STM 1977:2

Per Brahe's lute book

By Jan Olof Rudén

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The manuscript in the Skokloster castle library which forms the subject of this paper has long been known to scholars.¹ Since, however, its musical content has hardly been considered,² a number of misunderstandings on the subject have appeared in lists of lute music. It is therefore high time that the MS was described in relation to its context, i.e. western European books of lute music.

We may begin with a short description of the book’s outward appearance. The MS has 197 leaves, most of them blank. All the paper has the same watermark and was evidently manufactured in Germany. This, together with the binding of pressed parchment with Renaissance decoration, suggests that the book was bought ready bound. The contents which it then acquired are of two kinds. Folios 10–45 contain 53 pieces in lute tablature (preceded by a page of instructions on how to tune the lute and "Fedhlan"). Next come 56 blank leaves and then the song texts (fol 102v–177v) published by Noreen and Schück and, finally, 19 more blank leaves. Both the texts and the music are written in several hands, which have been attributed to Per Brahe (this is the hand occurring most frequently), his two sisters Ebba and Margareta, and his brother Nils. There are also a number of unidentified hands.

On fol 1 is written: "Fiducia et spe/ Verum decus in virtute positum/ Petrus Brahe C[omes] D[ee] W[ysingesborgh] 1 jan. Aº 1620/ Giessae", which serves to link the MS with the nobleman Per Brahe the Younger (1602–82), who belonged to one of the most exalted families in Sweden and, as Riksdrots, was to make major contributions to Swedish administration.³

The mention of "Giessa" shows that the MS dates from the Count’s educational tour of Europe, between 1618 and 1621, in the course of which he spent over two years at the recently founded university of Giessen, studying theology, jurisprudence, Hebrew and French.⁴ At that time the education of a nobleman also included such practical ac-

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* The article is a revised and abridged version of a master’s essay presented at a seminar in Uppsala in 1962. The writer wishes to thank Birgit Kjellström and Ingmar Bengtsson for the valuable comments which they made on that occasion.

¹ A short description of the source will be found in Pär Brahes visbok, Uppsala 1894, ed A Noreen and H Schück in the series Skrifter utg av Svenska litteratursällskapet i Uppsala, 7. The editors have mainly reproduced the Swedish and German song texts occurring in the second half of the MS. – The MS is mentioned in several lists of lute music manuscripts, starting with J Wolf, Handbuch der Notationskunde, 2. Leipzig 1919, p 105.

² T Norlind, Zur Geschichte der polnischen Tänze, (SIMG 1910/11, p 506.) Idem, Melodier till svenska folkvisor och folkdanser ... (Svenska landsmål 1906, p 76), as well as subsequent accounts.

³ A general description of his life and achievements will be found in P Nordmann, Per Brahe ... Helsinki 1904.

⁴ Brahe himself relates a few particulars concerning this journey in Svea rikets dräkt och greve Per Brahes säkerheter efter dens i Skoklosters bokhållers förvarade originales handskrift ed D Krummejer, Stockholm 1806, pp 3–4.
complishments as horsemanship, fencing and dancing. Music was also indispensable, as witness the following quotation from the Oeconomia of Per Brahe's grandfather and namesake, Per Brahe the Elder: "...Ahr och Mennischtig och een AULICUM hofligt, att haue någon förfarenheit vdi MUSICAM, på the homon icke Mäles åsne öron, såsom that skeelde MIDAS, Then ther dömdé åssnarn bette haue sungit att Nachtergalen". Our MS shows that music making included the playing of the lute, although Brahe himself does not mention it in his Tänkeshok. Unfortunately the lutenist or lutenists who taught him at that time are not known to us by name. Their existence, however, is borne out by a letter written on 29th July 1619 by Brahe's tutor and travelling companion Israel Bringius to his mother Elsa Brahe, requesting at least 800 dalers a year to enable them to live according to their station in Giessen: "Danzieren [kostar] hwar Månad En dukat för en Person. Luthanisten hwarr Månad en dukat. Fäktaren ock hwar månad En dukat." 6

The young man must have started his lute lessons in 1619, or else immediately on his arrival in Giessen in the autumn of 1618, but the flyleaf of the manuscript is dated New Year's Day 1620. As regards the dating of the contents, the song texts – or at least, most of them – are generally taken to have been written down in the book after Brahe's return home to Sweden, in August 1621. Lute pieces may also have been written down after that date (copied, perhaps, from other sources), because the handwriting changes at folio 38. At all events, as we shall see presently, the repertoire is wholly western European and contains nothing of Swedish origin. Therefore it was mere coincidence that a Swede put these pieces together and took them home with him as a souvenir.

Each page of music (format 12 x 20 cm) contains three six-line staves of French lute tablature. According to fol 9v, specifying "Claves på luthan & Fedhlan" (the lute and "Fedhlan"), "normal tuning in G", i.e. G c f a d'g', is used for the courses across the fingerboard. In addition, the tuning C D E/E flat F is given for the theorbo courses. It is evident from the musical context that the E course was sometimes retuned in D and the C course in D or 'B flat. One piece, no 25 (Phantasia), features a radically different tuning occasioned by its parallel thirds, viz 'B flat D flat F G B flat f b flat d'.

Fingering, both for the grip hand and for the playing hand, is quite often indicated, and so is ornamentation.

There are many obvious copying errors regarding pitches and note values (letters placed on the wrong line or else incorrect time value signs). The numerous crossings out, emendations and references all serve to show that the young man had quite a difficult time with his copying. What is more serious, "bar lines" sometimes occur too frequently or too infrequently without the time value signs clearly showing this to be the case.

5 "...It is humane and, for a courtier, fitting to have some proficiency in music, lest asses' ears be painted on him as was done to that Midas, who judged the ass to have sung better than the nightingale." P Brahe, Oeconomia eller Hushållsbok för unge adelfolk, Ed. J. Granlund & G. Holm, Stockholm 1971, p. 15.

6 "The dancing master [costs] each month one dukat per person. The lutenist each month one dukat. The fencing-master also each month one dukat." Riksarkivet (the National Archives), Stockholm, E 8131, fol 395v.


8 For some reason or other, the tuning of the "Fedhla" is indicated in reverse (e a d g f) from the bottom upwards. It is not clear what type of string instrument is referred to here, but the likeliest possibility seems to be a descant viola da braccio – in other words, a violin.

The repertoire

There seems to be little reason to assume with Noreen and Schück that the collection was made up of tunes used for Per Brahe's dancing lessons – at least not exclusively. Admittedly most of the pieces are dances, but it is doubtful whether in this connection they were primarily intended to function as dance music. Of course, dancing is completely ruled out in the case of the art music compositions and the chorale settings also included in the MS.

The MS contains the following pieces. (The original has neither numbers nor foliation.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>fol</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Les Boffons</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bergomasco</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10v</td>
<td>Balletto Francovis*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10v</td>
<td>Teutschen dantz – Nachdanz*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>11v</td>
<td>Teutschen dans – Nachdantz*</td>
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| 6   | 12v | Balletto *
| 7   | 12v | Corante pastorelle* |
| 8   | 13v | Wolte Francovis* |
| 9   | 13v | Balletto |
| 10  | 14v | Viav Fortuna |
| 11  | 14v | Cupido* |
| 12  | 15v | Balletto cauda* |
| 13  | 15v | Galiarda the frog* |
| 14  | 16v-17 | Galiarda englesse |
| 15  | 17v-18 | Corante Francovis |
| 16  | 18v-19 | Ballo in Echo* |
| 17  | 19v | Corante La Muresque |
| 18  | 20v | Pavana* |
| 19  | 20v-21 | Amor* |
| 20  | 21v-22 | Teutschen Dantz – Nachtanz* |
| 21  | 22v-23 | Wär gudh åhr oss en wäldig borgh |
| 22  | 23v-24 | Phantasia* |
| 23  | 24v-25 | Von himell hoch da kom ich här |
| 24  | 25v-26 | Galiarda Englesse* |
| 25  | 26v-26v | Favorite |

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*Publ in arr for guitar by Roland Bengtsson in Ur Per Brahes visbok, Stockholm 1965.

It will be observed that, with one exception, no composers are named. Comparisons with contemporary lute books and published incipits have made it possible to identify a number of melodies without tracing exact replicas; the latter were hardly to be expected, considering the contemporary variation practices. Since the MS has been found to include a


10 Publ in Oeuvres des Bocquet. Paris 1972, no 34. In addition no 14, 27, 30, 33 will be found as no 23, 43, 1 and 40 in John Dowland. The collected lute music transcr and ed by Dian Poulton and Basil L. am. London 1974.
large proportion of pieces of English origin, these have been numbered according to D Lumsden, without specifying the individual sources. References are also made to Land and to a number of contemporary printed lute books.

It is worth adding here that, with one exception, there are no concordances with other lute music preserved in Sweden.

Incipits are given to save space on one stave in octave transposition (marked with an 8 under the clef), or else in the "original" position if appropriate. (See below.)

Survey of the repertoire by types

In the following survey and commentary, the pieces have been assembled in a few groups. The boundaries between these groups are often flexible, for which reason the approach adopted has been practical rather than strictly systematic.

Group 1. Free compositions

The term free compositions has been chosen here above all to distinguish pieces by John Dowland, the most eminent lutenist of the time, from typical dances and basso ostinato forms.

With the exception of the Galiarda du passameta, no 29, all the galiardi are of English origin, as is expressly stated in pieces nos 27, 33 and 38. No concordances for nos 38 have been found in Lumsden, but there is one in van den Hove's Delitiae musicae, where the two short phrases of the melody appear, each with a variation. No 14 appears under the title Galiarda the frog or similar names in Lumsden's material (no 945). No 27 is John Dowland's well-known Lady Riche's galiarda (Lumsden 923), and no 33 is his King of Denmark's galiarda, also known as The battle galiarda (Lumsden 922). Lastly, no 48 (Lumsden 910) has been attributed in the English sources both to Francis Cutting and to John Dowland. The MS includes yet another piece by John Dowland, namely no 30, Fuga (Lumsden 176), which, running to no less than 190 bars, is the longest piece in the book.

It is difficult to say whether the "Bocqueti" in the title Lamento Bocqueti, no 50, implies that the music was written by one Bocquetus or that the music is a lament for somebody of that name. The former interpretation is suggested, for example, by a turn of phrase in Besard which could hardly mean anything but "by Bocqueti".

Praetextatum, no 34, is found in Vallet 1615/18 and was probably composed by him. The Phantasia, no 25, however, has proved impossible to trace. It has the same incipit as Crecqillon's chanson "Pour un plaisir". This may be coincidence, or else we may have here a "Fantasia super Pour un plaisir". This form of instrumental pieces based on vocal models occurs, for example, in Lumsden's English sources.

Group 2. Basso ostinato forms

The MS features two forms of basso ostinato, namely the folia and the passamezzo moderno. With slight deviations, the folia sequence occurs in Utilis Fortuna (no 11), Cupido (no 12) and Amor (no 22). Vallet calls no 11 "Fortuna Angliose", and Land gives it together with the words of "Fortune my foe", and it appears in a number of English sources, including settings by John Dowland. Nos 12 and 22 are two different versions of the same melody; the latter can be regarded as a variation of the former.

Les Buffons (no 1) and Galiarda du passameta (no 29) belong to the passamezzo moderno type. The latter has obviously been lifted bodily out of a passamezzo-galiarda pair.

Les Buffons is a title occurring in several sources, e.g. Land 6 and 10, though only the melody part is given there, which makes it impossible to say whether these pieces are in passamezzo form. Lumsden also has buffons (795), buffons (308), buffons (356), of which 308 bears the closest resemblance to our melody. Originally this was a French sword dance.

The pieces entitled Bergampascu in the MS (nos 2, 18) are also connected with the passamezzo moderno form. In this originally Italian folk melody, however, the harmonic aspect is secondary to the melodic. Bergamasca melodies do not occur in the English material, but they are found on the continent, e.g. Land (434), Flotzinger and van den Hove. This dance includes yet another piece by John Dowland, namely no 30, Fuga (Lumsden 176), which, running to no less than 190 bars, is the longest piece in the book.

For the sake of simplicity, Bergampascu, although a type of melodic variation, has also been included in this group.

22 O Gombosi, Zur Frühgeschichte der Folia. (Acta musicologica 1936, p 119.)
23 Oeuvres de Nicolas Vallet.
24 Land no 68.
25 Lumsden 902-709. Lumsden, who remarks that the melody part is missing and adds "(for two lutes?)", does not seem to have observed the folia pattern. – Lumsden 755, which occurs in two sources and is said to be composed by John Dowland, seems to be a different Fortuna melody from the English one. On this, cf E Lowinsky, The Goddess Fortuna in Music. (Musical Quarterly 1943, pp 45-77.)
26 The melodic skeleton is to be found, for example, in Musik in Geschichs und Gegenwart, vol 10, column 878.
27 Similar paired dances-sometimes with a ripresa added-occur in F Adriaenssen, Pratum musicum, Antwerp 1584. Cf G Spiesens, E Adriaenssen en son Pratum musicum. (Acta musicologica 1964, p 147.) – Land no 348 is a Galiarda whose beginning concurs with our melody. There it is meant to follow Passamezzo Haubois (339) for four lutes. – J van den Hove's Delitiae musicae also contains several passamezzo-galiarda pairs.
28 Cf Sohlmans Musiklexikon, 2nd ed, vol 1, p 567.
29 Cf P Nettl, Die Bergampascu. (Zeitschrift für Musikwisenschaft 1922-23, p 291.)
32 J P N Land, Het liutoek van Thysias beschreven en toegelicht. (Tijdschrift der Vereeniging voor Noord-Nederlands muziekgeschiedenis, 1-3, 1885-91.)
33 J B Besard's, Thesaurus harmonicus, RISM 16031. Cf also Oeuvres pour luth seul de Jean-Baptiste Besard, Paris 1909. – C I Fruhmann, Testudo Galli-Germanica, RISM 1615. – J van den Hove, Delitiae musicae, RISM 1612. – N Vallet, Paradisus musicus testudinis, 2nd ed, 1617. The two last mentioned publ. as Oeuvres de Nicolas Vallet pour luth seul. La secret des muses, premier livre 1615, second livre 1616. Ed et transer par A Souris. Paris 1970. The first and second eds both contain the same music, but the first ed is in Dutch and second in French.
34 P 66 "Galiarda".
36 The Galiarda occurring in Besard's Thesaurus harmonicus fol 110v does not seem to be the same melody, despite certain harmonic and melodic similarities.
is interesting in Sweden because it formed the prototype of a series of round dances, the most familiar being "Skåra havre" (Cutting oats).30

Another form of bergamasca without this characteristic melody can be found, for example, in Flotzinger (202, for guitar) and in a handwritten lute book in the Royal Library (Kungl biblioteket), Stockholm.31

Group 3. Intabulations

Intabulations of chorale melodies occur, for example, in Lumsdten's English material and in Land. For denominational reasons, the former includes Anglican hymns and the latter Calvinist chorales. It is perfectly natural, therefore, that four Protestant chorales should have been noted down in Giessen, the stronghold of Hessian Lutheranism. Puer natus in Bethlehem (no 16) gives the chorale melody uppermost with hardly any ornamentation. This has been combined with a freely composed accompanying part. Compared with Glahn no 124, phrase 2 deviates somewhat from the accepted chorale melody. Per Brahe has given Ein' feste Burg (no 24), one of the commonest chorale melodies in the Protestant church, the Swedish superscription "Wår Gudh ähr os en wäldig borgh". Here too, phrases 1 and 3 and 2 and 4 respectively are very similar to Glahn no 124. In the rest of the chorale, however, the melody dissolves into arpeggios, so that one is justified in speaking of a Choralbearbeitung or fantasia. Indeed the conclusion is almost a paraphrase.

Von himmel hoch da kom ich bär (no 26, Glahn no 128) is an interesting form of chorale variations. The four phrases of the chorale melody are presented one at a time in the upper part (sometimes with repeats) and with a slight melodic ornamentation or "colouring" against a principally harmonizing lower part. Each phrase is immediately followed by a variation. (In phrase 4 the variation is presented first.) This method of varying the phrases of the chorale melody is identical with the treatment given to secular melodies, but since chorale melodies would be well known to the assiduous churchgoers of the period, they could be treated with even greater liberty than secular tunes.

No 32, Nun kom der heijden beijland (Zahn no 1174),32 has a profusely ornamented and protracted cantus firmus, one syllable of the text generally corresponding to one bar of notation. Lastly no 36, Ich dancke dir liber berre (Zahn no 72), adheres to the chorale melody and is only slightly ornamented.

The MS also includes intabulations of secular songs. It is typical of all of them that the words which belong to them and which are reproduced in the text section of the MS are quite difficult to fit to the music. More Patatino (nos 37 and 39) was a well known student song beginning "More patatino, bibmus, re gutta supersit ...".33 There is a lute setting of this, e g in British Library, Sloane 1021 fol 65, 66, 55v. A keyboard setting occurs, for example, in the works of Buxtehude.34 The melody is usually varied; Buxtehude has no less than twelve variations.

No 40, Liebe, corresponds to the words "Nun bin ich durch Liebe zu trauen gebracht ...".35 There is also a lute setting, for example, in British Library Sch 23181 fol 50v (without words).

The words of no 41, Eliender Mensch, are attributed in the text section of the MS to Jochim Minsingere von Frundece.36 No other melody source has been found for this piece.

No 42 has no title. The tablature is followed by a melody written in ordinary staff notation, beginning with the words "E quest'il prem'amore". The full text is given on the opposite page of the MS. The lute tablature would seem to be an intabulation of the villanella. Unfortunately the tablature does not contain enough indications of note values for a decent transcription to be possible.

No 3, Balletto francouzsis (=French), is a well-loved melody which in Bataille37 carries the words "Est-ce Mars, le grand dieux des allarmes que je vois ...". It occurs quite often in English38 and Dutch39 sources, and also in Samuel Scheidt40 and Vallet 1615/19. Sveelinck was also attracted by this tune.41

Group 4. Dances

There are more pieces in this group than in the others. It is possible, but by no means certain, that they are functional music, i e actual dance music. The titles suggest that stylistic features typical of Germany, Poland, France and Italy were used.

Nos 5, 6 and 23 are called tysk dans (i e German dance). As is customary they are followed by a dance in triple time. These are the only instances of paired dances occurring in this MS. No 31 is called polsk dans (Polish dance) and appears here without any following dance.42

Ballo, ballet(to) suggest Italian origins. Titles of this kind occur in nos 7, 10 (same tune as no 28, Favorite), 13 Balletto cauda, 15, 19 Ballo in echo, 44, 45 (with variatio), 49 and 52.

30T Norlind, Melodier till svenska folksvisor och folkdansar ... (Svenska landsmalen 1906, p 78.)
31Call no S 253, fol 108-109 "bergamasce de Lespin". - In Besard fol 106v there is a more artistically worked out "Bergamasco I Besardi".
34The last two words may be a corruption of "Elia Meritius". This name occurs together with the melody in Fuhrmann 1615.
35 Cf A Vrethblad in G Sternhell & S Columbus, Spel om hedbilds vägemed. Stockholm 1955, p 64. - In the text section of the MS the words begin "Hört einem meneislicheh Creatur ...", reprinted in Noreen & Schuck, op cit, p 394ff.
38Ib, p 398ff.
39Airs de cour de differens auteurs. T 4, 1613, fol 7 according to Flotzinger, op cit, p 60. - In a review by F W Sternhell in Music & Letters 1965, p 259, Pierre Guédron is said to have composed the music.
40E g Lumdlen no 350.
41E g Vallerius, Nederlandische Gedem-klanck.
42E g in Tabulatoria nova.
43Cf Werken voor orgel en clavikirke Uitg door M Seiffert. 2nd ed 1943, no 58.
44T Norlind "discovered" our MS during his researches on the polskas Cf supra, n 2.
The above mentioned dances, whose titles suggest national traits, are in duple time. Triple time occurs in two dances called volta, nos 9 and 46. This dance is generally associated with France.\textsuperscript{45}

There are six courantes: no 8 pastorelle, 17 francovis, 20 la muresque\textsuperscript{46} and, finally, nos 35, 43 and 47, which do not have any such epithet.

As can be seen, even if the galliards in group 1 were to be included here, the selection of dances is limited. It is not surprising that an old-fashioned dance like the branle should be missing, but except for the courante one also looks in vain for forms that were later to make up the German baroque suite.\textsuperscript{47}

\textbf{Group 5. Miscellaneous}

Of the four remaining pieces in the MS, nos 51 and 53 have no title. It has not been possible to identify them with the aid of concordances. No 21 is the well known \textit{Pavane d'Espagne/Pavaniglia}.\textsuperscript{48} No 4, lastly, is called \textit{Symbell}. This is a very short piece based wholly on changing sonorities, whose title may possibly allude to a carillon.\textsuperscript{49} This inference is supported, for example, by the limited tonal range, which was a distinctive feature of the medieval carillon.

\textbf{Summary}

The repertoire in Per Brahe's MS closely resembles that of printed books of lute music from about 1610-1619 by Fuhrmann, Vallet and Robert Dowland. It also tallies very closely with the repertoire of contemporary western European lute manuscripts. The selection of pieces was probably made in connection with lute lessons in Giessen, in which case it reflects what was in vogue there around 1620. The music of John Dowland is strikingly well represented. Perhaps this means that contemporaries were aware of his great importance, or does it mean that Dowland's visit to the Landgrave of Hesse during the mid-1590s made such a profound impression?\textsuperscript{50}

We know that Per Brahe continued to take a close interest in music even in later life. On the other hand we do not know whether the pieces in his MS were ever performed in Sweden or whether they were simply regarded as sins of his youth. Any lutenist who tried to play from the notation would probably have given up the unequal struggle before long when he found how many strange noises he was producing. 350 years after the event, an examination of concordances has now shown that the MS is a far from satisfactory source. It is therefore a very risky undertaking to use a given piece as a link in a chain of argument without collating and reconstructing it first.

\textsuperscript{45}Cf Land 383 "Volte de France".

\textsuperscript{46}Identical with Vallet 1615/18 "La moresque".

\textsuperscript{47}The Allemande suite: Allemande – courante – sarabande – gigue.

\textsuperscript{48}For example, in a lute setting in Lumsden (no 47); and in both editions of Vallet.


2. BASSO OSTINATO FORMS

a. Folia
No. 11, f. 14 Ut schaff Fortuna [Vallet 1615/19]

No. 12, f. 14v Cupido

No. 22, f. 20v-21 Amor

b. Passametto morderno
No. 29, f. 27 Galliard du passameto

No. 1, f. 10 Les Boffons

3. INTABULATIONS

a. Chorale melodies
No. 16, f. 17 Puer natus in Bethlehem

No. 24, f. 22v-23 Wär Gudh dyr oss en wäldig borgh

No. 26, f. 24v-25 Von himel hoch da kom ich hår

No. 32, f. 32v-32v Nun kom der heijden heijland

No. 36, f. 35-35v Ich danche dir Liber herre [Fuhrmann 1615]
5. MISCELLANEOUS

No. 21, f. 20  Pavana [d'Espagne = Vollet 1615/18]

No. 51, f. 44  No title

No. 53, f. 45  No title