

REVIEW

## *Dowlandia*

### Leafing through Grapes's New Research Guide

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*John Dowland: A Research and Information Guide*, by K. Dawn Grapes  
New York: Routledge, 2020

FOR OVER FIFTY YEARS, Diana Poulton's biography of John Dowland (1562/63–1626), augmented by John Ward's scholarship, has been the quintessential Dowland resource for performers and scholars alike. And yet decades of ongoing research warrant an updated source. K. Dawn Grapes's new volume provides just that. It joins Routledge's growing library of research guides, which features volumes dedicated to the music of Joaquín Rodrigo, Fanny Hensel, and Miles Davis, to name a few.

Lutenists and guitarists alike have long felt they have been shouting into the wind as they wait for the rest of the music world to take notice of this remarkable Renaissance composer. A generation ago, standard music history textbooks gave a cursory nod to the lute song, but rarely acknowledged its solo repertoire. Momentum in this regard is growing, albeit slowly. Now, music students will find more representation of plucked-string music in their survey courses, including references to early printed music such as Spinacino's pieces published by Petrucci, Luys Milán's tempo indications, or text painting in John Dowland's compositions. Musicologists without a background in lute or guitar are taking notice and bringing a fresh eye to scholarship in the field. K. Dawn Grapes is one such musicologist: a specialist in music of the English Renaissance, her credits include the book, *With Mornefull Musique: Funeral Elegies in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2018), and entries in *Oxford Bibliographies* for "Recorder" and "John Dowland," the latter no doubt preparing the way for her most recent title.

While the audience for research guides is typically limited to university students and scholars, guitarists are a breed apart. The Guitar Foundation of America, though claiming its share of scholars, attracts a strong contingent of intellectually invested amateur players of advanced skills. The further one descends down the rabbit hole of lute music, the more knowledge one seeks. The very nature of the instrument

encourages research, and players soon find themselves immersed in creating their own transcriptions, looking up manuscripts, deciphering indications for ornamentation, and discovering the world of historically informed performance practice. So, a volume such as *Grapes's* has value for aficionados and players of different levels, as well as for experts.

A research guide consolidates all known information on a subject and presents it in an organized fashion. In music, it is an indispensable aid for quickly answering questions about a composer's complete catalogue, in addition to presenting a list of all major bibliographic sources. *Grapes's* guide is divided into nine chapters, which can be viewed as three sections: Chapter 1, an introduction which includes an overview of the guide with a brief biography and timeline of Dowland's life; Chapters 2–4, a catalogue of all known works by Dowland and their sources; and Chapters 5–9, an annotated bibliography and select discography.

The guide's updated catalogue of works alone would already be enough to make it an essential resource. Guitarists are generally well aware of the repetition of pieces found in multiple sources, in a variety of instrumental and vocal combinations, and with inconsistencies among titles. Poulton and Basil Lam first tackled the daunting project of cataloging Dowland's music in 1974, assigning each of his compositions a P number. *Grapes* picks up the torch and builds on this legacy, assigning each work a D number (or Dowland number), which coordinates with the P numbers. The Poulton-Lam P numbers end at P105. *Grapes* continues the list for another 113 entries, concluding with D218. The previously unnumbered works include consort music, pieces from *A Pilgrimes Solace*, and his psalm settings, and the new catalogue assigns a unique number to each individual song.

For those who have never used a research guide and are still unsure of what its value would be, a couple of examples provided here should illuminate the kinds of information that can be readily obtained.

Take the first entry in the music catalogue, D1 (also P1), titled simply "Fantasia." From the designation "Primary: 7," we can see that it is included in a primary source (i.e., a source that was either known to Dowland or in his hand) and that this source is found in entry seven of Chapter 3. Go to that entry to learn that the piece is included in *Varietie of Lute Lessons*, published by his son, Robert Dowland. The entry for the source also includes a list of published facsimile editions.

Return to the Chapter 2 entry for D1 to find seven more reference numbers for additional sources where the piece is found: Jean-Baptiste Besard's *Thesaurus Harmonicus*; "Cosens Lute Book" in the Cambridge University Library; "The Euing Lute Book" in the Glasgow University Library; Manuscript 31392, "M. L. Lute Book," and "Jane Pickering Lute Book," all in the British Library; and lastly, "Per Brahe's Lutebook" in the Skokloster Castle in Sweden. The latter reference is an example of the guide's organization of manuscript sources by country, a pertinent factor since Dowland spent much of his career in continental Europe. Moreover, being able to readily

peruse sources in international libraries, museums, and universities, is a delightful kind of intellectual armchair travel.

Considering that D1 has a relatively short entry, a significant amount of information is provided. In comparison, turn to one of Dowland's more celebrated works, "Flow my Tears," which exists in many instrumental and vocal forms. The entry number is D15, and it fills almost an entire page. The piece is featured in a whopping ninety-four sources, with thirty-four entries for lute (either solo or in lute ensembles), sixteen in a song setting (including a 1647 Amsterdam source with lyrics in Dutch), fourteen for consort, twenty-three for keyboard (such as William Byrd's arrangement in the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*), one for bandora, four for lyra viol, and two for recorder.

For all these sources, page numbers are also provided, but some may look strange to the uninitiated. Manuscripts frequently have folio numbers instead of page numbers, with an indication as to whether the piece is on the right side, *recto*, or the left side, *verso*. This doesn't fully account for the numbering, however. Each page, or leaf, is identified by a single number assigned to both the front (*recto*) and back (*verso*) of the leaf. For instance, consider the page range labeled "ff. 170v–171v." Looking at an open book, page 170v would be on the left side, with 171r on the right. Turn page 171r over to find 171v on the back side (and now on the left-hand side of the open book). Many such manuscripts may be found online. Once you realize that each page number occurs twice, for both the front and back of the sheet, it is not difficult to follow.

Following the numerical categorization of D numbers is an alphabetical list of works, so if you are specifically looking for *The Frog Galliard*, for instance, you will learn that its number is D23. Flip to entry D23 and discover all the sources that include that work (there are thirty-eight, by the way, including one for cittern and two for mandora). Yes, a research guide requires much flipping back and forth, and a well-loved one typically acquires a few sticky tabs for easy access.

The third section of the guide provides bibliographic sources, which are generously annotated. The annotations provide valuable insights and prevent the researcher from wasting time tracking down sources that are not pertinent to their specific quest. These sources are further organized by those known to Dowland (such as letters) and other primary sources, books (including Poulton's volume), dictionary entries, articles organized by musical genre, print, or performance practice, and lastly, recordings, which are further divided by genre. The bibliography encompasses not only a list of sources in English, but articles in German, Spanish, French, and Danish, among other languages. When applicable, ISSN, ISBN, and LC call numbers are provided. All Dowland pieces covered in written bibliographic sources or recordings are cross-referenced to their D numbers. In other words, all the tedious work has been done for you.

The final organizational tools are four indexes. One can look up information by author's name; by subject, which includes all references to other composers; by composition title; and finally, by the name of the performer.

The depth of information found in *John Dowland: A Research and Information Guide* is so expansive and the ability to cross-reference so addicting, I can imagine

a new generation of Dowland-obsessed enthusiasts pouring over its minutiae like sports fanatics memorizing stats. How long before we see Dowland trivia nights at the corner pub? This resource is a herculean accomplishment and an indispensable reference. It will certainly lead to fresh understanding of a most beloved subject and invigorate scholarship and concert programming alike — not to mention greatly improve term papers!