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Paper:

White, B (2007) *Music for a brave livlylike boy: the Duke of Gloucester, Purcell and The 'Noise of Foreign Wars'*. *The Musical Times*, 148 (1901). 75 - 83. ISSN 0027-4666

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25434498>

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Music for a 'brave livlylike boy': the Duke of Gloucester, Purcell and 'The noise of foreign wars'

BOTH THE OCCASION AND THE COMPOSER of the ode 'The noise of foreign wars', preserved as a fragment in a manuscript at Tatton Park, Cheshire, have been in some doubt since it was first brought to scholarly attention by Nigel Fortune in 1964.¹ The work has been ascribed to Henry Purcell on circumstantial and musical grounds, and its most likely subject was thought to be James II for an occasion in the autumn of 1688. A manuscript copy of the complete poem has now come to light in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, indicating both the occasion of the ode and the place of its performance, and while it does not provide hard evidence that Purcell composed the musical fragment, it does serve to strengthen the circumstantial case for ascribing its composition to him.

The primary source for the musical fragment of 'The noise of foreign wars' is found in the third of four score-books of music by Purcell held at Tatton Park.² The books are mostly in the hand of Philip Hayes (1738–97), Professor of Music at Oxford, and the overwhelming majority of the music is clearly attributed to Purcell. There are two works by other composers – an anthem each by Blow and Humfrey, clearly labelled – and two unidentified pieces. One is a canon, 'Venite exultemus', in vol.4 and the other is 'The noise of foreign wars'. Fortune concluded that Hayes's inclusion of the fragment in the collection suggested that he believed the work to be by Purcell. Similarly, on the basis of the sources from which Hayes himself copied, manuscripts either in Purcell's hand or in the hand of copyists close to him, the balance of probability pointed to Purcell as the composer. Finally, based on the evidence of musical style, Fortune concluded that the fragment was indeed probably by Purcell rather than the other most likely candidate active as a composer of court odes at the time, John Blow. Working from allusions to the political situation found in the poem, Fortune suggested that the work was composed either for James II in the autumn of 1688, or for William III in 1692. In 2005 Bruce Wood produced the first printed edition of the work, updating the evidence of the attribution through a secondary source explicitly (if not conclusively) identifying Purcell as the composer, and through additional evidence of musical style.³ Furthermore, he suggested

1. 'A new Purcell source', in *The Music Review* xxv (1964), pp.109–13.

2. I am grateful to Mr Mark Purcell, Curator of Libraries for the National Trust, and Ms Caroline Schofield, Mansion Manager at Tatton Park, for permission to consult the Tatton Park volumes. Fortune's article contains a detailed assessment of the contents and sources of Hayes's collection.

3. GB-Lbl Add. MS 33237. *Royal welcome songs part II, The Works of Henry Purcell* (London, 2005), pp.xvii–xx.

that the ode was most likely to have been planned for a welcome or birthday ceremony for James II in the autumn of 1688, but that it may have been left incomplete owing to the precarious political situation (the impending invasion of England by William of Orange), which caused the welcome ceremony to be held at short notice and the official birthday celebration to be cancelled. The manuscript copy of the complete poem, preserved in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, reveals that the ode was in fact written to celebrate the birth of William Henry, Duke of Gloucester in late July 1689.⁴ The document also indicates that the ode was sung at Hampton Court, implies that the whole of the text was set, and by suggesting the temporal proximity of the work to Purcell's ode for Lewis Maidwell's school, 'Celestial music', further strengthens its circumstantial attribution to Purcell and provides a possible link with one of Hayes's sources of the Maidwell ode preserved in the Tatton Park books.

The text of the ode is found in the James Marshall and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection, Osborn MS fb 108, pages 97–98; it is printed here for the first time.⁵

For her Royall Highness the Princess
Anne of Denmark on the Birth of
the Duke of Glóster sung att
Hampton Court

The noise of Foreign Wars
The whisprings of Home-jealousies & Fears
Domestique Wranglings, Civil jars,
Has reacht the Harmonious Spheres.
And now Apollo, and the Sacred Nine
In long alliance with this Court, com[m]and
their Envoys to complain
And with soft Musick to incline
The Hero Royall, & his Heroine
(With all the Graces of the Tongue, & Hand)
The troubles of Crowns to allay;
Nor have we toucht the Lyre in Vain!
There is a Truce, a glad Cessation for a day.

(2)

This day is our own: and our Wishes are crown'd;
We can not allow any Martiall Sound
Not the Clangor of Trumpets nor Ratling of Drumes.
Not a word of Battalions, or Fleets;
Nor of Mortars, and Bombs;
No Complaining be heard in our Streets.
No, no; a Young Prince to the Kingdom is given:
With the Voice, and the Lute
The Violin and Flute
We thank the Royall Mother, and Heaven.

4. In some sources his name is given as William Henry, though in the announcement of his birth in the *London Gazette* it is given as William. The former will be used in this article to avoid confusion with King William III.

5. Original spelling, punctuation and capitalisation have been retained. Abbreviations have been expanded through the use of square brackets. The manuscript is reproduced in the facsimile microfilm collection *English clandestine satire, 1660–1704: popular culture, entertainment and information in the early modern period*, consultant ed. Harold Love (Marlborough, 2006).

6. Edward VI (1537–1553) was born at Hampton Court.

7. An index can be found at <http://arts.monash.edu.au/english/resources/ clandestine-satire/mss/yoo8-cal.php> (accessed 23/5/07).

8. Beinecke Staff, comp., *Osborn 17th Century Bound Manuscripts (Folio) [Osborn Shelves fb]*, James Marshall and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University (1998, rev. October 2004), <http://webtext.library.yale.edu/beinflai/osborn.fbshelf.htm> (accessed 23/5/07). This guide provides the dates 1583–1663 for Sir George Strode, indicating the Royalist administrator (see G. G. M-G. Cullum, rev. Sarah E. Trombley: 'Strode [Stroud], Sir George (1583–1663)', in *Oxford dictionary of national biography online [ODNB online]*). This is clearly incorrect.

9. Historical Manuscripts Commission, *The Manuscripts of the Duke of Hamilton*, K. T. (London, 1887), p. 190. Little over a month later William Henry suffered severe convulsions, engendering fear for his life. He recovered, but remained physically frail until his death.

(3)
Young Glôster's the Theme! the Muses decree,
All the Studious Youth of the Land
Shall come and kiss the Smiling Infants hand;
Offering their Gifts of Ingenuitie;
Adorning his Cradle w[i]th Flowers that grow
On the Banks of the Cam,
Of Isis and Thame
The Flowers of Rhetorique and Poesie.
Glôster is a pleasing Theme!
Glôster will make their Fancy flow,
Clear, Full, and Strong, as any Brittish Stream.

(4)
Hail! Palace Royall! We are bound to raise
Thy Turrets to the highest point of Praise
This Second Birth perpetuates thy name
May the Good Genius of the Place
Make William to succeed to Edward's Fame;⁶
As Learned, Pious, Wise in all his Ways:
Like Him in all things, but the shortness of his Days.
Then will we strive our Talents to Improve,
And Tribute pay of Gratitude, & Love;
And make Thee equall to the Cradle of Jove.

The manuscript is a folio collection of verse satire, lampoons, ballads and other poems mostly relating to the events of 1688–89, written separately (and in several different hands) and subsequently compiled in a single volume.⁷ They appear to have been copied in London and sent to a gentleman resident with Sir George Strode (before 1664–1702) of Leweston, Dorset. Three of the items bear postmarks, which are heavily crossed through and mostly illegible.⁸

William Henry (1689–1700) was born to Princess Anne and George, Prince of Denmark at Hampton Court on the morning of 24 July 1689. His birth was announced in the *London Gazette* of the following day:

This morning, about Four a clock, Her Royal highness the Princess *Anne of Denmark* was safely delivered of a son: The Queen was present the whole time of her Labour, which lasted about 3 hours, and the King, with most of the Persons of Quality about the Court, came into her Royal Highness's bedchamber before she was delivered. Her Royal Highness and the young Prince are very well; to the great satisfaction of Their Majesties, and the Joy of the whole Court; as it will doubtless be of the whole Kingdom.

He was the couples' third child, the first male and, since both of his sisters had died in 1687, their sole heir. Anne had already suffered four unsuccessful pregnancies before William's birth; so the arrival of an apparently healthy child – he was described by Lord Melville as a 'brave livlylike boy' in a letter to the Duke of Hamilton sent on 26 July – must have come as a great relief.⁹ He was baptised on 27 July:

On *Saturday* in the Evening the young Prince, Son of their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of *Denmark* (whom his Majesty has been pleased to declare the Duke of Gloucester,) was Christened by the Lord Bishop of *London*, and Named *William*, the King, and the Earl of *Dorset* Lord Chamberlain of His Majesties Houshold, being Godfathers, and the Lady Marchioness of *Halifax* Godmother.¹⁰

William Henry's birth was of significant political consequence. William and Mary, who had been crowned as joint sovereigns in April 1689, were childless. Mary had suffered two miscarriages in 1678 and 79, and had not apparently conceived since, so there was, effectively, no prospect that the reigning monarchs would produce an heir.¹¹ Princess Anne and her children were next in line to the throne, the princess having given up her hereditary right to precede William as part of the settlement of the crown on the joint monarchs. Just over a week before William Henry's birth, John Evelyn, who had visited Hampton Court on business, speculated doubtfully on Anne's pregnancy and the subsequent demise of the Stuart line:

and Princess Anne of Denmark, who is so monstrously swollen, that it's doubted whether her being thought with child may prove a tympany only, so that the unhappy family of Stuarts seems to be extinguishing; and then what government is likely to be next set up is unknown, whether regal and by election, or otherwise, the Republicans and Dissenters from the Church of England evidently looking that way.¹²

Princess Anne's successful delivery provided an antidote to Evelyn's premonitions of political unrest. William Henry represented the continuation of Stuarts and provided a Protestant alternative to James Francis Edward, the son of the exiled James II, whose birth had precipitated the revolution of the previous year. He could furthermore be presented 'as an endorsement by providence of the revolution'.¹³ The birth of a son also served to greatly increase Princess Anne's political influence at a time in which she was embroiled in an increasingly bitter dispute with William and Mary over her lodgings and the support of her household.¹⁴ It is, therefore, not surprising that such an important event would be celebrated by the composition and performance of an ode.

If Purcell was the composer of 'The noise of foreign wars' it may be that it was amongst his court duties to compose works for Princess Anne, since he is known certainly to have written two other works associated with her. 'From hardy climes' celebrated Anne's marriage to the Prince of Denmark in 1683, and one of Purcell's last works, 'Who can from joy refrain?', was written for the Duke of Gloucester's fifth birthday. During the period in which Purcell and Blow were active composers of court odes, there was a clear demarcation of duties between the two: Blow provided the New Year's odes while Purcell composed welcome songs for Charles II and James II, and birthday odes for Queen Mary. The evidence that Purcell composed two odes for Anne and her family, though an admittedly limited sample,

10. *London Gazette*, 1 August 1689.

11. WA Speck: 'Mary II (1662-1694)', in *ODNB online*.

12. 19 July, 1689. W. Bray, ed.: *The diary of John Evelyn* (Letchworth, 2/1952), p.302. Tympanites is a distention of the abdomen caused by accumulation of air or gas.

13. M. Kilburn: 'William, Prince, duke of Gloucester (1689-1700)', in *ODNB online*.

14. See E. Gregg: *Queen Anne* (London, 1980), pp.72-73 and chapter 3.

nevertheless suggests the possibility that works related to her were assigned to him, and further strengthens the circumstantial case that 'The noise of foreign wars' is his work.

IT IS NOT CLEAR when 'The noise of foreign wars' was composed. A musical celebration of Duke of Gloucester's birth is not mentioned in the *London Gazette*. Apart from the two notices given above, the only ceremonial event reported to have taken place at Hampton Court within the first month of the duke's life was the visit of the Spanish Ambassador Extraordinary on 14 August, where he 'had Audience of the Prince of *Denmark*, to congratulate his Royal Highness upon Their Majesties happy Accession to the Crown; Being conducted in the usual manner by Sir *Charles Cottrel* Master of the Ceremonies.'¹⁵ Given the purpose of the ambassador's visit, it seems unlikely that an ode on the birth of the Duke of Gloucester was performed on this occasion. Neither of the other regular reporters on court events, Evelyn and Narcissus Luttrell, offers any evidence of a celebration of the duke's birth. The ode must then have been performed either at some unrecorded event in the weeks following his birth, or at the christening described in the *London Gazette* held on the evening of the 27 July, just three days after the birth. Such an event would seem the most appropriate for an ode, though we might question whether it could have been composed and performed so quickly.

Given Anne's troubled history of pregnancies, it must be doubted as to whether any preparations for the celebration of a royal birth were made before she was delivered. A performance of the 'The noise of foreign wars' on the evening of the 27th would have required the anonymous poet to have penned the ode on the 24th, and Purcell to have set it, and one or more copyists to have prepared performing materials, in three or fewer days. Bruce Wood has noted several large-scale ceremonial works by Blow that appear to have been prepared at short notice.¹⁶ Of these he observes that a manuscript of the symphony anthem 'Hear my voice, O God', which marked the conviction of the Rye House conspirators, is dated 18 July 1683, just six days after the end of the trial, and that it was probably performed on the following Sunday, 22 July.¹⁷ Yet even this timescale is double that to which Purcell would have worked in order to complete an ode for 27 July. It seems more likely that 'The noise of foreign wars' was performed a week or more later, at some unrecorded event of which the poem and the musical fragment are the only remaining witnesses.

The date at which the 'The noise of foreign wars' must have been composed has important implications for another of Purcell's odes, 'Celestial music'. The partial autograph of this work, preserved in GB-Lbl RM 20.h.8, indicates that it was 'A Song that was perform'd at Mr Maidwell's, a school-

15. *London Gazette*, 19 August 1689.

16. See *Royal welcome songs part II*, p.xix, especially n.7.

17. *ibid.*

master, on the 5th of August 1689, the words by one of his scholars.' Lewis Maidwell (1650–1715) ran a school at his house in King Street, London.¹⁸ How he came to commission Purcell for this work is unclear, though it may have been through his good friend, Nahum Tate, with whom Purcell had collaborated on *Dido and Aeneas*. Though the opera may have been composed as early as 1684, it was staged at Josias Priest's girl's school in Chelsea possibly in the summer of 1688 and this example may have provided an impetus for Maidwell to hold a different sort of musical entertainment of his own. Maidwell appears to have taken at least some interest in music before the commissioning of the ode for his school, since he provided a commendatory poem in Latin for Pietro Reggio's book of songs published in 1680.¹⁹ The use of a poem by one of Maidwell's scholars is consistent with his general practice, since he published two books of translations by his students of Latin works (in 1684 and 1693), the first of which is prefaced with a commendatory poem by Tate.²⁰

'Celestial music' was performed only 12 days after the birth of William Henry, a period during which Purcell must have been forced to turn most of his attention to the composition of 'The noise of foreign wars', whether or not it was performed on 27 July or a week or two later. Such a circumstance would explain why he reused the opening symphony of his 1685 coronation anthem 'My heart is inditing' at the beginning of 'Celestial music'. As Bruce Wood observes in reference to the incomplete state of Hayes's copy of 'The noise of foreign wars', 'what we know of Purcell's working habits suggests that he would probably have left the composition of the opening symphony until last'.²¹ Peter Holman suggests that the borrowing of the symphony from another work has given the impression that 'Celestial music' was composed 'in haste' though he asserts it is a work of high quality, 'stronger [...] than "Now does the glorious day appear"'.²² The general quality of 'Celestial music' may lead us to conclude that it was for the most part complete by 24 July, but that the demand of writing 'The noise of foreign wars' forced Purcell to borrow from another work for the symphony, which he had left till last.

Hayes's copy of 'Celestial music', also found in the Tatton Park books, suggests a possible relationship between one of his sources for this ode and his source for 'The noise of foreign wars'. Hayes's annotation to the second of his four Purcell score-books – the one that includes 'Celestial music' – reads 'The greatest part of the Odes &c &c contain'd in this Book were carefully transcrib'd from Hen.^v Purcel's original score, which I presented to my Royal Master, King George the third, in June 1781 at the Queen's House at Windsor'. 'Purcell's original' to which Hayes refers is MS RM 20.h.8, and while it provided the copy text for many of the works he transcribed, it does not contain 'The noise of foreign wars.' Hayes copied all of 'Celestial music'

18. The best biography of Maidwell is found in John Barnard & Paul Hammond: 'Dryden and a poem for Lewis Maidwell', in *Times Literary Supplement* (25 May 1984), p. 586.

19. *Songs set by Signior Pietro Reggio* (London, 1680).

20. *A breviary of Roman history [...] writ in Latin by Eutropius; translated into English by several young gentlemen privately educated in Hatton-Garden* (London, 1684); *The lives of the illustrious Romans writ in Latin by Sextus Aurelius Victor; and translated by several young gentlemen educated by Mr. Maidwell* (London, 1693).

21. *Royal welcome songs part II*, p. xix.

22. Peter Holman: *Henry Purcell* (Oxford & New York, 1995), p. 172.

from MS RM 20.h.8 apart from seven bars near the end of the bass solo, 'When Orpheus sang', which are missing in this source. These bars, which are found on a half-sheet tipped into the Tatton manuscript, were transcribed from another source that is now lost, a circumstance that has led Bruce Wood to suggest that at the point at which Hayes owned RM 20.h.8, 'some of Purcell's rough drafts were tucked inside it or otherwise associated with it'.²³ The fact that 'Celestial music' and 'The noise of foreign wars' were being composed more or less contemporaneously increases the likelihood that they were found together in a common source, one that came into Hayes's possession after he copied the second of his four books.

The discovery of the text of the ode appears to resolve the question of whether or not the whole of the musical setting was ever completed. The musical fragment preserved by Hayes begins partway through the opening symphony and ends in the subdominant with the line 'No complaining be heard in our streets', encompassing the first one-and-a-half stanzas of the poem. The heading of the poem in MS fb 108, including the information 'sung att Hampton Court', implies that the whole of the four-stanza text (apart from one exception discussed below) was set and performed. This conclusion confirms Wood's analysis of the fragment in which he suggests that, if the work is indeed by Purcell, the ode was probably completed by him, since there is an opening symphony (though only part of it survives), which according to his normal practice is likely to have been written only after the rest of the ode had been set.²⁴

The incomplete state of the source from which Hayes copied, and several of its idiosyncrasies of presentation, which Hayes apparently duplicated, may lead us to speculate that it was what Rebecca Herissone has described as a 'fowle originall'.²⁵ These manuscripts are 'the composer's first, original copies' written as loose bifolia, which often include alterations and are untidy and rough in appearance.²⁶ They are not, however, drafts, but are complete in themselves, or at least complete for the purpose for which they were meant to serve, such as the copying of vocal or instrumental parts. Three features of Hayes's transcription of 'The noise of foreign wars' suggest that it was copied from Purcell's 'fowle originall'. First, the manuscript contains several errors that may plausibly be the result of a source that was difficult to read, possibly owing to alterations. Wood's textual commentary suggests four instances in which the physical state of the source has been the likely cause of questionable readings. A good example is found in the viola part in the final chord of the opening symphony (bar 18) where both a D with an upstem and a B with a downstem are copied, the latter, as Wood suggests, 'perhaps represent[ing] Purcell's first thoughts, left unerased in the copy source'.²⁷ Secondly, in three passages for chorus and strings (bars 125–35, 175–89 and 197–223) the staves for the second violin and viola lines have been

23. *Royal welcome songs part II*, p.xix.

24. *ibid.*

25. Rebecca Herissone: '“Fowle originalls” and “Fayre writeing”': reconsidering Purcell's compositional process', in *The Journal of Musicology* 23 (2006), pp.569–619, esp. pp.580–86 and pp.604–16.

26. *ibid.*, p.586.

27. *Royal welcome songs part II*, p.222.

left blank (completed in the latter instance in a different mix of ink with parts Wood suggests are spurious). A largely analogous situation is found in the copy of 'Sound the trumpet' (1687) preserved in GB-Lbl Add. MS 33287 where several of the choruses lack independent string parts,²⁸ though these parts do exist in the copy found in RM 20.h.8. Herissone has used this information to suggest that the source from which the copyist of Add. 33287 worked was a 'fowle originall', and that it may have been used for copying vocal performance parts.²⁹ She suggests that the missing string parts may have been composed directly into RM 20.h.8, and that this source, described as a 'file copy' may have been used for the copying of string parts. The first and second features discussed above point strongly to the conclusion that Hayes's source was a 'fowle originall', and therefore probably copied as loose sheets, a circumstance which might easily account for the third feature of the source, its incomplete state. The pages preserving the beginning of the ode and its conclusion – which very likely would have included the composer's name – became separated from the fragment which eventually came into Hayes's possession.

A consideration of MS fb 108 and its text illuminates some aspects of its relationship to the musical setting. It is clear that the manuscript does not represent a transcription of the poem from performance or from the musical manuscript, but that it was made with knowledge of the musical setting. The tenth line of the opening stanza was not set by the composer, a circumstance apparently signalled by its enclosure in round brackets, which do not otherwise serve any grammatical or syntactical function. The texts preserved in MS fb 108 and in Hayes's copy of the fragment are otherwise almost identical, apart from minor differences in spelling and punctuation.³⁰ Only two minor variants occur: line 3 of stanza one is given as 'Wranglings' in MS fb 108 and as 'Wrangling' in Tatton Park, and line 3 of stanza two is given as 'nor' in MS fb 108 and as both 'no' and 'nor' in Tatton Park.³¹ One idiosyncrasy of the document from which MS fb 108 was copied is also apparent. In this source, the last word of 1.6 must have been 'Court', with the word 'Command' beginning 1.7, since in MS fb 108 1.7 is indented the space of one word, beginning with 'their', while 'command' is written at the end of 1.6. It seems that the copyist of MS fb 108 felt that establishing a rhyme with 'hand' in the bracketed tenth line of the stanza (the other possible ending of 1.6, 'Court', has no rhyme in the stanza) was more important than the line length of 1.7.

The fact that the poem's heading indicates Hampton Palace for the performance of the ode is of some interest. Very few reports from this period specify where the performances of court odes were held. In this instance, the venue was determined by Anne's residence at Hampton Court for her pregnancy. As early as March of 1689 William and Mary had taken up residence at Hampton Court, which they had chosen to remodel as their principal seat.

28. *ibid.*, p.xxiii.

29. Herissone: '“Fowle originalls”', p.616.

30. The text as found in the Tatton manuscript is reproduced in Fortune: 'A new Purcell source', pp.110–11.

31. 'No' is used in the solo (b.152), and 'nor' in the ensuing chorus (b.187).

Apart from day-trips and other business, the joint monarchs remained continually at Hampton Court until mid-October 1689.³² Princess Anne joined them there in July for the final stages of her pregnancy having been denied her request of Richmond Palace for her lodgings. Both Princess Anne and William and Mary stayed in parts of the old Tudor buildings at Hampton Court, where by July, work had already started on new state apartments designed by Christopher Wren and Nicholas Hawksmoor.³³ The performance of the ode, therefore, must have been held in the old Tudor Palace, presumably undertaken by members of the court music there in attendance upon William and Mary. Although the *Records of English Court music* does not include any entries pertaining to court musicians at Hampton Court in the summer of 1689, other entries from James II's reign include riding charges for musicians accompanying his progresses to Windsor and Hampton Court.³⁴

The discovery of the complete text of 'The noise of foreign wars' answers several important questions regarding the nature of its fragmentary setting in the manuscript at Tatton Park. The poem's heading establishes its occasion, subject and venue, and strongly suggests that the entire text was set to music. It does not, however, confirm Purcell as the work's composer. Nevertheless, the details surrounding the ode's performance and its subject fit conveniently with established facts of Purcell's career and his activities in the summer of 1689. With regard to the former, he was responsible for settings of two other odes for Princess Anne and her family, while with regard to the latter, the fact that he found it necessary or expedient to recycle the opening symphony from 'My heart is inditing' as the opening symphony in 'Celestial music', performed on 5 August 1689, provides an excellent circumstantial link with the likelihood that 'The noise of foreign wars' was being composed at short notice at the same time. The discovery of the complete poem, therefore, offers no direct evidence which contradicts previous ascriptions of the setting to Purcell, and provides a range of new circumstantial evidence to support it.

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32. Simon Thurley: *Hampton Court: a social and architectural history* (New Haven & London, 2003), pp.151–52

33. *ibid.*, p.182.

34. Andrew Ashbee: *The records of English Court music* (Snodland, 1987), II, pp.4 and 6.