

INVESTIGATING THE SHIPTON HOARD

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Izvleček: Avgusta 1840 je v pismu, objavljenem v reviji *The Musical World*, izšla notica o najdbi »štirih velikih železnih skrinj, polnih glasbenih knjig«; med njimi nekatere zelo redke in še neodkrite. V resnici je bila ta objava prevara. A kdo jo je zagrešil? Ta esej prinaša zbrane dokaze in skuša razrešiti skrivnost.

Ključne besede: *The Purcell Society*, Edward Taylor, starinoslovje, zbiratelj knjig, Edward Francis Rimbault

Abstract: In August 1840 a letter published in *The Musical World* announced the discovery of “four large iron chests filled with music-books”, some of great rarity, which have never been recovered. The truth is that the announcement is a hoax. But who perpetrated it? This essay sifts the evidence and attempts to solve the mystery.

Keywords: *The Purcell Society*, Edward Taylor, antiquarianism, book collectors, Edward Francis Rimbault

For Herry Diack Johnstone

In the issue of the journal *The Musical World* of 27 August 1840 the following letter appeared:

Sir-In an old family mansion in Shipton, near Woodstock, there has been lately found by the present proprietor, on opening the ground to make some repairs to the house, four large iron chests filled with music-books and other documents. [They contain] treatises, masses, motets, madrigals &c by all the English composers and writers from the year from 1480 down to the year 1649, as well as foreign publications of a similar kind and of the same period, both printed and manuscript. The place in which these iron chests were found was a large and dry stone cellar or vault, underground, the entrance to which appeared originally to have been in a recess in the wall (blocked up) from one of the lower apartments or cellars, perhaps managed by a spring, of which there appears some remains on the door. The whole of the books appear to be in their original bindings, some in wooden covers with clasps, others in old stout leathern bindings and tied with silken strings, and others in old vellum; they are all perfect and in fine condition. Being permitted, at the intercession of a friend, to see the collection, I managed to take a nearly complete list of the whole; this occupied me nearly two days. Of this list I send you a brief sketch.

Among the highlights of what then follows, described at considerable length and in some bibliographical detail are the following:

Copies “Ravenscroft’s Pammelia, 1600”. “Deuteromelia, 1609”. “Melismata, 1610”. “Brief Discourse, 1614” and another work by the author, not known “Musalia, or Pleasant

Diversions in Rime, several varieties of catches, roundels, canons, freemen's songs, madrigals, balletas, fancies, gleemen's songs, and cuntry dances, fitting for all sorts of humoures by Thomas Ravenscroft, B.M., imprinted at London, and are to be had at the sign of the Bible and Musicke-booke, near St. Mildred's Church in ye Poultrie, at Nicholas Feeman, his house, 4to, 1613".

A very thin volume, not above twenty pages, "Parthenia, or Musicke's Maidenhead for the Virginals, being the first musicke ever printed of the kinde, by Doctor John Bull, William Birde, and Orlando Gibbons, gentlemen of her Majesty's chappell: imprinted at London by Peter Short, dwelling on Bread-street-hill, at the sign of the Starre, folio, 1600; dedicated to Queen Elizabeth".

"Severall Interludes, with the music at the end, printed by Wynkin de Worde and Richard Pynson, particularly the 'Four Elements' by Rastell, 1519".

"Songs to Sondry Natures to three and fowere voyces, set by W. Cornyshe, Maiester Taverner, Dr. Robert Fayrfax, Pygott, Ashwell, R. Jones, J. Gwynnethe and Dr Copere: imprinted at London by Richard Pynson, dwelling in Fleete streete, M.D.XXX (according to the Colophon)".

The account then continues:

The following copy of a very curious historical document fell out of one of the books; it fully explains the reason why these chests of books were concealed. It was during the civil war previous to the death of Charles the First, when so much devastation was committed throughout England, and everything in the shape of musical service books as well as other things were destroyed by the parliament army.¹

This "very curious historical document", as the letter describes it, was addressed to "Browne cleri [*sic*] parliamentorum", which can only be a reference to John Browne, made clerk of the parliaments in 1638, who had declared himself to be a Puritan and supporter of Oliver Cromwell. Four years later Charles I set up his court-in-exile in Christ Church Oxford, and the area around the city did indeed become bitterly contested between the Royalist and Parliamentary forces. And while it may not be accidental that the oldest book of music discovered in "the old family mansion" in Shipton was dated 1649, the year of the monarch's public execution in front of the Banqueting House on Whitehall, the prime candidate for the mansion itself can only be Shipton Court, in the village of Shipton-under-Wychwood, one of the largest and most splendid seventeenth-century country houses in Oxfordshire.

By any standards, the contents of the collection discovered in Shipton Court were indeed extraordinary. The "Severall Interludes, with the music at the end" must be the copy of *A New Interlude and a Mery of the Nature of the iiii Elements*, which is now known only from an extremely imperfect copy in the British Library.² This came to the Library, then part of the British Museum, from the collection of the actor David Garrick in 1780, together with some 1200 other items. The first example of printed music to be

¹ For the full text of the letter to *The Musical World*, see King, *Some British Collectors*.

² London, The British Library (GB-Lbl), Case 39.b.17; see Alec Hyatt King, "The Significance of John Rastell in Early Music Printing", *The Library*, 5th series, 26 (1971): 198–214; and Milsom, "Songs and Society", 239–245.



Figure
Shipton Court (public domain).

produced in England, it presents a single song, “Tyme to Pas” in a pseudo-score arrangement. Some sense of its importance was evident to the Scottish literary scholar Alexander Dyce (1798–1869), whose transcription from the unique Garrick copy survives.³ The letter to *The Musical World* repeats the opinion, current at the time but now disproved, that the book was printed by Wynkyn de Worde, who with the *Polychronicon* by Ranulf Higden produced the first English work to incorporate mensural music printed by movable type.⁴

Then there is the *Songs to Sondry Natures*, with a publication date of 1530, which can only be a reference to the *XX Songes*. This, too, is today known by a single surviving source: a bass partbook in the British Library.⁵ Further fragments have been recovered from a binding in Westminster Abbey.⁶ Although the printer of the *XX Songes* can be identified neither from the bass colophon nor from the founts used to set the book, he had access to woodblock capitals and a large *textura* font used by another unidentified printer who undertook work for John Rastell in about 1530, the year in which the volume *XX Songes* was issued. Although it is conceivable that the anonymous writer of the letter must have seen either the British Library partbook, or another book from the set (now lost), it is more likely that he was aware of its existence from the publications of Joseph Ritson.⁷

This wealth of detailed information represents a somewhat erudite corner of the more general growing interest in old, rare and valuable books that was characteristic of the

³ London, Victoria & Albert Museum – National Art Library (GB-Lv), Dyce 25. F. 20. Transcribed from the unique copy in the Garrick Collection vol. 1, bk. 3. It is unfortunately imperfect.

⁴ De Worde was a German immigrant printer who worked with William Caxton, and was the first to exploit the potentiality of the printing press in England.

⁵ GB-Lbl, K.1.e.1. Bound at the end is the title-leaf only of the Triplex.

⁶ Westminster Abbey Library, see Nixon, “Book of XX Songes”.

⁷ See Ritson, *Ancient Songs and Ballads*, where it is described.

early decades of nineteenth-century Britain.⁸ A milestone in this new era occurred with the auction of the enormous library of the Duke of Roxburghe, who had died in 1804; this took place over forty-six days in 1812. The high point of the sale was the first edition of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, printed by Christopherus Valdarfer in Venice in 1471, believed to be the only surviving copy; this was bought by the Marquis of Blandford for £2,260, the highest price ever given for a single book at that time.⁹ After the sale was over, a group of eighteen collectors met in a local tavern and formed a private club of wealthy bibliophiles later to be known as the Roxburghe Club, with the second Earl Spencer as its first president and the bibliographer Thomas Frognall Dibdin as its vice-president.

In general, music did not attract the attention of such serious bibliophiles; not a single book of music of any bibliographical rarity appears in the Roxburghe sale.¹⁰ Except for occasional oddities such as the *XX Songes*, ambitiously described by the Sotheby's cataloguer when it was sold later in the nineteenth century as being "probably compiled at the monarch's [i.e. Henry VIII's] request for the use of his royal children", there were no equivalents in the field of music to the Roxburghe *Decameron*.¹¹ In general, Victorian scholars, teachers and performers built up their collections of music either for antiquarian research into the past, which increasingly meant the specifically English past, or for practical use by societies such as the Concerts of Antient Music.

In this context the work of Thomas Ravenscroft, admired by the Victorians not as a composer but rather as a kind of anthropologist whose printed collections were considered to be important anthologies of English folk music, evocative of a vanished Arcadian past, were already being seen in this light in the eighteenth century.¹² When, in 1822, a volume of *Selections from the Works of Thomas Ravenscroft* was issued to the members of the Roxburghe Club, this was a sign not of the rarity of the three published collections of his music, but rather of the approachability of their contents, full of rounds, street cries, vendors songs and other anonymous music that so effectively conjured up the potent image of an Elizabethan Golden Age.¹³ Hence the attraction of the curious description of the Ravenscroft editions discovered among the rarities of the Shipton Hoard, which includes an otherwise completely unknown work, the ingeniously entitled *Musalia*, and a 1600 edition of *Pammelia* which is obviously either a mistake or a fiction, since the composer would have been twelve years old at the time.

If it is the invention of a Ravenscroft "ghost", that impossible 1600 edition of *Pammelia*, that gives the game away, so, too, does the presence of Luca Marenzio's "nine sets of madrigals to five voices (Englished) unknown" and the listing of a rare collection of early

⁸ Connell, "Bibliomania".

⁹ It was not to be equalled until the sale of the Syston Park copy of the Mainz Psalter, sold in 1884 for £4,950.

¹⁰ There were just four books about music, including the four volumes of Burney's *History* (1789) and Dentice's *Dialoghi* (1553), together with a small collection of ballad operas.

¹¹ According to Nixon, "Book of XX Songs", 33, the British Museum acquired it in 1864.

¹² As in, for example, Ritson, *Ancient Songs: From the Time of King Henry the Third to the Revolution*, which includes "The Three Ravens" from *Melismata* (155–158), "The Over Courteous Knight" from *Deuteromelia* (159–162) and "Robin Lend to Me Thy Bow" from *Pammelia* (166–168).

¹³ *Selections from the Works of Thomas Ravenscroft*.

treatises by the mis-spelt Zinctor [Tinctoris] and Zartino [Zarlino], not to mention yet another indisputable “ghost”: a 1600 edition of *Parthenia*, the first English published book of keyboard music. The only known edition of *Parthenia* is undated, but it can be assigned to the years around 1612 on account of its dedication to the Elector Palatine Frederick of the Rhine, who was married in that year to Princess Elisabeth Stuart.¹⁴ There is no corroborative evidence in contemporary library catalogues or post-mortem inventories to indicate the existence of an earlier edition. In other words, the description of the Shipton Hoard is indisputably a hoax.

Nonetheless, the letter to *The Musical World*, signed, simply but unhelpfully for our purposes, “A MEMBER OF THE PURCELL CLUB”, is not without interest. About the society little is known. Alfred Novello, who was not only the founder of *The Musical World*, which was to become the pre-eminent nineteenth-century music journal but also published the first complete edition of Purcell’s church music, was almost certainly a member, but it is doubtful that he would have had the knowledge to invent the description of the Shipton Hoard single-handedly.¹⁵ A more likely suspect is Edward Taylor, Gresham Professor from 1837 and President of the Club from 1842.

Taylor was one of the great Victorian collectors. His library, which was auctioned in nearly one thousand lots in 1863, included rare early editions of motets, together with partbooks of English, French and Italian madrigals including those of Gesualdo, whose harmonies must have sounded strange to Victorian ears. According to an account of The Purcell Club in *The Spectator* – presumably written by Taylor, who had been the paper’s music critic since 1829 – “here professors and amateurs meet together for a common purpose, that of doing honour to the memory of England’s greatest composer [...]. He was Organist of Westminster Abbey, as well as the Father and Founder of the English Opera”.¹⁶ This view of Purcell’s dual historical roles is reflected in the Club’s activities. It met twice a year; once on the second Thursday in February, when the members dined together, and again on the last Thursday in July, when they assembled in Westminster Abbey “for the purpose of assisting in such Purcell music as might be selected for the purpose. On the evening of the same day the members met again to perform secular music by Purcell”. At a special meeting on 27 February 1842 Taylor was elected President. The Club also formed a library, and when it was dissolved in 1863 this was deposited at Westminster Abbey “under the guardianship of the organists of Westminster Abbey and St. Paul’s Cathedral”.¹⁷

There is more to be said about the Purcell Revival. In *The Musical World* of 18 October 1838 another unsigned article appeared; headed “Purcell and the English Church Composers”, it presents a nationalistic argument:

¹⁴ The first edition of *Parthenia* survives in two states; one copy of the first issue is in the Huntingdon Library in San Marino, California, and two of the second in the British Library.

¹⁵ The eldest son of the composer Vincent Novello, Joseph Alfred Novello was the creator of Novello and Company as a revolutionary force in commercial music publishing. *The Musical World* appeared weekly from 1838 until 1891.

¹⁶ “The Purcell Club”, *The Spectator*, 19 August 1837.

¹⁷ Cummings, “Purcell Club, The”.

The penalty we pay for being Islanders and Protestants, is to hear the best names in our cathedral books—our Gibbons, Purcell, Weldon, Croft, &c. on the Continent, “unknown and like esteemed”. With the genius of the Catholic and the Lutheran religions, the English have shown a more lively sympathy. From the motets of Palestrina down to the masses of Haydn and Mozart, *we* are well acquainted with the whole range, character, and expression of Catholic music.

It then continues, as if by way of compensation,

The late Samuel Wesley, in whom always existed a generous and lively apprehension of excellence, placed Purcell above Handel in the character of his genius.

In both the description of the Shipton Hoard and the polemics launched in the related ambience of the Purcell Club two distinct themes can be detected; the construction of a British musical history on the one hand, and an interest in church music on the other.

It is indicative that all the music listed by name in the Shipton Hoard account is by English composers and that the one exception, the group of Marenzio’s non-existent “nine sets of madrigals to five voices”, was apparently “Englished”: that is, issued with their texts in translation, a description which shows at least a passing acquaintance of Thomas Watson’s collection of 1590.¹⁸ Also of national importance is the “large quantity of English church music in MS, and seven large vellum MSS, consisting of very old songs in parts on opposite sides, to English words, and in black and red notes intermixed”.

Edward Taylor certainly had the detailed knowledge of sixteenth-century printed music, particularly the works of the Elizabethan and Jacobean madrigalists, to have constructed the letter to *The Musical World*. His books of music included complete sets of parts of John Ward’s *First Set*, John Wilbye’s *First Set* and Thomas Bateson’s *Second Set* “all the parts (6) very fine copies in clean uncut state”, together with a copy of *Parthenia* which “wants title, and has dedication in facsimile THE VERY RARE ORIGINAL EDITION”.¹⁹ And although Taylor also assembled a large collection of plays in Italian and French and had an interest in the history of drama, there is no reason to believe that he was concerned with the earliest phase of English music typography and the technicalities of printing. For that, we should turn to a more likely candidate as the perpetrator of the Shipton Hoard fiction: Dr Edward Francis Rimbault, who, as has been long recognized, indulged in dubious acquisition practices as well as a degree of historical fantasy.²⁰ In common with Taylor, Rimbault haunted the auction rooms in search of treasures for his own library, but in addition he was interested more generally in the history of printing and actively participated in the vogue for searching out ancient printed texts and making editions of English literary and dramatic works.²¹

¹⁸ Watson, *First sett, of Italian Madrigals Englished*.

¹⁹ *Catalogue of the Very Interesting, Extensive and Valuable Musical Library of the Late Edward Taylor* (London: Puttick and Simpson, 1863). See lots 78 (Bateson), 584 (Parthenia), 803 (Ward), 821 (Wilbye).

²⁰ I am grateful to Peter Holman for this suggestion.

²¹ King, *Some British Collectors*, 62–63; Andrewes, “Edward Francis Rimbault”.

Born in 1816, Rimbault grew up in an artistic and particularly musical environment. His father, Stephen, was the organist of the church of St Giles-in-the-Fields in the West End of London, and it was from him and, later, Samuel Wesley, who was a personal friend of the family, that Edward learnt music. By the age of sixteen Edward was evidently sufficiently competent at the keyboard to be appointed as organist of the Swiss church, which was also in Soho.²² It was in about 1838 that Rimbault began to attend book auctions and develop a life-long interest in building up a collection of sixteenth and seventeenth-century music both printed and manuscript; at his death in 1877 this impressive library was sold over six days.²³

Rimbault's music manuscripts included the "Hamond Partbooks" and the "Mulliner Book", both of which had once been owned by John Stafford Smith, a singer in the Chapel Royal.²⁴ On Stafford Smith's death in 1836 his library was inherited by his daughter Gertrude, who then disposed of it in a number of sales, the first of which was held eight years later.²⁵ Rimbault also owned two important seventeenth-century manuscripts: the Sambrooke manuscript and John Gamble's *Commonplace Book*, both of which were bought at the auction of Rimbault's collection by the New York dealer Sabin, who was a prominent buyer at the sale. Both manuscripts were acquired, together with many other items from Sabin, by the banker and philanthropist Joseph Drexel, who in turn left his substantial collection of over 6,000 music books to the Lenox Library, which later became the basis for the music collections of the New York Public Library.²⁶

As the *Musical Times* lamented, "all [the English *unica*] should have been purchased for the British Museum: now unfortunately it is too late, as a large proportion are on their way to New York".²⁷ The theoretical works included treatises by Gaffurius, Thomas Morley and Mersenne, and there were a number odd partbooks mostly containing secular vocal and instrumental works by Elizabethan and Jacobean composers, including the unique copy of *Parthenia In-Violata* that was also bought by Sabin.²⁸ There was also a good deal

²² The church, which no longer exists, was near Moor Street.

²³ *Catalogue of the Valuable Library of the Late Edward Francis Rimbault, LL.D. Comprising an Extensive and Rare Collection of Ancient Music, Printed and Manuscript* (Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, 1877). The sale began on 31 July 1877.

²⁴ For Rimbault's ownership of the "Hamond Partbooks", see Butler, "From Liturgy and the Education of Choirboys". The Mulliner Book, a major source for the history of English keyboard music, was bought by W. H. Cummings at the auction of Rimbault's library for £82, making it the most expensive lot of the sale; Cummings then donated it to the British Museum, where it remains. "Mulliner Book", GB-Lbl, Add. Ms. 30513.

²⁵ Stafford Smith's extensive library was sold by an anonymous auctioneer in 1844, and then by Puttick and Simpson in two further sales in 1852 and 1853. The Old Hall Manuscript, which he also owned, remained in the family until it was donated to St. Edmund's College, Ware. It was acquired by the British Museum in 1973.

²⁶ Sommer, "Joseph W. Drexel". Both the Sambrooke manuscript and the Gamble *Commonplace Book* are now in the collections of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center (US-NYp), as Drexel Mss. 4302 and 4257, respectively.

²⁷ "Sale of Dr. Rimbault's Library", 428.

²⁸ See *Parthenia In-Violata*. A second, imperfect copy, now lost, was in the collection of Edward Taylor (see above).

of later seventeenth-century music, including all six books of *The Banquet of Music*. One section of the sale was devoted to the work of Purcell; this featured an alleged autograph of the second Cecilian ode, “Hail Bright Cecilia!”, which was bought by Cummings, and a complete set of the *Sonnatas of III Parts*.²⁹ Another reveals an interest in music printing. Rimbault, who planned to write a history of the subject, formed a collection of material which appears as a single lot in the catalogue of his sale.³⁰

Beyond enhancing his own collection, Rimbault’s considerable energies were directed towards preparing modern editions of medieval and Renaissance texts. This enthusiasm, fuelled in part by the growing interest in “romantic antiquities”, seem to have coalesced in the late 1830s, when he became involved with the ambitious editorial programmes of a number of learned societies, including the Percy Society that had grown out of the Roxburghe Club. Rimbault, who was one of the Percy Society’s twelve founding members, contributed to its list of publications a number of editions which largely drew on manuscript sources and printed ephemera in the British Museum, the Bodleian, Ashmolean and Douce collections in Oxford and the Pepys Library in Cambridge.

In 1840 the Musical Antiquarian Society was founded, “for the publication of scarce and valuable works by the early English composers”. In the course of its short existence (it lasted just seven years) the Society published nineteen works in folio (unsuited, it was said at the time, for practical music-making), beginning with Byrd’s five-part mass edited by Rimbault, who had been appointed its Honorary Secretary. Rimbault went on to edit another seven volumes for the Society, while Edward Taylor, also a member, contributed an edition of Purcell’s *King Arthur*. Another of his interests, significantly in view of the improbable edition of *Pammelia* described in the report of the Shipton Hoard, was in the musical antiquarianism of Thomas Ravenscroft, whose work appears prominently in yet another of Rimbault’s many editions: *The Rounds, Catches, and Canons of England*.³¹ In the introduction to this collection he wrote that “in the reign of James the First flourished a musician to whom we are indebted for the preservation of our most ancient and interesting rounds, catches and canons: I allude to Thomas Ravenscroft”.³²

This maelstrom of editorial activity represents an extraordinary expenditure of time and energy, not least in travelling to consult rare items outside London. It was also in the early 1840s that Rimbault is known to have visited libraries in Oxford and Cambridge in search of “antiquities”, perhaps inspired by the *Bibliographical, Antiquarian and Picturesque Tour in the Northern Counties of England and Scotland* (1838) by the English bibliographer Thomas Frognall Dibdin, of which he owned a copy. The collections of music in Christ Church Oxford proved to be a particularly fruitful source; in a letter of October 1842, written from 9 Denmark Street, Soho Square, Rimbault announced his discovery

²⁹ Rimbault’s manuscript of the ode, which he used in preparing his edition of the work for publication by the Musical Antiquarian Society, is not the autograph but was copied from it and is now GB-Lbl, Add. Ms. 31453.

³⁰ *Catalogue of the Valuable Library*, lot 1430, “Collections towards a history of music printing, consisting of title-pages, leaves of music, prospectuses and other scraps”. The lot was bought by Sabin for £1.15.0.

³¹ Rimbault, *Rounds, Catches, and Canons*.

³² *Ibid.*, xvii–xxi.

of what he claimed to be the original copy of the *Magdalen College Grace* (composed by Benjamin Rogers) in a manuscript of music by Orlando Gibbons.³³ The Oxford college libraries remained of perennial interest. Writing to Henry Edward Dibdin, a musician and the son of the composer Charles Dibdin the younger, Rimbault expressed his “intention to reprint old John Day’s Psalter with an Historical Account of the rise and progress of Psalmody. [...] The only copy of the original edition with which I am acquainted in in the Library of Brasenose College, Oxford”³⁴

Rimbault owned copies of the *Typographical Antiquities* by Joseph Ames, Blades’s bibliography of the books printed by William Caxton and an interleaved copy of *The Origin of Printing* by Bowyer and Nichols.³⁵ But above all, Rimbault was an enthusiast for the work of Dibdin, the *protégé* of the second Earl Spencer, who in addition to involving him in the foundation of the Roxburghe Club also appointed him as the official curator of the magnificent library at Althorp House, then one of the largest private collections in Europe. Rimbault bought copies of many of Dibdin’s engagingly discursive works cast in the form of dialogues such as *Bibliomania* and the *Bibliographical Decameron*, and Dibdin’s example seems to have acted as an inspiration.

It cannot be claimed that the practitioners of the new bibliomania always acted with probity. One of Rimbault’s fellow-members of the Percy Society, James Orchard Halliwell (later Halliwell-Phillips), an antiquarian and literary scholar, was accused of (though never prosecuted for) stealing scientific manuscripts from Trinity College, Cambridge, while an undergraduate – and then selling them to the British Museum.³⁶ Rimbault himself was not entirely immune from suspicion, as some of his contemporaries realized. John Bishop of Cheltenham, a professional organist and early subscriber to the Musical Antiquarian Society, suspected Rimbault of having improperly removed a copy of Edward Lowe’s *Short Direction for the Performance of Cathedrall Service*, of which Rimbault had recently published an edition, from the library of Christ Church in Oxford. Writing to his fellow-organist Joseph Warren, he advised: “We must not make a direct charge, or we subject ourselves to an action for defamation. But we may make enquiry and say how lucky R. was to get a copy which bears Lowe’s autograph! Such books are a very convenient size for the pocket!! You understand me”³⁷

Despite Bishop’s intuition, it was not until 1939 that it was fully revealed that Rimbault stole eighteen volumes of printed music from Christ Church, including part-books of madrigals by Weelkes and Morley, collections of lute airs by Dowland and

³³ Edward Francis Rimbault to W. H. Black, 12 October 1542, P281/MS 1/74, Magdalen College Library Oxford.

³⁴ Edward Francis Rimbault to Henry Edward Dibdin, 9 June 1849, formerly with the dealer John Wilson of Cheltenham.

³⁵ Ames, *Typographical Antiquities*; Blades, *Catalogue of Books*; Bowyer and Nichols, *Origin of Printing*.

³⁶ Notwithstanding this stain on his character, Rimbault apparently admired Halliwell’s scholarship and owned an extensive collection of his publications; see *Catalogue of the Valuable Library*, lots 665–682, pp.37–38. Interestingly, Halliwell’s edition of *A New Interlude and a Mery of the Nature of the iij Elements* (see above) was printed by the Percy Society in 1848.

³⁷ Young, “Notorious Dr Rimbault”, 131.

Rosseter, and books of instrumental music by Robinson and Barley. Nine of these he was able to sell anonymously to the British Museum on separate occasions in 1844 and 1845, even though one still bore the ownership stamp of the College.³⁸ A further three books that he removed from the Christ Church collections were still in Rimbault's library when it was sold at auction. Nor were Cambridge libraries safe. Another item in the sale of Rimbault's library is described in the catalogue as "The Organ part of Anthems by Tallis, Byrd, Luge, Hooper, Tomkins, Bull, Weelkes, Amner, O. Gibbons, Morley and other composers of the 16th and early part of the 17th centuries, written on 6 line staves, wants a few leaves at the beginning oblong 4to".³⁹ As Thurston Dart demonstrated many years ago, this description perfectly matches that of an oblong quarto book now in New York, which in addition to the composers named also contains fifteen anthems by George Loosemore, organist of King's College, Cambridge, who copied it for use in the College chapel during the middle decades of the seventeenth century. It was still there in 1729, when the inscription "Edward Tuck, Chorister of King's Colledge" and the date were added. After that, nothing further is known until its appearance in the Rimbault sale; as Dart put it: "perhaps it was also there in Rimbault's time, for he was a great snapper-up of unconsidered music in the Victorian universities, as Christ Church discovered to its dismay".⁴⁰

There is evidence that Rimbault was not only cavalier about the ownership of books that attracted him in the institutional libraries of the ancient universities but was also capable of forgery. This comes to the fore in considering some of the material that he made available for the historical enquiries of William H. Cummings, a serious scholar who in addition to putting together an extensive library of music that included autographs by Blow and Purcell and a good deal of early printed material both English and Continental, engaged in archival research. In preparing his study of the life and works of Purcell, in which he sought to correct the "mis-statements" of Burney and Hawkins, Cummings drew upon his friendship with Rimbault, most notoriously in relation to "The Address of the Children of the Chapel Royal to the King, and their Master, Captain Cooke, on his Majesties Birthday, A.D. 1670, composed by Master Purcell, one of the Children of the said Chapel", a document "in the possession of the late Dr. Rimbault" in a copy "in the handwriting of Pelham Humphreys".⁴¹ Although Cummings had not seen the "Address", he was evidently prepared to accept its authenticity despite the fact that Purcell would have been eleven years old at the time of its composition.

This was not the only episode in Cummings's reconstruction of Purcell's biography that depended upon documentary evidence provided by Rimbault, although, again, the evidence has never come to light. In discussing Henry Purcell's early life and musical education Cummings notes the entry in Samuel Pepy's diary for 21 February 1660,

³⁸ Walter George Hiscock, "Christ Church Missing Books", *Times Literary Supplement*, 11 February 1939. See also Hiscock, *Christ Church Miscellany*, 127–133. The copy of Thomas Campion's *Songs of Mourning* (GB-Lbl, k.2.g.8) bears the Christ Church mark on its title-page.

³⁹ *Catalogue of the Valuable Library*, lot 1382.

⁴⁰ Dart, "Henry Loosemore's Organ-Book", 149.

⁴¹ Cummings, *Purcell*, 20.

which reports the friendship between Thomas Purcell, Henry's father, and the composer Matthew Locke, which in Cummings's view reveals "an intimacy and friendship which was afterwards extended to his son".⁴²

I met with Mr. Lock and Pursell, Maisters of Musique: and with them to the Coffee-house into a room next the Water by ourselves; where we spent an hour or two. [...] Here we had variety of brave Italian and Spanish songs and a Canon for 8 Voc., which Mr Lock had newly made on these words: Domine salvum fac Regem, an admirable thing.⁴³

That Purcell knew Locke is beyond doubt. Following Locke's death, Purcell wrote a commemorative lament, "What Hope for Us Remains Now He Is Gone", headed "On the death of his Worthy Friend, Mr Matthew Locke, musick composer in ordinary to His Majesty, and Organist of Her Majesties Chappel, who Dyed in August 1677". That the relationship was close was also suggested to Cummings by the score of Locke's music for *Macbeth*, erroneously claimed to have been copied by Purcell – one of a number of alleged autographs then in Cummings's library.⁴⁴ Elaborating on the theme, Cummings noted that Locke lived in the Savoy and that from there he penned the following letter to Purcell:

DEAR HARRY, - Some of the gentleman of His Majesties musick will honor my poor lodgings with their company this evening, and I would have you come and join them: bring with thee, Harry, thy last anthem, and also the canon we tried over together at our last meeting. Thine in all kindness, M. LOCKE. Savoy, March 16.

In a footnote Cummings then notes that "I am indebted to the late Dr Rimbault for a copy of this letter".⁴⁵ While the letter has since disappeared from view, on the grounds of literary style alone it must be discounted as spurious.

The anonymous *Catalogue of the Extensive Library of Doctor Rainbeau* is often dismissed as an exercise in schoolboy humour. In his introduction to the facsimile edition of the catalogue Alec Hyatt King wrote that "the satire is rather laboured and it is odd that the catalogue contains so many items of little direct relevance to his library".⁴⁶ This much is true, but at the same time there are a number of clues that suggest that the author was quite familiar with Rimbault's character and unorthodox procedures in his search for bibliographical curiosities. One lot, for example, is described as "Forgeries by a well-known Antiquary-MS", surely a reference of an almost libellous nature, and another as "Forgeries of Musical Works, Anecdotes, Letters, &c a large bundle".⁴⁷

As well as being in keeping with what can be deduced about Rimbault's character and habits, the hoax of the Shipton Hoard may have been inspired by an incident which occurred in France in the summer of 1840, when booksellers, scholars, librarians and

⁴² *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴³ Latham and Matthews, *Diary of Samuel Pepys*, 63.

⁴⁴ Cummings, *Purcell*, 21. See the opening section of the *Catalogue of the Famous Musical Library of Books*.

⁴⁵ Cummings, *Purcell*, 27.

⁴⁶ *Catalogue of the Extensive Library of Doctor Rainbeau*.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

bibliophiles received a printed catalogue announcing the auction of books belonging to Jean Nepomuchene Auguste Richauld, Comte de Fortas. The sale, which was to take place on 10 August (just sixteen days before the discovery of the Shipton Hoard was published in *The Musical World*), consisted of fifty-two books of which only one copy was known to exist. Many turned up on the appointed day only to find that the matter was a hoax; the address of the auctioneer in Binche could not be identified on any map, and the Comte de Fortas proved to be fictitious. The perpetrator of the deception, Renier Hubert Ghislain Chalon, a retired military officer with antiquarian interests, a distinguished numismatist and a member of the recently formed Société des bibliophiles flamands, had enlisted the help of a printer, Emanuel Hoylois, in preparing the catalogue, which describes each volume in great detail and in a style which convinced those who read it of its authenticity, and bids were placed on each lot in advance of the sale taking place. Ironically, copies of the catalogue became highly prized by collectors, in a final vindication of Chalon's contempt for the intellectual pretensions of the bibliophile community which the whole episode had so satisfyingly demonstrated.⁴⁸

The over-creative writer of the letter to *The Musical World* describing the treasures of the Shipton Hoard had the last word. In 1953 Alec Hyatt King, Keeper of Music in the British Museum, and Thurston Dart, then a Lecturer in the Music Faculty at Cambridge University, made the pilgrimage to Shipton-under-Wychwood in search of the "four large iron chests filled with music-books and other documents". At this date the main house was still intact, but the library of Sir John Chandos Reade, the resident owner of Shipton Court at the time of the announcement of the discovery of the Shipton Hoard had been sold in 1895; it then contained a handful of unremarkable seventeenth-century books and, as might be expected, no music.⁴⁹ Hyatt King and Dart returned to London empty-handed.

The history of the Shipton Hoard demonstrates how difficult it is to prove that something in the past did not exist. If the author of the letter to *The Musical World* had not invented the impossible Ravenscroft edition of 1600, it would have been much harder to uncover this particular piece of scholarly fraud. In this sense, historical fakes reported but then removed from view are more difficult to deal with than those of our own times such as forged banknotes or coins, Han van Meegeren's faked paintings by Vermeer, or the Vinland map. Such examples invite consideration of two often related questions: the process of producing a forgery, and the history of its reception and uses, where the second of these is often more interesting than the first. This is true, for example, in the celebrated case of the Belgian musicologist François-Joseph Fétis, who, among other infelicities, invented the figure of Valentin Strobach, allegedly the composer of a lute concerto

⁴⁸ Walter Klinefelter, *The Fortsas Bibliofoax: With a Reprint of the Fortsas Catalogue and Bibliographical Notes and Comment by Weber De Vore* (Evanston, IL: Ward Schori, 1986).

⁴⁹ See *Catalogue of a Collection of Books Comprising the Library of Henry Doetsch, Esq., [...]: [together with] A Portion of the Library of the Late Sir John Chandos Reade, Sixth Baronet of Shipton Court, Oxon [...] Which Will Be Sold by Auction by Messrs Christie, Manson & Woods [...] on Wednesday, July 31, 1895, at One O'Clock Precisely* (London: Clowes and Sons, 1895). The library had remained untouched since Reade left his estate to his butler, Joseph Wakefield, who in turn left it to his son in 1893.

premiered by Fernando Sor.⁵⁰ This contributed to the wholesale debunking of Fétis as a serious scholar at the hands of Pierre Aubry, who was himself accused of plagiarism by a fellow medievalist and challenged to a duel as a result.⁵¹ As Anthony Grafton has shown, such episodes raise issues relating to the history of scholarship, changing standards of authenticity and shifting mentalities.⁵² The intriguing mystery of the Shipton Hoard contains elements of all these stories.

⁵⁰ Holman, “Early Music in Victorian England”, 104–106.

⁵¹ Haines, “Footnote Quarrels of the Modal Theory”.

⁵² Grafton, *Forgers and Critics*.

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RAZISKOVANJE SHIPTONSKEGA ZAKLADA

Povzetek

V glasbeni reviji *The Musical World* je 27. avgusta 1840 izšlo pismo z naslednjo vsebino:

V starem družinskem dvorcu v Shiptonu blizu Woodstocka je sedanji lastnik nedavno našel [...] štiri velike železne skrinje, polne glasbenih knjig [...] traktatov, maš, motetov, madrigalov itd. vseh angleških skladateljev in piscev od leta 1480 do leta 1649, pa tudi tujih publikacij podobne vrste in iz istega obdobja, tako tiskanih kot rokopisnih. [...] Z dovoljenjem sem si ogledal zbirko in naredil skoraj popolni seznam celotne vsebine zbirke; to mi je vzelo skoraj dva dni.

To zanimivo in hkrati nenavadno pismo je preprosto podpisal »ČLAN PURCELLOVEGA KLUBA«, kar ne pove prav veliko. »Popolni seznam celotne vsebine« navedene zbirke se očitno ni ohranil, a knjige, omenjene v pismu, naj bi bile izredno redke. Med njimi je naveden tudi izvod *A New Interlude and a Mery of the iiii Elements*, ki ga danes poznamo le iz zelo slabo ohranjenega primerka, ter delo *XX Songes*, ki se je ohranilo v samo enem basovskem glasovnem zvezku.

Te bogate in podrobne informacije kažejo na poznavalca, značilnega za čas naraščajočega zanimanja za stare, redke in dragocene knjige v prvih desetletjih 19. stoletja v Veliki Britaniji. Na splošno glasba takrat še ni pritegnila pozornosti resnih bibliofilov tako kot na primer inkunabule ali iluminirani rokopisi. Učeni zbiratelji, učitelji in izvajalci so svoje zbirke večinoma ustvarjali bodisi za preučevanje preteklosti bodisi za praktično rabo. Kdo je torej ustvaril tako imenovani Shiptonski zaklad in zakaj je bil le-ta shranjen v kleti podeželske hiše v Oxfordski grofiji? Njena vsebina vsekakor kaže na lastnikovo izrazito zanimanje za zgodovino glasbe, natančneje za angleško cerkveno glasbo. A kljub hrabrim poskusom številnih radovednih raziskovalcev – leta 1935 sta Shipton obiskala tudi Thurston Dart in Alec Hyatt King iz Britanskega muzeja – »štirih velikih železnih skrinj« niso nikoli našli.

Nobenega dvoma ni, da je Shiptonski zaklad prevara. Toda kdo jo je zagrešil? Eden od osumljencev je Edward Taylor, od leta 1837 profesor v Greshamu, od leta 1842 predsednik Purcellovega kluba in eden največjih viktorijanskih zbirateljev. Njegova knjižnica, katere skoraj tisoč kosov so leta 1863 prodali na dražbi, je vsebovala tudi redke zgodnje izdaje motetov skupaj z glasovnimi zvezki angleških, francoskih in italijanskih knjig madrigalov. Verjetnejši kandidat je dr. Edward Francis Rimbault, ki je že dolgo znan po sumljivih načinih pridobivanja dokumentov in določeni meri zgodovinske fantazije. Podobno kot Taylor je tudi Rimbault obiskoval dražbe starin in iskal zaklade za svojo knjižnico. Zanimala ga je tudi zgodovina tiska in je aktivno sodeloval pri iskanju starih tiskanih besedil ter pri izdajah angleških literarnih in dramskih del. Ta razprava skuša razvozlati in pojasniti skrivnostni primer Shiptonskega zaklada.