Matthew Holmes was responsible for compiling the largest body of surviving English lute, bandora and cittern music, together with music for 'consort-of-six'. His interest in consort music seems to have begun around 1588 when he became precentor and a singing man at Christ Church, Oxford, and associated with another singing man, Richard Reade, whose interest in the form led him to compose numerous pieces. (Lyle Nordstrom, *Journal of the Lute Society of America*, 1972)

The expression ‘consort-of-six’ as used here refers to that special grouping of instruments (treble viol or violin, flute or recorder, bass viol, lute, cittern and bandora) which was a favourite of Queen Elizabeth I and is represented by four major sources: printed publications by Thomas Morley (The First Booke of Consort Lessons, 1599 & 1611) and Philip Rosseter (Lessons for Consort, 1609) and manuscript collections: The Walsingham Consorts c.1588 and The Matthew Holmes Consorts c.1588 – ?1597 (often known as 'The Cambridge Consort Books').

The term ‘Consort’ originally denoted any music whereby different families of instruments come together in a group, but in the 20th century a non-historical distinction was made between ‘whole’ consorts of like instruments and ‘broken’ consorts of different families.

Holmes’ consort music was written out in the following manuscripts which are in the possession of Cambridge University Library:

Dd.3.18 Mainly lute duet trebles and consort lute parts.
Dd.14.24 Cittern solos and consort parts.
Dd.5.20 Bass consort parts and an inserted section of lyra viol tablature and music for division viol, including a number of divisions on consort lesson bass parts, including ‘James’s Galliard’ and Dowland’s ‘Lachrimae’
Dd.5.21 Mainly recorder consort parts but with two pages of parts for ‘treble violan’. (the smallest size of violin used at the time), mistakenly copied by Holmes into his recorder book.

The main ‘treble violan’ book and the bandora book, which we can assume would have originally existed, are not extant.

The Matthew Holmes consort books are, nevertheless, one of the richest sources of Elizabethan consort music, particularly by virtue of having the largest number of fine lute parts to accompany consorts in this and other collections, such as Thomas Morley's *The First Booke of Consort Lessons* (1599 & 1611) for which the lute book is missing. The set is also interesting in that treble violan (treble violin) and recorder are specified rather than the more usual treble viol and flute.

For a fuller introduction and list of sources for the individual pieces, see the introduction in the Score.

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1. The French kings maske
2. Alfonsoes paven

? Augustine Bassano or Alfonso Ferrabosco II

3. La Bergera galliarde

4. Nightingale
5. Complainte or Fortune  (Fortune my foe)

6. Primiero
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\[ \text{Music notation image} \]
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Richard Reade

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John Dowland

20. Nutmigs and ginger
Variations from the source

The Bass Viol part

The list below shows notes as appear in the source and which were considered to require alteration. Black notation, occasionally used in the source, is not commented on below. Original clefs are all F4

1. The French kings maske  no change
2. Alfonsoes paven  no change
3. La Bergera galliarde  bars 9 and 10 are written all a third higher. Bar 25 1st crotchet not sharpened.
4. Nightingale  bar 8 minim rest missing 3 and 4 c quaver not sharpened. Bar 10 4th crotchet g a tone lower.
5. Complainte or Fortune  no change
6. Primiero  No sharp in key signature but accidentals are correctly notated.
7. Duncombs galliarde  bar 5 crotched d was c a tone lower
8. Tarletons jigg  no change
9. Long paven  bar 7 2nd minim e flat
10. Dowlands round Battell galliarde  no change
11. Katherine Darcies galliarde  Titled *Dowl. R.H. galliarde* in source. Bars 7 and 15 1st minim b natural. Bar 18 minim g then crotchet c then crotchet b then minim g. Bars 22 and 30 dotted minim and minim c appear to have been changed from the correct notes. Bar 32 last dotted minim missing.
12. The Jewes Daunce  IG modified bergamasca bass.
13. De la Tromba paven  bar 40 last note is a breve.
14. James Galliarde  no change
15. The Sprytes songe  no change
16. Reades first paven  no change
17. Reades second paven  no change
18. Reades galliarde  no change
19. Dowlands first galliarde  Bars 34 and 35: b crotchets not naturalised.
20. Nutmigs and ginger  no change