Various Authors

Canto Llano

The Manuscript Sources for Vihuela/Viola da Mano

36 Pieces by Antonio, F. Cardone, F. Dentice, Lopez, Mendoza, F. Paez and Anonymous

Edited by Stephan Olbertz

Lute & Guitar Editions
stephan olbertz

LGE 102

Preface

"Can we ever have too much of a good thing?"

Miguel de Cervantes, *The History of the Renowned Don Quixote de la Mancha*

The surviving music for the Spanish *vihuela de mano* and its Italian variant *viola da mano* is commonly played from the well-known seven vihuela books printed in 16th century Spain.[1] However, a certain corpus of related manuscript pieces from the late 15th to the early 17th century exists and deserves to be studied and played more frequently. This edition comprises for the first time all unique pieces from seven Italian and Spanish manuscripts with a clear connection to these instruments, and an excerpt from a large Neapolitan source containing both lute and vihuela/viola music.[2] A varying amount of (well-documented) editing and reconstruction work was needed to get the music into a form that reveals its beauty again. I hope that many pieces will find their way into the repertoire of today's players now more easily. Enjoy!

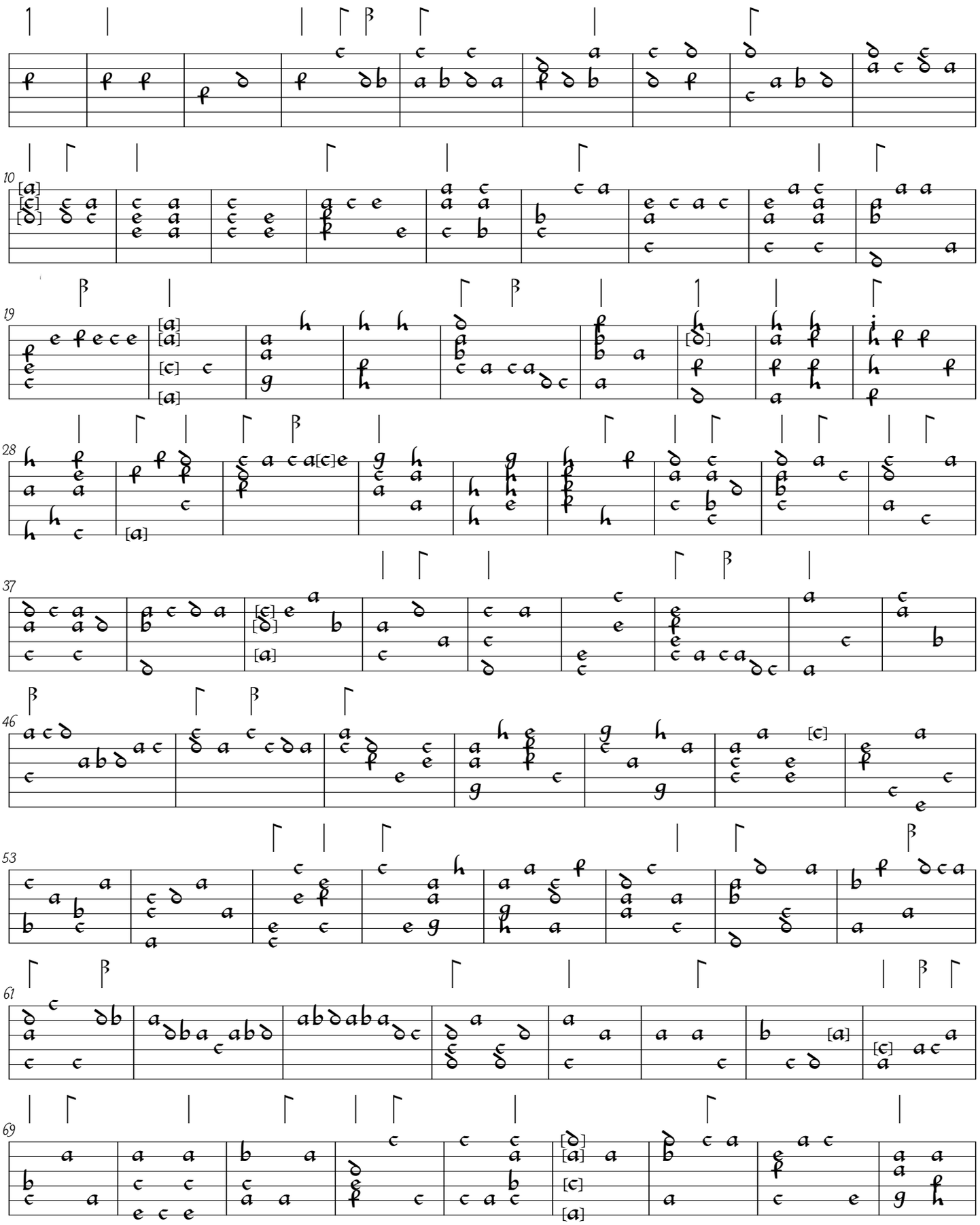
Stephan Olbertz
Wuppertal, June 2015

[1] For an overview on the history of both instruments in Spain and Aragonese influenced Italy see John Griffith, "At Court and at Home with the Vihuela de mano: Current Perspectives of the Instrument, its Music and its World", in: *Journal of the Lute Society of America* 22 (1989), p. 1–28, and Hiroyuki Minamino, "The Spanish plucked viola in Renaissance Italy, 1480-1530", in: *Early Music* 32, no. 2 (2004), p. 177–192.

[2] Not edited here are the pieces copied from Miguel de Fuenllana's 1554 print *Orphenica Lyra* (Seville, 1554) onto the empty pages of the books by Alonso Mudarra (*TRES LIBROS DE MVSICA*, Sevilla, 1546) and Enríquez de Valderrábano (*SILVA DE sirenas,* Valladolid, 1547) in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid.

13. Fantasia

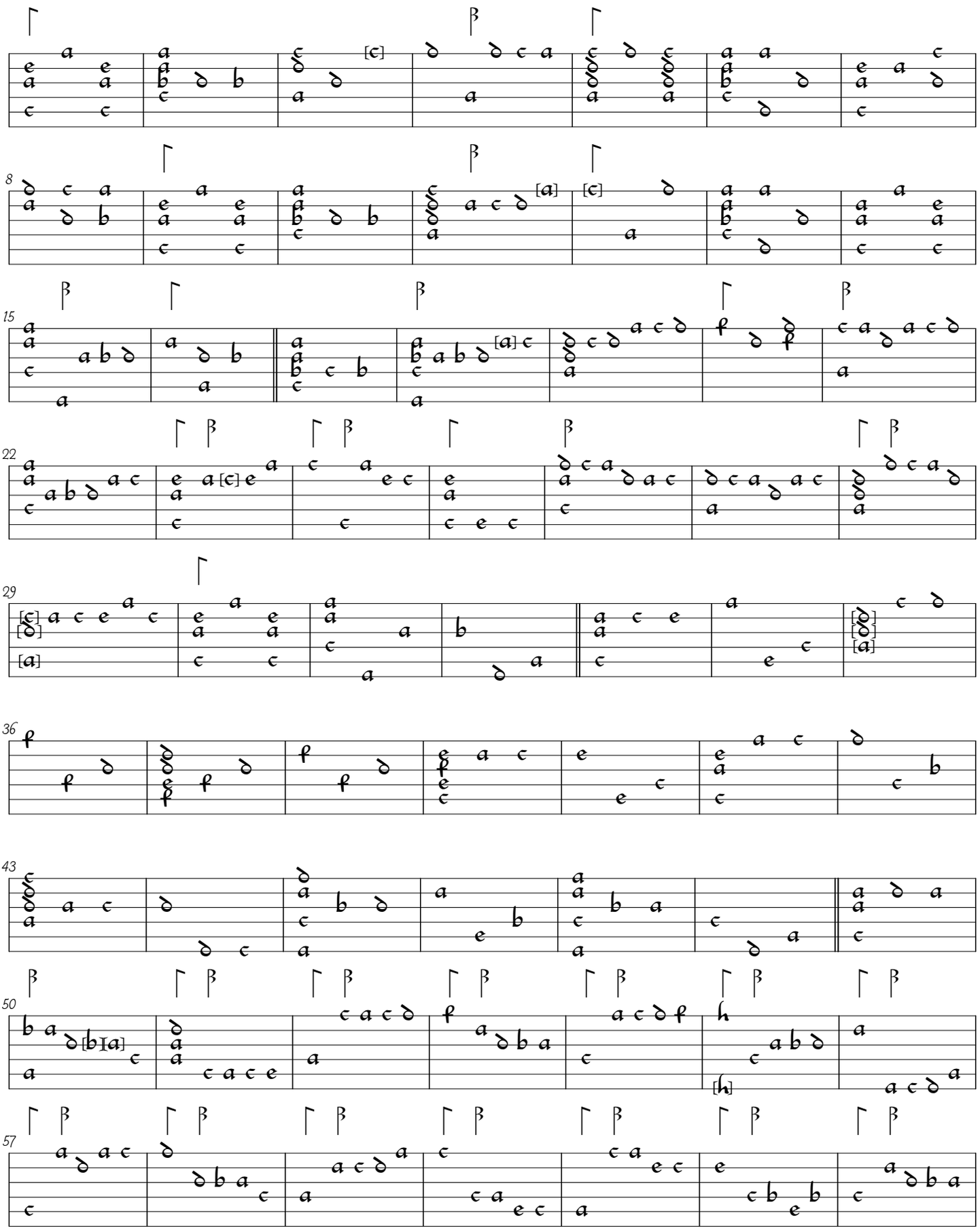
Fabrizio Dentice
Ms Ramillete de Flores



© 2015 by Lute & Guitar Editions Stephan Olbertz, Wuppertal
lute-and-guitar.com

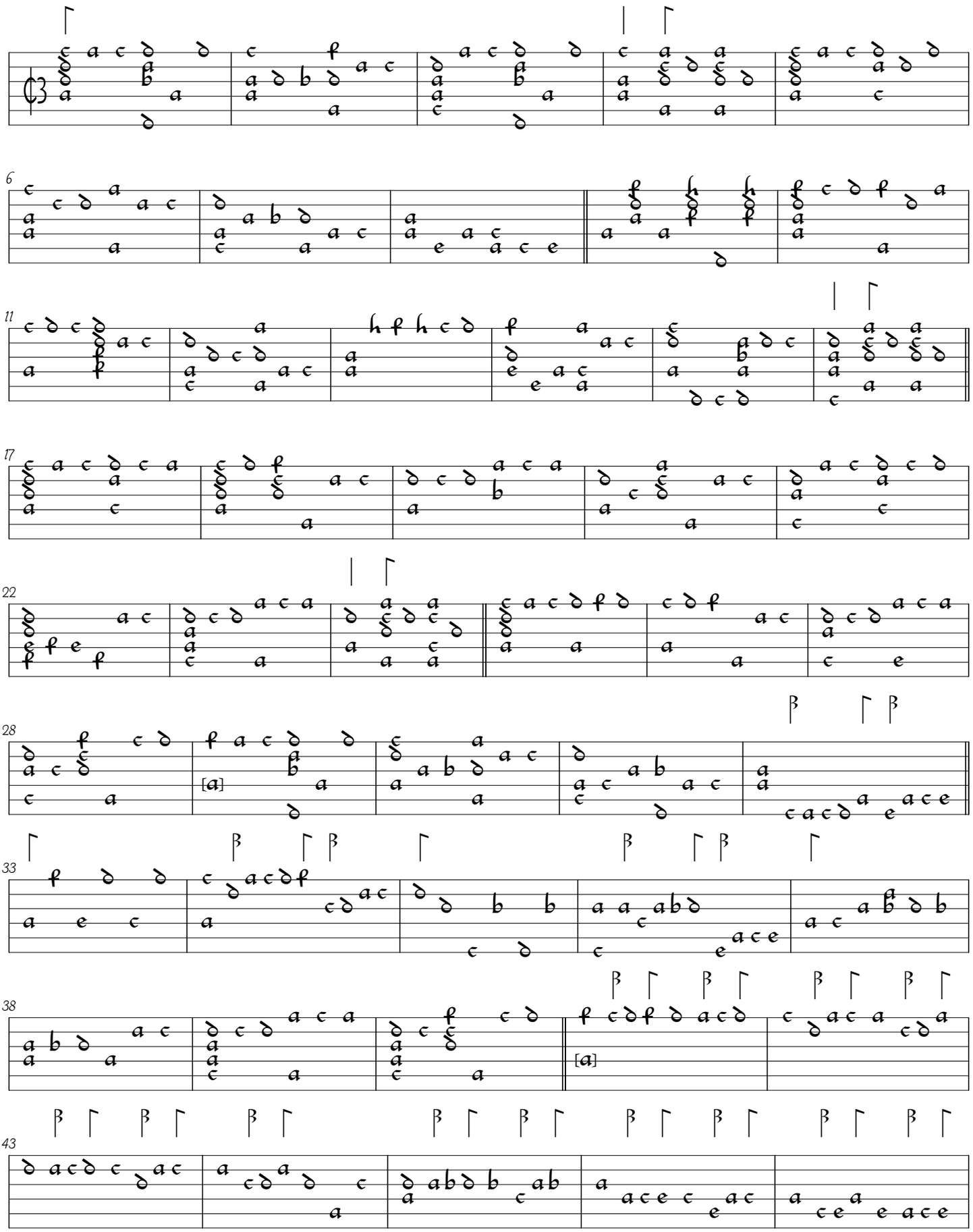
20. Diferencias de Folías

Mendoza
Ms Ramillete de Flores



34. Diferencias de la çarabanda

Vienna Ms



© 2015 by Lute & Guitar Editions Stephan Olbertz, Wuppertal
lute-and-guitar.com

Critical Commentary

This edition has been transcribed from the original sources in so-called Italian, Neapolitan and Spanish/Valencinian tablature into French tablature, which will be welcomed not only by amateur players, but also by many professionals who prefer to perform from this tablature style. The comments below also use the French tablature system of the edition, not the system of the respective manuscripts. The common rhythmic notation of Spanish sources with mensural notation above the stave has been changed into rhythm symbols. A *semiminima* (modern crotchet or quarter note) for example has been transcribed into a single flag rhythm sign. However, single flag rhythm signs in later sources like the so-called Barbarino manuscript would often be transcribed as a minim (half note). To avoid confusion in the comments, the rhythm signs ("rs") are called after their flags "inverted flag", "no flag", "one flag", etc. and have been abbreviated as follows:

ifl nfl 1fl 2fl 3fl 4fl

The music references are given in the order measure/beat. The titles have their original reading below, they can slightly differ in the performing edition. The original order of pieces in the manuscripts has been changed sometimes; it can be seen from the folio numbers given after the original titles.

Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS 596.HH.2[4]

The dating of this manuscript is unsure, because it was evidently taken from the binding of a mathematics-print from 1560, but shows a typical repertoire of the late 15th century.[3] It may well have been used to bind the book because the music was outdated and/or unusable to the owner. The source therefore contains probably one of, if not the earliest surviving tablature for vihuela/viola da mano, notated in Neapolitan tablature: a chart of the notes and fingering of mainly the first position of a seven-course instrument in A (titled *La mano a la viola*), a loosely measured prelude-like solo piece without rhythm signs (edited below), and a song-intabulation with tablature and mensural notation.[4]

1. (no title), f. 3r

The only solo piece of the source uses six courses but could be intended for seven, since the music has at one point a suspicious leap in the bass and is partly notated on a seven-line stave like the opening chart.

whole piece	All rs are editorial. The barlines have been edited to fit modern use.
1/9	The bass note a4 could have been d7 originally.

London, British Library, C.48.h.1

Manuscript fragment in: Lucius Marineus Siculus, *Epistolarum familiarum* (Valladolid 1514), on the flyleaf

This sketchy fragment was bound as an already unused piece of paper with the book as a flyleaf, or has been carelessly entered at a later point in time. It is basically written in what is usually called "Spanish" or "Valencian" tablature,[5] which could also be seen as a bottom-up variant of the Italian system, or, perhaps more fittingly, a Neapolitan tablature including the zero.

---

[3] See David Fallows, "15th-century tablatures for plucked instruments: a summary, a revision and a suggestion", in: *The Lute Society Journal* 19 (1977), p. 7–33, here p. 18 ff..

[4] Johanes Vincenet's rondeau „Fortune par ta cruaulté". Contained is also a keyboard tablature with a villancico by Juan de León, „Ay, que non sé remediarme".

[5] According to Antonio Corona-Alcalde, "The earliest vihuela tablature: a recent discovery," in: *Early Music* 1992, p. 594–600, this