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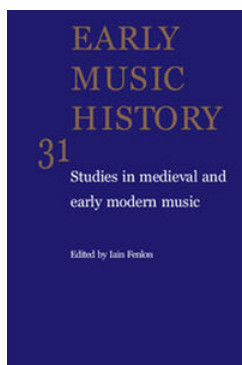
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A GENTLEMAN IN EXILE: LIFE AND BACKGROUND OF THE COMPOSER JOHN RAVENSCROFT

John Ravenscroft (1664/5–1697) is today best known for the fact that in 1695 he published a set of church sonatas that closely imitate Corelli in their style. The discourse around Ravenscroft has ever since focused on these twelve sonatas and the significance of their relationship to their illustrious model, to the exclusion of a later set of sonatas of different kind but equal merit. Ravenscroft's fascinating and unusual biography has likewise been totally ignored. The article examines the background of his distinguished, Catholic-leaning family in England during a long, turbulent period when Catholics were severely disadvantaged and his short but productive period spent in Rome, aided by newly discovered archival documents and a rich variety of other sources, both old and more recent, most of which have previously been overlooked by music historians.

The present article pools the results of investigations, originally independent, made by the two named authors into different aspects of the life of an English composer, John Ravenscroft, who was active in Rome at the end of the seventeenth century. Michael Talbot's interest in Ravenscroft is the by-product of a recent paper discussing the effect of visiting Italy on northern European musicians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,¹ while the starting point of Patrizio Barbieri's interest was the inventory of Ravenscroft's property drawn up after his death in Rome in 1697, which showed him to have been a discerning collector of paintings and violins.²

Since Ravenscroft was reportedly a pupil of Corelli, whose trio sonatas he imitated closely in his own two published sets (nine sonatas from Op. 1 later being mistakenly, perhaps fraudulently, published under the latter's name), his music has been the object of sporadic critical and analytical appraisal from the time of Hawkins onwards. Sadly, and perhaps surprisingly, this interest in the music has not been matched by an interest in Ravenscroft's life, about which standard modern reference works and studies of his music tell us very little over and above what can be gleaned from a perusal of the title pages of the two collections. Moreover, the text

¹ M. Talbot, 'Et in Italia ego: Musicians and the Experience of Italy, 1650–1750', paper read to the concluding conference of the research project MUSICI (Rome, 19–21 Jan. 2012).

² P. Barbieri, 'Ravenscroft and Pasquini: The Art Collections and Instruments of Two Musicians in Late-Baroque Rome', *Music in Art*, 36 (2011), pp. 257–74.

of these title pages has not always been interpreted correctly. For instance, ‘Rederi’, the alias of ‘Ravenscroft’ given on the title page of Op. 1, is not a fancifully invented Italian surname having in common with the original only the initial letter: it is a straightforward Italianisation of a quite different English surname, Rider; and while the title pages of the first (1708) and closely following second (*c.* 1709) editions of Op. 2 establish that the composer was by then no longer living, there is no hint in the modern literature prior to Barbieri’s article that Ravenscroft had in fact died over ten years previously without ever, it seems, returning from Rome to England.

The prime purpose of this article is to provide the first comprehensive account of Ravenscroft’s life: in particular, one that delves into his family background, thereby explaining why he came to be in Rome and shedding light on his existence as a member of a disadvantaged and sometimes actively persecuted Catholic minority in seventeenth-century England. Certainly, there are glaring gaps in this narrative – Ravenscroft’s date of birth and his activities up to the move to Rome in 1688 (or earlier) remain very conjectural – but enough can be pieced together to provide the outlines of a fascinating story that will, we hope, stimulate further research into this singular composer.

PREAMBLE: RAVENSCROFT’S REPUTATION

From Ravenscroft’s lifetime and most of the following century there survives no known comment on the value ascribed to him as a composer or to his musical works, although one may draw certain inferences from the record of the music’s collection and performance. The critical tradition proper begins in 1776 with Hawkins, for whom the focal point was his discovery of a so-called ‘Opera settima’ of Corelli – published in Amsterdam by Michel-Charles Le Cène and purporting to contain works earlier than those in the ‘canonic’ series initiated (in 1681) with Op. 1 – that in reality comprised the first nine sonatas of Ravenscroft’s Op. 1 as published in Rome by Mascardi in 1695.³ Perhaps unaware of the late date of Le Cène’s edition (1730–3) and certainly ignorant of Ravenscroft’s year of death (1697), Hawkins believed the latter to have been a deliberate plagiarist, writing: ‘Ravenscroft professed to imitate Corelli in those Sonatas which Roger published, and hoped to make the world believe were some of the earliest of his work.’⁴ Hawkins was uncomplimentary in general

³ J. Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, 5 vols. (London, 1776), iv, p. 311. Surprisingly, there is no mention at all of John Ravenscroft in Charles Burney’s *A General History of Music* (London, 1776–89).

⁴ Hawkins, *A General History*, iv, p. 318.

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towards the imitators of his idol Corelli, observing sententiously: ‘the experiment [of imitation] has been made, and has failed’.⁵

Hawkins’s view prevailed, without any significant addition of new factual information or modification of critical stance, for a century and a half. The first crack opened when Alfred Einstein, while not suggesting that Ravenscroft’s sonatas were equal to, let alone an improvement on, Corelli’s own, reportedly praised them for the fidelity of their imitation.⁶ This compliment acted as the stimulus for a short article (1957) by William S. Newman, at that time engaged on his panoramic study of the sonata genre, which compared the trio sonatas of the two men in a little more detail. Aware from his study of Ravenscroft’s Op. 2 that the composer was already dead by 1708, Newman exonerated him from the charge of plagiarism, although he was in his turn perhaps a little over-hasty to assume that Le Cène acted in bad faith when he issued the sonatas under Corelli’s name.⁷ Newman describes the Op. 1 sonatas as ‘much like Corelli’s and very skillful, too’; he appears to regard the greater regularity and thematic economy of Ravenscroft’s sonatas in comparison with their model as a strong point (whereas most other modern commentators have attributed it to a lack of imagination), although he concedes: ‘his writing for the violins is idiomatic but not quite as advanced or free as Corelli’s’.⁸ In his study of the Baroque sonata that appeared two years later Newman presented the same content in slightly condensed form.⁹

Two substantial studies of Ravenscroft’s Op. 1 – one focused on source criticism, the other on musical analysis – appeared towards the end of the twentieth century. Fabio Zanzotto (1982) reviewed the sources, printed and manuscript, for this collection, directing his attention especially towards the *editio princeps* by Mascardi, a set of manuscript parts in Florence transmitting the sonatas under Corelli’s name, and the Le Cène edition of sonatas I–IX.¹⁰ He hypothesised a connection between the Florentine manuscript and the Le Cène edition, thereby raising the possibility of exculpating the publisher, and – even more interesting – showed that, in the latter source, many small musical modifications were introduced to the original text,

⁵ Besides Ravenscroft, the contemporary English imitators of Corelli’s trio sonatas included Matthew Novell, William Topham and James Sherard. Italian imitators of Corelli were more numerous, but on the whole less epigonistic.

⁶ See below, n. 92.

⁷ W. S. Newman, ‘Ravenscroft and Corelli’, *Music & Letters*, 38 (1957), pp. 369–70, at 370.

⁸ Newman, ‘Ravenscroft and Corelli’, p. 370.

⁹ W. S. Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1959), pp. 311–12.

¹⁰ F. Zanzotto, ‘Fortune e sfortune dell’epigonismo corelliano: Il caso Giovanni Rederi – Giovanni Ravenscroft, Inglese’, in G. Morelli (ed.), *L’invenzione del gusto: Corelli e Vivaldi. Mutazioni culturali, a Roma e Venezia, nel periodo post-barocco*, ‘Ex Libris del Festival Vivaldi’, 1 (Milan, 1982), pp. 77–92.

perhaps with a view to maximising the stylistic similarity to Corelli. Zanzotto also made an important contribution to Ravenscroft's biography by finding in the Archivio di Stato of Florence the composer's handwritten letter of dedication of the opus to Grand Prince Ferdinando III of Tuscany (which differs in wording, if not very much in substance, from the dedication published with the music) and a minute of the Grand Prince's reply. The second article (1990), by Sergio Durante, compared Ravenscroft's fugal movements with their Corellian counterparts.¹¹ Durante argued, via a close reading of the text, that in this type of movement, at least, Ravenscroft diverged more considerably from Corelli's style than Einstein or Newman would lead one to expect – and usually to his disadvantage.

A reversion to the thoroughly negative stance taken by Hawkins occurs in Peter Allsop's book on Corelli (1999), which finds Ravenscroft's music over-reliant on 'stock harmonies' and 'sequential harmonic devices', as well as being epigonistic in the worst sense.¹² Whether or not future research or the experience of hearing the music performed will mitigate or even overturn this verdict is hard to say. Certainly, more attention needs to be paid to Op. 2, which scholars and performers alike have so far rather overlooked, and there is also a fascinating manuscript collection of fugues attributed to Ravenscroft, briefly described later, which, although by a recently identified earlier composer, may yet have a genuine connection to him.

It is unnecessary here to mention the dozens of passing references in books, articles and dictionary entries that mention Ravenscroft's music. So far as criticism and musical analysis are concerned, the sources discussed above are the main ones, the rest doing little more than recycle the information and views that these transmit.

THE RAVENSCROFTS OF BARNET

Ravenscroft is a toponym derived from the medieval manor of Ravenscroft in the neighbourhood of Middlewich, Cheshire.¹³ The surname was adopted around 1230 by its new owner, Warren de Byley.¹⁴ In the fourteenth century the main branch of the family was located in the north-east

¹¹ S. Durante, 'Ancora del "vero" e "falso" Corelli: Un confronto con i movimenti fugati di Ravenscroft', in P. Petrobelli and G. Staffieri (eds.), *Studi corelliani IV. Atti del quarto congresso internazionale (Fusignano, 4-7 settembre 1986), Quaderni della Rivista Italiana di Musicologia/Società Italiana di Musicologia*, 22 (Florence, 1990), pp. 275-301.

¹² P. Allsop, *Arcangelo Corelli: New Orpheus of our Times* (New York, 1999), pp. 156-7.

¹³ Many variant forms of the surname are documented: these include Rangcroft, Ranscroft, Ravencroft and Ravenscraft. Some of the variants appear to originate in pure scribal caprice.

¹⁴ See W. Ravenscroft, *Some Ravenscrofts* (Milford-on-Sea, 1929), p. 6. This family history and a similar earlier study by the same author and the Revd R. Bathurst Ravenscroft, *The Family of Ravenscroft* (London, 1915), give a useful overview of the family and its numerous branches but tend towards the anecdotal and contain many inaccuracies.

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corner of Wales at Bretton Hall, Flintshire, which lies in the parish of Hawarden, very close to the border with Cheshire and England. Over time, the family acquired through marriage many more properties and landholdings both in the vicinity (such as Broadlane House near Hawarden Castle) and in distant counties. The Bretton branch is ancestral to all the Ravenscrofts with whom this article is concerned.

The family was armigerous: the original and simplest form of its coat of arms is describable in heraldic language as ‘argent a chevron between three ravens’ heads razed sable’.¹⁵ Most male members of the family claimed the title of ‘Gentleman’ or the closely related ‘Esquire’. At the time, these were not mere courtesy titles but precise statements that the holder, although not noble, was of independent means, his income usually derived from landed property. This precluded activity in occupations regarded as manual but permitted involvement in commerce and the professions.

The first figure of importance for our story is Ralph (or Raphe) Ravenscroft of Bretton (born 1475), since all the Ravenscrofts with whom we shall be concerned descend from him.¹⁶ From his younger son John (born *c.* 1507), who founded the Hawarden line, descend both the well-known Jacobean composer, theorist and editor Thomas Ravenscroft (born *c.* 1589) and our John Ravenscroft.¹⁷ From the first John the line leads to the composer Thomas (born *c.* 1589) via Arthur (*c.* 1536–63), who moved to London, and John (1554–1605); from the same man it leads to the composer John via George (born *c.* 1534), Thomas (1563/4–1631), who founded the Barnet branch, James (1596–1680) and another Thomas (1628–1708). These genealogies give us a first inkling of how the same quite compact group of male forenames, all of them highly popular in

¹⁵ Allusion is made to the emblem of three ravens’ heads in the composer Thomas Ravenscroft’s four-part setting of the traditional ballad *The Three Ravens* included in his collection *Melismata* (London, 1611), which is dedicated, appropriately, to his distinguished relatives Thomas and William Ravenscroft of Bretton.

¹⁶ Dates from English sources before the calendar reform of 1752 follow the Julian calendar (Old Style), which in the seventeenth century was ten days behind the Gregorian calendar adopted in all Catholic countries in 1582 or shortly thereafter. In the present article these dates are left unadjusted. A more serious problem arises from the fact that in England prior to 1752 the year commonly advanced on Lady Day (25 Mar.) rather than 1 Jan. Where the day and month (or, in the case of Jan. and Feb., simply the month) are known, the year can tacitly be adjusted, as has occurred throughout this article. Where they are not known – as in the present case, the year of birth of Ralph Ravenscroft – the year is left as it stands, accepting the small but real risk that the true year according to the Modern Style is the following year.

¹⁷ For details of the identity and descent of the composer Thomas Ravenscroft we are indebted to David Mateer, co-editor (with John Morehen) of a forthcoming critical edition of Ravenscroft’s *Rounds, Canons and Songs from Printed Sources*, to be published as vol. 93 of the *Musica Britannica* series, who very kindly let Michael Talbot have advance sight of his preface and corresponded with him over the question.

English society at large during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Thomas – signifying the martyr rather than the apostle – being a favourite of Catholics and those inclined towards Catholicism), circulates in all branches of the Ravenscroft family in each generation, creating endless opportunities for subsequent confusion.

For the sake of completeness, we have to mention a different Thomas, who, since his first outing in 1915,¹⁸ has widely but almost certainly mistakenly been proposed as the Jacobean composer. He is identified as a son of the clergyman Roger Ravenscroft of Bretton (1566–1635), a direct descendant of George (born *c.* 1490), the eldest son of Ralph Ravenscroft, and younger brother of the dedicatees of Thomas's collection *Melismata*. The date claimed for this Thomas's birth, 13 June 1592, accords well with reports of his age in later documents. The problem is, however, that despite extensive searching, no documentation from parish records in Flintshire or Cheshire has turned up to support this identification.¹⁹

Like a sizable proportion of the nobility and gentry in north-west England and Wales, the Ravenscrofts were, as a whole, resistant to the royal supremacy over the church, initiated by Henry VIII in 1534, and therefore to the Anglican church *per se*. How this resistance, and fidelity to Catholic belief, became manifest depended on the individual conscience, on the tradition of the branch of the family to which the individual belonged and on the prevalent political and legal situation, which varied considerably over time, although between 1534 and the completion (for ordinary purposes) of Catholic emancipation in the nineteenth century English Catholics were always subject to legal penalties and other disadvantages (if one excepts the reign of Mary Tudor (1553–8), when, momentarily, the boot was on the other foot). The options for Catholic dissenters were basically five: they could go into exile; they could remain in England but go underground; they could refuse attendance at Anglican services, earning themselves the stigmatised and often punished legal status of 'recusants'; they could become what were sneeringly known as 'church papists', outwardly conforming to Anglicanism but privately retaining Catholic belief and perhaps some aspects of Catholic observance; finally, they could at some point embrace Anglicanism genuinely and merge into the majority population. All these categories are encountered among the Ravenscrofts.

¹⁸ W. Bell Jones, 'The Memorial Inscriptions in Hawarden Parish Church', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 67 [=ns 31] (1915), pp. 169–206, at 173. See also Ravenscroft and Bathurst Ravenscroft, *The Family of Ravenscroft*, p. 9.

¹⁹ On this issue, see I. Payne, 'Thomas Ravenscroft: A Biographical Note', *Musical Times*, 127 (1986), pp. 707–9.

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Before turning our attention specifically to the Ravenscrofts of Barnet, it will be useful to mention some landmark events in the history of anti-Catholic legislation between the accession of Elizabeth I in 1558 and the end of the seventeenth century.²⁰ The year 1559 saw both an Act of Supremacy reconfirming the monarch as Supreme Governor of the English church and an Act of Uniformity enforcing the use of the *Book of Common Prayer* and making attendance at church compulsory, with fines for non-compliance. Particular attention was paid to schools and the two universities in an effort to stamp out the teaching of Catholic doctrine. (Throughout the period of penalisation there was more emphasis on preventing the young from becoming Catholic – in extreme cases, through their forced removal from their parents – than on punishing adults.) In 1570, following the unsuccessful rising of the Northern Earls, the pope excommunicated Elizabeth. From this point onwards, Catholicism was always associated with political disloyalty and work on behalf of Continental Catholic powers (initially, Spain). In 1571 an Act ‘against fugitives over the sea’ was passed; this entailed the forfeiture of all wealth and property of anyone leaving England without permission and not returning within six months of a warning. This was aimed both at those undergoing schooling abroad and at those who might be recruited as agents or missionaries. Since the Reformation had destroyed the diocesan structure and seminaries of the Catholic church, the maintenance of necessarily clandestine Catholic education and practice in England depended increasingly on a flow of native-born missionaries trained on the Continent. The secret arrival of the Jesuits Edmund Campion and Robert Persons in 1580 began the process. This provoked, in 1585, a special Act against Jesuits that treated all incoming priests as traitors to the realm.

Under James I (reigned 1603–25) and Charles I (1625–49) this body of legislation, with periodic small revisions, remained in force. The first two Stuart kings, although not personally hostile to Catholic belief (Charles I had a French Catholic wife), found it convenient as well as politic to maintain the existing situation, especially since memories of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, cementing the majority population’s perception of Catholic disloyalty, made any relaxation of the penalties inadvisable. Ironically, during the Cromwellian Commonwealth (1649–60) following the Civil War the position of Catholics temporarily improved, since the policy of toleration towards Protestant dissenters (Nonconformists) benefited them as well. The Restoration, which began with the installation of Charles II

²⁰ A particularly useful source of information on anti-Catholic legislation and Catholic education during this period is A. F. C. Beales, *Education under Penalty: English Catholic Education from the Reformation to the Fall of James II, 1547–1689* (London, 1963).

as king in 1660, led to the reimposition of absolute Anglican dominance and the penalties against Catholics. His exile in France had increased Charles's personal sympathies for Catholicism, and in the secret Treaty of Dover made with Louis XIV (1670) the king in fact undertook to profess Catholicism publicly at some unspecified future point. In the event, this point never arrived, and in the Test Act of 1673 all holders of public office of any kind were required to take oaths of allegiance to the monarch and of acknowledgement of his supremacy over the church. In 1678 the strange Titus Oates affair (Oates was an adventurer and *agent provocateur* who implicated numerous Catholics in an alleged but probably unfounded 'Popish Plot') reinforced the trope of Catholic conspiracy.

A short time earlier (1675), however, Charles's younger brother and expected successor James had made public avowal of his Catholicism. As Protestants feared, when he came to the throne as James II in 1685, he set about doing whatever he could to reinstate Catholicism as a tolerated religion, if not yet one preferred by the state. Almost immediately, the rebuilding of the Catholic diocesan structures and of the houses of the major religious orders commenced, and two Declarations of Indulgence removing disadvantages from Catholics were forced through against great public opposition in 1687 and 1688. James also had a project to institute a powerful Catholic presence in the universities. Taking advantage of the death of the President of Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1687, he succeeded, against fierce opposition, in having a Catholic Bishop, Bonaventure Gifford, appointed to the post. In September 1688 a group of theologians and scholastics, and in October a second group of group of teachers and students, arrived at the college from Douay. But their residence in Oxford was short-lived: in October anti-Catholic riots broke out all over England; on 5 November William of Orange landed at Torbay with an invading force; on 11 December James fled to France. In the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution the penalties were reintroduced with extra vehemence, and a low point in Catholic fortunes ensued for a century.

English Catholic parents wealthy enough (and sufficiently accepting of all the risks) to send their sons abroad to receive a Catholic education during penal times had a wide choice. A whole network of English-speaking educational institutions, combined with seminaries, sprang up on the Continent.²¹ The oldest and best known was the English College at Douay (a city originally in the Spanish Netherlands but acquired in 1668 by France) founded by Thomas Allen in 1568, which provided an all-round education at all levels from the rudiments up to university degrees. Noteworthy,

²¹ The list in Beales, *Education under Penalty*, pp. 273–4, names thirty-four such institutions founded between 1568 and 1667.

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too, was the *Venerabile*, the English College at Rome founded (again by Allen) in 1579. Provision also existed for the daughters of English Catholics to profess their religion as nuns in an English-speaking milieu. We will mention later the Franciscan convent at Bruges (previously located at Brussels and then Nieuport), where several female Ravenscrofts and their close relatives took the veil.

The Barnet branch of the Ravenscrofts was the most Catholic-inclined (and in its day the most prominent) of the entire family. It was founded by Thomas Ravenscroft (1563/4–1631), who was probably born in Hawarden but early in the seventeenth century erected a house at Fold (or Fould) Farm in South Mimms, Middlesex, near the town of Chipping Barnet.²² This Thomas became a benefactor of Chipping Barnet. He was a governor of Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, founded there in 1573, and financed the building of the vestry in the church of St John the Baptist (also known as Barnet Parish Church), where his son James erected a magnificent monument to him.

This James (1596–1680) outdid his father in philanthropy and during his long life earned the appellation of 'The Great Benefactor'. To this very day, he is commemorated in the Barnet area in many ways, including via street names and the names of a school and a park. James attended Jesus College, Cambridge, from where he graduated in 1616.²³ Training as a barrister, he was admitted to the Inner Temple in 1616 and called to the bar in 1626.²⁴ On 1 January 1628 he married Mary Peck, or Pecke (1603–89), of Spixworth Hall in Norfolk, by whom, between 1628 and 1644, he had seven sons and four daughters, all of whom except the first (Thomas) and last (Edward) were baptised in Alconbury, Huntingdonshire, where the family had its second residence.²⁵ James took the royalist side in the Civil War and reportedly paid a price for it.²⁶

He appears to have conducted business as a lawyer and merchant from a rented house in High Holborn, London. At some unspecified point or

²² On Fold Farm and its environs, see F. T. Baker, *A History of the County of Middlesex* (Victoria History of the Counties of England, 5; London, 1976), pp. 271–82.

²³ J. and J. A. Venn, *Alumni cantabrigienses: A Biographical List of All Known Students, Graduates and Holders of Office at the University of Cambridge from the Earliest Times to 1900*, 2 parts in 10 vols. (Cambridge, 1922–54), i/3, p. 424.

²⁴ Information from The Inner Temple Admissions Database (www.innertemple.org.uk/archive), consulted on 1 Sept. 2011. The Inner Temple was one of four Inns of Court in London, to one of which all barristers had to belong. James's unmarried brother John followed him first to Cambridge (Trinity College) and then to the Inner Temple.

²⁵ This summer retreat was in fact in the neighbouring village of Alconbury Weston.

²⁶ In J. Gillow, *A Literary and Biographical History and Bibliographical Dictionary of the English Catholics from the Break with Rome, in 1534, to the Present Time*, 5 vols. (London, 1885–1902), v, p. 393, we read: 'In the course of the Civil Wars he suffered much for his loyalty, both in person and in estate.'

points between 1644 and the 1670s James spent time on the Continent, perhaps in Brussels, where his brother John (c. 1606–81) was a merchant. He was certainly back in London by 1674, when he made a donation of £100 towards the building of the new St Paul's Cathedral.²⁷

During the Titus Oates affair he was arrested on suspicion of participation in the Popish Plot. Joseph Gillow relates what then happened:²⁸

At his trial he requested the favour to defend himself in Latin, as he had lived much out of England, and could express himself better in that language. Commencing by signing himself with the cross, he delivered a most elegant speech in Latin to the astonishment and confusion of the Court. He was successful and obtained his discharge.

James also occupied himself with charitable works. In 1679 he set aside income from his properties in the east end of London, out of which he established both a fund for the perpetual maintenance of Barnet Parish Church and a group of almshouses for indigent widows and spinsters in Wood Street, Chipping Barnet, which he named the 'Jesus Hospital' in memory of his *alma mater*.²⁹ In 1889 a Masonic lodge in Barnet was established in his name as the 'Ravenscroft Lodge'. Since in the document recording its foundation James was given the title 'Master', one's initial thought is that he himself was a Freemason, but in the absence of any confirmation of this from Masonic records, it seems much more likely that the title merely refers to his position at the head of the Jesus Hospital.³⁰

Gillow also records that James went over formally (if covertly) to Catholicism in later life:³¹

On occasion of a severe illness, when the noon tide of his life was passed, he sent for a priest and was received into the Church. From that time he devoted himself to study and acts of piety, and became the possessor of the finest library of catholic books in England.

Many of the printed books James collected must be among those sold at auction in 1709 after the death of his son Thomas, who had presumably inherited them. Gillow mentions the titles of some manuscript devotional tracts authored by James: 'Of Living Well' (3 volumes); 'Off [*sic*] Life and the Shortness, Uncertainty, and Miseries thereof' (also known as 'Of Dying

²⁷ D. Hughson, *London; being an Accurate History and Description of the British Metropolis and its Neighbourhood*, 6 vols. (London, 1805–9), iii, p. 517.

²⁸ Gillow, *A Literary and Biographical History*, v, p. 393.

²⁹ Hughson, *London*, vi, p. 136. The charitable trusts disbursing the funds, named respectively the Chancel Trust and the Jesus Charity, still exist.

³⁰ We are grateful to Brian Tierney (Curator and Archivist, Provincial Grand Lodge of Hertfordshire) and Peter Aitkenhead (Assistant Librarian at the Library and Museum of Freemasonry, London) for looking into this matter on our behalf.

³¹ Gillow, *A Literary and Biographical History*, v, p. 393.

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Well’); ‘Fears and Terrours [*sic*] of Death’; ‘The Theatre of Afflictions and the Triumphs of Patience’.³²

Amid such moralistic sentiments, it is a relief to learn that on his tombstone in the churchyard of Barnet Parish Church James is described as ‘a man of untarnished integrity, of a happy disposition, exceedingly well known for the greatness of his mind’.

Leaving aside for the moment James’s eldest son Thomas, there is much of interest to say about his ten other children.

Thomasine (1630–80) became at the age of seventeen a Franciscan choir nun at Nieuport, later Bruges.³³ Of Elizabeth (born 1631) nothing more is known.

George (1633–83) achieved fame as a merchant and glass-maker. Sent to Douay College together with his elder brother Thomas in 1643, he presented his thesis in Logic in 1649,³⁴ but cut short his subsequent training for the priesthood, moving in 1651 to his uncle John’s in Brussels.³⁵ Both boys, like all subsequent Ravenscrofts at Douay, adopted the alias of Rider, the surname of a Catholic family of West Bromwich, Staffordshire, to which the Ravenscrofts were related by marriage. It is interesting that in the record of their admission in the journal known as the Fourth Douay Diary their mother Mary is described as ‘schismaticorum’ (i.e. an Anglican), and the reason given for their sending to Douay is partly to escape the commotion of the Civil War (‘ad vitandos tumultus in Anglia’) and partly to acquire a good education (‘ut bonis literis imbuerentur’). George studied at the University of Padua in the late 1650s and lived for several years at Venice, where he acquired a fortune as a merchant, working in partnership with his younger brothers John and Francis.³⁶ Returning to London in 1666 or earlier, George was active as an importer of Venetian glass, lace and currants. In 1674 he took out a patent to manufacture a new, English

³² There is also a tract entitled ‘Christian Oeconomy – Containing the Good Government of the Family’, preserved in the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society Collection (shelfmark: DD\SAS\C/795/HV/111) at the Somerset Heritage Centre, Norton Fitzwarren.

³³ R. Trappes-Lomax, *The English Franciscan Nuns, 1619–1821, and the Friars Minor of the same Province, 1618–1761* (Publications of the Catholic Record Society, 24; London, 1922), pp. 29, 140, 193 and 246.

³⁴ *The Douay College Diaries: Third, Fourth and Fifth, 1598–1654*, ed. E. H. Burton and T. L. Williams, 2 vols. (Publications of the Catholic Record Society, 10–11; London, 1911), ii, pp. 441 and 502.

³⁵ Gillow, *A Literary and Biographical History*, v, p. 393, claims that George took the oath in 1650, became a priest and was stationed in Lincolnshire and Rutlandshire, dying in 1702. It appears that Gillow is here confusing George with his younger brother James, who died in 1703 or 1704 and was certainly a priest.

³⁶ The literature on George Ravenscroft, particularly in connection with his glass-making, is vast. A good starting point is his entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, consultable online at <www.oxforddnb.com>. See also Rosemary Rendel, ‘The True Identity of George Ravenscroft, Glassman’, *Recusant History*, 13 (1975–6), pp. 101–5.

variety of lead crystal glass, on which his fame is based. In view of his status as a gentleman, George probably had little hands-on involvement with the new process, but he had an expert collaborator in the shape of Giacomo (or ‘John Baptiste’) da Costa, a glassmaker from the celebrated Jewish glass-making community (*università*) of Altare in Liguria, whom he had probably recruited in Amsterdam.³⁷ Throughout his life, George was particularly close to his father, whose charitable trusts he helped to administer.

Mary (1634–83) married the baronet Sir Charles Golding in 1656. James (1635–1703/4) arrived in Douay with his younger brother John in 1649. Ordained and later active as a priest,³⁸ he was admitted to the Inner Temple in 1653 (though never called to the bar). John (1637–1716), as we have seen, spent time in Venice as a merchant. Robert, born in 1639, died only a few months old. On Katherine (born 1640) there is no further information. Francis (1641–92) studied at Douay (he is probably identical with a ‘Franciscus Rider’ admitted on 2 February 1648),³⁹ but left on 1 April 1660, because he was considered little suited to literary studies (‘minus ad litterarum studia idoneus’),⁴⁰ to join George as a merchant, first in Venice and later in London.

The last child, Edward (1644–1704), took his talents in a different direction. He was admitted to the Inner Temple in 1659 and to the Middle Temple in 1667 but was never called to the bar. Instead, he became a popular London playwright, specialising in farces.⁴¹

After leaving Douay on 27 January 1648 to rejoin his uncle John in Brussels, Thomas worked as a merchant in London. He married (the date and place are unknown) Magdalen Paris, born to a tenaciously Catholic family resident at Pudding Norton Hall in Norfolk, who became the mother of a single child, John.⁴² At some point after her death Thomas took a second wife, Frances, whose identity remains obscure. It appears from Thomas’s will, dated 23 September 1707, that in later life the couple lived apart, Thomas paying Frances an annual allowance of £60. This will, which was proved on 10 June 1708 following Thomas’s death on 20

³⁷ On George’s glass-making and collaboration with da Costa, see especially D. C. Watts, *A History of Glassmaking in London and its Development on the Thames South Bank* (Barnet, 2009), and Samuel Kurinsky, *The Glassmakers: An Odyssey of the Jews: The First Three Thousand Years* (New York, 1991).

³⁸ See above, n. 35.

³⁹ *The Douay College Diaries: Third, Fourth and Fifth*, ed. Burton and Williams, ii, p. 494.

⁴⁰ *Douai College Documents, 1639–1794*, ed. P. R. Harris (Publications of the Catholic Record Society, 63; St Albans, 1972), p. 15.

⁴¹ The entry for Edward Ravenscroft in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (see above, n. 36) is very informative on his literary output.

⁴² The hall was built in the 1570s by Ferdinando Paris, a leading recusant who reportedly harboured a Catholic priest.

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April that year, provides interesting information of many kinds.⁴³ We learn that Thomas was residing at the time in Orange Street in the parish of St Giles in the Fields, Middlesex, and that he owned lands and houses in the parishes of Fenton and Pidley, Huntingdonshire, and at Colston Basset, Nottinghamshire, which he left to James, a son of his late brother Edward.⁴⁴ Fold Farm and the surrounding estate were left to James Ravenscroft Stroud, a son of his still-living brother John. Thomasine and Mary, two nieces, were to receive substantial monetary bequests on attaining their majority. But the will holds a surprise: Thomas's servant Martha Richardson (wife of Jeremy Richardson, a journeyman tailor) is made his executrix, is left an annuity of £10 payable from the rent and profits of the Colston Basset estate and is granted the lifetime occupancy of Thomas's house, which after her death is to pass to James Ravenscroft Stroud. Thomas adds:

And I doe hereby desire my servant Martha Richardson carefully to looke after my books and pictures dureing her Life and after her decease I give all my said books and pictures to the said James Ravenscroft Stroud son of my brother John Ravenscroft desiring him for my sake not to sell or dispose of them or any of them.

Predictably, in view of the unusual favour shown towards a mere servant, the two male beneficiaries challenged the genuineness of the will, but the probate court upheld its validity.⁴⁵

After his death Thomas was buried in the North Cloister of Westminster Abbey. His pensive epitaph, echoing the moral seriousness of his father James, was thought striking enough to be included in the second volume (containing humorous, whimsical and satirical specimens) of T. Webb's collection of epitaphs.⁴⁶ Its three lines read:

What I gave, I have.
What I spent, I had.
What I left, I lost by not giving it.

Unhappily, Thomas's wish that his library be preserved intact and within the family fulfilled the melancholy prediction of the last line of the epitaph only too exactly. On 24 October 1709 the *Daily Courant* advertised the printer Thomas Ballard's catalogue of the forthcoming auction, beginning on 7 November, of the *Bibliotheca Ravenscroftiana*. This catalogue is very rare, but an example survives in the library of Worcester College,

⁴³ The National Archives, Kew, PROB 11/502, fols. 150–1.

⁴⁴ Since Orange Street, named after the new king, was not built until the 1690s, John cannot have been born in the same house. Thomas must therefore have had at least one earlier London address.

⁴⁵ The National Archives, PROB 18/30/102, *Richardson v. Ravenscroft and Ravenscroft*.

⁴⁶ T. Webb, *A New Select Collection of Epitaphs*, 2 vols. (London, 1775), ii, p. 89.

Oxford.⁴⁷ The over 2,000 volumes it contains are dominated by books in Latin, but there is also a fair quantity of books in French, Italian and Spanish, besides ones in English.⁴⁸ No manuscripts are listed, and there are not many books with printed music, but there is a handful of musical collections and primers. The library contains an example of a 1614 edition of *The Whole Book of Psalms with Tunes*, as well as of Thomas Ravenscroft's *The Booke of Psalms* of 1633 and John Playford's *The Whole Book of Psalms* of 1677. There are two examples of John Playford's *Introduction to the Skill of Musick* (7th edition, 1674; 14th edition, 1700), and two of Christopher Simpson's *A Compendium of Practical Musick in Five Parts* (1677). This duplication suggests that at least one volume was originally intended for practical use by someone other than the collector himself – perhaps the composer John, to whom we now pass.

There is unfortunately no known information from parish records on the exact date and place of John's birth; he may even have been secretly baptised as a Catholic. It is only from Roman sources that we learn that he was born in London in 1664/5. Since he used the alias Rider in Op. 1, and this surname recurs in Roman documents, it is a fair assumption that he attended Douay College, where until 1688 music formed part of the curriculum.⁴⁹ However, the Sixth Douay Diary, covering the years 1676–92, has not survived, so confirmation of this hypothesis is not at present possible. He is probably identical with the John Ravenscroft of St Giles in the Fields, gentleman, who on 30 July 1685, in partnership with one Edward Burdet of Gray's Inn, Middlesex, leased buildings and lands in a number of locations in Wiltshire.⁵⁰ Since his father Thomas was residing in the same parish in 1708, the information in the deed recording this lease suggests that John was still living with him in London three years before we first catch sight of him in Rome. Seeing that his arrival in that city pre-dated the final crises of James II's reign, he may well have gone

⁴⁷ *Bibliotheca Ravenscroftiana, or a Catalogue of the Library of Thomas Ravenscroft Esq. deceas'd Containing many very Ancient and Modern Books in Greek, Latin, French, Italian, and English, in Divinity, History, Philology, &c.* (London, 1709). Worcester College Library, Oxford, shelfmark LRB 6.7 (9). The authors are very grateful to Harry Johnstone for providing information on this volume in private correspondence.

⁴⁸ Some of the books in Italian were probably purchased by the composer John in Italy. One example is a Bolognese edition (1689) of Carlo Cesare Malvasia's *Le pitture di Bologna*.

⁴⁹ Beales, *Education under Penalty*, pp. 138 and 145. In 1632 a certain Robert Bowerman was teaching both singing and the violin to the Douay students. Since Ravenscroft was in Rome by his early twenties, one naturally wonders whether his place of study was not the English College there (where the students employed aliases in similar fashion) rather than Douay. But his name is not listed among its students in W. Kelly, *Liber Ruber Venerabilis Collegii Anglorum de urbe: Annales collegii*, I: *Nomina alumnorum 1631–1783* (Publications of the Catholic Record Society, 40; London, 1943).

⁵⁰ Wiltshire and Swindon Archives, 409/9.

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there originally just as a visitor, deciding to remain only as a result of the Glorious Revolution.

JOHN RAVENSCROFT ALIAS GIOVANNI BATTISTA REDERI IN ROME

Information gleaned from Roman archives does much to fill in the gaps in the composer Ravenscroft's biography, at least during the last ten years of his life. It tells us that he was born in London around 1664/5 as the son of Thomas. From 1688 to 1697 he lived in Rome in a boarding house in Via del Corso, a short distance past the church of S. Giacomo degli Incurabili (today S. Giacomo in Augusta) on the same side of the street, as one goes towards the Piazza del Popolo. In parish censuses he appears as 'Giovanni Battista Rederi', and always in association with the same landlady, who was at least twenty years his senior.⁵¹ Earlier, from 1683 to 1687, this landlady was living in the same house together with her husband Giuseppe Cascapera (born around 1623 in Velletri); Ravenscroft, aged twenty-three, arrived in 1688, at which point Giuseppe Cascapera – obviously in order to make room for him – moved elsewhere. In view of the sparseness of biographical information concerning our composer, it will be useful to show, as Table 1, the complete set of entries for this house from 1688 to 1697.

Ravenscroft lived, then, a few minutes' walking distance from the Piazza di Spagna, which at this time was the heart of the artistic life of the city and the fulcrum of the quarter familiarly called 'Ghetto of the English' (*Ghetto degli Inglesi*). Indeed, most of the tourists from that nation, having entered Rome by the Porta del Popolo (adjoining the square of that name), took up residence in this area, as, incidentally, John Evelyn had earlier done, in 1644–5. Especially during the eighteenth century there sprang up in the neighbourhood of the Piazza di Spagna numerous inns expressly named after England or London, in addition to several watering holes, such as the Caffè Greco (still in existence), that the English frequented (see Figure 1).⁵² Already in those days, and until late in the twentieth

⁵¹ The 'Battista' following 'Giovanni', which appears (in its English form, 'Baptist') in none of the English documents concerning Ravenscroft, is an assertion, doubtless very deliberate, of Catholic identity. One can only speculate whether John was christened with this additional name or whether he adopted it later.

⁵² L. Iannattoni, *Roma e gli Inglesi* (Rome, 1945), pp. 34 and 40; E. Chaney, 'Il Grand Tour e l'evoluzione del libro di viaggio', in A. Wilson and I. Bergamini (eds.), *Grand Tour: Il fascino dell'Italia nel XVIII secolo* (Milan, 1997), pp. 99–133, at 119. Figure 1 shows on the left the Caffè degli Inglesi, on the right the inn Ville de Londres. Since this drawing was prepared with engraving in mind, the position of the two buildings is reversed, as if reflected in a mirror.

Table 1 *Notices of Ravenscroft's residence in furnished lodgings in Via del Corso, Rome*

1688, no. 66	Francesca q ^m Domenico da Rimini, moglie di Giuseppe Cascapera, [anni] 46. Sig. Gio. Batt.a
1689, no. 65	Francesca q ^m Domenico da Rimini, moglie di Giuseppe Cascapera, 47. Sig. Gio. Batt.a
1690, no. 64	Francesca q ^m Domenico da Rimini, moglie di Giuseppe Cascapera, 48. Sig. Gio. Batt.a
1691, no. 69	Francesca q ^m Domenico da Rimini, moglie di Giuseppe Cascapera, 49. Sig. Gio. Batt.a Inglese figlio di Tomaso Rideri, 26
1692, no. 65	Francesca q ^m Domenico da Rimini, moglie di Giuseppe Cascapera, 50. Sig. Gio. Batt.a Inglese figlio di Tomaso Rideri, 27
1693, no. 61	Francesca q ^m Domenico da Rimini, moglie di Giuseppe Cascapera, 51. Sig. Gio. Batt.a Inglese figlio di Tomaso Rideri, 28
1694, no. 72	Francesca q ^m Domenico da Rimini, moglie di Giuseppe Cascapera, 52. Sig. Gio. Batt.a Inglese figlio di Tomaso Rideri, 29
1695, no. 73	Francesca q ^m Domenico da Rimini, moglie di Giuseppe Cascapera, 53. Sig. Gio. Batt.a Inglese figlio di Tomaso Rideri, 30
1696, no. 75	Francesca q ^m Domenico da Rimini, moglie di Giuseppe Cascapera, 54. Gio. Batt.a Inglese figlio di Tomaso Rideri, 31
1697, no. 68	Gio. q ^m Gio. [<i>sic</i>] Rideri Inglese, 35. Francesca moglie di Giuseppe Cascapera da Rimini, 50

SOURCE: Transcribed from I-Rvic, Parrocchia di S. Maria del Popolo, Status animarum, 1688–97, section ‘Corso verso Ripetta’.

century, the palazzo of the British ambassadors was located in the Piazza di Spagna.⁵³

On 9 October 1697, from his sickbed, Ravenscroft dictated his will, in which, finally, his true surname is given. From this will (see the transcription in the Appendix) we learn that his place of birth was London. Attached to it is an inventory of his property, which was drawn up in his presence on the same day. On 12 October he passed away. The same document tells us that his death occurred in his home in Via del Corso, where he received the last rites. He was buried in his parish church of S. Maria del Popolo.⁵⁴

⁵³ [W. Bromley], *Remarks in the Grande Tour of France & Italy. Lately Performed by a Person of Quality* (London, 1692), p. 210.

⁵⁴ Rome, Archivio Storico del Vicariato (hereafter I-Rvic), Parrocchia di S. Maria del Popolo, Liber mortuorum, 1663–1700, fol. 352^r. There is today no tombstone or other memorial to Ravenscroft in this church.

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Figure 1 David Allan, *The arrival of a young English traveller and his suite during carnival in Piazza di Spagna, Rome, c. 1775*. The Royal Collection © 2012 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Die 12 Octobris 1697. Ioannes fil[ius] Ioannis Rideri de Anglicania, aetatis suae annorum 35 circiter in Communione Sanctae Matris Ecclesiae in Via Cursus, in domo suae habitationis, munitus omnibus debitis sacramentis, c[a]elebs objit: cuius corpus in hac Ecclesia sepultum est.

12 October 1697. John, son of John [*sic*] Rider of England, aged about 35, a communicant of Holy Mother Church in Via del Corso, in his own house, with all due sacraments, died unmarried: whose body is buried in this church.

The personal details given in this document contain the same error (‘fil[ius] Ioannis’) and the same vagueness over age (‘annorum 35 circiter’) that we noted in the *Status animarum* (an annual parish census usually prepared during Lent) for 1697. Evidently, the parish priest drew on that document for the death notice. These two entries are at variance with the complete consistency of the same details (like those referring to John’s landlady) in the *Status animarum* entries for earlier years (see Table 1). From the latter, one may safely conclude that John was the son of Thomas and born in 1664 or 1665.

As his executor John named ‘Monsignor Illustrissimo e Reverendissimo Odoardo Vualdegrave [Waldegrave]’, a ‘Clericus Londinensis’ of whom

it is known that in 1699 he was appointed by the Pope as prior of the prestigious church of S. Maria in Via Lata, lying in the stretch of Via del Corso close to the present-day Piazza Venezia. Waldegrave was certainly a person of some distinction, seeing that in the document nominating him Innocent XII describes him as a regular table companion (*continuus commensalis*).⁵⁵ This prelate was, however, no luckier than Ravenscroft, since he died, aged only thirty-one, on 20 April 1702. From the death notice we learn that Edward was the son of the late baronet Charles Waldegrave and that he became, after the death of Innocent XII, a *cameriere d'onore* of Clement XI. He lived in the papal palace on the Quirinale and was buried in S. Maria in Via Lata to the accompaniment of a solemn Mass, in which the choir of the Sistine Chapel participated.⁵⁶

Ill[ustriss]imus, et Rev[erendiss]imus Dominus Odoardus Vvaldegrave filius bonae memoriae Caroli Baronetti Nobilis Angliae S. D. N. Papae Clementis XI Cubicularius ex honore, huiusque Insignis Collegiatae Sanctae Mariae in Via Lata Priore, ac Sacerdos aetatis suae annorum 31 circiter omnibus Ecclesiae sacramentis munitus in Communionem S. M. E. animam Deo reddidit hora 20 in Palatio Quirinali Parochiae SS. Vincentij, et Anastasij in Trivio; corpus die sequenti de nocte ad hanc suam Collegiatam Ecclesiam à se pro sepultura in testamento electa delatum, ibid. die 22 eiusdem funeralibus solemnibus pompa absolutis, ac Missa de Requite per DD. Canonicos decantata cum assistentia totius Camerae Secretae Pontificiae, et musica Cappellae Apostolicae, in sepulcro canonicali cum capsula lignea hora 19 humatum est.

The Most Illustrious and Reverend Mr William Waldegrave, son of the noble English baronet Charles of blessed memory, an honorary valet-de-chambre of His Holiness Pope Clement XI, and prior and priest of this distinguished College of S. Maria in Via Lata, gave up his soul to God aged about 31, after being given the last rites of Holy Mother Church, at 20 hours⁵⁷ in the Quirinal Palace in the parish of SS. Vincent and Anastasius in Trivio; on the following night his body was given over to this, his collegiate church, where he had asked in his will to be buried, and on the next day, 22 [April], his funeral took place with solemn pomp and a Requiem Mass sung by the Canons with the assistance of the entire Camera Secreta Pontificia and the musicians of the Cappella Apostolica [the papal singers of the Sistine Chapel], and he was buried at 19 hours in a canonical tomb with a wooden box.

⁵⁵ Rome, Archivio di Stato (hereafter I-Ras), 30 Not. Cap., uff. 9, vol. 538, fol. 624 (15 Dec. 1699): The nomination by Innocent XII speaks of a 'dilecto filio Odoardo Vualdegrave Clerico Londinense ... et continuo commensali mei' ('my dear son Edward Waldegrave, a cleric of London ... and a regular table companion of mine').

⁵⁶ I-Rvic, Parrocchia di S. Maria in Via Lata, Liber mortuorum, 1660–1766, fol. 53^{r-v} (20 Apr. 1702). Four days later, a certain Bartolomeo Massei was appointed by Clement XI as his successor as prior of S. Maria in Via Lata: I-Ras, 30 Not. Cap., uff. 9, vol. 548, fol. 126 (24 Apr. 1702); I-Rvic, Capitolo di S. Maria in Via Lata, vol. 81, fol. 5^v (24 Apr. 1702). By way of postscript, it may be mentioned that Waldegrave was among the students from Douay College who travelled to Magdalen College, Oxford, in Oct. 1688 (his subject of study was to have been Logic), but, for reasons explained earlier, had to beat a hasty retreat. See Gillow, *A Literary and Biographical History*, iii, p. 169.

⁵⁷ Reckoned according to the traditional Italian timekeeping system (*ore italiane*), in which the 24-hour day commenced at nightfall. On this system, see M. Talbot, 'Ore italiane: The Reckoning of the Time of Day in Pre-Napoleonic Italy', *Italian Studies*, 40 (1985), 51–62.

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Ravenscroft arrived in Rome precisely at a time when, in musical matters, it enjoyed Europe-wide supremacy. In 1686 Richard Lassels, an English tourist who paid several visits to the Eternal City, voiced his admiration for the music he heard there:⁵⁸

Now, as for this music, it is the best in the world, and in the best kind, which is voices. . . . And being in a place where the best music[k] was, I frequented it often with singular satisfaction. Now the best musick I heard, was the musick of the Popes Chappel, consisting of pure voices, without any organ or other instruments: every singer here knowing his part so well, that they seem all to be masters of musick. Then the musick of the Chiesa Nova; of St. Apollinaris; upon St. Cecilies day in the church of that saint, the patroness of singers; of the oratory of St. Marcello every Friday in Lent; of the Jesuits, during the Quarante hore in Shrovetide; of every good church of nuns upon their patrons day; especially that of the nuns of Campo Marzo, where I heard often Fonseca sing so rarely well, that she seemed to me, to cheer up much the church in its combats; and to make the church Militant, either look like the church Triumphant, or long for it. In a word, whosoever loves musick, and hears but once this of Rome, thinks he hath made a saving journey to Rome, and is well payed for all his pains of coming so far.

According to Hans Joachim Marx, as late as 1707 Handel, on his arrival in Rome, ‘found a musical culture whose artistic level surpassed that of all other European capitals’.⁵⁹

In his *Memoirs of Music* (written c. 1726–8) Roger North observes: ‘most of the yong nobillity and gentry that have travelled into Itally affected to learne of Corelli, and brought home with them such favour for the Itallian musick, as hath given it possession of our pernassus [*sic*]’.⁶⁰ The ‘molt’illustre Signor Giovanni Ravenscroft figlio del Signor Tomasso da Londra’, as his will styles him (see Appendix 1), certainly belonged socially to this group: indeed, his Op. 1, published by Mascardi in Rome in 1695⁶¹ and dedicated to Ferdinando III de’ Medici (with whom, however,

⁵⁸ R. Lassels, *The Voyage of Italy or, A Compleat Journey through Italy, in Two Parts* (London, 1686), ii, pp. 155–6.

⁵⁹ H. J. Marx, ‘The Instrumentation of Handel’s Early Italian Works’, *Early Music*, 16 (1988), pp. 496–505, at 496.

⁶⁰ R. North, *Memoirs of Music*, ed. E. F. Rimbault (London, 1846), p. 129.

⁶¹ RISM R 446. The sonatas proved popular: Estienne Roger brought out his own edition in Amsterdam in 1698 (RISM R 447: later issues have the catalogue number 253). There is a possibility (arising from an entry in his catalogue of c. 1698) that Marino Silvani in Bologna produced an independent edition, although the probability is that he merely marketed an existing edition, perhaps Roger’s. We commented earlier on the partial and somewhat modified reprint by Le Cène under Corelli’s name (RISM R 447a / C 3896). It is interesting that one of the four extant contemporary manuscript sources of the sonatas (I-Fc, MS B. 1606) already credits the authorship to Corelli, while another (D-Bsb, Mus. ms. 18146/8) makes Caldara the composer, and a third (A-Wn, EM 84) is headed ‘Del Sig[no]re L. D. J. M.S.’, describing the author as ‘Inglese allievo d’Arcangelo Corelli’. Was the string of initials perhaps a misinterpretation (as a personal name) of a pious Catholic gesture in the form of a religious motto such as ‘Laus Deo Jesu Mariaeque Semper’?

he seems not to have had any direct relationship), constitutes, as we noted earlier, a perfect paradigm of Corellian style. In his preface to this collection of *Sonate a tre* Ravenscroft pointedly styles himself an amateur rather than a professional, a description supported by the total lack of known documentary evidence for any professional activity – an involvement for which he would have needed, at least in the case of performance in churches, to be a member of the Roman guild of professional musicians, the Congregazione di S. Cecilia.⁶² If we then consider that despite his lively activity as an amateur musician and (as we shall see shortly) as an art collector, he owed at the time of his death only the last instalment of the rent for his lodgings, we may reasonably conclude that the source of his income was his family, a supposition only reinforced by the fact that he named ‘Signor Tomasso Ravenscroft suo amatissimo padre’ as his universal heir (see Appendix 1).

The only references to music in the inventory of Ravenscroft’s possessions concern unspecified musical works and ‘cinque violini fatti di mano di Mattheo Albon, con due archi per sonare’ (‘five violins made by Mattheo Albon, with two bows’).⁶³ Two violins by the Tyrolese maker Mathias Alban (also Albani, Albano, born Caldaro/Katern 1621, died Bolzano/Bozen 1712) are listed in the same year, 1697, among the four left by the Roman musician Carlo Mannelli, also known as ‘Carlo del violino’, a fact confirming the esteem in which this maker was held.⁶⁴ Further, at least one violin by him was owned by a pupil of Mannelli, Nicola Cosimi. The autograph accounts of the second violinist – dated 12 January 1702, when he was already working in London – record payment to him from an English pupil ‘per il violino di Mattia Albò che gl’ò portato da Roma’ (‘for the violin by Mattia Albò that I brought him from Rome’). Amnden, this pupil, returned it on 20 April 1704 as part-payment for his violin lessons, on which occasion Cosimi called it ‘un violino di Mattia Albò mediochre’ (‘an indifferent violin by Mattia Albò’) and noted that it was

⁶² Zanzotto, ‘Fortune e sfortune dell’epigonismo corelliano’, p. 82. The title page, dedication and preface of Op. 1 are transcribed also in C. Sartori, *Bibliografia della musica strumentale italiana stampata in Italia fino al 1700* (Florence, 1952), p. 585. The full phrase reads ‘il quale esce da una penna dilettante non professoria’ (‘which is the product of an amateur, not a professional, pen’).

⁶³ I-Ras, 30 Not. Cap., uff. 8, vol. 225 (not. successor quondam Josephi Pasquarucci), fol. 669^r (9 Oct. 1697). The property list is transcribed in full in Barbieri, ‘John Ravenscroft and Bernardo Pasquini’, forthcoming.

⁶⁴ A. D’Ovidio, ‘*Sonate a tre d’altri stili*: Carlo Mannelli violinista nella Roma di fine Seicento’, *Recercare*, 19 (2007), pp. 147–203, at 158–9 and 193: ‘uno [violino] di Cremona, l’altro di Paolo Maggini, e due di Mattia Albano con quattro archi di serpentario’ (‘one [violin] from Cremona, the other by Paolo Maggini, and two by Mattia Albano with four bows of snake-wood’).

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‘per vendere’ (‘to be sold’).⁶⁵ The references just mentioned are therefore further pieces of evidence supporting the supposed presence of Albano in Rome to add to that supplied by the label found in one of his violins: ‘Matthias Albano fece in Roma 1668’.⁶⁶ From recent archival discoveries we also learn that this maker worked in the shop of two noted makers active in Rome: Martin Artz (1665) and Andrea Portoghese (1666).⁶⁷

In all probability, Ravenscroft knew two makers whose shops were close to his house: Giacomo Ertlè (in Via del Corso, in the stretch lying between the churches of S. Carlo and S. Giacomo) and Leone Ceroni (in the neighbouring Via di Ripetta).⁶⁸

There is no further biographical information of musical relevance concerning Ravenscroft in Rome. In his will and inventory the only references to persons of his acquaintance, apart from his executor, are to two painters with whom he had business dealings, as we shall shortly learn. In contrast to many Roman wills of the period, there are no mentions

⁶⁵ L. Lindgren, ‘Nicola Cosimi in London, 1701–1705’, *Studi Musicali*, 11 (1982), pp. 229–48, at 247. The inventory of the property left by Nicola Cosimi to the Oratorian fathers of the Chiesa Nuova is preserved in I-Ras, Notai A.C., vol. 5150, fol. 601 (24 May 1717). This lists two violins without mentioning the maker’s name and (fol. 619^v) ‘Un flauto di canna d’India, et avorio con sua saccoccia di tela’ (‘a flute [or recorder?] of Indian cane and ivory with its canvas bag’). Further (fol. 620^r), ‘Diversi libri di sonate, parte legati, e parte sciolti, e parte manoscritti, e parte impressi in diverse forme’ (‘Various books of sonatas, partly bound and partly unbound, partly manuscript and partly printed in different ways’): their titles are not given, however. Cosimi’s will (dated 7 Dec. 1714) was opened on 31 Mar. 1717, together with a codicil of 20 Feb. 1717 (I-Ras, Notai A.C., vol. 5149, fols. 647^r and 651^r respectively). On fol. 647^r Porfirio and Angelo Cosimi declare: ‘heri circa horam secundam cum dimidio noctis, sicuti Altissimo placuit, D. Nicolaum Hieronimum de Cosimis eorum fratrem uterinum naturae debitum persolvisse’ (‘yesterday around the second hour and a half of the night, as it pleased the Almighty, Signor Nicola Girolamo Cosimi their brother by the same mother passed away’). Bearing in mind that the hour of death was described according to *ore italiane* (see above, n. 57), we may assert that the exact time of Nicola Cosimi’s death, previously unknown, was the evening of 30 Mar. 1717. Among the persons mentioned in the will is ‘Pietro Paolo Bencini maestro di cappella della Chiesa Nuova’, to whom Cosimi leaves a tobacco pouch as a ‘piccola memoria della nostra ammicitia’ (‘small souvenir of our friendship’).

⁶⁶ L. Forino, *Il violoncello* . . . (2nd edn, Milan, 1930), pp. 99–100 (label seen by him on ‘un bel violino autentico’). On this maker, see also R. Vannes, *Dictionnaire universel des luthiers* (2nd edn, Brussels, 1951), p. 4 (‘Alban ou Albani Mathias’), and C. Beare, ‘Albani, Mathias’, in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edn, ed. S. Stanley and J. Tyrrell, 29 vols. (London, 2001), i, p. 282.

⁶⁷ See S. Franchi, *Le botteghe d’arte e la topografia storico-urbanistica di una zona di Roma dalla fine del XVI secolo a oggi* (Rome, 2001), p. 19, and the slightly more recent article by B. Hentrich, ‘Nuove notizie sui liutai tedeschi operanti a Roma’, *Recercare*, 13 (2001), pp. 249–55, at 254. Until 2001 the presence in Rome of this maker was not established: see Vannes, *Dictionnaire universel des luthiers*, p. 4 (‘Alban ou Albani Mathias’), and Beare, ‘Albani, Mathias’.

⁶⁸ I-Rvic, Parrocchia di S. Lorenzo in Lucina, Status animarum, anno 1693: fols. 52^v and 92^v respectively. On these makers, see P. Barbieri, ‘Cembalaro, organaro, chitarraro e fabbricatore di corde armoniche nella *Polyanthea technica* di Pinaroli (1718–32). Con notizie sui liutai e cembalari operanti a Roma’, *Recercare*, 1 (1989), pp. 123–209, at 186 (Ceroni, Ceroni) and 189 (Ertlè, Ertel, Erkle), also viewable at <www.patriziobarbieri.it/pdf/pirotta.pdf>.

of friends, servants, colleagues or teachers – not even a little present or souvenir for the landlady who lived with him and had looked after him for almost ten years. There is nothing to connect him with the musical life of the city, not even among the pictures in his collection, which are totally devoid of portraits (in contrast to the collections of Pasquini, Mannelli and Cosimi).⁶⁹ The impression is of a strongly introverted personality. The fact that, like Mannelli and Cosimi, he owned a number of violins by a maker who had not been active in Rome for some time makes one wonder whether he did not have some kind of personal link to these two. Although no contemporary source bears witness to a personal relationship with Corelli (leaving aside the claim, perhaps merely speculative, in the Vienna manuscript of Op. 1 that Ravenscroft was his pupil),⁷⁰ it is clear that Corelli was at least close to Cosimi, seeing that the latter's property list records as its sole portrait (apart from the two of Cosimi himself) one of the master of Fusignano.

Ravenscroft lived during a period when some of the leading professional violinists were on the verge of leaving Rome for London. Indeed, Nicola Cosimi, teaming up with the young cellist Nicola Francesco Haim, departed in 1701 for that city.⁷¹ Gasparo Visconti (known in England as 'Gasparini' or 'Gasperini'), another associate of Cosimi, made the move the following year.⁷² In view of his apparent detachment from the social

⁶⁹ Barbieri, 'John Ravenscroft and Bernardo Pasquini' (on the 156 pictures left by Pasquini); D'Ovidio, '*Sonate a tre d'altri stili*', pp. 188–200 (on the many pictures left by Mannelli, none of great commercial value, among which are various portraits). On Cosimi's inventory, see above, n. 65; this lists a portrait of Corelli and two of Cosimi himself, as well as 'un ritratto ovato rappresentante il milord Bedford in habito militare di un palmo in circa' ('an oval portrait representing Milord Bedford in military dress measuring about a palm') – this being the person in whose service he had been during his sojourn in England.

⁷⁰ See above, n. 61.

⁷¹ On Haim and Cosimi, see Lindgren, 'Nicola Cosimi in London, 1701–1705', and the same author's 'The Great Influx of Italians and their Instrumental Music into London, 1701–1710', in G. Barnett, A. D'Ovidio and S. La Via (eds.), *Arcangelo Corelli fra mito e realtà storica: Nuove prospettive d'indagine musicologica e interdisciplinare nel 350° anniversario della nascita. Atti del congresso internazionale di studi, Fusignano, 11–14 settembre 2003* (Historiae musicae cultores, 111; Florence, 2007), pp. 19–484, at 447.

⁷² On the violinist Visconti, a pupil of Corelli who arrived in London in the summer of 1702, see Lindgren, 'The Great Influx', pp. 447, 460–1 and 473. In 1701–2 'Gasparo Visconti suonator di violino' is recorded as living in Rome with Cardinal Benedetto Pamphilj; I-Rvic, Parrocchia di S. Maria in Via Lata, Status animarum, anno 1700 (fol. 129^v), and anno 1701 (fol. 138^r). There is an extensive literature on Visconti's productive sojourn in London (1702–6), where in 1704 he married Ebenezer (Cristina) Steffkins, from a famous family of viol players. See especially P. Barbieri, *Enharmonic Instruments and Music, 1470–1900* (Latina, 2008), p. 176, in relation to his participation, together with Cristina's father and uncle, in a demonstration at the Royal Society of a new system of fretting for the viol. Visconti's London address after his marriage was 'in Fetter Lane at Mr Hoskins house next door to the White Horse Inn by Holborn' (letter from Haim to Humphrey Wanley, GB-Lbl, Harley 3779, fols. 30–1).

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life of Rome and the fact that he remained throughout his ten-year sojourn in lodgings, one wonders whether Ravenscroft harboured thoughts of eventually returning to England. Of course, unlike the Italian professional violinists, he had no financial incentive to live in England rather than Italy, but his main reason for staying away is likely to have been, on the positive side, the uniquely inspiring (for Catholics) religious climate of Rome and its thriving musical life, and, on the negative side, the real disadvantages and even dangers he faced in his native country if he practised his religion openly there.

We must finally consider Ravenscroft's activity as an art collector. The collecting of pictures was a highly fashionable activity among the leading Roman families of that time. This is shown by the annual exhibitions, which, at least between 1680 and 1725, the academician Giuseppe Ghezzi organised in the church of S. Salvatore in Lauro, where even Arcangelo Corelli took part. Other musicians, too, were caught up in the universal mania for collecting pictures: among them, Bernardo Pasquini, our Ravenscroft, Nicola Cosimi, Angelo Olivieri and Bonaventura Argenti. Ravenscroft's collection comprised forty-four works by contemporary artists active in Rome, who include Jan Frans van Bloemen, Giuseppe Bartolomeo Chiari, Giuseppe Consiglieri, Michelangelo Corbi, Gaspard Dughet, Dirk Theodor Helmbreker, Filippo Lauri, Jan Remigius Leemput (known in Rome as Giovanni Remigi), Jan Momper and Salvator Rosa. This is a notable collection, when one considers that it was probably put together in a mere ten years and must have entailed a considerable financial outlay.⁷³

Ravenscroft lived only a short distance from the painters' quarter, which, just as today, was centred on Via del Babuino and Via Margutta, both of which lie between the Piazza di Spagna and the Piazza del Popolo. He was therefore in a good position to establish personal relations with many of the artists represented in his collection, some of whom predeceased him by a few years. A special word is needed on Giovanni Bartolomeo Chiari (born Rome, 1654; died Rome, 1727), since it was he who executed the actual picture used for the engraved vignette showing a lyre-playing Orpheus surrounded by stringed instruments and the Medici arms that appeared in 1695 on the title page of Op. 1. Not previously identified, this picture (see Figure 2) needs to be added to Chiari's oeuvre. In fact, given that in his property list Ravenscroft claims to have paid Chiari 20 scudi in advance for 'un quadro che gli deve fare' ('a painting that he is to do'), one wonders whether this is not a version in oils of the engraving

⁷³ It is described and discussed in detail in Barbieri, 'Ravenscroft and Pasquini', pp. 259–62 and 271.

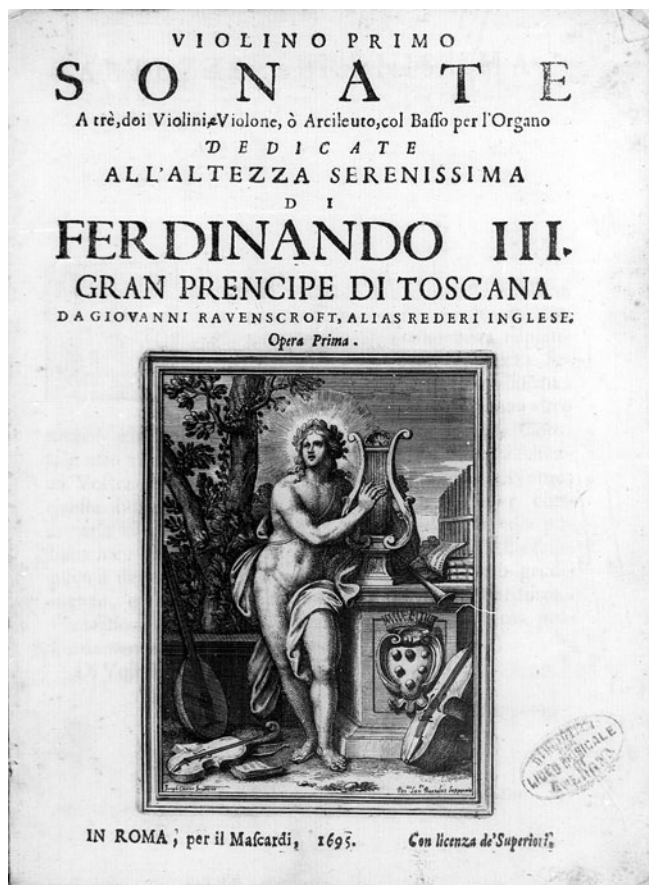


Figure 2 Title page of Ravenscroft's Op. 1, engraved after a picture by Giuseppe Chiari. Museo Internazionale e Biblioteca della Musica, Bologna

(presumably copied from a preliminary drawing), which is shown, perhaps significantly, with a full frame surround.⁷⁴

Ravenscroft had a special liking for Filippo Lauri (born Rome, 1623; died Rome, 1694), an internationally known artist of Flemish parentage (his father, also a painter, was Balthasar Lawers). Until his death, Lauri lived in Via dei Greci, also only a few minutes away from Ravenscroft's lodgings. This painter, incidentally, had musical interests: in his studio

⁷⁴ A lyre similar to the one depicted in Figure 2 occurs in another work by Chiari, 'Musica'. See B. Kerber, 'Giuseppe Bartolomeo Chiari', *Art Bulletin*, 50 (1968), pp. 75–86, Fig. 12.

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he kept a two-register harpsichord.⁷⁵ Ravenscroft owned as many as seventeen works by him – unsurprisingly, since the two men shared a predilection for Arcadian and mythological subjects.⁷⁶ Among the paintings by Lauri in the collection is an *Ecstasy of St Francis* also featuring a violin-playing angel, a work that the composer bequeathed to his executor Waldegrave (the rest of the collection, as we saw, passed to his father). Strangely, Waldegrave's own similar property list (1702) has no trace of the *Ecstasy*.⁷⁷

Ravenscroft had personal knowledge also of Jan Remigius Leemput (rendered in Italian as Giovanni Remigi by turning the second forename into a surname), who lived in Via del Babuino and died there in 1695. In addition to listing one painting by Remigi, Ravenscroft mentions the artist's Roman wife, Claudia Simonetti, on fol. 725^v of the inventory:⁷⁸

Dui rametti piccoli di mezzo palmo longhi, dipinti da Monsù Momper con cornice nera, asserendo detto S.^r Giovanni [Ravenscroft] haverli lui riscossi, per ordine della S.^{ra} Claudia Simonetti, che stavano appresso la vedova di Monsù Theodoro [Helmbreker] pittore, e pagati giuli ventuno moneta del proprio d'esso S.^r Giovanni, dichiarando ritenersi hora in pegno per detti scudi 2.10 moneta.

Two miniatures on copper, half a palm in length, painted by Monsieur Momper with a black frame, the said Signor Giovanni [Ravenscroft] claiming to have redeemed them at the request of Signora Claudia Simonetti, after they had been in the custody of the widow of the painter Monsieur Theodoro [Helmbreker], and for which he paid 21 giuli from his own pocket, stating now that he will keep them as a pledge for these 2.10 scudi.

⁷⁵ Recorded in the will of Filippo Lauri, 'pittore celebre in Roma', drawn up in his house in Via dei Greci (I-Ras, 30 Not. Cap., uff. 10, vol. 719, fol. 443 (17 Sept. 1694), as first noted in L. Pascoli, *Vite de' pittori, scultori, ed architetti moderni*, ed. V. Martinelli (Perugia, 1992), p. 589. On the contents of the inventory, see I-Ras, 30 Not. Cap., uff. 10, vol. 310, fol. 274 (11 Dec. 1694). This inventory covers only the artist's studio (in addition to 'un cimbalo con cassa bianca à doi registri con suoi piedi', it lists various drawings and seventy-one paintings by unspecified artists). The location of Lauri's house is given in I-Rvic, Parrocchia di S. Lorenzo in Lucina, Status animarum, anno 1693, fol. 33^r, as 'Strada delli Greci verso il Corso mano destra' ('on the right-hand side of Strada dei Greci as one goes towards the Corso'); in that year, a widowed sister and a forty-year-old niece are listed for the same address.

⁷⁶ On Lauri's style, see G. Sestieri, *Repertorio della pittura romana della fine del Seicento e del Settecento* (Archivi di arte antica, 1; Turin, 1994), p. 104.

⁷⁷ I-Ras, 30 Not. Cap., uff. 29, vol. 291, fol. 601 (20 Apr. 1702), 'Inventario dei beni del q[uondam] Odoardo Vualdegrave', prepared at the request of 'Eques Ioannes Chirichelli', his executor. The list contains only paintings of small value, which include 'Un ritratto di N. S. Clemente XI e un altro di Innocentio 12' ('A portrait of His Holiness Clement XI and another of Innocent 12'), these being the two popes he had served. His quarters in the papal palazzo on the Quirinale comprised a three-room apartment (one room was for servants), a kitchen and a stable (for which two horses and a saddle are listed).

⁷⁸ I-Rvic, Parrocchia di S. Maria del Popolo, Status animarum, anno 1695, Via del Babuino: 'no 58: Giovanni Remigij fiamengho; Claudia Romana q^m Giorgio Simonetti moglie, [anni] 62; Ferdinando figlio, 23; [two other sons]'.

A son of the same painter, Ferdinando Remigi,⁷⁹ was among the witnesses to Ravenscroft's inventory and will.

RAVENSCROFT'S LEGACY

News of John's death reached England quickly, perhaps as a consequence of the shipment home of his effects. The official manuscript report of the heraldic visitation of Norfolk in 1664, which contains many later additions, inserts into the genealogy of the Paris family 'John Ravenscroft dyed at Rome 9 Oct. 1697 unmar[ried]' and into that of the Ravenscroft family 'John only child died at Rome 9 Oct. 1697, s[in]e p[role]'.⁸⁰ The quoted date is actually that of John's will, not his death, from which one may conclude that this document was the source of the information. The same information was repeated without alteration in the third volume (1769) of Francis Blomefield's historical survey of Norfolk.⁸¹

John was remembered by his family in a particularly fitting way. Among the musical manuscripts acquired after his death by his father must have been a set, ready for publication, of six chamber sonatas in three parts following on, *alla Corelli*, from the church sonatas of Op. 1. These were published on 10 January 1708 by the London bookseller Isaac Vaillant, brother of the François Vaillant who was Estienne Roger's appointed agent. The sonatas were advertised the same day in the *Post Boy*. Their title page, featuring a Latin motto commemorating the composer (which can be rendered in English as 'Virtue [with the added meaning of virtuosity] lives on after death'), is worded in the advertisement: 'Sonata [*sic*] di Camera, a doi Violini, col Basso Continuo. Del Sig. Giovanni Ravenscroft, Englese [*sic*]. Opera Secunda. Vivit post Funera Virtus. Fairly Engrav'd, Price 4s'.⁸² There is no small irony in the fact that Thomas, or whichever other family member financed the publication, enlisted the help of a French Huguenot refugee to publish the music of an English Catholic exile. A new edition, 'engraven in a better character and more correct than the former edition', was produced very quickly – perhaps later the same year – by John Walsh and his associates John Hare and Peter Randall, under the description of 'Sonatas or Chamber Aires'.⁸³ Later still, but

⁷⁹ See previous note.

⁸⁰ Transcribed in *The Visitation of Norfolk anno Domini 1664 made by Sir Edward Sysse Knt. Clarendon King of Arms*, ed. A. W. Hughes Clarke and A. Campling, 2 vols. ([London], 1934), pp. 155 and 180. Heraldic visitations were periodic tours of inspection of counties to establish the right of persons to bear arms.

⁸¹ F. Blomefield [continued by C. Parkin], *An Essay towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*, 5 vols. (Fersfield, then Norwich, then London, 1739–75), iii, p. 805n.

⁸² RISM R 448. The wording of the advertisement is taken directly from the title page.

⁸³ RISM R 449; Smith 377.

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not after 1712, Estienne Roger brought out his own edition, a 'seconde edition corrigée trez exactement sur la partition', which was augmented by four sonatas by Neapolitan composers: two by Giovanni Antonio Guido and two by Pietro Marchitelli.⁸⁴

In England, Ravenscroft's Op. 2 seems to have been more popular than Op. 1; the fact that it existed in locally produced editions doubtless played its part. An example of the Vaillant edition today held by Magdalene College Old Library, Cambridge, originated in the collection of the Ferrar family, which between *c.* 1690 and 1710 was prominent in a Cecilian Music Society in the coaching town of Stamford in Lincolnshire.⁸⁵ Hawkins tells us that Thomas Britton, the 'small coal man' who held concerts at his own house, owned an example of 'Ravenscroft's Ayres', which must refer to the Walsh edition.⁸⁶

Very soon, this brief revival of interest in Ravenscroft's music was over, and the only musician named 'John Ravenscroft' in public view was a humbler, probably only distantly related, namesake: a wait (civic musician) of Tower Hamlets who played in the band at Goodman's Fields Theatre in Stepney, composed a few songs and a great many hornpipes, and in later life (as he stated when acting as a character witness in a trial at the Old Bailey in 1745) may have kept a coffee-house in Smithfield.⁸⁷

But there is an unexpected postscript. Near the end of the eighteenth century, when interest in older music, which constituted a kind of counter-canon alongside the dominant canon exemplified by Haydn and Mozart, was enjoying relatively wide currency in England (for example, at the Concerts of Ancient Music), some unknown person took the trouble to write out calligraphically a group of thirteen four-part fugues in open score attributed to a 'Sig[no]r Giov[ann]i Ravenscroft', which would appear to have used as its copy-texts material sent or brought back to England either before or after the composer's death (for the combination of Italian given name and English surname places his identity and location beyond doubt).⁸⁸ In an archaising spirit, the copyist deliberately retains

⁸⁴ RISM R 450. Later examples have the catalogue number 326 engraved on the plates.

⁸⁵ Rebecca Herisson, 'The Origin and Contents of the Magdalene College Partbooks', *RMA Research Chronicle*, 29 (1996), pp. 47–95, at 47 and 94.

⁸⁶ Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, v, p. 80.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 566–9. The identification of this composer with the John Ravenscroft of Smithfield, variously described as a victualler, vintner and wire-drawer in legal reports of the period 1747–50 concerning his imprisonment for bankruptcy, needs further confirmation.

⁸⁸ GB-Lbl, R.M. 23.a.18. The manuscript is written on wove rather than laid paper, which automatically places it in the second half of the century. The catalogue of the Royal Music Collection dates it to the 'late 18th century'. The RISM Online Catalogue of Musical Sources (www.rism.info/en/home.html) is more precise, placing the date of copying in the last decade of the century and specifying viol consort as the intended instrumentation. The second statement is definitely incorrect, for reasons that will become apparent from the discussion below.

many features of what one imagines to have been the original notation: sharps are used instead of natural signs before the note B (a practice particularly favoured in Britain but also current in Italy in the mid-seventeenth century), and breves retain the characteristic old-fashioned shape of a ‘double tilde’ framed by vertical strokes.

The fugues are all through-composed, mono-sectional movements in *alla breve* (4/2) metre. The first is in a kind of ‘deformed’ Phrygian mode with a void key signature, in which F \natural is frequently replaced by F \sharp , and other sharps (before C, D, G and even A) are liberally added even in the absence of explicit chromaticism. The remaining twelve form a cycle based on subjects in each of the twelve ecclesiastical modes as defined in the sixteenth century by Heinrich Glarean. Depending on the chosen tessitura, the notation employs either the ‘natural’ (F4, C4, C3, C1) or the ‘high’ (F3, C3, C2, G2) clef combination.

The style of these pieces is extraordinary. To summarise and simplify: they have a strong affinity of musical language with works of fantasia type composed in the early seventeenth century by composers such as Sweelinck, but their undeviating focus on a single subject (plus counter-subjects), without any change of textural type, metre or tempo en route, brings them much closer to the Italian *ricercar* tradition, as represented by Frescobaldi and his followers.⁸⁹ One is struck by the avoidance, in true *stile antico* spirit, of purely episodic writing – in complete contrast to Ravenscroft’s Corelli-imitating trio sonatas. The long opening fugue, ninety-three bars long, even manages to avoid formal cadencing (after the fashion of Biagio Marini’s *Sonata senza cadenza*) until the very end. Could Ravenscroft really have written in such an archaic and severe style, either because he had received a particularly conservative musical education in England or because, prior to his discovery of Corelli, he had been taught by a similarly backward-looking master in Rome?

Until a point shortly after the submission of this article, the authors believed so, offering the hypothesis (which in retrospect looks rather far-fetched) of a ‘first’ and ‘second’ compositional style in Ravenscroft’s music,

The keyboard destination is confirmed by the fact that the free-standing first fugue appears in score (employing six lines for each of the two staves), headed ‘Pr Mr. John Ravenscroft’, in a keyboard miscellany also containing works by Frescobaldi and Froberger (GB-Cfm, MU MS 652, fols. 11^v–22^v, at 11^v–13^r); we are grateful to Andrew Woolley for drawing our attention to this source, which is discussed in Geoffrey Cox, *Organ Music in Restoration England*, 2 vols. (New York and London, 1989), i, pp. 127–8 and 202–3, and transcribed complete in ii, pp. 229–34. This author observes justly (p. 202) that this fugue (for which he chooses the title ‘Voluntary’) ‘makes a more systematic use of invertible counterpoint than any other Restoration organ work’ and that its ‘systematic use of inverted themes ... is not characteristic of Restoration organ works’; he earlier (p. 199) associates these features with Italian practice. In fact, as we shall see, the piece is certainly Italianate, but probably not English.

⁸⁹ Battiferri’s *Ricercari a 4–6* for organ, Op. 3 (Bologna, 1669), offer a good comparison.

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and even discerning traces of English influence in the works of the first group. We were disabused of this idea through a strange happenstance. Michael Talbot had just produced a published edition of the thirteen fugues, of which John Collins, a specialist in organ music, had early sight. Collins recognised from memory one fugue from the 'modal' set of twelve and through it discovered that the complete cycle of twelve fugues was contained in the collection *Partitura seu tablatura italica* written and published by Johann Klemm in Dresden in 1631.⁹⁰

The chromatic fugue preceding the set in the London manuscript is not included in the Klemm print or known from Continental sources. However, although it is slightly longer than any of the fugues in the 'modal' cycle and tonally a little more modern, it is so similar in overall conception that Klemm must now be considered the prime candidate for its authorship. There is no absolute proof that Ravenscroft is not its composer, but in the changed situation following Collins's discovery his claim is seriously weakened. Naturally, the possibilities are not limited to Klemm and Ravenscroft.

It remains, however, to explain the explicit attribution to Ravenscroft of the chromatic fugue and of the first fugue in the cycle of twelve. Were these acts of deliberate plagiarism or some arbitrary addition or substitution by a copyist or collector? We believe that there is another possible explanation. In the keyboard score of the chromatic fugue held by the Fitzwilliam Reference Library, Cambridge,⁹¹ the piece is headed 'Pr Mr. John Ravenscroft'. Could the enigmatic and unconventional 'Pr' be a contraction of Latin 'Per' in the sense of 'via'? This would suggest an identification of Ravenscroft as the intermediary through whom this music reached England rather than necessarily its author. Such a hypothesis accords well with the fact that the Fitzwilliam volume includes other items with Continental and, significantly, Roman connections, and was in part copied (the copies include that of the chromatic fugue under discussion) by the organist John Harris (1677–1743), who, as a Catholic (his father was the prominent organ-builder Renatus Harris), will most probably have belonged to the same social and musical network as Ravenscroft. The latter could certainly have sent music requested by his circle to England during his residence in Italy, and other musical items will presumably have travelled

⁹⁰ We are most grateful to John Collins for sharing this information with us. As a sad but inevitable result, the edition of the fugues under Ravenscroft's name has been withdrawn from circulation. The music of Klemm's complete collection of 1631, including also its matching sets of two-part and three-part fugues, has been published in a modern edition by John O. Robison in the series *Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era*, 2 vols. (Madison, 1998). Alexander Silbiger's article on Klemm in the *New Grove* (xiii, pp. 667–8) provides an excellent introduction to this little-known composer's distinctive style.

⁹¹ See above, n. 88.

back among his effects after his death. This possibility is certainly one to explore in the future.

Returning to biographical matters, our final task is to assess Ravenscroft's profile as a musician. Clearly, his position is a distinctive one that does not fit neatly into any familiar category. We might be tempted to view him as the 'last recusant composer', which would place him at the end of a long line initiated by Tallis and Byrd and continuing with Bull, Philips and Dering, but unlike all those men he was not a professional musician and held no salaried musical posts. On the other hand, he was unlike other prominent English amateur musicians in choosing to settle permanently in Rome and 'go native'. He must have supported the Jacobite cause, but he did not, to our knowledge, frequent the Stuart court at Saint-Germain-en-Laye or engage in exile politics. The details of how he managed to support himself in Rome, acquiring not a few luxuries, for at least ten years are elusive, but he clearly enjoyed the support of his family, based partly on the Continent and partly in England, where it shielded itself from legal penalties most of the time by outward religious conformity.

Ravenscroft's surviving music would be interesting and revealing even if we did not know the biographical background. With this knowledge, however, we can view him in a new light: as an English gentleman-composer of a very recognisable kind – but, more important, also as one drawn physically and emotionally to Italy for special religious and political reasons in addition to the more ordinary musical and cultural ones. At the time of his arrival in Italy Ravenscroft probably had a modicum of training in the English musical tradition, even if none of his surviving compositions can be connected directly to his homeland; but he was sufficiently young and enterprising to forge an identity as an adept disciple of Corelli. Alfred Einstein's famous quip, reported by Newman, that Ravenscroft's sonatas were 'more like Corelli's than Corelli's own sonatas'⁹² falls into the exaggeration characteristic of most *bons mots* but expresses very felicitously the composer's eagerness to identify fully with his new surroundings and perhaps, also, an exile's awareness that his future, in the event cut tragically short, lay in Italy rather than England.

Rome; University of Liverpool

⁹² Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, p. 311.

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APPENDIX

John Ravenscroft's Will

I-Ras, 30 Not. Cap, uff. 8, vol. 225 (not. successor quondam Josephi Pasquarucci), fols. 668 and 727 (two conjugate folios used as wrapping) (9 October 1697).

[fol. 668^r] Presente, e personalmente costituito il Molto Illustre Signor Giovanni Ravenscroft figlio del Signor Tomasso da Londra dimorante in Roma da molt'anni in quà à me notaio benissimo conosciuto, giacendo in letto ammalato in questa stanza della sua habitatione, sano per la Dio grazia di mente, senso, vedere, et intelletto, benchè infermo di corpo, pensando alla fragilità humana, e che à tutti è preparata la morte, e che s'ha da morire di certo senza dubbio alcuno, e non sapendosi l'hora, e punto d'essa, e quando, per il qual dubbio vuole stare apparecchiato aspettandola di momento in momento, e volendo à quella prevenire con il maggiore apparecchio possibile, mentre che il detto Signor Giovanni stà con i sentimenti [fol. 668^v] et il suo animo rege la mente, spontaneamente et in ogn'altro miglior modo, che puole, e deve etc., hà deliberato, fermato, e stabilito disporre delle sue facoltà, e beni, che Dio benedetto s'è degnato concedergli per sua infinita misericordia in questo mondo, per levare, e troncare le liti, e differenze, che per il più, et particolarmente in questi nostri tempi sogliono nascere trà posterì, successori, e parenti, fare il presente testamento, che la ragione civile lo chiama nuncupativo senza scritti, e chiamando il divino aiuto, nel modo, e forma che segue, cioè.

Primieramente incominciando dall'anima, come più nobile del corpo, e di qualsiasi altra cosa mondana, quella raccomanda all'onnipotente Dio, alla santissima, e gloriosissima sempre Vergine Madre Maria, et à tutti li suoi avvocati, e santi tutti, e spiriti beati della celeste e trionfante corte del Paradiso, pregandoli tutti unitamente, che per li meriti della Passione di Nostro Signore Giesù Cristo vogliano degnarsi appresso S[ua] D[ivina] M[aestà] intercedere il total perdono dei suoi peccati, acciò l'anima sua possa [fol. 727^r] ottenere di stare in eterno consortia in Paradiso, e partecipare della divina gloria.

Il suo corpo doppio separato dall'anima ordina, vuole, e comanda che sia seppellito in quella chiesa, che parerà, e piacerà à Monsignor Illustrissimo, e Reverendissimo Odoardo Vualdegrave, con quella pompa, et altro, celebratione di messe per suffraggio dell'anima sua, et altre spese, se pareranno necessarie al medesimo Monsignore Odoardo, al quale esso signor testatore dà ampla, e piena facoltà, et autorità di poter operare della sua eredità, e fare tutto ciò che sarà necessario dichiarandolo esecutore testamentario di questa sua ultima volontà, con tutte, e singole facoltà necessarie, et opportune, pregandolo d'accettar questa briga per l'amor di Dio, perchè così etc.

Item lascia alla chiesa della sua parrocchia dove morirà, quel che gl'andarà per ragione di seppoltura per una sol volta, perchè così etc.

Item per ragione di legato lascia a Monsignore Illustrissimo suddetto Odoardo Vualdegrave un quadro rappresentante San Francesco in estasi con angeli di misura di mezza testa mano del Signor Lauri per una sol volta, per segno d'affetto, perchè così etc.

[fol. 727^v] Item dichiara non haver debiti di sorte alcuna contratti da lui, se non che deve pagare un mese di pigione della casa, che si compiacerà aggiustarla monsignore

esecutore testamentario, perchè così etc., nè deve dare ad altra persona, e questa dichiarazione detto signor testatore fà, e dice di fare, per scarico della sua coscienza, perchè così etc.

In tutti poi, e singoli suoi beni tanto mobili, come stabili, semoventi, crediti, attioni, e ragioni qualsivoglia, et in qualunque luogo posti, et esistenti, si in detta sua padria, come in Roma presenti, e futuri, suo erede universale, e proprietario fà, istituisce, e con la sua propria bocca hà nominato, e nomina il Signor Tomasso Ravenscroft suo amatissimo padre, al quale per ragione d'institutione, et in ogn'altro miglior modo lascia l'universa sua eredità, non solo in questo, ma in ogni miglior modo.

E questo vuole che sia il suo ultimo testamento, et ultima volontà, quale vuole che vaglia per ragione di testamento come sopra, e se non valesse, vuole vaglia per ragione di codicillo, ò donazione per causa di morte, et in ogni altro miglior modo, che potesse valere etc. Cassando, et annullando altro testamento, et ultima volontà, che avesse fatta con qualsivoglia parole derogatorie delle derogatorie alle derogatorie per l'attione di qualsivoglia notaio, perchè questo vuole che prevaglia à tutti l'altri testamenti, che avesse fatti, non solo mà in ogn'altro miglior modo.

Actum Romae domi Illustrissimae Dominae Com.[itis]sae Castaldae inhabitatae per dictum testatorem posita ad Cursum subtus Venerabilem Ecclesiam Sancti Iacobi Incurabilium tendentem ad Populum iuxta sua notissima latera presentibus ibidem infrascriptis testibus:

1. DD. Gaudio Scipione quondam Actilij ab Aesio,
2. Homobono Sudino quondam Petri Martiri de Sancto Severino,
3. Iosepho Antonio Franco filio Domini Iosephi Mediolanense,
4. Georgeo Anselmo filio quondam Ioannis Mediolanense,
5. Nicolao Antonio Prospero quondam Iosephi de Porcula Montis Alti Dige.^s,
6. Iosepho Mislier filio quondam Antonij Sabauda, et
7. Ferdinando Remigio filio quondam Ioannis Romano, testibus.

[fol. 668^r] In the presence of the Most Illustrious Signor Giovanni Ravenscroft, son of Signor Thomas of London, resident in Rome for many years up till now and known very well to me, his appointed notary, lying ill in bed in this room of his home, by the grace of God sound of mind, sense, sight and intellect, although infirm of body, thinking of human frailty, and that death awaits us all and that one certainly has to die without any doubt, but not knowing the hour and day of one's death, on account of this uncertainty he wishes to be prepared, expecting it at any moment and wishing to anticipate it in as orderly a way as possible, for since the said Signor Giovanni has these intentions [fol. 668^v] and his soul governs his mind, he has spontaneously and in every other possible and fitting way considered, decided and resolved to make arrangements for his property and goods, which blessed God has deigned to grant him through his infinite mercy in this world, and to forestall and cut short the quarrels and disputes that usually, and especially in the present times, arise among heirs, successors and relatives, by drawing up the present will, which civil law calls nuncupative, without documents, and calling upon Divine aid, in the manner and form that follows, that is:

Beginning first with the soul, since this is nobler than the body and than any other worldly thing, he recommends it to God almighty, to the most holy and glorious Mary, ever Virgin, and to all his intercessor saints and saints generally, and to the blessed spirits of the celestial and triumphant court of Paradise, imploring them all that, by the merits of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, they will deign to intercede with His Divine Majesty for the full pardon of his sins, so that his soul will [fol. 727^r] join those in Paradise forever and share in the Divine glory.

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He wishes and commands that after his body is separated from his soul it should be buried in whatever church is thought fitting by the Most Illustrious and Reverend Monsignor Edward Waldegrave, with whatever degree of pomp and similar things or celebration of Masses for the suffrage of his soul and other expenses shall appear necessary to the said Monsignor Edward, to whom he gives ample and full faculty and authority to spend from his legacy and do everything needed, appointing him as the executor of this, his last will, with all the necessary and appropriate individual powers, begging him to accept this task for the love of God, so that etc.

Item he leaves to the church of the parish where he dies whatever is due to it once and for all for his burial, so that etc.

Item by way of a bequest he leaves once and for all to the said Most Illustrious Monsignor Waldegrave a painting by Signor Lauri depicting St Francis in ecstasy with angels, measuring about half a head [*mezza testa*], as a token of affection, so that etc.

[fol. 727^v] Item he declares that he has contracted no debts of any kind except the payment of one month's rent for his lodgings, which Monsignor executor is asked to settle, so that etc.; and he [the executor] is asked not to give money to anyone else, and the testator makes and publishes this declaration for the relief of his conscience, so that etc.

Then with regard to all his assets, collective and individual, whether movable or fixed, such as portable objects, money owing, claims and property of any kind and situated anywhere, whether in his said homeland or in Rome, present or future, he identifies, and by his own mouth has named and now names Signor Thomas Ravenscroft, his most dear father, to whom, as custom and every other proper consideration dictate, he leaves his entire estate, not only in this but also in all other respects.

And he wishes this to be his last testament and will, which he desires to have legal force as expressed above, and should this not be, he wishes it to have the force of a codicil or last wishes concerning his death, and in every other valid way etc. Repudiating and annulling any other testament and last will that he may have made containing any words to the contrary through the action of any notary, since he wishes this will to take precedence over all the others that he may have made, not in this alone but in every other way.

Done at Rome at a house belonging to the Most Illustrious Lady Countess Castaldo inhabited by the said testator lying in the [Via del] Corso below the Venerable Church of S. Giacomo degli Incurabili as one approaches the [Piazza del] Popolo, next to its well-known walls, present being the following witnesses:

[The names of the seven witnesses follow.]