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# Richard Hume and Viol Making in Early Sixteenth-Century Britain

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ON 2 NOVEMBER 1535 A PAYMENT OF TWENTY POUNDS was made to Richard Hume to make a set of viols for the Scottish court: “Item, the samin day, to Richard Hume, Inglisman, quhilk suld mak violis to the Kingis grace, to by stufe to the samin...xx li.”<sup>1</sup> This is the first known reference to the viol in Scotland, and until now has been considered to be the earliest reference to a native English viol maker. However, recent research on the introduction of the viol into Scotland during the 1530s<sup>2</sup> has cast doubt on the latter claim, which now seems questionable, even improbable. This article will propose that Richard Hume was not a maker at all, but rather an intermediary hired by the Stuart court to commission or buy a set of viols either in London or abroad. A case against Hume as a viol maker will be established by considering the musical scene at court from the 1510s to the 1550s, with particular emphasis on the foreign nature of the viol in Scotland during the 1530s. The argument will also take into account the influx of foreign viol players at the English court of Henry VIII in the 1540s, and their effect on the business of buying and selling viols in England.

## *Music at the Scottish Court from the 1520s to the 1550s*

The *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland* record expenditures made by the Scottish court, providing information on the liveries and

1. In modern English this would read “Item, the same day, to Richard Hume, Englishman, who should make viols to the King’s grace, to buy stuff to the same, 20 pounds.” A second payment of 40 pounds is briefly recorded on 19 January 1535–36: “Item, the xix day of Januar, to Richart Hume, Inglisman, xl li.” Both quotations are taken from the published transcription of the expense records of the Scottish court: Sir James Balfour Paul, ed., *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland, Compota thesaurariorum Regum Scotorum* (13 vols., Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1882–1914), 6:261–62.

2. Emily Peppers, “The Viol in Sixteenth-Century Scotland: Foreign Influences in the Scottish Court, 1530–60,” M.Mus. dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 2004.

pensions of members of the royal household. They include occasional expenses of repairs, gifts, munitions, and messengers, as well as everyday expenses such as food and clothing. These accounts provide the main source of information on royal court musicians, and are therefore invaluable in researching sixteenth-century Scottish musical life.<sup>3</sup> Much of what is known of the viol in its first decade of use in Scotland must be gleaned from this source, which also provides important background about the musical scene at the court of James V before the appearance of an employed viol consort.

From 1515 to 1528, during the infancy and adolescence of James V,<sup>4</sup> there are eighteen references to musicians, of which only four mention any instrument by name. In 1526 an unnamed harper was given twenty shillings for playing in an Easter (Pasche) ceremony or celebration.<sup>5</sup> The same year Urre Schennek, a continental lutenist of presumably northern European origin, was delivered goods and money totaling four pounds five shillings.<sup>6</sup> In 1529, the sum of four shillings was given to a Westland harper, “at the Kingis command,” suggesting a one-time gift rather than a payment to an employed musician.<sup>7</sup>

Also in 1526, a payment of forty shillings was made to William Calbratht (sometimes spelled Galbratht or Galbraith) “to buy ane luyt, at the Kingis command,” but the wording of this entry is too ambiguous to determine whether Calbratht himself played the lute, or whether he was just a middleman buying the instrument for use by a third party.<sup>8</sup> Later references in 1531 and 1533 mention Calbratht as buying a lute and strings, but again the wording leaves it unclear whether the lute was for him, or possibly even made by him.<sup>9</sup>

Fiddle players are recorded in the account books beginning in the late fifteenth century, and are commonly designated as “fydlar,” “fidlare,”

3. All references in this article are to the transcription by Sir James Balfour Paul cited in note 1, rather than to the original manuscripts. See the appendix, below, for a list of entries consulted and the exact wording of each.

4. James V, born in 1512, inherited the Scottish throne the following year on the death of his father, James IV, at the Battle of Flodden Field on 9 September 1513. During his childhood the country was ruled by a series of regents, until he assumed power in his own right in 1528.

5. Paul, *Accounts*, 5:256.

6. Paul, *Accounts*, 5:312.

7. Paul, *Accounts*, 5:373.

8. Paul, *Accounts*, 5:276.

9. Paul, *Accounts*, 6:18 and 87.

etc.<sup>10</sup> At no point before the arrival of viols at the Scottish court is a term like “violis” used. In all other records, musicians are referred to as “menestralis,” or some similar term. The names of the minstrels mentioned singly, such as James Tabbaner, James Grame, and John Cruke, suggest Scottish or English origins. French or Italian minstrels are often specifically designated as foreign (for example, “Franche menestralis”), but still without any reference to the instruments they played.<sup>11</sup>

Starting in 1515, a group of five Italian minstrels is listed as being paid a livery and pension. Associated with this group was George Forest, a “scottishman with thame makand vj personis.”<sup>12</sup> An emphasis is placed on the number of musicians (six), suggesting that they performed as a group or consort. Besides wind and brass consorts, six performers could be either singers or a viol consort.<sup>13</sup>

The first specific reference to the employment of viol players comes in 1538, when it is recorded that “the foure veolis” were to receive liveries of clothing similar to those of the trumpet players—red and yellow taffeta, silk, and velvet for their costume, and red for their bonnet.<sup>14</sup> In 1539 the “foure minstralis that playis upoun the veolis” were given a yearly pension and livery, each receiving 50 pounds for a period of approximately fifteen months.<sup>15</sup> Later in the year Jakkis Collumbell, “player upoun the veolis,” was paid more than the three other members of his consort, including more for a clothing allowance.<sup>16</sup> There are

10. A representative entry from 1526 reads “[Item,] till Anton, fyldar, at the Kingis command xx s.” Paul, *Accounts*, 5:276.

11. Bontanis, a “franche menestralis,” is listed as being given 36 shillings and 40 shillings in part payment of his wages and fees in 1515 (Paul, *Accounts*, 5:44). In 1517 French “talbanaris and menestralis” were paid 8 shillings in ale (Paul, *Accounts*, 5:157). “Fransche Orry” was paid 9 shillings for playing at Easter in Stirling in 1525 (Paul, *Accounts*, 5:256). He is not mentioned again, and could be a travelling minstrel, although his absence from court records does not guarantee that he did not remain in Scotland.

12. Paul, *Accounts*, 5:53–54.

13. The possibility of the five Italians being either instrumentalists or singers is purely speculative; there are arguments for and against either claim. The term ‘minstrel’ was associated with instrumental musicians throughout the middle ages, and there is a strong possibility that a group of musicians from Italy at this time would be flexible instrumental performers, probably playing a variety of instruments including bowed strings. There are several examples in the 1530s and 1540s of groups of musicians from Italy at the court of Henry VIII, most notably the Bassano family.

14. Paul, *Accounts*, 7:118–19.

15. Paul, *Accounts*, 7:199.

16. Paul, *Accounts*, 7:271.

records mentioning alternatively “Jakkis and his thre mawris [partners]” and the “four menstralis that playis upoun the veolis,” and it is probable that these two types of account entry refer to the same consort.<sup>17</sup> Judging from his name (Jakkis = Jacques), one can assume that Collumbell was also a foreign player. The reference to the unnamed other players of his consort as his “mawris,” or partners, may suggest they came to James V’s court as a pre-formed group.

The mention of viol players is scarce but regular over the next few years. Until 1542, the four viol players appear in yearly lists of liveries given to members of the royal household and court musicians. Beginning in that year, payments to musicians are often more specific, or rather, the musicians are being paid for specific performances in addition to (or instead of) their yearly pension. An account entry from 1542 records that for their performances at Yule and Candlemas the viol players were paid an extra ten pounds, more than any other musicians for their services during this time.<sup>18</sup> Pasche, or Easter, was another time of religious ceremony when musicians were noted in the accounts as hired specifically for the occasion.

The viol is not documented as being played by local musicians until 1541, when John Fethy received money for viols and lessons for the boys of his Chapel Royal choir in Edinburgh.<sup>19</sup> This payment for entertainment by young boys playing viols parallels the popularity of English choirboy companies, who would perform in viol consorts for special occasions and between theatrical acts. At St. Paul’s and Westminster choir schools in London the viol was established as an important part of the choirboys’ education by the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>20</sup>

After the death of James V in 1542, religious and social tensions in Scotland put a strain on court spending; indeed, amid revolts in Edinburgh and battles to the south, a string of failed campaigns during the Regency<sup>21</sup> eventually forced Mary of Guise, the Queen Dowager, to sell

17. Paul, *Accounts*, 7:414 and 334, respectively.

18. Paul, *Accounts*, 8:149–50.

19. A livery was given in 1541 to “Schir John Fechyis children that plays on the viols.” Paul, *Accounts*, 8:54.

20. Ian Woodfield, *The Early History of the Viol* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 212–13.

21. From the crowning of James V’s infant daughter as Mary Queen of Scots in 1543 until her return from France in 1561, a governor or regent was appointed custodian of the Scottish kingdom. During this period Henry VIII saw an opportunity to consolidate the two kingdoms by marrying the infant Mary to his young son Prince

off royal jewels and to borrow money on several occasions from the Scottish nobility still faithful to her in order to pay her household.<sup>22</sup> It is therefore not surprising to find a decrease in spending on permanent court entertainment during this period of social unrest and mourning. Although a consort of five viol players was mentioned in 1543, no liveries were given, only a payment of fees for services provided.<sup>23</sup>

Throughout the next twenty years, viol consorts were employed for religious and festive occasions such as Yule, Whitsunday, and Martinmas as well as for private occasions. Clothing was often paid for, especially for occasions such as Yule, but the yearly pensions are now missing. The musicians, especially the viol players, were paid well for their performances, and there are many records during this period of gifts ranging from five shillings to five pounds given to the court musicians.<sup>24</sup>

Along with a change in the manner of employment during the Regency came a change in the viol players employed. Records from 1542 through 1557 regularly number the viol consort as four. In 1558, payments to viol players for Yule and Pasche record for the first time the names of all members of a viol consort, revealing that Jakkis Collumbell and his three partners were no longer on the payroll. The names given suggest that the players were now Scottish (or English) by birth: "Item, to Jakis Dow, John Feildie, John Dow, Johnne Ra, Morris Dow, Williame Hog, and Alexander Feildie, violaris, for thair dewitie and waxis for [Y]ule and Pasche last bypast, ilk ane v li, summa xxxv li."<sup>25</sup> It is worth noting that seven viol players are mentioned, but it cannot be ascertained if they played all together, or in smaller groups. Woodfield has suggested that many of these new players may have been children,<sup>26</sup> citing a record of 1561: "Item, to John Feldie and his barnis [children], violaris, for thair service at this last [Y]ule, . . . xx li."<sup>27</sup> This is in line with

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Edward VI. Later coined "rough wooing" by Sir Walter Scott, Scotland's refusal to accept the marriage proposal resulted in a sustained onslaught on Scottish soil that cost the English crown over £350,000. Magnus Magnusson, *Scotland: The Story of a Nation* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2000), 319–26.

22. Antonia Fraser, *Mary Queen of Scots* (London: Phoenix Press, 1994), 52.

23. "Item, the ix day of December, to the fyve violaris, in part of paiment of thair feyis . . . xxij li." Paul, *Accounts*, 8:240.

24. See appendix; examples include Paul, *Accounts*, 9:127, 175, 215, 281, and 425.

25. Paul, *Accounts*, 10:415.

26. Woodfield, *The Early History of the Viol*, 209–10.

27. Paul, *Accounts*, 11:102.

both the presence of viol-playing choirboys at the Scottish court twenty years earlier, and concurrent musical trends in England (as discussed above).

Jakkis and his partners were last mentioned in 1541, but a lack of individual recorded names prevents us from learning at exactly what point between 1542 and 1557 Scottish (or English) players took over the unnamed viol consort.<sup>28</sup> Based on these records, however, we can say that during the 1530s the viol was played at the Stuart court exclusively by foreign musicians.

### *Lutes and viols at the Scottish Court*

A study of the records that mention lutes and lute players in the *Accounts* reveals a level of detail and responsibility on the part of the Scottish court that is noticeably absent when one compares the records in which viols are mentioned. James V himself—like his mother, Margaret Tudor, and father, James IV—played the lute,<sup>29</sup> and as early as 1526 a series of entries document court expenditure on lutes and gut strings. By the 1530s there are several records of lutes and strings bought for, or delivered to, the king. William Calbratht arranged for many purchases in the first years of the decade, but between 1533 and 1536 six different people are mentioned as buying strings in amounts from “iiij skenze luit stringis” to larger amounts of seven dozen or five pounds worth.<sup>30</sup> One record mentions Glasgow as the place of purchase.<sup>31</sup> There are records of “lutars” receiving liveries and pensions at regular intervals, and it is possible that many of the purchases of strings (and possibly even instruments) may have been for the musicians of the court. It is interesting to note that from 1526 to 1531 there are no records of strings bought at regular intervals. It can only be guessed that 1531 marks the point at

28. It is possible that Jakkis Collumbell left soon after pensions ceased to be given, searching perhaps for a continental court with patrons who had more money to lavish upon its musicians.

29. Indeed, there are records indicating that most Stuart monarchs, including James II and III, did so. See Matthew Spring, *The Lute in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 451.

30. See appendix.

31. On 28 September 1533 payment was made for a lute and case, together with a dozen strings “coft in Glasqu, and sent with Troilus to the Kingis grace in Inverrera.” Paul, *Accounts*, 6:87.

which the young James V began to pay more attention to the lute, and that before that time lute players mostly took care of purchasing their own instruments and strings.

In marked contrast to the available information about lutes at the Scottish court, there are no references to viols or viol strings bought or reimbursed from royal funds, except for the commission to Richard Hume in 1535.<sup>32</sup> In fact, from 1510 to 1570 no other mention is made of purchases relating to viols. This tells us much about the function of the viol in the Scottish court: its upkeep was not paid for by court funds, further supporting the idea that it was a professional and specialized practice.

When viol players finally arrived on the scene in 1538, it seems likely that they brought their instruments with them, rather than taking the risk of relying on unknown local Scottish makers. Even in subsequent decades, when native musicians replaced foreign players in court records, the continual absence of money spent on instruments and strings reinforces the notion that the viol was a professional instrument, with the responsibility of its upkeep lying in the hands of the players themselves.

This conclusion, although only speculative, could in turn shed light on the local instrument-making scene in Scotland. The likelihood of foreign viol players buying Scottish instruments seems slim, although it is possible that they relied upon local makers for gut strings. Later viol players of Scottish birth would be more likely to patronize local makers, and could even have made instruments themselves. It is probable that viol players at the Scottish court would have had some contact with local makers, and judging from the number of references to the fiddle, lute, and harp in the royal treasury accounts there would certainly have been a market capable of supporting makers of these kinds of instruments, and their strings, in Scotland. But would there have been a need for Scottish viol makers in the 1530s?

32. It has been suggested that there would have been little difference between lute and viol strings in the early sixteenth century, and that lute strings could have been used on viols. They would therefore have been recorded as such in court accounts, without differentiation. I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer of my article for this intriguing idea.



### *The Viol in Scotland*

A lack of detail and consistency is frustratingly pervasive in surviving sixteenth-century Scottish documents; much of what could be historically important remains unknown due to omitted information, scribal negligence, common names, and the destruction or loss of documents. However, the entries of payments to musicians—especially the few that mention instruments, strings, and materials for instrument making—in the *Accounts* do prove that a market existed for string instruments, at least by the midpoint of the sixteenth century.

The northern English city of York became an important instrument-making center during the second half of the sixteenth century,<sup>33</sup> and the appearance of Scottish and English names as viol players at the Scottish court from the 1550s suggests that craftsmen perhaps did move northwards, either as players themselves, or to provide their services to viol players. It is also possible that a need for instrument makers was not developed in Scotland until after James VI ascended to power as an adult in 1579,<sup>34</sup> when musical education and courtly entertainment were revived after several decades of decline. Certainly, surviving documents relating to instrument makers provide a clearer picture by the turn of the seventeenth century, but our concern is with the possibility of local viol makers in Scotland during the 1530s, and whether it is plausible to think that Richard Hume was a viol maker in either Scotland or England.

As we have seen, the viol was not played by native musicians in Scotland until at least the 1540s, and it was not until some time in the second half of the sixteenth century, or even the beginning of the seventeenth century, that the viol was taken up by the aristocracy, with professional Scottish players remaining few and far between for most of the sixteenth century. Inventories in the National Archives of Scotland of “movable plinishings” and goods claimed through wills mostly do not include musical instruments of any kind, and it is not until the seventeenth century that viols are listed.<sup>35</sup> (On the other hand the fiddle—a term used for

33. Michael Jonathan Fleming, “Viol-Making in England c. 1580–1660” (Ph.D. dissertation, Open University, 2001), 1:167, 172. George Styddie became a free man as an “instrumentmaker or joyner” in York in 1585. It is worthy of notice that his profession was listed as instrument maker first, before joiner.

34. James VI, born in 1566, had become king upon the abdication of his mother, Mary Queen of Scots, on 4 July 1567.

35. For example, an inventory of goods claimed in 1574 by Patrick as heir to his father, Lord Drummond, does include string instruments, but only a clavichord and

rebec or other instruments played on the arm—would certainly have been made by local Scottish makers, since it had a well-established history in Britain before the sixteenth century.<sup>36</sup>)

Given the scarcity of viol players in Scotland, it seems unlikely that there would have been enough of a market to support local makers of this instrument; musicians would either have had to bring their own instruments (as was probably the case with foreign professionals), or buy them elsewhere. And it is precisely for this reason that I would like to propose that the mysterious Richard Hume was not himself the maker of the viols ordered by James V, but instead was simply hired to commission them, either in London or abroad.

The money given to Hume in the two records totals sixty Scottish pounds sterling, equivalent at that time to about twelve English pounds.<sup>37</sup> This seems high in comparison to another set of viols purchased by the Duke of Rutland only two years later, when the price “for iiij vyalles bought at London” was 53s. 4d., or two and two-thirds pounds, which works out to two-thirds of a pound per viol.<sup>38</sup>

But what of the fact that there were two payments to Hume, one for twenty pounds, and a second two months later for forty? The most obvious explanation is that the former was (as recorded) to cover the cost of materials along with partial payment up front for labor, and the latter was for the finished viols. It could be further argued that if the intended maker were located outside of Scotland, the first payment would have included travel funds for Hume to negotiate with and commission him, while the remaining forty pounds would similarly have included money to transport the instruments back to Scotland. Alternatively, because the second payment record does not actually mention viols, it is possible that

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gittern (or similarly-spelled instrument), even though the Drummond family was known for being patrons of the arts and music. National Archives of Scotland, GD 160/92/ff. 165–6.

36. Mary Remnant, *English Bowed Instruments from Anglo-Saxon to Tudor Times* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 62–63.

37. I wish to thank David Rattray for alerting me to the discrepancy between Scottish and English pounds during this period. See Elizabeth Gemmill and Nicholas Mayhew, *Changing Values in Scotland: A Study of prices, money, and weights and measures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 138–39.

38. Woodfield, *The Early History of the Viol*, 226. A generation later, during the 1560s, three different sets of viols cost between ten and fifteen (English) pounds per set, an increase that Woodfield attributes to both fiscal inflation and the growing popularity of viol consorts during the intervening years (*ibid.*).

this larger sum was given to Hume for some other, unrelated expense incurred in the king's service. In this case, the first payment of twenty pounds—equivalent to four English pounds—may have covered the entire cost of the viols, not just the “stufte to the samin.”<sup>39</sup> Either way, however, the claim that Hume was active as a viol maker in Scotland is unconvincing.

### *The Viol in London*

What of the possibility that Richard Hume was an English viol maker, working in London? It is possible, but in my opinion it is not probable. While it is true that the viol was known and played at the Tudor court and in wealthy English households in the 1530s, it is certainly more likely that it was still an item imported from continental makers. Further diminishing the likelihood of an English-born viol maker in London at this time is the fact that the Bassanos, musicians and instrument makers in the service of Henry VIII, are known to have made viols. Each of these points will be considered in turn.

Beginning in 1505, foreign players—including such names as Guillaume Terro, Mathis de Wildre (Weldre, van Wilder), Hans Hossenet, Hans Highorne, and Peter van Wilder—dominate the English court records as viol players,<sup>40</sup> a situation that continues up until at least 1540. In addition, a number of viols were bought by members of the aristocracy for musical entertainment at their personal residences, beginning at a much earlier point in time in England than in Scotland. In 1534 the Earl of Essex is recorded as owning viols; in 1537, as already mentioned, the Earl of Rutland purchased a set of four; by the following year the

39. This would still be fifty percent more than the Duke of Rutland paid, but we do not know how many instruments were ordered by the Stuart court. If their set consisted of six rather than his four, the price would once again work out to two-thirds of an English pound per instrument. However, given the prevailing French cultural influence in Scotland at this time, it is more likely that the set would have been based on four-part viol consorts popular in French courts during the 1520s and 1530s (see Edmond Vander Straeten, *La Musique aux Pays-Bas avant le XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 8 vols. [Brussels, 1867–1888], 4:189–90).

40. Woodfield, *The Early History of the Viol*, 206–7. Peter Savage, listed in 1531 as a viol player, could be English, but Peter Holman is probably right in suggesting that “Savage” is a translated version of the name “Wild” or “Wilder.” Peter Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers: The Violin at the English Court, 1540–1690* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 75.

Earl of Hertford also had a set, while an inventory reveals that the Marquis of Exeter owned no fewer than nine.<sup>41</sup>

It is likely that during the first half of the sixteenth century these instruments were imported from France, Italy, or the Low Countries, where experienced makers were available whose work was probably deemed superior to instruments made by native English craftsmen. Naturally wanting the best, members of the English aristocracy would have had the money to import instruments from Europe. It is not difficult to imagine how this would have been done, for during the reign of Henry VIII favored foreign musicians were granted licenses to import wine, grain, and other foods into England tax free.<sup>42</sup> Importing musical instruments for interested buyers would have been easily accomplished once regularly scheduled deliveries had been established for other products. A record from 1563 details a purchase of viols exported from Italy to England,<sup>43</sup> but it could be speculated that musical instruments were also imported in the previous decades.

In 1540, Henry VIII's court hired a group of six viol players from Italy, who are listed separately in the accounts from two other viol players already present at the court, as the king's "newe vials."<sup>44</sup> Coming from Venice, Milan, and Cremona, these musicians would have brought with them the most current and fashionable music, playing techniques, and—undoubtedly—instruments. It would not make sense for this group, who were presumably already established musicians in Italy, to come to London without the tools of their trade. This assumption is verified in a record of payment most likely to the group of six, after they arrived from Venice in November 1540, where they are recorded as "certain mynstrelle(s) w(i)t(h) their Instrumente(s) of Venice to the kinge(s) highness."<sup>45</sup> Thus there is no need to assume the presence of a viol maker in London at this early date; on the contrary, it is not difficult to imagine

41. Remnant, *English Bowed Instruments*, 74–75; Woodfield, *The Early History of the Viol*, 210.

42. For example, Philip van Wilder was given a license in 1526 to import 800 "barrels of pastel or woad of Toulouse and wine of Gascony" (Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers*, 72), and in 1538 Anthony and Jacopo Bassano were granted a license to import "300 tons of Gascon wine" (see David Lasocki, with Roger Prior, *The Bassanos: Venetian Musicians and Instrument Makers in England, 1531–1665* [Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1995], 8).

43. Woodfield, *The Early History of the Viol*, 208 and 226.

44. *Ibid.*, 208.

45. Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers*, 79.

that the consort members may have brought with them (or subsequently had sent to them) a few extra instruments from Italy for sale in England.

It is also known that Italian musicians employed at the English court were making instruments to order. The Bassano family made lutes and viols, and it is probable that several of the nineteen viols listed in the court inventory after Henry VIII's death in 1547 were made by a member of the Bassano family.<sup>46</sup> The Italian viol consort that arrived in 1540 evidently also brought instrument-making skills with them: Ambrose Lupo of Milan was one of the original six viol players to be hired in 1540, and the Lupo family were distinguished players and makers of string instruments, employed in the service of the crown for over a century.<sup>47</sup>

Foreign musicians dominated the musical scene at the court of Henry VIII. If they played viols brought from abroad, imported them to England for profit, and also were known as makers of fine instruments sought after by court and nobility alike, it seems implausible that an Englishman like Hume who is otherwise unknown as a maker would be chosen and commissioned to make a set of viols for the rival Scottish court.<sup>48</sup> It is much more likely that his role was simply as an agent hired to commission or purchase a set of viols either directly from Europe or in London, where instruments of fine quality could be obtained from established continental makers. At the very least, the fact that Hume is not mentioned after 1536 in Scottish records argues against his being established in any kind of business in Scotland.

### *The Viol in Scotland Before 1535*

A question remains, though, as to how the viol was first introduced to Scotland. Jakkis Collumbell's appearance in records of 1538 suggests that the Stuart court's viol consort most likely originated in northern Europe, with performance practice and musical taste probably influenced by the French royal court.<sup>49</sup> However, the commissioning of a set

46. Lasocki, *The Bassanos*, 214.

47. Peter Holman, "Lupo," *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (<http://www.grovemusic.com>, accessed 31 January 2006).

48. A "Hewme the lute player" was given rewards of 10 shillings in 1551 and 1552 by Sir Thomas Challoner, who was at that time a client of the English viol maker John Rose, but as Hume was a common surname it is difficult to determine whether this is the same person. See Fleming, "Viol-Making in England," 1:2, n. 9.

49. Peppers, "The Viol in Sixteenth-Century Scotland," 8–12.

of viols in 1535 implies that the instrument was known in Scotland before James V's travels to France (1536–1538) and his successive marriages to two different French consorts,<sup>50</sup> as it is assumed that the king would have had to be already familiar with the instrument before ordering a set to be made for use at his court.

Even though the viol is not mentioned in the royal accounts before 1535, it is probable that it had previously been introduced to the Scottish court by traveling continental musicians. One possible opportunity for this would have been a visit by Thomas de Avarenzia of Brescia, a member of the court of Massimiliano Sforza, duke of Milan, which is documented in a letter of 1530 from James V to Massimiliano. The king was so impressed with Avarenzia's knowledge of music that he had him stay for the whole winter, without the duke's express approval.<sup>51</sup> Two factors strongly suggest that Avarenzia's musical skills would have included playing the viol. First, his reported native city of Brescia was an important center for string instrument making in the sixteenth century: surely his musical training would not have ignored the newly developed and increasingly popular viol and violin. Avarenzia's subsequent employment at the court of Milan also implies a familiarity with the viol, which was a regular part of musical life there. Not only were the Sforza family important musical patrons of the late fifteenth century, with an established chapel of singers and much sought-after court performers, but Massimiliano's mother, Beatrice d'Este, along with her sister Isabella, was a great supporter of instrument makers at the turn of the sixteenth century, including Lorenzo Gusnasco of Pavia, a famed maker of string instruments, organs, and clavichords whom she held in high esteem.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, in 1493 Cardinal Ascanio Sforza sent Spanish viols "as large as myself" from Rome to near Milan to celebrate the birth of his nephew Massimiliano.<sup>53</sup>

50. James V spent a great deal of time between 1536 and 1538 in France making arrangements for his marriage to Princess Madeleine, daughter of King Francis I. This took place in 1537, but ill health and the Scottish climate lead to her early death within the year. James pressed the French court for a "replacement," and Mary of Guise was chosen. They were married by proxy in 1538 (with Francis I paying most of her dowry) and Mary travelled to Scotland the same year. *Ibid.*, 19.

51. Denys Hay, ed., *The Letters of James V, 1513–42* (Edinburgh: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1954), 163, 169–70.

52. Mariangela Dona, "Sforza," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2001), 23:186.

53. Bonnie J. Blackburn, "Music and Festivities at the Court of Leo X: A Venetian View," *Early Music History* 11 (1992): 1–38, p. 12.

Two days after writing to Massimiliano Sforza in 1530, James V announced “to all in authority” that he had made Avarenzia his “famulus et stipendarius” [*sic*] (i.e., a house servant or paid attendant), and requested that “every facility be given to him and his six ‘servitors’ to come to Scotland.”<sup>54</sup> Who were these six servitors? Were they musicians? If so, it is certainly possible that some, if not all, were viol players, like the groups of musicians who traveled from Venice and Milan to the court of Henry VIII at around the same time.

Taking into consideration Avarenzia’s connections to Brescia and the Milanese court, it seems very likely that a consort of viols accompanied this courtly visit to Scotland. James V’s strong ties to the continent, and to current cosmopolitan fashions, suggest that in the 1530s it was only a matter of time before a viol consort took up residence in the Stuart court.

### *Conclusion*

History has recorded Richard Hume as an early sixteenth-century viol maker on the basis of a payment record specifically stating that Hume was the person “quhilk suld mak violis to the Kingis grace” (who should make viols to the King’s grace).<sup>55</sup> But it seems quite possible that the scribe responsible for this entry did not record, or did not understand, the details of the transaction correctly. A simple mistake such as naming Hume as the maker instead of the intermediary could easily have been made by someone removed from the transaction, or recording payment after the fact.

The uncertainty of account records, coupled with research into the use of the viol in Scotland in the 1530s, initially prompted the author to question the validity of Hume’s status as a viol maker, in turn leading to the proposal that this attribution may be false. Viewing him instead as merely an agent involved in the purchase of such instruments fits much more soundly with past scholarly research into foreign viol consorts at the courts of Henry VIII and James V during the 1530s. As the years passed, and the viol was increasingly taken up by local players, there would have been an obvious need for makers situated in Britain. An

54. John McQuaid, *Musicians of the Scottish Reformation, with a special reference to crown policy, c. 1560 – c. 1650* (Ph.D. dissertation, Edinburgh University, 1949), 8.

55. Paul, *Accounts*, 6:261.

early example is John Rose, who flourished as a viol maker in 1550s London,<sup>56</sup> filling a need that probably did not exist there two decades previously.

In sum, this hypothesis is an attempt to reconcile a previously-accepted “fact” (stated as probable truth in numerous scholarly publications) with a contradictory understanding of the viol’s place in early sixteenth-century Britain, a time when it still held fast to its foreign connections and associations. The question now to consider is this: if Hume was not the first British maker of viols, then who was, and when?

56. Woodfield, *The Early History of the Viol*, 223.



## APPENDIX

Records of Scottish Court Payments Transcribed in Paul's  
*Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland*, Volumes 5–10

The entries below are arranged chronologically. From the mid-1510s until the second half of the 1530s, when the viol becomes a regular member of the Scottish court instrumentarium, entries referring to a variety of instruments and instrumentalists are included, such as minstrels, fiddle players, lutenists, and shawm players. After the introduction of the viol to the court, this appendix focuses primarily on players of the viol. The time period covered by the following list begins twenty years before the appearance of the viol in Scottish court records in 1535, and stops a little more than two decades after that date, at the point when archival records and modern information on the viol at court become more detailed.

Each entry below reproduces the exact text given in Sir James Balfour Paul's transcription of the *Compota Thesaurariorum Regum Scotorum*, or *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland* (13 vols., Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1882–1914), followed in parentheses by volume and page in the modern publication. When the year is given as a double number, for example 1535–36, this refers to the period between January 1 and Easter of the later year. Monetary amounts are indicated by li. for pound, s. for shilling, and d. for pence, the same symbols used by Paul but without his horizontal lines through or above the letters to signal their status as abbreviations. (Twelve pence equal one shilling, and twenty shillings equal one pound.) Presumably in conformity with the original source, j is used as the last i in a Roman numeral (for instance, iij is three), and ij<sup>c</sup> is used to designate two hundred (the superscript number giving the amount two is referring to: “two hundreds”). In the transcribed records the obsolete letter *yogh* is closest to a “Y” sound and is thus indicated as [Y] whenever it occurs, a practice also followed here.

- 1515      Item, to Bontanis, franche menstrall, in part paiment of his wagis and feis to gud compt by my lord governouris command . . . xxxvj s. (5:44)  
 Item, to Bontanis, franche menstrall, at my lord governouris command, in part paiment of his wagis . . . xl s. (5:44)  
 Item, to him befor this day, the vj day of September within the tyme of this compt, in part of payment of his wagis sic lik . . . xxvij s. (5:44)  
 Item, to the v Italian menstrallis viz Vincent, auld Julian, [y]ounger Julian, Anthone and Bestian Drummonth, and George Forest, scotisman with thame makand vj personis, takand ilk persone monethly for thair expenses thretty fyve schillingis, ansuerand for the saidis personis to ten pundis ten schillingis vj d., makand to thame all ilk quartar twenty six pundis v s., deliverit to thame this day, and at divers tymes befor the samyn in complete paiment of v monethis immediat befor this day, and for thair lames quartar precedand this day, like as the breviat and thair compt beris in thaim, . . . lxxvij li. xv s. (5:53–4)

- 1516 Item, to James Tabbaner, now the King's minstrel in Striveling, at the lordis delivera[n]s, for his gown, dowblat and hois . . . iiij li. xvij s. (5:83)
- 1516–17 Item, to the menstralis of Striveling that followit the King to LithqwVx s. (5:111)
- 1517 Item, to James Grame, the Kingis menestrals . . . xl s. (5:117)  
Item, to the franche talbanaris and menstralis that woik and playit all that nycht, in aile . . . vij s. (5:157)
- 1522–23 Item, to the v Italian Menestrals thair lufferay clais for the space of thre [y]eris, ilk ane of thaim takand ij lufferais in the [y]er, price of ilk lufferay vj li. x s., summa of thair lufferayclais be the dait of this writ and compt extendis in the hail to . . . ij<sup>c</sup> li. vij s. (5:198. This livery is extended in 1525, 1526, 1529, and 1531)
- 1526 Item, for lutt stringis . . . vj s. (5:252)  
(At Pasche [Easter] in Striveling) Item, to ane harper . . . xx s. (5:256)  
(At Pasche [Easter] in Striveling) Item, to Franche Orry, menestrals . . . xiiij s. (5:256)  
Item, to the King to play that samin day . . . xl s. (5:256)  
Item, to Johne Craik, menestrals . . . v li. (5:276)  
[Item,] to William Calbrath to buy ane luyt, at the Kingis command xl s. (5:276)  
[Item,] till Anton, fyddlar, at the Kingis command xx s. (5:276)  
John Cabroch, fiddlar, to buy him ane hors . . . v li. vj s. vij d. (5:276)  
Item, deliverit Urre Schennek, lutair, iiij ellis ane quarter frans russait, price el. xx s., summa iiij li v s. (5:312)
- 1526–27 On New [Y]eir Day, gevin to divers menstralis . . . x li. (5:316)
- 1529 Item, to Johne Cruke, menestrals . . . xiiij s. (5:373)  
Item, to ane Westland harpar at the Kingis command . . . ij s. (5:373)
- 1530 Leveray claithis gevin at the feist of [Y]ule be the Kingis command (to Cabroch, fiddlar, John Kemp, Anthoun, tabronar, five Italian trumpeters and shawmaris). (5:431)
- 1530–31 Item, on New [Y]er Day, to the Italiane menstralis in Striveling . . . vj li. (5:440)
- 1531 Item, the xiiij daye of October, for ane luyt coft to the King togidder with certane stringis, deliverit to William Galbrath . . . l s. (6:18)
- 1533 Item, deliverit to Williame Galbraith to buy lute stryngis to the King . . . xx s. (6:87)  
Item, the xvij day of September, for ane lute with the caise, and ane dosane of stringis coft in Glasqu, and sent with Troilus to the Kingis grace in Inverrera, . . . xl s. (6:87)  
*The gifts of clothing and liveries of 1532 mention not only "five Italian minstrels," but three trumpeters, "Thomas Cawbroch, fiddler," and a French trumpeter, "quhilk cum furth of Ingland to the lieutenant." (6:91–2)*
- 1533–4 Item, to John Symson for x dosane luyt stringis brocht hame to his grace . . . v li. x s. (6:185)  
Item, to Johne Craik, mynstrals, . . . vj li. (6:207)

- 1534 Item, to ane Inglis luter . . . v li. (6:209)  
 Item, to ane boy that past furth of Glasgew to Edinburgh for the Kingis lute, . . . iiij s. (6:216)
- 1535–6 Item, send with Weddail, futeman, to the Kingis grace in Striviling, ane dosane lute stringis and xij hankis of small wyre, price thair of . . . xx s. (6:256)  
 Item, the last day of Januar, for viij dosane of luit stringis to the Kingis grace, deliverit to Maister John Coldoun . . . lvj s. (6:257)  
 Item, the second day of November, in Striveling, for ane sadill to the Inglis lutare . . . xxiiij s. (6:261)  
 Item, the samin day, to Richart Hume, Inglisman, quhilk suld mak violis to the Kingis grace, to by stufe to the samin . . . xx li. (6:261)  
 Item, the xix day of Januar, to Richart Hume, Inglisman, . . . xl li. (6:262)  
 Item, deliverit to Johne Murray to be had to the Kingis grace, iiij skenze luit stringis, price thair of . . . iiij s. (6:277)
- 1536 Item, sent to the Kingis grace with Schir Constantine Ahnnay, ane dosane lute stringis, price . . . vj s. (6:281)
- 1538 Item, gevin to the King of Frauncis trumpettis for thair newar gift, . . . xx cronis. (7:15)  
 Item, to his howboyis for thair newar gift, . . . xxij cronis. (7:15)  
 Item, gevin to the Quene of Navernis howboyis, . . . x cronis. (7:15)  
 Item, gevin to twa menstralis of Monsieur de Guize, . . . xij cronis. (7:15)  
 Item, gevin to twa menstralis of the Quene of Frauncis for thair newar gift, . . . xij cronis. (7:15)  
 Item, gevin to the Quene of Scotlandis tabernar, . . . xij cronis. (7:16)  
 Item, gevin to the Kingis organist, . . . xv cronis. (7:22)  
 Item, gevin to the organist, . . . xx cronis. (7:25)
- 1539 Item, gevin to the officiaris and menstralis the day of the Quenis mariage in Chasteau Dun, . . . xl cronis. (7:56)
- 1538 *Liveries. Paul does not list the liveries of “the foure veolis,” but instead lists the liveries of the “foure trumpettis of weir” and mentions that the viol players have a similar livery. The following is the transcription given for the trumpeters.*  
 Item, deliverit to foure trumpettis of weir the xxj day od December, xij elnis of dymmegrane to be ane part of thair coitis, and foure pair of hois, price of te elne xxiiij s., summa . . . xiiij li. viij s. (7:118)  
 Item, deliverit to thame, ix elnis of Frenche [y]allow to be the uthir part of thair mekill coitis, price of the elne xx s., summa . . . ix li. x s. (7:118)  
 Item, deliverit to thame, vj elnis of [y]allow byrge sating, and vj elnis of reid byrge sating to be thame bowblettis, price of the elne x s., summa . . . vj li. (7:118)  
 Item, deliverit to thame, iiij reid bonettis, price of the pece xvij s., summa . . . ij li. xij s. (7:118)  
 Item, deliverit to thame, viij elnis of [y]allow taffyteis to draw thair hois with, price of the elne ix s., summa . . . ij li. xij s. (7:118)

- 1539 Item, gevin to the five Etalianis for thair twa loverais in the [y]eir, ilk loveray takand vj li, x s, summa . . . lxxv li. (7:199)
- Item, to the four minstralis that playis upoun the veolis for thair [y]eirlie pencion, payit to thame quarterlie at foure termes in the [y]eir, beginning the first terme at the feist of Lammes the [y]eir of God j<sup>m</sup>v<sup>c</sup>xxxviij [y]eris, and includand per tempus compoti five termes, ilk terme xl li., summa . . . liij<sup>c</sup> li. (7:199)
- In the first, the xvj day of December, gevin to Jakkis Collumbell, player upoun the veolis, becaus his loveray is reid, vj elnis dimmegrane to be his cote and hois, and to his uthir thre colleges playeris on the veolis to be thair cotis and hois, ix elnis dimmegrane, and vj elnis half elne [y]allow, price of the elne of dimmegrane xxiiij s., and price of the [y]allow xvij s., summa . . . xxiiij li. xvij s. (7:271)
- Item, deliverit to thame to draw thair hois with, viij elnis [y]allow taffites of twa threid, price of the elne ix s., summa . . . iiij li. xij s. (7:271)
- Item, deliverit to thame to be thame iiij dowblattis, xij elnis reid and [y]allow burge sating, price of the elne ix s., summa . . . vj li. viij s. (7:271)
- Item, deliverit to Jakkis ane reid scarlat bonet, price thairof . . . xx s. (7:271)
- Item, deliverit to the uthir thre that playis upoun the veolis, iij reid bonettis, price of the pece xvij s., summa . . . lj s. (7:271)
- 1540 Item, gevin for ane lute and twa dosane of stringis to Johnne Barbour, . . . lvj s. (7:314)
- Item, to the iiij menstralis that playis upoun the veolis, for thair [y]erelie pension, pait quarterlie, ilk an takand xl li, summa j<sup>c</sup>lx li. (7:334)
- Item, deliverit to Jakkis to be him ane haill cote, v elnis dimmegrane, price of the elne xxiiij s., summa . . . vj li. (7:413)
- Item, for thre elnis birge sating to be him ane dowblate, price thairof . . . xxx s. (7:413)
- Item, for ane raid bonet to him, . . . xvij s. (7:413)
- Item, deliverit to his thre marrowis, playerris upoun the veolis, to be thair cottis and hois, ix elnis dimmegrane, price of the elne xxiiij s., and vj elnis [y]allow, price of the elne xvij s., summa . . . xvj li. iiij s. (7:414)
- Item, for thre raid bonettis to thame, of the pece xv s., summa . . . xlv s. (7:414)
- Item, to the playaris on the veolis and trumpettis, xj li. (7:415)
- 1541 Item, to the four menstralis that playis on the veolis, for thair [y]erelie pensoiun payit quarterlie, takand ilk ane xl li., summa . . . j<sup>c</sup>lx li. (7:478)
- 1541 Liveries for "four players on the viols; Jakkis Collumbell; Cunningham the lutar." (8:46)
- 1541-2 Liveries for "schir John Fechyis children that plays on the viols." (8:54)

- 1542 In the first, gevin to the v Italianis for thair loveray claithis this [y]ere, ilk ane xij li; the four that playis upoun the veolis, for thair feis, ilk ane xl li; the four that playis un the trumpettis, ilk ane xx li., and the twa Toddeis that playis un the taburne, ilk xx li.; summa ij<sup>c</sup>xlvi li. (8:103)  
The expensis debursit upoune the Kingis menstrellis for their feis of [Y]ule and Candilmes termes, and thair loveray claithis. (8:149)  
In the first, deliverit to be x coittis and x pair of hois to the four playeris un the veolis, four trumpettis of ware, and twa taburnerris, xxxij elnis dimmegrane, price of the elne xxvij s., and xvij elnis Frenche [y]allow, price of the elne xx s., summa lxij li. xvj s. (8:149)  
Item, gevin to the foresaidis four playerris un the veolis, for thair pensoinis and fee of the [Y]ule and Candilmes termes, havand ilk ane of thame at the terme x li, summa . . . lxxx li. (8:150)
- 1543 Item, the ix day of December, to the fyve violaris, in part of paiment of thair feys . . . xxij li. (8:240)
- 1544 Item, to the quenis gracis menstrallis in Striveling, xxiiij s.” (8:327)
- 1545 Item, to thre menstralis fydlaris that playit before his gracis oist and armye at Kelso, . . . xxij s. (8:405)
- 1547 Item, to certane menstrallis of the toun, and thair Robert Hude, . . . xliij s. (9:73)  
Item, to playarris upoun the vyolis in Glasgw, . . . v li. x s. (9:127)
- 1548 Item, the second day of Aprile, to Alexander Stewinsoun, lutor, to by him ane lute, . . . vj li. xij s. (9:172)  
Item, to the vyolares that playit to my lorde governour the tyme of Pasche, . . . xliij s. (9:175)  
Item, to the vyolarris the tyme my lorde governour wes in the abbay of Hadingtoun, . . . xlv s. (9:215)
- 1548–9 Item, to the Quennis vllarris, . . . xj li. v s. (9:281)  
Item, to ane fydlar playit at the marriage (of Lady Barbara), x s. (9:281)
- 1550 Item, be his graces precept to foure vyolarris, . . . xxvij li. (9:425)  
Item, to his grace foure violaris for thair Martymes feis last bipast, and to by thame leveray claithis with aganis this nixt [Y]ule, . . . lx li. (9:461)  
Item, to the saidis foure violaris for thair service maid at the last scacker (exchequer), . . . x li. (9:461)
- 1551 Item, to the veolaris, . . . xlvj s. (10:22)  
Item, to my lord governouris foure veolaris for thair Martymes feis last bipast, ilk ane of thame havand termilie vij li., summa . . . xxvij li. (10:31–2)  
Item, be my lor governouris preceptis, to the saidis four violaris to by thame leveray claithis with aganis the nixt [Y]ule, . . . xxx li. (10:31–2)
- 1551–2 Item, be the lordis compositouris speciale command to my lord governouris veolaris, x li. (10:67)
- 1552 Item, x<sup>o</sup> Junii, to the foure veolaris for thair Witsounday feis last bipast, . . . xxvij li. (10:89)

- Item, xv<sup>o</sup> Junii, to William Hoge, veolar, quhay had bene seik, to support him, . . . viij li. (10:89)
- Item, be command of my lordis compositouris to my lord governouris veolaris in consideration of thair expensis at the aire (justice court) of Abirdene, . . . x li. (10:95)
- Item, xiiij<sup>o</sup> Septembris, to the veolaris in consideration of thair expensis in thr northtland at the airis, xij li. xij s. iiij d. (10:107)
- Item, to the veolaris for thair Martymes feis last bypast, xvij li. (10:127)
- Item, to the saidis veolaris, to by thame leveray clathis with aganis this [Y]ule, . . . xxxij li. (10:127)
- 1552–3 Item, be the saidis lordis commande, to my lorde governouris vyolaris, . . . v li. (10:167)
- 1553 Item, the xi<sup>o</sup> day of Julii, to his gracis foure vyolares for thair feyes of the Vitsunday terme last bipast, the soume of . . . xxvij li. (10:188)
- Item, to the vyolares in considderatioun of thir service at the aires of Perth and Cowper, . . . lx li. (10:195)
- 1555 Item, to answer the four vviolars, . . . xx li. (10:275)
- 1558–9 Item, to Jakis Dow, John Feildie, John Dow, Johnne Ra, Morris Dow, Williame Hog, and Alexander Feildie, violaris, for thair dewitie and wags for [Y]ule and Pasche last bypast, ilk ane v li, summa . . . xxxv li. (10:415)