

IDENTIFYING THE UNKNOWN SOURCE OF A PRE-RAMEAU HARMONIC THEORIST: WHO WAS ALEXANDER MALCOLM'S MYSTERIOUS GHOSTWRITER?

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ABSTRACT

Alexander Malcolm (1685–1763) published his monumental Treatise of Musick in Edinburgh in 1721, one year before Rameau published his Traité de l'harmonie. Malcolm's was the first important work on music theory published in Scotland, and it established his musical reputation, influencing theorists and historians for almost a hundred years, both in Europe and in the American colonies. Sir John Hawkins deemed it 'one of the most valuable treatises on the subject of theoretical and practical music to be found in any of the modern languages'. Malcolm's chapter 13 is often cited by music theorists for anticipating the writings of Rameau. However, Malcolm's Introduction states that the thirteenth chapter was communicated to him by a 'modest' friend. Identifying this friend necessitated first determining the author(s) of two rare anonymous contemporaneous treatises, remarkably similar to each other, and one nearly identical to Malcolm's chapter 13. Several writers have speculated on possible authors – two in particular, Alexander Baillie and Alexander Bayne – but none has provided actual evidence. This study identifies the author of these two hitherto anonymous treatises: Malcolm's modest friend.

ALEXANDER MALCOLM AND HIS *TREATISE OF MUSICK*

Alexander Malcolm, the Scottish mathematician and music theorist who lived from 1685 to 1763, was an altogether remarkable man. Not only did he publish a monumental treatise on music theory, entitled *A Treatise of Musick: Speculative, Practical and Historical*,¹ but he also published several mathematical treatises, a bookkeeping treatise and a Latin rudiments book,² all of which were highly regarded and influential during his lifetime and remain so today.³

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1 Alexander Malcolm, *A Treatise of Musick, Speculative, Practical and Historical* (Edinburgh: author, 1721).

2 Alexander Malcolm, *A New Treatise of Arithmetic and Book-Keeping* (Edinburgh: Mosman and Brown for John Paton, 1718); *A New System of Arithmetick, Theoretical and Practical* (London: J. Osborn and T. Longman, 1730); *A Treatise of Book-Keeping or Merchants Accounts* (London: J. Osborn and T. Longman, 1731); and *New Rudiments of the Latin Tongue* (London: author, 1756). Thomas Jefferson owned a copy of Malcolm's *New System of Arithmetick*.

3 Augustus de Morgan, *Arithmetical Books from the Invention of Printing to the Present Time* (London: Taylor and Walton, 1847), 66. Morgan calls Malcolm's *New System of Arithmetick* 'one of the most extensive and erudite books



Malcolm published his *Treatise of Musick* in Edinburgh in 1721, one year before Rameau published his *Traité de l'harmonie*.⁴ Malcolm's was the first important work on music theory published in Scotland, and it established his musical reputation, influencing theorists and historians for almost one hundred years after its publication, both in Europe and the American colonies.⁵ Sir John Hawkins said of Malcolm's treatise:

It is replete with musical erudition. Extensive as the subject is, the author has contrived to bring under consideration all the essential parts of the science. His knowledge of the mathematics has enabled him to discuss, with great clearness and perspicuity, the doctrine of ratios, and other abstract speculations, in the language of a philosopher and a scholar. In a word, it is a work from which a student may derive great advantage, and may be justly deemed one of the most valuable treatises on the subject of theoretical and practical music to be found in any of the modern languages.⁶

In a work of considerable scope, Malcolm broaches the subject of the possibility of equal temperament⁷ and contributes some of the earliest published English discussions of triadic inversion, including the inappropriateness of a second-inversion triad.⁸ Much of what is found in the thirteenth chapter, entitled 'Containing the General Principles and Rules of Harmonic Composition', probably the most 'practical' of all fourteen chapters, can be found in any current theory textbook: Malcolm tells his readers to use contrary motion, avoid parallel or direct octaves or fifths, avoid moving from V to IV and resolve the tritone properly. He further identifies and explains the proper use of non-chordal notes, closely related keys, the process by which the leading note of a new key effects a modulation to that key and how to use pivot chords for modulating. Further, Malcolm explains which bass scale degrees can harmonize a given melody note, and which melodic scale degrees can be used over a given bass note: that is, he provides a preliminary guide to chord succession.⁹

of the last century'. More recently, Michael J. Mepham has written, 'Although Malcolm had emigrated well before the peak of the Enlightenment, his books on mathematics, music and accounting were scholarly, analytical works which deserve recognition as part of the achievements of that movement'. Mepham, 'The Scottish Enlightenment and the Development of Accounting', *The Accounting Historians Journal* 15/2 (1988), 155. In a further testament to his mathematical abilities, in 1760, after having settled in Annapolis, Maryland, Malcolm was appointed by Lord Baltimore as one of the commissioners charged with determining the boundary between Maryland and Pennsylvania (the Mason-Dixon line). Malcolm 'was said to have been one of the most learned mathematicians in the colonies'. Malcolm Lloyd Jr, 'Alexander Malcolm, Writer on Mathematics and Music', *Scottish Notes and Queries*, third series, 6 (1928), 235–236.

4 Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Traité de l'harmonie* (Paris: Ballard, 1722).

5 See J. R. Heintze, 'Alexander Malcolm: Musician, Clergyman, and Schoolmaster', *Maryland Historical Magazine* 73 (1978), 227: 'in the colonies, his treatise was read and praised in both New England and the middle colonies, particularly, Maryland and Virginia'.

6 John Hawkins, *General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, five volumes, volume 5 (London: T. Payne, 1776), 222.

7 Malcolm broaches the subject of equal temperament in chapter 10, but determines it would be impossible to implement, because the numbers involved would be irrational. Nevertheless, he says all practical musicians tune by ear, and that some claim to diminish all fifths by a quarter of a comma, but he doubts anyone is able to do this exactly (*Treatise of Musick*, 306, 312).

8 Malcolm, *Treatise of Musick*, 210–214 (chapter 7). Malcolm explains that while a fourth may be a concord in some circumstances, when sounded against the fundamental (by which he sometimes means the tonic, as we understand it, or the bass note), it is a discord, and therefore is not to be admitted as a harmony.

9 For a fuller discussion of Malcolm's treatise see Louis Chenette, 'Music Theory in the British Isles during the Enlightenment' (PhD dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1967), and Rebecca Herissone, *Music Theory in Seventeenth-Century England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).



This thirteenth chapter is often cited by current music theorists, as it anticipates the writings of Rameau, yet there is no indication Malcolm would have had any knowledge of the composer's theories. It earns high praise from Joel Lester:

Malcolm applied harmonic scale-step norms in a rather different way [from Campion], adding to them the notion of harmonic context as the basis of simple counterpoint . . . This may not be a fully developed theory of melodic-harmonic structure. But with its invocation of harmonic norms combined with well-considered voice-leading recommendations and awareness of structural motives (the hidden 'imitation' between the melody and bass), it sounds strikingly modern.¹⁰

Thomas Christensen, in discussing how eighteenth-century theorists understood modulation, states:

Malcolm offered a description of modulation similar to that of Rameau . . . As is clearly suggested by the definitions of Rameau and Malcolm, the principal idea behind modulation depended not so much upon whether the music strayed outside the immediate confines of a single mode, as whether the general movement was *characteristic* of a mode.¹¹

Clearly, Malcolm's chapter 13 is significant. However, in the Introduction to his treatise, the author writes the following:

Justice demands [that I] inform you, that the 13 Ch. of the following Book was communicated to me by a Friend, whose Modesty forbids me to name. The speculative Part, and what else there is, besides the Subject of that Chapter, were more particularly my Study: But I found, there would certainly be a Blank in the Work, if at least the more general Principles of Composition were not explained; and whatever Pains I had taken to understand the Writers on this Branch, yet for want of sufficient Practice in it, I durst not trust my own Judgment to extract out of them such a Compend as would answer my Design; which I hope you will find very happily supplied, in what my Friend's Genius and Generosity has afforded: And if I can judge any Thing about it, you have here not a mere Compend of what any Body else has done, but the first Principles of *harmonic Composition* explained in a Manner peculiarly his own.¹²

It is surprising to find that Malcolm did not actually write this important chapter. The obvious question is, who was this unnamed modest friend of Malcolm's who richly deserves the credit?

TWO ANONYMOUS TREATISES: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE OF THE THORO'BASS AND INSTITUTIONS OF MUSICK

In order to answer this question, one must first determine the author or authors of two anonymous treatises – one published in Edinburgh in 1717, entitled *An Introduction to the Knowledge and Practice of the Thoro'Bass* (hereafter referred to as the *Thoro'Bass* treatise),¹³ and the other, in manuscript, dating between c1717 and 1721, entitled *Institutions of Musick, Wherein are sett forth the Practicall Principles of Musical Composition in Two Parts* (hereafter referred to as *Institutions*). These treatises have remarkable similarities both to each other and to Malcolm's, and *Institutions* is nearly identical to Malcolm's chapter 13. The two passages

10 Joel Lester, *Compositional Theory in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 76–77.

11 Thomas Christensen, 'The Règle de l'Octave in Thorough-Bass Theory and Practice', *Acta musicologica* 64/2 (1991), 106–107.

12 Malcolm, *Treatise of Musick*, xxii.

13 According to Henry George Farmer (1882–1965), a musicologist and Arabist who had studied at the University of Glasgow, this was 'the first independent work of its kind published in Scotland': 'Music in 18th Century Scotland', *Scottish Art and Letters* 2 (1946), 11.



below highlight some of the similarities, the first taken from the *Thoro'Bass* treatise, the second from identical passages in both Malcolm's treatise and *Institutions*:

1. *Thoro'Bass* treatise (page 4):

In every piece of *Musical Composition*, and in every Part and Portion of each Piece, there is one Sound or Tone predominant to which all the other Sounds that enter into the Composition do refer, which Tone is commonly called *the Key*.

Altho every Piece of *Musick*, whether *Concerto*, *Sonata*, *Cantata*, etc. has its own peculiar *Key*, with a regard to which, the whole Piece is fram'd; yet in the Course of the *Harmony* of any Piece, the Variety which in *Musick* is so necessary to please and entertain, requires the Introducing several other keys than that which is the peculiar one of the Piece.

2. Malcolm's treatise (page 416) and *Institutions* (page 3):

The *Key* in every piece and in every Part of each Piece of *musical Composition*, is that *Tone* or Sound which is predominant and to which all the rest do refer.

Every Piece of *Musick*, as a *Concerto*, *Sonata*, *Cantata*, is framed with due regard to one particular Sound called the *Key*, and in which the Piece is made to begin and end; but in the Course of the *Harmony* of any such Piece, the Variety which in *Musick* is so necessary to please and entertain, requires the Introducing several other keys.

There are likewise similarities between the musical examples in Malcolm's treatise and *Institutions*, as shown in [Figure 1](#).¹⁴

THORO'BASS TREATISE

There appear to be just five extant copies of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise, listed in [Table 1](#), and research has not yet turned up any subscription list. [Figure 2](#) shows the title-page of the presentation copy, held by the Library of Congress, on which we read, 'Humbly Inscrib'd to the Right Honourable the Lord Colvill'.¹⁵ The author of this treatise is listed only by the initials A. B. There is no publisher listed, but the place and date of publication are included (Edinburgh, 1717), as is the publisher's colophon. There is also a handwritten dedication, 'To My Lord Colvill'.

This eleven-page folio presentation copy is bound with *Institutions*. Affixed to the inside cover is an auction-lot tag, showing that these treatises had previously been purchased together in 1882 by the collector Thomas William Taphouse,¹⁶ of Oxford, from the extensive collection of renowned Edinburgh antiquarian James Maidment (a contemporary of David Laing's);¹⁷ the inside cover bears Maidment's bookplate.¹⁸ The auction tag lists the author of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise as '[Baillie (A.)]', but lists no author for *Institutions*. Taphouse's collection was then auctioned off in 1905; the whereabouts of these two treatises for the next fifteen years is not certain. However, in 1920, the Library of Congress sent a letter to the librarian and publisher

14 Herisson also discusses these similarities in *Music Theory in Seventeenth-Century England*, 21–22, 98 and *passim*.

15 Colvill's name is found with various spellings, including Colvil and Colville.

16 Thomas William Taphouse (1838–1905) was an English music and instrument dealer and collector. His collection became one of the finest in England. Albi Rosenthal, 'Taphouse, Thomas William', in *Grove Music Online* www.oxfordmusiconline.com (24 October 2017).

17 James Maidment (1793–1879) was born in London, studied arts and law at Edinburgh University and was called to the Scottish bar in 1817. He published many volumes and built up a library of over five thousand titles. J. C. Hadden, 'Maidment, James', in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* www.oxforddnb.com (23 September 2004).

18 Maidment would have acquired these treatises some time before 1853; for more on this see footnote 39. A copy of Maidment's 1880 sale catalogue may be found in the British Library, General Reference Collection, shelfmark S. C. 1074, or online at <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009982638>. Curiously, the listing (4025) states that the manuscript (*Institutions*) is supposed to be by Colvill.

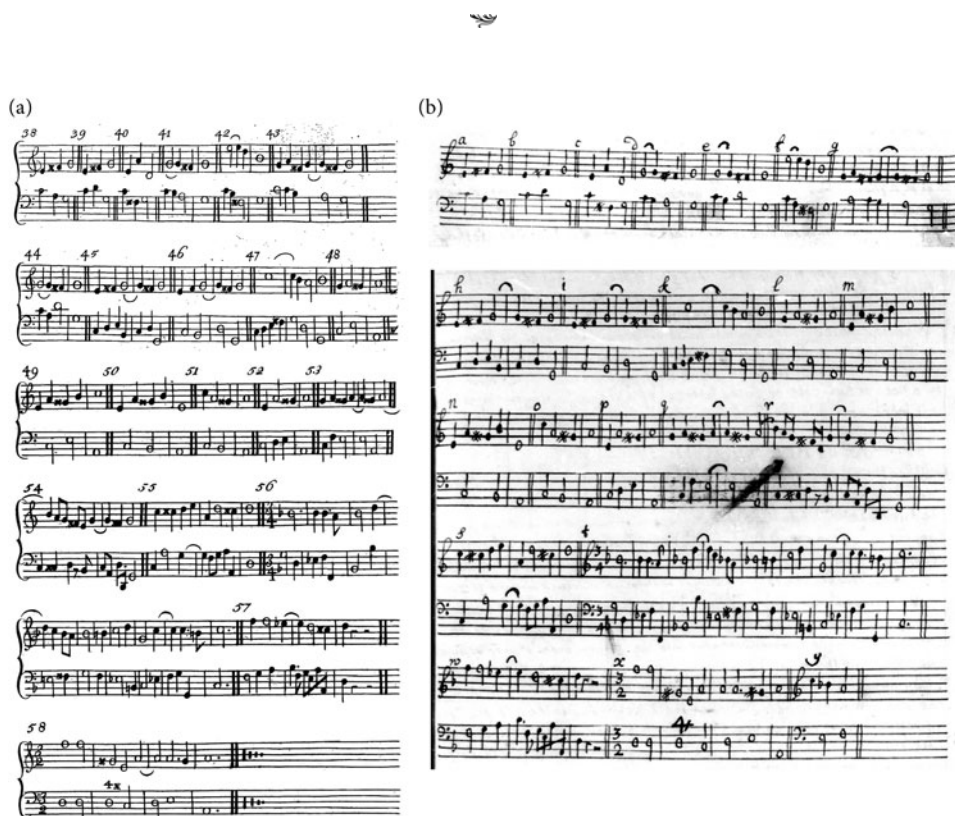


Figure 1 Comparison of musical examples in Malcolm's *Treatise of Musick* and the anonymous *Institutions of Musick* (Library of Congress MT49.A2 B18): (a) Malcolm, *Treatise of Musick*, plate 6, Examples 38–58; (b) *Institutions of Musick*, pages 20–21

Édouard Champion, in Paris, with instructions to execute bids on several items from the Jules Écorcheville sale,¹⁹ with the *Thoro'Bass* treatise being the first item on the list.²⁰

The copy of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise held by the Bodleian library comes from the 1879 auction of the collection of the eminent Edinburgh librarian, antiquarian and bibliographer David Laing,²¹ who, according to

Table 1 Libraries holding copies of *An Introduction to the Knowledge and Practice of Thoro'Bass*

Library	Shelfmark/Call number
Library of Congress, Washington D. C.	MT49.A2 B18 https://www.loc.gov/item/22011221/
Bodleian Library, Oxford	MS Mus. c.8, fols 3r–8r
National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh	6.208 (11)
University of Glasgow Euing Library	Gu Ca.9-b.34
Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz	4'' Mus. Gb 43

19 Jules Écorcheville (1872–1915) was a French musicologist and collector who studied with César Franck. John Trevitt and Jean Gribenski, 'Ecorcheville, Jules', in *Grove Music Online* www.oxfordmusiconline.com (24 October 2017).

20 Information regarding this auction purchase was communicated to me by a librarian at the Library of Congress.

21 David Laing (1793–1878) was the son of a publisher and bookseller who specialized in second-hand, antiquarian and foreign literature. In 1824 Laing was elected to a fellowship of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. At the time of his death, his library consisted of approximately twenty thousand printed books and a massive manuscript collection. Most

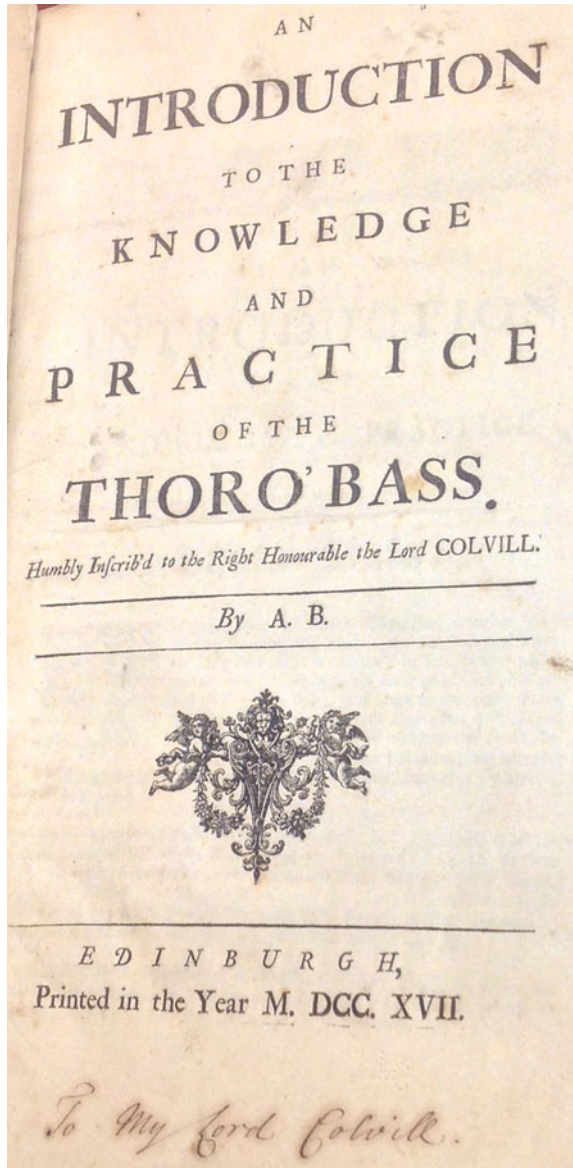


Figure 2 Title-page of the dedication copy of *An Introduction to the Knowledge and Practice of Thoro' Bass*. Library of Congress, MT49.A2 B18

David Murray, 'probably did more than any other single man to elucidate the history and literature of Scotland'.²² It is preceded by a poem on the flyleaf which begins 'The Various Gifts of Nature to Mankind'. (This poem will be discussed in more detail below.) How or when Laing acquired his copy of

of what he collected was important literary and historical material, mainly of Scottish interest. Murray C. T. Simpson, 'Laing, David (1793–1878), antiquary and librarian', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* www.oxforddnb.com (15 April 2018).

²² David Murray, 'David Laing, Antiquary and Bibliographer', *The Scottish Historical Review* 11/44 (1914), 345.



the treatise is not currently known, although it was after 1853. Nor does there appear to be any information regarding ownership of the copy now held at the National Library of Scotland, acquired in 1938. The copy owned by the University of Glasgow library bears the bookplate and signature of Sir Archibald Grant, Second Baronet of Monymoske (1696–1778),²³ while the copy at the Berlin State Library bears the bookplate of William Cowan (1852–1929), a collector and writer on Scottish liturgies and early maps of Edinburgh.²⁴ This was acquired by the library in 1932, and had previously belonged to a J. Grant of Edinburgh.²⁵

There is also a curious untitled manuscript at the Yale University Library catalogued as a *Treatise of the Thoro'bass*, incorporating large sections (though not all) of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise, but also including significant (and redundant) additions which do not seem to be in the voice of the original author, who is much more concise.²⁶ We may speculate that someone was copying portions of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise and adding what they thought were pertinent comments and explanations as they went along. This manuscript, bearing the bookplate of Dr William Hayman Cummings (1831–1915), though not in his hand, dates from after the publication of Malcolm's treatise in 1721, since there is a note in the margin on page 5, in the hand of the copyist, referring to chapter 13 of Malcolm's treatise.²⁷ Also curious, the manuscript is preceded by the same poem as in the Bodleian copy.

INSTITUTIONS

There appear to be just two extant copies of *Institutions*, both in manuscript. Neither has a formal title-page, a listed author, author initials or a date. One is the above-mentioned copy at the Library of Congress; the other is at the National Library of Scotland, in the Advocates Library,²⁸ bound with and following yet another anonymous and untitled treatise.²⁹ The handwriting of the two copies of *Institutions* differs; and these both differ from that found in the dedication of the presentation copy of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise. This copy of *Institutions* was acquired by the Advocates Library in 1925 from the extensive library of Dundas of Dundas. On the flyleaf is written, 'This manuscript belongs to the Laird of Dundas'; on the opposite side of the flyleaf is the same poem found in the Bodleian copy of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise and the Yale manuscript.

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- 23 Sir Archibald Grant was President of the Aberdeen Musical Society in 1771–1772. This copy was subsequently owned by Henry George Farmer. See Farmer, *A History of Music in Scotland* (New York: Da Capo, 1970; reprint of 1947 first edition published in London), 321. On the basis of personal correspondence with a librarian from the University of Glasgow, it appears the treatise was donated by Farmer.
- 24 William Cowan, 'The Buildings at the East End of Princes Street and the Corner of the North Bridge: A Chapter in the Early History of the New Town of Edinburgh', *The Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*, volume 1 (Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable, 1908), 137–154.
- 25 This acquisition information comes from personal correspondence with a librarian at the Berlin State library. J. Grant was probably Sir James Grant, Fifth Baronet of Monymoske (1791–1859), great-grandson of Sir Archibald Grant, Second Baronet of Monymoske.
- 26 Anonymous, *Treatise of the Thoro'bass*, Yale University Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, James Marshall and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection, call number Osborn Music MS 3 (acquired 1925).
- 27 Cummings was an assiduous collector of old music and is today remembered primarily for his extensive collection, so it is puzzling that the treatise is not listed in the sale catalogue of his library (Library of Congress call number ML 138.C9). Also puzzling, Dr Cummings's name and the date of 1917 are pencilled in above Cummings's bookplate, while, in the same hand, the name of Dr Pepusch is lightly pencilled in at the bottom of the page. No further information on these markings is available at this point, but see below for more on Pepusch. For more on Cummings see Hugh J. McLean, 'Cummings, W(illiam) H(ayman)', in *Grove Music Online* www.oxfordmusiconline.com (24 October 2017).
- 28 The Advocates Library is the Law Library. This copy of *Institutions* is catalogued under the title *Treatise on Music* (shelf-mark Adv.MS.80.6.9), though that title does not appear anywhere in the treatise.
- 29 This untitled treatise is primarily about string division, string vibration, intervals, consonance and dissonance, and so on. The handwriting is consistent with the handwriting of the copy of *Institutions* bound with it. It is not inconceivable that the author of this treatise and *Institutions* are the same person, and this treatise may indeed be a preface to *Institutions*. Much study remains to be done.



Given the number of times these two treatises changed hands, suggesting that they were considered to be important works, it is remarkable that they still exist, and that we have access to them. It has so far been impossible to trace their provenance prior to the nineteenth- and twentieth-century auctions just mentioned. Frustratingly, the 1728 sale catalogue of Lord Colvill, the dedicatee of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise, does not list either of these treatises.³⁰ At this point it is not clear where any of them were for the next hundred or so years after their creation.

Various writers have attributed the *Thoro'Bass* treatise to one or other of two possible authors: Alexander Baillie, mentioned above, and Alexander Bayne, discussed below, but none has provided actual evidence. Even fewer have speculated on the identity of the author of *Institutions*. So, who were Baillie and Bayne?

ALEXANDER BAILLIE

Alexander Baillie was one of the early Edinburgh music engravers. David Laing, in his extensive Introduction and Appendix to *The Scots Musical Museum*,³¹ tells us that Baillie engraved a collection of *Airs for the Flute, with a Thorough Bass for the Harpsichord*, dedicated to the Right Honourable the Lady Gairlies, in Edinburgh in 1735;³² he also engraved Francis Barsanti's *Collection of old Scots Tunes with the bass for the Violoncello or Harpsichord*, dedicated to the Right Honourable Lady Erskine, in Edinburgh in 1742.³³ Additionally, several sources mention Baillie's 1764 engravings of *St. Cecilia Playing on the Organ* and the *Holy Family*, copied after Francesco Imperiali, as well as some portraits from 1768 and some important maps of Edinburgh, dating from 1778 and 1779. There are no further mentions of any music engraving.³⁴

What appears to have given rise to the speculation that Baillie may have been the author of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise is the handwritten dedication page of the *Airs for the Flute* (Figure 3), which states:

Madam, the following Airs, having been composed by a Gentleman for your Ladyship's Use when you began to practice the Flute a Beque, I thought I could not chuse a better Subject for my First Essay, as an Engraver of Musick, than these Airs: as well because they were made for Beginners on the Flute & Harpsichord, as that they were composed by a Gentleman who first put a Pencil in my Hand and then an Engraver. But chiefly because they were originally made for your Ladyship's Use which gives me so fair a Handle to send them into the World under the Protection of your

³⁰ Pretoria State Library, shelfmark FB6652.

³¹ David Laing, Introduction to William Stenhouse, *The Scots Musical Museum, Consisting of Upwards of Six Hundred Songs, with Proper Bases for the Pianoforte, originally published by James Johnson, and now Accompanied with Copious Notes and Illustrations of the Lyric Poetry of Scotland, by the Late William Stenhouse, with Additional Notes and Illustrations*, four volumes (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1853), volume 1, xlvi. The original publication by James Johnson consisted of six volumes printed between 1787 and 1803; see <https://digital.nls.uk/87793664>. See David Johnson, 'Stenhouse, William', in *Grove Music Online* www.oxfordmusiconline.com (16 April 2018) and 'The Scots Musical Museum, a collection of songs', British Library Website, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-scots-musical-museum-a-collection-of-songs> (1797) (16 April 2018).

³² Anonymous, *Airs for the Flute, with a Thorough Bass for the Harpsichord* (Edinburgh: Alexander Baillie, 1735), National Library of Scotland, shelfmark Glen.135.

³³ Francis Barsanti, *Collection of old Scots Tunes with the bass for the Violoncello or Harpsichord* (Edinburgh: Alexander Baillie, 1742). Though the score itself bears no date, David Laing, in the Introduction to *The Scots Musical Museum* (liii), states the collection was published on 14 January 1742, and cites the *Caledonian Mercury* and *Scots Magazine* (1742).

³⁴ See, for example, William Young Ottley, *Notices of Engravers and Their Works* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1831); Stephen W. Brown, and Warren McDougall, *The Edinburgh History of the Book in Scotland*, volume 2: *Enlightenment and Expansion 1707–1800* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 94, 101–102; and Brown and McDougall, 'Baillie, Alexander', in *Benezit Dictionary of Artists* www.oxfordartonline.com/benezit (31 October 2011).

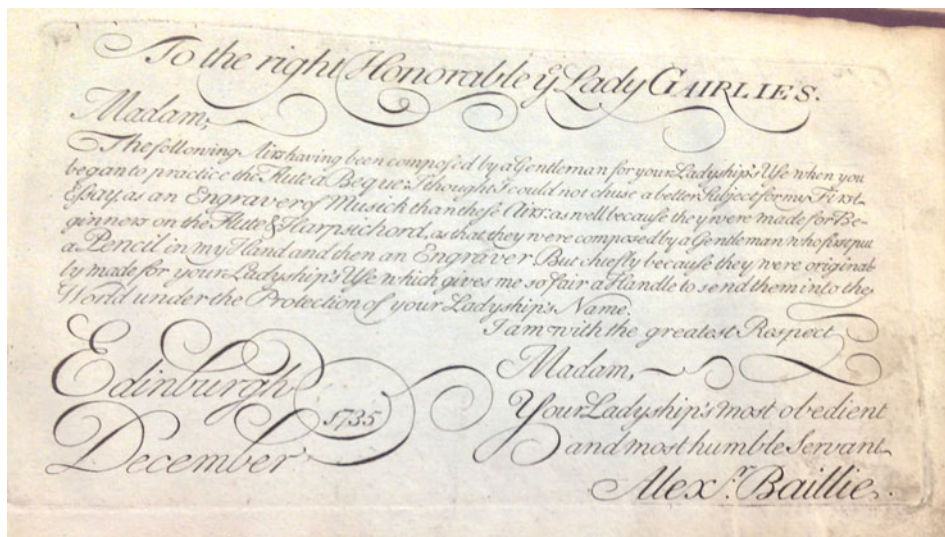


Figure 3 Alexander Baillie's dedication to Lady Gairlies of the *Airs for the Flute, with a Thorough Bass for the Harpsichord*. National Library of Scotland, Glen.135

Ladyship's Name. I am, with the greatest respect[,] Madam, Your Ladyship's most obedient and most humble Servant, Alex. Baillie.

This dedication does not identify the composer of these *Airs*, so we do not know if Baillie had a hand in them or not; Henry Farmer seems to believe he may have, and RISM lists him as the composer, even though Baillie himself seems to discount that possibility.³⁵ Nor do we know if Baillie ever composed any music at all. Further, the very florid handwriting in the dedication, presumably executed by Baillie, does not match the very brief handwritten dedication of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise.³⁶ Even more importantly, Baillie identifies these *Airs for the Flute* as his first essay as a music engraver, yet they were published a full eighteen years after the 1717 publication of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise, and there is no evidence of any previous activity by Baillie.

We may also note that the *Thoro'Bass* treatise does not contain any engraved musical examples; rather, it contains tables of triads with all the notes printed by their letter names, illustrating for each major and minor key which melodic scale degrees can be used over a given bass note, and which bass scale degrees can harmonize a given melody note (similar to Malcolm's treatise). Had Baillie been the author, we might speculate that he would have tried to engrave the examples. Furthermore, given Baillie's documented activity between 1735 and 1779 and his death in 1791, and with no evidence of his birth date, it is likely Baillie would have been too young in 1717 to have written this treatise.

Finally, my extensive source study has uncovered nothing connecting Baillie to Alexander Malcolm, Lord Colvill or to the Edinburgh Musical Society, very active during this time, or to any music composition or performances at all.³⁷ How, then, did Baillie become a prime suspect? The earliest mention that connects

35 Farmer, *History of Music in Scotland*, 330. RISM (Répertoire international des sources musicales), A/I/I, 198. Farmer also speculates that these may have been composed by Lord Colvill, the dedicatee of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise.

36 Frank Kidson suggests the dedication to Lady Gairlies is Baillie's handwriting, stating that it was signed by Baillie. Kidson, *British Music Publishers, Printers and Engravers* (London: W. E. Hill, 1900), 178. See also Charles Humphries and William C. Smith, *Music Publishing in the British Isles* (London: Cassell, 1954), 59.

37 For more on the Edinburgh Musical Society see Helen Goodwill, 'The Musical Involvement of the Landed Classes in Eastern Scotland, 1685–1760' (PhD dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 2000), and Jennifer Macleod, 'The



Baillie's name with the *Thoro'Bass* treatise seems to be Laing's 1853 Introduction to *The Scots Musical Museum*. In his listing of these *Airs for the Flute*, Laing mentions the *Thoro'Bass* treatise and states that both the dedication copy and *Institutions* are in the possession of Maidment,³⁸ and that attribution to Baillie can only be conjectured.³⁹ Admittedly, this is not a bad hypothesis: Baillie was a music engraver of the time who had the same initials as the anonymous author. However, I do not know if Laing ever saw the dedication copy, whose handwriting he could have then compared to the handwritten dedication to Lady Gairlies. Nor have I been able to ascertain whether Laing had any additional sources of information regarding the authorship of these treatises other than knowing that the initials A. B. match those of the music engraver Alexander Baillie.

Maidment refers to Laing's entry in a signed but undated note he wrote on the flyleaf of the dedication copy of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise, which he says he picked it up at a book sale in Glasgow. The note says:

The author of the printed portion [that is, the *Thoro'Bass* treatise] was probably Alexander Baillie who in 1735 published in oblong 4^{to} 'airs for the flute, with a thorough bass for the Harpsichord' . . . dedicated to Catherine Lady Gairlies. This was a presentation copy from the author to Robert third and last Lord Colville of Ochiltree, a great collector of musical works and 'a thorough Master of Music'.⁴⁰ He was one of the performers at the Feast of St. Cecilia in 1695.⁴¹ He died unmarried on 26 March 1728. Whether he or Baillie or some one else was the author of the m.s. treatise that follows [*Institutions*] is uncertain. Mr. D. Laing, whose bibliographical knowledge is proverbial, never heard of another copy other than the present, of the printed tract.⁴²

Not surprisingly, then, given Laing's esteemed reputation, many of the sources that mention the *Thoro'Bass* treatise list Baillie as the author, even if only tentatively, citing Laing as their authority. Often the author is listed as A. B[aillie], as on the flyleaf of the Library of Congress copy and in RISM (B/VI/I, 112). But other writers lean towards Alexander Bayne as the author and, surprisingly, they too cite Laing as their source. For example, the 1883 *Dictionary of the Anonymous and Pseudonymous Literature of Great Britain* attributes the *Thoro'Bass* treatise to Bayne, listing Laing as their source, but without any further citation.⁴³ Similarly, Farmer and Frank Kidson credit Bayne with the authorship, but cite no evidence at all.⁴⁴

Edinburgh Musical Society: Its Membership and Repertoire 1728–1797' (PhD dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 2001).

38 In other words, Maidment owns the dedication copy by 1853 but Laing has not yet acquired his own copy, since his listing suggests Maidment's copy is unique.

39 Laing, Appendix, *The Scots Musical Museum*, xcii. Whether there had been any earlier attribution to Baillie is unknown – Laing is writing 136 years after the publication of the treatise. Why does he mention Baillie at all? He may simply be referring to his own earlier entry on Baillie's engraving of the *Airs for Flute*, in his Introduction, xlvi.

40 Maidment appears to be quoting from William Tytler's article 'On the Fashionable Amusements and Entertainments in Edinburgh in the last Century, with a Plan of a grand Concert of Music on St. Cecilia's Day, 1695', *Archaeologia Scotica: Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* volume 1 (1792), 508 <https://doi.org/10.5284/1000184>. Tytler writes, 'Lord Colvill, it is said, was a thorough master of music, and understood counterpoint well. He played on the harpsichord and organ.'

41 Peter Holman offers convincing evidence that the concert actually took place in 1703 or 1704. Holman, *Life After Death: The Viola da Gamba in Britain from Purcell to Dolmetsch* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010), 89–90, and 'An Early Edinburgh Concert', *Early Music Performer* 13 (2004), 9–17. See also François-Pierre Goy, 'The "British" Sainte-Colombes', *The Viola da Gamba Society Journal* 11 (2017), 1–45.

42 Maidment is referring to Laing's comments in *The Scots Musical Museum*.

43 Samuel Halkett and John Laing, *A Dictionary of the Anonymous and Pseudonymous Literature of Great Britain*, four volumes, volume 2 (Edinburgh: William Paterson, 1883), 1245.

44 Farmer, *History of Music in Scotland*, 321–322, and Kidson, 'Baillie, Alexander', in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, fifth edition, ed. Eric Blom, nine volumes (London: Macmillan, 1954), volume 1, 355.



ALEXANDER BAYNE

And who was Alexander Bayne?⁴⁵ Bayne lived from c1684 to 1737, making him a contemporary of Malcolm's. He was an advocate and jurist; in 1707 he was admitted to Lincoln's Inn in London, though he does not seem to have been called to the English bar. By 1713 Bayne had returned to Scotland, and in 1714 he was admitted to the élite Faculty of Advocates, whose members 'were distinguished by their cultural and intellectual breadth of outlook as much as by their proficiency as legal practitioners'.⁴⁶ In 1722 Bayne was appointed senior curator of the Advocates Library and was elected first Professor of Scots Law at the University of Edinburgh. In 1730 he published *Institutions of the Criminal Law of Scotland*, probably influenced by Sir George Mackenzie's *Institutions of the Law of Scotland*, which he used in a class he taught.⁴⁷ Note the word 'Institutions' in both titles. This is apparently common for law books, but other than in Zarlino's *Le istitutioni harmoniche* published in Venice in 1558, I know of very few music treatises that have that word in their title. This suggests the possibility that the author of the music treatise *Institutions* may have been a legal practitioner.

Bayne was also an amateur painter; his daughter, Anne, married the famous portrait painter Allan Ramsay (1713–1784), son of the poet and author Allan Ramsay (1684–1758). Bayne had a strong interest in music. He played the harpsichord, and some of his musical compositions have survived, while others are mentioned in sale catalogues.⁴⁸ Bayne was influential in promoting concerts and developing the musical culture of early eighteenth-century Scotland; he was the chairman, or president, of the Edinburgh Musical Society on its formal constitution in 1728 (a society that existed informally for years before this),⁴⁹ and remained an enthusiastic and influential member until his death, in 1737. The fact that he was elected president is a testament to the high esteem in which he was held by the members of the Society.

We can also assume, based on the auction catalogue of Bayne's books after his death, that he was extraordinarily well read on all manner of subjects.⁵⁰ He possessed many texts in Greek and owned several music histories, dictionaries and treatises, including those of John Playford and Christopher Simpson. He also owned Malcolm's *Treatise of Musick* and his *New Treatise of Arithmetic and Book-Keeping*, but the catalogue does not list either the *Thoro'Bass* treatise or *Institutions*.⁵¹

Since the *Thoro'Bass* treatise was dedicated to Lord Colvill, we should consider the relationship between Bayne and Colvill. Lord Colvill (c1665–1728) was born about twenty years before Bayne; he was one of the earliest members of the Edinburgh Musical Society and by all accounts a very capable amateur

45 The following biographical information is drawn from John W. Cairns, 'Bayne, Alexander, of Rires (c. 1684–1737), advocate and jurist', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* www.oxforddnb.com (4 January 2007); Goodwill, 'Musical Involvement', 216–218; and Charles Knight, *The English Cyclopædia: A New Dictionary of Universal Knowledge*, seven volumes, volume 1 (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1856), 587–588.

46 Goodwill, 'Musical Involvement', 216.

47 Alexander Bayne, *Institutions of the Criminal Law of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Thomas and Walter Ruddiman, 1730); Sir George Mackenzie, *Institutions of the Law of Scotland* (Edinburgh: J. Reid for T. Broun, 1688).

48 Two of Bayne's cantatas, 'Quando voglio' and 'Qual Tortorella', dated 1722, are in the George Baillie Collection of Music Manuscripts, Coll-1061/3 (Box: CLX-A-653), Edinburgh University Library Special Collections. They are dedicated to Mrs Murray, who is Griselda, Lady Murray of Stanhope, daughter of George Baillie. See Lowell Lindgren, 'Cantatas and Arias in the Collection of Griselda Baillie (1692–1759)', *The Handel Institute Newsletter* 23/1 (2012) <https://handelinstitute.org/newsletter>. For Colvill's sale catalogue, including works by Bayne, see Goodwill, 'Musical Involvement', 153–154, 217.

49 Roger L. Emerson and Jenny Macleod, 'The Musick Club and The Edinburgh Musical Society', *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club New Series*, volume 10 (2014), 46. According to Emerson and MacLeod, this society existed by 1695.

50 'A catalogue of curious and valuable books, being chiefly the library of the late Mr. Alexander Bane Professor of Scots law in the University of Edinburgh', National Library of Scotland Reading Room, shelfmark Ferg.71.

51 It is possible they were never sold. There is or was a privately held collection of Bayne's papers, but I have not had access to them, nor have I been able to determine who holds them.



musician.⁵² It is no stretch to assume that he and Bayne were well acquainted. Colvill's sale catalogue includes manuscript music by Bayne,⁵³ as well as a song 'written by Mr. Pepusch for Mr. Bayne'; Helen Goodwill posits that 'Pepusch and Bayne probably became acquainted when Bayne worked in Lincoln's Inn, London, in the first decade of the 18th century'.⁵⁴

COLOPHONS

The printer's colophon on the title-page of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise provides additional evidence linking Bayne to the *Thoro'Bass* treatise, *Institutions*, and to Malcolm (Figure 2). A search through catalogues of eighteenth-century printers' colophons reveals that this particular colophon belongs to Thomas Ruddiman, who was closely involved with the Edinburgh Musical Society and did a lot of their printing, as evidenced by the dozens of receipts from him.⁵⁵ Ruddiman also printed two of Bayne's law books.⁵⁶ While Malcolm's *Musick* treatise does not list a printer, his *New Treatise of Arithmetic and Book-Keeping* was printed by John Mosman and William Brown, colleagues of Ruddiman's,⁵⁷ and has a colophon that is remarkably similar to Ruddiman's, shown in Figure 4. In addition, Malcolm and Ruddiman were close friends; Malcolm refers to Ruddiman as 'my very worthy, learned, and much respected old friend and acquaintance'.⁵⁸

PROXIMITY

Further establishing a likely connection between Malcolm and Bayne is their sheer proximity. The two known addresses of Malcolm's (while a child and as an adult) are just a few blocks away from where Bayne lived. It is implausible that these two contemporaries, both very interested in music, and residing just blocks apart from one another, would not have been acquainted.

Clearly, Bayne seems to be the likely author. But what evidence led some writers to list Bayne as the author of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise and cite Laing as their authority, when Laing himself never seems to have done so? Ironically, the 1879 auction-lot tag on Laing's copy of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise, acquired by the Bodleian, lists Bayne as the author, yet the later 1905 *Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library* does not include any name.⁵⁹ What theory would account for this conundrum? Perhaps the answer lies in the Laing/Bodleian copy of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise. On the flyleaf appears an undated, unsigned, handwritten note in what may well be Laing's hand (based on comparisons of known handwriting samples). This note says, 'Prefixed to a Ms. treatise, in quarto (Dundas Castle), *Institutions of Musick*, etc.'. Below that there appears a dedication, in the same hand: 'The Master of Stormont to his friend Mr. Bayne on his Treatise

52 Tytler, 'On the Fashionable Amusements', 508.

53 Goodwill, 'Musical Involvement', 153–154, 217.

54 Goodwill, 'Musical Involvement', 217. Chenette, 'Music Theory in the British Isles', 288, speculates that the author of Malcolm's chapter 13 may have been Pepusch himself, or at least someone familiar with the work of Pepusch, since there are similarities in terminology and concepts. I am not aware of any relationship between Malcolm and Pepusch.

55 From personal correspondence with Jane Blackie, a harpsichordist who edits eighteenth-century dance music for the Edinburgh Early Dancers, and author of 'A New Music Room: A Short History of St. Cecilia's Hall', 2002 (University of Edinburgh pamphlet).

56 *Institutions of the Criminal Law* (1730) and *Notes for the use of the Students of the Municipal Law* (Edinburgh: Thomas and Walter Ruddiman, 1731).

57 See Brown and McDougall, *Enlightenment and Expansion 1707–1800*, 9.

58 Malcolm, *New Rudiments of the Latin Tongue*, vi–vii.

59 Falconer Madan, *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, seven volumes in eight, volume 5 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1905), 574, No. 29165. This treatise is bound with thirty-two mostly instrumental scores by Valentini, Purcell, Corelli, Loeillet, Handel, Bononcini and Campora, and a number of anonymous pieces. For more information see the RISM listing at <https://opac.rism.info/search?id=800227803&View=rism>.

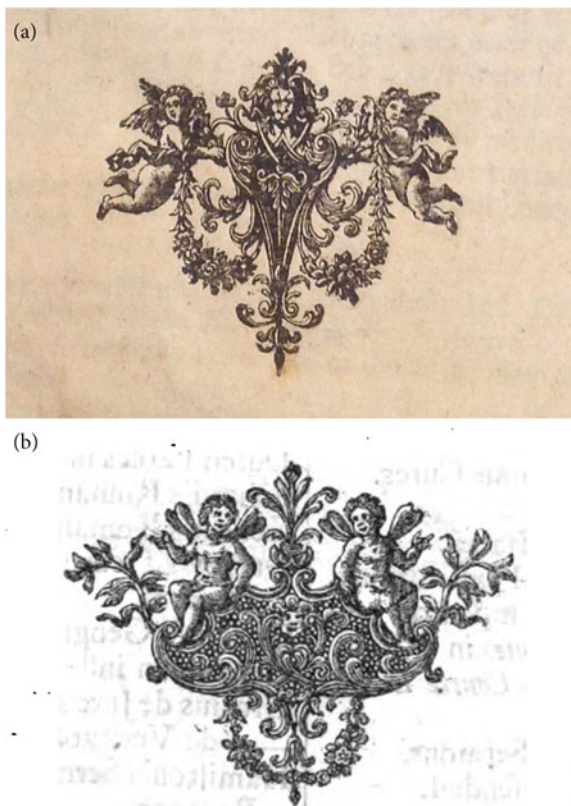


Figure 4 Ruddiman and Mosman and Brown colophons: (a) Ruddiman (Allan Ramsay, *Poems*, page 64 in 1720 edition, page 67 in 1721 edition); (b) Mosman and Brown (Malcolm, *New Treatise of Arithmetic and Book-Keeping*, page 51)

of Musick' (Figure 5). The Master of Stormont is David Murray, Fifth Viscount of Stormont (1665–1731).⁶⁰ This dedication is followed by a laudatory (though rather mediocre) poem extolling the gifts and blessings Nature has bestowed upon Mr Bayne. This is the same dedication and poem that appears in the copy of *Institutions* that belonged to the Laird of Dundas.⁶¹

While the dedication identifies Bayne as the author of a treatise, it does not identify the treatise by name. It is rather the writer of the note (Laing) who connects Bayne to *Institutions* by identifying it in his comments preceding the dedication: 'Prefixed to a Ms. treatise, in quarto (Dundas Castle), *Institutions of Musick*, etc.'. Laing was referring to the quarto copy of *Institutions* now held by the National Library of Scotland Advocates Library, acquired from Dundas Castle.⁶² Laing must have seen the manuscript at Dundas Castle and then copied the dedication and poem onto the flyleaf of his copy of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise.

Why would he have affixed this dedication and poem to the *Thoro'Bass* treatise, when the poem precedes a different treatise, *Institutions*, in the Dundas copy? While there is no written evidence that Laing ever explicitly ascribed the *Thoro'Bass* treatise to Bayne, it is possible that by prefixing the dedication and poem from the

60 David Murray, born the same year as Colvill, would have been approximately twenty years older than Bayne. His granddaughter, Margaret Lindsay, married the widowed painter Allan Ramsay, whose first wife was Bayne's daughter.

61 This is presumably George Dundas, Twenty-Third Laird of Dundas, born c1690, a contemporary of Bayne's.

62 Shelfmark Adv. MS 80.6.9. Since *Institutions* was attributed to Bayne, who in 1722 was appointed curator of the Advocates Library, it is perhaps not too surprising that this copy was eventually acquired by the law library.

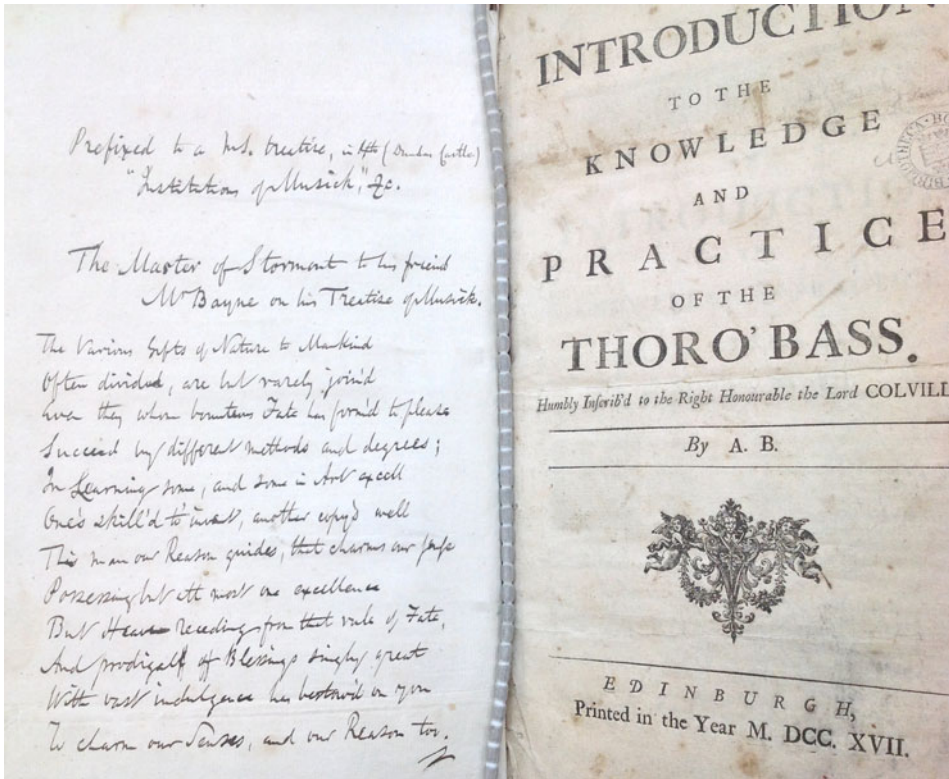


Figure 5 David Laing's copy of *An Introduction to the Knowledge and Practice of Thoro'Bass*, including Laing's notes and the Master of Stormont's poem. Bodleian Library, shelfmark MS Mus.c.8

Dundas copy of *Institutions* to his own copy of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise, Laing was implicitly doing so. When Laing consulted the Dundas copy of *Institutions*, and when he acquired his own copy of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise, are not known. Nevertheless, it is possible that later writers who attributed the *Thoro'Bass* treatise to Bayne, citing Laing as their authority, knew of Laing's copy of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise with its prefixed dedication identifying Bayne as the author of *Institutions*, and therefore assumed that the two treatises were written by the same author.⁶³

It is puzzling that the Maidment/Library of Congress copy of *Institutions* does not have this poem included. Initially, one may presume this is an original copy, since it is bound with the dedication copy of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise. But it is in a different hand from that of the dedication, so it must be the work of a scribe. Nor can the Dundas manuscript be the original. The handwriting in that volume is consistent throughout. If this were the original, the poem would be in a different hand from that of the treatise. It seems likely that the original version of the poem was presented to Bayne in a more formal capacity and was subsequently copied into this manuscript by a scribe. Yet another puzzling aspect of the Dundas volume is the anonymous untitled treatise preceding *Institutions*. The dedication and poem directly precede this

63 As late as 1900, Kidson still suggests there is just one copy of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise, in Taphouse's possession, even though Laing's copy was acquired by the Bodleian in 1879. Kidson also writes that while Laing suggested the *Thoro'Bass* treatise was by Baillie, that was quite unlikely. Kidson, *British Music Publishers*, 178. However, when Kidson writes the 'Baillie' entry for the *New Grove* fifth edition (1954, 355), he claims that Bayne is the author of the treatise.

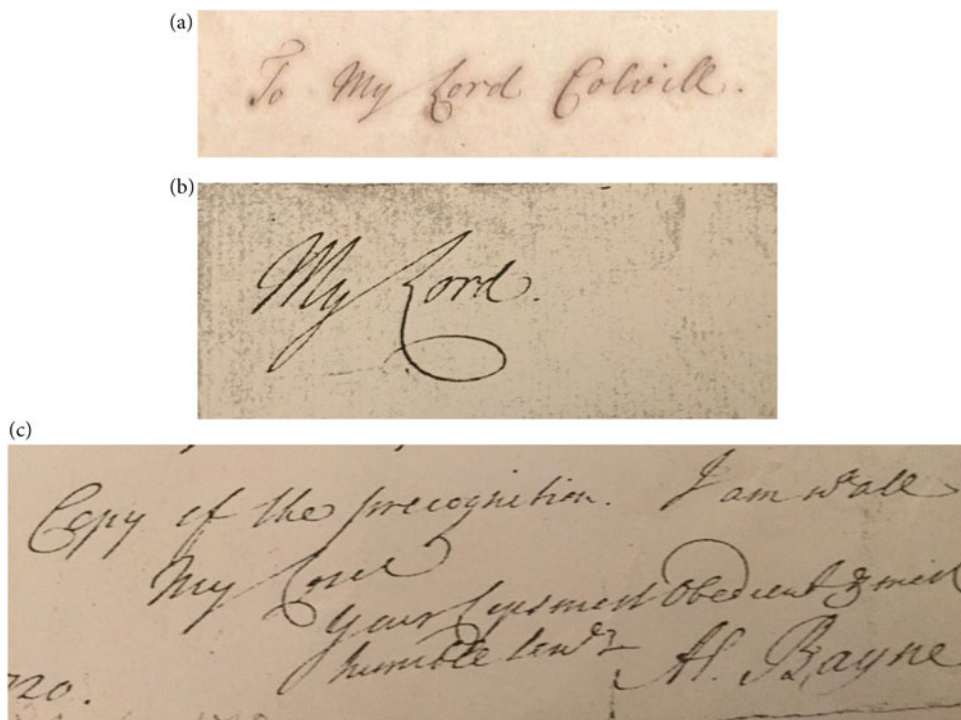


Figure 6 Comparison of the handwritten dedication on *An Introduction to the Knowledge and Practice of Thoro'Bass* (Library of Congress MT49.A2 B18) to Bayne's known handwriting, from excerpts of a letter to an unknown recipient (National Records of Scotland, GD 26/13/549; with thanks to John Cairns for making this sample available): (a) dedication on title-page of *An Introduction to the Knowledge and Practice of Thoro'Bass*; (b) letter from Bayne to unknown recipient: salutation; (c) letter from Bayne to unknown recipient: closing

anonymous treatise rather than *Institutions* – might this suggest that this anonymous treatise is also by Bayne? Perhaps the original copies of *Institutions* and the poem are in the privately held collection of Bayne's papers; we may never know.

As mentioned above, this poem also precedes the Yale manuscript, presenting another mystery yet to be unravelled. This untitled manuscript is not a copy of *Institutions*, but rather portions of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise with many additions. The dedication is different from that found in the Bodleian and National Library copies, in that Bayne's name is not mentioned at all, nor is any title given. It says only, 'To the author of the following treatise', followed by the poem. The dedication, poem and treatise are all in the same hand, but differ from both the Dundas copy and the Library of Congress copy. At this point, no further information on this copy is available.

HANDWRITING

Finally, there is the 'smoking gun' proving that Bayne was indeed the author of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise. After extensively searching for samples of Bayne's handwriting, I was fortunate to meet with Professor John Cairns, who wrote the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* entry on Bayne, and who had many samples of Bayne's handwriting. When comparing those samples to the *Thoro'Bass* dedication, Professor Cairns agreed they were a match. One example, excerpted from a letter to an unknown recipient, is shown in Figure 6. Comparing the words 'My Lord' in the dedication and the letter shows that the match is exact. There are



other instances throughout the letter that also correspond to the writing in the dedication, but permission was not granted to reproduce the entire letter.

Given the dedication from the Master of Stormont to Mr Bayne, and Laing's note about it, Bayne must be the author of *Institutions*, which is nearly identical to Malcolm's chapter 13. And, given that parts of *Institutions* are identical to parts of the *Thoro'Bass* treatise, which the present study has determined was written by Bayne, Malcolm's chapter 13 was likewise written by Bayne, whom Malcolm identified in his Introduction as his modest friend. But then the tantalizing question remains: with whom did Bayne study? Might he have studied with Pepusch while he was in London for approximately ten years?⁶⁴ There was clearly a connection – as we saw above, Pepusch wrote a song for Bayne. Furthermore, Pepusch was known as a great pedagogue. Further research is warranted to investigate that possibility.

64 For more on Pepusch see Donald Frederick Cook, 'The Life and Works of Johann Christoph Pepusch (1667–1752), with Special Reference to His Dramatic Works and Cantatas' (PhD dissertation, King's College London, 1982).