

Panel Discussion Transcript

The following discussion took place as the third session of the Symposium. On the panel were Nicholas Temperley, Bryan White, and Robert Shay; Rod Sharpe mediated.

Rod Sharpe: What we're going to be talking about today is the possible misattribution and possible justification of reassigning the composer of the manuscript through stylistic considerations: Does this sound more like Turner, or more like Aldrich?

I'm going to start out by putting you in the picture as to how we came to acquire this manuscript - what we know, don't know, and surmise about it.

Robert Shay: Thank you, Rod. Looking at any music manuscript for the first time you're trying to form a general impression as to how it came into being, and get a general sense of its make up (its "codicology" a fancier term referring to study of manuscripts). The first thing we should probably say is that the manuscript began as a bound book of music paper. This is not unusual. If you were an amateur or professional musician in Restoration England you were likely to go and buy music paper rather than rule it up yourself. John Playford sold lots of music paper, both loose and in bound books. So you could go in and buy a bound book of music paper and use it for some purpose, and that's very much what appears to be the case here. There is a bookplate on the inside cover and it looks like at some point it was pasted over with another sheet of plain paper which was cut out to reveal the label. Another thing you do is to get a sense of whether this is the whole thing or not by examining the watermarks. This is an octavo volume –

us all down a blind alley we can only speculate. Nicholas, when you first saw the ms. And played it through you were inclined to think . . .

Nicholas Temperley: I didn't think it was as bold or original as some of Turner's music, but I now think perhaps it was an early work. When I was considering style I didn't feel I had enough to go on,

it was his own he might have thought, “Well, I think I could have done better.” And as we know

couldn't have written a work that does have canons in Gloria Patri, but it isn't consistent, certainly, with the other known works of his. And the last thing I would say is that there is a lack of variety in the scoring. In both the other works there are sections where we move down to 3 voices, or possibly even 2, even though one of them does have up to 6 voices available, so there's much more by way of verse sections as opposed to full sections in 4 parts all the way through. The only distinction we have in today's work in the Dec-Can distribution. So all of these things would lead me to believe either it's not by Turner or it could be an early work. One thing we can't determine [is the date?] He worked first at Lincoln at age 16, 17, 18, after he left the Chapel Royal when he was a boy, and I think that as far as we know, none of his service music can be ascribed to his Lincoln period. Possibly this could be an early work from then. (BW raises an additional stylistic point, but this was attributable to a copying error in the transcription and so is omitted here. – Ed.)

Rod Sharpe: Robert, would you care to say something about copying, because we know Turner copied other things as well as his own music. In general, copying was a way musicians could supplement their incomes?

Robert Shay: The broader question as to why certain things were copied