

Manuscript Inscriptions in Early English Printed Music. David Greer.
Music and Material Culture. Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. xx + 206 pp. \$109.95.

It is easy to forget that the history of reading, now an established and familiar aspect of the history of the book, is a comparatively recent and complex subject. Progressing beyond traditional concerns with marginalia and commentaries in printed texts, scholarship has become increasingly concerned with the full repertory of marks left behind in books by their previous owners. The phenomenon itself is extensive; it has been estimated that more than 20 percent of the early printed books in the Huntington Library preserve the annotations of early readers, and for some subjects the proportion is higher. Printed music presents a somewhat different profile. Print runs were small, as are survivals, and many of the extant copies have escaped destruction precisely because they were never used.

David Greer's assemblage of information about those that were used, presented as a catalogue prefaced by introductory chapters, also establishes a workable typology of the marks themselves, beginning with indications of ownership (including bindings) and ending with a compendium of scribbles ranging from solmization rules to crude drawings of male and female figures. For many readers the most significant of these categories will be instances where complete pieces, many known from other sources but others not, have been added on the blank staves left by the printer at the foot of the page. Such insertions not only demonstrate the continued vitality of manuscript transmission in the age of print, but also delineate the adaptations made to texts to meet local performance conditions.

A considerable advance in our knowledge of individual collections is made in Greer's second chapter. Some of these are documented in the literature, but others, including the mysterious anonymous collector, marked his books (some thirty-one editions are identified here) with a Greek sigma. Another largely unknown collector to emerge from Greer's pages is Conyers D'Arcy. Educated at Cambridge and then admitted to the Inner Temple, he seems to have spent the remainder of his life as a local worthy operating from the family seat in the North Riding of Yorkshire. While this *cursus honorum* is typical of the provincial landed gentry, so too is his choice of recreational music, identified by Greer on the evidence of D'Arcy's distinctive signature and now scattered throughout libraries in Britain and the United States. That said, on the evidence of these survivals, the absence of books printed in Antwerp or Venice, which by the early seventeenth century were being imported in large numbers, is noticeable, as is the apparent lack of interest in the music of Byrd and Dowland, the two most distinguished English composers of the day. Interestingly, D'Arcy's books of music were clearly used; a number of them contain additional pieces, some of which are not known from any other source. For the rest, D'Arcy's purchases were conventional: plenty of Morley (three books); madrigal books by Weelkes, Pilkington, Bateson, Bennet, and Farmer; and the two popular anthologies of Italian madrigals "englished" by Thomas Watson and Nicholas Yonge.

To Greer's reconstruction a few more titles can be added, namely incomplete sets of partbooks of Michael East's first, second, third, fourth, and sixth "sets of books" published in London in 1604–24. These have survived in the William Salt Library, formed in the nineteenth century by a London banker whose family came from the county. Provincial libraries of this kind have survived throughout Britain, and armed with Greer's excellent compilation, latter-day hunters of early printed music can extend the inquiry that he has so carefully inaugurated with systematic forays into county record offices, country house libraries, and similar archives. As for Salt, his acquisition of D'Arcy's copies of East's madrigals is not indicative of an antiquarian interest in "antient musick," but rather an exercise in local piety, since East also came from Staffordshire. If that is a neat reminder that the motives for collecting music are many and varied, and are not always related to performance, confirmation of practical use is provided elsewhere by precisely the sorts of corrections and additions to the musical

text that David Greer has so invaluabley charted in what is bound to become a standard reference work.

Iain Fenlon, *King's College, University of Cambridge*