

The Experience of Worship
in Late Medieval Cathedral and Parish Church
Bangor Cathedral Research Workshop
February 2012

Evaluation by Andrew Johnstone

The Experience of Worship workshop at Bangor Cathedral last February was for me richly rewarding and informative. I took home the idea that periodic refresher courses in chant and faburden ought to be compulsory for musicologists. Gaps in my knowledge were plugged in respect of melodic phrasing, Hebrew pronunciation, and faburden (on which I was spurred to catch up with the most recent literature). And a long-standing prejudice against describing any liturgical act as a 'performance' was firmly laid to rest by John Harper's wisdom that it is only 'per', i.e. through, the participants that a liturgy can be 'formed'.

It was instructive to take part in several alternatim pieces, particularly the office hymn 'Te lucis ante terminum' in a combination of faburden-based organ verses and Tallis's polyphony from the 1575 *Cantiones*. I for one had been misled by the common view that the organ should alternate only with monophonic chant; the knowledge that not just vernacular but also Latin polyphony can be related to what is now known of English organ pitch could prove very fruitful in unlocking whatever pitch grid may have existed in England prior to the Reformation. Having been diverted from work in that area for a few years, I am now much more eager to return to it.

It was a (probably unfair) privilege to be able to present my recent work on William Byrd's vernacular church music with a particular focus on his earlier liturgical compositions in the full idiom. Given the availability of Dominic Gwynn's newest replica organ, greater emphasis on the verse compositions would have been desirable, but the opportunity to perform a cognate work, Mundy's 'Ah, helpless wretch' valuably informed the study I have since been making of Byrd's verse anthems. I must mention John's incidental discovery that the text of 'Ah, helpless wretch' was clearly converted from common to long meter at some point, presumably

to fit music Mundy had already conceived for some other, long-meter text. This was yet another nail in the coffin of a *Werktreue* concept for early verse anthems in general: it is much easier to make sense of Byrd's contribution to the genre given the increasing certainty that such works were constantly subject to textual and/or musical adaptation, authorised or not.

There was a helpful reminder too from Dominic that, although he has equipped the project's organ with a full-compass 10-foot stop, that unique resource more properly belongs to the two-manual 'double organs' that seem not to have become widespread until the Jacobean era. To the extent it was performed in church at all (and only in the case of liturgical psalms and canticles is this by any means certain), the early verse music by Farrant, Mundy and Byrd was very likely accompanied on a five-foot principal alone. It must therefore be stressed that the following essay on Farrant's verse anthem reaches conclusions that can apply only to Jacobean and Caroline performance practice. The caution cannot be repeated often enough that the latter-day sources of Elizabethan vernacular church music are fraught with anachronisms.

May 2012

Reflections on Peter le Huray's interpretation of the two surviving organ parts
to Richard Farrant's verse anthem 'When as we sat in Babylon'

Andrew Johnstone

The Tudor organ commissioned by the Experience of Worship project, and inaugurated on 8 April 2011 at St Teilo's Church in St Fagans National History Museum, Cardiff, is the third instrument of its kind to be made by Goetze and Gwynn, and the first since the seventeenth century to include a full-compass 10-foot stop. The opportunity was therefore taken at the inaugural workshop to perform a work for which, in one of its surviving versions, a 10-foot stop is known to have been indispensable, Richard Farrant's verse anthem 'When as we sat in Babylon'. Two organ parts to this work survive, and they are especially instructive on the arcane methods of choral accompaniment pursued by English organists of the Reformation period. They have therefore been singled out for special scholarly attention, particularly from the foremost authority on English Reformation music, Peter le Huray (1930–92). His views on their interpretation,¹ quoted in full below, can at last be assessed in the light of the practical experience obtained at St Teilo's church.

The simplest approach to the question of transposition and registration of organ accompaniments may be made through a comparison of the left-hand lines of the two extant sources of organ parts for Farrant's anthem (the 'Chirk' organbook here referred to as *Occ* 6 and the Batten organbook as *T* 791). There are some significant variants between the two, it is true, but the parts are recognisably similar.

The two accompaniments clearly both belong to the same composition, yet differ strikingly in terms of texture. The Chirk version, intended for use in a household chapel, is in three or four parts throughout, and calls three times for the barely practicable stretch of a tenth in one hand or the other (bars 13, 48 and 53), suggesting adaptation from a consort work for voices and viols. Batten's version, possibly copied

¹ 'The Chirk Castle Partbooks', *Early Music History*, 2 (1982), 17–42 (40–42). For an earlier, and (it must be said) confusing, discussion of the two organ parts, see John Bunker Clark, *Transposition in Seventeenth-Century English Organ Accompaniments and the Transposing Organ* (Detroit, 1974), 48–52.

for use at St Paul's Cathedral, is in contrast almost entirely in two parts (there is a single three-part chord at bar 35), which during the solo verses form a complementary, self-contained and idiomatic organ accompaniment to the voice-part.

Neither version could have been derived from the other without a considerable amount of reworking, and it is not immediately obvious which version came first. Fugal anticipations or echoes of the solo voice-part are generally more prominent in Chirk (bars 1–2, 11–12, 17, 55) than in Batten (bars 1–2, 7–8, 15–16), perhaps implying that Chirk is the more integrated conception. At the same time, Chirk is marred by some blatant parallel 12ths (bar 18) and a hiatus (bar 16) at one of the very moments when Batten preserves the momentum by anticipating the vocal phrase that is to follow. If Farrant is to be credited with the more fluent accompaniment of the two, then it would appear that Batten's bicinium is original, that it was subsequently, and not entirely successfully, re-worked for four viols, and that the reworking was itself then transcribed for organ. But unless further sources of this work come to light, this scenario must remain hypothetical; in any case, the two manuals and full-compass 10-foot stops apparently called for by Batten's accompaniment are more characteristic of his own time than of Farrant's. Indeed, registrations that worked very well for the copyist (who was born in 1591) might well have been unknown to the composer (who had died in 1580).

In the chorus sections the left hand of the (transposed) accompaniment *T* 791 lies for much of the time a fourth below that of the (choir-pitch) part in *Occ* 6; this, in turn doubles the lowest singing part, the chorus bass. Most of the variants that occur in *T* 791 can be explained by the need to avoid running off the lower end of the keyboard (see Example 2, the third chorus, bars 44–9 [bars 41–5, AJ edn]). Had the organist playing from *T* 791, therefore, drawn only a 5' stop he would have doubled the chorus basses at the unison; had he, however, also drawn a 10' stop he would have also doubled at the octave below: he would, to use modern terminology, have been playing at both 8' and 16' pitches.

Though these remarks are broadly correct, there are a few telling instances when to play Batten's LH part on a 5-foot registration alone would result in the LH's sounding an octave higher than the vocal B, and higher even than the vocal T (bars 42, 44, 49 and 62). Save for an explicit direction in Batten's own hand, there could be no clearer indications that a 10-foot registration was intended. In one such instance (bar 44), it is

noteworthy that the chorus B part descends to *E*, the 10-foot, octave-lower equivalent of which would be the unobtainable *B*" a semitone lower than the 10-foot *C*-pipe itself. Here, then, there was no alternative to temporarily suspending the octave-lower doubling of the vocal B part; other instances in which it was suspended (e.g. bars 50–53) were clearly discretionary.

In the left-hand lines of the solo verses *Occ* 6 and *T* 791 differ more notably. The harmonies in bar 7, for instance, are somewhat different, as are those of bars 11–12 (Example 3). There are, moreover, far more variants of a purely decorative kind, as in bar 6. Nonetheless, the parts are similar in most essentials and broadly comparable. Here the bass of *T* 791 lies for much of the time a fourth above the *Occ* 6 bass, although the right hand of *T* 791 lies a fourth below that of *Occ* 6.

In the Chirk accompaniment, the solo voice-part appears as the second voice from the top, corroborating its appearance in the corresponding M volume of the Chirk Castle set. The Batten accompaniment, however, contains not a trace of the solo voice-part, raising the possibility that the now unknown voice-parts with which it was meant to be used could instead have assigned the solo part to T—a possibility supported by the presence in the T part of the choruses of most of the material already heard in the solo verses. The apparent differences in tessitura between the two accompaniments might therefore be a symptom of their having been intended for solo M and solo T respectively.²

If the *T* 791 organist used only 5' pitch for the verses, the relationship between solo voice and organ would be grammatically acceptable (no exposed 6/4 chords arise), although the tessitura of the organ part might be thought to be rather on the high side; the bass line of the first two bars, for instance, is above the first note that the soloist sings.

Quite right: on a 5-foot registration, Batten's accompaniments to the verses sound uncomfortably acute.

The balance could of course be adjusted by playing this line on a 10' stop. But what then of the right-hand line? This might produce an unduly thick effect if it were also played at 10' pitch, for as has already been mentioned it lies a fourth below the *Occ* 6 right-hand part. If this proved to be so, the solution would surely be to play the line on a second manual at 5' pitch.

² I am indebted to Prof. John Harper for the observation that Batten's accompaniments to the verses might have related to a vocal T part an octave lower than the Chirk M part. The phenomenon of reworking solo verses for a different voice-type at an octave's distance is also to be met with in the treble version of Gibbons's verse anthem 'This is the record of John' (*Cph* MS 44, f. a2).

Quite wrong: since both hands are seldom less than an octave apart, they may be played on a 10-foot registration without any risk of overburdening the texture. Granted, to play the RH an octave higher would place it above the solo M part, thereby reproducing the instrument-above-voice, consort-song arrangement found in Chirk. Yet, if the solo verses are sung by a T, that arrangement obtains without playing the RH an octave higher.

In the second, fourth and fifth verses, both hands in *T* 791 are a fourth below *Occ* 6, suggesting the use of 5' pitch, either on one or two manuals, as desired.

Correct if both accompaniments were intended for M. Given the increasing likelihood that Batten's accompaniment was intended for T, a 10-foot registration—implied by the use of a G2 clef for the RH part—would still be preferable for the verses in question.

Further registration changes are implied by the pitches at which the upper chorus line is notated in *T* 791. The choir-pitch part in *Occ* 6 doubles the upper line of the choir—the 'meane' part—at the unison throughout all the full or chorus sections, a procedure that is absolutely standard in all Elizabethan and Jacobean verse anthems. In the first chorus, however, *T* 791 is written a fourth below *Occ* 6. By drawing a 5' stop, therefore, the organist using *T* 791 would be doubling the choir 'meanes' at the unison; he could well have also used a 10' stop, but in doing so he would have produced what organists today would think of as 16' sub-octave doubling. The decision would have been purely a matter of taste; the point to establish, however, is that the 16' effect would have been possible.

Significantly, it is during this chorus alone that Batten's RH part, otherwise notated in a G2 clef, is notated in a C2 clef. While his motives for introducing such a clef change in a pre-transposed accompaniment of this type are yet to be fathomed, it may be stated that here the customary unison doubling of the M could be obtained simply by playing the RH part an octave higher, as if the C2 clef signified *c*" as opposed to the usual *c*'. To double the M part at the sub-octave would be contentious.

The *T* 791 organist would have been faced with further registration choices at the start of the second, third and fourth choruses (bars 32, 44 and 49), where his right-hand part is notated a fifth above the upper line of the chorus. Here, surely, a 10' foundation pitch would have been needed; the extent to which upper-work would then have been added to this, at 5', 21/2' and even 1 1/4' pitches, would have depended on the size of the choir, and on the extent to which the words called for bright registrations.

Whatever registration choices Batten may have made, it is extremely doubtful that he executed them whilst actually playing. Rather, the contrasting sonorities signified in all organ-books of the period by the directions ‘cho:’ and ‘vers:’ were most probably secured simply by changing manual, the choruses being accompanied on the great organ and the verses on the chair organ. In ‘When as we sat in Babylon’, Batten’s use of the G2 clef for the RH part of the verse passages suggests that he played them on the 10-foot stopped diapason of the chair organ, since this was the clef he sometimes prefixed to quire-pitch accompaniments in order to ‘sight’ the 5th-higher transposition necessary on a 10-foot stop.³

It is Batten’s notation of the chorus passages of this anthem, however, that proves most instructive. As has already been established, a 10-foot stop is essential both to prevent the LH from sometimes sounding higher than the T and (with the exception of the problematic passage in the C2 clef mentioned above) to keep the RH in unison with the M. Yet it is only with the addition of a 5-foot stop to the 10-foot stop that the satisfactoriness of Batten’s two widely spaced parts is fully revealed. In combination, both stops ensure that the vocal B part is always doubled also at the unison—be it by the 5-foot stop, or (at those moments when the octave-lower doubling of the vocal B part is temporarily suspended) by the 10-foot stop. They further ensure that the vocal M part is doubled also at the octave above—the surest way for the singers of that part actually to hear the doubling.

In sum, the lessons to be learned from Batten’s organ part for ‘When as we sat in Babylon’ are that its verse passages were most likely played on the chair organ’s 10-foot stopped diapason, and its chorus passages on the great organ’s 10-foot diapason and 5-foot principal. Deployed in a bicinium texture, the latter registration resulted in octave-lower doubling of the vocal B part (in so far as was dictated by keyboard compass or admitted by the organist’s ‘taste’) and of the vocal M part an octave higher. At the same time, the combination of 10- and 5-foot stops incorporated unison

³ See, for example, the beginning of the Venite from Byrd’s Great Service, *Ob* MS Tenbury 791, f. 141v.

doubling for the vocal B (by the principal) and for the vocal M (by the diapason). Generally speaking, therefore, when reading from an organ part notated at quire pitch an organist could obtain precisely this texture by transposing the LH a fourth lower and the RH a fifth higher. In that arrangement, the lower limit of the LH (*C*) corresponds precisely with the usual lower limit of the vocal B (*F*), and the upper limit of the RH (*a''*) with the usual upper limit of the vocal M (*d''*).

Whether or not ranks of pipes survive from this period covering the range of colours that are suggested by the Tomkins-Worcester specification has still to be determined. Without such evidence, however, a vital piece of the jigsaw puzzle is missing.

For 'has' read 'had'; for 'is' read 'was'.

AJ 12 April 2011, revised May 2012

When as we sat in Babylon

Ps. 137, versified by William Whittingham (d. 1579)
Music by Richard Farrant (b. c.1525–30, d. 1580)

Draft, experimental edition by Andrew Johnstone

SOURCES AND VARIANTS

New York: Public Library, MSS Mus. Res. *MNZ (Chirk)
(The Chirk Castle Part-Books)
Sole source for the voice parts
24 Medius 4 a' a' q q

Oxford: Christ Church Library, MS Mus. 6
(The Chirk Castle Organ-Book)
Organ part at quire pitch
15 RH 1 b' / 25 all parts 1 sb

Oxford: Bodleian Library, MS Tenbury 791
(The Batten Organ-Book)
Pre-transposed organ part
9 RH 5–6 c'-sharp sb / 14 LH 2 G / 39 LH 5 B / 40 LH 1 E

Editorial notes and rests are shown in small type.

The edition is untransposed, and will sound roughly two-thirds of a tone higher than concert pitch (a' = 440) if performed at Quire pitch (a' = c.475).

THE ORGAN PARTS

The two organ parts to this anthem are of considerable interest *vis-à-vis* texture and transposition in English Reformation organ accompaniments generally.

The Chirk part is notated at Quire pitch, and on a transposing organ would have to be played either a fourth lower on a 5-foot stop or a fifth higher on a 10-foot stop.

Batten's part, however, is notated mostly a fifth higher than shown in this edition, with the exception of bars 21–5, where the right-hand part is notated a fourth lower. The sounding notes shown here would result from playing the whole anthem on a 10-foot stop, and transposing the right-hand part of bars 21–5 an octave higher (as may actually have been signified by the use in this passage alone of a c2 clef; elsewhere, a g2 clef is used).

It is nonetheless possible that Batten intended the verse passages to be accompanied on a 5-foot stop, and they may feasibly be played an octave higher than shown here.

For two inconclusive discussions of these differing organ parts see John Bunker Clark, *Transposition in Seventeenth-Century English Organ Accompaniments and the Transposing Organ* (Detroit, 1974), 48–52, and Peter le Huray, 'The Chirk Castle Partbooks', *Early Music History*, 2 (1982), 17–42 (40–42).

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VERSE

VERSE
 MEDIVS

MEDIUS
 CONTRATENOR

TENOR
 BASSUS

ORGAN
 (CHIRK)

ORGAN
 (BATTEN)

1. When as we sat in Ba - by -
 2. Then they to whom we pris' - ners
 3. But yet if I Je - ru - sa -
 4. There - fore, O Lord, re - mem - ber

5

lon, The ri - vers round a - bout; And in re - mem - brance
 were Said to us taunt - ing - ly: Now let us hear your
 lem Out of my heart let slide, Then let my fin - gers
 now The cur - sed noise and cry That E - dom's sons a -

of Si - on, The tears for grief burst out. We hanged our
 He - brew songs And pleas - ant me - lo - dy. A - las, I said
 quite for - get The warbl - ing harp to guide; And let my
 gainst us made When they razed our ci - ty. Re - mem - ber,

harps and in - stru - ments The wil - low trees up - on; For in that
 we, who once can frame His sorr'w - ful heart to sing The prais - es
 tongue with - in my mouth Be tied for e - ver fast, If that I
 Lord, their cru - el words, When, as with one ac - cord, They cried on,

place, men for their use Had plant - ed ma - ny a one.
 of our liv - ing God Thus un - der a strange king.
 see Je - ru - sa - lem Thy full de - liv' - rance past.
 sack, and raze their walls In de - spite of the Lord.

sic.

21 CHORUS

For in that place, men for their use Had plant - ed ma - ny a one.
 The prais - es of our liv - ing God Thus un - der a strange king.
 If that I joy be - fore I see Thy full de - liv' - rance past.
 They cried on, sack and raze their walls In de - spite of the Lord.

26 VERSE

E'en so shalt thou, O Ba - by - lon, At length to dust be brought:

31 CHORUS

E'en so shalt thou, O Ba - by - lon, At length to dust be brought:

36 VERSE

And hap - ly shall that man be called That our re - venge hath wrought.

The musical score for Verse 36 consists of a vocal line and two piano accompaniment systems. The vocal line is in a single system with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: "And hap - ly shall that man be called That our re - venge hath wrought." The piano accompaniment is in two systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The first system of piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords in the right hand. The second system continues the accompaniment, ending with a final chord marked with a fermata.

41 CHORUS

And hap - py shall that man be called That our re - venge hast wrought.

The musical score for Chorus 41 consists of a vocal line and two piano accompaniment systems. The vocal line is in a single system with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: "And hap - py shall that man be called That our re - venge hast wrought." The piano accompaniment is in two systems, each with a grand staff. The first system of piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords in the right hand. The second system continues the accompaniment, ending with a final chord marked with a fermata.

46 VERSE

Yea, bles - sed shall that man be called That tak'st thy child - ren young

The musical score for Verse 46 consists of a vocal line and two piano accompaniment systems. The vocal line is in a single system with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: "Yea, bles - sed shall that man be called That tak'st thy child - ren young". The piano accompaniment is in two systems, each with a grand staff. The first system of piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords in the right hand. The second system continues the accompaniment, ending with a final chord marked with a fermata.

50 CHORUS

VERSE

Yea, ble - sed shall that man be called That tak - est thy child - ren young To dash their

55

CHORUS

bones a - gainst hard stones Which lie the streets a - mong. To dash their bones a -

61

gainst hard stones Which lie the streets a - mong. A men.