums spent on feasting (including fountains of red wine); a
virtual Olympic games of jousts, archery, and wrestling; clothing and jewels; musical and
dramatic entertainment from sacred choral pieces to decadent masques; and the actual
architecture of their respective lodgings, France in lavishly appointed tents and England
in a kind of palace which required literally thousands of craftsmen to construct (Russell
32).

The Field of the Cloth of Gold revealed the extent to which England and France
were determined to impress each other, but, in reality, England and France were not
evenly matched because of their respective national strengths and the extent to which
French culture influenced English. Cardinal Wolsey, effectively governing England, saw
the nation as an "arbiter" between France and its rival, the Hapsburg Empire; however,
England was really never in a position that powerful and was actually being courted by
France as a possible ally against the Spain and the new emperor, Charles V (Russell 13-
14). Although the English were eager to prove themselves the equals of the French, the
influence of French culture was more pervasive in the English court than the reverse.

Anne Boleyn was a crucial part of the establishment of French culture in the Eng-
lish court since she was essentially seen as "a native-born Frenchwoman" ("Boleyn"
Ives). Warnicke writes that Boleyn "was the perfect woman courtier" because she
"learned her lessons in France well: her carriage was graceful and her French clothes
were pleasing and stylish [ . . . and] she spoke French fluently" ("Rise" 59). Boleyn was
so associated with French culture that the French poet Nicholas Bourbon wrote of her,
"Just as the golden sun dispels the gloomy shadows of night and at daybreak makes all
things bright: So you, Oh Queen, restored as a new light to your French and brightening
everything bring back the Golden Age."\(^{43}\) Despite the fact that Bourbon is writing to
Boleyn – the Queen of England – his classification of her people as French and not En-
lish shows the extent to which she was identified as and with the French. This is signifi-
cant because it shows that Anne's love of France was known and embraced by the
French, and, if the inverse is true, the English would have identified her with the French
more so than with themselves.

Boleyn's love of French culture extends to the French reformist movement. She
collected many reformist books, including Lefèvre's French translation of the Bible. Ives
writes that "Louis de Brun, a French epistolographer, vividly described seeing Anne early
in 1529, immersed in a French translation of St. Paul's letters," which he believes were
"almost certainly Lefèvre's earlier version of the New Testament which conservatives [ .
. . ] wanted burned" ("Frenchman" 22). Furthermore, Anne's Protestant convictions were
well-known in both England and France, evident in Clément Marot's gift of a customized
manuscript of his "Le Pasteur Evangelique," accompanied by a poem praising Anne
("Frenchman" 22).

It seems likely that Anne's religious convictions led her to harbor Nicholas Bour-
bon. His book, *Nicholai Borbonii*, "savaged the opponents of humanism and reform" and
resulted in his 1534 imprisonment in France (Ives "Anne"). Bourbon was pardoned and
released only under the condition that he admit his book was too radical. Following his
release, Bourbon fled to England, supposedly with the help of William Butts, one of
Anne Boleyn's reformist allies as well as the king's physician. Boleyn employed Bourbon
to teach the royal children, and, in addition to his teaching responsibilities, Bourbon

\(^{43}\) This excerpt is quoted from Ives' "A Frenchman at the court of Anne Boleyn." There is
no existing English copy of Bourbon's works, which are rare even in French.
found time to continue to write – including two poems celebrating Cromwell and several others about the Queen, King, and Thomas Cranmer (Ives "Anne"), a kind of "roll call of evangelicals in England in the early 1530s" ("Frenchman" 25). This protégé of Anne Boleyn's was also friends with the French Protestant sympathizers Rabelais and Marot, and while he lauded Protestant figures in his poetry, he also derided figures like Thomas More (Lee 44). The French influence as seen in Bourbon was decidedly Protestant, and the fact that he was friends with Marot – who himself had given the Queen a highly Protestant book with a dedicatory poem – would have, however loosely, connected Wyatt, who learned from and borrowed Marot's pet form and was patronized by Boleyn and even Cromwell, to more extreme Protestantism. But more importantly, Boleyn's decision to harbor and charge a transplanted Huguenot with the task of educating the royal children shows her continuing desire to be identified with the French Reform movement, even as the Queen of England.

The Rondeaux

Of the nine rondeaux in the Egerton manuscript, three appear in Tottel's *Songes and Sonnettes*. These poems, then, would have been the most widely circulated of Wyatt's rondeaux and the most likely to have connected Wyatt, Boleyn, and French Protestantism, a dangerous association during Mary I's reign. The poems are "What Vaileth Truth?", which was changed to "Complaint for True Loue vnrequited" in *Songes and Sonnettes*, "Goo Burning sighes Vnto the frozen hert!", which became "The louer sendeth sighes to mone his sute," and "Behold, Love," which was retitled "Request to Cupide, for reuenge of his vnkind loue." Both "Goo Burning sighes" and "Behold, Love" have known
Petrarchan sources, *Rima* CLIII and CXXI, respectively, and because of their Petrarchan originals, Wyatt was somewhat confined because of the nature of translating. However, "What Vaileth Truth?" is an original poem, which allowed Wyatt significantly more latitude than with the Italian translations. For this reason, "What Vaileth Truth?" is a more significant poem for study because it exemplifies the influence of Boleyn and French culture.

Although Wyatt borrowed the French rondeau form from Marot, he made some modifications of his own in this particular poem, "What Vaileth Truth?". A rondeau typically contains three stanzas, but "What Vaileth Truth?" contains one larger stanza followed by a shorter. Each stanza augments the primary theme of the poem through presenting opposing pairs. The first pair places the "true meaning heart" (7) in juxtaposition with "deceit and doubleness" (8). The second binary structure of the poem contains the jilted lover – possibly Wyatt or simply a metaphorical device – and his cruel "mistress" (13). Perhaps Wyatt is expressing frustration with a "mistress" who would reduce even something as sacred as love to a means of maneuvering.

However, regardless of whether or not Wyatt is responding to an actual romantic relationship with Boleyn as the "mistress," the poem must be, to some degree, read as a critique of the court because he is using the courtly language of love in an ironic, jaded way. Wyatt is clearly expressing frustration with the overall corruption of the court, where love becomes a simple mechanism in the machine of patronage and the struggle for power. The corrupted court leads to and condones further corruption, specifically
through the patronage system. The speaker's righteous indignation is almost audible when he declares that the "false and plain" are "rewarded" (5).

"What Vaileth Truth?" can be read as a fairly straightforward critique of the court for several reasons. For example, the poem is full of language negatively associated with movement made for personal gain: "take" on line 1, "strive" and "attain" on line 2, "flee" on line 3, and "speedeth" on line 6. The word choices correlate to the "deceit and doubleness" half of the binary structure of the first stanza. Other verbs of movement, such as "flee" and "speedeth," suggest what action the "true-meaning heart" should take. All of these verbs show how Wyatt might have felt at court, where one must be on guard against duplicity and "craftiness" at all times (4). The manner in which Wyatt chooses to complete the rondeau rhyme scheme is also significant. There are only two words at the end of the lines that are repeated: "truth," which is the last word of the refrain (9,15), and "doubleness" (3,8). The focus on these words underscores Wyatt's overall concern with the duplicity of the court and the existence of a greater reality outside of the machinations of this center of power.

Wyatt's use of French in his critique of the English court is both general and specific. In other words, his decision to incorporate French in his rondeau allows him to covertly discuss the general problems that existed among the powerful (ie: corruption, duplicity and "craftiness" at all times (4). The manner in which Wyatt chooses to complete the rondeau rhyme scheme is also significant. There are only two words at the end of the lines that are repeated: "truth," which is the last word of the refrain (9,15), and "doubleness" (3,8). The focus on these words underscores Wyatt's overall concern with the duplicity of the court and the existence of a greater reality outside of the machinations of this center of power.

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44 Plain could be interpreted in several ways, one of which is, "free from duplicity and reserve" (OED n.7); however, in the context, the best interpretation seems to be "clear to the senses of the mind; evident, manifest, obvious," (OED n.11) in the sense that the duplicity and guile of the person is easily perceived or plain.

45 There is a strong vein of Neoplatonism in the poem. Wyatt's refrain calls the reader back to the existence of a knowable, Platonic truth that exists in direct opposition to the trappings and duplicity of court. The language that Wyatt employs to describe those who practice (and worse – those who have "rewarded" (5)) "deceit and doubleness" (8) is reminiscent of Plato's critique of rhetorical flattery in the Gorgias (97).
plicity, etc) and specific problems at the court that he was familiar with. There are two primary reasons that this wordplay is likely. First, the Renaissance understanding and use of language was not limited by precise, modern orthography. Early modern writers found a wide range of meaning through what Margreta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass call, "phonetic, orthographic, and semantic plasticity" (266). A second, more specific reason is that this bi-lingual punning would permit Wyatt to, again, identify the English court with the excesses of the French, possibly allowing him to tacitly identify the false mistress with Anne Boleyn. One possible example is in Wyatt's use of the word "train." The "crafty train" that deceives the speaker (10) could refer to a literal "number of persons following or attending on someone" (OED n.9.a), but it could also be a pun on two French words. Wyatt might have referred to trainée, meaning "pieces of carrion [. . . ] laid in a line or trail for luring certain wild beasts [. . . ] into a trap," (OED n.7), which he could have used to create an extended metaphor of the idea that the speaker is within a "trap" of "guile" (11,12). The "crafty train" could be interpreted as a derivation of the French word traïne, meaning "guile, deceit, ruse" (OED n.1). This definition underscores the treachery of the court, but it also makes more sense than the more obvious definition meaning of a kind of entourage. (OED n.9.a). In other words, the more overtly French meaning of the word reveals more of the poem's meaning.

All of these less-obvious French referents subtly enhance the idea that the court was a place of deceit and entrapment, and, although Wyatt's use of bilingual punning would certainly not have been unusual in the English Renaissance, it would have strongly connected him to French language and culture in the minds of his readership. Furthermore, Wyatt's francophilic language coupled with his decision to write original poetry (as
opposed to translations only) in an unusual French form would have only reinforced the French association that his audience would have formed between the poet, the obscure form, and its content. Wyatt's poems would have circulated in manuscript form within the court, amongst an audience composed of well-educated readers who were also very aware of the inner workings of the court to which Wyatt's poems slyly referred. Margaret Maurer writes that

the maker [of a poem] can arrange the elements of his composition to imply a range of statements about the person to whom he dedicates the emblem. Implicitly, his own intentions in dedicating the emblem participate in ambiguity. The meaning he intends is accessible to only those who know all the circumstances on which the emblem depends. (431)\(^4\)

Wyatt's rondeaux do exactly this. On one level, his poetry is accessible to any reader in a very literal sense; however, on another level, the real meaning of a poem is a kind of conglomerate composed of interrelated cultural and literary circumstances that can only be recognized and correctly interpreted by those "in the know."

Changes to "What Vaileth Truth?" in Publication

However, the form as well as much of the French wordplay is nowhere to be found in the version of the poem found in Songes and Sonettes. Instead, the rondeau "What Vaileth Truth?" appears as an imperfect kind of sonnet under the title "Complaint for true loue vnrequited." There seem to be several reasons that led Tottel to omit the

\(^4\) Maurer's equally applicable argument examines emblematics, which she defines as "the art of making emblems" "in which meaning depending on a conjunction of elements that was fully present in no one of them. Emblematics is a kind of code made of "expressions that were inaccessible to the uninitiated beholder" (430).
rondeau form from his collection. The first two reasons deal primarily with the popularity of certain types of poetic form while the latter are concerned with the larger religio-political framework of mid-sixteenth-century England. The first reason that Tottel might have omitted the rondeau form from *Songes and Sonettes* is that the sonnet, which would have been synonymous with love poetry, was Wyatt's pet form and had become quite popular in England. A second possible reason for the omission dovetails with Tottel's decision to substitute the sonnet for the rondeau. The rondeau was an obscure form in England, and, although it would have had rich linguistic and cultural resonance with the readers "in the know" at court, this form and its web of associated meaning would not have easily transferred to a printed medium. Another reason for the omission is that Franco-Anglo relations were decidedly more complicated and tenuous than England's relationship with Italy, especially since Mary I had reinstated Catholicism and healed the breech with Rome that her father (and basically French step-mother) had caused. Perhaps Tottel decided to omit the French form and the web of associated connotations in favor of the safer and more popular Italianate form. Lastly, the Italian form of the sonnet would have been associated with romantic love, whereas the rondeau's possible connotations – Boleyn, Marot, and Protestantism – were potentially more hazardous during the period in which Tottel was publishing.

However, even though Tottel does avoid the more overtly Protestant connotations that would have been transferred by way of the rondeau form, he does not omit all references to faith. Tottel's edition speaks in code using romantic language that could also double as religious language. Since the work was published in 1557, the year prior to Mary I's death, it seems logical to assume that any positive references to faith must refer
to the Catholic faith or simply be ambiguous enough to "pass"; Tottel's edition would fall under this latter category. For example, the phrase "parfit stedfastnesse" (Giiv) is an addition to "Complaint," the version found in *Songes and Sonettes*, that is used as a kind of appositive for Truth. While "perfect" can mean "in a state of complete excellence; free from any imperfection or defect of quality" (*OED* a.1.b), it could have also had a more religious connotation: "Of, marked, or characterized by supreme moral or spiritual excellence or virtue; righteous, holy; immaculate; spiritually pure or blameless" (*OED* a.1.a). Likewise, the word "stedfastnesse" meant "constancy or fixity in purpose, belief, fidelity" (*OED* 1).

The word gains additional meaning when its cultural context is examined. Since the church was frequently identified as female, the idea of "perfect steadfastnesse" would likely have carried with it the image of both the ideal woman and the church as the bride of Christ. However, the word "steadfastnesse" carries with it a decidedly Protestant connotation. William Tyndale used the word 13 times in his 1526 (and 1534 revision) English translation of the New Testament, and, although he was burned at the stake for heresy (despite Cromwell's attempt to intervene), Tyndale's translation gained popularity and was published widely in England within four years of the translator's death. David Daniell writes that several of Tyndale's translated phrases had entered common use by this point: "the spirit is willing," "fight the good fight," and "the powers that be" (142). Despite the fact that Tyndale's Bible would have been anathema to Mary I, the word "steadfast" likely had a religious veneer because of the popularity of Tyndale's English translation. Therefore, Tottel's addition of the words "parfit stedfastnesse" would have likely had a strong religious connotation both in the smaller context of the poem and in the
larger context of the nation's religious history through his tacit suggestion that this 
woman, the true church, is the Protestant church.

Conclusion

Wyatt's use of the rondeau form has several implications in the context of the 
English court. His experimentation with a French form pioneered by Clément Marot 
identifies him with French Protestantism, but in the larger context of the Anglo-French 
relations, his decision to work with the rondeau form is both an attempt to advance and 
develop English poetry as well pay tribute to the French educated Boleyn. Because of the 
rumors surrounding Boleyn and Wyatt, in addition to their mutual interest in French cul-
ture and religion, the rondeau form might have been seen as a link between the two that 
later readers would view as evidence of a romantic relationship. Consequently, Wyatt's 
use of the rondeau form and the Protestant overtones that it might have connoted likely 
led the editor of Songes and Sonettes, leery of the association with Protestantism and 
Boleyn, to change all of Wyatt's rondeaux to sonnets. Although a Protestant presence is 
still subtly felt in the revised text, the more dangerous connection to French Protestantism 
and Boleyn – the rondeau form – was removed when Tottel published Wyatt's poetry dur-
ing the reign of Mary I.
CONCLUSION

Rehabilitating Wyatt's Rondeaux

Because Wyatt played such an important role in ushering in the English Renaissance by importing the sonnet from Italy, his work with other poetic forms, particularly the rondeau, has been largely neglected. In this paper, I hope to show that Wyatt's use of the rondeau is as compelling as his use of the sonnet. The sonnet has long been recognized for its ability to speak on multiple levels: Petrarchism is used to disguise the political maneuverings that are not immediately obvious to a modern reader. Similarly, Wyatt's use of the rondeau would have signaled secondary meanings for an early modern audience, meanings that are not easily recognizable for a twenty-first-century audience. Just as the romantic language of the sonnet was used to conceal political posturing, the rondeau would have been closely connected with Protestantism, both because of Wyatt and because of the form itself. The connections that Wyatt had to Protestant figures like Anne Boleyn, Thomas Cromwell, Robert Singleton, John Bale, and Thomas Gybson would have prevented an early modern readership from seeing him as a religiously neutral figure. Wyatt's use of the rondeau form further implicates him as a Protestant sympathizer by virtue of the connection that the form had with Clément Marot, and, through him, Marguerite de Navarre and John Calvin.

Critics have dismissed Wyatt's rondeaux as largely unsuccessful experiments in a French form. C.S. Lewis writes that "[e]xcept for the form of the rondeau (and he did not make much of that) Wyatt's debt to French poetry is small" (229). Wyatt's rondeaux are
not, however, simple experiments with a French form, nor is their worth tied to the music that may have once accompanied them as Maynard, Mason, and Foxwell suggest. Wyatt's work with the rondeau form is deliberate: he chose to write in a form that was deeply connected to Protestantism. The rondeau was not a neutral poetic form; it was not simply "a little music after supper" (Lewis 230). Instead, the rondeau was charged with religious meaning, and Wyatt's use of the form, particularly in light of his connections to such visible Protestant figures, imbues his poetry with a kind of Protestant subtext. Wyatt and the rondeau would have had strong Protestant resonances amongst an early modern readership.

Furthermore, I hope to rehabilitate the earliest published versions of Wyatt's rondeaux by mining the wealth of Protestant connections that both Wyatt and the rondeau form would have had. Muir and Thomson dismiss the Douce fragment of The Court of Venus an "inferior" and "carelessly printed book" (437), and Lewis writes that Tottel's Songes and Sonettes is "a very large body of wooden and clumsy verse" (Studies 129). Although the Douce fragment of Court is certainly a troublesome text in terms of its quality and preservation, it does reveal the Protestant connections that Wyatt and his work would have had. Similarly, the changes to Wyatt's rondeaux in Songes and Sonettes cannot be wholly attributed to poor editing, nor does it seem likely that Tottel was simply unfamiliar with the rondeau form. Instead, I believe that Tottel recognized the Protestant resonances that Wyatt and the rondeau form had for his readership, and Tottel's recognition of these associations led to the heavy revisions of Wyatt's rondeaux in Songes and Sonettes. A religio-political consideration of Wyatt and his poetry shows us that Tottel's editorial changes are not the result of a misunderstanding or even of an attempt to iron
out the rough spots in Wyatt's poetry; rather, Tottel's editorial changes are a deliberate attempt to disguise a form that would have been too closely connected with Protestantism and would have therefore been too dangerous for him to print during the reign of Catholic Mary I.
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