Lord Thomas de Marr'

I found this recipe in the Complete Anachronist #120 “Making Medieval Mead or, Mead before Digby” by Christina M Krupp – Duchess Marieke van de Dal & Bill Gillen – Master Cenwulf Bearwes, page 39. This recipe comes originally from Theodorus Clutis, an apothecary and herbalist of Leiden University and published in the 1597AD edition of Van de Byen. Page 167-8. I was able to find images of the book on google images and google books but all are untranslated from the original old Dutch, therefore I will have to depend upon the translation provided by Kristina M Krupp. The link for the original 1597 Van de Byen online publishing is here:

https://books.google.com/books?id=neR5DwAAQBAJ&pg=PA897&lpg=PA897&dq=Van+de+Byen+1597&source=bl&ots=FuD9HcK9u1&sig=ACfU3U0VaDoINUUTjn-Mh1lQcaa7gvmLZg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiF3_2X-YrzAhVOnuAKHZWTCtUQ6AF6BAgaEAM#v=onepage&q=Van%20de%20Byen%201597&f=false

Translation: Take 90 parts or stoops of good river water or rainwater, 10 parts or stoops of white honey, and put them in a kettle. Let them boil, skimming, until only 80 stoops remain. The thickness can be tested with an egg to see if it is strong enough. Let it cool and pour into the vat and let it work. Add beer yeast so that it will change and end up clear. You may add spices, as said above.

To make my recipe I had to tackle the issue of “what is a stoop for a measurement?” There is no agreed upon quantity by scholars and cooks that I could find so in order to be as true to the original I opted to go by the “parts” instead of stoops. This allowed me to use math for accurate portions. 10 parts of honey plus 90 parts is a 9 to 1 ratio which converting to a 5-gallon batch comes out as 4 pints of honey to 36 pints of water. Reducing that in a boil from 100 parts to 80 parts is a 20% reduction which in a 5-gallon batch means boiling until 4 gallons remain or 1/5th reduction. I tried using the egg method and failed horribly. The egg would never float even after a 50% reduction, I tried warm eggs, cold eggs and duck eggs. I believe the problem is in how a store purchase egg is processed, changing its physical properties but I have no local source for farm fresh eggs to test this theory. In the end after making 2 batches without success I opted for the measuring by the reduction amounts rather than the egg float. The honey I used was unprocessed wildflower honey locally sourced. While it is not a white honey it is closer to period than the store bought processed white clover honey that cannot actually be proven to be made entirely of white clover as the fine print of the labels warns. While I do not have a river to gather water from, I was able to collect about 2 gallons of rainwater in a sanitized bucket and then used our well water to supplement the remaining amounts needed. Using our well water means it is untreated like town water so no chemicals were added, and the water is as pure as I can get it.

After boiling out the excess liquid it calls for letting it work after cooling. However, this is before it says to add the beer yeast, so I believe that it refers to letting the natural yeasts in the honey get started before adding the beer yeast. I have seen this in other period recipes where no yeast is added at all, but natural yeasts do the "work". Therefore, I decided to let it sit in the kettle overnight before adding the yeast giving it time to "work" and sure enough, in the morning before pouring into the primary the mead had begun to ferment on its own. For sanitation purposes I did not want to wait longer before moving it to the primary where it could be safely sealed with an air lock. The yeast I chose to use is Nottingham Ale Yeast. This was the only "beer yeast" available at the local market, all other yeasts were cider and wine yeasts making this the closest choice to follow the recipe. This recipe does not prescribe a duration of time for how long to let it ferment until serving so I opted to simply wait until it clarified on it's own which took 5 months from the time of brewing, then I bottled 1 gallon, leaving 3 gallons in the carboy to be used as the foundation in my next period of brew of *Hydromel like Red wine*.

My recipe is as follows:

Take 36 pints of rainwater and good well water, 4 pints of raw wildflower honey, and put them in a kettle. Let them boil, skimming, until 4 gallons remain (20% reduction). Let it cool and pour into the vat and let it work. Add Nottingham Ale Yeast so that it will change and end up clear. Bottle after fermentation has finished and the mead is clear in color.

To serve the mead the closest to Dutch specific drinking vessels I could find was a painting of a post period gathering 1673AD. From the Amsterdam Historic Museum. All other images were modern paintings of historic events.

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