

15.30 *Who wrote the Sadler Partbooks?* (25)

5 minutes = 850 words OR 170 w.p.m.

25 minutes = 4,250

<cardinal>

Few Tudor partbooks were compiled entirely by one person, and when they were there was little visible change in the style of script or habit. Most books were written by multiple scribes, but there are only a couple of instances where those scribes made an effort to create a uniform script. One of those is the pocket partbook [CLICK](#) British Library Add. 47844, and there are signs of a nascent uniform style in the [CLICK](#) Hamond partbooks which Katherine Butler has gone over in considerable detail, concluding that at least part of the books may have been completed by choristers learning to write and copy out music. The practice of learning and employing standardised scripts for shared work is commonplace in the 16th century.

<Alamire and Scottowe>

Scriptoria producing music books such as the Alamire workshop exemplify this practice up to the early 16th century -- and with the close trade and immigration ties between Norwich the Netherlands, it would not have been impossible for the elegant style of copying in the Alamire books to have influenced the production of Sadler's books in the next generations, [CLICK](#) just as the decorating style persisted in the work of penmen like John Scottowe. If you wanted to present your client with a book with a pleasingly uniform appearance, it was important to make sure your scribes all wrote a consistent hand.

<common pleas hand and secretary hands from writing tutor books>

The practice was commonplace not only in scriptoria producing books, but in professional walks of life, where employees of government offices for example were required to learn the bespoke model hand of that office, [CLICK](#) making any document originating from that office instantly recognisable. At work you used the same script and form as everyone around. So the idea of a standard type of writing for a particular purpose, and the concept of deliberately copying a model hand to create uniformity of appearance was one that was culturally embedded, and therefore not surprising when it is found in music manuscripts copied by multiple scribes.

Leaving the decorators aside, I'm going to look only at the scribes of the music, since it is this hand -- or these hands -- that have long been identified as the hand of John Sadler himself.

<Thomas More example>

All of these different scripts were written by the same scribe, because professional scribes working at the level of secretarial work were taught multiple scripts to be used for different purposes.

<custos etc from Sadler>

The changes in the custos, carefully executed in almost every case, if executed by the same person, would demonstrate a copying practice quite unlike any other in the repertory if they were executed by the same person. While that may have been reasonable if the books were the outliers to the partbook world that they have been believed to be, it doesn't work if they fit neatly into the central corpus.

One issue for me is how many scribes there might be: there are up to 17 changes in hand through the books, but how many of these are different individuals (and how likely is it that 17 copyists would have been involved)? going by custodes and clef forms alone, there seem to be anything from 6 to 11 scribes involved in the Sadler books, with at least two appearing more than once. The likelihood of dozens of scribes has to be set against the fact that most of the scribes are probably not writing their natural hand, but following a model, which might account for a level of internal variation in each hand.

<title>

This brings us back to who might have copied these books. We tend to imagine that something the extent of the Sadler books, 700 pages, would have taken months to copy, but in a former life, before the advent of computer typesetting of music, I worked as a music copyist, and also ran a short-lived emergency scriptorium copying parts for the Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

<copying time>

So I sat down with one of the Sadler partbooks, and copied a few pages, in diamond noteheads, but using my normal handwriting for the underlay, onto a blank sheet reproduced from the books. **CLICK** It took about 16 minutes per full page of five lines of music – let's say 20 minutes to be generous (as some pages may be more fiddly),

CLICK which means a total of 234 hours for 700 pages, CLICK or 30 eight-hour days. Nowadays we are careful of our eyesight, but in 1585 we can be pretty sure that every daylight hour was utilized for work.

You really have to know what you are doing to copy music. You can't just copy shapes and hope you had it right -- or you could but it would be agonisingly slow. My own scriptorium therefore used music students as copyists. Where might you find a largish group of Tudor copyists not only with the musical skill but also the penmanship to copy out music?

<Jane Flynn reference>

Jane Flynn has demonstrated that choristers were taught not only to read but also to write as part of their training, and the ranks of adult singing men were drawn from this well. Singing men were impoverished. Their salaries did not increase from the end of the reign of Henry VIII up to 1600, despite rampant inflation. Their duties however were considerably less in the reformed church than they had been in the catholic liturgy, amounting to perhaps 2-3 hours a day.

<James Saunders>

James Saunders has described how singingmen supplemented their income by 'moonlighting', although in reality it seems that the singing part of their lives was more probably the second job, and the real income came from their other activities. So much so, in fact, that some didn't even bother to turn up to their singing jobs. Saunders, like us, has to deal with the shadow cast by these moonlighting jobs, rather than actual records of them. He finds complaints of non-attendance in cathedral minutes and disciplinary proceedings recorded against cathedral singing men for misdemeanours such as running an unlicensed alehouse in the cathedral precincts (suggesting that there were licensed alehouses in the precincts).

<list of occupations of singingmen>

There are also records of payments to singingmen for teaching choristers to sing, write and play the viol and being employed as grammar-school teachers. A singingman could hardly have been a grammar-school teacher if he could not write well, CLICK but one activity that Saunders signally fails to mention is that of publishing music, either in manuscript or in print. Quite an omission when you consider the music printing business of the Chapel Royal singing men, Tallis and Byrd, and later Thomas Morley,

the copying of John Baldwin for William Byrd and the energetic copying of Matthew Holmes in Oxford and London.

<records of payments for music copying>

There is abundant evidence that singingmen were employed to copy music for the institutions where they had their main employment and for others that they visited. We also know that John Baldwin undertook copying for private clients and copied in both the Forest-Heather and Dow Partbooks. **CLICK** Payments to Chapel Royal singers are understandably better documented than anywhere else. However, these are records of copying in situations where records were both kept and survive to today.

<Harold Love>

What of the unrecorded activity of music copying, in the tradition of scribal publishing described by Harold Love?

<custodes from FH>

Here the three scribes of the Forest-Heather books, which includes John Baldwin

<John Baldwin's hand; custodes>

It is one of the interesting things about the singingman John Baldwin's copying that although he uses two vastly different hands – one for his own personal books and an unrecognisably different one when he is copying for someone else – he uses the same custos, with a little bow tied on the top.

<Forest Heather>

At the end of the Forest-Heather partbook there is no doubt the hand is that of Baldwin (he signs it but also uses his signature custos). Because Baldwin wrote in these books, it has been assumed he owned them at some point, even though they did not appear in his will, and the progress of the books between the other owners who are certain makes it difficult to trace their path via Baldwin. However, Baldwin wrote in these books using his professional hand and, as before, signed his name as *copyist*. He also copied some of the works from the Forest-Heather set into his own books. Why would he have done that if the Forest-Heather set belonged to him? We know that Baldwin undertook professional copying for other people, for which he used a specialist hand. Even though we know that Baldwin (and possibly other singingmen) copied for other people, the belief persists that someone only wrote in a book they owned, even if establishing a chain of ownership to encompass that person becomes extremely twisty.

<custos correction slide again>

The custos is probably a lot more crucial than we have previously considered in identifying scribes in this period. It certainly seems that the shape was significant, or why would a scribe correct it when he drew one of the wrong shape and retain the shape even when doing so was neither attractive nor (technically) necessary.

<Harold Love references again>

Love demonstrated that up to 1700 and beyond, the stigma attached to the printed word and the cost of printing when you might only want a single copy of something led to the widespread establishment of scriptoria to serve the growing numbers of the literate middle classes. Love termed the process of disseminating the works of poets and in manuscript 'scribal publishing'. There were well-established scriptoria in London that issued daily digests of parliamentary and court proceedings and distributed them to nobles living out of town, so there was a steady stream of couriers galloping all over the country to keep people in touch, and no doubt carrying other documents to make a journey more economic. A Norwich merchant sending to Windsor or Oxford for the latest music to add to his books could have expected to receive a reply containing a packet of works within a week or two.¹

Despite the rise in literacy, there was considerable demand for informal scribal work, from letter-writing to drawing up tenancy agreements. Love does not consider where all his scribes came *from*; like many non-musicologists, he does not even consider what penniless-but-literate musicians got up to.

< list of amounts left in wills (from Saunders)>

It is all too easy to think of Tudor singing men merely as servant-class, but Saunders demonstrates that many musicians accrued a considerable fortune either in money or property (or both) by the time they died – amounts easily matching many merchant estates.

We should not imagine, then, that singingmen simply sat in a filthy hovel and quietly starved to death on their cathedral salaries. Far from it. They were among the better educated in society – easily as well-educated as many merchants, and they had skills that could ensure a white-collar job. The evidence Saunders uncovered suggests an

¹ I wonder if there could have been a form of musical currency: rather than paying money for a packet of music, perhaps you could exchange some local music for it?

entrepreneurial turn of mind among musicians, something that shouldn't be surprising when we consider the publishing activities of Byrd, Tallis, Dowland and Morley.

<Playing cards, board games – from the Eglantine table>

Couple the growth in numbers of people with money to spend on things that were entirely useless to a society that was too busy growing food to survive or fighting wars with the explosion in the printing industry, supplying books for leisure reading and self-improvement, as well as music books for domestic use, and you start to see how useful a scriptorium could be – not just useful in fact, but essential in Norwich,

because printing of English books was prohibited by law outside London.

What better use of a singingman's skills, then, than to get together with a bunch of friends with similar financial needs and skills and establish a scriptorium,

<Scriptorium>

copying musical works to which you had easy access from your other employment—to meet the needs of a class that was demanding luxury items to fill their leisure time? We know these places existed, we just don't know who populated them.

Remember *also* that these copyists didn't have to limit their activity to music, so if there weren't enough music jobs to keep your scriptorium busy (and there probably weren't), you simply filled the gaps with text copying, reading and writing letters for the less literate, and quite possibly dissemination of news like the London bulletins. It is quite likely in fact that the primary business of any scriptorium of this sort would be to deal with text, with music simply as a sideline, rather than the other way around.

Byrd's idea of publishing music in print as a business must have come from an observation of his environment that led him to think there was a market for it. There must also have been a healthy trade in hand-copying, one large enough that the report by the Warden of the Stationers' Company in 1582 indicates that the sale of printed paper was the only economically viable part of their business.

So hand copying was thriving and the sale of printed music was not. The Byrd & Tallis business fell foul of a double dose of bad planning; **firstly** Elizabethan collectors, building on a long-standing tradition, wanted to be able to select the works they included in their collections, rather than having them selected for them by a publisher. Compiling your books yourself allowed you to ignore works you felt were dull, old-fashioned or conveyed a message that wasn't to your taste. You also weren't limited to

a single composer and your tastes could be highly eclectic (unless you were Edward Paston).

48. Slide: Page of Dow

Secondly, and probably more important, was that it appears serious middle-class collectors were not copying music simply to have the music, but also to create something pleasing to the eye,

What we never really consider in relation to that famous privilege was that getting it was symptomatic of entrepreneurial behaviour that was becoming a hallmark of the singingmen of the country's big musical institutions. If you were an enterprising lay clerk who needed a second string to your bow, why not organize yourself and your companions to work as copyists, or get involved with an enterprising merchant like John Sadler.

50. Slide: Sadler book: a pretty page

Which brings us back to the Sadler books. Certainly the music is all written using the same model of diamond notes underlaid with text in a secretary hand, but anyone taught to write could do that, and a diamond hand was easier to emulate and looked more formal than a round hand, as John Baldwin demonstrated. While a penman of higher class would be expected to develop a personalised form of the model hands, choristers would have been taught the basic forms and encouraged to perfect them rather than elaborate.

<ingrossing hands 1>

As adults they probably would not have used or learned more than one model, hence perhaps the rather clumsy attempts at some of the ingrossing scripts, although most are

<ingrossing hands 2>

quite presentable. It is however clear even from these incipits that there are many hands at work in the books. I particularly like the opening of Conserva me, the last example on this slide, because the incipit writer also inserts the first two words of the text, and the main copyist continues in a clearly different hand.

So who were they?

<>

There is a list of the Cathedral choir in 1568, giving the names of the boys and the men.

<picture of *Nro DCN 29/1* [formerly Libri Misc. 1], fol. 28.>

Nro DCN 29/1 [formerly Libri Misc. 1], fol. 28. The 'vijj singinge' Childrin in the Queare' were

Edmonde Bettis

Peter Browne

Edmonde Englott thonger (who later became organist and was the incumbent before Thomas Morley

Will[ia]m Shanck

Michael Peckover

Anthony Catton

Will[ia]m Englott

Anthonye Todde

Many of these boys could have become scribes later as well as being singing men or independently.

Much closer to the main date on our partbooks, the adult singers of the choir are listed in the four quarterly lists that survive for 1580–81.

DCN 10/2/1 ('Payments at christinmas [*sic*] Anno d[omi]ni 1580 / et Reginæ xxij^o. / 'Payments at the Ann[un]ciac[i]on 158i / et Reginæ xxij^o. / 'Payments at midsomer anno d[omi]ni 158i / et Reginæ xxij^o. / 'Payments at Michelmas anno d[omi]ni 158i / et Reginæ xxij^o.)

<pictures from *DCN 10/2/1* >



=> transcriptions of the four lists:

- 'Payments at christinmas [*sic*] Anno d[omi]ni 1580 / et Reginæ xxij^o.

[=> incl.]

To osbert Perslaye for his fæe & in rewarde. __ iij℥

To John Ambrye __ iij℥

To Will[ia]m fayerwell __ xls

To Thomas Hooke __ xls

To Peter Spratte __ xls

To Anthonye Wilson __ xls

To Thomas Bernes __ xls

To Robert Triser __ xls

To Will[ia]m Englott __ xls

To Edmu[n]de Englott m^r of the choristers __ Ls

To him for the stipende of vijj boyes __ vj℥ xiijs iiij^d

=> 'Payments at the Ann[un]ciac[i]on 158i / et Reginæ xxij^o.

[=> incl.]

To osberd Perslye for his fæe & in rewarde. __ iij℥

To John Ambrye singinman for the like __ iij℥

To Will[ia]m Fayerwell __ xls

To Thomas Hooke __ xls

To Peter Sprate __ xls

To Anthonye Wilson __ xls

To Thomas Bernes & Robert Triser __ xls

To Will[ia]m Englott __ xls

To Edmu[n]de Englott m^r of the choristers __ xs

To him for the stipende of vijj boyes __ vj℥ xiijs iiij^d

=> next verso incl. 'To M^r Byrd scolm[aster] __ vj℥ xiijs iiij^d'

=> 'Payments at midsomer anno d[omi]ni 158i / et Reginæ xxij^o.

[=> incl.]

To osbert Persley singinman [*sic*] __ iij℥

To John Ambrye __ iij℥

To Will[ia]m fayerwell __ xls

To Thomas Hooke __ xls

To Peter Spratt __ xls

To Anthonye Wilson __ xls

To Thomas Bernes __ xls
 To Will[ia]m Englott __ xls
 To Edmu[n]de Englott m' of the choristers __ Ls
 To him for the stipende of viij boyes __ vj℥ xiijs iiijd'
 => 'Payments at Michelmas anno d[omi]ni 158i / et Reginae xxiiij'.
 [=> incl.]
 To osberd Persley singniman [sic] __ iiij℥
 To John Ambrye __ iiij℥
 To Will[ia]m fayerwell __ xls
 To Thomas Hooke __ xls
 To Peter Spratt __ xls
 To Anthonye Wilson __ xls
 To Thomas Bernes __ xls
 To Will[ia]m Englott __ xls
 To Thomas Lawghorne __ xls
 To Edmu[n]de Englott for him selfe & viij boyes __ ix℥ vjs viijd'

This group seems to be fairly stable in the early 1580s.

The other important group of musicians in Norwich was the Waits, the city musicians. The sources indicate that they were more than competent musicians, and there was some overlapping with the Cathedral choir: for instance, Peter Spratt who appears in the choir payment list for 1580–81 that we have just seen, was also listed as one of the waits in the same year.

<picture from *NCR 18a/10: Chamberlains' [audited annual] accounts, [29 Sep] 1580–[29 Sep] 1589, fol. 14r (from account for 1580–81).>*

NCR 18a/10: Chamberlains' [audited annual] accounts, [29 Sep] 1580–[29 Sep] 1589, fol. 14r (from account for 1580–81). Actually, Murray, diss., p. 40 already noted that Spratt was in both groups.

Apart from that, while we do have the names of Waits between 1580 and 1585, none of these ring massive bells.

What of 1585 then?

<>

Osbert Parsley, a long-standing member of the choir perhaps since the Reformation, died in 1585 and may easily have been musically active until then, as 1585 was a plague year. We also know that Thomas Morley was resident in Norwich until 1585, his family presumably living in the parish adjacent to Sadler, and received payments as Master of the Choristers until 1587.

Did Morley know Sadler? Well Sadler certainly knew Francis Morley, the person Tessa Murray identified as Thomas's father, as when Sadler served as one of the twelve city surveyors in 1573–74, one of the '6 newe' surveyors listed was 'Fraunces Morley surveyor to the ryver'. It is therefore quite likely that Sadler knew Francis Morley. That close-knit group of merchants that we see in Sadler's biography may have been mirrored in the group of musicians with whom Sadler mixed and played – Sadler's books preserve unique copies of two works by Morley, suggesting a close, if not

personal, connection. Morley father was part of Sadler's circle, since Nicolas Sotherton -- who sold Sadler that large parcel of land, and was related to him by marriage -- was one of the two people who made Francis Morley's probate inventory on his death in 1591 (the date in the Wilmott and Braikenridge books).

<Paston>

In case anyone was wondering if Sadler had any connection with the young Edward Paston, yes, he almost certainly knew him, as they overlapped as members of the Society of St George in Norwich.

This finally brings us back to this little mark:

<audit mark>

There has been some speculation about what this means. It appears at the end of a large number of pieces in the Sadler and W&B books, but not consistently.

<table of audit marks>

If it is a mark indicating a piece has been checked and/or corrected,

- why are only some works marked?
- why, in many instances, are only some of the parts in a work marked?
- why do pieces marked in this way often include uncorrected mistakes?

As Matthias has shown in the poor census books this is an audit or payment check-mark, and matches with the system of checks and balances that were employed in the poor census books, where all the payments, both in and out, were checked and verified with the individual mark of the person who had oversight. It. The person paying for, or overseeing the copying made the notation in the partbooks to show where he had audited it, or where he had paid up to, so that on his next visit he would not be conned into paying for something he had already bought. The mark is sometimes very visible, but more often than not hidden, sometimes appearing to be part of the ascription, though close examination shows that it is often in a different ink colour.

This is one of Sadler's personal marks and its use ties him not only to the books, but to the process of compilation and explains why not every work has a mark following it, and why some voice-parts have marks and others do not, if Sadler turned up at a time when some of the voices had been copied, but not all. If this use of the sign in the books is correct -- and it matches the evidence better than as a corregitur mark -- it might indicate that the books were copied to order, and that Sadler had an ongoing

interest in their preparation while they were being copied, which also ties in with the practices of scribal publication set out by Harold Love.

I think it is quite likely that Sadler did write in the books, but possibly only as a decorator. There has been speculation that surely he would have written his own *In Nomine*. However, the custos and script for four of the five parts match that of someone quite active in the books,

<John>

and the name 'John' written at the bottom of the piece is in the same script as John later in the books. This does not mean that Sadler was not that scribe, but I am not convinced.

<The Books after Sadler's death>

Sadler died intestate and unfortunately, the probate inventory that would have listed all of his goods does not seem to have survived. If John still had the books when he died, they would have gone to his brother Richard, who was his only beneficiary. The books are, however, not mentioned in Richard's will of 1605 – and as he mentions his linen napery, it is unlikely he would have failed to mention books in his possession. So, Richard either never had them, or had passed them on by the time of his death. Trace seems to be lost until the early nineteenth century, when it was picked up by James Burke searching through sales catalogues.² However, they could have been passed down to fellow musicians in Norwich. As we heard earlier, John Sadler had a connection by marriage to the Norwich schoolmaster, theologian and musician Henry Byrde.³ This Henry Byrde, in turn, could have been related to the Thomas Byrde who was the scrivener of Dorothy Sadler's 1590 will.

² See Burke, part iii.

³ Byrde had married Alice Marrant, the sister of Elizabeth, the wife of John Sadler the elder brother, in a double-wedding at St Clement's on 23 October 1553. [we don't know it was a double wedding. Might just have been on the same day.]

John Burton, *Antiquitates Capellæ D. Johannis Evangelistæ, Hodie Scholæ Regiæ Norwicensis*, by John Burton, Mater. Elected 1677. With a Prize Translation by Herbert H. Buck, Scholar, Norwich 1861 [...] and an Appendix containing Lists of Head Masters from the Foundation [...] (Norwich: Printed by R. N. Bacon, Mercury Office [1862]), pp. 45–48: list of Head Masters. Saunders, *A History of the Norwich Grammar School*, refers to Buck's list in Burton. There does not seem to be a more modern list.???

The link between the two Byrdes is confirmed in the 1563 edition of John Fox's *Actes and Monuments*: 'Also another called maister Henrye Birde dwelling in Norwich (who married Alice, the daughter of one maistres Jone Marrant, widow, of that city of Norwich, a very nurse to al good people) was lykewise driven from his dwelling, to seeke the hyding of his heade in straunge places.'



Thomas Byrde's probate inventory of 1601 lists 'v prick song bookes of certeyne psalmes', worth 'xiiij d'.⁴



Much later, in 1680, Braithwaite Souter, who had been a lay clerk at Norwich Cathedral since 1661, left to the dean and chapter in his will 'for ever One hundred setts of books of Songs Composed by diverse Authors wch number with the names of the Authors are sett downe in an Inventory [...] for the only use of the Canons & Clarke of the Quire when they shall or will meete at any time'.⁵

While Souter's actual books have been lost, the inventory he refers to survives. Almost all of his books of music are printed sets,



but there is an entry for

'A sett of Latten songs of 5 p[ar]t[e]s bound in Leather prick't'.⁶



This has been a flying visit to the Sadler Partbooks, and both Matthias and I are aware of just how much we haven't been able to cover today that has come out of the study of these books and Matthias's research in the Norwich Record Office. We hope to be able to address that in the introductory study to the edition when it eventually comes out, but for now we would both like to thank you all for your time and feedback.

We wish you all a good journey home and, as the philosopher Doni would say,

LIVE LONG AND GROW FAT.

⁴ Probate Inventory of Thomas Birde, 8 Dec 1601, *Nro DN/INV 17/186*. Very speculatively, these could have been the Sadler partbooks, now Mus. e. 1–5.

⁵ See *Norwich Cathedral* (Atherton et al.), p. 695. For the will see *Nro DCN 29/2: Libri Misc. 2* (1536–1681), p. 348.

⁶ *Nro DCN 29/2: Libri Misc. 2* (1536–1681), no. 64/ pp. 388–90 (Inventory of books bequeathed to Dean and Chapter (name of testator not given), in that inventory no. 57 (on p. 389): 'A sett of Latten songs of 5 p[ar]t[e]s bound in Leather prick't'.