

Bibliographical Notes

HENRY HALL OF HEREFORD AND HENRY PURCELL: A POSTSCRIPT

IN AN ARTICLE PUBLISHED in this journal in 1994 I demonstrated that the poet and songwriter Henry Hall (c.1656–1707), organist of Hereford Cathedral, drew on two of his own earlier poems when composing the verse tribute to his friend Henry Purcell printed in 1698 at the front of Part One of the latter's posthumous *Orpheus Britannicus*.¹ To be specific, this public tribute, entitled 'To the Memory of my Dear Friend Mr. Henry Purcell', was shown to be a generally skilful adaptation of the unpublished 'To Mr. Purcell' and 'A Dialogue between Palemon and Alexis Lamenting the Death of the Incomparable Mr. Henry Purcell', the former preserved solely in Leeds University Library, Brotherton Collection MS Lt q 5, the latter found also in Brotherton Collection MS Lt 6 and in two manuscripts among the Ottley papers in the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth. It is the poem entitled 'To Mr. Purcell', thirty-three lines in length, that provides the main basis for the 58-line composition printed in *Orpheus Britannicus*. Hall begins by taking over much of the earlier poem's account of the development of musical art in Britain and its praise of Purcell, adapting certain lines and adding new ones. Then, towards the end, he draws on some of the subject-matter of the 46-line 'Dialogue between Palemon and Alexis' (namely Purcell's skill in affecting his audience emotionally), before interposing a new autobiographical passage on his and Purcell's friendship, and finally borrowing the 'Dialogue's' triumphant final couplet, which now becomes:

Sometimes a HERO in an Age appears;
But scarce a PURCELL in a Thousand Years.²

I wrote in 1994 (p. 23) that Hall must have decided that the approach adopted by 'To Mr. Purcell' was better suited than that of 'A Dialogue between Palemon and Alexis' to a public tribute to the dead composer, but it would have been more accurate to have said 'better suited to a public tribute to be printed as verse'. I was unaware at the time that Hall had also

¹ Oliver Pickering, 'Henry Hall of Hereford's Poetical Tributes to Henry Purcell', *The Library*, vi, 16 (1994), 18–29.

² This couplet evidently made an impression on its readers. Prefaced by 'those Lines of Mr. Hall's may be very well apply'd', it is quoted in an anonymous letter in praise of Purcell's musical genius published in the *Universal Journal* of 25 July 1724, reprinted in Michael Burden, *Purcell Remembered* (London, 1995), pp. 136–38 (p. 136). In the 'Dialogue' it reads: 'Once in an Age a Heroe here appears, / But scarce a Daphnis in a thousand Years' (Brotherton Collection MS Lt q 5, p. 53).

composed a musical tribute to Purcell, the ode on his death that begins 'Yes, my Aminta, 'tis too true'. This work appears never to have been printed, but two manuscript copies survive, one a complete version now in the Bodleian Library (MS Tenbury 1232, fols 11^r–15^v, headed 'A Peace of Musicke vpon y^e Death of Mr. H. Purcell by Mr. Henry Hall'), the other a fragmentary copy in the library of Christ Church, Oxford, which is in Hall's autograph. The text of the ode is very largely based upon 'A Dialogue between Palemon and Alexis', which begins 'Yes, my Palemon, 'tis too true'.

The Christ Church copy of 'Yes, my Aminta', MS Mus. 1212B, has recently been described by Dr John Milsom for his forthcoming catalogue of the music manuscripts at Christ Church.³ It comprises eight bifolia, stitched together in a modern card folder and signed at the end (fol. 8^r), 'H: Hall'. The score (as also in the Tenbury manuscript) is for a treble shepherdess (Aminta) and an unnamed bass shepherd, with intervening passages for three instruments; it concludes with a duet and lengthy chorus. The hand is clearly Hall's own, matching that of an autograph letter and of autograph poems amongst the Ottley papers.⁴ As has been said, the Christ Church manuscript is fragmentary, now beginning with the instrumental passage preceding the shepherdess's entry 'No sullen cloud obscur'd the sun', which is line 10 of the poetic text.

MS Tenbury 1232 is an album of early-eighteenth-century manuscript music in the hand of the composer and organist William Croft (1678–1727),⁵ who subscribes his copy of the ode: 'This was composd by the Ingenious M^r H. Hall organist att Hereford upon y^e Death of M^r H: Purcell, who was educated wth him in y^e Chapell Royall in y^e Reign of K. Charles y^e Second.' The score is complete, and the text runs to sixty-two lines (ignoring repeats), of which ll. 10–62 match the text in the Christ Church manuscript. The only anomaly is that the music and text for 'The vers before ye 2 part' (i.e. ll. 47–52, which fall immediately before the duet) are copied at the end, having apparently been accidentally omitted from their proper place, to which a pointing hand refers back.

Lines 1–40 of 'Yes, my Aminta' run parallel to ll. 1–40 of the poetic dialogue 'Yes, my Palemon'. Thereafter the final six lines of the latter and the final twenty-two of the former are unrelated. The shared text falls into

³ I am grateful to Dr Milsom for letting me see his descriptions in advance of publication. It may be noted that Christ Church library contains another score in Hall's autograph, now preserved as two separate fragments, MSS Mus. 1212A and Mus. 1142 (A), fols 34–37; together they form 'Song to the Queen', an ode addressed to Queen Anne, beginning 'Bless Albion bless thy stars above' and signed 'Henry Hall'.

⁴ A description of the major manuscripts of Hall's verse, including his autographs, is included in my 'The Poems and Songs Attributed to Henry Hall of Hereford', now approaching completion. This will contain a detailed checklist of the 145 poems and songs attributed or attributable to Hall, and also a sample edition.

⁵ I owe this information to Dr Peter Holman, to whom I am grateful (as also to Professor Paul Hammond) for commenting on an earlier draft of this note.

two parts. In the first (ll. 1–22) the shepherd and shepherdess (in the poem two shepherds, Alexis and Palemon) lament Purcell's death and describe how birds — and the shepherdess's pipe — have grown silent as a result of the source of music being stopped. The second part (ll. 23–40) then evokes Purcell's irreplaceable skill in arousing feelings of love (ll. 23–34) and of war (ll. 35–40, the rhythm appropriately changing from octosyllables to more urgent anapaests).⁶ But whereas 'Yes, my Palemon' then swiftly ends with a reaffirmation of Purcell's uniqueness ('But scarce a Daphnis in a thousand Years', l. 46), 'Yes, my Aminta' moves on to describe Purcell's burial, the shepherdess asking about it ('But tell me dearest Shepherd tell / what Honours crown'd his Funerall', ll. 41–42), and the shepherd providing the information.⁷

For Daphnis on a Beir was laid,
Flowers deckt his Feet, and Bays his Head.
Two learned Bards that march'd before,
His Sacred Harp between 'em bore
and as they softly pass'd along
invoking Daphnis thus they Sung. (ll. 47–52)⁸

After a three-line duet ('Arcadians now your voices raise'), a chorus praising and lamenting Purcell then ends the ode:

Then come yee Satyrs come yee Faunes,
Send hither all that crowd y^e Lawns
bring your pipes, your Hornpipes bring
sing Daphnis Dirge Sweet Daphnis Sing.
But when y^e mournfull Dirge is o're
To shew how much you him deplore
break your Pipes and Sing no more. (ll. 56–62)

The textual differences between the two manuscripts of 'Yes, my Aminta' are slight, the most significant variants being as follows (CC denotes the Christ Church manuscript, and T, the Tenbury):

- 13 'grew mute' (CC), 'Grow mute' (T)
- 14 'in Flocks to Thicker Covert fled' (CC), 'y^e flock to thicker covert fled' (T)
- 23 'your Amrous Tale' (CC), 'Amintas tale' (T)
- 28 'what Raptures dwelt' (CC), 'what raptures dwell' (T)

⁶ The use made of ll. 23–40 of 'Yes, my Palemon' by the poem published in *Orpheus Britannicus* is analysed in Pickering, 'Henry Hall of Hereford's Poetical Tributes', pp. 26–27.

⁷ I quote 'Yes, my Aminta' from the Christ Church MS 1212B, it being in Hall's autograph. The ode is unpublished, except that a transcription of the text in the Tenbury manuscript can be found in the booklet accompanying a recent recording by the Parley of Instruments Baroque Orchestra and Choir, directed by Roy Goodman and Peter Holman: *Odes on the Death of Henry Purcell*, Hyperion Records, CDA66578 (London, 1992), item 3. Three mistakes in this transcription may be noted here: 28, 'sapphires' for MS 'raptures'; 35, 'served' for MS 'scrud' (i.e. screwed); 57, 'crowned' for MS 'crowd'.

⁸ Lines 49–50, referring to 'Two learned Bards', may possibly reflect an actual feature of Purcell's funeral, about which little appears to be known. For contemporary newspaper accounts of the occasion, see Burden, *Purcell Remembered*, p. 114.

In all four cases CC agrees, against T, with the manuscripts of 'A Dialogue between Palemon and Alexis',⁹ confirming that T is corrupt: ll. 13 and 28 require a past tense; in l. 14 the sense properly flows on from ll. 12–13 ('Yet Birds which here were wont to Sing / grew mute and all with heavy wing / in Flocks . . .', CC); and in l. 23 'your Amrous Tale' is recognisable as a harder reading.

On five other significant occasions CC and T agree in readings that differ from the manuscripts of 'A Dialogue', as follows (I quote from Brotherton Collection MS Lt q 5, pp. 52–53, denoted by B):

- 10 'obscurd y^e Sun' (CC, T), 'o're-spread' (B)
- 23 'can tell' (CC, T), 'shall tell' (B)
- 25 'can teach' (CC, T), 'shall teach' (B)
- 37 'Vanquish'd y^e Flute' (CC, T), 'silenc'd y^e Flute' (B)
- 38 'And the Thundring Drum had quite Silenc'd y^e Lute' (CC, T), 'And the noisey rude Drume had quite banish'd the Lute' (B)

At the beginning of the ode, where CC is lacking, T additionally reads 'y^e charming tongue' (l. 3) against the 'Dialogue's' 'that Charming tongue'; 'oft' (l. 5) against its 'once'; and, of course, 'Aminta' (l. 1) against its 'Palemon'.

These various differences are not in themselves sufficient to prove that the 'Dialogue' pre-dates 'Yes, my Aminta', although it may be guessed that 'oft' in l. 5 was introduced to remove the repetition of 'once' in two successive lines of the former (ll. 4–5), and that the changes to ll. 37–38 arose from a perception that 'noisey rude' was indeed too 'rude' (and too ineffective) a phrase. The sense that 'Yes, my Aminta' is of later date derives rather from its being the more developed — and more successful — composition. The poetic 'Dialogue' ends abruptly with Palemon enquiring about a possible successor to the 'Sacred Bard' (ll. 41–43), and Alexis, in reply, asserting Purcell's uniqueness (ll. 44–46). In 'Yes, my Aminta' the speakers are not exclusively male but instead shepherd and shepherdess, and the description of a pastoral, musical funeral with which the text ends is characterized not by the distinctly masculine heroism of the 'Dialogue' but by a restrained and evocative lament for the two voices in chorus. The 'Dialogue' would have been too short for Hall's musical purposes. The longer text of 'Yes, my Aminta' allows for a much wider range of musical effects,¹⁰ and it is hard to escape the conclusion that it was expanded from the 'Dialogue' specifically

⁹ Except that in l. 13, Brotherton Collection Lt 6 also reads 'grow'.

¹⁰ In his paragraph on 'Yes, my Aminta' included in his notes to the recording cited in n. 7 above, Peter Holman writes that the music 'aptly refers both to a funeral march and the pealing of bells' (p. 4).

to be set to music. No reason for Hall to have turned 'Yes, my Aminta' into the 'Dialogue' easily presents itself.¹¹

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¹¹ Hall heaped further high praise on Purcell in his 30-line ode, 'A Song on St. Cecilia's Day', which was printed in the *Diverting Post*, no. 3 (4–11 November 1704), p. 1. It begins 'From the bright Mansions of the blest above', and includes the lines: 'Purcell that everlasting name / The darling & the last of fame / Purcell that by a pow'r divine / Wrought miracles to serve the nine / To rapid poesie could new spirit give / And make dead words to breath & live' (ll. 8–13). The song is said to have been 'Admirably Set by Mr. H. Hall of Hereford', but no musical score (or manuscript of the words) is at present known. In view of Hall's other poems in praise of Purcell it may be assumed that he wrote the text to this song as well.