

Documentation for

Nottinghill Coill

A song and lute accompaniment by Johann von Solothurn

The final product is a joint project by Johann von Solothurn & Helena Isabelle de Soleure

Music, lyrics, lute accompaniment and notation by **Lord Johann von Solothurn**

Calligraphy and illumination by **Lady Helena Isabelle de Soleure**

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I. Introduction / Background

I composed the song “Nottingham Coill” originally as a dedication to Their Excellencies Geldamar and Etain in 2011. The purpose of the composition was to provide a somewhat patriotic place-song for the Barony of Nottingham Coill, with reference to both the geography and people of that fine Barony. The original composition (figure 1) consisted of the melody and guitar chord accompaniment. My interest in period instrumental compositions for lute, vihuela, four-course and five-course guitar and the lute songs of Dowland, Johnson and others has recently piqued my curiosity for composing in a period style. Additionally, I have transcribed numerous pieces for those instruments (especially for the period guitar) from facsimiles of the originals. Through this undertaking over the past several years, I have developed a more sophisticated “feel” for the late period music of the fretted stringed instruments, and for late period compositional styles, than I had when I drafted the original version of Nottingham Coill in 2011. Although my current understanding of late period music is by no means perfect or complete, nonetheless, I have endeavored to revise my original accompaniment for the song, to present a more period lute song style accompaniment. This attempt is documented, in brief, over the following pages.

II. The Song

I chose the traditional Irish melody “*Slane*” as a setting for Nottingham Coill. I have found no consensus or definitive proclamation for the “age” of this melody. Various resources claim an origin for the melody dating back centuries, but I have found no hard evidence for an approximate date for the piece, or even a scholarly estimation of a range of dates. The earliest appearance of the *Slane* melody in print appears to be in Patrick Joyce’s 1909 publication of *Old Irish Folk Music and Songs*. The melody does not have the feel of a Dowland lutesong, but I chose the *Slane* melody as a setting for Nottingham Coill because of the beauty and emotion of the piece, rather than for its supposed centuries – old history. Also, at the time of selecting the melody, I had no plans to compose a lute accompaniment to the piece. The song lyrics are as follows:

O my dear homeland of Nottingham Coill
I’ll live and I’ll die on thy blessed soil
Through many long years with good friends I’ll toil
Until I rest well in Nottingham Coill

By the Broad River such beauty abounds
Nature harmoniously sings her sweet sounds
Green grasses laden with wildflower crowns
In this my homeland such beauty abounds

Such noble gentles in this land I love
Coronets rule with grace like the dove
Good lords and ladies I think kindly of
Dwell here beside me in this land I love

Nottingham Coill

Lyrics and arrangement by Johann von Solothurn

Melody: Slane - Traditional Irish Melody

Chord diagrams: C (x3211), Am (x2311), G (21332), G/B (x1232), F (134211)

Tempo: $\text{♩} = 100$

Capo. fret 3

Chords: C, Am, G, Am, G/B, C, G, G/B, F, C, Am, G, F, C, Am, F, C, G, C

Lyrics:
 O, my dear home-land of Not-ting-ty hill Coill,
 By the Broad Ri-ver such a-beau-ty a-bounds,
 Such no-ble gen-tles in this land I love.
 I'll live and I'll die on thy bless-ed
 Na-ture and har-nets mon-ious-ly with thy sings her sweet
 Cor-o-nets _____ with grace like the
 soil. Through ma-ny long years with
 Green grass-es-la-den with
 dove. Good lords and la-dies I
 Am F G Am Am
 good friends I'll toil Un-til I
 wild-flow-er crowns In this my
 think-kind-ly of Dwell here my be-
 rest well in Not-ting-ty hill Coill.
 home-land such a-beau-ty a-bounds.
 side me in this land I love.

Figure 1: Original version of Nottingham Coill, with guitar chord accompaniment

III. Lute Accompaniment

I have attempted to emulate the style of John Dowland's lute songs with the lute accompaniment for Nottingham Coill. Figure 2 shows my "composer's draft" of the piece, with lute accompaniment in French tablature (the most common style of lute notation in England during the late SCA period – all of Dowland's publications are in French tablature). Figure 3 shows the piece with lute accompaniment in standard notation.

Nottingham Coill

Johann von Solothurn



my dear hune land of Nottingham Coill

Handwritten musical notation for the first line, including a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff. Below the staff, there are three staves of French tablature with letters 'a', 'c', 'e', 'f', 'g', 'd' and rhythmic flags.

I'll live and I'll die on thy blessed soil

Handwritten musical notation for the second line, including a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff. Below the staff, there are three staves of French tablature with letters 'a', 'c', 'e', 'f', 'g', 'd' and rhythmic flags.

Through many long years with good friends I'll toil

Handwritten musical notation for the third line, including a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff. Below the staff, there are three staves of French tablature with letters 'a', 'c', 'e', 'f', 'g', 'd' and rhythmic flags.

until I rest well in Nottingham Coill

Handwritten musical notation for the fourth line, including a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff. Below the staff, there are three staves of French tablature with letters 'a', 'c', 'e', 'f', 'g', 'd' and rhythmic flags.

Figure 2: My draft copy of Nottingham Coill with lutesong style notation and French tablature

Nottinghill Coill

Lyrics and arrangement by Johann von Solothurn

Melody: Slane - Traditional Irish Melody
Lute part by Johann von Solothurn

$\text{♩} = 100$

mf O, my dear - home-land of Not- ting- hill Coill,

mf I'll live and I'll die on thy bless- ed soil.

Through ma- - ny___ long years with good friends I'll toil_____

Un- til I rest_well in Not- ting- hill Coill.

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1/1

Figure 3: Nottinghill Coill melody with lute accompaniment in standard notation

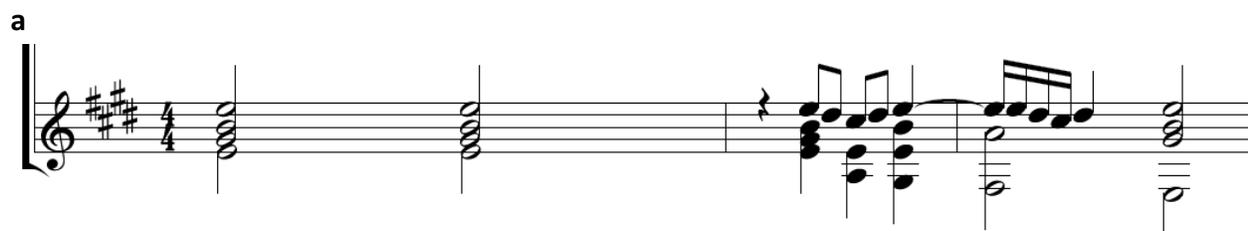
A full discussion of Dowland's (and others) compositional styles is well beyond the scope of this documentation. In short, I have borrowed rhythmic, chordal and melodic elements from various Dowland pieces, where appropriate. For example, the first five beats of the lute accompaniment for Nottinghill Coill are very similar to the first five beats of Dowland's "Now O Now I Needs Must Part" (1597, figure 4). Choosing these opening chords set the tone for the

Figure 4. First line of “Now O Now I Needs Must Part” transcribed from Dowland (1597)

subsequent segments of the lute accompaniment, although, due to significant differences in the *Slane* melody and Dowland’s “Now O Now,” my lute accompaniment very quickly diverges from the referenced Dowland piece. I have also attempted to use a combination of chords, ornamentation, and “semi-polyphonic” passages in Dowland’s style, so far as is allowed by the *Slane* melody. The dotted eighth note followed by sixteenth note and quarter note is a common ornament in Dowland’s music (also used in Dowland’s “Now O Now” and other pieces in his First Book of Songs). Also, Dowland oftentimes utilizes sequences of chords in his lute songs (numerous examples in the First Book, etc.) and solo lute works (e.g. Dowland’s *Midnight*, etc.) that sound quite comfortable to the modern ear. I have used similar chord sequences and ornamentation in the lute accompaniment, where the melody dictated (especially the first two lines of the song). For the final two lines of the song, I attempted to use the “semi-polyphonic” style of lute accompaniment (as much as possible) that was so prevalent in late period lute and guitar compositions, with a sense of opposing movement between the vocal and lute accompaniment parts, while giving breath where necessary, and avoiding unnecessary dissonance. The final measure of the lute accompaniment is a very common ending, found in numerous pieces by multiple composers for lute and guitar (e.g. Dowland’s *Frog Galliard*, etc., etc., etc.). I thought this a most fitting (and period) end to the piece. While the *Slane* melody I selected for Nottingham Coill is significantly different than the melodies we find in Dowland’s collection of lute songs, I believe the final product is a believable approximation of an accompaniment that Dowland himself might have written for *Slane* (although, admittedly with less “genius flare” than we typically find in Dowland).

I have used French tablature with a lute tuning for the final piece (figure 2 and the illuminated copy). See figure 5 below for a comparison of the French tablature in Dowland’s “Come Again” (1597) and modern standard notation of the same piece. French tablature was by far the most common style of tablature used by English and French lutenists and guitarists during the SCA period. Dowland, Morley, Le Roy, Morlay, Brayssing, etc. all used French tablature in their compositions. In short, French tablature uses letters, as opposed to numbers, to represent frets of the instrument. For example, the letter “b” above the uppermost line of the lute tablature indicates that the performer should play the first fret of the first string (the note “F”).

Note values were typically halved for printing in French tablature. As an example, from the lute accompaniment to Nottingham Hill Coill (figure 2), the first chord in the first measure is a half note, while the second chord is a quarter note (even though to a modern musician, it would appear at first glance that a quarter note followed by an eighth note is depicted). For a more thorough discussion of French tablature, please refer to Tyler (1980) and Tyler and Sparks (2002).



b

Figure 5: a) Facsimile copy of first 3 measures of “Come Again” from J. Dowland (1597)

b) Lute accompaniment for first 3 measures of “Come Again” transcribed to standard notation

IV. Style of the Final Product

The final presentation of the piece (Figure 9 and “illuminated print”) is based on examples of the printed lute song in period. See Appendix A and B for examples of J. Dowland and Morley lute songs from 1597 and 1600, respectively. The notation and tablature styles, measure divisions, and overall appearance is in keeping with these period publications, save one detail. The period examples shown in the appendices were block printed in mass. Since I do not have block printing capability, I elected to have the final product illuminated. I prepared the

“composer’s draft” of the piece (figure 2) as a guide for the illumination. I also elected to incorporate a short dedication within the page, styled after the introductions shown in Robert Dowland’s “Variatie of Lute Lessons” (1610, see Appendix C).

Lady Helena Isabelle de Soleure completed all of the calligraphy and illumination work on the final product. Without her assistance, the final product would have been completely lackluster in appearance. My talents lie outside the realm of scribal arts. The following section (Section V) is by Lady Helena, and describes her work in preparing the final print.

V. Calligraphy and Illumination of the Final Print (by Lady Helena Isabelle de Soleure)

Throughout this documentation the final product is referred to as “illuminated” due to a lack of a better word, although in the strictest sense of the word, “illuminated” refers to a page decorated with either gold or silver.

Much of my work was to take the elements given to me by Johann and arrange them to a visually pleasing piece of artwork. These elements included the dedication and the actual song with notes and lyrics. The decorative touches were my own decisions.

The whole document is made with ink. I chose colors that mimic period inks as closely as commercially possible; therefore I used brown, red, green and yellow ink. I chose to work with dip pens with multiple tips and handles due to the multiple color changes throughout the document. This made it somewhat easier to change colors, than with cartridge pens.

For the title, I wanted a font that had capitals with more visual interest than the main body of the document. I chose dual stemmed Rotunda capitals with the accompaniment of Rotunda minuscule. Rotunda hand was a relatively popular hand in medieval and Renaissance Italy and Spain. I chose to make the dual stemmed capitals stand out even further by making them a different color than the rest of the title, as is often seen in period manuscripts. The title is a perfect example of why I did not want to use a hand I was not at all familiar with for the whole document. In such a short section as the title, I have made a significant error that I fixed the best I could (a very period way of fixing mistakes, mind you). Unfortunately ink cannot be erased, only scraped off if the surface allows, or covered over with darker ink.

I chose **Insular majuscule** (a.k.a. Insular half-Uncial) as the type set for most of the document, because I have dabbled with it before and it required less of a learning curve for me than most other hands would have. Insular majuscule originates from the British Isles and it dates back to the seventh century. Some famous examples of this hand include works such as the Book of Kells. Insular majuscule is a beautiful font, and since this particular piece is not set to any specific historical time or location, I did not see the need to learn another hand from scratch. I

am a beginner when it comes to period calligraphy and if closely examined by learned individuals my attempt at recreating proper form of Insular majuscule might fall short of ideal.

The wording of the dedication is purely a dictation from Johann, but I did take the liberty of embellishing a few of the letters in a manner that might occur in a period text such as the book of Kells. The “Ex” of the word Excellencies is actually modeled after an “Ex” found in the Book of Kells. Another piece that was inspired by the book of Kells is the knotwork corner design. I found a similar corner design in the book of Kells and made a slight modification to it to make it fit my purpose. I chose the knotwork design and the color green to mimic and echo the feel of the badge of Nottingham Coll, which I included (with the best of my ability) in the “O” of the beginning of the song lyrics. The “O” is modeled after the copy I received from Johann in other details except for where I changed the center design.

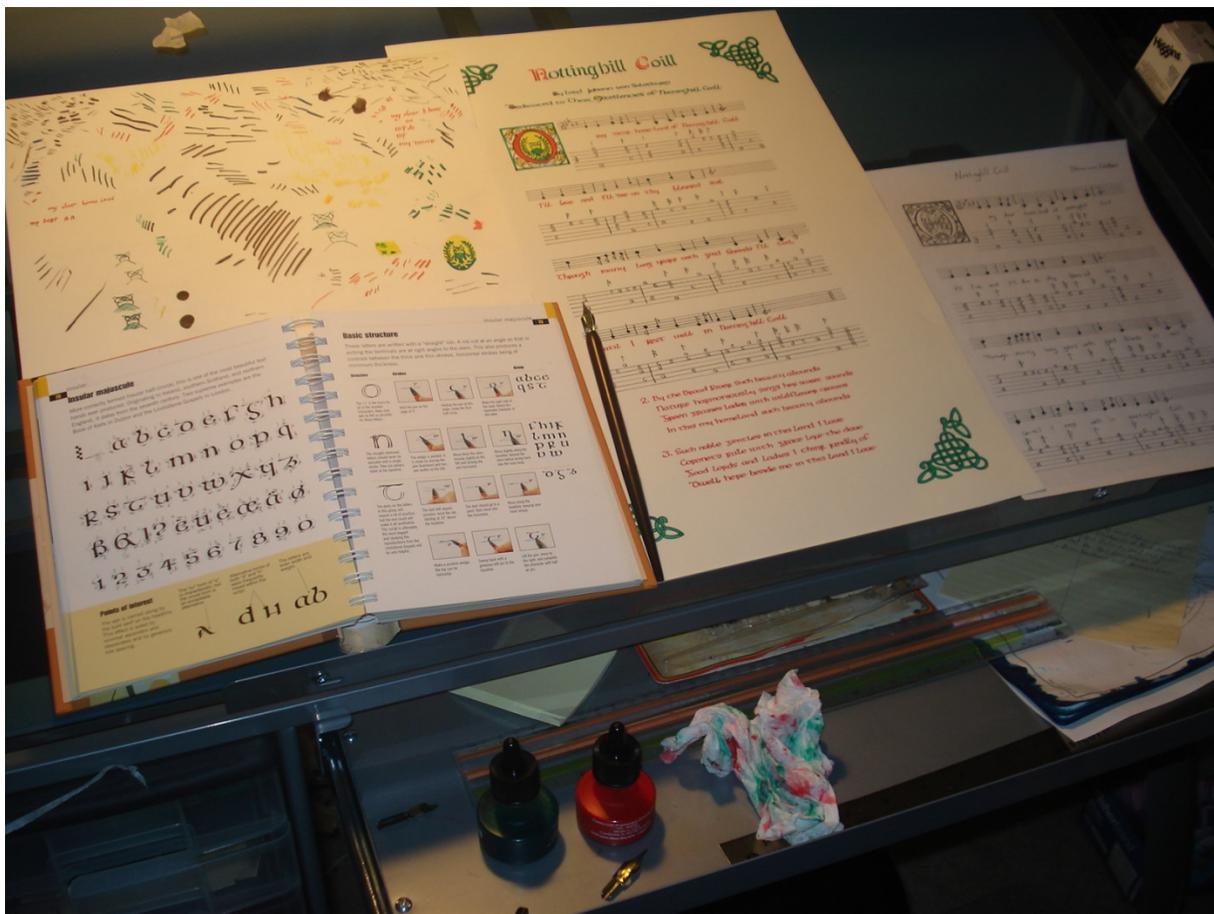


Figure 5. This image shows my work space with some of the tools and references.

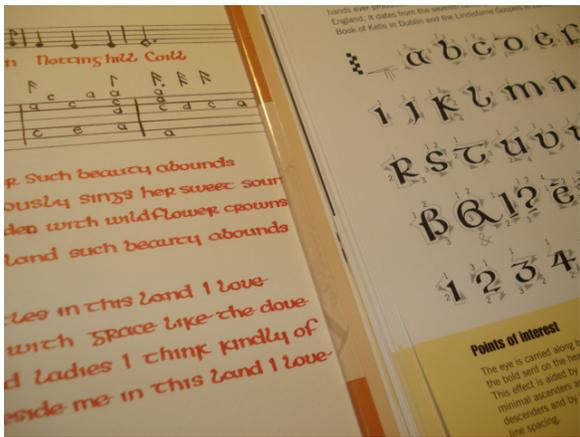


Fig. 6. Close up of the font



Fig. 7. One of the nibs used, resting on scrap/test paper

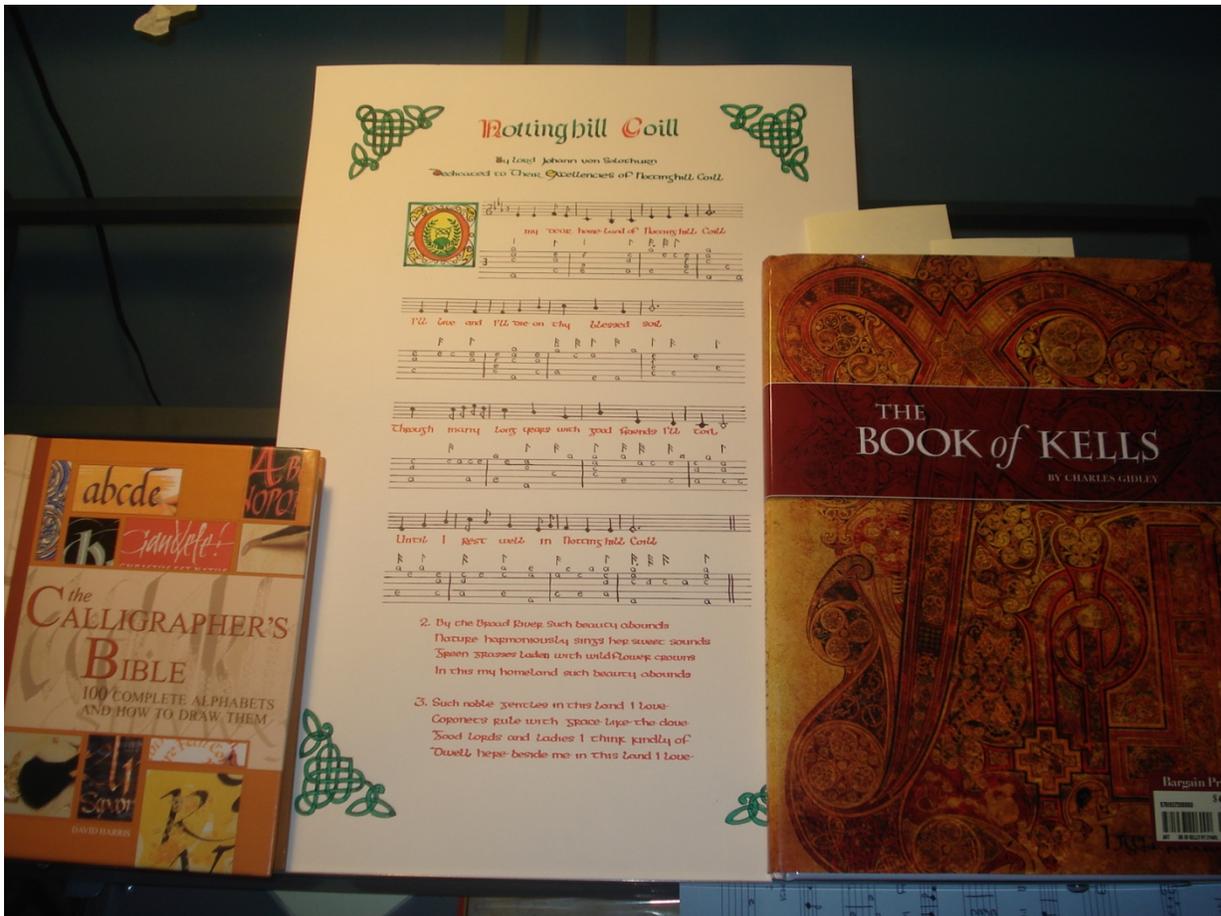
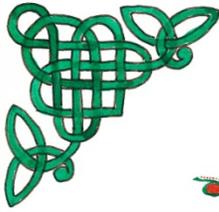
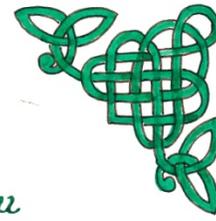


Figure 8. Final document with some of the references.



Nottingham Coill



By Lord Johann von Salachurn
Dedicated to Their Excellencies of Nottingham Coill



my dear home-land of Nottingham Coill

I'll live and I'll die on thy blessed soil

Through many long years with good friends I'll toil

Until I rest well in Nottingham Coill

2. By the Broad River such beauty abounds
 Nature harmoniously sings her sweet sounds
 Green grasses laden with wildflower crowns
 In this my homeland such beauty abounds

3. Such noble gentles in this land I love
 Coronets rule with grace like the dove
 Good lords and ladies I think kindly of
 Dwell here beside me in this land I love

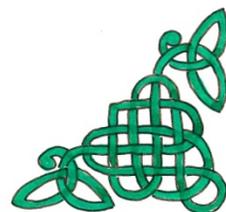
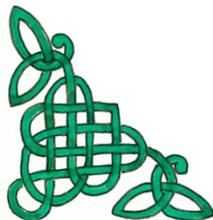


Figure 9: Copy of Final Print. Scribal work by Helena Isabelle de Soleure.

VI. Contact Information

Feel free to contact Johann or Helena if you would like to discuss (or criticize) any aspect of this project in more detail than is permitted in this short document.

Johann von Solothurn: johann_von_solothurn@yahoo.com

Helena Isabelle de Soleure: helena_isabelle_desoleure@yahoo.com

VII. References

Dowland, John (1597). *The First Book of Songs or Ayres of foure parts, with tablature for the lute*. London.

Dowland, Robert (1610). *Varietie of Lute Lessons: Fantasies, pavins, galliards, almaines, corantoes, and volts: selected out of the best approved authors, as well beyond the seas as of our owne country*. London.

Gidley, Charles (2011). *The Book of Kells*. Arina Books, Inc., Del Mar, CA., 152 p.

Harris, David (2003). *The Calligrapher's Bible: 100 Complete Alphabets and How to Draw Them*. Quatro Publishing, PLC. London, England. 256 p.

Morley, Thomas (1600). *The First Booke of Ayres or Little Short songs to sing and play to the lute with the base viole*. London.

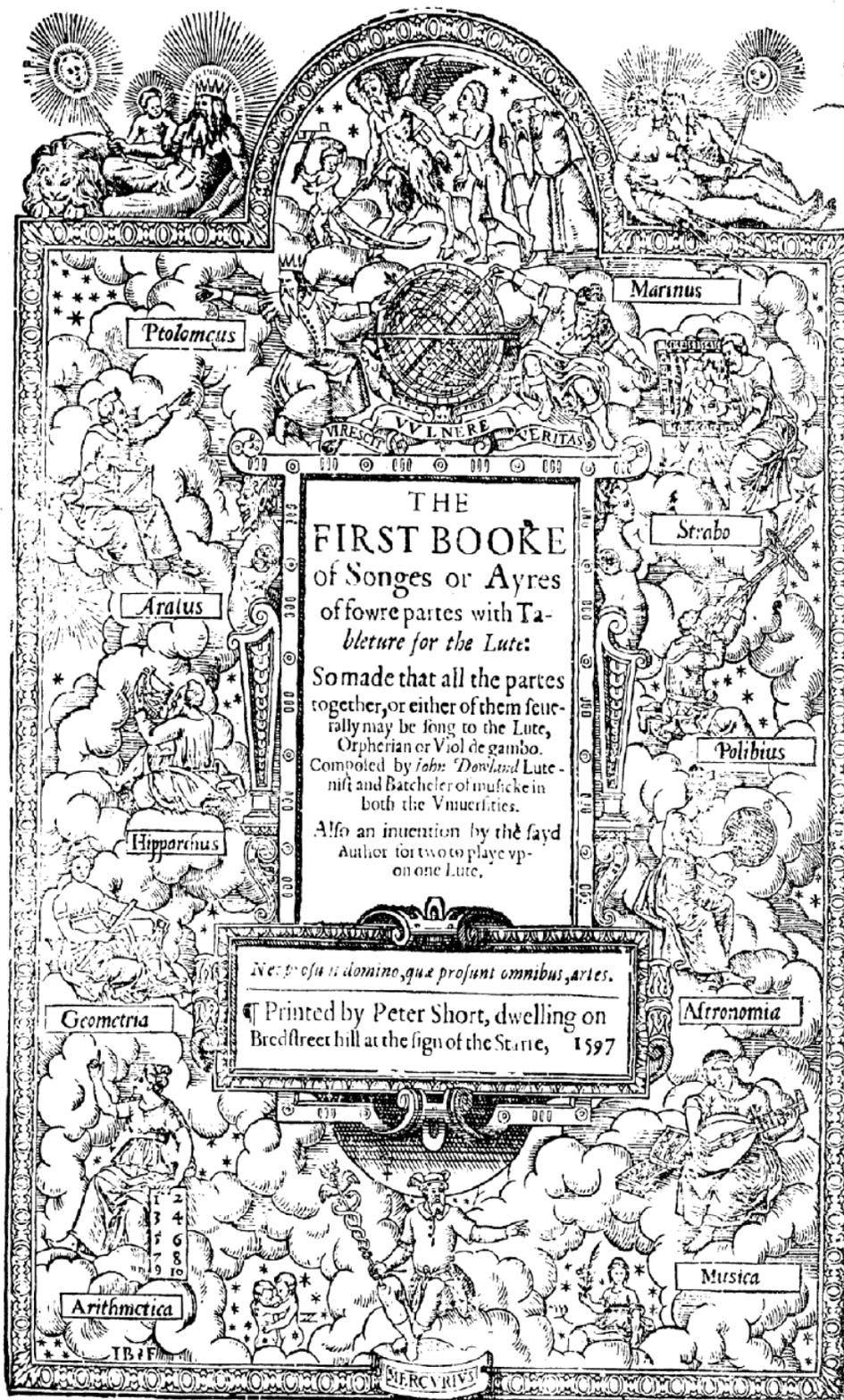
Nadal, David (1997). *Lute Songs of John Dowland*. Dover Publications. Mineola, NY.

Tyler, James (1980). *The Early Guitar: A History and Handbook*. Oxford Early Music Series. Oxford University Press. London. 176 p.

Tyler, James and Paul Sparks (2002). *The Guitar and its Music: From the Renaissance to the Classical Era*. Oxford Early Music Series. Oxford University Press, Inc. New York. 322 p.

Appendix A

Excerpts from John Dowland's *First Book of Songs...* (1597)



Title page of Dowland's First Book of Songs (1597)

XVII.

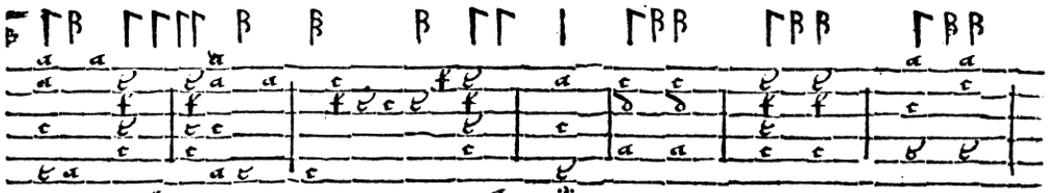
CANTUS.



Come again: sweet loue doth now inuite, thy gra-ces



that refraine, to do me due de- light, to see, to heare, to touch, to kisse,



to die, with thee againe in sweetest sympa- thy.



2
Come againe that I may cease to mourne,
Through thy vnkind disdaine:
For now left and forlorne,
I sit, I sigh, I weepe, I faint, I die,
In deadly paine and endlesse miserie.

1
All the day the sun that lends me shine,
By frownes doth cause me pine,
And feeds mee with delay: (grow,
Her smiles, my springs, that makes my ioyes to
Her frownes the winters of my woe:

2
All the night my sleepes are full of dreames,
My eyes are full of streames.

My heart takes no delight,
To see the fruits and ioyes that some do find,
And marke the stormes are mee assignde.

3
Out alas, my faith is euer true,
Yet will she neuer rue,
Nor yeeld me any grace:
Her eyes of fire, her heart of flint is made,
Whom teares, nor truth may once inuade.

4
Gentle loue draw forth thy wounding darr,
Thou canst not peerce her heart.
For I that doe approue,
By sighs and teares more hot then are thy shafts,
Did tempt while she for triumph laughs.

Appendix B

Excerpts from Thomas Morley's *First Booke of Ayres...* (1600)

THE
FIRST BOOKE
OF AYRES.

OR
LITTLE SHORT
SONGS, TO SING AND
PLAY TO THE LVTE,
WITH THE BASE
VIOLE.

NEWLY PVBLISHED

BY

THOMAS MORLEY

*Bachiler of Musicke, and one of
the Gent. of her Maiesties Royall
CHAPPEL.*



*Imprinted at London in little S. Helen's by VVilliam Barley,
the assigne of Thomas Morley, and are to be sold at
his house in Gracious streete. 1600.*

Cum Privilegio.

CANTATA THE MORNING

III.

In my lone my life was wretched, In the fane of happiness, from my lone my

Life was wretched, To a world of happiness, O let loose my life remove, With I live not where I love, O let

In my life remove, With I live not where I love,

THE MORNING

III.

In my lone

W

FOURTH PART

2 Where the truth once was and is not,
 Showing what help they cannot,
 Signs nor flames of miseries,
 Painted miseries hang on feeds,
 Dying like each death exceeds.

3 O was loose from the path of me,
 Most all life is tedious,
 Death is no line without thee,
 Death of all most without thee,
 Terms again and inter with thee,
 Let me die, or live though I die.

Appendix C

Excerpts from Robert Dowland's *Varietie of Lute Lessons...* (1610)



VARIETIE
OF
LUTE-lessons:

Viz.

Fantasies, Paines, Galliards, Almains, Corantoes,
and Volts: Selected out of the best approved
AVTHORS, as well beyond the Seas as
of our owne Country.

By Robert Dowland.

Whereunto is annexed certaine Ob-
servations belonging to LUTE-playing:
By John Baptisto Besardo of Vifonti.

Also a short Treatise thereunto appertayning:
By John Dowland Batcheler of
MUSICKE.

LONDON:
Printed for Thomas Adams.
1610.

Cover Page of Robert Dowland's "Varietie of Lute Lessons" (1610)

Fantafies for the Lute.

Composed by the most famous *Gregorio Huvet* of Antwerpe: Lutenist to the most high and mightie
Henricus Julius, Duke of Brunfwicke, &c.

Fantafie.
s

The image displays a handwritten musical score for a lute piece titled "Fantafie." The score is written on 12 systems of staves. Each system consists of a single staff with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The notation is a form of lute tablature, using letters (a, b, c, d, e, f, g) to represent fret positions on the strings. Above the staves, there are various rhythmic symbols, including vertical lines and flags, which indicate the timing and duration of the notes. The piece begins with a circled 's' and a '5' below it. The notation is dense and characteristic of early 17th-century lute manuscripts.

Pauins for the Lute.

Here beginneth the Pauins: of which the first was made by the most magnificent and famous Prince
Mauritius, Landgraue of Hessen, and from him sent to my Father, with this inscription
 following, and written with his GRACES owne hand:

Mauritius Landgravius Hessia fecit in honorem Ioanni Doulandi Anglorum Orphei.

Pauin.
1

The musical score consists of ten systems, each containing three staves. The notation is a form of lute tablature, using letters (a, b, c, d, e, f, g) to represent fret positions on the strings. Above the staves, there are rhythmic flags and other symbols indicating the timing and articulation of the notes. The first system is labeled 'Pauin. 1'. The notation is dense and characteristic of early modern lute music.

Appendix D

Dedication to Their Excellencies, Geldamar and Etain

Herein is presented the song "Nottinghill Coill," a lute song composed by Lord Johann von Solothurn, lutenist, guitarist and bard to Their Excellencies of Black Diamond, Baron Aldemere and Baroness Juliana, and set to an Irish melody. Dedicated to the illustrious patrons of musick, Their Excellencies of Nottinghill Coill, Baron Geldamar and Baroness Etain.