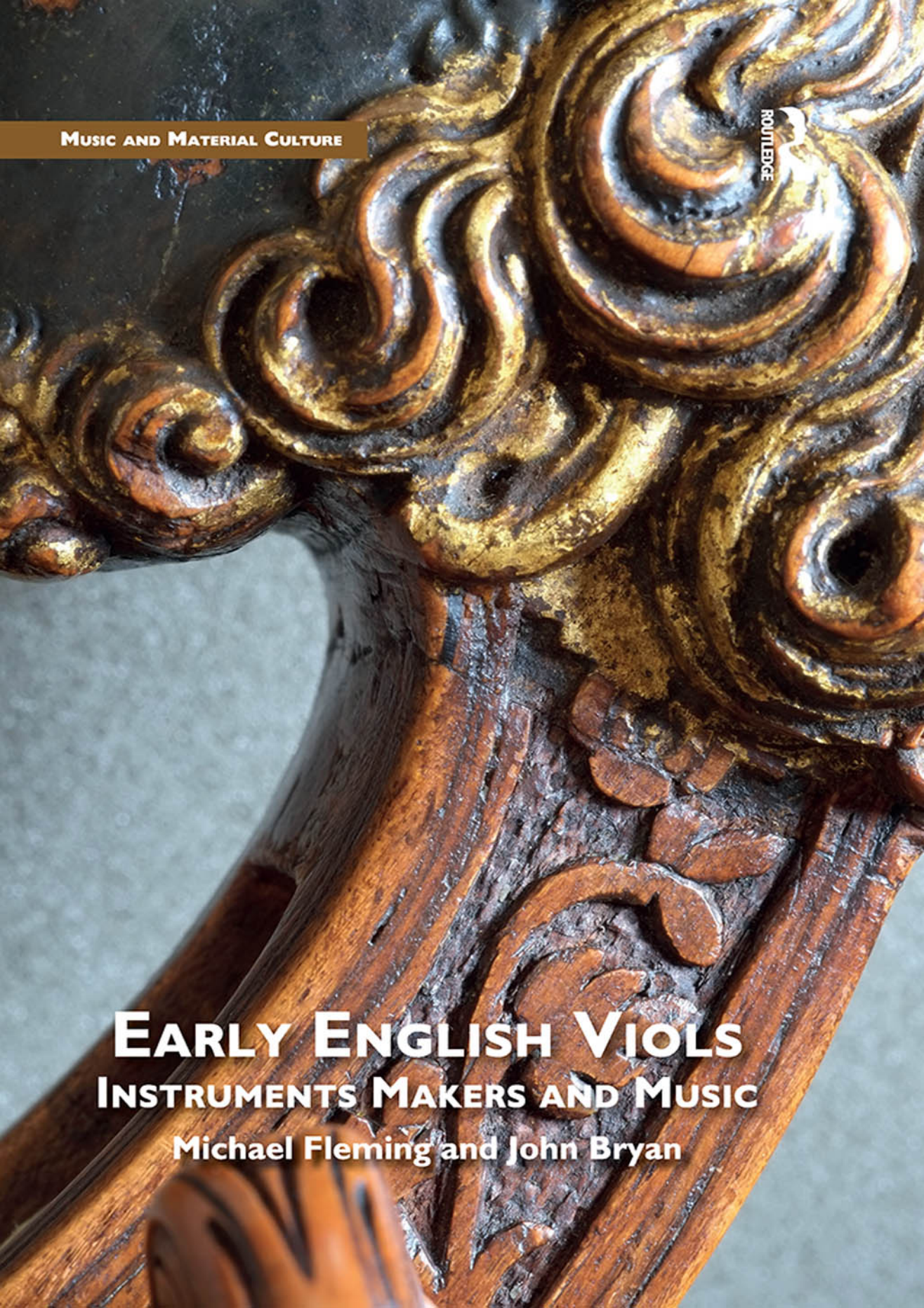
Music and Material Culture
ROUTLEDGE
Early English Viols
Instruments Makers and Music
Michael Fleming and John Bryan

EARLY ENGLISH VIOLS

Musical repertory of great importance and quality was performed on viols in sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England. This is reported by Thomas Mace (1676), who says that 'Your Best Provision' for playing such music is a chest of old English viols, and he names five early English viol makers than which 'there are no Better in the World'. Enlightened scholars and performers (both professional and amateur) who aim to understand and play this music require reliable historical information and need suitable viols, but so little is known about the instruments and their makers that we cannot specify appropriate instruments with much precision.

Our ignorance cannot be remedied exclusively by the scrutiny or use of surviving antique viols because they are extremely rare, they are not accessible to performers and the information they embody is crucially compromised by degradation and alteration. Drawing on a wide variety of evidence including the surviving instruments, music composed for those instruments, and the documentary evidence surrounding the trade of instrument making, Fleming and Bryan draw significant conclusions about the changing nature and varieties of viol in early modern England.

Michael Fleming, after graduating from the Queen's College, Oxford, worked for Robert Goble & Son for five years, making early keyboard instruments. Since 1982 he has worked as an independent musical instrument maker, specializing in viols and bows. In 1986 he was joint recipient of the Best Maker prize at the Crafts Council Open Exhibition, London. Fleming was a member of an Expert Group drafting the Museums and Galleries Commission guidance: *Standards in the Museum Care of Musical Instruments* (published 1995). Since 2004 he has worked on *The Galpin Society Journal* (international journal of organological research), including five years as editor. He has contributed to standard reference works such as *Grove* and *ODNB*, and published articles in *Early Music*, *The Galpin Society Journal*, *The Viola da Gamba Society Journal* and elsewhere. He is an active member of the Viola da Gamba Society and has been its chairman since 1997. As an enthusiastic amateur performer on the viol, his interests resemble his organological and instrument-making ones; they reflect his curiosity about, and respect for, the original producers and users of that music.

John Bryan is Professor of Music at the University of Huddersfield, where he was awarded a higher doctorate for his practice-based research in 2015. Following study at the University of York, he has developed a career that encompasses performance, research and teaching in equal measure. His research has been published in articles for *Early Music* and the *Journal of Musicology*, and a book chapter for Ashgate. He has taught early music at the Universities of York, Leeds and Hull, founded the North East Early Music Forum and coached viol consort performance at Dartington International Summer School. As a performer, he has worked with many leading ensembles since the 1970s, including the Rose Consort of Viols, Musica Antiqua of London, I Fagiolini and the Consort of Musicke, with whom he has made some forty CDs, given many radio recordings, and appeared at international festivals in USA, Canada and throughout Europe. His performance focus is on music for viols, but he also plays Renaissance woodwind and harpsichord, and regularly directs and conducts early music performances. He has contributed to a range of programmes on BBC Radios 3 and 4, and is an Artistic Adviser to York Early Music Festival, which he helped to found.

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Music and Material Culture provides a new platform for methodological innovations in research on the relationship between music and its objects. In a sense, musicology has always dealt with material culture: the study of manuscripts, print sources, instruments and other physical media associated with the production and reception of music is central to its understanding. Recent scholarship within the humanities has increasingly shifted its focus onto the objects themselves and there is now a particular need for musicology to be part of this broader 'material turn'. A growing reliance on digital and online media as sources for the creation and consumption of music is changing the way we experience music by increasingly divorcing it from tangible matter. This is rejuvenating discussion of our relationship with music's objects and the importance of such objects both as a means of understanding past cultures and negotiating current needs and social practices. Broadly interdisciplinary in nature, this series seeks to examine critically the materiality of music and its artefacts as an explicit part of culture rather than simply an accepted means of music-making. Proposals are welcomed on the material culture of music from any period and genre, particularly on topics within the fields of cultural theory, source studies, organology, ritual, anthropology, collecting, archiving, media archaeology, new media and aesthetics.

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Early English Viols

Instruments, Makers and Music

Michael Fleming and John Bryan

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Michael Fleming and John Bryan
January 2016

[1] Fleming, 2001.

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Note to readers

Text, dates, music, quantities and measurements

Citations

Full bibliographic information for all cited sources is given in the Bibliography.

Transcriptions

Most transcriptions are 'diplomatic', preserving original spellings and punctuation. These unmodernized transcriptions are either placed in quotation marks (within the text) or identified visually as an indented paragraph. The main reason for using raw transcriptions – and illustrations of some documents – is that the mental adjustment they demand can bring the reader a little closer to the world wherein they were created.[1] Illustrations make some key extracts accessible to other paleographers. We hope that this taste of the period contributes to understanding, and that readers will make any small effort required by the transcriptions. Expanded abbreviations and contractions are given in italics (e.g. p*er*mitted; com*m*on; day*es*; It*em*), while additions or comments are in square brackets.

Spelling and punctuation

Readers who are unfamiliar with documents of the period should note the following. The letters 'u' and 'v' are largely interchangable. In both text and numbers 'j' is virtually the same as 'i' and can signify 1, so 'iij' means 3. Original punctuation is often idiosyncratic but only some spacing has been modified here to comply with modern practice. Neither capital initial letters nor italics imply emphasis.

[1] For the same reason, the authors are among those musicians who favour playing from original musical texts (facsimiles) rather than modern editions.

Dates

During the period, the year officially started on Lady Day, 25 March. Thus one week after 20 March 1568 is 27 March 1569. All data cited here directly from original documents (such as parish records) maintain this system. Some are given in the form 17 January 1602/03, meaning the year was then called 1602 but is 1603 in the new style. Where the source gives a range, such as financial accounts that run from Michaelmas one year to Michaelmas the next, dates of individual records have been calculated wherever possible and are given as they would have been. It is not always clear whether dates supplied by secondary sources have been converted to the new system (ns), but the potential uncertainties are rarely of significance for this book.

Music

Terminology of musical pitch uses the Helmholtz system. The standard tunings for English viols are therefore from lowest string to highest

Treble:	d	g	c'	e'	a'	d''
Tenor:	G	c	f	a	d'	g'
Bass:	D	G	c	e	a	d'

Numbers, units and measurement

Numbers can be confusing, especially 'C', which in counting means 100 but in weight means a hundredweight. A hundredweight is usually 112 avoirdupois pounds (1 pound ≈ 454 grams), but for the purpose of import and export, a hundredweight of some goods (e.g. brass, ginger) was 100 pounds. A hundred reed pens or a hundred horse tails meant 100 units, but a hundred 'cant spars' or 'Jedburgh staves' was 120 units; a hundred stockfish was 120 units but a hundred codfish was 124 units. And so on.

Measurements of length are given in the units used at the time. Their inch was virtually identical to ours.[2] Monetary units were quite diverse. They include guineas, crowns, nobles, groats, marks and angels, but most costs and values were expressed in pounds (£ or li), shillings (s) and pence (d) where £1 = 20s = 240d.

Some goods were quantified by weight or volume but many were in units that are imprecise (varied or unquantified) or all but forgotten. Examples include a barrel of honey, a case of carving tools, a shock of lutes (or boxes: usually 60), a timber of furs (varied), a nest of counters, a quatern of figs, a dicker of razors (usually 10), and a poke of madder (a bagful).[3] In Customs

[2] Fleming, 2003, pp. 18–22.
[3] For further examples see Zupko, 1977.

rates and cargo lists musical items are usually but not always rated by number: a pair of virginals (one instrument); strings by the gross (144) but sometimes by the knot, or dozen, or box, or paper; a dozen of lutes, citterns or gitterns; a pound of clavichord wire. For Customs purposes viols are rated singly, but in other records they are often recorded in chests, cases or sets, none of which are fixed specific quantities,[4] nor is a 'noyse' of instruments (recorders, violins).[5]

[4] Fleming, 2000a.
[5] Fleming, 2000b.

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1

'English viols are the ones which one normally plays':[1] Researching early English viols

If you ask what early English viols were like, what sort of answer might you expect? This book presents plenty of relevant facts, but its core theme is heterogeneity. If half of England prefers to bathe in hot water and the other half in cold, it would be misleading to summarize the favoured temperature in a single word as 'warm'. However much we value concise explications and easily communicable ideas, any characterization of early English viols that ignores their great variety of form, manufacture and context can be no better than 'warm'. More likely it would be fallacious and misleading.

This study examines early English viols and their music in the period between the beginning of the sixteenth century, when they first appeared in England,[2] and the Civil War in the middle of the seventeenth century. Thus 'the period', a formula that recurs throughout this book, means approximately 1506–1642. Our research found less new material from the early sixteenth century than had been hoped, but comment about viols throughout the period has proved possible.

We present material from two closely related research projects: Michael Fleming's PhD (2001),[3] and the *Making the Tudor Viol* project (2009–14). Research for *Making the Tudor Viol* was carried out by Michael Fleming, together with the Principal Investigator, John Bryan. The project was based at the University of Huddersfield and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. It addressed two principal questions: what are the characteristics of sixteenth-century English viols, and what do today's makers need to know in order to produce instruments that closely resemble sixteenth-century English viols? This chapter introduces and explains those questions and their context, our approaches to them, and the form in which the research is presented. John Bryan is the author of Chapter 2 and Michael Fleming wrote the rest of this book, but both authors were involved in all parts and are jointly responsible for the whole.

Early viols and their reputation

Soon after viols emerged in late fifteenth-century Spain, Italy and elsewhere,[4] they became accepted in many countries. But despite the international

1 Forqueray, c.1769, p. 206.
2 Woodfield, 1984, p. 206f; Holman, 1993, ch. 3.
3 Fleming, 2001.
4 Woodfield, 1984; Polk, 1989.

connections evident in much music, some aspects such as pitch levels and vocal forces could be quite localized. The general nature of viols is now understood reasonably well but the differences between instruments of different times and countries still await thorough investigation. In England, viol players were employed at the royal court by the second decade of the sixteenth century but were known in the country possibly as early as 1506. This new family of bowed instruments was well suited to polyphonic music favoured in England. In many countries viols were used in combination with voices and other types of instrument, as well as continuing to perform what is now thought of as vocal music. But England also developed the most extensive, profound and important repertory of idiomatic music for sets of viols, which are now known as consorts.

Naturally, the nation's blossoming interest in viols involved the acquisition of suitable instruments. Makers who could satisfy this demand emerged and eventually English viols became the most highly thought-of throughout Europe. Their reputation survived long after the styles of music for which they were made had fallen out of fashion. Old instruments have long been favoured over new, and when 'playing the viol' came to mean performing works by Marais, Forqueray, Bach, Abel and their contemporaries, the most treasured and sought-after instruments were always 'old English viols'. This resembles the reputation of lutes in that while other types were available, old Bolognese lutes[5] were the *acme* of desirability.

Among evidence of this, John Dowland was commissioned by the Danish court to buy English instruments in 1601.[6] Dowland's interest in viols displayed in his outstanding publication of 1604[7] makes it likely they were among the instruments sought. In 1638 the Master of the King's Musick (Nicholas Lanier) acquired a matched set of six 'excellent old English' viols on behalf of his friend the Netherlandish composer Constantijn Huygens.[8] In France, the 'jouer de viole' and 'secrétaire de la chambre et ordinaire de la musique du roi et de la reine' Jean Boyer possessed an undescribed viol valued together with a *hautbois* and a *musette* at 40*l*., a small viol valued at 15*l*., and a large viol with case at 40*l*., but his large English viol with a leather case had the much higher valuation of 100*l*.[9] Also in the seventeenth century, Rousseau describes 'old English viols' as those 'which we particularly esteem in France'.[10]

Much later, Jean-Baptiste Forqueray (1699–1782) advised his pupil King Friederich Wilhelm of Prussia that 'English viols are the ones which one normally plays', and that he should acquire an old English viol.[11] Many examples of English viols were among the possessions of eighteenth-century French luthiers. For example, Nicholas Bertrand had twenty-three 'violles

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[5] However, the value of old instrument fragments was not guaranteed: 'A Lute of twenty pound lessened soe [i.e. reduced in size] is not worth 5^{li}.' *Burwell Lute Tutor*, fol. 3r–3v.

[6] Ashbee and Lasocki, 1998, p. 355.

[7] *Lachrimæ, or seaven teares figured in seaven passionate Pauans, vvith diuers other Pauans, Galiards, and Almands, set forth for the Lute, Viols, or Violons, in fiue parts:…*

[8] Crawford, 1989, p. 44. Huygens also received a gift of a 'viole angloise' in 1659. Ibid., p. 50.

[9] 16 May 1648. Jurgens, 1967–, 1, p. 287f.

[10] Rousseau, 1687, p. 22.

[11] Letter to 'Monseigneur le Prince de Prusse'. Forqueray, c.1769, p. 206.

angloises' (1725), Claude Pierray had two 'basses de violle d'angleterre' (1730), and Pierre Véron had eleven 'basses de violle d'Angleterre' (1731).[12] In eighteenth-century Germany Eisel asked which viols were held in great esteem, and his answer was 'The very old English ones … because of their delectable sound and their age, which is over a century, the English ones maintain their rank above all others.'[13] A corollary of the ubiquitous and long-lasting lust for old English viols is that information about them is significant not only for those who wish to understand and perform early English music but also for those with an interest in later continental European practices.

Thus English instruments were to be found among the possessions of music-loving individuals and establishments across Europe. Some were acquired as gifts and others after effort had been expended to locate suitable examples, but of course some viols were made locally or came from countries other than England. Similarly, not all viols used in England were necessarily made in that country. Evidence of the international trade in musical instruments includes cargo lists in port books (Figure 1.1), specific rates of customs duties, and the identification of instruments in inventories as of foreign origin. The import/export trade was not symmetrical, with England tending to import more manufactured goods than she exported. Lists of imports frequently include quantities of musical instrument strings,[14] lutes, gitterns and other musical instruments. However, I am aware of only one example of a viol in an import cargo list. On a ship called *Le Sigoma*, Lewis Cassaris's cargo included one pair of virginals and one viol: 'j paier virginals j vyoll'.[15] For viols in England, therefore, the evidence indicates that international trade principally comprised exports rather than imports.[16]

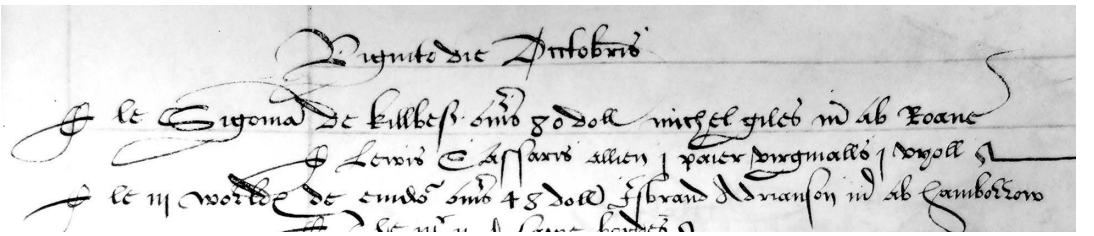

Figure 1.1 The only known port book record of a viol imported to England
The National Archives, ref. Port Book E 190/6/3, fol. 3r

[12] Milliot, 1970, pp. 127–38.
[13] Eisel, 1738, p. 44.
[14] English-made strings were also exported. See Chapter 7, and Fleming, 2000b, pp. 305–11.
[15] 20 October 1574. TNA, Port Book E 190/6/3, fol. 3r. I thank Christopher Page for drawing this to my attention.
[16] An example of other instruments being exported is a manuscript at Hatfield House that records the Duke of Medina Sidonia sending his servant to acquire 'fyve violins, iij sagbutts, iij Cornetts, and vj haultboyes, being instruments'. Cecil Papers 13/15, 8 February 1584.

Understanding and researching viols

For viol users today there are many potential barriers to re-creating the viol experience as understood by the composers, performers and listeners of the period. Musical texts, performance practice (aspects such as bowing, ornamentation and musica ficta), the physical and social context of performance, and other matters, are all vitally important for anyone who intends to understand the repertory and perform it in ways that would be recognized in the culture whence it originates. But exploring such matters is not the function of this book. This book focuses on the physical object – the viol itself.

The suitability of particular instruments for particular music was recognized by Mersenne in 1635[17] but the idea received its main boost when the 'early music' movement blossomed in the later twentieth century. However, while instruments are an important issue for any music that involves them, scholars who discuss the viols of early modern England[18] have concentrated predominantly on aspects such as musical texts or performance issues, rather than the instruments themselves and how they were made. This relative status of theoretical and mechanical aspects of music reflects medieval attitudes as much as the current paucity of information. But while the main focus here is on the instruments and their makers, music should not be ignored.

Particularly for the Tudor period, where other evidence is thinner, the repertory that viols might have played is a tangible resource that deserves close attention. It enriches our understanding of viols, providing context for their making, ownership and use. An analytical approach may yield evidence to help us speculate with greater authority about the characteristics of the viols upon which such music was played.

In other musical repertories, analysis of the ranges and particular registers used has been shown to inform our understanding of the instruments for which it was designed. For example: what appear to be large left-hand stretches in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century keyboard music alert us to the presence of a 'short' octave; the ranges of eighteenth-century recorder parts show that instruments were available in pitches other than the now standard 'F' or 'C'; the texture of Haydn's piano music can suggest whether specific pieces were conceived for the lightly strung Viennese instruments he knew in his youth or the rich, ringing bass register of the more sturdily constructed English instruments he encountered in 1790s London.[19]

How might the surviving English repertory played on viols in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries inform our understanding of performers' and composers' expectations of their instruments, and of makers' aspirations when building them? The analysis in Chapter 2 focuses on this question. More viols survive from later periods, so the need for repertory to illuminate their characteristics is less acute.

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17 Chapman, 1957, p. 15.

18 Woodfield, 1984, ch. 14; Holman, 1993, ch. 4.

19 For example, the voice flute (a recorder in D) was often used for the performance of baroque *traverso* music and it is conjectured that Bach's *flauti d'echo* in Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 BWV 1049 were pitched in G. For Haydn's pianos see Harrison, 1997, especially ch. 1.

Chapter 2 begins by exploring the relationship between voices and viols, which were closely associated for much of the period. This provides a context for the investigation of repertory intended for purely instrumental performance. Issues that lend themselves to such analysis include the overall compass of pieces, the relationship between the voices within the composition, and their individual ranges. Further analysis can indicate the prevailing register within each part's overall range that a composer favoured, which may identify areas in which he felt the viols he knew were most effective.

This approach is most fruitful when applied to discrete bodies of music, such as a particular publication or manuscript collection, the work of an individual composer, or pieces for a particular combination of instruments. Analysis of range and register gives insights into the ways instruments were combined to create different textures, and provides some measurable parameters for comparison. Compasses and ranges may also provide proxies for broader stylistic variations and therefore show composers' responses to the instruments with which they were working. Comparisons can therefore be made that may indicate norms or highlight exceptions to generally accepted practice. Where compositions can be dated or related to specific collectors or patrons the data might indicate changing trends and patterns in instrumental usage across time and between places.

Analysis of compass, range and register is only one way to understand the sound of viol consorts in early modern England. Chapter 2 also addresses elements within the repertory that are less susceptible to objective analysis: agility and leaps between registers, the ability to articulate divisions and other ornamentation, sustaining power and projection of tone.[20]

Antique viols and other evidence

Having acquired a suitable musical text and organized suitable environment and techniques for performing it, a player's prime concern is the equipment to be used. The first difficulty that arises is understanding exactly what it was that was known as a viol in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and what became an 'old English viol' later. This is salient for scholars who wish to understand such instruments, for the instrument trade (makers, retailers, auctioneers and collectors) who need to describe, catalogue or reproduce them, and of course for musicians who wish to use them. There are two main problems when dealing with the issue. First, surviving old English viols are very rare. A large proportion is in museums and those in private hands are beyond the financial means of most potential users. Second, they depart in multifarious and unquantified ways from the instruments that were in the hands of the original users. These matters are discussed in Chapter 3. Individual viols referred to in this book are listed in Table 1.1, which uses DHV numbers from the on-line *Database of Historical Viols* (http://www.vdgsa.org/pgs/viols/viols.html).

[20] It should not be forgotten that the notated music is only part of the story in an age when expertise in embellishment might take performers some distance from the written notes.

Table 1.1 Extant viols mentioned

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
0001	Nice Turner	bass	28	ABON 1	Turner	1652	F–Nice–Musée d'Art et Histoire
0022	Maria treble	treble	–	ASHMOL 1	G. Maria	late C16	UK–Oxford–Ashmolean
0025	Ashmolean festooned	bass	33	ASHMOL 4	attr. Rose	2nd half C16	UK–Oxford–Ashmolean
0026	Ashmolean Rose	tenor	20	ASHMOL 5	Rose	1598	UK–Oxford–Ashmolean
0027	Ashmolean Blunt	tenor	21	ASHMOL 6	Blunt	1605	UK–Oxford–Ashmolean
0029	part–Jaye	treble	04	BAINE 1	attr. Jaye	<1636	UK–PC
0031	attr. Jaye	treble	13	BAINE 3	attr. Jaye	early C17	UK–PC
0032	Jaye 1611	bass	32	BAINE 4	Jaye	<1636	UK–PC
0033	Pitts	bass	–	BAINE 5	Pitts	1675	UK–PC
0056	Jaye 1620	treble	06	BENT 1/GAL 3	Jaye	1620	UK–PC
0215	attr. Rose	bass	35	CALD 15	Rose	1584	USA– Oberlin–Caldwell
0265	Strong	treble	16	FOLGER 1/[KENS 1]	Strong	c.1600	USA–Washington–Folger
0277	Anon. French	bass	–	GAL 11	Anon.	late C17	UK–PC
0380	Hart House attr. Rose	treble	–	HART 5	attr. Rose	early C17	CDN–Toronto–Hart House
0410	Jaye 1619	bass	37	KESSLR 1	Jaye	1619	UK–London–RCM
0411	RCM Meares	bass	–	KESSLR 2/NESBIT 1	Meares	c.1680	UK–London–RCM
0528	Leipzig Jaye	treble	–	LEIPC 07	Jaye	early C17	D–Leipzig–Universität
0596	Met Smith	bass	25	METRO 07	Smith	1629	USA–NewYork–Metropolitan
0603	Boston Blunt	tenor	22	LOAN 4	Blunt	c.1600	USA–Boston–MFA
0697	Paris Jaye	bass	24	PARIS 06	Jaye	1624	F–Paris–Musée de Musique
0743	Hoskin	treble	–	PRINGL 1	Hoskin	1609	USA–Vermillion–NMM
0745	RCM Norman	bass	–	RCM 2	Norman	1692	UK–London–RCM
0746	RCM attr. Lewis	bass	–	RCM 3	Lewis	c.1690	UK–London–RCM
0877	V&A Rose	bass	31	VIC 1	Rose	2nd half C16	UK– London–V&A
0878	V&A 'Jaye'	treble/tenor	17	VIC 02/KENS 6	Jaye	1667	UK– London–V&A
0880	Baker	bass	–	VIC 04	Baker	1688	UK–London–V&A
0955	Gibs	bass	–	–	Gibs	unknown	USA–PC
0977	Paris Rose	tenor	19	–	John Rose	1595?	F–Paris–Musée de Musique
0988	Caldwell festooned	bass	29		attr. Rose	<mid C17	USA– Oberlin–Caldwell
1006	Bowcleffe/Bowlesse	tenor	–	–	attr. Bolles	mid C17?	CH–PC
1018	attr. Smith 1637	bass	31	–	attr. Smith	1st half C17	UK–PC

1036	attr. Rose	bass	26	–	attr. Rose	early 17C	UK–London–RCM
1073	Blunt bass	bass	–	–	Blunt	1591	CH–Zurich–Sammlung Hug
1086	Shaw	bass	–	–	Shaw	1673	USA–PC
1101	Meinertzen	bass	–	–	Meinertzen	c.1700	DK–PC
1115	Rasseter	bass	–	–	Rasseter	1656	USA–PC
1212	Paris anon. bass	bass/tenor	23	–	anon	early C17	F–Paris–Museé de Musique
1254	Lewis	bass	–	–	Lewis	1703	UK–PC
1280	Anon English NY	bass/tenor	–	–	English	C17	USA–NewYork–Metropolitan
1314	Gill	treble	01	–	Gill	[C17]	UK–London–Horniman
1329	William Cross	bass	–	-	Cross	c.1700	UK–London–City University
1458	Hart House Jaye	bass	–	–	Jaye	1610	CDN–Toronto–Royal Ontario Museum
1519	Allred	bass	–	–	Aldred	1635/1639	CH–PC
1521	Anon. treble	treble	–	–	English	[c.1700]	UK–PC
1631	Allred 1629	bass	–	–	Aldred	1629	B–PC
1633	Anon. English PC	bass	–	–	English	1st half C17	USA–PC

Key to columns

1. DHV = *Database of Historic Viols*. See http://www.vdgsa.org/pgs/viols/viols.html for further information
2. Text description
3. Size
4. VME number in Fleming, 2001 (*Viol-Making in England c1580–1660*)
5. Reference in Tourin's VIOLLIST
6. Maker or traditional attribution
7. Date from label, or estimate
8. Country–City–Collection (PC = Private Collection)

Visual evidence has the potential to illuminate early English viols and is discussed in Chapter 4. Images may give direct reports of the viols that were used in the period. They also form part of the visual environment in which the viols were made, and are therefore among the factors responsible for the conceptions of viols in the minds of both makers and users. Viols have been constructed on the basis of paintings,[21] and scholars have discussed forms of construction on the basis of images.[22] However, even though the standardized systems seem to offer a reliable and consistent way to approach the mass of material, images' value as evidence is often undermined by flawed investigative methodology. Neither H. M. Brown and J. Lascelles, *Musical iconography: a manual for cataloguing musical subjects in Western art* (Cambridge, MA, 1972) nor the ICONCLASS system (www.iconclass.nl) used in major international institutions meet all the needs of investigative organology. Organology requires a different approach from art history, so images in several media are used to exemplify the extraction of data for the purpose of understanding early English viols. English images are referred to here by their 'EVI' numbers (explained in Chapter 4).

One common problem is the nomenclature of instruments. There are various reasons why period sources fail to adhere to modern standards of precision. Spelling was very fluid and unstandardized, and the exact species of an instrument, though a crucial matter for us, was often of little or no interest to the scribe or artist. Writers would happily spell their own name differently within a single document. A single instrument could be casually recorded as viol, viall, vyoll, vyalle, vyelle, viole, violle, veolde, vioall, violette, violen, vyolan, violin, or many other spellings. We apply some of these to specific distinct types of instrument, but that was not always the case in the period. Contextual clues often enable the type of instrument to be identified with confidence, but they are not always adequate.

It is important to recognize that the analytical structure within which varieties of viols are discussed is often driven by our own taxonomic convenience. Categories of musical instruments, and terms describing their size and nature, that are by modern standards rational and consistent, may be wholly anachronistic and contrary to the way they were perceived and understood at the time. For understanding the view taken in the period, therefore, they are potentially very misleading. When we describe an instrument as a viol, we mean it matches our definition of that instrument, or at least most of the relevant criteria. For example, we might consider a viol (Plate 1) such as a well-preserved bass by Richard Meares (DHV:0411) to be a 'typical' English viol, then concoct our definition such that it fits comfortably in the centre. This might involve relatively general critera such as: a bowed instrument with six strings, a flat back, three bouts, and a neck with tied-on frets, or it might

[21] Toon Moonen, according to the *Strad* (May 1995), pp. 506–10, made a viol based on Raphael's *St Cecilia*. A set of viols based on a painting by Lorenzo Costa (1497) was commissioned from West Dean College by Musica Antiqua of London, 2003.

[22] For example, Otterstedt, 2002, p. 111.

include specific aspects such as the shape, size, materials and ornamentation of particular components.

The problem is that no criterion applies in all cases, so a range of work-arounds are required to accommodate disparate or inconvenient evidence. In the interpretation of images, for example, inflexible criteria make it necessary to say that when we think an instrument is a viol and there are no frets, the image is misleading for practical reasons such as artistic incompetence, careless execution, a false description by the commissioner, an error in the executant's understanding or knowledge of viols, and so on. Such factors certainly obtain, but to avoid unnecessarily convoluted explanations it is better to use descriptions that rely on musical matters, such as tuning or musical context, rather than pre-determined and inflexible rules. Balancing descriptions of how viols and other instruments were thought of in the period against how we think of them now is essential in order to understand them.

Nomenclature issues also apply to occupations. Chance plays a remarkably large part in determining whether instrument makers are identified as such in documents. For example, it is not even always clear (especially in parish records) whether the instruments made by someone described as an 'instrument maker' were musical. When Thomas Walker of Southwark baptised his daughter, he was described as 'An Instrumentmaker for surgio*ns*',[23] but if the scribe had written only 'Instrumentmaker', we would assume he meant musical instruments rather than medical equipment. More specifically, no individual was ever termed 'viol maker' in parish records; other evidence is necessary to identify them.

Descriptions of instrument makers feature in Chapter 5. This considers the nature of their working lives, including their place in society, their education and training, their trade relationships and formal support structures, and the range of work they undertook. Chapter 6 takes the investigation of viol makers further through detailed investigations of individuals. All the best-known early English makers are considered to the full extent allowed by their low profile in contemporary records (explained in previous chapters). Makers from all around the country are examined, some generically and others as case studies. To supplement the picture of viol making derived from this and previous chapters on instruments, music and images, Chapter 7 looks closely at the physical resources involved in the production of old English viols. It examines physical evidence from extant viols in the light of a detailed assessment of the woods and tools that could have been used in that place and at that time.

Reasons for researching old viols

The normal solution to the unavailability of original instruments is to use modern reproductions or reconstructions. In order for reconstructions to be more than mere works of imagination based on incomplete or imprecise data

[23] LMA. Parish register of St Saviour, Southwark P92/SAV, Item 3003. 2 January 1658/9.

and fragmentary understanding of early viols, makers need comprehensive and reliable information about surviving original viols (including their exact form when new) and viol-making practices. They need to understand the demands made of their predecessors by the commissioners and users of such instruments. Current workshop practice is often founded on alien instrument-making traditions (typically nineteenth-century violin making), 'common sense' and pragmatism. This approach may be effective for making new instruments but it undermines the validity of viols intended for an historically informed approach to performance.

No precise description of sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century English viols has been published. This severely compromises attempts to understand and re-create their music by building instruments of that exact sort. The making of pre-1600 Italian viols[24] and later English and French instruments[25] has been discussed (though not always with academic rigour), but this is of limited relevance to early English instruments. This book combines new information about materials (wood, strings), processes (tools, workshop practice) and aesthetics with new understanding of musical expectations to produce a comprehensive and balanced overview of the instruments, how they were made, how they worked and their reception.

Viol research before and in this book

As a viol maker in the 1980s, it was the inadequacy of the available information that prompted Michael Fleming to start researching. This progressed to doctoral studies and to further research culminating in the present book. The thesis was never published,[26] so this book incorporates information from it in order to make it more widely accessible. A few passages have been reused with minimal modification but most of this book is either completely new work or substantially revised.

To exemplify the differences, the earlier work deliberately ignored the music for which viols were used, but here, as explained above, John Bryan's Chapter 2 explores what their music can tell us about the instruments. Conversely, the popular approach to old instruments using geometrical and proportional analysis is not revisited here. There seem to be good reasons to expect such schemes to represent viol makers' design processes, but the techniques used for describing and analysing the shapes of extant instruments have been shown to be wholly unsatisfactory.[27] Furthermore, such schemes would have been impossible or irrelevant for the people concerned (see Chapter 5), so despite the continuing popularity of geometrical-proportional-mathematical analyses,

[24] Harwood and Edmunds, 1978; Edmunds, 1980.
[25] Kessler, 1982. Soubeyran, 1996.
[26] It was available in the Open University library, through the British Library Thesis Service, and on a CD-ROM from the author. The thesis may now be read at the University of Huddersfield website: https://eprints.hud.ac.uk/5249.
[27] Fleming, 2001, Chapter 1.

the technique does not provide a useful route to a profound understanding of early English viols. Freedom from prescriptive schemes[28] may even be one of the keys to the success of early English viol makers.

It is crucial to recognize the impact of the rarity of early English viols on the reliability of information that may be derived from those that survive. Close examination of the *Database of Historical Viols* confirms that rarity applies to all viols in this study but is particularly acute for Tudor instruments. As a consequence, many who wish to discuss Tudor viols cite evidence about other instruments, other countries and other periods, with the tacit assumption that such data are revealing about English practices during the period. This obscures potential distinctions and undermines the characterization of early English viols. For this book, the principle of relying on evidence that is both from England and from within the period has been adhered to as far as possible. Data from nearby times or places is used occasionally but only with caution.

The importance and presentation of primary evidence

The way evidence is presented here follows the principle that it should be as close to original as possible.[29] This is because all scholars, including the present authors, are human and may make errors. Once published, even a minor mistranscription acquires a sort of authority (often enhanced by repetition) and permanence, becoming less helpful than it might be, or worse, obstructing the illumination the correct data could provide. For example, a 1954 article reported that 'The parish registers of St Olave Hart Street show the burials of: *Sara d. Melchior de Fombroker, Italion and lutmaker* …'[30] (See Figure 1.2.)

That some errors in this may be accidental rather than intended is indicated by the preservation of unconventional spellings of 'Italion' and 'lutmaker'. Nevertheless, this transcription departs from the original source, probably

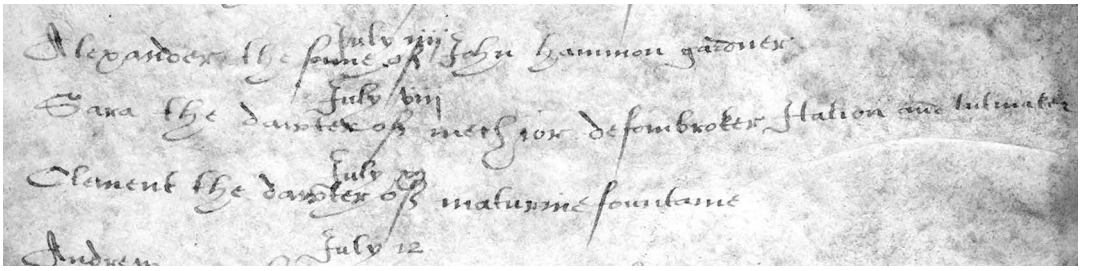

Figure 1.2 St Olave Hart Street parish register: Sara 'defombroker' buried 8 July 1563
LMA, P69/OLA1/A/001/MS28867

[28] The issue here is theory and intent; I do not propose that geometrical or proportional procedures had or have no place in the *mechanical* processes of viol making.

[29] See Note to Readers.

[30] Boston, 1954, p. 6, n. 7.

because of the author's expectations of content, typographic conventions, or well-meaning but misguided editorial interventions. Careful examination of the original parish register shows that in fact it says 'Sara the dawter of mechior defombroker Italion and lutmaker'. A man whose name is spelt 'defombroker' is much more likely than 'de Fombroker' to be identified correctly as a member of the famous German-Italian Tieffenbrucker family of instrument makers.[31]

Another example of the impact and extended life of a flawed reading is a tenor viol that formerly hung in a Shakespeare Trust property in Stratford-upon-Avon on long-term loan from W. E. Hill & Sons. The Hills acquired it in 1912 and eventually sold it at auction in 1992, when it was catalogued as by William Bowcleffe.[32] I was among many who assumed this reading of the label was reliable because of the reputation of the source, but I could find no trace of anyone with this name. The label itself is probably not original, though it might be a replica. In any case, recent inspection through more objective eyes reveals immediately that it actually says William Bowlesse. I found records of many people named William Bowlesse at about the right time, from a Shropshire gentleman to a London cook, but no evidence that any of them were connected with viols or other instruments or music or woodwork. The name on the label is, therefore, credible, but this is far from confirming that anyone of that name made viols.

While preparing this book, numerous documentary sources of very varied types have been consulted in dozens of locations including the National Archives, many city and county record offices, guild and university archives, parish records, and archives of stately homes. On-line databases have been useful, but original documents were examined whenever it was practical. Of course, it is impossible to examine all surviving documents of the period. Issues including accessibility and state of preservation make some individual items or collections difficult to work with, so some collections were investigated more deeply than others. London records feature strongly, reflecting both their accessibility and the importance of the capital city. Examples from Oxford are used often partly because of the long history of that city and its university as centres of musical activity, and partly because of the extent and convenience of access to Oxford archives. Similarly accessible archives such as Wiltshire provide both unique data and general exemplification. These local focuses should not bias our findings, as experience shows that comparable material can be found around the country, albeit unevenly distributed.

Much raw data is presented in the following pages, caveats are noted, interpretations are offered and speculations are made. Inevitably, many questions remain unresolved (some areas for future research are suggested in the final chapter), but this book should at least broaden knowledge and deepen understanding of early English viols.

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[31] For the context of defombroker, see Fleming, 2012b.

[32] For this viol see also Chapter 3. Hebbert, 2003, p. 72f, suggested it could be connected with a man named Borracleffe, but this relied on a document that actually refers to William Borradell.

2

'Choice consorts … (rare chests of viols)':[1] The evidence of the repertory

John Bryan

In 1658 Lord Dudley North (1581–1666) wrote to Henry Loosemore (c.1607–70), organist of King's College, Cambridge, to thank him for having participated in a consort performance at North's home in Kirtling. In a postscript he gave a rare insight into how one keen viol player of the early modern period responded to the consort music he loved: 'There is a kind of brisk, lusty, yet mellifluent vein, that flows as in *In nomine*; and I have found it in a double C fa ut piece of Mr Wards 4. Parts … that stirs the bloud, and raises our spirits, with liveliness and activity.'[2] Such a record is invaluable, since despite the wealth of music from Tudor and Stuart England appropriate for performance on viols, we are still some way from conceiving what it actually sounded like in performance. Surviving instruments tend to post-date the music and are frequently compromised by later alterations and the lack of original fittings (see Chapter 3). However, the repertory played on viols may yield significant insights into some of the instruments' characteristics.

Before investigating this question, another issue needs to be addressed. This is the nature of the surviving music itself, and the extent to which it is possible to identify a corpus of 'viol music'.[3] The earliest English publications explicitly specifying viols as the preferred performance medium date from the years around 1600: Antony Holborne's *Pavans, Galliards, Almains and other short Aeirs both graue and light* (London, 1599) and John Dowland's *Lachrimae, or Seaven Teares figvred in Seaven Passionate Pauans* (London, 1604). Both collections are to some extent retrospective, including at least some pieces that can be dated as

[1] Mace, 1676, p. 236.

[2] Quoted in Wilson, 1959, p. 5. The piece in question is John Ward's 'Oxford' Fantasia 6 (VdGS 26; Ward, 2005). It is the only surviving four-part fantasia by Ward that requires a low C (and the treble goes up to c'''', giving a total compass of thirty notes). Payne suggests that the fantasias (including this one) preserved in the 'Hatton Great Set', GB-Och, Mus. MSS 397–400, Mus. MS 2 (score) and Mus. MS 436 (organ book), probably copied in the mid–late 1630s, are 'unlikely to have been composed earlier than the five- and six-part pieces or the madrigals published in 1613' (Ward, 2005, p. xxiii). Ward's five-part pieces are preserved in Tregian's scorebook, GB-Lbl, Egerton MS 3665, so predate the copyist's death in 1619. It is not known to which In Nomine Lord North was referring.

[3] This study is concerned primarily with viols in consort rather than as solo instruments. Analysis of the surviving music for unaccompanied viol, particularly that involving scordatura and notation in tablature (lyra viol), deserves separate consideration.

early as the 1580s, and can therefore be read as shedding light on the repertory for the last twenty years or so of the Tudor viol consort.[4]

Apart from isolated pieces in anthologies, such as the two fantasias published by William Byrd in *Psalmes, Songs, and Sonnets* (London, 1611), almost no consort music for viols appeared in print except for nine *Fantasies of Three Parts* (London, c.1620) by Orlando Gibbons.[5] Like Gibbons's publication, the many manuscripts containing the viol consort's repertory usually contain no explicit instrument specifications, each partbook generally being given only the title of its function in the musical texture (e.g. 'Cantus', 'Bassus') rather than the name of a particular instrument. Perhaps it was thought to be self-evident that viols were intended, since when the scoring is out of the ordinary, partbooks tend to say so, as is the case in GB-Ob, MS Mus. Sch. C.84, which specifies 'Mr J Jenkins his Ayres for the Harpsecon, Lyra Viole, Base Vyole and Vyolin'.[6] It is rare to find anything quite as precise as the autograph inscription on fol. 45 of William Lawes's score book (GB-Ob, MS Mus. Sch. B.2): 'a. 5 for ye Violls', or the description in the mid-seventeenth-century US-R, MS M 350F216: 'Jo: Wythie his Booke … 3 parts for the Violls'.[7] Yet we know from Thomas Mace (1612/3–?1706) that the music played by early seventeenth-century viol consorts consisted of '*Fancies* of 3, 4, 5, and 6 *Parts* to the *Organ*; Interpos'd (now and then) with some *Pavins, Allmaines, Solemn, and Sweet Delightful Ayres*', exactly the repertory collected in the many extant seventeenth-century manuscripts.[8]

Mace, an experienced viol teacher in Cambridge, makes particular reference to the viol consort's core repertory by composers such as Alfonso Ferrabosco II, John Ward, Richard Dering and John Coprario, all of whom died forty or more years before his book's publication. Other later commentators, such as Roger North (1651–1734), also refer to fantasias, In Nomines, ayres and dance music as the staple diet of the viol consort. In attempting to define the viol consort's repertory it is salutary to remember how frequently the material cited by Mace sits alongside vocal music in the manuscript sources, and how often copyists collected relatively 'old' music together with more recent compositions. For example, the sole surviving source for Byrd's six-part Pavan and Galliard is the set of partbooks GB-Ob, MSS Mus. Sch. C.64–9, copied in the mid–late 1630s, though Laurence Dreyfus has tentatively dated the composition to 1603.[9] Copyists were collecting such old-fashioned material either for the sake of comprehensiveness and antiquarian interest, or because they wanted to be able to play it on their viols, so the repertory had a longevity that bears witness to a variety of performance contexts and probable changes in instrumental capabilities.

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4 Bryan, 2013.

5 Gibbons's pieces were reprinted, together with three-part music by Thomas Lupo, John Coprario and William Daman, in *XX. Koninclycke Fantasien* (Amsterdam, 1648), where the performing forces are specified as '3 Fioolen de Gamba'. See Harley, 1999, pp. 283–6.

6 Ashbee, Thompson and Wainwright, 2001, p. 111.

7 Cunningham, 2010, p. 301.

8 Mace, 1676, p. 234.

9 Phantasm, *William Byrd Complete Consort Music* (Linn Records CKD 372, 2009).

The following analysis of repertory that was most likely to have been performed on viols will focus on music from the sixteenth century and the earlier part of the seventeenth, using the following definitions:

- Compass: the distance between lowest bass note and highest treble note in a composition.[10]
- Range: the distance between the lowest and highest note of a single part or voice.
- Register: a sub-section of 'range'. For example, the most used register of a part with a range of a ninth might be the fourth between the fifth and eighth notes; in a piece with two tenor viols of equal range, one might typically be located in a register a fifth above the other.

The following investigation of compass, range and register uses a basic measurement in 'notes', i.e. pitch names. No distinction is made here between tones and semitones, so c♯ to b♭ and c to b are both reckoned as a seventh, even though one is actually a tone wider than the other. When used across a corpus of pieces for comparative purposes this distinction becomes relatively insignificant.

Any interpretation of the results of such a corpus-based approach to the analysis of compass, range and register must also recognize the distinction between 'nominal' notated pitches and the actual sounding pitch that may have resulted in performance. There is evidence of the same piece being transcribed at different pitch levels by contemporary copyists, and the composer's or copyist's choice of clefs could also indicate transposition in performance.[11] For instance, the large collection of manuscripts connected with performance in the homes of Edward Paston (?1550–1630) often gives the same piece at different pitches, such as the three versions of Byrd's 'Ye sacred Muses' (BE 15/32).[12] The overall compass of a composition becomes significant here, in that a wide compass constrains the amount of transposition possible for a particular ensemble if it is not to 'go off the top or bottom' of the available instruments or voices.

We are still some way from reaching a consensus concerning the parameters governing actual pitch at which viol consorts played in early modern England, leading to theories that there may have been more than one generally agreed level, depending on the size of the instruments, or that viols may have played at different pitch levels when performing alone or in combination with voices or keyboard instruments.[13] In our more standardized age, it is easy to forget that concepts of absolute pitch were foreign to a culture that instructed players:

[10] John Dowland, in his translation of Ornithoparcus' *Micrologus* (London, 1609), p. 11, writes: 'The Compasse is nothing else, but a circuite or space allowed by the authoritie of the Musicians to the *Tones* for their rising and falling.'

[11] Praetorius, 1619, Part II, ch. IX: 'Concerning the transposition of compositions'. For a brief discussion of 'consort pitch' in England before c.1670 see Haynes, 2002, pp. 95–6.

[12] Byrd, 1970 (BE 15). US-CA, MS Mus 30 shows the piece a fourth lower than GB-Lbl, Add. MSS 29401–5. A third source, a lute book containing an arrangement of the four lower parts of the song, GB-Lbl, Add. MS 31922, is written a tone below the higher version. See Brett, 1993, pp. 89–118.

[13] Harwood, 1981, pp. 470–85.

'When you begin to Tune, first raise your *Treble* or first string as high as you conceive it will hold without breaking.'[14] Non-standardization of sounding pitch appears to have been taken for granted in the days before soundposts were common, since Ganassi recommended that viol players should move their bridges in order to facilitate different instrumental pitch levels, and multiple-pitch sources may therefore suggest viols without soundposts.[15] In later repertory viols combined with fixed-pitch instruments such as the organ, constraining the variability of the stringed instruments' tuning. Similarly, one significant determinant of pitch for viols in the Tudor repertory must have been the capacity of the human voice, since much of the viol's earlier music was so closely associated with singing.

The following analysis takes the form of a series of case studies, since it would be beyond the scope of this chapter to investigate every piece suitable for performance on viols surviving from the period under discussion. The first study focuses on music in which voices and viols are combined, or might replace one another in performance. The next takes two-part repertory as its subject, using Whythorne's innovative *Duos* of 1590 as its starting point. In contrast, the richer textures of six-part consort music are then explored, before analysis turns to a specific genre, the In Nomine, providing evidence of the changing treatment of viols across a relatively wide chronological span. The final case study turns to the distinctive sound world of the broken consort: a repertory in which there is clear documentary evidence of the participation of treble and bass viols in music from the last decades of the sixteenth century.

Voices and viols

Voices and viols were inextricably linked in the soundscape of early modern England. Some repertory, such as verse anthems for domestic use, had a musical structure that required a mixture of voices and viols; music with verbal texts was sometimes performed instrumentally, and often copied without its words; and music originally devised without text was adapted to provide music for singers.[16] The numerous publications of repertory 'apt for the Viols and voices' that started in 1600 with *Madrigals of 5. and 6. parts* by Thomas Weelkes are testament to a tradition that extended back well into the sixteenth century. Prints such as Byrd's *Psalmes, Songs, and Sonnets* (1611) and those of Michael East brought together madrigals, psalm settings, verse anthems, consort songs and instrumental consort music all in one collection.[17] Investigation of the ranges of the individual parts in such publications, and how they were combined in consort, might indicate whether composers and publishers were simply making the most of a new market in instrumental performance with little regard for

[14] Playford, 1654, p. 29.
[15] Ganassi, 1542, ch. 11.
[16] Monson, 1982.
[17] 'Consort song', though not a term used in early modern England, is now commonly used to designate songs for a solo voice accompanied by viol consort.

writing specifically for the viols. Or analysis might demonstrate consort music's growing independence from vocal music, and the implications this may have had for the instruments upon which it was played.

However, the omission of a text by a copyist or publisher was not necessarily an indication of instrumental performance. The skill of singing textless music to sol-fa syllables was part of a Tudor musician's basic training, and pieces now conventionally played on viols have titles that suggest instrumental performance might not have been its prime purpose, such as the five-part 'A Solfinge Songe' (MB 44/36) by Thomas Tallis (c.1505–85).[18] In other cases initially wordless pieces were adapted when texts were added, as John Milsom has demonstrated in connection with Tallis's 'O sacrum convivium'.[19] Such interconnectedness is also represented in one of the most substantial sources of untexted polyphony from Elizabethan England: 'A booke of In nomines & other solfainge songes of v: vi: vii: & viii: pts for voyces or Instrumentes' (GB-Lbl, Add. MS 31390, in tablebook format and dated *c*.1578).

Many Tudor viol players were initially trained and employed as singers. Some of the earliest English court violists were also 'singing men': from 1547 Thomas Browne was one of the singing men in the Privy Chamber ensemble led by Philip Van Wilder (c.1500–53), but in 1554 he was appointed 'one of the vyalls', a role he continued until his death in 1582.[20] Choristers in many of the English cathedrals were taught to play viols, which were regularly used by the choirboy troupes in musical and dramatic entertainments. Around 1545 John Redford (d.1547), organist of St Paul's Cathedral, wrote a morality play, *Wyt and Science*, which was performed by the scholars. This included the song 'Remembreance' performed with viols: the stage direction states 'Heere cumth in fowre wyth violes and syng'. The boys of St Paul's were in demand for much of the Elizabethan period, performing for dinners such as those given annually by the company of Merchant Taylors, and by the Goldsmiths' Company at their election feast on 17 June 1560: 'And all ye dynner tyme ye syngyng chyldren of Paules played upon their vialles & songe verye pleasaunt songes to ye delectacion & reioysynge of ye whole companie.'[21] Songs from choirboy dramas and similar entertainments also appear to have stimulated an interest amongst Elizabethan collectors such as Robert Dow (1553–88), whose manuscript partbooks (GB-Och, Mus. MSS 984–8, copied in the 1580s) contain many examples of solo songs alongside fully texted sacred music and pieces without text.[22]

By 1588, when the *Psalmes, Sonets, & songs of sadnes and pietie* by William Byrd (c.1540–1623) appeared, such songs were adapted for a wider audience by

[18] So titled in GB-Lbl, Add. MS 32377, which only preserves the cantus part. In GB-Lbl, Add. MS 31390 the piece has no title at all. See Doe, 1979 (MB 44).

[19] Milsom, 1988.

[20] This is possibly the same man listed as 'instrument-maker' who gave Queen Elizabeth I a New Year's gift in 1556 of 'a faire lute, edged with passamayne of golde and silk': Ashbee and Lasocki, 1998, p. 200.

[21] Cited by Woodfield, 1984, p. 213.

[22] Facsimile edition with introduction: Milsom, 2010; modern edition of songs for voice and instruments: Brett, 1967.

having text added to what had been conceived as instrumental parts. As Byrd's 'Epistle to the Reader' makes clear, such parts: 'which being originally made for Instruments to expresse the harmonie, and one voyce to pronounce the dittie, are now framed in all parts for voyces to sing the same'.[23] Although Byrd does not tell us that his previously untexted parts were specifically performed on viols (and there is evidence of his polyphonic songs also being performed with lute or keyboard instruments), viols are the most likely candidates.[24]

The designated 'first singing part' in Byrd's 1588 set (the one conceived as the solo vocal line) is different in nature from the parts that were originally untexted: it is generally more syllabic, has fewer text repetitions, is often narrower in range and usually enters last in the contrapuntal web. So Byrd appears to have had a different aesthetic in mind for his vocal and instrumental lines. Even if his untexted parts can be shown to have something 'instrumental' in their conception, such as a greater use of decorative movement than is typical of the originally vocal part, they are still largely inspired by their imagined texts.[25]

Analysis of the ranges of the parts in Byrd's 1588 set reveals the scale of his distinction between 'vocal' and 'instrumental' lines. Of its 35 items (all in five parts), 29 have a designated 'first singing part', and several of the remaining six show similar characteristics in one or other of the top two parts without them being so titled.[26] In the majority of cases it is the *superius* that is the 'first singing part' (in 24 songs, 18 thus designated), equally distributed between G2 and C1 clefs. In 20 of these parts Byrd requires a range of only eight or nine notes. In the 11 songs whose 'first singing part' is in the *medius* partbook, with a higher part (originally untexted) above it as a descant, only one exceeds a ninth in range. The average range for the untexted *superius* parts, however, is wider than the texted ones, typically covering a tenth or eleventh. The untexted *medius* parts have an average range of more than a tenth, very similar to the three untexted lower parts. Only two parts in the entire 1588 set exceed the range of a twelfth, and both are to be found in the *contratenor* part.[27]

Byrd's combination of ranges in his 1588 publication largely follows a stratified system in which each inner part overlaps with those above and below it, but tends to inhabit its own characteristic register. This is designated by the choice of clefs, most usually C1, C2, C3, C4, F4 or G2, C2, C3, C4, F3. But Byrd is far from constrained by such stratification, and several pieces in his 1588 set use

[23] Byrd, 2004a (BE 12). The earlier versions of many of these songs, in which only one part is texted, can be found in Byrd, 1976.

[24] Several manuscripts from the Paston collection include accompaniments for Byrd songs in tablature, and GB-Y, MS M.91(S) contains a keyboard reduction of 'In fields abroad' (BE 12/22) written on two six-line staves.

[25] Early seventeenth-century copyists were happy to transcribe vocal music untexted, presumably for instrumental performance. 'O Lord, who in thy sacred tent' (BE 12/8) is preserved without words in GB-Lbl, Add. MSS 37402–6, in which one Italian madrigal bears the note 'the last lyne ys to be played [i.e. not sung] afore this'. See Monson, 1982, ch. 6.

[26] Exceptions to this are 'O God give ear' (BE 12/1) and 'Ambitious love' (BE 12/18), which are generally more homophonic than the other items in the set, and have no designated 'first singing part'.

[27] The *contratenor* part of 'O God give ear' (BE 12/1) and 'As I beheld a herdsman' (BE 12/20) each requires a range of 13 notes. The latter is unusual in being a high-lying part set in C2 clef.

quite distinctive clef combinations and ranges, which have implications for the sizes or relative capabilities of viols that might have been employed to perform them. For example, 'O Lord how long' (BE 12/5) has an unusually low 'first singing part' notated in tenor vocal range (C3 clef; g–g') with two instrumental parts that frequently go above it. The *contratenor* part would take a normal tenor viol up to its top fret d'', but its lowest note (g) is lower than that usually found in parts that appear more suited to a treble viol. 'O you that hear this voice' (BE 12/16) requires *contratenor* and *tenor* instruments of equal range (C3 clef; g–a') and register, since they constantly cross each other throughout the song, while 'O God give ear' (BE 12/1) has similarly low-lying ranges for both *medius* and *contratenor* parts (d–a' and d–b♭'). Extremes of register are generally avoided in all parts: the *superius* goes as high as the treble viol's top fret (a'') in only three pieces, one of which ('O you that hear this voice', BE 12/16) would probably have been transposed down since all its parts lie unusually high. The *bassus* in Byrd's 1588 set never goes below F nor above d'. This would be unremarkable if the part had been conceived for a voice, but Byrd's decision not to extend higher or lower in a part originally made for an instrument may give an important insight into the Tudor bass viol's optimum register too.

Byrd was fully aware of the compasses of his 1588 songs, as he took pains to point out to potential users that they varied. His 'Epistle to the Reader' indicates that 'If thou delight in Musicke of great compasse' it is those pieces that were originally designed 'for Instruments to expresse the harmonie' that fulfil that role. But 'If thou desire songs of smal compasse & fit for the reach of most voyces, heere are most in number of that sort'. Of Byrd's 12 songs 'of great compasse', four have a compass of 22 notes, and eight a compass of 23 notes, whereas his songs 'of smal compasse' have compasses of 19–21 notes. It is also the case that in all but one of his songs 'of great compasse' Byrd places the 'first singing part' in the *medius*, so that the *superius* is to be taken by a viol, regularly taking the part up to g'', and even to a'' in 'Lulla lullaby' (BE 12/32)[28] and 'Why do I use my paper, ink and pen' (BE 12/33).[29] The implication for this 'descant viol' scoring is that Byrd's treble viol must have been capable of floating relatively quietly above the vocal line without obscuring it. This particular attribute was confirmed by Praetorius in 1619: 'the highest strings on the treble viol are quite soft and not heard with the same intensity as the other lower strings of the tenor or bass viols'.[30]

Comparison of the songs Byrd published in 1588 with versions of them preserved in manuscript show his process of adaptation. There are frequent rhythmic changes needed to facilitate fitting a number of syllables to what were originally conceived as longer sustained notes, especially in the often slower-moving *bassus* parts. Byrd also makes a small number of minor changes to

[28] 'Lulla lullaby' is also preserved in manuscript sources a tone lower than in the 1588 print, thus avoiding the *superius* top a'' and taking the *bassus* down to F.

[29] The twelfth song 'of great compasse' is Byrd's one Italian setting 'La virginella' (BE 12/24) which does not designate a 'first singing part', though it is the *superius* that carries the text in Dow's partbooks GB-Och, Mus. MSS 984–8.

[30] Praetorius, 1619, p. 161.

the ranges of his parts. For example the *contratenor* of 'Blessed is he that fears the Lord' (BE 12/8, bar 13) omits a low-lying cadential figure transmitted by Dow and in Paston sources that extends the part's range down to an otherwise unused e. In 'Who likes to love' (BE 12/13, bar 4) Byrd removes the low c that is found in the *tenor* in Dow's copy of the song. These minor emendations support the hypothesis that, in Byrd's opinion, Tudor viols were more effective in these registers than voices.

The success of Byrd's 1588 set encouraged him to follow it quickly with *Songs of sundrie natures, some of grauitie, and others of myrth, fit for all companies and voyces* (London, 1589).[31] This is a more varied collection in three, four, five and six parts and contains different genres, including five items with untexted parts. Byrd does not specify whether these parts should be sung wordlessly or played, or on what instruments, but viols must surely be the prime contenders for the verse anthem 'Christ rising again/Christ is risen' (BE 13/46–7) that brings the publication to a close. The others are 'From virgin's womb' (BE 13/35), 'An earthly tree' (BE 13/40) and the rustic shepherds' dialogue 'Who made thee Hob forsake the plough?' (BE 13/41). 'From virgin's womb' is set for *medius* voice (C1) with a treble viol above it (G2) and three lower untexted parts. The other pieces with viols all require two *medius* range voices and four lower viols. There is little to distinguish the ranges of the untexted parts from those that are texted, though in 'Christ rising again/Christ is risen' it is noticeable that the chorus parts are all narrower by one or two notes than the untexted sections.

Byrd is fairly consistent in the ranges of his lower untexted parts across the 1589 set. Parts in C3 clef go no higher than a' and descend to g. Untexted C4 clef parts lie consistently in the range c to e' with an upward extension to f' in 'Christ rising/Christ rising again' and one notable downward extension to B♭ in 'Christ is risen' (BE 13/47, *tenor*, bar 105). If played on a tenor viol tuned in G, this would be an extremely rare use of the bottom string and suggests that this part would have been more effectively played on a bass viol.[32] Where Byrd writes two parts of equal range (e.g. *contratenor* and *tenor* of 'Who made thee Hob', BE 13/41) they also tend to inhabit similar registers, frequently crossing and often sharing imitative points at the unison. This suggests performance on two similarly tuned and strung instruments.

As with the 1588 set, the inner parts of Byrd's *Songs of sundrie natures* tend to range more widely than his *superius* or *bassus* parts. For example, in the ten six-part pieces, the *superius* and *sextus* (equal-register top parts) average a little over nine notes, and the *bassus* less then ten, while the three inner parts all average well over ten notes. As might be expected, the ranges are wider in pieces with fewer voices: for example the *tenor* of 'the seaven Psalmes' in three parts that open the 1589 set has an average range of nearly a twelfth. It seems that pieces with slightly wider ranges were particularly attractive to viol players: three of Byrd's 1589 three-part songs (BE 13/11, 13 and 14) were transcribed without their texts and given the title 'Fantasia' in GB-Lbl, Add. MSS 41156–8 (part of

[31] Byrd, 2004b (BE 13).

[32] This note occurs in a chorus section, however, so the doubling voice could compensate for a relatively weak low note on a tenor viol.