

Dowland: *Lachrimae* (1604)



Peter Holman



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The document

English music publishing

Music publishing came late to England.¹ While substantial trades developed in Venice, Paris, Nuremberg and Antwerp in the first half of the sixteenth century, virtually no music was published in London until the 1570s, apart from liturgical books with plainsong and collections of metrical psalms. It is not entirely clear why England lagged so far behind the Continent, though Queen Elizabeth tried to improve matters by granting two monopolies, one in 1559 to John Day for psalm books, and the other in 1575 for twenty-one years to Thomas Tallis and William Byrd for polyphonic music. The latter covered ‘set songe or songes in partes, either in English, Latin, Frenche, Italian, or other tongues that may serve for musicke either in Church or chamber, or otherwise to be either plaid or soonge’, as well as ‘any paper to serve for printing or pricking any songe or songes’ and ‘any printed bokes or papers of any songe or songes, or any bookes or quieres of such ruled paper imprinted’.²

Tallis and Byrd used their monopoly to produce *Cantiones quae ab argumento sacrae vocantur* (1575), printed by Thomas Vautrollier, though it did not sell well and they appealed to Elizabeth in June 1577 for support, claiming they were out of pocket to the tune of at least 200 marks. Only two sets of part-books were issued before 1588, when Byrd, now sole holder, assigned it to the printer Thomas East. It was East who began the large-scale publication of polyphonic music, starting with *Musica transalpina* and Byrd’s *Psalms, Sonets and Songs*. The Byrd–East monopoly expired in 1596, which provided openings for others. William Barley immediately produced *A New Book of Tabliture*, the first English printed collection of songs and solo music for lute, orpharion and bandora, while Peter Short started in 1597 with, among other things,

Thomas Morley's *Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke*, Anthony Holborne's *Cittharn Schoole*, Morley's *Canzonets or Little Short Aers to Five and Sixe Voices*, and Dowland's *First Booke of Songes or Ayres*.

The publication of Dowland's *First Booke* was a notable event. Short entered it in the Stationers' Register together with Morley's *Canzonets* on 31 October 1597, and the two collections share the distinction of being the first English prints of polyphonic vocal music with a tablature part.³ *The First Booke* was highly successful: it was reprinted at least four times up to 1613, and its table layout (see below) was the model for all subsequent lute song collections.

With such a success on his hands, Peter Short must have been disappointed when, in the next year (1598), he was suddenly unable to print any more music. On 28 September Thomas Morley was granted a renewal of the music monopoly on similar terms as before, and for the same period, twenty-one years.⁴ For some reason, Morley chose William Barley as his partner rather than East or Short, the two main London music printers. But on 29 May 1600 East was also authorised to print music for three years, and about the same time Short produced some volumes 'with the assent of Thomas Morley', including Robert Jones's *First Booke of Songes and Ayres* (1600), or at 'the assigne of Th. Morley', in the case of the 1600 reprint of Dowland's *First Booke*. But this sensible arrangement did not last long. Morley died in September or October 1602, and though his wife Susan inherited his estate she either died soon after or did not exercise her claim to the monopoly, and it effectively went into abeyance after East's three-year licence expired in May 1603. Moreover James I, the new king, created more uncertainty when, by a proclamation dated 7 May 1603, he suspended all monopolies pending an investigation of the subject.

Dowland's continental career

When *Lachrimae* appeared Dowland had been working abroad for a decade.⁵ He had left England in 1594 after failing to obtain a vacant post as a court lutenist. After working briefly at Wolfenbüttel and Kassel, he left Germany for Italy to study with the Roman composer Luca Marenzio. According to a letter he wrote to Sir Robert Cecil from Nuremberg

on 10 November 1595* (see Chapter 4), he got as far as Florence, where he was drawn into a group of English Catholics involved in plotting against Queen Elizabeth. He protested his innocence to Cecil, claiming that he quickly realised the seriousness of his position and returned to Germany, though the English authorities probably continued to regard him with suspicion. He certainly failed a second time to obtain an English court post during a visit in 1597, when he took the opportunity to publish *The First Booke*, and on 18 November 1598* he entered the service of Christian IV of Denmark.

Dowland was evidently highly valued by Christian IV. His salary of 500 Daler (more than £200 in contemporary English money) made him one of the highest paid court servants; his successor, Thomas Cutting, only received 300 Daler a year. He also received occasional gifts from the king, and was allowed extended periods of leave in England. The first visit occurred over the autumn, winter and spring of 1601–2, and was made to recruit musicians and purchase instruments. Dowland's second journey from Denmark to England occurred sometime between 15 July 1603*, when he received his salary up to 18 August*, and 10 July 1604*, when he was given arrears of pay up to 18 August* with the proviso that:

it depends on His Royal Majesty's gracious pleasure whether His Majesty will be pleased to grant him the same salary, in view of the fact that he has travelled to England on his own business and remained there a long while, longer than His Royal Majesty had granted him leave of absence. And in case His Royal Majesty will not grant [part] of the same salary, he shall do future service therefore, or give satisfaction to His Royal Majesty there-fore in other ways.

He must have still been in London on 9 May 1604, the day he wrote out a lute piece for a foreign visitor, Hans von Bodeck of Elbing (now Elbląg in Poland).⁶

The publication of *Lachrimae*

It is often thought that Dowland made the 1603–4 journey to England specifically to publish *Lachrimae*, but his main motive seems to have been to lobby James I for the court post he had repeatedly failed to obtain from Queen Elizabeth. Indeed, he probably began to make preparations for

the trip soon after the news of Elizabeth's death on 24 March 1603 reached Denmark. He clearly planned to approach James through the queen, Anne of Denmark, sister of his employer Christian IV, using *Lachrimae* to attract her attention. He dedicated it to Anne, and a close reading of the graceful dedication reveals a good deal about his plans and activities in the months before it was published:

Since I had accesse to your Highnesse at Winchester (most gracious Queene) I have been twice under sayle for Denmarke, hastning my returne to my most royall King and Master, your deare and worthiest Brother; but by contrary windes and frost, I was forst backe againe, and of necessitie compeld to winter here in your most happie Kingdome. In which time I have endeoured by my poore labour and study to manifest my humbleness and dutie to your highnesse, being my selfe one of your most affectionate Subjects, and also servant to your most Princely Brother, the onely Patron and Sun-shine of my else unhappie Fortunes. For which respects I have presumed to Dedicate this worke of Musicke to your sacred hands, that was begun where you were borne, and ended where you raigne. And though the title doth promise teares, unfit guests in these joyfull times, yet no doubt pleasant are the teares which Musicke weepes, neither are teares shed alwayes in sorrowe, but sometime in joy and gladnesse. Vouchsafe then (worthy Goddess) your Gracious protection to these showers of Harmonie, least if you frowne on them, they bee Metamorphosed into true teares.

We learn from this that Dowland was in England by the middle of September 1603: the queen arrived in Winchester on the 18th and stayed there until late October. The entertainment during her visit included a masque on 17 October – in which, perhaps, he played.⁷ He wrote that he ‘had accesse’ to the queen at Winchester, which implies that he spoke to her in person, presumably requesting permission to dedicate *Lachrimae* to her and perhaps hinting that he was interested in a court post. His original plan was to return to Denmark before the winter, but he left it too late: he was ‘twice under sayle’ before ‘contrary windes and frost’ forced him to spend the winter in England. His statement that *Lachrimae* was ‘begun where you were borne, and ended where you raigne’ could mean that it was unfinished when he left Denmark, and needed ‘labour and study’ that winter in England to finish it, a point developed in Chapter 2.

If so, then Dowland could hardly have come to England in 1603 to see *Lachrimae* through the press. Had he returned to Denmark according to plan it is unlikely he would have had time to finish it before his departure, and he would have had to send the manuscript to London by post, as he had done with his two previous collections. The dedication of *The Second Booke of Songs or Ayres* to Lucy, Countess of Bedford is signed ‘From Helsingnoure in Denmarke the first of June. 1600’*, and we know from a complicated series of lawsuits (discussed below) that the publisher purchased the collection from Dowland’s wife in London. Also, Dowland remarked in the preface to his *Third and Last Booke of Songs or Aires* (1603) that it had been ‘fetcht far from home, and brought even through the most perilous seas’; it was registered at Stationers’ Hall on 21 February 1603, when he was certainly in Denmark.⁸

Lachrimae was entered by Thomas Adams in the Stationers’ Register on 2 April 1604,⁹ but there is no mention of him on the title-page: it was just ‘Printed by John Windet, dwelling at the Signe of the Crosse Keyes at Powles Wharfe’, and ‘solde at the Authors house in Fetter-lane neare Fleet-streete’. Windet and Adams had both taken advantage of the hiatus in the music monopoly to become involved in publishing music. Windet had started printing psalm books in 1592 using John Day’s old music type, which may have originated in Antwerp.¹⁰ He began printing secular polyphonic music with *Lachrimae* and Thomas Greaves’s *Songes of Sundrie Kindes* (both entered in the Stationers’ Register on the same day) and continued with a number of part-book and table layout collections over the next three years, by Richard Alison, John Bartlet, John Coprario, Michael East, Thomas Ford, Tobias Hume and Robert Jones. Windet began to use a new fount when he turned to secular music. Like several others used at the time by London printers, it was modelled on the one Vautrollier seems to have obtained from Pierre Haultin in La Rochelle, though Windet mixed in pieces from the Day fount and, probably, other sources; the most obvious sign of this in *Lachrimae* is the apparently incongruous use of several types of sharps and flats on the same page.¹¹

The tablature type used by Windet in *Lachrimae* and his other table layout books is essentially that used by William Barley in Alison’s *Psalmes of David in Meter* (1599) and Morley’s *First Booke of Ayres* (1600), and was apparently borrowed by Windet from Barley; Barley

used it again in Thomas Robinson's *New Citharen Lessons* (1609).¹² *Lachrimae* differs from the other examples of the Barley–Windet tablature in its extensive use of beamed rhythm flags, which presumably reflects Dowland's own preference. They also appear in the autograph sections of the Dowland Lutebook in Washington and the Board Manuscript, though oddly not in any of his song books.¹³ William Chappell claimed in 1844 that Edward Rimbault was 'in possession of a portion of the original manuscript', though it does not appear in the catalogue of Rimbault's library, sold in 1877, and does not seem to survive.¹⁴

Thomas Adams had been a bookseller and publisher at the White Lion in St Paul's Churchyard from 1591, but started publishing music in 1603 taking advantage of the hiatus in the music monopoly. He began with Dowland's *Third and Last Booke* and a reprint of *The First Booke*, and went on to issue Dowland's translation of *Andreas Ornithoparcus his Micrologus* (1609), and Robert Dowland's anthologies *Varietie of Lute-Lessons* (1610) and *A Musicall Banquet* (1610), as well as collections by John Danyel and Thomas Ravenscroft. It seems that Dowland had also planned to use Adams to publish *Lachrimae*, but changed his mind, perhaps because his enforced stay in England gave him the time to organise its sale himself, and he thought he could make more money that way.

Perhaps Dowland came to this conclusion by hearing about the complicated and protracted series of lawsuits relating to the publication of *The Second Booke* between the publisher George Eastland and Thomas East.¹⁵ He would doubtless have been interested to learn that Eastland printed 1000 copies (the largest run allowed by the Stationers' Company) and planned to sell them at 4s 6d each. Thus Eastland stood to make as much as £225 against expenses he estimated at £100, but East described that sum as 'such apparent an untruth', and submitted a more detailed and convincing estimate of only £47 12s. It reveals that Dowland's wife received £20 'for the manuscript and half the dedication' – that is, half the reward that could be expected from the queen for the dedication. No wonder Dowland was tempted to publish *Lachrimae* himself.

Lachrimae was published without a date, though the copies in Manchester Public Library and the British Library have the dates 1605 and 1605 or possibly 1606 added by hand to the title–page.¹⁶ 1605 was accepted by earlier scholars, but both dates were apparently added relatively recently and have no authority; the entry in the Stationers' Register

makes it clear it appeared in the spring of 1604. But scholars do not seem to have asked themselves why *Lachrimae* is one of the very few undated typeset music prints from Elizabethan and Jacobean England. To answer the question we must return to the tangled and uncertain situation in the music publishing trade.

With the litigation surrounding *The Second Booke* fresh in his mind, it is easy to see why Dowland might have chosen to disguise the fact that it had appeared without the authorisation of the holder of the monopoly or an assignee at a period when the ownership of the monopoly was in question. He was perhaps wise to be cautious, for in May 1606 and October 1609 William Barley won court cases against East and Adams, claiming an interest in the monopoly as Morley's former partner.¹⁷ Dowland might also have decided to leave the date off the title-page of *Lachrimae* because he was not sure how long he would be in England, when he would return, or how well the collection would sell in his absence. It would have been easier to dispose of the stock over a period if it was not obvious on the title-page that it was no longer a novelty. For a similar reason, most engraved editions issued by eighteenth-century English music publishers are undated: it allowed them to run off more copies as and when demand arose without revealing the age of the publication, and without having to change the title-page.

The table layout

The normal way of publishing polyphonic vocal or instrumental music was in sets of quarto part-books, with each book containing all the parts in the collection for a particular instrument or voice range. But *The First Booke* is a folio intended to be placed flat on a small table, to be read by the performers grouped around it. Each piece is laid out on a single opening, with the Cantus and the lute tablature underlaid on the left-hand page, and the other three vocal parts grouped around the three sides of the right-hand page.

One of the attractions of the table layout was its flexibility. Since each opening could be laid out differently, it was easy to include a wide variety of music, including solo songs, part-songs, madrigals, masque music and even anthems and motets, while Dowland developed a type of part-song for the format that could be used in many different ways. All the songs in

The First Booke can be performed by a single person singing the tune and playing the underlaid tablature on the left-hand page. Alternatively, they can be sung as part-songs with or without the lute, using some or all of the lower parts on the right-hand page, or with viols replacing or doubling some or all of the voices. It was an elegant solution to the problem of printing music with a tablature part as well as staff notation. Morley's *Canzonets*, its competitor, inspired no imitations, probably partly because it was a set of part-books with the tablature printed inconveniently on separate pages of the Cantus – requiring two copies for performance.¹⁸

The table layout was not entirely Dowland's invention. GB-Lbl, Add. MS 31390, a large manuscript dated 1578 of 'In Nomines & other sol-fainge Songes' for 'voyces or Instrumentes', has the parts of each piece spread around the four sides of each opening.¹⁹ Similar formats had already been used in continental publications. Jacques Moderne printed four-part pieces in *Le parangnon des chansons* (Lyons, 1538–43) on a single opening, with two of the parts upside-down at the top of the page, while the lute duets in Pierre Phalèse's *Hortus musarum* and *Luculentum theatrum musicum* (Louvain, 1552, 1568) are arranged so that the players sit facing each other; in *Florilegium* by Adrian Denss (Cologne, 1594), the lutenist sits opposite the singers.²⁰ Similarly, in an Elizabethan lute song manuscript, GB-Lbl, Add. MS 4900, the performers sit facing one another or at right angles.

Of course, the table layout is related to the choirbook format, in which all the parts of a polyphonic vocal piece are spread around a single opening but face the same direction; the book is placed on a lectern or music desk rather than flat on a table. It was used in some continental vocal collections with tablature parts, such as Emanuel Adriaenssen's *Pratum musicum* and *Novum pratum musicum* (Antwerp, 1584, 1592), and the *Canzonette a tre voci* (Venice, 1596) by Alessandro Orologio, the Prague-based wind player Dowland met at Kassel in 1594.²¹ A similar format is used for the two fantasias for cittern and/or three single-line instruments in Holborne's *Citharn Schoole*.²² Dowland's innovation was to apply the full table layout of Add. MS 31390, with parts laid around all four sides of the book, to a printed collection and to flexible combinations of voices and lute.

Lachrimae is modelled on *The First Booke* and other lute-song collections in table layout. It is also a folio book, with the parts for each piece

distributed around the sides of a single opening in the following order: Cantus (left bottom), Bassus (left middle, facing outwards), Quintus (left top, upside down), Tenor (right top, upside down), the lute tablature (right middle, opposite the Bassus), and Altus (right bottom) (see Fig. 1.1). Dowland presumably chose the table layout for *Lachrimae* because it had been so successful in *The First Booke*. But he may also have been trying to avoid an obvious problem with conventional part-books: the tablature takes up more space than the other parts. The problem was avoided in Morley's *First Booke of Consort Lessons* (1599; 2/1611) and Philip Rosseter's *Lessons for Consort* (1609) by printing the lute part in folio and the others in quarto.²³ But this created another problem: the sets did not have a consistent format, and so there was a danger that the lute part would get separated from the others, or would have to be folded across the middle to fit on a shelf with them, risking damage. This is perhaps why we have no example of the two editions of Morley's lute part and only a few fragments of a single copy of Rosseter's; significantly, they show signs of having been folded.²⁴

But publishing consort music in table layout created its own problems. Dowland was aware that space round the table would be limited, for he placed the parts for the bass and lute, the largest instruments, on the sides of the opening facing in, so that they had the most room. But even so, experiment shows that it is difficult to get five viol players and a lutenist seated around a single table and a single copy of the collection: if they get close enough to read the music comfortably there is no room for bowing; if they withdraw to a comfortable distance the music is too small to read.²⁵ Of course, the same arguments apply to Add. MS 31390, but Warwick Edwards has argued, using the phrase 'solfainge Songes' in its title as evidence, that the Elizabethan instrumental ensemble repertory was used for singing as much as playing, particularly for didactic purposes in choir schools.²⁶ It is also possible that some of its pieces were intended for wind players, who, like singers, would have had less trouble than string players gathering around a single book. Another option for performers of *Lachrimae*, of course, was to buy more than one copy, and this is perhaps why two were included in the collection of English music prints purchased by a German nobleman in London in 1630, until recently in the library of Schlobitten Castle.²⁷

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Lachrimae Antiquae" by John Dowland. The score is arranged in a table layout with three main parts: Quintus, Bassus, and Cantus. The Quintus part is at the top, followed by the Bassus part in the middle, and the Cantus part at the bottom. Each part is written on a five-line staff with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The Quintus part begins with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The Bassus part is written in a lower register and includes a "1" below the staff. The Cantus part is written in a higher register and includes a "1" below the staff. The name "Lachrimae Antiquae" is written vertically between the Bassus and Cantus parts. The name "Io. Dowland" is written at the end of each part's staff.

Fig. 1.1 The table layout: *Lachrimae*, sig. B1, B2

The image displays a page of a musical manuscript for the piece "Lachrimæ Antiquæ" by Io. Dowland. The score is arranged in two main sections. The upper section is for the Tenor voice, with the title "Lachrimæ Antiquæ." written above the staff. The Tenor part is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. Below the Tenor staff is a large block of lute tablature, consisting of six staves with letters (a, b, c, d, e, f) and rhythmic markings. The lower section is for the Altus voice, with the title "Lachrimæ Antiquæ." written above the staff. The Altus part is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. Below the Altus staff is another block of lute tablature. The manuscript includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and clefs. The name "Io. Dowland" appears at the end of the Tenor staff and at the beginning of the Altus staff. The word "FINIS." is written at the end of the Altus staff. The page is numbered "1" at the top center and "B 2" at the bottom center.

Fig. 1.1 (cont.)

All in all, *Lachrimae* does not seem to have been very successful. We do not know how well it sold, or how much money Dowland made out of it, but he never acted as his own publisher again, and it was never reprinted, despite his fame and the rarity of English publications of consort music; *Lachrimae* was only the third, after Morley's *Consort Lessons* and Anthony Holborne's *Pavans, Galliards, Almains* (1599).²⁸ The Prussian nobleman's purchase shows that there was still unsold stock in 1630, though this may tell us more about the embryonic nature of the English music trade than about how the collection was perceived by Dowland's contemporaries.²⁹ But no one repeated the experiment of printing consort music in table layout, and its music had little influence on English composers, who had begun to move on to other things by 1604. Doubtless Dowland was disappointed by the failure of *Lachrimae* to obtain him that coveted court post, though a sensible person would have realised that he was putting Queen Anne into an impossible position: she could hardly be seen to be poaching a servant of her brother. It was also perhaps unwise to have added the motto 'Aut Furit, aut Lachrimat, quem non Fortuna beavit' ('whom Fortune has not blessed, he either rages or weeps') on the title-page, for it might have been construed as a criticism of his employer. But common sense was not Dowland's strong point: as his friend Henry Peacham put it in *The Compleat Gentleman* (1622), he 'slipt many opportunities in advancing his fortunes'.³⁰