

Francesco Corbetta - The Best of All

A study of his life and works



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Introduction

In the introduction to his 'Instruccion de musica', printed in 1674, Gaspar Sanz refers to Francisco Corbetta as *el mejor de todo* – [the best of all] - and clearly his contemporaries regarded him as such. Although his music is perhaps less popular today than that of Sanz himself or Santiago de Murcia, he is undoubtedly the most significant and prolific composer for the five-course baroque guitar of the seventeenth century.

Five printed books of his music survive today -

De gli scherzi armonici. - Bologna: Giacomo Monti & Carlo Zennero, 1639.

Varii capricii per la ghittara spagnuola. - Milan: No imprint, 1643.

Varii scherzi di sonate. - Brussels: No imprint, 1648.

La guitarre royalle. - Paris: Hierosme Bonneüil, 1671.

La guitarre royalle. - Paris: Hierosme Bonneüil, 1674.

At least three, possibly four other books may have appeared in print but are now lost.

1643-48	Published in Italy or Spain
165?	Book in Italian tablature. Dedicated to the Duke of Brunswick-Lüneberg. This includes some pieces by Granata which Corbetta pirated in order to get his own back on Granata who had earlier included some of Corbetta's pieces in one of his books.
165?	Book of tablature published in Paris and possibly dedicated to the King Louis XIV. The plates were stolen and reprinted with some other pieces. This pirated edition was dedicated <i>a un Prince estranger</i> [to a foreign prince].
167?	Easie lessons on the guittar for young practitioners; single and some of two parts. By Seignior Francisco. Printed for Jo. Carr in the Middle Temple lane. Price 3s 3d. ¹ This is listed in the 'Term Catalogue for the Michaelmas Term', 1677.

An almost unquantifiable amount of music is also attributed to him in contemporary and later manuscript sources.

The only full length study of Corbetta is Richard Pinnell's doctoral dissertation 'The role of Francesco Corbetta (1615-1681) in the history of music for the baroque guitar' completed in 1976 and subsequently published by UMI Research Press ca. 1980 with the title 'Francesco Corbetta and the baroque guitar with a transcription of his works'. This covers a lot ground in a general way but is now very out of date.

¹ Arber (1903) Vol. 1, p.291.

This study is an attempt to give a more focused account of Corbetta's life and work. It is in four sections. Section I is an account of his life and a study of his printed books with English translations of their introduction; Section II is a study of the alternative sources of his music; Section III is a study of his musical style in particular his use of dissonance; and Section IV is a thematic index to pieces attributed to him in manuscript sources.

A note on the transcription of the musical examples

The method of stringing which Corbetta refers to in 'La guitarre royalle' (1671) and which he may well have used throughout his career had a low octave string on the fourth course and a re-entrant fifth course.

Example 0.1 Corbetta's tuning



As a general rule musical examples are therefore transcribed with notes on the fifth course shown only in the upper octave. As far as possible these notes are shown with lozenge-shaped heads but it is not always practical to do this with the software being used. There are some circumstances where it is more convenient to show notes on the fifth course in the lower octave, particularly in tables of five-part chords; this is not intended to imply that this is how they would sound.

Notes on the fourth course may be transcribed in the upper or lower octave, occasionally in both, depending on the context. When transcribed in the upper octave they will, wherever practical, have a lozenge-shaped head and be highlighted in blue.

I have tried to include ornaments where practical especially if this has some bearing on what the examples are supposed to illustrate.

The original tablature is always included so that the reader can see how the music lies on the fingerboard.

Chapter 1

Life

Early years

Unlike most composers of music for the five-course guitar, Corbetta's life story is quite well documented. He was born in Pavia in about 1615. The legend in the border surrounding the engraved portrait of him on page 3 of his second collection of guitar music, 'Varii capricii per la ghittara spagnuola' printed in 1643, reads:

FRANCESCO CORBETTA PAVESE
ACADEM.CO TRA GL'ERRANTI DI BRESCIA IL CAPRICCIOSO
Di Etta d'Anni 28.
*[Academician amongst the Wanderers of Brescia
known as 'Il Capriccioso' - at the age of 28.]*

His name also appears as *Francesco Corbetta Pavese* on the title pages of his 1639 and 1648 books and his obituary states that he was born in Pavia.¹ Pavia lies some twenty miles south of Milan and would have been under Spanish rule at the time when Corbetta was born. Sanseverino and Colonna both published their guitar books in Milan in the 1620s and Sfondrino also published a guitar book there in 1637. The music in these three books is in *alfabeto* and intended to be strummed.

According to his obituary Corbetta was so attached to the guitar that his parents, who had intended him for a different profession, were unable to dissuade him from studying it. From what Corbetta himself says in the Italian preface to 'La guitarre royalle' (1671), it seems that he played only the guitar and may have been largely self taught.

It is so obvious that the world already knows it, that I have never played this instrument [i.e. the lute], of which I do not know a single chord, and that my passion has always been for the guitar, which I play for my own pleasure. I have always had a natural talent and have never needed any help to perfect my technique.²

Unlike many of his contemporaries who published music for guitar although they were employed professionally as theorbo players, it seems that Corbetta never held a formal musical appointment.

Corbetta's first two collections of guitar music were printed in Italy, 'De gli scherzi armonici' in Bologna in 1639 and 'Varii capricii per la ghittara spagnuola' in Milan in 1643. He taught the guitar for a while in Bologna where Giovanni Battista Granata was one of his students. He mentions Granata by name in the Italian preface to 'La guitarre royalle' (1671) and accuses him of plagiarism. 'De gli scherzi armonici' was printed by the well-known printers of tablature, Giacomo Monti and Carlo Zenero. In 1646 Giacomo Monte printed another guitar book – 'Intavolatura di chitarra, e chitarriglia' - which is usually attributed today to Carlo Calvi, the writer of the dedication at the beginning of the book. This includes part of the preface from Corbetta's 1639 book and abbreviated versions of thirty-four of his pieces in *alfabeto*. The

¹ Mercure (1681).

² La guitarre royalle (1671) p.4. ...gia il mondo sa che non ho'mai praticato tal instrumento doue non ne so pur un accordo, che per piacer a me stesso la Chitarra sola n'e statta sempre il mio genio non hauendo mai hautto bisogno d'agiuto per perfetionarla;

fact that it is not an original book is acknowledged on the title page which states that the music has been taken from *duo eccellenti professori* – one of whom is Corbetta.

‘De gli scherzi armonici’ is dedicated to Count Odoardo Pepoli (1612-80). The Pepoli family came to prominence in Bologna in the fourteenth century. In the fifteenth century they allied themselves with the ruling family in the town, the Bentivoglio, and held positions of trust in their administration. Count Odoardo Pepoli was granted the title of senator in 1653. Two pieces in ‘De gli scherzi armonici’, the *Corrente detta l’Odoarda* (page 60) and *Sarabanda detta la Pepoli* (page 61) are dedicated specifically to him, spelling out his name in *alfabeto*. A third piece, a *corrente* (page 62) is dedicated to Count Odoardo’s brother, Oguzone or Ugucione Pepoli (d. 1670). Most the other pieces from page 60 onwards have individual dedications. Amongst these, on page 74, is a piece with the title *La mia donna importuna* dedicated *Al Molt’Illust. Sig. il. Sig. Gioseffo Corbetta*. This may be a relative of the composer.

Mantua

Corbetta’s second guitar book, ‘Varii capricii per la ghittara spagnuola’ has no imprint but the dedication to Carlo II, Duke of Mantua and Monferrato is dated Milan, 30th October, 1643, the occasion of the Duke’s fourteenth birthday. The extinction of the male line of the senior branch of the Gonzaga family, descendants of Vincenzo I, lead to war (1626-31) between France, which supported the claim of Carlo, Duke of Nevers (1580-1637), the grandson of Federico I, Duke of Mantua, and Spain, who supported Cesare Gonzaga, Duke of Guastalla, grandson of Federico’s brother. The peace of Cherasco (1631) granted the Duchy to Carlo. On his death in 1637 the Duchy passed to his grandson Carlo II (30 October 1629 – 14 August 1665) who ruled from 1637- 1665.³

Slightly earlier on 31st May 1643 Corbetta had been admitted as a member of the Accademia degli Erranti in Brescia. Brescia lies some thirty miles north-east of Milan and had been ruled by the Republic of Venice since 1421. The Accademia was founded in 1620 by the fathers Lattanzio and Silvio Stella, both religious of the Cassinese Order. It was inaugurated in 1626 at the monastery of the Padri Cassinensi and Biagio Marini was appointed its music director.⁴ Members of this particular *accademia* had to be conversant not only with music, painting and dance but also fencing and riding. On the right-hand side of the engraved portrait of Corbetta on page 3 is a coat of arms depicting the moon shining upon a well surrounded by the motto

SEMBRA CAPRICIO MA NE TRAGO IL VERO
It may seem capricious but it gets to the heart of the matter
[literally “bears the truth”].

Corbetta was attached to the court in Mantua over a number of years but he seems to have enjoyed frequent leaves of absence in order to pursue a career as a freelance musician, touring the courts of Europe. On December 10th 1644 he was granted an *attestazione* to travel freely in Italy and abroad by Duke Carlo II’s mother, Maria Gonzaga (1609-60) who served as regent from 1637-47.

Francesco Corbetta Pavese has become so worthy of our gratitude by his virtue, and good character, that we think it reasonable to give him some sign of our great good will and approval, signed and sealed by us, with the endorsement of those present; we therefore hope and request that the above

³ Kamen (2000) p.131-2. Entry for Gonzaga. Sometimes known as Carlo III as his father, Carlo II, died before 1637.

⁴ I-BRas, Archivo antico municipale, Accademi Erranti, b.142, mazzo 13, f. 18v. [Fontijn (2006) p.22, n.34].

named Corbetta, currently in the service of the Duke, our son, will be recognized, esteemed, and accepted by everyone with all the honors, graces, and prerogatives which are enjoyed by the other servants of our court, and of the Duke our son. We also attest, that it will be necessary for the same (Corbetta) to travel throughout Italy, and beyond.⁵

Although there are references to his trips abroad in several sources it is not possible to date these with any certainty as he seems to have travelled back and forth from Italy on a regular basis between 1644-1654. According to his obituary

“... first he astonished all the musicians of Italy. Next, he went to Spain where he was heard at the Court playing such things as before him had been believed impossible on the guitar.⁶

At the time the idea of using the guitar for anything other than strummed music may have been a novelty in Spain. As far as we know the only guitar book printed there in the first half of the seventeenth century was Amat's 'Guitarra española' which explains how to play the twelve major and minor common chords and how to use them to accompany vocal music. The Spanish king, Philip IV (1605-65) who acceded to the throne in 1621 was also Duke of Milan which may account for Corbetta's visit. He himself mentions visiting Spain in the Italian preface to 'La guitarre royalle' (1671) when giving an account of his grievance against Granata.

I must speak of someone else in Italy, in Bologna, a certain guitar player named Granata, who, besides stealing my sonatas, also took ideas from my printed books and published them under his name, as I saw in one of his books in Venice, on my return from Spain.⁷

The book which he refers to is probably Granata's 'Capricci armonici sopra la chittarriglia spagnuola' printed by Giacomo Monti in Bologna in 1646. If this were the case, Corbetta's trip to Spain probably took place between 1645–1647. Corbetta seems to have been a regular visitor to Venice. The obituary goes on to say that

From there [Spain] he passed to the Emperor and all the Courts of Germany where he was made welcome by the greatest Princes. Having returned to Italy to defend the glory that certain envious people wished to tarnish, by claiming his work as their own, (another possible reference to his dispute with Granata) he attached himself to the Duke of Mantua who was pleased indeed to have such a man to present to his Majesty (Louis XIV of France).⁸

⁵ I-Mas, Libro dei Mandati 52 (1644, gennaio-1650, dicembre). [Fontijn (2006) p.22, n.33].

Attestatione per il Corbetta, dicembre 10, 1644: S'e reso così degno della gratia nostra Francesco Corbetta Pavese per la sua virtù, e buoni condizioni, che habbiamo creduto ragionevole dargli qualche segno dell'ottima volontà, e dispositione nostra, e però in virtù delli presenti, che saranno da noi fermate, et col nostro sigillo corroborate dichiariamo il sodetto Corbetta attual servitore del Duca nostro figlio, e vogliamo, che da ciascheduno sia riconosciuto, stimato, et ammesso per tale con tutti gli honori, gratie, e prerogative, che godono gli altri attuali servitori della nostra corte, et del duca nostro figlio. Attestando in oltre, che occorrendo al medemo trasferirsi in qualsivoglia luogo, così nell'Italia, come fuori.

⁶ Mercure (1681). ...il surprit d'abord tous les Musiciens d'Italie. En suite il alla en Espagne, où il fit entendre à la Cour, des choses que l'on avoit crû auparavant impossibles sur la Guitarre.

⁷ La guitarre royalle (1671) p.4. Diro dun altro in Italia à bologna qual è un certo Granatta sonator di Chitarra del qualle oltre l'hauer rubato sonate, ne hà distacato anche inuentioni da miei libri stampati, et messe su suoi, come io vidi in un suo à Venetia al mio ritorno di Spagna.

⁸ Mercure (1681). De là il passa chez l'Empereur, & par toutes les Cours d'Allemagne, où il fue chéry des plus grands Princes. Après estre retourné en Italie, pour soutenir sa gloire que des Envieux vouloient obscurcir, en s'attribuant injustement ses Ouvrages, il se donna au Duc de Mantoüe, qui fut bien aise d'avoir un tel Homme à présenter à sa Majesté.

Corbetta's travels in northern Europe took place in the aftermath to the long running conflict known as the Thirty Years War which was fought primarily in central Europe between 1618 and 1648, although the whole of Europe was involved in one way or another at different times. It was precipitated by the election of the new Holy Roman Emperor, Ferdinand II, a devout catholic, who tried to impose religious uniformity throughout his domains. The northern protestant states, which had been granted a measure of religious freedom in the Peace of Augsburg (1555), formed the Protestant Union to protect their rights. In 1619 the kingdom of Bohemia, which was an elected monarchy, chose the Calvinist, Frederick V, Elector of the Rhenish Palatinate, as their new king and he and his wife, Elizabeth, daughter of the English king James I, took up residence in Prague. Their reign was however short lived, no more than a few months, during the winter of 1619–1620, which earned them the sobriquet of the Winter King and Queen. After defeat by forces of the empire at the battle of the White Mountain, they were forced to flee and were offered assylum in the Dutch Republic. Frederick was stripped of his title and territories as Elector Palatine; these were eventually restored to his eldest surviving son, Karl Ludwig, in 1648. Their numerous children, their spouses and offspring crop up regularly in Corbetta's biography. Indeed, most of Corbetta's royal patrons were related to one another in one way or another which explains why he travelled so widely.

In January 1648 Corbetta was in Brussels, where he dedicated his third surviving book, 'Varii scherzi di sonate' to the Archduke Leopold Wilhelm of Austria, son of Emperor Ferdinand II and Mariana of Bavaria. In 1646 Philip IV had nominated the Archduke governor of the Spanish Netherlands, a position which he held until 1656. As the book is described as "*Libro quarto*" on title page. Corbetta must have had another book printed between 1643-1648 but no copies of such a book have come to light to date. Corbetta continued to visit the Court in Brussels at least until the end of 1652. The record of the expenses of the Archduke between May 1647 and December 1652 includes an entry dated 18th December 1652 of a payment to "Juan" Francesco Corbetta of a gratuity of 240 florins "for having played some times in my apartment". The original entry is in Spanish.

Corbetta 240 fl. Juan [sic] Franc [es] co Corbetta, Guitarist Ayuda de Costa. Leopoldo Guillermo & Julian de Ilano Velasco my Treasurer and Maestro de la Camara.

I order and command you that from any monies in your charge you give and pay to Juan Fran[ces]co Corbetta, Guitarist, a hundred patacones, each one of forty eight placas, sealed by the Ayuda de Costa, for having played some times in my private chamber. And you will take your Letter of Payment which, being signed by the Marques de Ayseaux, my Majordomo, and confirmed by secretary Pedro Martinez de Paz, my Comptroller and Greffier will be passed in accounts without any other surety.

Dated in Brussels 18th December, 1652. Leopold William at the command of S.A. Juan de Annarola Onate. By my right Pedro Martinez de Paz.⁹

Leopold Wilhelm served as a general in the Franco-Spanish Wars (1635-1659), a continuation of the Thirty Years War. In August 1648, after the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia, the forces of the Spanish-Netherlands under his command were defeated at the battle of Lens. Later in the war, he was involved

⁹ Brussels - Archives Générales du Royaume – Manuscrits divers – Dépenses de l'archiduc Guillaume, no. 1374, p. 232v. [Thieffry (2002) p. 165]

Corbetta 240 fl. Juan [sic] Franc[es]co Corbetta Musico de Guitarra Ayuda de Costa.

Leopoldo Guillermo & Julian de Ilano Velasco mi Thesorero y M[aest]ro de la Camara. Yo os ordeno y mando que de qualesquier dineros de V[ost]ro Cargo deys y pagueys a Juan fran[ces]co Corbetta Musico de Guitarra cien patacones de a quarenta y ocho placas cada Uno que seledan de Ayuda de Costa por haverla tocado algunas Vezes en mi Camara. Y tomareis su Carta de pago que con ella y esta siendo señalada por el Marques de Ayseaux mi Mayordomo, y tomado la razon por el secretario Pedro Martinez de Paz mi Contralor y Greffier se passaran en cuenta sin otro Recaudo alguno. Datt. en Brusselas a diez y ocho de Deziembre de mil seyscientos y cinquenta y dos años. Leopoldo Guillermo Por mandado de S.A. Juan de Annarola Onate Tomo la Razon Pedro Martinez de Paz.

in military action outside of the Netherlands, in the course of which several northern French forts were seized in February–March 1652. It seems that during this conflict, Leopold contracted malaria and the physician attending him recommended music as part of his treatment. The composer and keyboard player, Froberger, was also employed for the same purpose. However, there is no evidence that he and Corbetta performed together

Corbetta also seems to have been in Vienna sometime between November 13th 1648 and the end of July 1649. An entry in the Court Payments for that period reads

Johann (sic) Francisco Corbetta, Musician, for playing the guitar to both Royal Persons, was presented with a reward of 60 fl.¹⁰

The “Royal Persons” in question were presumably the Emperor, Ferdinand III and his second wife, Archduchess Maria Leopoldine whom he had married on 2nd July 1648. The references to Corbetta as Juan or Johann in these two sources are unusual; no other sources suggest he had more than one Christian name.

Corbetta did not find working for the Duke of Mantua congenial. Eventually, in a letter dated from Venice, 12th March 1652, he asked to be relieved of his post because he was so poorly paid.

Captain Luca, on the order of Your Serene Highness, has written to ask me to return to your service and I offer humble thanks to Your Most Serene Highness for the honour. But because of my previous meagre earnings it has been necessary for me to attach myself to the Prince of Lüneberg, from whom I have received many favours, both here and in Paris. I beg your Highness therefore to excuse me for I have tried many times to work for Your Most Serene Highness with little success.¹¹

In another letter addressed to his former patron, Odoardo Pepoli in Bologna dated 28th May 1652, Corbetta also complains about the way in which he was treated in Mantua and thanks Pepoli for his continued support.¹²

The Prince of Lüneberg referred to is presumably Georg Wilhelm, Duke of Zell (1624-1705), the second of four brothers¹³ who, following a family dispute, divided the rulership of the Duchy of Brunswick and Lüneberg between them. The third brother, Johann Friedrich, also known as the Duke of Brunswick Lüneberg, married Bénédicte Henriette, a daughter of Duke Carlo’s sister, Anna de Gonzaga.¹⁴ The youngest, Ernst August, ruled over the Principality of Calenberg, a sub division of the Duchy with Hanover as its capital. From the mid 1650s the brothers were in the habit of paying annual visits to Venice during

¹⁰ Nettl (1929). Eintrag in den Hofzahlamtsrechnungen für den Zeitraum 13 November (1648) bis Ende July 1649 -Johann (sic) Francisco Corbetta Musico umbwillen er vor beeden Khönigli Persohnen auf der Kittara gespielt zur Verehrung dargeraicht 60 fl.

¹¹ I-MAa, Archivio Gonzaga, Carteggi esteri, Carteggi ad inviati (Venezia) Busta 1571 Diversi 1652. [Fontijn (2006) p. 23/281]. Il Sig[no]r Cap[it]ano Luca, d’ordine di V[ostra] A[ltezza] Ser[enissi]ma mi scrisse di ritornar al servito, et io rendo humiliss[im]e gratie à V[ostra] A[ltezza] Ser[enissi]ma del honore, ma essendo statto nesescitato dalla precedente mia poco fortuna ad impegnarmi con il Sig[no]r prensipe de luneberg, dal quale hò ricevuto molte gratie tanto à pariggi come qui, suplico V[ostra] A[ltezza] stante haver tentato molte volte con poco sorte mia il servito di V[ostra] A[ltezza] Ser[enissi]ma ad havermi per iscusato...

¹² I-Bas Archivio Pepoli, Carteggi, Lettere al Conte Odoardo Pepoli 1651–52, Mentioned in the Foreword by Claire Fontijn in the facsimile edition of De gli scherzi armonici published by Cornetto-Verlag – Stuttgart, 2013. [Faksimile- Edition Laute 11].

¹³ The eldest brother, Christian Louis, who died in 1665, does not seem to have had been involved with Corbetta.

¹⁴ She was married to Edward, the fourth son of the Elector Palatine and was commonly known as the Princess Palatine. She may be the dedicatee of Carré’s ‘Livres de guitare’ (1671).

Carnival, the season preceding Lent. Maria Mancini, a niece of Cardinal Mazarin, refers in her memoirs to having spent time in the company of the Duke of Brunswick Lüneberg and the Duke of Mantua in the city during Carnival. Corbetta may have come to the prince's attention in Venice or during visits to Paris.

The Hanover court registers list a payment to Corbetta of 160 Thaler for the year 1652-53.¹⁵ In the preface to 'La guitarre royale' (1671) Corbetta says that he had dedicated a book to Georg Wilhelm but no copies of this have so far come to light.¹⁶

Georg Wilhelm had been betrothed to Sophie (1630-1714), the youngest daughter of the Winter Queen. In 1650 Sophie took up residence in Heidelberg with her eldest surviving brother, Karl Ludwig, after his restoration as Elector Palatine. However, Georg Wilhelm was reluctant to marry¹⁷ and therefore arranged for her to marry his younger brother, Ernst August. The two young men visited Sophie in Heidelberg in the spring of 1653 and Sophie commented on their visit in her memoirs.

Just then Duke Ernst August of Brunswick Lüneberg passed through Heidelberg on his return from Venice. I had seen him as quite a youth in Holland.¹⁸ Since then his appearance had greatly improved, and he was universally admired, but as the youngest of three brothers he was not thought a desirable prospect. We played the guitar together, which served to show off his exquisite hands; in dancing he also excelled. He offered to send me some of Corbetti's guitar music and began a correspondence on this subject which I was the first to break off, fearing that the world might call my friendship for him by a tenderer name.¹⁹

In spite of her initial reservations, the couple were eventually married in 1658. In 1692, when it became apparent that none of his older brothers would leave male heirs, Ernst August was created Prince-Elector of Brunswick-Lüneberg, colloquially known as Elector of Hanover, and Sophie from that time forward was known as Electress Sophie of Hanover. It would be interesting to know what the couple played together and what music by Corbetta Ernst August sent her. At that point in time Corbetta had not (as far as we know) composed any music for two guitars to play together. Sophie seems to have been quite a talented musician. She also mentions that whilst she was recovering from the birth of her eldest son, George Louis, she performed vocal trios with Ernst August and Johann Friedrich accompanying herself on the guitar.²⁰

Corbetta is mentioned in two letters written in 1654 to the Duke of Mantua by Antonio Bosso, the *residente* or Mantuan envoy in Venice. These relate to negotiations over the possible employment of the singer, Antonia Padoani Bembo, at the Mantuan Court. The first letter, dated 14th July, mentions that Corbetta is about to leave for Germany by way Mantua and that the Duke will hear from him about the 'father of the girl who sings'.

¹⁵ Sievers (1961) p.46/134. [Pinnell (1976) p.176 Note 50].

¹⁶ La guitarre royale (1671) p.4.

¹⁷ Georg Wilhelm subsequently contracted a morganatic marriage with a French woman, Eleanor d'Olbreuse and their daughter, Sophie Dorothea married Sophie's eldest son, George Louis who succeeded to the English throne as King George I in 1714.

¹⁸ Sophie spent her childhood at her mother's court in the Hague.

¹⁹ Sophia (1888) p. 46-47.

²⁰ Kroll (1975) p.101.

Before leaving for Germany, Signore Francesco Corbetta will come to the feet of Your Most Serene Highness to greet you humbly. Your Highness will hear from him certain details on the subject of the father of the girl who sings.²¹

A second letter dated July 21st refers to the fact that Antonia's father has given her in marriage to Corbetta. ***Signore Francesco Corbetta is returning to the feet of Your Most Serene Highness. You will hear from his own lips about his dealings in the matter of the girl who sings of what interest I have not been able to understand because I have been completely tricked by him [it is not clear whether this is Corbetta or Bembo's father] behind my back; so that neither Bartolo nor Baldo²² can come close to explaining their strategies.***

But at present all that this means for Your Highness is that they are a cage of madmen whose interests have only pernicious goals. Furthermore, I call to the attention of Your Highness the fact that as well as the doctor falling into a frenzy (although a commoner expression would be to say that he is possessed by the devil), the girl who sings suffers from fainting fits brought on by frenetic fears of her father, who has handed her over in marriage to Signore Corbetta and it is confirmed in a private letter as a greater sign that they remain attached to one another.²³

A postscript to same letter dated July 22nd also refers to the marriage

After having written the enclosed letter – which was to be consigned to Signore Francesco Corbetta – although he did not wish to pick it up as he was about to miss the hour of his departure – I thought it better to keep it and to send it to your Highness by the shortest possible route to Verona, with the ordinary Saturday courier, so that Your Highness will be advised about the capricious matrimony of the said Corbetta.²⁴

Although Corbetta was obviously an acquaintance of the family, it seems that the marriage to Antonia did not actually take place as in 1659 she married the Venetian nobleman, Lorenzo Bembo. However, in 1654, at the advanced age of 39, Corbetta was evidently unmarried although he may have been a widower. There has been much speculation as to whether he remained in contact with Antonia after her marriage to Bembo had broken down and she left Venice sometime after the winter of 1676-77 to settle in Paris. However, there is no evidence to suggest that he helped her to escape from Italy or that he

²¹ I-Maa, Archivio Gonzaga, Carteggi esteri, Carteggi ad inviati (Venezia) Busta 1571, Bosso Residente 1654. [Fontijn (2006) p.21/280]. Viene a piedi dell'A[ltezza] V[ostra] Ser[enissi]mo avanti partire per Alemagna il Sig[no]re Fran[ces]co Corbetta p[er] humilmente riverirla. Dal med[esi]mo V[ostra]A[ltezza] udirà certo particolare in materia del Padre della figlia che canta.

²² A reference to the fourteenth-century jurists Bartolo de Sassoferrato and Baldo degli Ubaldi.

²³ I-MAa, Archivio Gonzaga, Carteggi esteri, Carteggi ad inviati (Venezia) Busta 1571 Bosso Residente 1654. [Fontijn (2006) p. 21/280. Ritorna à piedi dell'A[ltezza] V[ostra] Ser[enissi]ma il Sig[no]re Francesco Corbetta dal quale udirà con la viva voce l'operato da lui in materia della figlia che canta, nel qual interesse non ho io potuto sbracciarmi p[er] esser raggiro adossato tutto à lui, che ne Bartolo, ne Baldo può in ristretto capire gli strattagemmi di costoro.

Altro p[er] hora, significo riverentem[en]te all'A[ltezza] V[ostra] solo che tutti costoro sono una Gabia de Pazzi i quali con suoi fini interessati procurano fini perniciosi. Di più porto alla notizia di V[ostra]A[ltezza] che oltre l'esser il medico caduto in fernesia (bench[e] la voce piu trita, è ch'il Demonio sia di lui in possesato) e la figlia parim[en]te che canta patisse il mal caduco, riportato dalli spaventati frenetici del Padre, il quale hà concesso in matrimonio la de[et]ta figlia al Sig[no]re Corbetta, e con scrittura privata si è sottoscritto restandome al maggior segno invaghito.

²⁴ I-MAa, Archivio Gonzaga, Carteggi esteri, Carteggi ad inviati (Venezia) Busta 1571 Bosso Residente 1654. [Fontijn (2006) p.24/281]. Doppo scritto la qui inserta p[er] consegnarla in mano del Sig[no]re Fran[ces]co Corbetta, il quale non s'è compiaciuto levarla rumpendo l'ora della partenza et io ho stimato accertato inviarla all'A[ltezza] V[ostra] Ser[enissi]ma p[er] la via di Verona ch'è la piu breve del corr[ier]o ord[in]ario de sabato acciò in qualche parte V[ostra] A[ltezza] resti avvisata del capriccioso matrimonio del d[et]to Corbetta e di nuovo profundam[en]te m'inchino.

assisted her in any way in later life. Corbetta's obituary states that Charles II procured a wife for him, presumably some time after 1660.²⁵ He also had a daughter referred to by Adam Ebert (aka Apulius Apronius)²⁶ but it is not known when and where she was born or who her mother was.

Paris

According to the obituary, at some point the Duke of Mantua introduced Corbetta to the French king, Louis XIV. Although Corbetta may have visited Paris earlier, he probably did not settle there before 1654. During the civil war known as the 'Fronde', which was waged in France between 1650–1653, Italian musicians were expelled from Paris. It has frequently been claimed that Corbetta was guitar teacher to Louis XIV, but this is not supported by any documentary evidence. The obituary states only that

...he attached himself to the Duke of Mantua, who was pleased indeed to have such a man to present to his Majesty; Our Great Monarch honoured him with such esteem and liberality and employed him in the most pompous spectacles. But his nature not allowing him to stay in one place for long, he wished to go to England...²⁷

The post of guitar teacher to the king was in fact held by Bernard Jourdan de la Salle, a native of Sanlúcar de Barrameda in the province of Cadiz, Spain, from April 1650 until 1695 when he was succeeded by his son, Louis. There are records of payments to him between 1684-1693.²⁸ The relevant entry in the official accounts reads as follows -

Retention [of the post of] of the King's guitarist for the Sieur de la Salle. Having regard to the services that the late Bernard Jourdan de la Salle has given us since the year 1650 when we chose him to teach us to play the guitar. It is our wish for this reason, to preserve the said charge for Louis Jourdan de la Salle, his son, and that he should keep the ordinary wages of 1200 livres tournaments which are attributable to him.²⁹

Bernard Jourdan de la Salle's association with the French Court was clearly of long-standing. He was granted French nationality in 1681³⁰ and Louis XIV was godfather to his son.³¹

In 1715 Jacques Bonnet commented on Louis' proficiency as a guitarist claiming that Mazarin brought a guitar teacher for him from Italy.

²⁵ Mercure (1681).

²⁶ Ebert (1724) Under Theil – Reise nach Italien.p.11.

²⁷ Mercure (1681) ...il se donna au Duc de Mantoüe, qui fut bien aise d'avoir un tel Homme à présenter à sa Majesté ; Nostre Grand Monarque l'honora de son estime, & de ses libéralitez, & l'employa dans les plus pompeux spéctacles; mais son naturel ne permettant pas qu'il fust longtemps dans un mesme lieu, il voulust aller en Angleterre...

²⁸ Benoit (1971a) p..79, 93, 105,112,120,130, 137. [Emilio Pujol quotes "L'Etat general des Officiers du roi (29th April, 1651) – "maistre pour enseigner le roi a jouer de la guitar". Source untraced].

²⁹ Secrétariat de la Maison du Roi" March 14th 1695, f° 38v in the series O.1 39. [BENOIT (1971a) p. 141]. Retenüe de joueur de guitarrre du Roy, pour le Sr de la Salle - Ayant regard aux services que feu Bernard Jourdan de la Salle nous a rendu depuis l'année 1650 que nous le choisismes pour nous enseigner a joüer de la guitarrre, nous avons bien voulu, en cette consideration, conserver lad. charge a Louis Jourdan de la Salle, son fils, et luy contnuer les gages ordinaires de 1200 livres tournois qui y sont attribuez.

³⁰ Benoit (1971a) p. 79 – the entry reads "Naturalité pour Bernard Jourdan dit la Salle, natif de St. Luc en Espagne, faisant profession de la Religion catholique et romaine".

³¹ Benoit (1992) p. 209.

I am convinced that it is praise worthy of his Majesty, that it is said that in eighteen months he played as well as his guitar teacher, whom Cardinal Mazarin had invited expressly to come from Italy, to show him how to play this instrument which was widely used in that time.³²

However, Bonnet does not name the teacher and may be mistaken in saying that he came from Italy. His information probably originates with his uncle, Pierre Bourdelot (d. 1685), physician to Louis XIII and the Condé family.

In 1780 Jean-Benjamin de La Borde included Corbetta in his alphabetical list of *Musiciens Français* taking his information from Médard's obituary in 'Mercure Galante'. Like Médard, all he has said is that the duke of Mantua introduced Corbetta to Louis; he says nothing about his being employed as his teacher.

CORBET, (Francisque), famous guitar player born in Pavia.

His parents threatened him angrily and tried unsuccessfully to compel him to abandon this instrument, which distracted him of all other interests. He was admired in Italy, Spain and Germany, and was loved by several Sovereigns. Eventually the Duke of Mantua presented him Louis XIV; but the taste for travelling having seized him again, he passed into England, where the King married him off, gave him the title of Gentleman of the Queen's Household, a key to his room, his portrait, and a considerable pension. He returned to die in France, loved and regretted by all who had known him. Here is the epitaph made by Mr. Medard, one of his best pupils, and his best friend.³³

It is clear however that by 1656 Corbetta was in France at the court of Louis XIV. In January-February of that year Jean-Baptiste Lully's ballet 'La galanterie du temps' was performed during Carnival. The music for the ballet has not survived, but the libretto states that *Corbetti. Les deux La Barre, frères et les petites Violons* accompanied a duet sung by Mademoiselle de la Barre and La Signora Anna Bergerotti.³⁴ The ballet opens with an aria for Venus *Venere io son che vò cerando il riso*.³⁵ This is followed by *entrées* and a serenade in Italian in the form of a dialogue which was performed by La Barre and Bergerotti.³⁶ The Italian singer, Anna Bergerotti, arrived in Paris in 1655 as a member of a group of Italian musicians which had previously spent time at the court of Queen Christina of Sweden and which also included the lutenist and guitarist, Angelo Michele Bartolotti. The well-known French singer, Anne Chabanceau de la Barre, with her brothers Joseph and Pierre, had also spent time at the Swedish court. *Les petites Violons* – also known as *La petite bande* was a group of 16 players, (later augmented to 21), subsidiary to the *grand bande* – *24 violons du Roi*. Lully was given permission to conduct them some time before 1656 and they appeared for the first time under his direction in 'La galanterie'.³⁷

³² Bonnet (1715) Chapter 10, p.330-31. Je suis persuadé que c'est une louange infiniment au dessous de sa Majesté, comme de dire qu'en dix-huit mois elle égala son Maître de guitare, que le Cardinal de Mazarin avoit fait venir exprès d'Italie, pour lui montrer à jouer de cet Instrument qui étoit fort en usage dans ce tems-là.

³³ La Borde (1780) Vol. 3, Book 5, Chapter 9, Musiciens Français, p. 503-4. CORBET, (Francisque), fameux Jouer de guittarre, né à Pavie. Ses Parens le menacerent inutilement de leur colere, pour le forcer à abandonner cet instrument, que lui ôtoit tout autre goût. Il se fit admirer en Italie, en Espagne, en Allemagne & fut aimé de plusieurs Souverains. Enfin Duc de Mantoüe les donna à Louis XIV ; mais le goût des voyages l'ayant repris, il passa en Angleterre, où le Roi le maria, lui donna le titre de Gentilhomme de la Chambre de la Reyne, une clef de sa chambre, son portrait & une pension considerable. Il revint mourir en France, aimé & regretté de tous ceux qui l'avaient connu. Voice l'épitaphe que lui fit M. Medard, un de ses meilleurs élèves, & son meilleur ami.

³⁴ F-Pbn Ms.Rés.F.524b p.75.

³⁵ I am Venus who makes laughter.

³⁶ Prunières (1910) p.165-6.

³⁷ Anthony (1986) p.3-4.

In both the French and Italian prefaces to 'La guitarre royale' (1671) Corbetta himself also mentions taking part in Lully's ballet and says that he was allowed by the king to compose or arrange an *entrée* for several guitars to be performed during the ballet. He also refers to an incident which took place, apparently in Paris in the same year, when the plates of one of his books were stolen from him and re-used to print another book dedicated to a "foreign prince". In the French preface he says he dedicated the the pirated book to the King, and presented two copies of it to him, but does not specify that it was printed in Paris or the year of publication. In the Italian preface he says that he had presented Louis XIV with two copies of the pirated book, but does not say that it was dedicated to him.

The text of the French Preface is as follows:

Amongst these are those who have taken from me the plates of a book which I had left in Paris, after having dedicated it to the King of France, on the occasion of a ballet composed by the most famous composer Jean-Baptiste Lully, Master of the King's Music in 1656. For this I was allowed by His Majesty to make an Entrée for several guitars, having presented two copies of this book of my compositions to that great monarch, in recognition of all the favours which I had received from His Majesty. They took advantage of the time of my departure from Paris in order to sieze the said plates, throwing in some other pieces and dedicating them afresh in their name to a foreign prince:³⁸

The Italian Preface reads as follows:

I would like to tell you – so that it does not happen again – about what happened to some of my sonatas which I had sent for printing; and also, about other books which have been patched up. In particular [I would like to tell you what happened] in 1656 here in Paris, to one I had had printed [at the time] when it pleased His Majesty to allow me to take part in an Entrée for several guitars of a ballet composed by the most famous Sr. Gio. Battista Lulli. As an act of respect, I presented His Majesty with two copies. As I had to travel, the plates were transported elsewhere and after some other pieces had been added to them, they were dedicated to a foreign Prince. As this has been noticed here, without however any indication as to the character responsible for this impudence, I felt obliged to give another [book] for printing. I am astonished at these composers who have no shame in putting their names to books which they have not made any efforts themselves to compose.³⁹

This may be a reference to a pirated edition of his 1648 guitar book which came to light in 1991.⁴⁰ It seems that during his years in France he also had printed another book which he dedicated to the Duke of Brunswick-Lüneberg. It is in connection with this book that he refers to his dispute with Granata.

³⁸ La guitarre royale (1671) p.8. ...parmi lesquels il y en a qui m'ont enlevé les planches d'un livre que j'avois laissé à Paris, apres l'avoir dédié au Roy de France, à l'occasion d'un Balet, composé par le tres-fameux Auteur, Jean-Baptiste Lulli, Maistre de la Musique du Roy en 1656: où je fus admis par sa Majesté a faire une Entrée de plusieurs guitarres, ayant présenté deux exemplaires de ce Livre de ma compositon à ce grand Monarque, en reconnaissance de toutes les faveurs que j'avois reçu de sa Majesté. Ils prirent le temps de mon despart de Paris pour surprendre les dites planches, d'y adioster quelqu'autres pieces, et de le dedie de nouveau sous leur nom à un Prince estranger.

³⁹ La guitarre royale (1671) p.4. Mi conuiere d'auertirti accio non aplichì certi libri messi in stampa di mie sonate gia nechie poste su miei altri libri stampati et parti di quelle rapezate et in particolare in uno che fecci stampare l'anno 1656 qui in Parigi doue si compiaque sua Maestà di admetermi in una entrata di piu Chitare d'un Balletto composto dal famosissimo S' Gio Battista Lulli, ondio per un atto d'ossequio ne presentai due esemplari a S. M. et essendomi occorss^o di partire ne furono traportate le stampe altroue che aggiuntoui altre sonate fù dedicato a un Principe Straniero; come qui se' uisto; senza pero'alcuno inditio del perssonaggio che n'hauea pigliato l'ardire ne resto per cio in obbligo di darne un altro in breue alle stampe. Mi stupisco di questi autori senza uergogna di far uedere il lor nome sopra libri che non hanno hauto fatica di componerli; ne godo per tanto à sua confusione che la mia Chitarra gl' habbia soleuati dalla nescesità.

⁴⁰ A facsimile of this print with an introduction by Monica Hall and Lex Eisenhardt was published by Deutsche LautenGesellschaft in 2006.

Because Granata had previously taken the liberty of including some of Corbetta's pieces in one of his books, Corbetta seized the opportunity to get his own back by including some of Granata's pieces in one of his own books.

I must speak of someone else in Italy, in Bologna, a certain guitar player named Granata, who, besides stealing my sonatas, also took ideas from my printed books and published them under his name, as I saw in one of his books in Venice, on my return from Spain. Whilst I was attending to some business in Bologna, Granata came to me, and apologised for publishing some of my sonatas in his book. As he had been one of my students, he had taken the liberty of doing so. It is also true to say that I had given him many of my sonatas years ago, but as he offended me several times with his arrogant malice, I resolved to treat him in the same way in a book dedicated to the honourable Georg Wilhelm, Duke of Brunswick Lüneberg. Because this obscure reprimand was evidently unclear to him, I was forced to make a more explicit clarification during my stay in England following a discourse in one of his books in which he accused me of plagiarizing authors of both guitar music and lute music. This was clearly the awkward stupidity of a senseless person in view of the fact that he himself had stolen and published some of my sonatas and other pieces, and moreover that he had requested his friends here to send him lute sonatas by Gaultier, Dufaut and others.⁴¹

No copies of a book dedicated to the Duke of Brunswick Lüneberg have come to light so far, but it is possible that music attributed to Corbetta in a much later manuscript source, B-Lc Ms.245, copied by the Flemish clergyman and amateur guitarist, Jean-Baptiste de Castillion in about 1706, is from this source. This manuscript includes fifty pieces not found in any of his surviving printed books. In addition, there are a further twenty pieces which Castillion has attributed to Corbetta which also appear in Granata's 'Novi capricci armonici musical' (1674). These may be the pieces which Corbetta pirated.⁴²

England

Early years at Court

At some point during the 1650s Corbetta came to the attention of members of the English royal family and in particular the king, Charles II, in exile since 1645 following the defeat of the Royalists in the English Civil War. Although Charles was initially resident in France, from July 1654 he led a nomadic existence, living from hand to mouth mainly in the Low Countries, until the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660. Corbetta seems to have followed Charles first to the Netherlands, and thence to England. The Dutch scholar, Constantijn Huygens, refers to him in a letter which he wrote to Lady Swanne dated 7th May, 1660.⁴³

⁴¹ La guitarre royalle (1671) p. 4. Diro d'un altro in Italia à Bologna qual è un certo Granatta Sonator di Chitarra del quale oltre l'hauer rubato sonate, ne hà distacato anche inuentioni da miei libri stampati, et messe su suoi, come io uidi in un suo à Venetia al mio ritorno di Spagna, et ne fui per qualche mio affare à Bologna quall mi uenne il detto Granatta a scusarssi d'haver messo alcune mie sonate sul suo libro, che per esser statto mio scolare ne haueua presa la libertà uero é che gli die di molte mie sonate già'anni sono, ma'hauendomi più uolte offeso, causa la malitia superba che ne tiene, rissolsi di tratarlo da simia in un libro dedicato al Serenissimo Georgio-Guglielmo Duca di Bronsuich è Lunebergh che ne contentandossi della riprensione occulta, m'hà forzato di farne una piu chiara, per un discorsso posto in un suo libro nel mio soggiorno in Inghilterra aducendo una confusione d'Autori tanto di Chitarra come di liuto contro me; Goffa balordagine d'un insensato, sapendo che è lui medesimo, d'hauer stirachiato sonate mie, et altri su suoi libri et piu datto ordine qui a suoi amici dinuiorli sonate di liuto di questi maestri Gottier, et du fo' et altri;

⁴² See Section II Chapter 12.

⁴³ Huygens (1916). Part. 5, Letter 5647, p. 335-6.

I hope you will have your ears feasted at Breda with the excellent guitar of Sig.or⁴⁴ Corbetta, which indeed is worthy of your hearing and admiration, as I can testify by the favour of her Royal Highness.

Utricia Ogle, Lady Swanne, the Dutch singer, was the wife of Sir Wolfgang William de Swan, a diplomat employed by Charles whilst in exile.⁴⁵ “Her Royal Highness” refers to Princess Mary, daughter of Charles I and sister of Charles II, who was married to William II, Prince of Orange. She was part of her brother’s entourage when he moved his court from Breda to the Hague in anticipation of his return to England early in May.⁴⁶ On 23rd May Charles finally set sail from the Netherlands to reclaim his throne. He arrived at Dover two days later and proceeded to London via Canterbury and Rochester where he spent the night. Whether or not Corbetta was in his entourage at this time, or whether he arrived in England later, his subsequent career at the Court in London during the 1660s and 1670s is well documented both in Official State Papers and private letters and journals. However, he continued to make regular visits to Paris and further a field during the last twenty years of his life.

Corbetta was presumably at court by September 1660, when Charles younger brother, Henry, Duke of Gloucester, died unexpectedly of smallpox. The ‘Allemande sur la mort du duc de Gloaster’ included in ‘La guitare royale’ (1671) commemorates this sad event. However, the earliest references to Corbetta by name at this time are in connection with the controversy over the patenting of various “lotteries” - actually games of chance which the player had little chance of winning. The first of these was known as *L’Oca di Catalonia* [The Goose of Cataluña]. Most of the information about this dispute is found in the papers accumulated by the Secretaries of State in their domestic capacity throughout the reign of Charles II. These consist of letters and petitions of one kind or another. They are “calendared” – that is to say listed in chronological order - in the ‘Calendar of State Papers’ which was published in 1860s. In most cases this reproduces the relevant text although this is sometimes abridged. They are translated into English if this is not the language of the original. Unfortunately, not all the documents are dated so that the precise sequence of events is difficult to determine. Other less reliable accounts of the controversy are found in some other sources.

Corbetta’s name appears for the first time in a petition to the King in January, 1661.

Petition of Francisco Corbett to the King, for an order for a patent, prohibiting any other person from setting up the game of L’Acça di Catalonia, the privilege of which His Majesty is pleased to grant him.⁴⁷

The petition was granted on February 22nd 1661.

On November 14th in the same year he petitioned for a prohibition for anyone else to exercise a similar game without his consent.

⁴⁴ In the 1916 Worp edition of Huygens’ letters Corbetta’s title was mistakenly transcribed as *sig.^{aa}*. The original letter is in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in Den Haag and clearly reads *sig.or*. I am indebted to Lex Eisenhardt for this information. Writing from Antwerp on April 20, 1659 Huygens refers to a different “Francisque” - De onvergetelijke Francisque laat ons buitengewone dingen hooren en speelt van dag tot dag beter (The unforgettable Francisque lets us hear extraordinary things and plays better from day to day). Part 5, p.:318. This is not however Corbetta, but the singer, Francisca Duarte, known as the “French nightingale”. Worp may have confused the two.

⁴⁵ Fraser (1997) p.82.

⁴⁶ Fraser (1997) p.174.

⁴⁷ Calendar (1860) 1660-1661 p. 494, January 1661.

Petition of Francesco Corbet to the King. Notwithstanding his sole warrant for practicing the game L'Oca di Catalonia, Gio, Franc. Finochelli, formerly practicing the same by his consent, but dismissed for his scandalous life, made a society with Jas. Roche and his cousin, for a newly invented lottery called the royal Oak, and got leave from Sir Edw. Ford to practice it though it is only the same game disguised and the name changed; begs a prohibition for any to exercise a game approaching his, without his consent.⁴⁸

On November 23rd an order was issued forbidding Francisco Finochelli from exercising the same lottery and James Roche petitioned not to be prevented from exercising a new, presumably different, lottery.

Order forbidding a lottery carried out by Francisco Finochelli, as being the same with the L'Oca de Catalonia, for which the sole license was granted to Francesco Corbet.⁴⁹

Petition of James Roche and his Associates to the King not to prevent them from exercising a new lottery etc....⁵⁰

On August 25th 1663 Corbetta and James Roche were granted licenses for further games of chance referred to as "The Royale Oake" and "Queenes Nosegay".

License to Capt. James Roche, Adjutant of our Gard and Francis Corbett Gent to set up and exercise the lotteries of the Royale Oake and Queenes Nosegay etc....⁵¹

On 28th August 1663 there is a "Memorial by Simon Mancelli of money transactions between Capt. Roche, Fras. Corbetta and Sr. Jean fran. Finochelli relative to the lottery of the Royal Oak set up at Smithfield Fair...."⁵²

The Smithfield Fair, more properly known as the Bartholomew Fair because it took place in the precincts of the Priory Church of St. Bartholomew the Great, Smithfield, in the City of London, was held on or about the Feast of St. Bartholomew on 24th August. Originally the principal fair for the sale of cloth in England, it expanded to include various forms of entertainment including sideshows, prize-fighters, musicians, acrobats and lotteries.

On December 23rd Corbetta was granted yet another license for games called "The Royal Oak" and "Il Trionfo Imperiale".

Grant to Fras. Corbett of license to set up lotteries of a new invention called the Royal Oak and Trionfo Imperiale⁵³

On receipt of this license Corbetta wrote in a petition that

⁴⁸ Calendar (1860) 1661-1662 p. 146, November 14th 1661.

⁴⁹ Calendar (1860) 1661-1662 p. 156, November 23rd 1661.

⁵⁰ Calendar (1860) 1661-1662 p. 157, November 23rd 1661.

⁵¹ Calendar (1860) 1663-1664 p. 253, August 25th 1663.

⁵² Calendar (1860) 1663-1664 p. 254, August 28th 1663.

⁵³ Calendar (1860) 1663-1664 p. 361, December 2nd 1663.

he travels to France for his health. But no sooner gone but this was likewise prohibited to his very great prejudice and almost loss of life in a strange country.⁵⁴

Presumably these lotteries were important sources of income for him aside from his musical activities.

Corbetta petitioned the King again in January (?) 1664,

Francis Corbett to the King. Was joined in a patent for the game of Royal Oak with Capt. Roche, who has separated from him & associated himself with Sir [Ant] Des Marces. Bgs the profits of the patent for six months, or some satisfaction therefor; also leave to sell his place as 'valet de chambre' to the queen as ill health obliges him to go abroad; and he wants money for his journey and medical treatment.⁵⁵

This seems to be the earliest reference to his travelling abroad, apparently due to ill health. It gives no inkling of what ailed him nor why it was necessary for him to go abroad for treatment.

Later in 1664 (?) Corbetta wrote to the King from Paris about the matter

Francesco Corbetto, Your Majesty's most humble and faithful servant, says that after being ill en route, he has arrived in Paris, where Madame (the king's sister, Henrietta Anne, wife of the Duke of Orléans) wishes to see him, but he has been unable to visit her as he has had to take to his bed because he is still unwell. He says that the good hope that Your Majesty promised him sustains him until such time as he can take advantage of the letter of exchange which it pleased Your Majesty to promise him. Because of the impediments which Sir Henry Benett has placed in the way of the game he does not want to have any profit from it. The supplicant believed that he would find some financial assistance in Paris whilst awaiting Your Majesty's pleasure but says that he found only letters bearing bad news. He therefore humbly begs Your Majesty to be gracious enough not to allow him to be wronged in the favour which your Majesty has granted him and begs you to send him help in the form of a letter of exchange as quickly as possible as he hopes to come to the feet of Your Majesty and do his utmost to meet with the satisfaction of Your Majesty, to whom devotedly and deeply he bows.⁵⁶

It seems that Corbetta was employed initially as "Groom of the Privy Chamber to the Queen" - Catherine of Braganza - whom Charles had married in May 1662. His obituary states that Charles II bestowed upon him the title of "Gentilhomme de la Reyne"⁵⁷ and from 1665 there is a "Warrant for an immediate livery for Francesco Corbetta, Groom of the Privy Chamber to the Queen [Doquet]".⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Roberts (1991) Part 1. Source unidentified.

⁵⁵ Calandar (1860) 1663-1664 p. 454, January (?) 1664.

⁵⁶ Mabbett (1986) p. 245. citing State Papers 29/109-9. Francesco Corbetto humillss.^o et fedellss.^o servitore di Vostra maestà, dice che doppo di essere restato su la strada amalato, e gionto a pariggi, et desiderando madama vederlo, non ha potuto essendo forzato dal malle de meterssi à letto, dice che la bona speranza che Vostra maestà li ha promesso in partire lo nutrisce, sino che ne possa goderela gratia de la letera di Cambio che Vostra maestà li ha piaciuto di promettere, stando che per l'impedimento del S.^r Henri benet a fatto, et fa al gioco che non vole havere profito alcuno; credendo il suplicante di ritrovare in pariggi qualche agiuto di denaro in attendendo la gratia [di] Vostra maestà, dice di non havere trovato solo che letere di male nove; Cossi humilmente suplica Vostra maestà de gratia di non lasciarli far torto ne la gratia che Vostra maestà li ha concesso, come suplica d'inviarli il soccorso de la letera Cambio acciò presto come spera di venire a piedi di Vostra maestà, et a tutto suo potere incontrare nelle satisfationi di Vostra maestà a Cui divotto et proffondamente s'inchina. Abbreviated version in Calandar (1860) 1664-5 Part 1, p.139.

⁵⁷ Mercure (1681).

⁵⁸ Calandar (1860) 1665-1666, p.169. See also Ashbee (1986) Vol. 8 p.337.

However, in May 1665 he petitioned for a place in the King's household.

Petition of Francesco Corbetto, to the King. Having refused the proffers of several foreign princes in order to serve His Majesty, he wishes to exchange his place of Groom of the Privy Chamber to the Queen for that of Page of the Backstairs to the King, for the better convenience of showing his proper talent and to be admitted as a supernumary until a place is vacant; in the meantime, he will live on the pension provided him.⁵⁹

The Privy Chamber was the private apartment of a royal residence; grooms of the Privy Chamber waited on members of the royal family during their various leisure activities. Pages of the Backstairs were fairly junior servants who also waited on royalty in private. Both positions would presumably have allowed Corbetta ready access to the King and Queen - the obituary states that Charles gave him *une Clef de sa Chambre*.⁶⁰ His musical activities were probably on a private, informal level rather than as part of the musical establishment which performed in public.

There are references to him performing for various other dignitaries. In September/October 1664 he took part in a performance referred to by the French ambassador, the Comte de Comminges, in a letter to the Marquis de Lionne, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to the French Court in Paris.

The King of Great Britain with twelve of the principal Lords of his Court did me the honour of having supper with me the other Monday.....The meal was merry and the time after supper was employed in listening to music, the violins and the Sieur Francisque, the great guitar player Madame de Fienne was of the party which did its duty well.⁶¹

'La guitarre royalle' (1671) includes a sarabande on page 21 subtitled 'La Cominge' which is dedicated to him.

In his memoirs of life at the Court of Charles II, Anthony Hamilton refers to Corbetta and a sarabande which he had composed. This was a hit amongst the numerous amateur guitarists at court, including Charles's younger brother, the Duke of York, later James II. Presumably this was one of the sarabandes included in 'La guitarre royalle' (1671) although it is not clear which one.

There was a certain Italian at Court, famous for the guitar. He had a genius for music, and he was the only man who could make anything of the guitar; but his music was so graceful and tender that he would have made harmony with the most ungrateful of instruments. In truth, nothing was more difficult than to play the same way as he. The King's taste for his compositions had made this instrument so fashionable that everyone played it, well or ill..... The Duke of York played passably and the Count of Arran⁶² as well as Francisque himself. This Francisque had composed a sarabande which

⁵⁹ Calandar (1860) 1665-1666, p.143. May 1665. See also Ashbee (1986), vol. 8, p.337.

⁶⁰ Mercure (1681).

⁶¹ Pepys1 (1828) Vol. 5, Appendix, p.464. Le Roi de la Grande Bretagne avec douze des principaux seigneurs de sa Cour me fit l'honneur de souper lundy céans;Le repas fut gai, et l'après soupée employée à ouïr la musique, les violons et le Sieur Francisque, grand joueur de guitare. – Madame de Fienne étoit de la partie, qui fit bien son devoir. I am indebted to Chris Page for identifying the source of this reference.

⁶² In 1656, Anne Hamilton, 3rd Duchess of Hamilton married William Douglas, 1st Earl of Selkirk. He changed his surname to "Hamilton", and on 20 September 1660 was created Duke of Hamilton, Marquis of Clydesdale, Earl of Arran, Lanark and Selkirk and Lord Aven,

charmed or enraptured the whole world; so that every guitarist at court tried to play it and God only knows what universal strumming there was.⁶³

He goes on to describe the amorous intrigues between various people at court. Hamilton was the son of Sir George Hamilton, younger son of James, Earl of Abercorn; his mother was sister to the 1st Duke of Ormond. He was born in Ireland but grew up in France during the Interregnum. His memoirs, which were published posthumously in 1713, draw extensively on the reminiscences of Philibert, Comte de Grammont, a French nobleman who spent some time at the Restoration Court in the 1670s.

Corbetta may have travelled abroad again in 1665 as there is a note in the Treasury Book stating that “being disirous to pass beyond the seas” he asks for arrears from 16th June 1663 to 1st Nov. 1665, board wages – at three and fourpence a day.⁶⁴ On May 29th, 1667 Charles II wrote to his sister, Henriette-Anne, wife to the younger brother of Louis XIV, Philippe, Duc d’Orleans

I have heere sent you some lessons for the guittar, which I hope will please you. The Comte de Gramont did carry over with him others, which maybe you have; and as Francisco makes any more that pleases me, I will send them to you.⁶⁵

Presumably these were pieces in manuscript, which Corbetta later published in ‘La guitarre royale’ (1671). During the 1660s Corbetta seems to have enjoyed the support of Madame D’Orleans during his visits to Paris and may have acted as an emissary between her and Charles on a regular basis. There is a record of a payment to him in the Secret Service Accounts dated 22nd March 1663 when the sum of £100 was set aside “To Mr. John Quinn for Seig^r Francisco”.⁶⁶ The Secret Service accounts were used to bypass the Exchequer to record payments to private individuals and to spies and informers. It is not known whether Corbetta was actually involved in espionage or simply paid as a private individual. Madame died unexpectedly on 29th June 1670 and Corbetta dedicated to her the exquisite “Tombeau” in C minor in ‘La guitarre royale’ (1671).⁶⁷

On 5th August, 1667 Samuel Pepys describes hearing Corbetta play in the private apartments of the Duke of York.

After done with the Duke of York and coming out through his dressing-room, I there espied seignor Francisco, tuning his guitar, and Monsieur de Puy with him, who did make him play to me; which he did so admirably that I was mightily troubled that all that pains should have been taken upon so bad an instrument.⁶⁸

⁶³ Hamilton (1713) p. 26. Il y avait un certain Italien à la cour, fameux pour la guitare. Il avait du génie pour la musique; et c’est le seul qui de la guitare ait pu faire quelque chose; mais sa composition était si gracieuse et si tendre, qu’il aurait donné de l’harmonie au plus ingrat de tous les instruments. La verité est que rien n’était plus difficile que de jouer à sa manière. Le goût du roi pour ses compositions avait tellement mis cet instrument à la mode, que tout le monde en jouait bien ou mal;.....Le duc d’York en jouait passablement, et le compte [sic] d’Arran comme Francisco lui-même. Ce Francisque venait faire une sarabande qui charmaient ou désolaient tout le monde; car toute la gitarerie de la cour se mit à l’apprendre, et Dieu sait la raclerie universelle que c’était!

⁶⁴ Roberts (1991) Part 1, p. 15. No source of reference given.

⁶⁵ Charles II p. 117.

⁶⁶ Dorchester, Dorset History Centre D/FSI box 267, Secret Service accounts maintained by Sir Stephen Fox, 15 October 1660-9 July 1674, f.3v. [Page (2017) p.68 & p.95 Note 16].

⁶⁷ La guitarre royale (1671) p. 10.

⁶⁸ Pepys2 (1946) Entry for 5th August, 1667.

Pepys was employed as an officer of the Navy Board, in which capacity he attended on the Duke of York, Lord High Admiral, once a week on Monday mornings. August 5th was a Monday according to the Julian calendar in use in England until 1752.

In an account of the short visit that he made to London in February-March, 1668, the Italian writer and diplomat, Lorenzo Magalotti, includes Corbetta in his list of *Sonatori di viola* in royal employment in the section entitled *Artisti più famosi di Londra*.⁶⁹ Corbetta is referred to as *Francesco Corbetti, padovano, per la chitarra*. Although Corbetta may have spent time in Padua, it is possible that this is an error for "Pavese". Other players listed include a fellow Italian, Cristofano Semproni; John Bannister (1630-1679, violinist, composer and at this time, leader of the King's Band; John Bolles, the viol player to whom Christopher Simpson dedicated the second edition of the 'Division viol' in 1665; John Smith, in the King's Band (1660-1673); George Walsh; and Stewkin of Hamburg, possibly Theodor Steffkin – one of a family of musicians in the service of the Stuart kings. Presumably Corbetta would have been acquainted with all these and played along side them on occasion.

Visits to Paris and relationship with Antoine Carré, Sieur de la Grange

In the Fall of 1670 Corbetta was in Paris making arrangements for the printing of 'La guitarre royalle' (1671). At the beginning of the Italian preface he says

I arrived in Paris last year in order to live there for some months and as I had begun this work in London, I brought the plates with me in order to finish it.⁷⁰

As the preface is undated it is uncertain exactly which year he arrived in Paris. He was involved in legal proceedings of some kind with the French guitarist, Antoine Carré, Sieur de la Grange, who also published his 'Livre de guitarre' in 1671. The nature of these proceedings is at present unknown, but it may have had something to do with plagiarism as Carré included a piece from Corbetta's 1648 book in this book and in his later book, 'Livre de pieces de guitarre et de musique' printed between 1677-1687, he included three pieces from 'La guitarre royalle' (1671). Corbetta's privilege to publish 'La guitarre royalle' is dated 21 September 1670 which suggests his book was ready for printing by that date. According to the 'Registres de privilèges' Corbetta registered his privilege on 20th December 1670 after Carré had obtained some kind of judgement in his favour at the Chatelet (the principal court of common law jurisdiction in France at the time) on 6th November. The entry is as follows

20th December, 1670 Monsieur Corbetta has presented to us a privilege obtained by him from His Majesty for many pieces to play on the guitar etc. which Monsieur Bonneuil must enjoy following the sentence obtained at the Chatelet and dated Wednesday 6th November 1670 for the benefit of [or on behalf of] Antoine Carré sieur de La Grange, and this for a period of five years, dated the 21st September.⁷¹

Carré and Corbetta were clearly acquainted. Bonneüil was the printer to whom Corbetta ceded his rights to publish 'La guitarre royalle'. The book was not finally printed until 1st October 1671 but delays of this kind were not unusual. This may have been due to technical problems with printing rather than from any

⁶⁹ Magalotti (1972) p.151.

⁷⁰ La guitarre royalle (1671) p. 3. In congiuntura desser uenuto l'anno passata a Parigi per traienermi alcuni pochi mesi et hauendo cominciato questo libro in Londra ne portai meco gl'intagli per qui finirlo.

⁷¹ Brenet (1906) p. 414 quoting from F-Pn Ms. Fr. 21945, the French equivalent of the Stationers' Registers. 20 décembre 1670. Le sieur Corbetta nous a présenté un privilege par luy obtenu de S. M. pour plusieurs pieces à jouer sur la guitarre, etc., duquel le Sr Bonneuil doit jouir suivant la sentence obtenue au Chatelet et dattée du mercredi VIe novembre 1670 au proffit de Antoine Carré sieur de La Grange, et ce pour le temps de cinq années, et datté du 21 septembre.

delay on Corbetta's part. In France engraving was at first an alternative to typography which was controlled by the Ballard patent. Most of the engraved music printed is instrumental and Corbetta's book is one of the earliest, if not the earliest to have been printed by Bonneuil.

'La guitarre royale' (1671) is one of the most interesting and challenging collections of seventeenth-century guitar music. Corbetta himself clearly regarded it as his masterpiece and it includes his finest music. It probably circulated quite widely – the English composer, William Boyce owned a copy of it which was sold at auction after his death in 1779.⁷² It was listed as "Corbet's Royal guitar" and purchased by an anonymous buyer.

In March 1673 Charles II signed the Test Act requiring every office holder at Court, including all household staff, amongst them many musicians, to take Communion in the Church of England. This resulted in an exodus of catholic musicians and Corbetta may have been one of them. In any event, it seems that he was already in Paris in February of that year. A rhymed newsletter by Charles Robinet in the style of Jean Loret describes a concert which took place at the Chateau de Saint-Germain-en-Laye on February 18th in the presence of the King, Queen, Monsieur (the king's younger brother) and *Seigneurs et Dames de la cour*, in which he took part.

*Icelle [sic] eût aussi, trois Concerts,
Qui valoyent mieux que trois Desserts
Mais le meilleur, et des plus rares,
Fut, cher lecteur, de deux Guitares,
Encor que ce soit l'Instrument
Le plus ingrat, et moins charmant,
Mais j'ose dire sans nul risque
Que lorsque le fameux Francisque,
Ce cher Arion Milanois,
Le touche avec ses maigres doigts,
Il n'est Luth, Théorbe, ni Lyre,
Qui sur l'Oreille est plus d'Empire.
La petite Muse Plantier,
Dont mon historique Psautier
A si souvent dit les Merveilles,
Qui sont, bonne foy, sans pareilles
Dedans le siècle d'aujourd'hui,
Jouait, en partie, avec Luy,
Et ravit, la chose est certaine,
Tant le Monarque, que la Reyne,
Monsieur, et pour le trancher cour,
Seigneurs et Dames de la Cour.⁷³*

⁷² Johnstone (2010) p. 147/Lot 157.

⁷³ Brossard (1970) p.136-7. 1673, 18 février (la cour à Saint Germain-en-Laye). Here there were also three concerts/Which were worth more than three desserts/But the best and the rarest/Dear reader, was of two guitars./Although the instrument maybe/The most thankless and least charming,/I dare say without any risk/That when the famous Francisque,/That dear Milanese Arion/Plays it with his slender fingers/The lute, the theorbo or the harp/Do not please the ear more powerfully./The little muse Plantier/Of whom my historic Psalter [i.e. his collection of letters]/Has so often spoken wonders,/Which are, in good faith, without equal/Within the century of today/Played in consort with him./And ravished, the matter is certain,/The King, the Queen,/Monsieur, and to cut the matter short,/The Lords and Ladies of the Court.

The description of Corbetta as *Ce cher Arion Milanois* is a reference to his birth place, Pavia in the Duchy of Milan. Robinet notes that Corbetta performed a number of duets with *La petite Muse Plantier*, Marie-Anne Plantier, a noble amateur guitarist.⁷⁴ What they played is not specified, but the performance could have included the duets from the 'La guitarre royalle' (1674). This was the first French publication to include compositions for two guitars.

The first printed news sheets began to appear in France in 1631. They were the work of Jean Loret (1660-1665) and took the form of weekly letters in rhyme addressed to Mademoiselle de Longueville, Marie d'Orleans (1625-1707), daughter of Henri II d'Orleans. Charles Robinet succeeded him, making his debut as a writer on 25th May 1665. From then on, he wrote each week to Madame (d'Orleans), sister-in-law of Louis XIV. After her death in June 1670, he addressed his letters to the *ombre de Madame* – [the shade of Madame], then to her husband, Monsieur, and finally from 1674 to Monsieur & Madame after Monsieur's marriage to the Princess Palatine (Elizabeth Charlotte known as Liselotte). He died 25th April 1698 when more than 80 years old.

Corbetta probably remained in Paris until the beginning of 1674. The privilege of his final surviving book, also titled 'La guitarre royalle', is dated 21st December 1673. As before he ceded his privilege to the printer Bonneüil and the book was finally printed on the 12th January 1674. It is dedicated to Louis XIV and features music in a style which apparently pleased him most, in effect simpler than that of the 1671 book.

Calisto

Corbetta's absence from court was shortlived as later in 1674 he was involved in rehearsals for the English masque 'Calisto' by John Crowne. These took place regularly three times a week beginning in November 1674. Corbetta is cited amongst the four guitarists hired for the occasion listed in the records of the Lord Chamberlain now preserved in the Record Office.

Musicians in the Mask Gittars. 4

Mr. Frasco [sic] Corbett,
Mr. Cutom

Mr. Deloney
Mr. Delloney⁷⁵

The exact dates of performances are unclear. John Evelyn mentions attending performances on 15th and 22nd December but these may have been of the spoken part of the play only without the participation of the musicians.⁷⁶ The masque was finally performed on Shrove Monday and Tuesday, 15th and 16th February 1675 in the Hall Theatre, which had been specially renovated for the occasion.⁷⁷ There may have been further performances in April, May or June.

Calisto is not really a masque, but a play with a musical introduction and *intermedii* or interludes. Because of a literary feud between the poet laureate, John Dryden, and the Earl of

⁷⁴ Marie-Anne Plantier was daughter of Sieur Plantier, Avocat in Parlement, and Doctor Agrégé in the Université de Valence, and niece of Mlle Béranger.

⁷⁵ Ashbee (1986) Vol. 1 p. 146. Source - Lord Chamberlain. Vol. 745, pp. 547, 548

⁷⁶ Evelyn (1955) Vol IV p.49-51.

⁷⁷ Boswell (1932) p.200-203.

Rochester,⁷⁸ Dryden was passed over and the commission given to John Crowne. The roles in the play itself were taken by amateurs, including the daughters of the Duke of York, Princess Mary and Princess Anne; other members of the court also took part as dancers and attendants. The *intermedii* featured professional singers from the Chapel Royal, the King's Private Musick and the public stage.

Dramatis personae

Calisto, a chaste and favourite Nymph of Diana, beloved of Jupiter	Lady Mary (aged 13)
Nyphe, a chaste young Nymph, friend to Calisto	Lady Anne (aged 10)
Jupiter	Lady Henrietta Wentworth (aged 14) ⁷⁹
Juno	Lady Anne Fitzroy, Countess of Sussex (aged 14) ⁸⁰
Diana	Margaret Blagg
Psecas	Lady Mary Mordaunt
Mercury	Sarah Jennings (Later Duchess of Marlborough) ⁸¹

In the myth on which the play is based Jupiter falls in love with Calisto, a nymph of Diana. He rapes her and then turns her into a bear. Calisto later escapes death at the hand of her son by being transformed into a star. Crowne altered the story extensively to make it suitable for the young princesses. Jupiter is unsuccessful in his attempts on Calisto's virtue, comes to her rescue when she is accused of misconduct by Juno and finally offers her and her sister sovereignty of a star.

The play is very long; there are 5 acts, with singing and dancing only in the prologue, epilogue and *intermedii*. The *intermedii* comprised pastoral scenes and dances which have no connection with the play. The Prologue – as was customary – pays homage to King Charles and his consort Catherine of Braganza. Thames, attended by Peace, Plenty, Europe, Asia, Africa and America, is alarmed by the distress of Europe's nymphs, but is reassured by the Genius of England who sends two heroes to their aid. All involved are about to offer homage to Fame, but seeing the King and Queen pay homage to them instead. Several sarabandes with castanets were danced by the two princesses and other ladies in the Prologue.⁸² The Duke of Monmouth danced a minuet with several other gentlemen, and also appeared as a hero "crown'd with a Mural Crown".⁸³

The music

The music was composed by Nicholas Staggins. He was sworn in as Master of the King's Music and leader of the Band of Violins on 29th January, 1674/5 – two weeks before the performance took place - but may have been acting in that capacity for several months previously. The instrumental music probably consisted of dances and accompaniments for the songs although

⁷⁸ John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester (1648-1680) was a poet noted for his dissolute life style and often obscene verse.

⁷⁹ She later became mistress to James, Duke of Monmouth, Charles II's eldest illegitimate child, who also took part.

⁸⁰ Illegitimate daughter of Charles II and Lady Castelmaine – married to the Earl of Sussex.

⁸¹ Duchess of Marlborough, friend and confidante of Princess, later Queen, Anne.

⁸² Holman (1999) p. 15.

⁸³ A mural crown was a crown given to Roman soldiers who first scaled a wall in a siege.

there may have been “symphonies” during the prologue and between the acts. The vocal music was performed by professional singers.

What little survives of the music is found in the manuscript GB-Lbl Ms. Add. 19759. This is a collection of seventeenth-century songs including items by Purcell, Blow, Pelham Humphreys, Locke and others mostly in the form of a single treble clef vocal line. At the beginning of the manuscript there is a note

Charles Campelman his book
June y^e 9 1681
God give him grase 1682

The pieces from ‘Calisto’ are found on folios 18 and 18^v. There is a note ‘Calisto/Catch’ in pencil above first song.

f.18	Augusta is inclined to fears	Prologue
	Poor Corydon, thy flame remove	First Intermedio
	Kind lovers, love on	First Intermedio
	Alas poor Shepherd	Second Intermedio
f.18v	No longer complaine	Third Intermedio
	Joy Shepheards joy	Fourth Intermedio
	Since all our grief	Fourth Intermedio

At the end there is a note – “Mr. Stagings”. Another manuscript, GB-Ob Ms Mus. Sch. F. 572, a collection of songs, instrumental music and Restoration verse, includes an simple arrangement for guitar alone of the first piece with the title ‘Augusto’; this was originally performed by the singer Mary Davis in the role of *Thames* during the Prologue.⁸⁴

The costumes

Some of the players were visible to the audience, probably in a space set at the back of the stage. The rest may have been concealed behind the scenes where there was a “floor with seuerall degrees for y^e Musicke”. Lavish costumes of *taffety* and *avinnion* - thin silk, like sarcenet, possibly made in Avignon - were provided for twenty of the violinists, the four guitarists, two of the recorder players, the four trumpeters and a drummer. The princely sum of £18. 2s. 0d was spent on costumes for the guitarists -

“Kittars” (4)

ffor making a taffety gowne Laced with gawes downe before round	
the sleeves and neck and bottome with all small ffurniture	10. 0
making gilt leather cap with feathers	4. 0
gilt leather	4. 0
for making 3 more	2. 14. 0
18 ells white taffeta	9. 18. 0

⁸⁴ A transcription of the piece is in Page (2017) p. 91.

16 yds. broad gold gauze	1. 12. 0
2 yds. broad gold gauze	4. 0
Gytar Master 14 falls (of feathers of severall collours)	2. 16. 0

	18. 2. 0

Exactly what the guitarists played is unclear; in particular it is not known whether they formed part of the regular continuo group or whether they were a separate act accompanying the more popular dance numbers.

Encounter with Aulus Apronius

In December 1676 Corbetta petitioned for leave of absence from his post to travel to France and further afield. The pass, which is dated 13th December 1676, reads

*Pass for Francesco Corbetti, one of the Italian musicians of the King's Bedchamber, who is going to France and other foreign parts.*⁸⁵

It must have been during this period of absence from the English Court that the incident described by Adam Ebert *aka* Aulus Apronius in his 'Reise-Beschreibuung' took place. There are two different editions of the book, printed in 1723 and 1724. The earlier edition does not include the fuller account of Corbetta's visit to Turin with the reference to his 'Memoirs'.

The town of Turin has a cathedral of St. John. At Christmas when the young Duke Victor Amadeus II was on the throne, he came out and attended a celebratory supper with his mother and aunt at which music for theorbos, lutes, angeliques and guitars could be heard. But as such music is not very loud and unsuited to open spaces such as churches, it was performed before a small private assembly and the musical works adapted to suit the needs of the voices. The Pilgrim [Peregrinant - Ebert refers to himself as a pilgrim] was informed that the director was an Italian named Bertelli.

Recently the world-famous guitarist, Corbetta, who taught all the Potentates of Europe, came here [to Turin] from England. But because he had the misfortune to break a fingernail (and with old folk these grow again very slowly) it was impossible for him to present himself at the festival with his consort, however much he wanted to. Every foreign musician who performed at court in Turin was given 500 Thlr. and Madame Royale wished to show her generosity by not withholding anything [from Signor Corbetta]. (1723 version ends here).

Corbetta complained bitterly that he had come from England with great difficulty, and because he had invited people from Italy to come there [to Turin] to play in consort on his guarantee, he had to pay them afterwards out of his own pocket. He had brought with him a daughter whose acquaintance we made, in order to persuade her to search amongst her Father's possessions for his personal Memoires about the courts he had visited. At a time when her father was bedridden, the Pilgrim gave to the aforementioned Signore a Louis d'Or [a gold coin] to secretly bring the materials to his home; when she reclaimed them, he gave her

⁸⁵Calendar (1860) 1676 p.451 (which cites Home Office, Warrant Book I, p.331).

***another Pistolette [a smaller coin] for her own use. After his request was successful the 'Liber Relationes ex parnasso di variis Europae eventibus' enjoyed no small part of it.*⁸⁶**

Victor Amadeus was born on the 14th May, 1666. In June 1675, at the age of nine, he succeeded his father as Duke of Savoy. His mother, Marie Jeanne of Savoy, a distant cousin of Louis XIV and the second wife of Charles Emmanuel II of Savoy, known as "Madame Royale", acted as Regent during his minority. Corbetta's obituary refers to her patronage and more generally to the esteem in which he was held by the nobility; he was clearly well known in Europe at the time.

***People of the first rank always held him in the same esteem and above all he received many tender tokens of kindness from Her Royal Highness, Madame in his last days.*⁸⁷**

In 1684 Victor Amadeus married Anne-Marie, the elder daughter of Madame d'Orleans, Henriette-Anne, the sister of the English king Charles II.

The passage affords a few interesting snippets of information. Most importantly from a musical point of view, it seems that Corbetta played with his nails; this may have been common practice on the baroque guitar. The well-known portrait of Domenico Pellegrini in his 'Armoniosi concerti sopra la chitarra spagnuola' shows him with very long right-hand nails. On the other hand, John Playford in 'Musick's delight on the cithren' (1660), in which he suggests that the cittern should be played in the same way as the guitar, seems to imply that nails should be kept short.

***For your right hand, rest only your little finger on the belly of your cithren and so with your thumb and first finger and sometimes the second strike your strings, as is used on the gittar; that old fashion of playing with a quill is not good and therefore my advice is to lay it aside; and be sure you keep your nails short on the right hand.*⁸⁸**

⁸⁶ Ebert (1724) p10-12. (1723) p.251 Der Stadt *Turin* hat eine *Cathedral*-Kirche zu St-Johannis alwo umb Wennachten der junge Herzog *Victor Amadeus II.* aus einem Thron nebst seiner Frau Mutter und Muhme hervor trat und zum Heil. Abendmahl gieng; da denn die trefflichshe *Musique* von *Thiorben*, Lauten, *Angeliquen* und *Guiternen* sich hören liesse. Solche sanffte *Musique* aber schickte sich gar nicht in sehr grossen und offnen Plätzen, als Kirchen und dergleiche, sondern sie ist nur vor solitaire, privat assemble, und de *Operen*, darinn der *Vocal Musique* praevaliren muss. Der *Director* war ein Italianer *Bertelli* genandt; so auch *Peregrinanten* unterrichtet. Es war zwar kurz zuvor der Weltberühmte *Guitariste*, *Corbetto*, so alle Potentaten in Europa unterrichtet, aus England alhier angekommen, weil er aber das *Malheur*, dass ihm der Nagel am Finger abgebrochen, und gar langsam ben alten Leuten wieder zu wachsen pflaget, so war ihm ohnmöglich mit seiner *Musique* sich ben dem Fest auffzuführen, wie sehr er es auch verlangte. Es ward einem jedem fremden *Musico*, so in *Turin* am Hoff sich hören liess 500. Thlr. gegeben; und wolte *Madame Royale* sich darinn absonderlich zu ihren Zeiten sehen lassen, und dem [*Signor Corbetto* isso] nichts abbrehen. (1723 edition ends here). *Corbetto* klagte sehr, dass er mit grossen Schaden aus England gekommen sintemahl er die Leute aus Italien der *Musique* wegen auff seine *Garantie* dahin kommen lassen, und dieselbe nochmahls aus seinen Beutel auszahlen müssen. Er hatte eine Tochter mitgebracht mit welcher man sich darumb bekandt gemacht, weil ben den Vater besondere *Memoiren* vor den Höffen alwo er sich auffgehalten zu spühren als der Vater einsmahl Bettlägerig, gab *Peregrinant* gedachter *Signore* ein *Lovisdor* di Sachen unter de Hand nach Hause zu friegen wann sie wieder gebracht noch eine *Pistolette* deswegen darvor derselben geniessen zu lassen. Nachdem solches nach Wunsch reusfirt, so haben die *L. Relationes ex Parnasso di variis Europae eventibus* nicht geringen Antheil daraus sich zu erfreuen gehabt.

⁸⁷ Mercure 1681. Les Personnes du premier rang luy ont toujours conservé la mesme estime, & sur tout il a reçue dans ses derniers jours plusieurs marques sensibles des bontez de son Altesse Royale Madame.

⁸⁸ Playford, John - Musick's delight on the cithren. Introduction, no page number.

In spite of the fact that Corbetta was unable to perform with his consort, it seems that he was actually paid, something has not been made clear previously. The 1724 edition is also the only reference to his having a daughter; no further information about her has so far come to light.

Ebert was born in Frankfurt Oder in 1656, studied law at the University there and died in March 1735. He seems to have been a somewhat eccentric and contraversial individual. 'Reise-Beschreibung', which was published under the pseudonym "Aulus Apronius", is an account of his travels throughout Europe in the 1670s.

One can only speculate as to why the anecdote about the loan of Corbetta's 'Memoirs' is not included in the earlier edition. It has been suggested that at least some of the book actually reproduces Corbetta's own memoirs which Ebert borrowed from the daughter.⁸⁹ This is based on a misunderstanding. The 'Liber Relationes ex parnasso di variis Europae eventibus' dated 1683 mentioned at the end of the extract quoted above is a different work from 'Reise-Beschreibung'. If Ebert did pirate any part of Corbetta's memoirs it would have been in this book rather than 'Reise-Beschreibung'. 'Liber Relationes' is an alternative title for the work 'Historia Arcana Europae' where there is a brief mention of Corbetta in the following hexameter verse:

***Fidibus illustris ille Corbetto Italus
Voce Mārgharithā Salicōla virgō Boniensis
Venetis tam famosa theatris vicere musas.⁹⁰***

Margarita Salicola (fl. 1682 – 1706) was a famous opera singer of her time. She came from a family of musicians at the court of Ferdinando Carlo Gonzaga, duke of Mantua and performed regularly at the San Giovanni Crisostomo Theatre in Venice in the 1680s. Ferdinando Carlo was the only child of Charles II, Duke of Mantua who had employed Corbetta in the early 1650s; he succeeded his father to the Dukedom in 1665. It is possible that Corbetta was acquainted with Margarita or at least with members of her family. There are no other references to him by name in Ebert's work. Ebert has been accused of plagiarism and it has been suggested that he could not have visited all the places mentioned in 'Reise-Beschreibung'. However, it is known that he visited England himself in 1678, buying books, and making contact with the Royal Society, and his account of his visit in 'Reise-Beschreibung' is accurate and convincing.

Final years in England

In 1677 Corbetta was employed as guitar teacher to Lady (later Queen) Anne, the younger daughter of James II. The 'Establishment Book for the Household of James, Duke of York' from Christmas 1677 lists payments to the following musicians

<i>Guytarr Master</i>	<i>Mr. Francisco Corbet</i>	<i>£100</i>
<i>Singing Master</i>	<i>Monsieur Robert</i>	<i>£50</i>

⁸⁹ The source of this misunderstanding seems to be a handwritten note on the flyleaf of the British Library's copy of 'Anecdota sive historia arcana Europae' which reads 'In the Bibliotheca Riuchiana it is stated that 'Reise-Beschreibung' was not composed by Ebert'.

'Bibliotheca Riuchiana' refers to the Bibliotheca Richiana - books, manuscripts and other antiquarian materials gathered by the early 19th century Oriental linguist, Claudius James Rich. I am indebted to Chris Page for this information.

⁹⁰ Ebert (1715) p.3. With the strings of his guitar that illustrious Italian, Corbetto, by her voice Margharitha Salicola, the most famous maid of Bologna, surpassed (defeated) the muses in the Venetian theatres.

Music Master	Mr. John Bannister	£70
Musitian	Mr. Thomas Greeting	£31. 04.00⁹¹

James had converted to Roman Catholicism in 1672 which may explain why Corbetta was attached to his household rather than that of the King towards the end of his time in England.

In the same year Corbetta published another guitar book now missing. The 'Term Catalogue for the Michaelmas Term', 1677 includes the following entry –

EASIE Lessons on the Guittar for young Practitioners; single, and some of two Parts. By Seignior Francisco. Printed for Jo. Carr in the Middle Temple lane. Price 3s 3d.⁹²

The Term Catalogue was a trade journal edited by John Starkey and Robert Clavell which claimed to be a "catalogue of books printed and published in London". It was issued three times a year for the Hilary⁹³, Easter and Michaelmas terms. John Carr (fl. 1672-95) was a bookseller, music printer and instrument seller who had a shop at Middle Temple Gate near that of John Playford the Elder. It is reasonably certain that the book did actually appear in print and is not just a "ghost";⁹⁴ the price also suggests that it was quite substantial, not merely a pamphlet. It is included in a list of 'MUSICK Books sold by John Carr at the Middle Temple Gate' in Henry Playford's 'The Theater of Music. The Second Book', printed in 1685.⁹⁵ Robert Clavell also lists it as 'Francisco's Lessons on the Guitar' in 'A catalogue of books printed in England since the dreadful fire of London' (1696) in the section headed 'Musick books for voice or instrument' under quarto and octavo music books.⁹⁶

Corbetta may also have been a witness at a marriage which took place in the Queen's Chapel at Somerset House on 19th May 1678. The entry reads as follows

No. 289 May the 19th 1678. In her Ma^{ties} Chappell Royall att Somersett-house, were joined in lawful Wedlock Gerom (Jerome) Servarie and Anne Chapman of St. Martin's in the ffields in the presence of Howll & ffoster, Peter Novell, x ffracisque is marque, Will. Yarde, by me fr: James a St Bonaventure.⁹⁷

The comment "x ffracisque is marque" implies that he was unable to sign his name which seems unlikely unless he was by that time – at the age of about 63 - disabled in some way. His eyesight might have been failing or perhaps he had had a slight stroke. Aulus Apronius refers to him as *bettlägerig*, [bedridden] in December 1676, which suggests that he was unwell during his visit to Turin. James a St Bonaventure officiated at marriages between Sept. 29, 1673-May 30, 1678 and Will Yarde appears as a witness several times. Somerset House, the residence of Charles II's Portuguese queen, Catherine of Braganza, was the centre of Catholic life in England at the time.

⁹¹ British Lib. Add. Ms.18958 – f.8v – Establishment Book for the Household of James, Duke of York from Christmas 1677; Ashbee (1986) Vol.2, p. 121.

⁹² Arber (1903) Vol. 1, p.291.

⁹³ The second term (January-March) of the academic year at Oxford University so called because it begins on the first Sunday after the feast of St. Hilary of Tours celebrated on 14th January.

⁹⁴ The term for a book which is listed in catalogues but never actually printed.

⁹⁵ Playford, Henry -The Theater of Music. The Second Book (1685).

⁹⁶ Clavell (1696) p.112. [Page (2017) p. 214].

⁹⁷ Weale (1941) p. 28, No. 289

During this same period a fine portrait of Corbetta was made by the French artist and engraver, Henri Gascar.⁹⁸ Corbetta's obituary states that Charles II gave him "his portrait [that of Charles himself rather than Corbetta] studded with diamonds, and a considerable pension".⁹⁹

Corbetta returned to Paris towards the end of his life where he died some time before May 1681 when his obituary appeared in 'Mercure galant'. He seems to have regretted not spending more time in the French capital.

Regret at leaving France having come to him too late, he made two or three journeys to Paris, where he was at pains to print several books of his works, as he had done previously in Flanders, Italy, and elsewhere. He finally returned to France, to signify by his death the regret he felt at not having spent all his life there.¹⁰⁰

It is noteworthy that 'Mercure galant' suggests that Corbetta had works printed "elsewhere" as it is possible that he had had a book printed in Spain rather earlier. A fitting epitaph by Remy Médard, is reproduced at the end of the obituary.

Epitaphe de Francisque Corbet

***Cy gist l'Amphion de nos jours,
Francisque, cet Homme si rare,
Qui fit parler à sa Guitarre
Le vray langage des Amours.***

***Il gagna par son harmonie
Les coeurs des Princes, & des Roys.
Et plusieurs ont crû qu'un Genie
Prenoit le soin de cōduire ses doigts.***

***Passant, si tu n'as pas entendu ces merveilles,
Apprens qu'il ne devoit jamais finir son Sort
Et qu'il auroit charmé la Mort;
Mais, hélas! Par malheur, elle n'a point d'oreilles.***¹⁰¹

Rémy Médard also refers to Corbetta in a less complimentary fashion in the introduction to his own guitar book – 'Pièces de guitarre' printed in 1676

⁹⁸ A copy of the print is in the British Museum, no. 1902-10-11-2227.

⁹⁹ Mercure (1681) ... son Portrait enrichy de Diamans, & une Pension considerable.

¹⁰⁰ Mercure (1681). Le regret d'avoir quitté la France luy estant venu trop tard, il fit deux ou trois voyages à Paris; dans lesquels il eut soin de faire imprimer quelques Livres de sa Composition, comme il avoit déjà fait en Flandre, en Italie, & ailleurs. Il est enfin revenu en France, marquer par sa mort la douleur qu'il avoit de ne luy avoir pas donné toute sa vie.

¹⁰¹ Mercure (1681). Here lies the Amphion of our times, Francisque, so rare a man, who made his guitar to speak the very language of love. / He won with his harmony the hearts of Princes and of Kings, and many believed that a Genie took care to guide his fingers. / Passer-by, if you have not heard these marvels, know that he should never have met his fate, and that he would have charmed Death herself. But alas! Unfortunately, she hath not ears.

I have tried to emulate the style of the celebrated Francisque Corbet which he explained to me over several months with this difference – I found for my pieces a simplicity which he could not take the trouble to give to his.¹⁰²

Robert de Visée, who may also have known Corbetta personally, composed a moving *Tombeau* for him, included in his first guitar book, 'Livre de guittarre', printed by Bonneüil in 1682.

Corbetta was clearly well known enough in France to be mentioned twice by Le Gallois in his letter to Mademoiselle de Regnault de Solier, published in 1680.

Each instrument had, and has still today, Masters of this kind We see Messieurs le Moine, Pinel, de Vise, Hurel, and a few others for the theorbo, the guitar with francisque corbette, Mr. de Valroy, and Mr. de Vise.¹⁰³

It is certain that some of them have had universal recognition, which seems to place them in just possession of the crown; like a Gautier for the lut, a Chambonnier for the harpsichord, a Lambert for the song, a Francisque Corbette for the guitar; and so on.¹⁰⁴

Sadly, the exact date of Corbetta's death and his place of burial are unknown.

¹⁰² No page numbe. Je pretens avoir entierment suivi la maniere du fameux francisque Corbet, qu'il ma communiqué pendant quelques mois avec cette difference que J'ay trouvé pour mes pieces une facilité qu'il ne s'est pas donné la peine de chercher.

¹⁰³ Le Gallois (1680) Chaque instrument a eu, & a encore aujourd'huy des Maîtres de cette nature.... On voit Messieurs le Moine, Pinel, de Visé, Hurel, & quelques autres encore pour le teorbe, la Guittare à francisque corbette, Mr. de Valroy, & Mr. de Visé. Le Gallois (1680) p.62-3.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid p.64-5. Il est certain que quelques-uns d'eux ont eu une approbation universelle, qui semble les mettre dans une juste possession de la couronne; comme un Gautier pour le lut, un Chambonnier por le clavecin, un Lambert pour le chant, un Francisque Corbette pour la guittarre; y ainsi du reste.

Chapter 2 De gli Scherzi Armonici (1639)

Introduction

Corbetta's first book, 'De gli scherzi armonici trouate, e facilitati in alcune curiosissime suonate sopra la chitarra spagnvola' [Harmonic scherzi set out and made easy in some very skilful sonatas for the Spanish guitar] is the least known of his five surviving printed books. A facsimile was published in Italy some years ago but has never been easy to obtain and now seems to be out of print. Most of the music in this book is in *alfabeto* but it also includes his earliest attempts at writing pieces combining strummed chords in *alfabeto* with lute style counterpoint in Italian tablature or "mixed style".

The title page has excited some interest because it features several musical instruments, including two guitars. One of these appears to show the strings passing through a slot in the bridge to attach to a button at the base of the instrument, an arrangement which is often, but certainly not always, associated with wire strung instruments. However, illustrations of this kind are not photographs and are not necessarily reliable sources of what instruments were actually like.

Illustration 2.1 – Detail from the title page showing unusual stringing arrangement



The book was printed in Bologna in 1639 by the printers Giacomo Monti and Carlo Zenero using moveable type for both the pieces in *alfabeto* and the pieces in mixed style. Seven years later in 1646 Monti printed another book which is usually attributed to Carlo Calvi, the writer of the dedication at the beginning.¹ This includes part of the preface from Corbetta's 1639 book, together with abbreviated versions of all his *passacalli* and thirty-three other pieces in *alfabeto*. Monti may have owned the licences for Corbetta's book and would therefore have been entitled to re-use the contents. However, it is important to recognise that Calvi's book is not an original work – something which is acknowledged on the title page. This states that the music has been taken from *duo Eccellenti Professori* – one being Corbetta. Subsequently Monte printed five out

¹ Calvi, Carlo - Intavolatura di chitarra e chitarriglia.

of the seven books of guitar music by Granata² and the guitar books of Pellegrini (1650),³ Coriandoli (1670),⁴ and Asioli (1674/76)⁵ all from moveable type.

‘De gli scherzi armonici’ is dedicated to Count Odoardo Pepoli and two pieces spelling out his name in *alfabeto* - the *Corrente detta l’Odoarda* (page 60) and *Sarabanda detta la Pepoli* (page 61) – are also dedicated specifically to him. A third piece, a *Corrente* (page 62) is dedicated to Count Oguzone Pepoli, Count Odoardo’s brother. Corbetta evidently enjoyed their patronage. The dedication reads as follows

To the Illustrious Signor and respected Patron

Your Grace’s infinite and constant generosity has shown itself by your endorsing with your presence the meagre talent which I possess for playing. I am therefore eager to show the world something of my compositions. I have not known or been able to commend them to any other patron except your Your Grace, whose most enduring name shines like the sun among the nobility and will bestow harmony upon this book when it is exposed to your generous rays in the same way as the sun does to a lifeless statue. And I hope that this little example will serve me for a manifesto, for within it is published the devoted service which I profess to Your Grace to whom I make the deepest reverence praying that God will grant you continual happiness. Bologna 4 September 1639.⁶

Corbetta begins his work in the usual manner by commending himself to his public and asking for their indulgence. The sonatas in the middle of the book to which he refers are his earliest efforts in mixed style but the main part of the book consists of pieces in *alfabeto* which are entirely strummed.

TO THE READER

I must confess that the sonatas which I have included in the middle of this book may be more difficult and complicated [than usual] and in a more delicate and imaginative style. But I was overwhelmed by the desire to introduce myself as far as possible with a public testimony intended to serve whosoever it may through infinite understanding. And also, in order to make my work suited to the ability of those of you who are beginning to study this instrument, I have presented the following sonatas, which I hope will not displease your courteous ears, when they are played at the right speed by skilled hands. I pray you therefore to accept this, the first work of my pen; if it arouses your indulgence and kindness I will make a further

² Granata, Giovanni Battista, *Capricci armonici* (1646). - *Soavi concenti di sonate musicali* (1659). - *Novi capricci armonici musicali* (1674). - *Nuovi soavi concenti di sonate* (1680). - *Armoniosi toni di varie suonate musicale* (1684).

³ Pellegrini, Domenico, *Armoniosi concerti sopra la chitarra spagnvola*.

⁴ Coriandoli, Francesco, *Diverse sonate recercate sopra la chitarra spagnuola*.

⁵ Asioli, Francesco, *Primi scherzi di chitarra*. (Bologna, 1674); *Concerti armonici*.

⁶ L’infinita e solita benignità de V.S. Illustriss. hà mostrato in modo di aggradire con la sua presenza quel poco di talento, che nel suonar mi trovo, che desideroso di far vedere al Mondo alcune delle mie Suonate, non hò saputo, nè potuto raccomandarle ad altro patrocínio, che al saldissimo Nome di V.S. Illustriss. quale come Sole risplende frà Cavalieri, e come Sole darà l’armonia a questo Libro, il quale apunto, quasi Statua insensata si offerisce a’suoi benigni raggi. Et io mi servirò di questa picciola esibizione per manifesto, in cui si publichi la devotissima seruitù da me professata à V.S. Illustriss. alla quale faccio profonda riuerenza, con pregarle da Dio continuata felicità. Bologna li 4 Settembre 1639 Di V.S. Illustriss.

attempt to communicate with you in a second book as much as I have in the first. And so, may you live happily.⁷

This is followed by a sonnet in praise of Corbetta composed by Giacinto Onofrio.

*Your hand, Francesco, which creates new harmonies
upon this wooden Spanish guitar,
though your sweet Tesin⁸ takes pride in it,
was created in heaven not elsewhere.*

*Fish in the sea ne'er darted so lightly
Nor bird in the air moved so swift
No snake on the ground slid more wildly
Nor lightning of Jove descended so fast.*

*How your hand runs over the strings
Of this chattering instrument, strikes and awakes them
More nimbly than wind can rustle the leaves.*

*Do any not know that your hand was created
In the heavens since none of the elements themselves
Have so much lively speed?⁹*

Corbetta's Instructions to the Player

The preliminaries are followed by instructions to the player on how to interpret the notation and play the music. These are brief and not always very clearly worded. They cover some of the same ground as the 'Regole per ben'imparar à sonar la chitarra Spagnola' set out at the beginning of Foscari's 'Il primo, seco[n]do, e terzo libro della chitarra spagnola' and subsequent editions and it can be helpful to compare the two. The earliest edition of Foscari's book is usually dated ca. 1630 for no other reason than that his 'Intavolatura di chitarra spagnola, Libro secondo' was clearly printed in 1629. However, 'Li cinque libri', which is a cumulation of his complete works, has a dedication dated 1640. It seems more likely that he started the work, including writing the introduction, in the late 1630s; as each book was completed it was included in an expanded

⁷ Confesso, che le Suonate, le quali si publicano da me colmezo de queste Stampe potrebbero essere più difficili, & intrecciate con modi più delicati, e capricciosi. Ma violentato il desiderio di dedicarmi quanto prima con publico testimonio seruitore à chi per infiniti capi doueua; & anco per accommodarmi alla capacità de'principianti studiosi di questo Stromento, hò dato fuori le sequenti Suonate, le quali confido, non siano per dispiacere alle tue cortesissime orecchie, quanto dalle mani ammaestrate saranno à tempo suonate, pregandoti in oltre à gradire questo primo tratto della mia penna, che animata poi dal tuo compiacimento, e benignità si sforzerà altre volte, per seruirti, giungere à maggior perfettione di studio per comunicartelo nel secondo Libro quanto prima. E viui allegro.

⁸ Ticina – the rivers which flows through Pavia.

⁹ Qvella tua man, Francesco, ond'a l'Ibero/Musico legno accresci Armonie noue,/Benche il tuo bel Tesin ne vada altero,/Fù nel Ciel fabricata, e non altroue.

Pesce non guizza in mar così leggiere,/Ne' sè presto per aria augel si moue,/E non striscia per terra angue sì fiero,/Nè sì rapido scende ardor di Gioe.

Com'ella di quel garrulo stromento/Scorre le fila, e le percote, ò schiua,/Agil più, che non fà le fronde il vento.

Hor chi non sà, che la tua man deriua/Da le sfere del Ciel, s'ogni elemento/In se non hà velocità sì viua?

Omitted from the basic sequence are the chords represented by M+ (the minor form of Chord M), and & although Chord & is used in the music. One thing which Corbetta does do occasionally which is unusual is to use the chords at the beginning of the sequence which include open courses with figures indicating that they should be played with a *barré* two frets higher. B2 in the following example is the equivalent of &2 and E2 is the chord usually represented by M+ played at the second fret.

Example 2.1 - Passacalli sopra il C, p. 2, 2nd variation

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation consists of a series of chords and stroke marks. Above the staff, the chords are labeled: C, N, E, K, P, G, B, N, C. Below the staff, the chords are labeled: C, 3, N2, E2, 5, K2, P2, G3, B2, N2, 3, C. The stroke marks are indicated by numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.

Corbetta does not include any information about how the pieces in *alfabeto* are notated but presumably by this time most people who tried to play the guitar were familiar with the usual layout for this kind of music using a single line with the *alfabeto* symbols above and stroke marks above or below to indicate the directions of the strum. Within this format Corbetta's pieces are carefully notated with time signatures, bar lines and where necessary, note values above the line to indicate rhythm so that they are easy to read although the printing sometimes leaves a lot to be desired.

However, after briefly explaining *alfabeto* he does go on to explain how single notes inserted between the chords to create a melodic line are notated.

Come anche i numeri, che saranno sotto le botte, s'intenderanna tutte sopra il Canto, e questo faccio per esser più facile, e per non hauere ogni volta ad accomodar più dita per far vna lettera, il che à me pare, che riesca meglio, e più dilicato. Onde bisogna trouando vu C, ò vn M, ò altra lettera con i numeri sotto, come si è detto, tener fermo la lettera, e far suonate il canto, sino che s'arriui all'altra lettera.

Note also that when there are single numbers placed below the stroke marks, these are all intended to be played on the first course [canto] only. And they are played like this so that it is easier and so that it is not necessary to make any changes to accommodate more fingers in order to play a letter/chord which seems to me to create a better and more delicate effect.

Where necessary, when one finds a C, or an M or another letter with a number below, as I have explained, the letter/chord has to be held, and the notes on the first course played until another letter/chord is reached.

He is actually making two separate points made here.

The first is fairly straightforward. If there is a number placed below a stroke mark this is played as a single note on the first course, as shown in Example 2.2 below and not inserted into the chord. The reason for this is that on the one hand it is easier to play – it is not necessary to re-finger the

In this example there is one place where a figure – zero - on the first course does have a down stroke – when Chord C is repeated at the cadence. This indicates that unstopped first course should be substituted for the F sharp as the chord is strummed downwards. This is covered by the second part of the paragraph. Here what appear to be single notes are intended to be inserted into the chord rather than played as single notes. It is comparable to Foscarini's fifth rule.

Si ricorda, che la lettera, che si doura sonare, tanto ordinaria, quanto à più tasti. Tal quale sara notata, tal si dourà toccare, e seguitando appresso quella alcun numero, ò superiose, ò inferiore, si farà ogni sforzo di farlo sentire ò in sù, ò in giù, che sia chiaro, e distinto, e se doppo tal numero si trouerà altra botta senza lettera, s'auuert, che detta botta s'appartenerà alla botta antecedente, la quali regola farà generale a qual si sia sonata, e tra l'altre, propria della Correnta, detta la Favorita, e posta in questo à car. 60.

Remember that the letter must be played in the way that it is notated, whether in the standard position or at a higher fret; as it is notated so it should be played. And if there is a number following after [a letter] either above or below, you should ensure that this can be heard clearly and distinctly, whether the stroke is made up or down. If after any such number you find another stroke without a letter, this stroke belongs to the preceding letter which should be repeated.

This device is used by both Foscarini and Corbetta primarily to introduce a four-three suspension at a cadence as in Examples 2.3a and 2.3b.

Example 2.3a – Folia sopra l'O, p. 19, 2nd part, final bars

The example shows a lute tablature and a corresponding guitar-style staff. The tablature consists of two lines of text: the top line contains letters B, O*, C, and A* separated by vertical bar lines, and the bottom line contains fingerings 1, 1, 2, 1, 1, 3, 1, 1, 1. The guitar staff is in 3/4 time and shows four chords: B, O*, C, and A*. The O* and C chords are marked with a '2' and '3' below them, indicating a 4-3 suspension. The staff ends with a double bar line and repeat signs.

Example 3b – Folia sopra il'D, p. 17, 2nd part, final bars

The example shows a lute tablature and a corresponding guitar-style staff. The tablature consists of two lines of text: the top line contains letters G, C, M, M, N separated by vertical bar lines, and the bottom line contains fingerings 1, 1, 4, 1, 1, 5, 1, 1, 1. The guitar staff is in 3/4 time and shows five chords: G, C, M3, M2, and N2. The C and M3 chords are marked with a '4' and '5' below them, indicating a 4-3 suspension. The staff ends with a double bar line and repeat signs.

Corbetta's *Alfabeto Falso*

As well as the standard *alfabeto* chords Corbetta has included a table of altered chords, referred to as *Alfabeto falso*, represented by the relevant letters with an asterisk. This is described as follows

*De più trouando quelle lettere, che hanno questo segno * sopra, si seruità à della medesima lettera, portando il deto, che più accomoda ò più basso, ò più alto, conforme insegna l'Alfabeto falso.*

Furthermore, when you find letters which have this sign * above them, this indicates the same chord [as that represented by the same letter], altering the fingerings of same, either lower or higher, as is shown in the *Alfabeto falso*.

Foscarini had previously included a table of altered chords using standard letters with a + entitled *alfabeto dissonante* but only five chords are the same in both sources. As Foscarini makes very little use of these in his music, it is difficult to decide how many of them should be interpreted. In particular it is difficult to decide which open courses should be included. Corbetta on the other hand does use chords from his *alfabeto falso* frequently in the pieces which are in strummed style so that it is possible to form a clearer idea of their purpose. In the following illustration open courses which may or may not have been included are shown with lozenge shaped heads.

Illustration 2.3 - Corbetta's *Alfabeto Falso*

The illustration consists of two parts. The top part is a table of letters A through P, each with a finger number (1-4) and a lozenge-shaped head. The bottom part shows musical notation for chords A* through P* on a six-stringed instrument. The notation is arranged in two rows of six chords each. The first row contains A*, B*, C*, D*, E*, and F*. The second row contains G*, H*, I*, L*, N*, and O*. Below the notation, the letters H+, I+, and E+ are listed.

Chord L*

Chord L* is awkwardly fingered consonant form of the C minor chord and is not used in the music. The dissonant form occurs in a characteristic progression followed or preceded by Chord A or Chord O as can be seen in Example 4 below.

Chord A*

In Chord A*, a G major chord, Corbetta has included the zeros on the second and third courses, implying that the fourth and fifth courses should be omitted. This chord is frequently used at a

cadence with the dominant seventh introduced as a passing note as in penultimate bar of Example 2.4. The fifth course, which in the standard Chord A is usually fretted with the first finger, is omitted in order to play the passing note on the first course. (It is of course possible to re-finger the chord, using the second finger on the fifth course but players at the time, grounded in *alfabeto*, may not have regarded this as a suitable option). The open fourth course could actually be included as it belongs to the chord. However, Chord A* often occurs as the final chord at a cadence preceded by a suspended fourth over a D major chord as in Examples 2.8b and 2.9 below where it is also convenient from the point of view of the left-hand fingering to omit the fifth course. Corbetta may also have wanted the key note chord to be in root position if there were low octaves strings on the fourth and fifth courses.

Example 2.4 – Passacalli sopra l’L, p. 6, 2nd variation

In the other *alfabeto falso* chords it is not always clear whether the open courses should be included. Should we assume that because Corbetta has indicated which open courses are to be included in Chord A* they should be omitted elsewhere or should we exercise our own discretion? There seems to be no hard and fast rule.

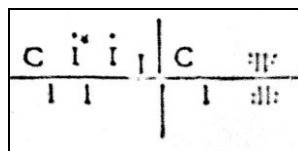
Chords H* and I*

Two chords – H* and I* are straightforward. Both are used to introduce a four- three suspension at a cadence as in Example 2.5a-b. It is obvious that all five courses must be included in Chord H* as all courses are fretted with the *barré*. There is no reason why the open first and fifth courses should not be included in Chord I* as they belong to the chord. Foscarini has included both of these in his *alfabeto dissonante*.

Example 2.5a. Passacalli sopra il G, p.4, 2nd variation/ 2.5b. Chiaccona sopra il C, p.15, 2nd variation

a.

b.



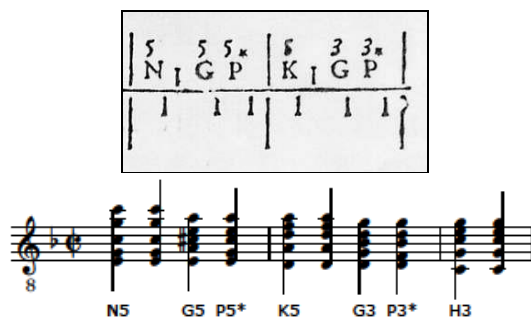
a-b



Chords C* and P*

Two more chords - C* and P* are also straightforward. Both are dominant seventh chords. The open fourth and fifth courses can be included in Chord C* as they belong to the chord. [See Example 2.9 below for an example of C* combined with a four-three suspension]. All five courses must be included in Chord P* as in Example 2.6 as all courses are fretted. It should be noted that here Chord P* is a major rather than a minor chord.

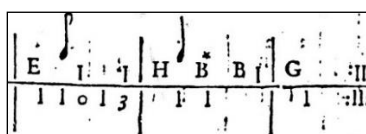
Example 2.6 - Alemana sopra l'E, p.48 – Seconda parte passeggiata, b.8-10



Chord B*

This chord is also used to introduce a four-three suspension at a cadence. If the open first course is included this will result in the fourth sounding simultaneously with its note of resolution. This may be what is intended; it occurs in the music of both Foscarini and Bartolotti and the resulting clash seems to have been acceptable. The open course will be included in the second chord as the fourth resolves

Example 2.7 - Chiaccona sopra il G, p.16, 4th variation, b.3-5





Chord N*

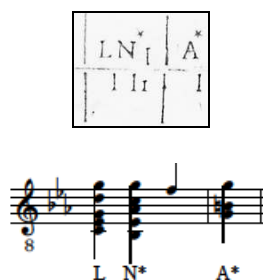
Chord N* is a rather odd chord which includes both the major seventh and the minor ninth; the ninth falls on the fifth course. It is used only in a few places. The fifth course may have been left unfretted because the chord is easier to play like that especially if a passing note is to be introduced. Its harmonic function may vary according to the context. It occurs in its basic form in Example 2.4 at bar 3; the note on the first course is the seventh and resolves downwards as it should. However, in Example 2.8a the note on the first course is really an ascending appoggiatura resolving onto the B flat major chord which follows.

Example 2.8a – Passacalli sopra l'E, p.3 - 3rd variation, b.2-4



In Example 2.8b the chord is a third inversion minor seventh chord on the fourth degree of the scale – F/A flat/C/Eflat; the G on the first course is a descending appoggiatura; strictly speaking the B flat should be omitted.

Example 2.8b – Passacalli sopra l'L, p.6 - 3rd variation, b.3-4



Remaining chords

The remaining chords are ambiguous. Some people have suggested that the open courses should be included regardless of whether the chords make harmonic sense but this does seem questionable.

Chord D*

This chord is used to introduce a four-three suspension at a cadence on A minor as in Example 2.10 below. It is a variant of the E major chord represented by F rather than a variant of the A minor chord represented by D in the standard sequence. If the open fifth course is included this will double the suspended fourth which would sound ugly if octave stringing were used on the fifth course as it would not resolve downwards. This would not be a problem with either re-entrant tunings.

Chord F*

This is the chord on to which Chord D* resolves. As Corbetta makes clear further on (see below) it is used so that a trill can be played on the third course with the third finger rather than the fourth which would have to be used if the fifth course was fretted at the second fret as in the standard chord. It is also one of Foscari's *alfabeto dissonante*. If the open fifth course were to be included this would result in the suspended fourth sounding simultaneously with its note of resolution. As we have seen in Chord B* there may have been no objection to this. However, it is the same as one of Bartolotti's *lettere tagliate* and when it occurs in the characteristic cadential progression shown in Example 2.10 it is clear that the fifth course should be omitted and from the preceding chord which is the equivalent of Chord D*. The fifth course is omitted for reasons of fingering.

Example 2.9 – Bartolotti Libro Primo - Passacaglia p.31 b.4-5



The last three chords are probably intended to be three-part chords.

Chord E*

The fifth course could be included in Chord E* as it belongs to the chord; it is questionable whether the open first course should be included.

Chord G*

The fifth course could be included in Chord G* as it belongs to the chord; it is questionable whether the open first course should be included.

Chord O*

This is variant G minor chord. The open fourth course could be included but the open fifth course would be dissonant.

All of these are illustrated in Example 2.10 in what is a fairly typical passage.

Example 2.10 – Pass’e mezo sopra il D Altra parte passeggiata, p. 42, b.1-6

The image displays musical notation for a passage from a lute manuscript. At the top, a single staff shows a sequence of chords with their constituent notes and fingerings: D (F*), D (G*), E (G*), D (F*), D (O*), C (C*), and A (A*). Below this, two staves of music are shown. The first staff contains six measures of music, each with a chord and its notes: D (F*), D (G*), E (G*), D (F*), D (O*), and C (C*). The second staff contains six measures of music, each with a chord and its notes: D (F*), D (G*), E (G*), D (F*), D (O*), and C (C*). The notation includes various symbols for notes, rests, and fingerings, such as '1', '2', '3', and '4'.

It seems unlikely that the open first course should be included in Chords G* and E* in this example; the whole point of using them seems to be to create a more interesting melodic line and/or a contrast in texture. The most likely explanation is that these three chords represent an intermediate step between music which consists just of strumming all five courses and a more sophisticated style with clearer voice leading and correctly voiced dissonances.

Corbetta concludes this passage with some fairly obvious advice.

Si che sarà nesessario mettersi bene à memoria l'uno, e l'altro Alfabeto, accioche suonando non s'habbia à mendicar le lettere.

It is necessary to memorise each Alfabeto well so that when playing you do not have to search for the chord.

Ornamentation

He then goes on to describe two ways of ornamenting strummed pieces. The first of these is the *repicco*.

Repicco

Particolarmente nelle Ciaccone, oue hò posto per far'il repicco, alcune botte longhe, s'intenderà per quelle il deto grosso, e per l'altre qual deto più aggrada, ma sarà meglio il più lungo, dande le botte vguali tanto in giù, quanto in sù.

Particularly in the Ciaccone, [on page 13-15] where I have indicated that a repicco should be played, there are some long stroke signs. Here it is intended that the thumb should be used,

Beside the F* it will be made on the third course with the third finger and beside the I on the second course with the same [third] finger.

These should not be omitted, although allowances can be made for the convenience of the hand.

In the *alfabeto* music Corbetta only puts in trill signs in a small number of places but he probably intended the player to add them at will (as Montesardo suggests). The most appropriate place to play a trill is on major chord at a cadence combined with a four-three suspension. For this reason, all of Corbetta's examples are major chords, with the exception of Chord E. It is easy to play a trill on Chord E which may be why he has included it. It is possible to play trills on Chord + and Chord D, both minor chords, although there is no obvious reason for doing so. However, because of the way they are fingered it is not practical to play trills on the other basic chords - G, H, M, and N which are major chords, and K, O and P which are minor.

Corbetta does not give any details about how the trill should be played and whether it should start on the main note or upper auxiliary. However, in the pieces in mixed tablature he does sometimes indicate the fret number of the note with which the trill is made.

Foscarini uses the same symbol for a trill which he refers to in his eighth rule. He does not describe how it should be played and it is only used in the pieces in mixed tablature from Book 3 onwards.

Due si trouerà la lettera T: sotto qual si voglia numero, ò lettera, si dourà fare il tremolo à quella corda, doue si trouerà sotto, quand'anco fosse il Zero, nell quali s'haura sempre l'istesso auuertimento.

Eighthly when the letter T: is found below a number or letter, one must play a trill on that string. And even when it is found below a zero, the same instruction should be followed.

Corbetta also uses one other symbol which he hasn't explained which resembles an S turned on its side. This seems to indicate a mordent possibly combined with an ascending appoggiatura.

The pieces in mixed style

Corbetta then goes on to comment briefly on the pieces in mixed style.

Nella Corrente ODOARDA, che vā pizzicata le lettere dicono CONTE ODOARDO, e nella Sarabanda PEPOLI; questo hò fatto per mostrar maggiormente la mia deuotione verso sì degno Caualiere, sì che si dourà hauerui qualche pazienza, e impararla bene, perche se bene io mi sono obligaro à quelle lettere, spero nondimeno, che riuscirà di gusto.

In the Corrente ODOARDA, which is based on the letters which spell out CONTE ODOARDO, and in the Sarabanda PEPOLI, which I have composed principally to show my devotion towards this worthy gentleman, one must have patience and practice hard, because I am much constrained by these letters, but I hope nevertheless that the pieces will give enjoyment.

The need to use the letters does result in some of the chords being in awkward positions and the intervening two- and three-part writing is very basic.

Strummed chords notated in tablature

Corbetta makes one other point about the strummed chords which are notated in tablature rather than with *alfabeto* letters – that only the notes indicated by numbers are to be played.

In questa, e nell'altre parimente pizzicate que'numeri, che hanno vna botta sopra, ricercano i deti sopra l numeri, e di poi si farà la botta, senza toccar altre corde, che quelle, sopra le quali saranno i deti, che altrimenti non raria bell'effetto.

In this and in other similar pizzicato pieces in tablature, where there is a stroke above [a chord notated in tablature rather than represented by alfabeto], the fingers must be placed on the numbers and then the stroke made there, without striking any other strings apart from these, otherwise it will not make a beautiful effect.

This is comparable to Foscari's sixth rule.

Si osseuerà la Corrente, detta Nuove Inventione, posta à car.68., nella quale, com'anco in altre simili si dourà auuertire di obligarsi a sonar quelli stessi numeri, che saranno notati, senza aggiungerui, ò scemarui cosa alcuna, altrimenti in vece di dilettere, si consonderà chi le sona, e chi le sente;

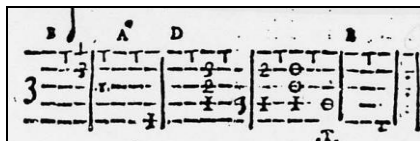
Observe that in the Corrente, detta Nuoua Inventione placed on page 68, you must play [only] those same numbers which are notated without adding or subtracting any thing and do the same in other similar pieces. Otherwise in place of delight it will confuse whoever plays or listens.

Open courses – to include or not to include?

There are in fact very few three- or four-part chords notated in tablature which are to be strummed and in most cases it is fairly obvious that only the notes represented by numbers are to be included. However, the opening and closing bars of the *Chiaccona* on page 64 do pose a few questions, not only because it is not always clear which open courses should be included in strummed chords but also because it is not always clear whether passing notes should be played as single notes or incorporated into the chords.

In Example 2.12a it is to be assumed that the altered note on the fourth course in the first bar (marked with a star) is to be incorporated into Chord B. The chord following Chord D should be played as written. The open third course must be included in the first chord in the next bar if it is to be strummed. This is fairly obvious which is why Corbetta has not put in the zero. He has put in the zeros in the next chord because it is not quite so obvious that these courses should be included. As Corbetta has not included strum marks above the single figures in bars 2, 3 and 4 of the example these should be played as single notes. So far so good.

Example 2.12a – Chiaccona, p. 64, bars. 1-4





The next four bars are not quite so straight forward. It is to be assumed that the note on the first course of Chord B at the beginning is to be altered to G, played at the third fret. If the advice which Corbetta has given previously is followed, the single figures with up-strokes between Chord M3 in bar 2 and Chord A* (one of Corbetta's *alfabeti falsi*) in bar 4 and after Chord H3 in bar 2 will be played as single notes. The note F stopped at the first fret on the first course in bar 4 should be included in Chord A* on the down stroke. In the last bar there is another of Corbetta's *alfabeti falsi*, G* - a three-part chord. So the passage could be played as in Example 2.12b.

However, some people might argue that in the context all the passing notes should be incorporated into the chords as in Example 2.12c. This is physically possible but not easy to do, as Corbetta has pointed out in his introduction. This leaves us in a bit of a quandary. As he is now using mixed tablature, with the note values placed above the staff without stroke marks if they are to be played as single notes, should we assume that his instructions no longer apply here and that a different interpretation is called for? Or is this just an inconsistency in the notation which was still at an evolutionary stage?

Example 2.12b-c – Chiaccona, p. 64, bars. 7-8



Example 2.12b.



Example 2.12 c.



There are similar ambiguities in the closing bars of the pieces which could be played either as in Example 2.11d or as in Example 2.11e. (It is not clear either whether the open first course should be included in the first chord of bar 2, marked with a * in the example).

Example 12.2 d-e – Chiaccona, p. 64, last 5 bars



Example 2.12 d



Example 2.12 e



Common sense suggests that in this kind of situation it is reasonable for players to choose whichever they prefer. If they decide to repeat each variation, they might wish to vary it on repetition. The fact that Corbetta has only indicated that the first variation should be repeated should not be taken too literally.

Staff notation

Corbetta concludes with another fairly obvious remark.

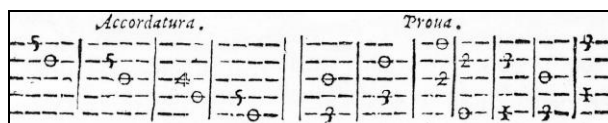
De le note musicali non parlo, come anche di qualche regola nelle pizzicate, perche queste riferbo al secondo Libro, e quelle sono per se stesse manifeste.

I will not speak of musical notation, or of other rules of playing pizzicate, because I reserve this for the second book, in which I will explain all this.

Tuning instructions

Right at the end Corbetta has included two tablature charts for checking whether the guitar is in tune without any written explanation. These comprise the standard *Accordatura* found in many Italian guitar books and a *Prova*. Neither of these specifies whether the intervals between the courses are octaves or unisons.

Illustration 2.4 – Corbetta's tablature tuning checks



It is sometimes argued that the intervals in the *Accordatura* must be unisons and those in the *Prova*, octaves. With the re-entrant tuning, the fourth course stopped at the fifth fret will sound an octave above the third course rather than in unison with it. They can therefore refer only to an instrument with octave stringing on both the fourth and fifth courses and clearly indicate that all the music in the book is intended to be played with this method of stringing. However, in practice the checks work perfectly well whichever method of stringing is used.¹⁰

The charts are followed by verbal instructions for matching up guitars of four different sizes to play in consort.

Per accordar quattro Chitarre di concerto, prima s'accorderà la terza corda della picciola Chitarra con la quinta della mezzana, e con la quarta della più grande si farà unissono, toccando poi la terza dell'altra Chitarra mezzana con la seconda corda della grande si farà l'istesso, sì che la picciola con la grande farà accordata in quinta, e una mezzana in quarta, e l'altra in terza Toccando poi la picciola sopra l'A, la grande sopra il C, una mezzana sopra l'I, e l'altra sopra l'H, faranno ottimo concerto..

To tune four guitars in concert, first tune the third course of the small guitar with the fifth course of the medium size one, and with the fourth course of the largest so that they make a unison. Then playing the third of the other medium sized guitar with the second course of the largest will make the same. Thus, the smallest and the largest will be tuned a fifth apart, one medium size a fourth and the other a [major] third above the largest.

Then playing the chord A on the smallest, C on the largest, I on one medium size one and H on the other medium sized one will sound in concert.

Unlike the instructions in the books of Colonna and Foscarini,¹¹ Corbetta's are calculated consistently from the treble strings on the fourth and fifth courses of the guitars. The third course of the small guitar can only be in unison with the high octave string on the fifth course of the medium sized guitar and the high octave string on the fourth course of the large guitar. Arguably the instructions could imply the re-entrant tuning, but in the context it is not really necessary to mention whether or not there are bourdons on the fourth and fifth courses.

Assuming that the first medium sized guitar is tuned to the standard pitch with e' for the first course, the four instruments would be tuned as follows:

¹⁰ For further discussion see Chapter 8.

¹¹ Foscarini has copied his instructions from Colonna's 'Intavolatura di chitarra alla spagnuola' (1620). He included them originally in his 'Intavolatura di chitarra spagnola. Libro secondo' (1629) where they were misprinted - a fact which is often overlooked - so that they do not actually make sense in one place. The error is uncorrected in the later editions. The 1629 book includes two pieces for two guitars tuned a tone apart and one for three to play in consort. The later books includes one piece (on p. 70) for two guitars a tone apart.

Example 2.13 - Corbetta's Four Guitars

Small

Medium 1

Medium 2

Large

A I H C

S M1 M2 L

Corbetta has not included any music specifically for four guitars to play in consort. The relative pitches of the instruments are the same as those in Colonna and Foscari, excluding the second medium sized guitar.

Conclusion

Corbetta's instructions are sensible and helpful but they are not comprehensive and do not cover every eventuality. The fact that he has mentioned one thing rather than another does not indicate that the music must be played in one way only. There is plenty of scope for the player to use his own imagination and common sense when interpreting the notation.

For practical reasons all musical examples in this section have been transcribed with the notes on the fourth and fifth courses in the lower octave only. It is not easy to show notes which are duplicated in unison clearly when transcribing pieces which are entirely alfabeto into staff notation and it is not easy for the reader to follow the music when notated in this way. However, I think it is important to stress that music in alfabeto works perfectly well with any method of stringing. In this context the chord inversions are completely irrelevant. There is nothing in this book to suggest that any specific method of stringing was intended. For his music in mixed style the method of stringing which he describes in the the preface to 'La guitarre royale' (1671) is the most suitable and will be used for musical examples in subsequent sections.

Contents

The contents fall into three sections – pieces from the basic *alfabeto* repertoire (page 1-59), pieces in mixed tablature (page 60-65) and individual pieces in *alfabeto* (page 66-75) including some which are probably arrangements of vocal pieces or accompaniments for same. The pieces

in second and third sections are individually dedicated to people presumably of some importance at the time.

1. Pieces in *alfabeto* (subheadings from the list of contents)

[Passacalli diuersi sopra tutte le lettere dell'Alfabetto]

Each consists of the basic sequence of chords and two variations. All are in triple time.

- p.1 Passacalli sopra la +
- p.1 Passacalli sopra l'A
- p.2 Passacalli sopra il B
- p.2 Passacalli sopra il C
- p.3 Passacalli sopra il D
- p.3 Passacalli sopra l'E
- p.4 Passacalli sopra l'F
- p.4 Passacalli sopra il G
- p.5 Passacalli sopra l'H
- p.5 Passacalli sopra l'I
- p.6 Passacalli sopra il K
- p.6 Passacalli sopra l'L
- p.7 Passacalli sopra l'M
- p.7 Passacalli sopra l'N
- p.8 Passacalli sopra l'O
- p.8 Passacalli sopra il P
- p.9 Passacalli sopra il Q
- p.9 Passacalli sopra l'R
- p.10 Passacalli sopra l'S
- p.10 Passacalli sopra il T
- p.11 Passacalli sopra l'V
- p.11 Passacalli sopra l'X
- p.12 Passacalli sopra il Y
- p.12 Passacalli sopra il Z

[Chiaccone passeggiate, con repicchi sopra A, B, C, & G]

Each consists of the basic sequence of chords and several variations ending with a *repicco* variation. All are in a major key and in triple time.

- p.13 Chiaccona sopra l'A
- p.14 Chiaccona sopra il B
- p.15 Chiaccona sopra il C
- p.16 Chiaccona sopra il G

[Folie sopra D, E, O, X, & +, con sue parti variate]

Each consists of the basic sequence of chords and a *Seconda parte passeggiata*. All are in a minor key and in triple time.

- p.17 Folìa sopra il D
- p.18 Folìa sopra l'E
- p.19 Folìa sopra l'O

- p.20 Folìa sopra l'X
- p.21 Folìa sopra la +

[Spagnoletti sopra O, D, E & + con sue parti variate]

Each consists of the basic sequence of chords and an *altro modo passeggiata*. All are in minor keys and in triple time.

- p.22 Spagnoletto sopra l'O
- p.23 Spagnoletto sopra il D
- p.24 Spagnoletto sopra l'E
- p.24 Spagnoletto sopra la +

[Ruggieri sopra A, B, C, & G, con sue parti variate]

Each comprises the basic sequence of chords, an *altra parte passeggiata* and a Corrente. All are in major keys; the main sections are in common time and the corrente in triple time.

- p.26 Rugiero sopra l'A
- p.26 Sua Corrente
- p.27 Rugiero sopra il B
- p.27 Sua Corrente
- p.28 Ruggiero sopra il C
- p.28 Sua Corrente
- p.29 Rugiero sopra il G
- p.29 Sua Corrente

[Pavaniglie sopra O, D, & E, con sue parti variate]

Each comprises the basic sequence of chords and a *altra parte passeggiata*. All are in minor keys.

- p.30 Pavaniglia sopra l'O
- p.31 Pavaniglia sopra il D
- p.32 Pavaniglia sopra l'E

The pieces from here onwards are arranged as sequences of dance movements based on the same material. They may have been intended to be danced to.

[Pass', e mezo per b molle sopra E, con sua parte variata]

- p.33 Pass', e mezo per b molle sopra l'E
- p.34 Altra parte passeggiata
- p.35 Sua Corrente
- p.36 Sua Gagliarda
- p.36 Sua Corrente

[Pass', e mezo per b molle sopra O, con sua parte variata]

- p.37 Pass', e mezo per b molle sopra l'O
- p.38 Altra parte variata
- p.39 Sua Corrente
- p.40 Sua Gagliarda

p.41 Sua Corrente

[Pass', e mezo per b molle sopra D, con sua parte variata]

p.41 Pass' e mezo sopra il D
 p.42 Altra parte passeggiata
 p.43 Sua Corrente
 p.44 Gagliarda del Pass'e mezo
 p.45 Sua Corrente

[Mantouana con sua parte variata]

p.45 Mantouana
 p.46 Seconda parte variata
 p.47 Sua Corrente

[Alemana sopra E, con sua parte variata]

p.48 Alemana sopra l'E
 p.48 Seconda parte passeggiata
 p.49 Sua Corrente
 p.49 La medesima passeggiata

[Alemana sopra O, con sua parte variata]

p.50 Alemana sopra l'O
 p.50 Seconda parte passeggiata
 p.51 Sua Corrente
 p.51 La medesima passeggiata

[Aria di Fiorenza sopra A, con sua parte variata, & altra in repicco]

p.52 Aria di Fiorenza sopra l'A
 p.52 Altra parte passeggiata
 p.53 Altra parte in repico
 p.55 Corrente del Ballo

[Aria di Fiorenza sopra G, con sua parte variata]

p.56 Aria di Fiorenza sopra il G
 p.57 In altro modo passeggiato
 p.57 Sua Corrente

[Pass'e mezo per B quadro sopra A]

p.58 Pass'e mezo per B quadro sopra l'A

[Bergamasco]

p.59 Bergamasco

2. Pieces in mixed style – details in brackets from list of contents.

- p.60 Corrente detta l'ODOARDA [pizzicata, e battuta]
- p.61 Sarabanda detta la PEPOLLO [pizzicata, e battuta]
- p.62 Corrente [pizzicata]. All'Illustriss. Sig. il Sig. Conte Oguzone Pepoli.
- p.63 Corrente [con sua Sarabanda. pizz. e batt.]. All'Illustriss. il Sig. Conte Buonaparte Ghisiglieri
- p.63 Sua Sarabanda
- p.64 Chiaccona [pizz. e batt.]. All'Illustriss. Sig. il Sig. Comendator Pompeo Vizani
- p.65 Sarabanda [pizz. e batt.]. All'Illustriss. Sig. il Sig. Marco Michielli
- p.65 Sarabanda la Marinetta [pizz. e batt.].

3. Individual pieces in *alfabeto* - details in brackets from list of contents.

- p.66 Corrente. All'Illustriss. Sig. il Sig. Giorgio Biava
- p.66 L'Anturlurù, [aria Francese]. All'Illustriss. Sig. il Sig. Carlo Maffei
- p.67 Corrente. Al Molt'Illustr. & Molto Revendo Sig. Monsig. Vezoli
- p.68 Corrente. Al Molt'Illustr. Sig. il Sig. Don Carlo Gaiangos
- p.68 Corrente. Al Molt'Illustr. Sig. il Sig. Gio. Battista Giussani
- p.69 Và pur superba vâ. Al Molt'Illustr. Sig. il Sig. Francesco Periz.
- p.69 Sarabanda. Al Molt'Illustr. Sig. Il Sig. Sebastiano Eucedo
- p.70 Corrente. Al Molto Rever. Padre Filippo Lachini
- p.71 Corrente. Al Molt'Illustr. Sig. Il Sig. Giacinto Galerati
- p.72 La Betta, [aria Venetiana]. Al Molt'Illustr. Sig. il Sig. Gio. Pietvo Gira
- p.72 Sarabanda. Al Molt'Illustr. Sig. il Sig. Giulio Fè
- p.73 Balletto fatto nella Bariera sopra la Sala di Bologna [con sua corrente].¹²
- p.73 Sua Corrente
- p.74 Codognella [aria Venetiana]. Al Molt'Illustr. Sig. il Sig. Carlo Caueueri
- p.74 La mia donna importuna [aria Venetiana]. Al Molt'Illustr. Sig. il Sig. Gioseffo Corbetta
- p.75 Sua Chiaccona
- p.75 La Moda. [aria Venetiana]. Al Molt'Illustr. & Virtuosiss. Sig. il Sig. Gioseffo Maffezzoni
- p.75 Sua Chiaccona

¹² The Sala di Bologna was built in 1630 by the papal legate Bernardino Spada who dedicated it Urban VIII, the pope who had created him a cardinal. Today, it houses the main city library on the Piazza Maggiore.

Table 2.1 Concordances between Corbetta 1639 and Calvi		
Title	Corbetta 1639	Calvi
Passacalli diuersi sopra tutte le lettere dell' Alfabetto	p.1-12	p.7-9 The first variation with the basic chord sequence only of each passacaglia
Chiacconna sopra l'A	p.13	p.9 1st two variations only
Chiacconna sopra l'B	p.14	p.9 1st two variations only
Chiacconna sopra il C	p.15	p.9 1st two variations only
Chiacconna sopra il G	p.16	p.10 1st & 4 th variations only
Folia sopra il D	p.17	p.10 1st part only
Folia sopra l'E	p.18	p.10 1st part only
Spagnoletto sopra l'D	p.23	p.10 1st part only
Spagnoletto sopra l'E	p.24	p.11 1st part only
Ruggiero sopra l'A	p.26	p.11 1st part only
Sua Corrente	p.26	p.11
Ruggiero sopra il C	p.28	p.12 1st part only
Sua Corrente	p.28	p.12
Pavaniglia sopra l'D	p.31	p.12 1st part only
Pavaniglia sopra l'E	p.32	p.13 1st part only
Pass'e mezo sopra il D	p.41	p.14 1st part only
Gagliarda del Pass'e mezo	p.44	p.15 No note values
Mantouana	p.45	p.15 No note values. 1st part only
Sua Corrente	p.47	p.15
Alemana sopra l'E	p.48	p.16 1st part only
Sua Corrente	p.49	p.17
Alemana sopra l'O	p.50	p.17 1st part only
Sua Corrente	p.51	p.17
Aria di Fiorenza sopra l'A	p.52	p.18 1st part only
Corrente del Ballo	p.55	p.18
Aria di Fiorenza sopra il G	p.56	p.19 1st part only
Sua Corrente	p.57	p.20
Pass' e mezo per B quadro sopra l'A	p.58	p.13
Bergamasco	p.59	p.21
L'anturlurù	p.66	p.24
Corrente	p.68	p.22 No note values
Sarabanda	p.69	p.23 No note values
Va pur superba va	p.69	p.24 No note values
La betta	p.72	p.23 No note values

Passacalli + 33 pieces

Chapter 3 Varii Capriccii per la Ghittara spagnvola (1643)

Introduction

Corbetta's second book, 'Varii capriccii per la ghittara spagnola', has no imprint, but his dedication to Carlo II, Duke of Mantua and Monferrato, is dated from Milan, 30th October 1643. Corbetta was apparently attached in one way or another to the court in Mantua over a number of years which accounts for the dedication. A facsimile of the copy in the Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale in Bologna was published by Studio per Edizioni Scelte (SPES) in 1980 with an introduction in Italian by Paolo Paolini.

The main part of the book is printed from engraved plates. All the music is in "mixed" style combining lute style counterpoint with strummed chords notated in Italian tablature with *alfabeto* for the basic five-part chords. It comprises a cycle of *passacagli* going from F minor to E major, preceded by a short *Toccata* in F minor. There are eight "suites" comprising an *allemanda*, one or two *corrente*, and a *sarabanda*; the last of these is in *scordatura* – the guitar is tuned either d' b flat g d'/d a or e' c a e'/e b depending on whether you wish to tune the first course down a tone or the fifth course up a tone; the former is more likely since it involves re-tuning only two courses rather than four. The solo music ends with a *folia*. There are brief instructions on accompanying a bass line and two "Sinfonias".

The title page is on folio 1r. In the British Library copy horns have been added to the two angels holding up the banner bearing the title and coat of arms of Mantua. On the blank verso of the British Library copy there is a hand written note which reads *Libro stupendiss.^{mo} per suonar La Chitarra*. Evidently whoever originally owned the book was impressed with the contents!

On folio 2r Corbetta's typeset dedication to the Duke of Mantua reads as follows

Serenissimo Signore

Here at the feet of Your Highness, these my pieces for guitar, knowing the impotence of their parent, humbly beg for your special protection. They are of such a kind that as they are born without favour they cannot flourish without your favour. I will therefore say that they have been born with fortune on their brow and that they have understood how to choose a protector who, if they meet with adverse circumstances, will be able to sustain them with his power and will not be offended by any minor blemish.

Believe me also Your Highness that in accepting them you will make me happier than the Citharist Euonimus who broke a string by accident when playing against Aristonus, and was immediately provided by the Gods with assistance in the form of a Cicada. This produced such a delicate sound that he was judged the winner over his adversary at the end of the contest, and won the right to be commemorated with a statue.

I hope therefore that Your Highness will condescend to accept under your protection these pieces which are dedicated to you knowing that they would never have been composed if it were not in gratitude for your singular grace. And I bow to you humbly in reverence.

For Your Most Serene Highness – Your most humble and devoted servant, Francesco Corbetta.¹

According to myth Eunonimos was a citharist from the ancient Greek colony in the south of Italy. Whilst he was competing against the citharist Aristonas in Delphi, a string of his cithara broke. A cicada or grasshopper joined in and continued the melody with its "song". There is or was a statue of Eunonimos with the cicada commemorating this contest in his native town of Locri in southern Italy.

Corbetta's dedication is followed on folio 2v by a poem addressed to the Duke of Mantua.

AL SERENISSIMO SIGNOR DVCA DI MANTOA

***Royal Lord, who from your pure blood,
At this most beautiful age, makes yourself a mirror,
And in it reflecting your serene rays,
Know that you outrun the Heroes in Heaven.***

***If you cast your eye o'er them², at least
Let not your ear ignore my sweet lays,
I play for the pleasure of others, but my own taste
I declare enough with this dry wood³.***

***O may your kind favour accept me,
Though I'm not the greatest pride of Thrace⁴,
Nor he who brought every boulder to Thebes.⁵***

***Perchance it may be that your beautiful Mantua,
Which gave birth to the greatest Swan of Lazio.⁶
Will give to my music the quality of song.⁷***

¹ Serenissimo Signore. Ecco à piedi di V.A. questi miei parti de Chitarra, che conoscendo l'impotenza del loro genitore humilmente chieggono da lei particular protettione. Sò, che chi è nato à fauorire non può se non contribuire fauori, dou'io potrò ben dire essere nati essi con la fortuna in fronte, mentre hanno saputo eleggere un tanto protettore, che encontrando in qualche auuerso incespo, saprà egli col suo potere così bene sostenergli, che in un minimo neo non resteranno offesi. Credami pur V.A. ch'io ne anderò così glorioso, che di gran lunga mi terrò più felice di quell'Euonimo Citarista, il qualesonando à garra con Aristone, e frantasegliper accidente vna corda sù da gli Dij proueduto in vn'istante di vna Cicala, quale à mancamento di quella formò così delicato sono, che giudicato vincitore dell'auuersario nel fine dell'arringo, meritò di essergli inalzata vna statoa. Degnisi dunque V.A. di accettargli in protettione, mentre glieli dedico, sapendole dire, che non formeranno mai sono, che non sia in ringratiamento d'vna gratia tanto singolare; Et inchinandome humilmente la riuerisco. Milano di 20 Ottobre 1643. De Vostra Altezza Serenissima. Humilissimo. & diuotissimo Seruitore. Francesco Corbetta.

² i.e. his pieces

³ i.e. his guitar

⁴ i.e. Orpheus.

⁵ i.e. Amphion. He and his twin brother Zethus became rulers of Thebes. According to Homer he played the lyre with such skill that his music moved in to place the stones needed to build the wall of Thebes.

⁶ i.e. Virgil who was born in Mantua. Lazio is the area of southern Italy with Rome as its principal city.

⁷ Regio Signor, che del tuo Sangue chiaro, / Ne la più bella età, specchio ti fai, / E in lui volgendo i tuoi Sereni rai, / Sai precorrer gli Eroi, ch'al Ciel s'alzaro.

Se giri l'occhio in loro, almeno auaro / Non sia l'orecchio à miei sonori lai, / Scherzo sù i gusti altrui, mà in propri guai / Con quest'arido legno assai dichiaro.

O se m'acetta il tuo fauor benigno, / Bench'io non sia di Tracia il maggior vanto, / O' quel, che trasse à Tebe ogni macigno. Forse auerrà, che la tua bella Manto, / Che partori del Lazio il più gran Cigno. / Doni ai mio suon la qualità del canto.

It is not clear whether this *soneto* is by Corbetta himself.

From there onwards the engraved plates are numbered 3- 81.

On page 3 there is an engraved portrait of Corbetta giving his age as 28 years. In the British Library copy horns have again been added to the two angels flanking the composer. Corbetta's advice to the player is on page 4. In the facsimile edition this is engraved, but in the British Library's copy it has been typeset which suggests it may belong to a later printing. It is certainly more legible. At the end the previous owner has commented *bene, bene, bene, bene, bene, benissimo!*

On page 5 the contents are listed in the *Tauola dell'Opera*.

This book includes very little in the way of instructions, because as Corbetta says, it is not intended for beginners, who need to read the instructions in his first book 'De gli Scherzi armonici' (1639).
Advice to the player

*Eccoli ó uirtuoso il mio secondo Librò gia promessoti nel mio primo, qual'in esso uedrai e sentirai altro modo perfetionato per Sonar questo Stromento, tanto da mé gradito.
Ma auerti che se tú non hai Principio nonne cauerai niente poiche per i principianti diedi fuori il mio primo non mancare dunque se desideri suonar bene questi miei deboli capricii, Esser studioso, e paziente nel farli che spero nè restarai a pieno soddisfatto.*

***Here, virtuoso is my second book which I promised you in my first in which you will see and understand another more perfect manner of playing this instrument, which gives me so much pleasure.
But note that if you do not know the first principles, you will gain nothing from this because [it will not be understood] by the beginners without reference to my first [book]. Now in order to play my feeble caprices well, it is necessary to be studious, and patient, and by being so I hope you will find them satisfactory.***

As we have seen, the instructions in his first book are not actually very detailed but it is helpful to bear them in mind when considering the music this book.

His first comment is about the *passacaglias*

Ho posto in queste sedeci Lettere ancho sedeci Pasachalli per ciascheduna Lettera con l'attacco d'una Lettera in l'altra;

I have also placed on these sixteen letters sixteen Pasachalli, one based on each letter, with a link from one letter to another.

This is a reference to the sixteen *passacaglie* which, after the opening Toccata in F minor, make up the first part of the book. The first starts in F minor and ends in E flat major. Minor and major sets of variations alternate through the keys following the "circle of fifths" until we get to the end with one that starts and finishes in E major. Corbetta's series is less comprehensive than that in Bartolotti's 'Libro primo di chitarra spagnola' (1640); wisely he has omitted the keys with more than four flats or sharps which are not very effective on the guitar. His comment about the link from one letter to the next does not make it clear whether they are to be played as a continuous sequence, but common sense suggests that there would be nothing wrong with playing only one of them. Alternatively, the player could choose a minor/major

pair. The final variation which serves as a link could be omitted in each case. He then continues with a brief note about notation

& auerti che delli numeri, che vedrai sopra le righe, quali dinotano le corde, e li sarà la botta appresso; la batterai più dolce, è delicata, che sii possibile quando non anderà picigata:

And note that if there is a stroke beside the numbers which you will see on the [tablature] lines, which represent the strings, with the stroke marks beside them, you will strike them as sweetly and delicately as possible when not playing pizzicato;

This simply refers to the usual stroke marks which are placed down or up from the lowest line to indicate the direction in which chords notated in tablature should be strummed.

The next comment is rather convoluted

e le lettere che averanno presso qual che numero con la Botta auanti farai la lettera é giungerai col deto che piu ti accomoda Sopra quel numero e poi la batterai.

And [when] the letters have any number beside them with the stroke beneath, you will form the letter and stop it [the note indicated by the number] with whichever finger is most convenient and then you will strike it [the chord].

All he is trying to say here is that there will sometimes be auxiliary notes, usually a four-three suspension, inserted into the chords as in Example 3.1.

Example 3.1 – Sop. F, p.38, b. 23-24



This is all that he has to say about the notation.

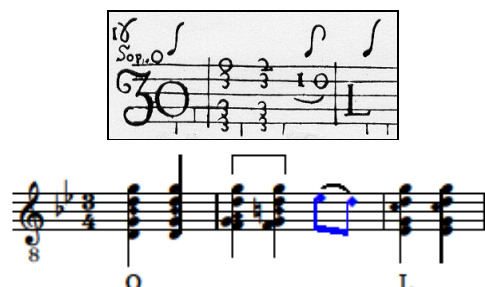
On page 6 he has included a table of the usual *alfabeto* chords - +, A-Z, &, M*2 and M*3 set out in Italian tablature.

Open courses – to include or not to include?

The music in this book is more complex than the few short pieces in mixed style included in his 1639 book and interpreting it raises a number of issues. First of all, it must be said that Corbetta does often put in the zeros representing the open courses where it might not be obvious that they should be included although he does not do so consistently. In Example 3.2 he has put in the zero on the fifth course in the first chord of the second bar because otherwise it would not be clear that it should be included. He has

however left the middle line blank both in this chord and the one that follows although in each case the third course must be included if the chord is to be strummed.

Example 3.2 – Sop. O, p.16, b.1-4



There are a number of places where we have what at first sight appear to be examples of only two notes which are to be strummed. These can usually be augmented to three notes without difficulty. In the first bar in Example 3.3a Corbetta has included the zeros in the first chord for obvious reasons, but he has left the third line blank in the next chord although it must be included if the chord is to be strummed. The first chord in the third bar appears to consist of only two notes. However, there is no reason why the open fourth course should not be included here and this is probably what Corbetta intended. It is a standard cadential progression – a minor seventh chord on the fourth degree of the scale followed by a four-three suspension. The open first course should not be included because it does not belong to the chord. In a later variation which is in lute style, shown in Example 3.3b, Corbetta has indicated that this is in fact the correct bass note, although in the interests of a coherent bass line the G sharp in the preceding bar should really be followed by A (shown in brackets).

Example 3.3a – Sop. D, p.24, b.25-28



Example 3.3b – Sop. D, p.24, b.52-53



In the second bar of Example 3.4, taken from the same piece, Corbetta has included another short passage which also appears to consist of two-part “chords” to be strummed. The underlying harmony is different here; the first chord is a first inversion of the dominant seventh which should resolve onto an A minor chord. The first course can be included in all three chords, although it might be argued that this results in a less varied melodic line. (The second course will also be included in the third chord).

Example 3.4 – Sop. D, p.24, b.44-46



Example 3.5 illustrates a slightly different problem. Corbetta has indicated that the notes on the second beat of the second bar [following Chord N3] are to be strummed. It seems unlikely that he intends the open third course to be included here because this simply duplicates the note on the fourth course, is awkward to play and sounds feeble. If the *barré* is held throughout the whole passage so that the third course is stopped at the third fret in the chord this would result in a much more effective harmonic progression involving the first inversion of the diminished triad on the leading note. This would be quite in keeping with Corbetta’s harmonic vocabulary.

Example 3.5 – Sop. G, p. 18, b. 9-12



It is of course possible that the staccato mark has been included in error and that the two notes are meant to be played pizzicato in the same way as the slurred notes which follow.

There are other places where either by accident or design Corbetta has not filled in the appropriate ciphers, the assumption being that notes from the previous chord should be repeated. In places, the notes to be included in the strum are ambiguous. In Example 3.6 in the second bar, the 5 on the first course has a stroke mark beneath it although it doesn’t make sense to play it as a single note. The notes stopped on the second, third and fourth courses of the previous chord could be included as in a. However, as this chord will be played with a *barré* at the second fret, a possible alternative would be to play an A major chord including only the notes stopped by the *barré* as in b.

Example 3.6a-b – Sop. I, p. 34, b.15-17

To strum or not to strum?

Corbetta does not always distinguish clearly between strumming and pizzicato. In his 1639 books he has made it clear that at least in the *alfabeto* pieces, figures on the first course between chords are to be played as single notes.

Come anche i numeri, che saranno sotto le botte, s'intenderanna tutte sopra il Canto, e questo faccio per esser più facile, e per non hauere ogni volta ad accomodar più dita per far vna lettera, il che à me pare, che riesca meglio, e più dilicato.

Note also that when there are single numbers placed below the stroke marks, these are all intended to be played on the first course [canto] only. And they are played like this so that it is easier and so that it is not necessary to make any changes to accommodate different fingerings in order to play a chord/ letter. In this way it seems to me to create a better and more delicate effect. [1639]

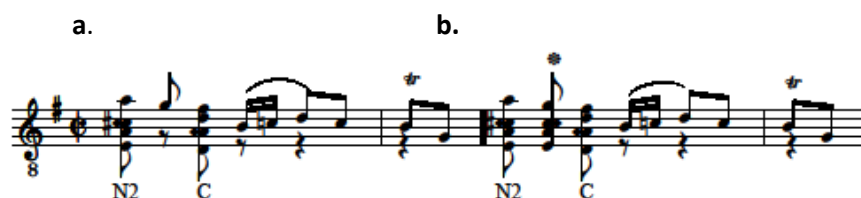
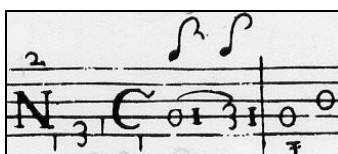
In the 1643 book he tends to leave out the stroke marks if notes between chords are to be played singly but inevitably, he does not do so consistently. In Example 3.7 there are no stroke marks under the notes between the chords.

Example 3.7 - Sop. V, p. 36, bar 54-56

However, in Example 3.8 he has put a stroke mark under the passing note following Chord N2 although it is impossible to play it whilst holding the full chord. Chord N2 is played with a *barré* at the second fret and the fifth course is stopped at the fourth fret with the second finger. The passing note on the first

course also has to be stopped with the second finger. The only convenient way to include it in the chord would be to leave the fifth course unfretted or omit it. The dissonance which occurs if the fifth course is left unfretted is typical of *alfabeto* music.

Example 3.8a-b - Almanda, p. 40, bar 13-14



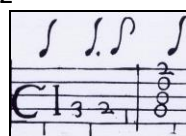
He is somewhat inconsistent in the way he notates what appears to be the same effect. In Example 9 the same cadence occurs four times.

- b.2 the C# has a strum mark but no trill
- b.9 there is a trill but no strum mark
- b.21 there is both a strum mark and a trill. – and the quaver is missing!

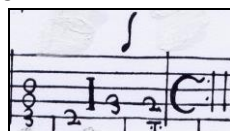
The C# is probably intended to be played as a single note each time.

Example 3.9 – Sop. C, p.30, b.2/9/21

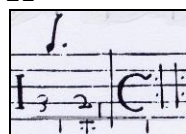
Bar 2

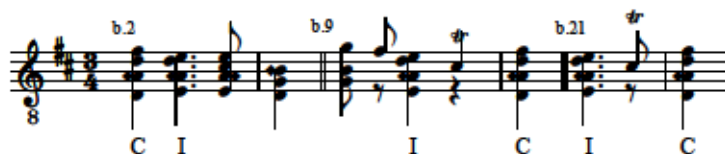


Bar 9



Bar 21





Ornaments

Corbetta then describes the signs used for the most basic ornaments without giving any information about how these should be played.

These are the slur

Horà questo e il segno dello strascio ∪

Now here is the sign of the slur ∪

the trill

questo del tremolo .T.

this of the trill .T.

and vibrato

è questo del tremolo sforzato, ò accento come vogliame dire [#] qual credo, come dico, non essendo principiante, il saperai;

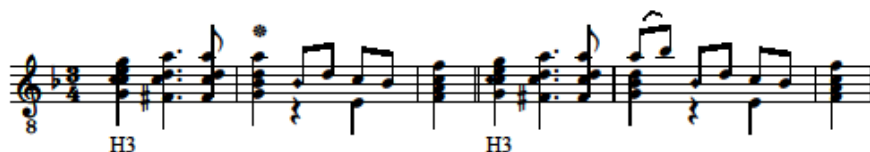
and this for the forced tremolo or accent # (actually a double X), as we usually say, from which I believe, as I have said, you will understand what to do, provided you are not a beginner.

The only problem here is that he has not given any idea as to how the trill should be played. It is up to the player to decide what kind of ornament would be appropriate depending on the context in which it occurs.

There is one other ornament which he does not mention but which is implied in the music – an ascending appoggiatura. In several places a dissonant chord occurs, the highest note of which should probably be resolved upwards as in Example 3.10.

Example 3.10 – Sop G, b.13-15





Accompanying a bass line

He then goes on to mention the instructions for accompanying a bass line and the sinfonias at the end of the book.

li ho messo di piu per perfetionar meglio questo stromento il modo disuonar Sopra la parte un Basso Continuo con tutte le sue Consonanze piu Famigliari con una sinfonia, a 2; si che habbi particular cura che del tutte ne riescerai bene.

In order to perfect the best of this instrument I have included examples of how to harmonize a bass line with all its most familiar consonances, including with it a sinfonia in 2 parts. If you take particular care with this you will be able to realize it well.

The exercises on accompanying a bass line are discussed in Chapter 7. At the end of the book there are actually two “sinfonias”. In the Table of Contents, the first is described as *come si deue sonar la notte* – literally “how the note must be played” which suggests that is an example of how to create a piece from a bass line. The bass part is more or less integrated into the guitar part. The second has a note *acompanata con l’organo ò altro Basso* – “accompanied with the organ or another bass [instrument]” which suggests that it is a preconceived piece with organ or other accompaniment. In places the two parts are more independent with one echoing the other. Today they are usually both played as duets.

Conclusion

Although the music in this book is much more sophisticated than that of 1639 the instructions are much briefer and less helpful.

Contents

The contents fall into five sections -a sequence of *Passachali* preceded by a Toccata (page 7-39); seven “suites” each comprising an *Almanda*, *Corrente* and *Sarabanda* (page 40-.67); a Follia (page 68-70); Rules for accompanying a bass line (page 70-74) and two Sinfonias (page 75-81).

1. Passachali

p.7	Toccata	F minor
p.8	Passacgaglie	F minor
p.10	Sop M	E flat major
p.12	Sop L	C minor
p.14	Sop H	B flat major
p.16	Sop O	G minor
p.18	Sop G	F major
p.20	Sop E	D minor

p.22	Sop B	C major
p.24	Sop D	A minor
p.26	Sop A	G major
p.28	Sop +	E minor
p.30	Sop C	D major
p.32	Sop X	B minor
p.34	Sop I	A major
p.36	Sop V	F sharp minor
p.38	Sop F	E major

2. Suites – Corbetta indicates the key of each group according to the modal system in use in the early seventeenth century.

p.40	Alm[anda] bel [sic] 4 ^{to} tuono	E minor
p.41	Sua Corrente	E minor
p.43	Sarabanda	E minor
p.44	Alm[anda] 5 ^{to} un tuon più Alto	D major
p.45	Sua Corrente	D major
p.46	Sar[a]b[anda]	D major
p.47	Alm[anda] del 2 ^o tuono	G minor
p.48	Cor[rente]	G minor
p.49	Sar[a]b[anda]	G minor
p.50	Alm[anda] del 6 ^{to} tuo[no]	F major
p.51	Cor[rente] (1)	F major
p.52	Cor[rente] (2)	F major
p.53	Sar[a]b[anda]	F major ⁸
p.54	Alm[anda] del p.[ri] ^{mo} tuo[no]	D minor
p.55	Cor[rente]	D minor
p.56	Sar[a]b[anda]	D minor
p. 57	Alm[anda] del 5 ^{to} tuono	D minor
p.58	Cor[rente]	D minor
p.59	Sar[a]b[anda]	D minor
p.60	Alm[anda] del 7 ^{mo} tuo[no]	C minor
p.61	Cor[rente]	C minor
p.62	Sar[a]b[anda]	C minor
p.63	Almanda per nuoua Acordatura	B flat major
p.65	Cor[rente] Con sue Parte doppie	B flat major
p.67	Sar[a]b[anda]	B flat major

3. Follia

p.68	Follia	D minor	Four variations only
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⁸ This appears to be the work of a different engraver from the rest of the book.

4. Regola per sonar sopra la parte un Basso continuo con tutte le sue Consonanze piu famigliari

- p.71 Modo di tocar la notta col diesis e senza Per b quadro
il Simile per b. molle
- p.72 Modo di dar l'accompagna.^{to} alla notta della terza minore maggiore
Modo di dar l'accompagna.^{tº} alla notta della sesta minore maggiore
- p.73 Modo di far la Cadenza di quarta risolta con la terza per b. quadro con la quinta falsa
Il Simile per b. molle
- p.74 Modo di far la cadenza di Settima risolta con la sesta per b. quadro
Il Simile per b. molle

5. Sinfonias

- p.75 Sinfonia [come si deue sonar la notta]
- p.77 Sinfonia a.2 [acompagnata con l'organo o' altro Basso]

Chapter 4

Varii Scherzi di Sonate per la Chitarra spagnola(1648)

Introduction

Corbetta's third surviving book, 'Scherzi di sonate per la chitarra spagnola', has no imprint, but his dedication to the Austrian Archduke, Leopoldo, is dated from Brussels, *il 1. del anno, 1648*. It is not entirely clear whether the "1" refers to the month – January – or whether the month is missing. On the title page this book is referred to as *Libro Quarto* which suggests that Corbetta had published another book between 1643 and 1648 which is now missing. A facsimile of an unidentified copy (presumably that in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, in Paris, as it varies from that in the British Library) was published by Studio per Edizioni Scelte (SPES) in 1983 with an introduction in Italian by Paolo Paolini. An unusual "hispanified" edition of the book came to light recently. This is discussed in Section II Chapter 10.

The main part of the book is printed from engraved plates. All the music is in "mixed" style combining lute-style counterpoint with strummed chords notated in Italian tablature with *alfabeto* for the basic five-part strummed chords. It comprises a shorter cycle of *passacagli* than that in the 1643 book, going only from C minor to D major; these are followed by a *chiacona* in C major. There are the four "suites", each comprising a *prelud* and *alemanda*. The first, in C major, also includes two *sarabandas*;¹ the second, in A minor, includes a *corenta* and a *sarabanda*² followed by a miscellaneous *sarabanda* in G minor; the third in F major has a single *sarabanda* and the last in E minor a single *corenta*. These are followed by a *prelud*, *gigue* and *passachalo* in *scordatura*; assuming that the fifth course is tuned to **a**, the guitar is tuned as follows.

Illustration 4.1 – Scordatura 1648



These are followed by five *corenti francese* and four *sarabande francese*. The *corenti* are in the French style – that is, in slower 3/2 time rather than the quicker Italian style of the *corente* in simple triple time in the preceding suites. The solo music concludes with a *folia* which is a re-working of the *folia* found in the 1643 book with an additional variation. At the end there are brief instructions on accompanying a bass line.

On folio 2r there is an engraved illustration featuring a coat of arms – presumably that of Austrian Archduke, Leopoldo – flanked by two cherubs. This is signed *Io[an] Thomas delin. Frederick Bouttats fc.*, Ioan Thomas being the designer and Frederick Bouttats the engraver.

Corbetta's engraved dedication to the Archduke is on folio 3r and on folio 4r and translates more or less as follows:

¹The second of these, on p.37, is very similar to the Sarabanda Anna on p. 42 of Carbonchi's *Sonate de chitarra spagnola* (1640). Carbonchi's version is in French tablature and strummed throughout.

²This is the same as the Sarabanda Francese on p.44 of Foscari's *Il primo, seco[n]do, e terzo libro della chitarra spagnola* (undated) and later editions.

Serenissimo Signore

Offering this tribute of my labours to Your Serene Highness may perhaps be regarded as an act of recklessness; if indeed it is not that strength is drawn from my duplicity. You, Phoebus of Virtue, who bestow favour only on good things, make me all the more afraid to present to you the fruits of a barren garden, which is situated in such a shady place, that without the rays of Your Highness's Sun of innate kindness would be bitter fruit, & insipid to the taste

However as one with a pure heart I offer it to you, imploring Your Highness that with the same goodness with which you give me the honour of your attention, you will do me the favour of appreciating these my compositions for guitar, & if some imperfection offends your taste, you will excuse the baseness of my talent with your usual magnanimity, which my devotion supplements, and which does not long for any advantage other than permission be able to say this eternally.³

This is followed by another engraved illustration showing Corbetta flanked by angel musicians playing guitars and other instruments with the motto above – *al cielo de gli honnori alto é inmortale si vela sol della virtù con l'alla* [To the heaven of the highest honours he is immortal, veiled with the wings of virtue].

Corbetta's Instructions to the Player

Corbetta's instructions to the reader, printed in moveable type, begin on page 5.

Eccoti ò curioso di novo parte dèlle miè fatiche sopra la Chitara Spagnola; in esse troverai noue curiosità per divertirti scuserai la fretta per che per satisfare il mio desiderio di farli vedere al mondo sotto la protettione di questo gran Principe le ho date; come anche per sodisfare alla volontà di molti studiosi di questo stromento.

Here you have the newest part of my labour on the Spanish guitar. In it you will find new inventions with which to divert yourself. However, you must excuse the haste with which I have produced it in order to fulfil my wish to publish it under the protection of that grand Prince [Archduke Leopold], and also in order to satisfy the wishes of many students of this instrument.

The reference to the haste in which the book has been produced is particularly relevant as it is very badly printed. The British Library includes a substantial number of corrections to the music

³L'Offerire questo tributo di mie fatiche all' A.V. Serenissimo sarà forse stimato parto di temerità, se ben' in vero non è che forza cavata dalla mia doppiezza: V.A. febo di Virtù, che benefica cose buone & [ra]ree, affila il mio timore à presentare frutti di arido giardino, situato in parte così opaca, che senza il riflesso del sole dell'innata benignità di V.A. sarà il frutto aspro, & insipido al gusto: qualonque egli si sia con puro cuore l'offerisco, supplicando l'V.A. che con l'istessa bontà, che si servi di farmi degno della sua attentione, mi facci la gracia di gradire queste mie compositioni di Chitara, & se qualche imperfettione turbassi il gusto di V.A. condoni con il solito della sua magnanimità à la bassezza del mio talento, que supplire la mia divotione, la quale non brama di vantaggio ch'è li s'è permesso poter dire, che su eternamente.

made by hand – probably at the printers and possibly even by Corbetta himself. There are also a fair number of other likely errors. Corbetta also explains that the music is not intended for the beginners.

Ma averti, che se non sai principio ne caueraí poco frutto perche hauendo ridotto la Chitara all'ultima perfezzione non ho stimato bene il farti vedere cose facile, come ho fatto nel mio primo libro, & ancor', che sono un poco dificali, saranno tanto piú belle per satisfarti, volendo esser paziente è studioso nel farli.

But note that you if you are a beginner you will extract little fruit from it because, having brought the Guitar to the ultimate perfection, I have not thought it necessary to make it as easy for you as I have done in my first book, and also because if the music is a little difficult, it will be so much more beautiful and so will give you more satisfaction, if you are willing to be patient and studious in playing it.

He then briefly summarizes the contents of the book. Minor and major sets of variations on the *passacaglia* alternate through the keys from C minor to D major following the “circle of fifths” until the last one which starts and finishes in D major. (The one in C major on page 18 starts and finishes in C major). It is not clear whether they are to be played as a continuous sequence, but common sense suggests that there would be nothing wrong with playing only one of them or a minor/major pair. The final variation which serves as a link could be omitted in each case.

Qui vedrai nove inventioni di Passachali, con l'attaco d'una lettera in l'altra come di preludii Alemande, Sarabande, Correnti, con alquante corrente Francese, Hauendole ridotte nella Chitara per satisfare à diversi.

Here you will see new variations on the Passachalli, starting with one letter and progressing to another, followed by the preludes, alemandes, sarabandes, correntas, and several corrente Francese which I have arranged for the guitar in order to satisfy your wish to be entertained.

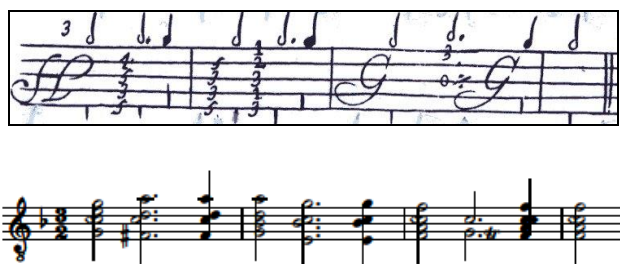
He then very briefly describes some features of the notation. The first comment is straight forward. If there is a stroke mark under chords represented by figures (rather than *alfabeto* letters) they are strummed.

Hora averti, che de li numeri che vedrai sopra li righe, quali dinotano le corde se vi sara la botta presso in giù ò in su, la batterai quando non andera picigata,

Now note, that when there is a stroke mark, either down or up, near the numbers which you will see on the lines representing the strings, you will strum them rather than playing them pizzicato.

What he doesn't mentioned is that the chords will be notated only once. They have to be repeated until the next one is indicated as in Example 4.1.

Example 4.1 - Passachaglia, p.14, b.6-9

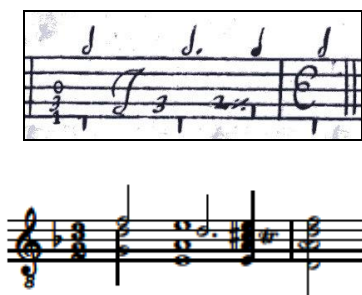


As in 1643, he explains that there will sometimes be auxiliary notes, usually a four-three suspension, inserted into the chords as in Example 4.2.

& le lettere che haverano presso qualche numero con la battuta avanti, farai la lettera, & giungerai col detto, che piu ti accomoda, sopra quel numero, è poi la batterai.

And when any of the alfabeto letters have a number nearby with a stroke mark beside them, you will form the chord represented by that letter and stop [the fret represented by] that number with whichever finger is most convenient, and then you will strike the chord.

Example 4.2 – Passachaglia, p.16, b. 4-5



[It should be noted that this is an example of the same harmonic progression illustrated in Example 4.4 below and in Example 3.3a from Corbetta's 1643 book in Chapter 3, a minor seventh chord on the fourth degree of the scale followed by a four-three suspension. Corbetta has included the zero on the relevant tablature line here but not in the other two examples].

Ornaments

The rest of the introduction describes ornaments used in the tablature. The first of these is the *strascio* [slur]

In vedendo questo segno ∪ che si chiama strascio si dovera picigare il primo numero tirando il resto con la man sinistra, & essendo posto cossi [downwards] osserverai il medesimo: Tocando il primo numero ò à votto venendo in giu, senza piu tocar la corda tanto che finisse la legatura del detto strascio,

When you see this sign \cup which is called a slur [strascio], the first note must be plucked and the rest [of the notes] played only with the left hand, and being placed thus \cap you will observe the same, playing the first note or open course downwards, without touching the string [with the right-hand] again until the slur mark of that strascio finishes.

The *tremolo* [trill] is represented as a slash with dots on either side - \cdot/\cdot .

questo, è il tremolo \cdot/\cdot .

This is the trill \cdot/\cdot .

and what he calls a *il tremolo sforzato* [accent or vibrato] - with a double x.

è questo è il tremolo sforzato # , d'accento come vogliamo in dire, qual non essendo principiante facilmente li saprai

and this is the forced trill # or accent as we usually say, all of which you will easily understand if you are not a beginner.

The only problem here, as in his 1643 book, is that he hasn't given any idea as to how the trill should be played. It is up to the player to decide what kind of ornament would be appropriate depending on the context in which it occurs.

The table of *alfabeto* chords

Referring to the table of *alfabeto* chords he points out that he has only included these as far as P which are played in first position. It is easier to use these with the relevant fret number above when they are played at higher positions on the fingerboard rather than letters from the end of the alphabet.

Non ho posto il resto del alfabetto secondo la regola ordinaria, perche serue quelle lettere con li numeri sopra, essendo li medesimi, & per più facilità poste cossi nel libro,

I have not included the rest of the alfabeto chords after the basic series, because these letters can be used with [the relevant] fret numbers above, which are the same [as those at the end of the sequence] and I have placed them in this way in the book to make it easier;

It is noteworthy that Corbetta has also included the table of chords set out in French tablature for the benefit of players who may not be familiar with Italian tablature. The book may have been printed in the Spanish Netherlands and he may have had a mainly French players in mind although he has not gone so far as to notate the music in French tablature.

per quelli, che non sano solo la tavolatura Francese, ho poste sotto all'alfabeto Italiano, li acordi medesimi à la Francese, avvertendo, che il canto resta al contrario cio è di sotto l'a.b.c.d. della Francese è come 0.1.2.3. del Italiana si che facilmente potranno impararle.

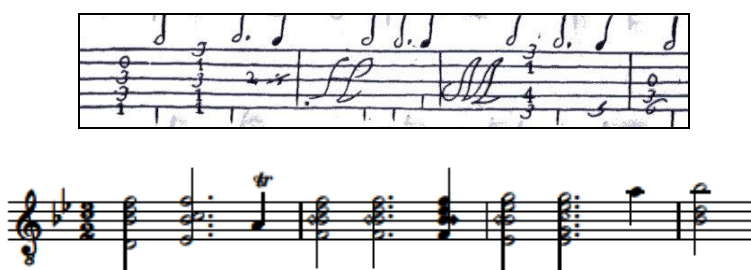
For those who know only French tablature, I have placed below the Italian alfabeto the same chords in French tablature. Observe that the first course is the opposite way round [i.e. the

highest line is the first course rather than the lowest] and the a, b, c, d, of the French version corresponds to the 0, 1, 2, 3 of the Italian which will make it easy to learn it.

Open courses – to include or not to include

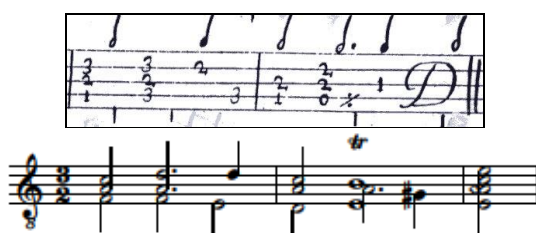
The open courses are obviously intended to be included in the *alfabeto* chords. Elsewhere Corbetta does frequently put in the zeros where it might not be clear that the open courses are to be included. In Example 3 he has put a zero on the fourth course of the first chord because otherwise it would not be clear that it was to be included but he has not put in the zero on the third line in the chord at the cadence because it is obvious that it must be included if it is to be strummed. This is actually the consonant form of Chord L.

Example 4.3 – Passachaglia, p. 12, b.11-14



Nevertheless, as in his 1643 book there are crucial passages where he has not put in a zero. In Example 4.4 there is no strum mark under the two notes on the first beat of the second bar which suggests that they should be played pizzicato. However, in order for the three-part counterpoint to make sense, the open fourth course really needs to be included whether it is strummed or played pizzicato. It is the same harmonic progression which he has notated properly in Example 4.2 above.

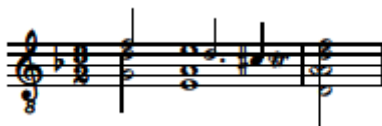
Example 4.4 – Passachaglia, p. 20, b.19-20



To strum or not to strum?

Corbetta is inconsistent when it comes to putting in the strum marks. There are occasionally strum marks under what may be intended to be played as single notes. In Example 4.2 above there is a stroke under what appear to be a single note (2 on the second course) with a trill. Chord I could be repeated as the trill is played and as the suspended fourth resolves as shown there. But the trill perhaps works better and sounds clearer played as a single note as in Example 4.5.

Example 4.5 – Passachaglia, p.16, b. 4-5



In Example 4.3 above the note with a trill in the first bar does not have a stroke mark. This is a minor point and really a matter of convenience for the player. Stroke marks are some times lacking when a chord should obviously be strummed. In Example 4.6 the chord in tablature must be strummed like the two preceding chords in *alfabeto*. [The smudge under the chord is actually a note value belonging to the chord below].

Example 4.6 – Almanda, p. 48, b. 6-7



Accompanying a bass line

At the end of the book there are instructions for accompanying a bass line similar to those found in the 1643 book. These are discussed in Chapter 7.

Ho posto di più il modo di trovar tutti le consonance della musica più familiari per servirsene di sonare sopra la parte, si che habbi particolar cura, che di tutto ne riusserai benè.

I have also included the method of finding all the most familiar consonances of music which can be used for accompanying a [bass] part. In this way if you take particular care, you will succeed well in everything.

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p.12	G minor – F major
p.14	F major – D minor
p.16	D minor – C major
p.18	C major
p.20	A minor – G major
p.22	G major – E minor
p.24	E minor – D major
p.26	D major

2. Chacona

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p.32	Prelud al 5 ^{to} tuono	C major	
p.34	Alm[and]a	C major	
p.36	Sarb[and]a	C major	
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p.40	Alm[and]a	A minor	
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p.44	Sarb[and]a	A minor	cf. Foscari (163-) p.44
p.45	Sarb[and]a	G minor	
p.46	Prelud al 6 ^{to} tuono	F major	
p.48	Alm[and]a	F major	
p.50	Sarb[and]a	F major	
p.52	Prelud al 4 ^{to} tuono	E minor	
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p. 74	Sar[a]b[and]a	G major

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p.80	Mode di toca la notta col diesis e senza per b quadro Il Simile p. b molle
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p.86	Il Simile per b. molle

Chapter 5 La Guitarre royale (1671)

Introduction

Corbetta's fourth surviving book, 'La guitarre royale', was printed in Paris after some delay on 31st October 1671. The *Extrait du Privilege du Roy* on page 102 reads as follows

Extract from the Privilege of the King

By the grace of the king dispatched at St. Germain en Laye dated 21st September, 1670. Signed Dalencé. S.^r Francesco Corbetti is allowed to print or have printed a book of many pieces to play on the guitar which he has composed, to be sold and retailed to the public during a period of five consecutive years; and all printers, bookshops and others are prohibited from printing the said book, from selling counterfeits or from extracting anything from the same, on pains of a fine of two thousand livres and of all dispensations, damages and interests as it is most amply conveyed by the said privilege.

The said Sieur Francesco Corbetti has ceded and transferred his said privilege as above to Hierosme Bonneüil engraver en taille douce in Paris. Finally printed the last day of October, 1671. The exemples have been submitted.¹

The King granting the privilege was Louis XIV. There is more than a year between the date on which the privilege was granted and the date on which the book was finally printed. The reason for the delay is unknown but may have been due to difficulties with the printing. The book is printed throughout from engraved plates. From what Corbetta says in his introduction it seems that he engraved at least some of the music himself; the title page and text were probably engraved by Bonneüil to whom Corbetta ceded his privilege. Printing from engraving was a recent innovation in France in the 1670s. A facsimile of an unidentified copy was published by Minkoff in 1993.

The book is dedicated to the English king, Charles II.² All the music is in "mixed" style combining lute style counterpoint with strummed chords. It is however notated in French tablature and is, as far as we know, the first of Corbetta's books to use French tablature rather than Italian tablature with *alfabeto*. It comprises mainly the standard movements of the suite grouped by mode or key but includes some miscellaneous pieces, amongst them independent sets of variations on the chaconne and folias. At the end there are arrangements of four of

¹ Par grace et Priuilege du Roy expédié à S.^t Germain en Laye, en datte du 21.^e Septembre 1670. Signé Dalencé. Il est permis au S.^r Francesco Corbetti d'jmplimer ou faire jmplimer un Liure de plusieurs pieces a louer sur la Guitarre, qu'il a composé, de le uendre et debiter au public, et ce durant le temps et espace de cinq années consecutives, et deffence sont fait à tous Imprimeurs, Libraires, et autres, d'imprimer ledit Liure, d'en uendre de contrefait, n'y mesme d'en extraire aucune chose à peine de deux mil liures d'amende, et de tous despens, dommages et interets, comme il est plus amplement porté par ledit Priuilege.

Ledit Sieur Francesco Corbetti a cédé et transporte son dit Privilege cy dessus A Hierosme Bonneüil graveur en taille douce à Paris. Achevé d'imprimer le dernier iour d'Octobre 1671. Les Exemplaires on été fournis.

² Eisenhardt claims that "Corbetta's '*La guitarre royale*' was dedicated to the King of Britain, and yet most of the text of its "preface" [sic] is addressed to the great monarch of France". The book does not actually have a "preface" as such, so that it is not clear which of the preliminaries Eisenhardt is referring to. He has not explained why he thinks that the "preface" is addressed to the "great monarch of France" but there is nothing in the introductory material to support this idea. As the book was printed in France, the Privilege was granted by Louis XIV and he is mentioned briefly in both the Italian and French instructions to the reader in connection with a performance of Lully's ballet, but the rest of the introductory text clearly refers to Charles II. Eisenhardt (2015), p. 43.

the guitar pieces for vocal ensemble; these are followed by instructions on accompanying a bass line. Corbetta's dedication to King Charles is on page 2. It is in Italian, rather than French,³ and translates as follows:

Sire

Because of the arduousness of the path of virtue, the human spirit does not have a stimulus more stinging than glory nor a bridle harsher than respect. I, who thus far have known this ambitious truth for the one, and fearful for the other, have perhaps been a long time in submitting my sonatas to the recognition of the world. And I only determined to do so, when I knew that the privilege they would enjoy would not be ephemeral, being recommended by the immortal name of the most glorious of all the Kings of the Earth. What is certain is that in the shade of the laurels of Your Majesty, they will have no fear of the lightning of envy. Not disdaining therefore the sublimity of his Great Kingdom, may he bestow a kindly glance on the profound humility with which I dedicate these pages to him: since the final purpose of my intention is to confirm my homage to him, sublimating my luck to the glory of being able to publish them to the Universe.

Sire, To Your Majesty, Your most humble, faithful and obedient Servant Francesco Corbett⁴

There is an anonymous *Sonetto* in Italian praising the guitar on page 6 between the Italian and French prefaces.

Sonetto

*Muses I pray you, do not muzzle,
He who by right should enter Parnassus,
The only one who learned the skill of Apollo,
That sun which will never set.*

*Surely he deserves to be among you,
When you let others lead you by the nose
And since he loaded the spindle to your distaff
You are obliged to accept his cause.*

³ It seems that Charles II spoke French as well English and had at least some knowledge of Italian.

⁴ Per il sentiero malagevole della virtù non hà l'animo humana stimolo più pungente della gloria, ne freno più duro del rispetto. Io che sin qui ho conosciuta questa uerita ambizioso per l'una, e timoroso per l'altro, sono stato gran tempo in forse di produrre le mie sonate alla cognitione del Mondo. Et all'ora solo determinai di farlo, quando conobbi, che haurebbero goduto privilegio di non caduco applauso, raccomandate all'Immortal Nome del più Glorios di tutti i Re della Terra; fatto certo, che all'ombra di gli Allori di Vostra Maesta non hauriano temuto i fulmini dell'Inuidia. Non isdegni ella dunque dalla sublimità della sua Regia Grandezza riuolgere un guardo benigno alla profonda humiltà, con la quale le dedico questi fogli: poiche l'ultimo oggetto della mia intentione e di confermarle gli ossequi miei sublimando la mia fortuna all gloria di potermi pubblicare all'uniuerso. Sire di Vostra Maestà Humilissimo fedelissimo et obedientissimo seruo Francesco Corbett.

***And by these scoundrels much offended,
This scoundrel dares to burst with laughter,
Because they scratch more than play.***

***Therefore Muses should give them notice
That if they don't keep their balance right,
It will be due to their use of the guitar.⁵***

There is a detailed list of contents on page 10.

'La guitarre royalle' (1671) is unusual in that it has lengthy introductions in both Italian and French, each accompanied by a page of examples in Italian and French tablature respectively. The Italian introduction appears first on pages 3-4 with tablature examples on page 5; the French introduction is on pages 7-8 with tablature examples on page 9. Corbetta's mother tongue would most likely have been dialect of Italian and it is to be assumed that he wrote the Italian instructions himself. Even so it is not always clear what he is trying to say. The French preface is not a word for word translation of the Italian and it is sometimes less precise. It was presumably included for the benefit of players who could not read the Italian. Corbetta's French may not have been very fluent and it is also possible that the French version was made by someone else who did not fully understand the subject matter or whose grasp of Italian was limited. However, the two prefaces cover the same topics in a similar way; they are not intended for different groups of readers. It is possible that some or all of the Italian preface had appeared earlier in one of the missing books which Corbetta refers to in his introduction.

The two introductions are not identical; there are passages in the Italian which are not in the French and vice versa and there are examples in Italian tablature which are not among the French tablature examples and vice versa. In this translation the two versions are set out in parallel columns as far as possible for ease of comparison. There are minor variations in the order of the topics discussed. These are highlighted and cross-referenced in the translation.

I have tried to adhere closely to the original texts but have translated more freely when this seemed necessary to make the instructions clear. Explanatory words or phrases are in square brackets. The method of stringing which Corbetta preferred had a low octave string only on the fourth course; the strings of the fifth course were in unison in the upper octave. In the examples, notes, on the fifth course are usually shown in the upper octave with lozenge shaped heads. I have not shown ornaments except where these relate to the instructions under consideration. The direction of strummed chords is usually shown by the direction of the stem of the chord – down for a bass to treble stroke and up for a treble to bass stroke – except where it is necessary to make the part writing clear.⁶

⁵ Muse ui prego di non fare il Muso/E soffrir à ragion ch'entra in Parnaso,/Il solo che d'Apollo apprese l'uso/Quel sol che non andrà mai a l'Occaso
Ben egli merta esser tra' uoi rinchiuso,/Seui uengan tant' altri à dar di naso/E poich' egli' empie/à vostra rocche il fuso/Sete in uero obligate à farne Caso

E gli che da gaglioffi e troppo offeso/Di suo gaglioffo ardir crepa di riso,/Poiche à grattar più che à suonar han preso Per cio' dourestes o Muse darli auiso,/Che se non tengan giusto il contrapeso/Li sarà datto della cetra in uso.

⁶ I am indebted to Chris Page for his assistance in translating Corbetta's French Instructions.

Parallel Translations of the Italian and French Introduction

Italian Preface	French Preface
<i>Curioso Lettore, Legi prima che cominei a sonare</i>	<i>Auais au Lecteur auant que commencer a jouer les pieces</i>
Studious Reader - Read before beginning to play.	Advice to the reader before beginning to play the pieces.
<i>In congiuntura desser uenuto l'anno passata a Parigi per traienermi alcuni pochi mesi et hauendo cominciato questo libro in Londra ne portai meco gl'intagli per qui finirlo.</i>	<i>J'arriuay à Paris l'année passé pour y demeurer quelque temps, et comme i'auois commence cet Ouurage à Londres j'apportay avec moy les Planches qui estoient desia faites afin de l'acheuer</i>
<i>I arrived in Paris last year in order to live there for some time and as I had begun this work in London, I brought the plates with me in order to finish it.</i>	<i>I arrived in Paris last year in order to live there for some time. As I had begun this work in London, I brought with me the plates which had been made previously in order to finish it</i>
<i>Ho uoluto esporlo alla luce e sodisfatione de Curiosi di Chitarra alla maggior perfetione humiliandosi il mio Genio ad incontrar sopra ogn altro quello di sua Maesta a cui essendo Care le Muse ha sempre gradite e goduto delle mie Compositioni ch' hora per un atto d'Ossequio glie le dedico.</i>	<i>et de suiure le grand genie du Roy et le mien en mettant ce Liure au jour dans toute la perfection que j'ay peu</i>
<i>I wanted to publish it with the greatest perfection for the satisfaction of students of the guitar and, humbling my Genius, in order to comply above all else with the [satisfaction] of His Majesty [Charles II], who, being a lover of music, has always appreciated and enjoyed my compositions which now in an act of homage I dedicate to him.</i>	<i>and to follow the guiding spirit of the King [Charles II] and of myself in publishing this book today with as much perfection as I am capable of.</i>
<i>Adonque in questo libro per ridurti alla perfetione osseruera le instrutioni poste qui auanti come degli ingionti auertimenti qualli insieme ti renderano le sonate piu facile;</i>	<i>y apporter où vous remarquerez exactem^t toutes les instructions que vous y verrez pour en fair uostre profit.</i>
<i>Therefore, in this book, in order for you to achieve this perfection, you must observe the instructions set out here as well as the examples below [on the next page] which together will render the sonatas very easy for you to play;</i>	<i>to bring to it where you may observe exactly all the instructions which you will see [here] so that you may draw profit from it.</i>

ti ho meslo l'Alfabeto che ti seruira per tradurre precisamente le sonate per poterle poi piu speditm.^{te} impararle.

I have set out for you the Alfabeto [chords] which will help you to play the sonatas accurately by making it easy to learn them quickly.

Not in the French preface

Comment: The standard *alfabeto* chords +/A – P are set out in both French and Italian tablature at the beginning of the examples in Italian tablature on page 5 although they are not used in 'La guitarre royalle' (1671). They are also set out in Italian and French tablature in the introduction to Corbetta's 1648 book, 'Varii scherzi di sonate' which was probably printed in the Spanish Netherlands, presumably for the benefit of players who were not familiar with Italian tablature.

Illustration 5.1 – Alfabeto in French and Italian tablature

The image displays two musical notations for guitar chords. The top notation, titled 'Alphabet Françoise', uses French-style lute tablature with letters A through M placed above the strings to indicate fret positions. The bottom notation, titled 'Alfabeto', uses Italian-style lute tablature with letters +, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, K, L, M, N, O, and P placed below the strings. Both notations show the fret numbers on the strings and the corresponding letter above the fret.

(For convenience notes on the fifth course are shown in the lower octave).

Nota che le prime Consonanze sono Abbelimenti Rebattimenti e sono poste con questo segno ∩ a fine d'abbreuiare, e ne uedrai l'esempio appresso, douendosi colare il dito su la corda che formarà la terza minore ò maggiore, et in ogni altra si deue far l'ostesso[sic], come appresso uedrai.

Note that the chords in the first example are Abbelimenti Rebattimenti and they are indicated with this sign ∩ in order to abbreviate them [i.e. to avoid writing them out in full] and looking at the example below you must place a finger on that string [i.e. stop the string] which makes a minor or major third [of the chord], and in all the others you must do the same as you will see in the other examples.

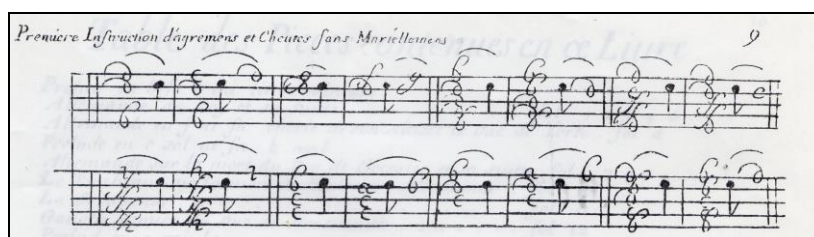
Les Consonnantes sont marquées par ce signe ∩ afin de les mettre en Abregé vous en uerrez l'exemple apres scauoir qu'il faut couler le doigt sur la Corde qui formera la Tierce mineur ou majeure, et en toutes les autres on doit faire la mesme chose, comme uous remarquez par la suite.

The chords are marked with this sign ∩ in order to put them in abbreviated form. You must look at the following example from which you will understand that it is necessary to run the finger over the string [i.e. stop the string] which forms the minor or major third [of the chord]; and all the others ought to be done in the same way as you will note in the following [example].

Example 5.1 - Ascending appoggiatura without a mordent



(In the places marked with a star there is a b instead of 1 on the first course).



Premier Instruction d'agremens et Cheutes sans Martellemens



Comment: What Corbetta has said here does not altogether make sense but it is clear from the examples that what he is trying to describe is an ascending appoggiatura without a mordent. If there is a slur over a chord, an auxiliary note, a semitone or a tone below the note to be ornamented, is played, followed by the main note. The slur does not make it clear which note is to be ornamented; this is usually but not always the uppermost note of the chord. It does not indicate what value the auxiliary note would have either – this is a matter of some debate. Although Corbetta refers to the “string forming a major or minor third” it does not do so in all of the examples. In the first example the auxiliary note is a major third above the next note down in the chord (F sharp over a G minor chord); in the second, sixth and seventh examples the note on which the auxiliary note resolves is the minor third of the chord and in the third and fourth examples the note on which the auxiliary note resolves is the major third of the chord. In the fifth and eighth examples the note on which the auxiliary note resolves is actually the root of the chord.

Trouerai questo picciol segno , tra' la consonante e la battuta, che significa deuersi ribattere il dito picciolo.

You will find this little sign , between the chord and the [note value indicating the

Vous trouverez ce petit Signe , entre la Consonnante et la Note qui signifie que l'on doit rebatre avec le petit doigt.

You will find this little sign , between the chord and the note [value] which indicates that you must strike [it] with the little finger.

direction of the] stroke which indicates that you must hammer [it] with the little finger.

Example 5.2 - Ascending appoggiatura with a mordent



Comment: Corbetta is not giving much away here either but from the example it is clear that if there is a comma after the chord and before the note value you effectively play the same thing twice. Only the first of the four notes will be played with the right hand; the three notes which follow will be played with the little finger. That is why there are two slurs. Strictly speaking the comma should be beside the note to be ornamented but this does not always happen.

Example 5.3 – Ascending appoggiatura without a Mordent



Comment: Corbetta has not commented on this example at all but it is simply ascending appoggiatura at a cadence played on the two lowest courses which is a common feature of his music.

In a nutshell – a slur over a chord indicates that you play an ascending appoggiatura; if there is a comma as well you add a mordent.

Vedrai lo Strascio quale e' con questo segno
 U che mostra douerssi toccar col dito della

Vous uerrez ce signe U qui marque que l'on
 doit toucher avec le doigt de la main droite la
 premiere lettre a tirer le reste avec celuy de la

mano dritto la prima letera, e con la sinistra il resto fin che duri la nota soura posta,

You will see the strascio which has this sign \cup which indicates that you must play the first letter [note] with the finger of the right hand and the rest with the left hand for just as long as the sign is placed [i.e. including as many notes in the slur as are indicated].

sara lo stesso al Contrario a questo segno \cap douendosi colar il dito.

When the same sign \cap is in the opposite direction the finger must hammer [the notes].

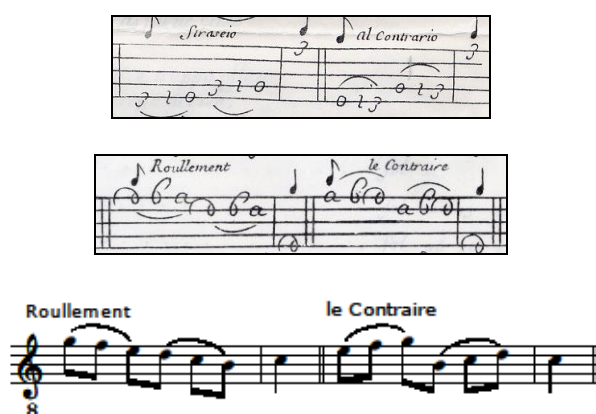
gauche ce qui s'apele Tirade jusques a ce que vous y voyez la note dessus.

You will see this sign \cup which indicates that you must play the first letter with the finger of the right hand and pull off the rest with those of the left just as you see above the notes. This is called a Tirade [in the example it is called a roullement]

et lorsque uous y uerrez se signe \cap au contaire il faut couler le doigt en façon de cheute.

and when you see there this sign \cap on the contrary it is necessary to run the finger in the same way as a cheute.

Example 5.4 - Downward slur/Upward slur



Comment: This is straightforward and describes the standard practice of playing groups of notes with the left hand only. The slur is usually (but not always) placed below the letters for a downward slur and above the letters for an upward slur.

Non potendosi far il tremolo sotto a' Crome e Semicrome, uedrai come deui partirlo in due lettere d'appresso sotto una Semicroma tanto nel pizzicare quanto nel battere.

As it is not possible to make the tremolo [trill] over a quaver or semi-quaver, you will see next how you ought to divide it into two letters [i.e. notes] under [i.e. with the value of] a semiquaver both when plucking and when strumming.

Comme on ne peut pas faire le tremblement dessous les Crochues et les doubles Crochues vous trouuez le moyen de les partager en deux lettres qui sont apres dessous une double Crochue pinceant de mesme que battant.

As it is not possible to make the tremblement [trill] below the quavers or semiquavers, you will find here the way to divide them into the two letters [i.e. notes] which come after [one another], under [i.e. with the value of] a semiquaver whether they are plucked or strummed.

Questo segno S. significa repetitione alla fine della sonata, che sara posto auanti o dopo le Cadenze onde sara necessario essendosi replicata la seconda parte di restare al detto segno per replicare l'altro piu su' e poi si ripiglia la Cadenza, della sonata per ricomenciar da Capo;

This sign S. indicates repetition of the end of the piece and it may be placed before or after the cadence where, after the second part has been repeated, it will be necessary to stop at the said sign, in order to repeat [the section] from the other [sign] above, and then to repeat the cadence of the piece for the purpose of re-commencing it from the da capo;

e trouando il medesimo segno dopo la Cadenzae si tralascia la detta ripigliando il Medesimo Segno per replicar lo stesso; e ciò fatto si resta alla Cadenza fina le per cominciar da Capo.

and finding the same sign after the cadence, break off at this sign, resuming from the same sign [above] in order to repeat the same [passage]; and that done you will stop at the last cadence in order to begin the da capo.

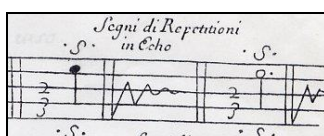
Ce signe S. signifie que l'on doit repeter à la fin d'une piece, et uous la uerrez dauant ou apres les cadences. C'est pourquoy quand on a repliqué la Seconde partie il faut s'arrester au dit signe, et repliquer l'autre dessus, et en suite reprendre la cadence de la piece, afin de la recommencer;

This sign S. indicates that one should [make a] repeat at the end of a piece and you will see it before or after the cadences. This is because when the second part has to be repeated it is necessary to stop at the said sign, and to repeat the preceding section above, and then to resume the cadence of the piece in order to begin it again;

mais lorsque uous trouuez le mesme signe S. apres la Cadence, il ne faut pas la jouer, mais seulement reprenez se signe afin de repliquer le mesme, et apres cela uous demeurerez à la Cadence pour recommencer.

but when you find the same sign S. after the cadence it is not necessary to play it [the cadence] but only to retake [the piece from] the sign in order to repeat the same, and after that you will stop at the cadence in order to begin again.

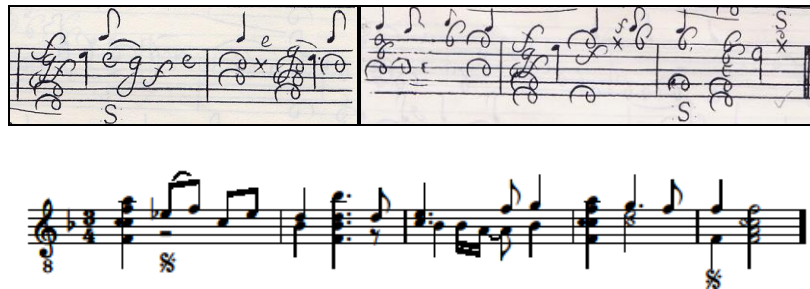
Example 5.6 – Repeat signs



Comment: Corbetta is describing different types of repetition which are quite complex. Here he is referring to what is known as the *petite reprise*. The last phrase of a piece is repeated –

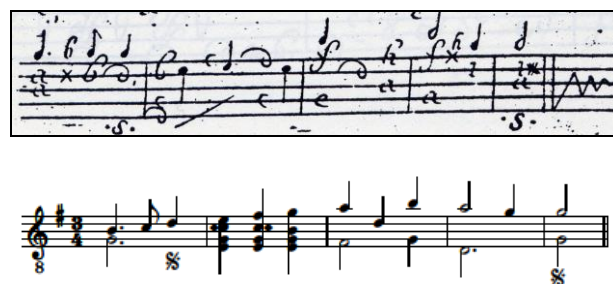
as a kind of echo. A sign should appear at the point in the music where the repetition begins; at the cadence the sign may appear before or after the final chord or cadential figure. In the first instance the phrase is repeated before the final chord is played; in the second instance it is taken from the end. In Example 5.7, because the repeat starts on the second beat (of the first bar of the first line) the final chord is omitted the first time around.

Example 5.7 – Repeat signs [Sarabande p.40 closing bars]



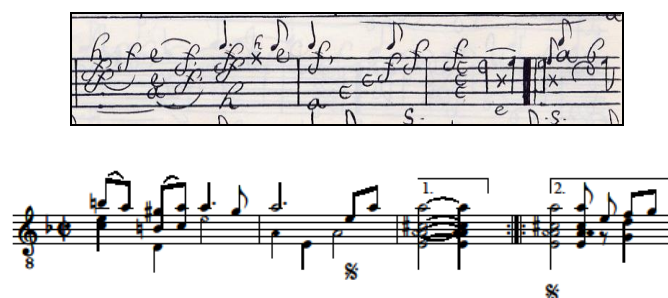
In Example 5.8 the final chord is played before repeating the final phrase.

Example 5.8 – Repeat signs [Gigue p. 21 closing bars]



The sign is also used to indicate first and second time bars in the middle of a piece in binary form as in Example 5.9. The first .S. indicates that the bar which follows is played the first time around. When the section is repeated the chord following the first .S. is omitted and the music continues after the double bar line from the second .S.

Example 5.9 – Repeat signs [Allemande p.25 b.15-17]



The dots at the beginning of the next stave of examples in French tablature, Example 5.10, are not explained; they are not included in the Italian examples. They may be intended to indicate the repeats of sections in binary form movements. Corbetta usually just puts plain double bars with a flourish at the end of a piece although these are sometimes filled in with dots; in a few places e.g. the first gigue on page 57 he has just put two dots.

Example 5.10 – Repeat signs



Sara bene replicar piu uolte le Sonate per sentime meglio l'Aria, et abbelirle con le Cadenze che ho posto ad effetto sodisfar l'Orecchio.

It is good to repeat the pieces again many times in order to appreciate the air [tempo] better and to embellish them with the ornaments which I have notated so as to satisfy the ear.

le uous conseille de repliquer encore plusieurs fois les pieces pour en apprendre mieux l'air et pour les embelire avec les cadences que j'ay notées afin de satisfaire l'Oreille.

I advise you to repeat the pieces again many times in order to learn the air [tempo] better and in order to embellish them with the cadences which I have notated so as to satisfy the ear.

Comment: This is a bit of a *non sequitur* – but having explained which sections of a piece should be repeated Corbetta advises the player to repeat the pieces themselves over and again in order to learn to play them properly – sensible advice.

Trouerai abbelim.^{ti} di cadenze,

You will find embellishments of the harmony [cadenze],

Not in the French text

Comment: This comment is confusing. The first example of a *cadenze* is placed before the example of a *tenute* but the topic it relates to is mentioned further on. (See below).

appresso uedrai la Consonante con questo segno) tra le Corde che sono tenute, e serue per tener la Consonante sino che passi all'altra, a fine di mantener l'Armonia,

afterwards you will see the chord with this sign / between the strings which are to be held and this indicates that the chord should be held until you pass to another in order to sustain the harmony,

e uedrai l'altro fuori delle righe che significa trauerssar il dito sul tasto cossi per battere, come per pizzicare, e questo e il modo piu comodo.

and you will also see another outside the lines of the tablature which indicates that the [first] finger crosses the fingerboard [i.e. forms a barré] both when strumming and plucking; this is the most convenient method.

Ce signe / dans les cordes c'est afin de tenir la consonnante jusqu'aceque uous passiez a l'autre a fin de continuer l'harmonie

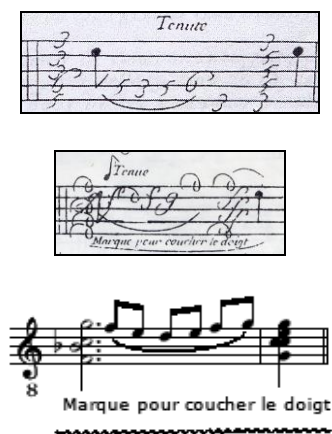
This sign / on the strings indicates that you have to hold the chord until you pass to another so as to sustain the harmony,

et uoyant celle cy hors des cordes elle signifie qu'il faut coucher le doigt sur la touche tant pour battre que pour pincer uoila le moyen le plus commode.

and seeing this [sign] underneath the strings indicates that it is necessary to lay the [first] finger across the fret [i.e. use a barré] both for batteries and for plucking; this is the most convenient way.

	These comments are placed further on in the French preface
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Example 5.11 – Signs for *Tenue* and *Barré*



Comment: The Italian example does not show the wavy line under the staff indicating the *barré*. Instead it is included together with the *tenuto* sign and the signs for the *acento* and *tremolo* in a separate example. (See Example 5.13 below).

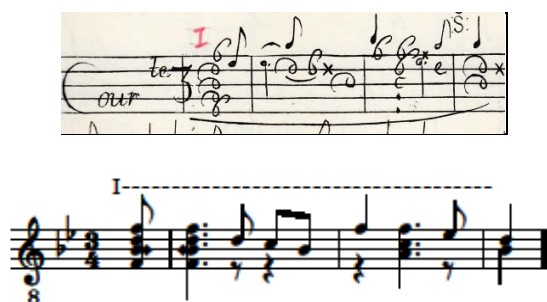
It is important to recognize that these are two **different** signs which serve different purposes.

The curved line on the tablature staff (not to be confused with a slur) represents the *tenue*. It encloses a group of chords and/or notes belonging to the same underlying harmony and indicates that the first chord or note should be sustained whilst subsequent ones are played, in order to realise the underlying part writing.

The line **beneath** the staff (shown as a wavy line in the transcription) indicates that a *barré* should be used. It may occur in passages of single notes and two- or three-part counterpoint, as well as in groups of chords.

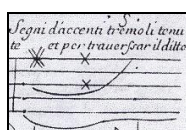
It is not always easy to distinguish one from another and in sequences of chords they may serve a dual purpose. In the following example the harmony changes twice and Corbetta has indicated that the fourth and fifth courses stopped by the *barré* should be omitted from the F major chord at the cadence. The line is not there to indicate that the underlying harmony is to be sustained. The whole passage is played with a *barré* at the first fret.

Example 5.12 – Sign for a *barré* [Courante p.47 b.1-3]



<p>Questo ✕ in maniera di doppio tremolo si chiama acento che si fa con tremolar la mano hauendo il dito fisso su la lettera della Corda in cui sara posto.</p> <p>This sign, ✕ which resembles a double trill sign, is called an acento and it is made by placing the finger firmly on the letter on the course where it is indicated and shaking the hand.</p>	<p>Ce Signe ✕ qui est le flattement ueut dire qu'il faut tenir le doigt <fixe> sur la corde, et trembler avec la main, aiant le petit doigt sur la lettre de la corde où sera mis le dit signe.</p> <p>This sign ✕ which is the flattement means that it is necessary to hold the finger firmly on the string and to shake with the hand having the little finger on the letter [i.e. fret] of the string where the said sign will be placed.</p> <p>This comment is placed further on in the French preface</p>
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Example 5.13 – Sign for Accento/ Flattements



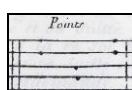
Segni d'accenti, tremoli, tenute et per trauerssar il ditto

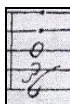


Comment: The *acento* or *flattement* is a kind of vibrato applied to a single note to emphaze it. The Italian example illustrates four different signs, the *acento*, the *tremolo* or trill, the *tenuto* and the sign for a *barré* described as *per trauerssar il ditto* i.e to place the finger across [the strings].

<p>Shiua piu che potrai i punti che uedrai sopra le righe per euitar le dissonanze scegliano con la mano o col polzo le lettere precisamente notate ;</p> <p>Follow as much as possible the dots which you can see on the lines to avoid the dissoances chosing with the fingers or the thumb the letters exactly notated.</p>	<p>Esuitez [i.e.Et suivez] le plus que uous pourrez les points marquez ainsi [illustration] que uous uerrez sur les cordes, afin desuiter les dissonances, et choisissez avec le pouce les lettres precisement noties;</p> <p>Follow as much as you can the dots marked thus</p>  <p>which you will see on the strings so that you avoid the dissonances, and chose with the thumb precisely the letters notated;</p> <p>This is placed further on in the French text</p>
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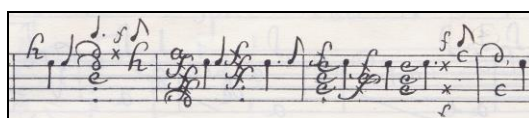
Example 5.14 - Dots





Comment: Dots placed on tablature lines in this way are meant to indicate that the strings should be omitted from the chord. In the French example in the first instance the first and second courses are to be omitted; in the next the third, fourth and fifth and so on. In the Italian example, the fourth and fifth courses are to be omitted. Although Corbetta has mentioned this use of dots in the Italian preface it is not used in Italian sources. In a practice which originates with the tables of *alfabeto* chords found in early seventeenth-century Italian guitar books, only the stopped courses of strummed chords are indicated in the tablature; lines representing unstopped courses are left blank. In later more complex music this creates something of a problem. Rather than notate chords in full, various devices were used to indicate courses which should be omitted. In the music Corbetta uses his dots in a completely random way or not at all and it is not always certain which notes should be included/omitted. In Example 5.15, in the first bar at least the fifth course should be omitted from the first chord although there is no dot on the line; in the next chord it is clear that the fourth and fifth courses are to be omitted. In the second bar it is clear that the fourth and fifth courses are to be omitted from the second chord. In the third bar the fifth course is clearly marked to be omitted from the first chord but not from the next two.

Example 5.15 – Dots [Allemande p. 59 b22-25]



e per l'ultimo uedrai altri abbellim^{ti} di cadenze et repetitioni.

At the end you will see some other embellishments of cadences and repetitions.

enfin uous uerrez plusieurs embelissements de Cadences et de repetitions.

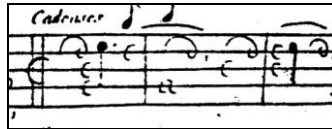
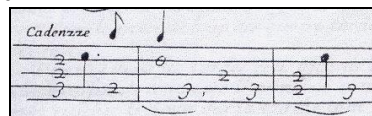
At the end you will see some more embellishments of cadences and of repetitions.

This is placed further on in the French text

In the Italian examples, one example of a *cadenzze* is at the beginning of the ninth stave. This is the same as the first of the examples labeled *cadences* on the eighth stave of the French examples. (Example 5.16 a). Two more Italian examples, which are not in the French preface are placed at the very end of the tenth stave and labeled *Altre cadences*. (Example 5.16 b). Two more examples of a *cadense* are placed at the end of the French examples on the eighth and ninth staves; these are not included in the Italian examples. (Example 5.16 c & d). They are all really just conventional cadential formulas.

Example 5.16 a-d - *Cadenzze*

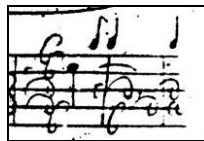
a.



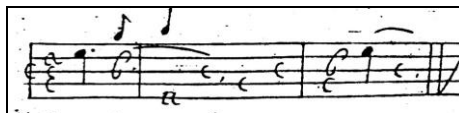
b.



c.

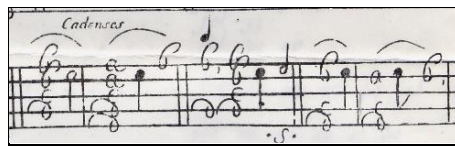


d.



Corbetta has not commented on the two tablature examples in the French preface labelled *Cadences* which follow the *Signes de Repetition en Echo* on the sixth stave. They are not included amongst the Italian examples. These seem to be no different from the *Cheutes sans Martellemens* illustrated at the beginning. The chord in the second bar of the first *cadense* (marked with an asterisk in the transcription) should be an F major chord; the tablature letter on the second course should be b = c' not a = b natural but it is impossible to play the appoggiatura with the *barré* so the second course has to be left unfretted. It is not clear what the example in the middle is supposed to represent – just a common cadential formula with a repeat sign perhaps.

Example 5.17 – Cadenses



Corbetta has not commented either on the example labeled *Aggremens* which precedes the *Cadenses* on the eighth stave. It is an ascending appoggiatura with a mordent on the fifth course.

Example 5.18 – Aggremens



Vedrai l'esempio d'un repicco posto in una ciaccona, doue la nota piu longa significa il polzo; cominciando prima i diti poi con il polzo facendo l'istesso all in su'e osserua che le quatro note legate significano douersi far prima con il secondo dito e poi con il primo appresso, e cosi all in su' sotto a un tempo piu presto, e poi seguita con i diti et il polzo.

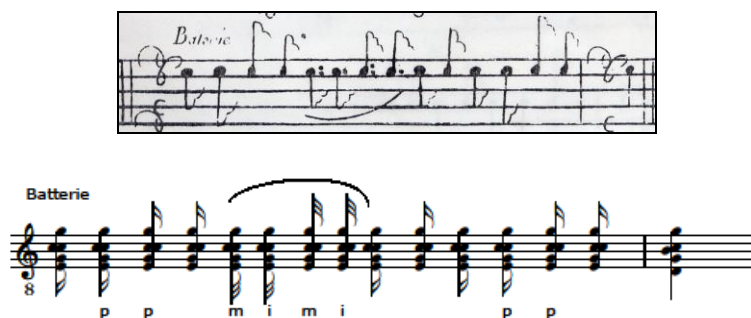
You will see an example of a repicco placed in a ciaccona [on page 72], where the note with the longer tail indicates [that the chord should be played with] the thumb; beginning first with the fingers [i.e. playing the first chord once with all four fingers], then [do the same] with the thumb [downwards] and then do the same upwards. Note that the four notes tied together indicate that you must first play the chord with second [i.e. middle] finger and afterwards with the first [index] finger

Vous uerrez l'exemple d'une battrie, mise sur un caprice de Chaconne où la note la plus longue signifie le pouce tant au dessus qu'au dessous et remarquez que quand uous uerrez quatre notes liées ensemble, uous devez uous servir auparavant du Second doigt en descendant, et puis apres du premier doigt uous ferez de mesme en montant dans un temps plus prompt et continuez tousiours avec les doigts et le pouce suiuant l'exemple que uous y uerrez.

You will see the example of a batterie placed in a caprice de chacone [on page 72] where the note with the longer stem indicates that the thumb should be used for both up and down strokes; and note that when you see four notes tied together, you must use the second finger downwards, and then the first finger [downwards] and then you will do the same upwards very quickly; and you will continue always with the fingers and the thumb following the example as you see [illustrated] here.

[downwards], and then again as upstrokes at a quicker tempo [i.e. as demi-semi-quavers rather than a semi-quavers], and continue with the fingers and thumb [in the same way];

Example 5.19 – *Repicco/Batterie*



Comment: This is the first of two examples of a *repicco* (*batterie* in French) – an elaborate strumming pattern. It is the same as the first bar of the variation which begins at bar 32 in the *Caprice de Chaconne* on page 72 of ‘La guitarre royale’ (1671). The chords with the long stems are played with the thumb – a downstroke followed by an upstroke on the two semi-quavers. These are followed by four demi-semi-quavers – two downstrokes played with the second and first fingers followed by two upstrokes played with the second and first fingers. Two dots beside the note heads represent the second finger and one dot the first. Corbetta has not indicated which fingers should be used for the other chords. The Italian preface is only slightly more helpful. The first full chord is played with all four fingers. Having described how to play the demi-semi-quavers he says “and continue with the fingers and thumb in the same way” which is open to more than one interpretation.

nel altra Ciaccona d'appresso uedrai un altro repicco messo gia in Stampa doue a confusione ho posto il medesimo piu perfettionato cosi; la doue uedrai sei battute di tempo di Crome, ne farai quattro dalla terza in gui e portando la mano farai l'altre due battute su l'altre due Corde prima e seconda senza toccar l'altre;

in another ciaccona [on page 75] you will see another repicco which has already been placed in the press [i.e. appeared in print] where [because] it was misunderstood I have included the same thing in a more perfect way. Where you see six quaver strokes, play four of them from the third course

Dans une autre chacone il y a une autre battrie que j'ay desia fait imprimer, et parcequ'elle a le don de plaire, j'ay uoulu la mettre icy, ou uous uerrez six coups au temps de Crochues uous en ferez quatre sur la premiere, seconde, et tierce corde, portant la main en bas, apres uous ferez les deux autres battries sur les deux autres cordes quarte et quinte, en portant la main en haut sans toucher les autres,

In another chacone [on page 75] there is another batterie which I have had printed previously).⁷ And because it has the gift of pleasing, I wanted to include it here, where you will see that there are six strokes in the form of quavers. You will play four [quavers] on the first, second and third courses

⁷ This variation does actually occur in a different Chaconne attributed to Corbetta which has survived only in a later manuscript – B-Lc Ms 245 (ca. 1706) p.96. This may have originally appeared in print in one of Corbetta's missing books.

downwards [i.e. towards the first course – alternately down and up], and moving the hand make the next two strokes on the other two courses, the first and second [i.e. 5th & 4th], without touching the others [i.e. 1st, 2nd & 3rd];

dopo mutando il dito sul tasto, farai il medesimo alle altre sei; e mutando il dito alle altre quattro d'appresso, batterai la prima battuta forte, e le altre tre, piano

after changing the finger[s] on the frets, play in the same way for the other six [quavers], and changing the fingers for the next four [quavers], strike the first loudly, and the other three softly;

così altre in mutar il dito, farai il medesimo, sino cominci le sei prime, onde trouerai un f che uol dir forte nella prima battuta delle quattro, e così ti riuscirà il repicco più bello.

then changing the fingers at the other [groups of four] do the same until the first six begin again; where you find an *f*, which means play the first of the four beats loudly, and thus you will achieve a beautiful repicco.

carrying the hand downwards; after you will play the other two strokes on the fourth and fifth courses carrying the hand upwards without touching the others;

après changeant le doigt vous en ferez de mesme aux autres six changeant le doigt aux autres quatre qui suivent vous toucherez la première corde un peu fort et les trois autres plus doucement.

after changing the fingering [of the left hand] you do the same with the other six quavers. Changing the fingers for the next four which follow, you will strike the first chord a little strongly and the other three very sweetly.

*Vous ferez de mesme aux autres en changeant le doigt jusqu'à ce que vous commençiez les six premières; c'est pourquoi vous trouverez une f qui marque que vous toucherez un peu fort dans le premier coup des quatre cordes ou est l'*f*. et de cette manière la battrie sera plus délicate.*

You will play the others in the same way changing the fingering as you commence the first of each six. This is why you will find an "*f*" that indicates that you strike rather strongly on the first stroke and in this way the batterie will be more delicate.

Example 5.20 – Repicco/Batterie [Autre Chacone p.75, b.13-14]

Comment: This refers to the *repicco* variation in the Chacone on page 75 although Corbetta has not reproduced it in his preface. What Corbetta says in the French preface does not make very good sense; the Italian is more helpful. On the first four of each group of six quavers, the first, second and third courses are played; on the last two, the fourth and fifth. In the French

version Corbetta seems to be saying that the first four are played as downstrokes and the last two as upstrokes but the notation clearly indicates that the chords are played alternately down – up.

In the Italian preface he says “Where you see six quaver strokes, play four of them from the third course downwards [i.e. from the third course towards the first course], and moving the hand make the next two strokes on the other two courses, the first and second [i.e. fifth and fourth] without touching the others”.

It is important to realize here that in the Italian preface Corbetta is referring to the order of the courses in the Italian way – the first is the lowest sounding course; the second is what we would usually call the fourth.⁸

The “f”s under the first chord of each group of four quavers is self explanatory.

	<i>Ce signe / – See above</i>
	<i>Ce signe ✕ – See above</i>
Not in the Italian Preface	<p><i>Quand uous trouuerez ce Signe X. qui s’apelle tremblement, il marque qu’il faut trembler le doigt sur la touche, et quand il’sera uuide uous y uerrez dessus ou dessous le dit [p.8] le dit tremblement hors des Cordes une petite lettre qui marque l’endroit, ou uous deuez faire le tremblement, et si uous auez le doigt sur la lettre uous uerrez la mesme chose.</i></p> <p><i>When you find this sign X which is called tremblement it indicates that it is necessary to trill the finger on that fret and when it will be unstopped you will see above or below the said trill outside the strings a little letter which indicates the place where you ought to make the trill and if you have the finger on the letter you will see the same thing.</i></p> <p><i>enfin vous verrez – See above</i></p>

Comment: Although Corbetta has not described the trill in the Italian preface he has included an illustration of the appropriate sign with that for the *tremolo* etc. (See Example 5.13 above). He has not included any tablature illustrations of how to play it in the French examples and his description of it is not very helpful. However, it is a trill which starts with the upper auxiliary note. This is indicated with a small fret letter placed above or below the tablature stave. It may be played on a stopped string or an open string as seen in this example. Corbetta says nothing at all about how the actual trill is played. This would depend on the length of the note to which it was attached.

⁸ It should be noted that James Tyler in his Ex. App 1.19 has transcribed the chords the wrong way round because he was unfamiliar with Italian nomenclature. Tyler (2000), page177,

Example 5.21 - Trill [Allemande p. 35 closing bars]



At the very end of the French tablature examples there is an illustration of the dots used to indicate that two notes of a part should be played with the first and second fingers rather than with the thumb and finger, with a note underneath -

Les points ainsi marques ce fi pour pincer avec les 2 doigts en haut

The dots marked thus indicate that [the notes] must be played upwards with the two fingers.

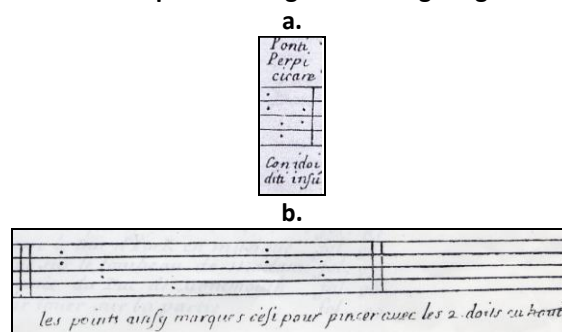
In the Italian examples the example at the beginning of the seventh stave illustrates the same thing.

Ponti Perpiciare / Con i doi diti in sú

Perpendicular dots, with the two fingers upwards

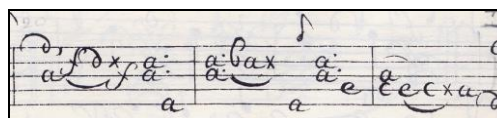
This use of dots is not actually mentioned in either prefaces.

Example 5.22 - Right hand fingering



The dots are placed beside the notes as in this example.

Example 5.23 – Right-hand fingering [Passacaille p.37 b.20-22]





Auerti di mettere una picciol ottava alla seconda Corda che e D. Sol re perche li dui unissoni non fanno Armonia come anche le mie sonate lo ricercano; e batti sempre le consonanti con la mano et il polzo insieme che ti riuscirà piu armoniosa la batuta.

Note that you should put a thin octave on the second [i.e. fourth] course] which is D sol re [i.e. D on the middle line of the bass stave, a low D], because the two in unison do not make the harmony which my sonatas also call for; and always strike the chords with the hand [fingers] and thumb together, which will make the stroke more harmonious.

le vous auertis de mettre une Octave à la 4^{me} Corde de la re sol. parceque les deux unissones ne composent point d'harmonie, et battez avec la main et le pouce ensemble les consonnantes doucement, afin d'avoir plus d'harmonie.

I advise you to put an octave on the fourth course, d la re sol because the two in unison never make harmony, and strike the chords with the hand [i.e. fingers] and the thumb together in order to have the most harmony.

Comment: In the Italian preface, Corbetta refers to the order of the courses in the Italian manner, the first course, more usually referred to as the fifth course, is the lowest sounding, and the second course is what we today would usually call the fourth course. (As we have already seen he also refers to the courses in this way in the Italian description of the *repicco*). According to the standard hexachordal system, the solmisation syllables refer to the low octave string which must be added to the fourth course - D on the middle line of the bass stave. The fully re-entrant tuning was probably widely used in Italy from the mid-seventeenth century onwards and Corbetta wanted to make it clear to his Italian readers that a low octave string on the fourth course was necessary to provide an adequate bass register for his pieces.

Because in the Italian preface Corbetta describes the octave string as "*picciol*" (literally "little"), it has often been suggested that he is advising Italian players to put a high octave string on the fourth course which was usually strung in unison at the lower octave but with octave stringing on the fifth course. There is no evidence that the guitar was ever strung in this way in Italy or anywhere else. The most likely explanation is that in the Italian preface, Corbetta is advising the use of a thin string - the thinnest string practical for the bourdon - to minimize the inconvenience caused by having strings of different thicknesses which Sanz refers to.

Corbetta's comments on stringing in the French preface are less helpful than those in the Italian preface but they also indicate that the guitar had octave stringing on the fourth course but not the fifth. The solmisation syllables are in a different order from what one would expect. In the standard hexachordal system, the syllables *la sol re* refer to a high D, the D above middle C; they do not usually occur in the order *la re sol*. However, it seems that in late seventeenth-century France (if not elsewhere) the hexachords were sometimes arranged in a different order. The first, or lowest, hexachord started on F below the bass stave rather than G on the lowest line of the bass stave. With the hexachords arranged in this way, *de la re sol* refers to D on the middle line of the bass stave, the pitch of the low octave string to be added to the fourth course. [See Appendix 1 for further details]. In spite of the ambiguities it is reasonably clear in both prefaces that Corbetta is instructing his readers to add a low octave

string, or *bourdon*, to the fourth course which was usually tuned in unison at the upper octave, that is to the fully re-entrant tuning. There is no reason why he should be giving contradictory instructions in the two prefaces. Throughout he has covered the same points in more or less that same way. Eisenhardt⁹ has argued that Corbetta's instructions are directed at French players who used the fully re-entrant tuning, and that Corbetta himself used octave stringing on both the fourth and fifth courses. This begs the question – "Why are the instructions included in the Italian preface which French players are unlikely to have read?". Eisenhardt has not commented on the Italian instructions. There is no apparent reason why Corbetta should have advised players in France or anywhere else to do something different from what he did himself.

<p><i>Vedrai alla fine del libro le Consonanze piu familiari per sonar su la parte,</i></p> <p>You will see at the end of the book the most familiar chords for accompanying the [bass] line,</p>	<p><i>Vous uerrez à la fin du Liure des consonnantes plus familiares pour joüer sur la partie et pour accompagner, puisque l'y ay mis l'exemple dans les chansons à trois parties avec le basse continue, et dessous, la mesme basse en tablature, c'est pour accompagner,</i></p> <p>You will see at the end of the book the most common chords with which to accompany a bass line.</p>
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Comment: Here Corbetta is refering to the *basso continuo* exercises on pages 99-101. These are discussed in Chapter 7.

<p><i>et per dartene maggior Notitia mi sono seruito delle parole fatte sopra alcune mie sonate specialm^{te} soura la fauorita del Re et altre, conforme uedra a tre e a due voci, col basso continuo, et sotto al medesimo, l'accompagnan^{to} di chitarra.</i></p> <p>and to draw more attention to them, I am supplying the words made for some of my sonatas, especially for the favourite of the King and others, just as you will see in two and three parts voices with basso continuo, and below them the guitar accompaniment.</p>	<p><i>puisque l'y ay mis l'exemple dans les chansons à trois parties avec le basse continue, et dessous, la mesme basse en tablature, c'est pour accompagner.</i></p> <p>Then I have included as an example the chansons in three parts with a basso continuo and below the same bass in tablature, which is for accompanying.</p>
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Comment: Here Corbetta is refering to the four vocal pieces on pages 83-98.

<p><i>Troueroi nel principio del libro la detta Alem.^{da} fauorita in intauolatura soura un altro tono, et uolendola sonare col concerto, alzerai la chitarra d'un mezo tono;</i></p>	<p><i>Dans l'Allemande aymée du Roy <qui est en musique> uous y trouuerez la mesme <en> tablature dessus un autre ton pour joüer seul, et si uous uoulez la joüer avec le concert uous mettrez la Guitare un <demy> ton plus haut, parceque pour la difficulté du ton il m'fallu la transposer d'un <demi> ton plus haut ;</i></p>
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⁹ Eisenhardt (2015), p. 145 et seq.

<p>At the beginning of the book [on page 1] you will find the said Allemande favorita in tablature in a different mode [i.e. in B minor instead of C minor] and if you wish to play it in consort [with the vocal version], you must raise the guitar a semitone;</p>	<p>For the Allemande aymée du Roy which is in staff notation [on page 83] you will find the same in tablature above [on p.1] [in] a different mode [i.e. in B minor instead of C minor] to be played alone. If you wish to play it in consort [with the vocal pieces] you should tune the guitar half a tone higher, because on account of the difficulty of the mode it seemed to me necessary to transpose it [the vocal version] up half a tone.</p> <p><i>vous y trouuerez encore l'Allemande chérie du Duc d'Yorch du mesme ton, avec la Sarabande faite sur la mort de Madame d'Orleans, et un petit Air de Gauote aymé de Monsieur le Duc de Monmouth ;</i></p> <p>You will also find the Allemande chérie du Duc d'York¹⁰ in the same mode [as the tablature version], with the sarabande made on [the occasion of] the death of Madame d'Orleans¹¹, and a little Air de Gavotte liked by Monsieur le Duc de Monmouth;¹²</p>
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Comment: The reason for the transposition is to accommodate the voice parts; two of the other vocal pieces are also in different modes/keys from the solo guitar pieces.

This is followed by some general comments on the contents of the book.

<p><i>seguitano l'altre fauorite parim^{te} [parimente = likewise] in intauolatura et altre noue fatte qui agiunte nel libro altre poi Preludi, Alemande, Corenti, Sarabande, Gighe, alla maniera inglese et Francese et altre arie, con passachagli, ciaccone, et folie con partite diuersse et tutte con abbelimti intrecciate, doue se le osseruerei ne perfetionera la tua Chitarra.</i></p>	<p><i>vous uerrez aussi des preludes pour commencer les Allemandes, dont il y en a deux qui doiuent estre ioüez fort tendrement, l'une sur la mort du Duc de Clocester, et l'autre fait sur l'emprisonnement du Duc de Bouquingam lesquelles uous trouuerez toutafait belles, qui suiuent avec des Courantes, Sarabandes, Giges à la mode <de> France, et d'Angleterre, et d'autres airs, dont une partie a esté ioüée et chantée deuant le Roy, lesquelles sont tres-parfaites. Il y a aussi des passacailles, des chacons, des folies avec des airs que j'ay compose de Nouveau, et pour contenter un chacun, l'on en uerra pour battre simplement, d'autres à pincer seulement, et d'autres à pincer et à battre tout ensemble.</i></p>
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¹⁰ Charles II's younger brother who succeeded him as James II in 1684.

¹¹ Charles II's youngest sister, Henrietta Anne, married to the Duc de Orléans, the younger brother of Louis XIV.

¹² Charles II's eldest illegitimate child.

<p><i>there follow other favourites also in tablature and other [pieces] newly composed brought together in the book - that is - Preludes, Allemandes, Correnti, Sarabandes, Giges in the English and French manner, and other airs with various passacaglias, ciacconas, and folias, all with intricate embellishments, which, if observed, will perfect your guitar playing.</i></p>	<p><i>you will also see the preludes with which the allemandes begin. Amongst these [allemandes] there are two which ought to be played very tenderly, one on the death of the Duke of Gloucester¹³ and the other on the imprisonment of the Duke of Buckingham¹⁴ which you will find entirely perfect; these are followed by the courantes, sarabandes, giges in the manner of France and England, and other airs where a part has been played and sung before the king, which are also very perfect. There are also passacailles, chaconnes, folias, with airs [variations] which I have composed afresh, and in order to please everyone, you will see some to strum simply and others to pluck only, and others to pluck and strum together.</i></p>
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Comment : The rest of the preface deals with more personal matters, including plagiarism which Corbetta seems to have suffered from more than most. The first incident of which he complains relates to a book which he apparently had printed in the 1650s. The two account differs in some respects.

<p><i>gia il mondo</i> This is placed further on in the Italian preface.</p>	<p><i>Et parcequ'il y a tousiours des envieux qui pouroient dire que ma maniere de ioüer est trop difficile, a cause qu'une partie de mes pieces aproche de la maniere du Luth, je leur pourrois respondre avec verité, que ie ne scay pas un seul accord sur cet instrument, et que je n'ay iamais eu d'autre inclination que pour la Guitare seule, ma maniere est si differente de celle du Luth, que les personnes qui sy connoissent le verront d'abord, et si l'on y trouve quelque chose de difficile, c'est parcequ'il est au dessus du commun, étant la meilleure façon de ioüer et la mieux fournie qui ayt encore paru en public.</i></p> <p><i>And because there are always envious people who are able to say that my style of playing is too difficult, because some of my pieces are in a similar style to that of the lute, I am able to reply to them truthfully that I do not know a single chord on that instrument, and that I have never had any inclination other than for the guitar alone;</i></p>
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¹³ Charles II's younger brother who died in 1660.

¹⁴ The Duke of Buckingham was twice arrested and sent to the Tower of London. In 1666 he was involved in a notorious divorce case and imprisoned after a fight with Lord Dorchester. In 1667 he was accused of treason on the grounds that he had commissioned a horoscope of King Charles' birth. He was conveyed to the Tower in June 1667 but released in the following month after a perfunctory interrogation.

	<i>my style is so different from that of the lute, that people, if they are acquainted with it, see it straight-away and if they find something difficult, this is because [my music] is over and above the ordinary, being in the best fashion of playing and the best collection of pieces which has yet appeared in public.</i>
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Comment: Corbetta – unlike many other guitarists of the period, including Foscari, Bartolotti and De Visée, was not a lutenist.

<p><i>Mi conuiere d'auertirti accio non aplichì certi libri messi in stampa di mie sonate già nechie poste su miei altri libri stampati et parti di quelle rapezate et in particolare in uno che fecci stampare l'anno 1656 qui in Parigi doue si compiaque sua Maestà di admettermi in una entrata di piu Chitare d'un Balletto composto dal famosissimo S^r Gio Battista Lulli, ondio per un atto d'osseguio ne presentai due esemplari a S. M. et essendomi occorss^o di partire ne furono trasportate le stampe altroue che aggiuntoui altre sonate fù dedicato a un Principe Straniero;¹⁵</i></p>	<p><i>Tels sentimens ne pourront venir que de ceux à qui j'ay donné de mes pièces, qu'ils ont déchiré, pillé, fait imprimer, tourné à leur profit particulier; parmi lesquels il y en a qui m'ont enlevé les planches d'un livre que j'avois laissé à Paris, après l'avoir dédié au Roy de France, à l'occasion d'un Balet, composé par le tres-fameux Auteur, Jean-Baptiste Lulli, Maistre de la Musique du Roy en 1656: où je fus admis par sa Majesté à faire une Entrée de plusieurs gitarres, ayant présenté deux exemplaires de ce Livre de ma composition à ce grand Monarque, en reconnoissance de toutes les faveurs que j'avois reçu de sa Majesté. Ils prirent le temps de mon despart de Paris pour surprendre les dites planches, d'y adiouster quelqu'autres pieces, et de le dedier de nouveau sous leur nom à un Prince estranger:</i></p>
<p><i>I would like to tell you – so that it does not happen again – about what happened to some of my sonatas which I had sent for printing; and also about other books which have been patched up; and in particular [I would like to tell you what happened] to one I had had printed in the year 1656 here in Paris [at the time] when it pleased His Majesty [King Louis XIV] to allow me to take part in an Entrée for several guitars of a ballet composed by the most famous Sr. Gio. Battista Lulli. As an act of respect I presented His Majesty with two copies. As I had to travel, the plates were transported elsewhere and after some other pieces had been added to them they were dedicated to a foreign Prince;</i></p>	<p><i>Such sentiments could only come from those to whom I have given my pieces, which they have torn up, stolen, printed and turned to their own profit. Amongst them, are those who have taken from me the plates of a book which I had left in Paris, after having dedicated it to the King of France, on the occasion of a ballet composed by the very famous composer Jean-Baptiste Lully, Master of the King's Music, in 1656. For this I was allowed by His Majesty to make an Entrée for several guitars, as I had presented two copies of this book of my composition to that great monarch, in recognition of all the favours which I had received from His Majesty. They took advantage of the time of my departure from Paris in order to seize the</i></p>

¹⁵ I am indebted to Nadia Taggloff for translating the Italian preface from the point onwards.

<p><i>come qui se' uisto; senza pero'alcuno inditio del perssonaggio che n'hauea pigliato l'ardire ne resto per cio in oblige di darne un altro in brueve alle stampe. Mi stupisco di questi autori senza uergogna di far uedere il lor nome sopra libri che non hanno hauto fatica di componerli; ne godo per tanto à sua confusione che la mia Chitarra gl habbia soleuati [i.e.sollevare] dalla nescesià.</i></p> <p><i>as this has been noticed here, without however any indication as to the character responsible for this impudence, I felt obliged to give another one for printing. I am astonished at these composers who have no shame in putting their names to books which they have not made any efforts themselves to compose. In it [this book] I rejoice so much at their discomfort that my guitar has of necessity risen up [against them].</i></p>	<p><i>said plates, throwing in some other pieces and dedicating them afresh in their name to a foreign prince;</i></p> <p><i>mais pour confondre leur temerité et punir leur rapine, j'ay voulu mettre ce livre au jour afin de faire voir en mesme temps leur ignorance par des pieces plus belles et plus nouvelles que tout ce qui a paru jusqu'à present, les quelles uous paroistront faciles et gracieuses, en observant les embelissements et les subtilités que j'ay mis dans ce Livre, pour vous perfectionner dans la belle methode de iouer de la guitare. l'y ay aporté du mien tout ce que l'ay peu pour vostre satisfaction particuliere qui sera la mienne aussi. Adieu.</i></p> <p><i>but in order to confound their temerity and to punish their theft, I wished to present this book today at the same time in order expose their ignorance by means of pieces which are more beautiful and novel than any which have appeared until now. These should seem to you easy and gracious, if you observe the embellishments and subtleties which I have placed in this book, so that you may perfect yourselves in the beautiful method of playing the guitar. I have brought everything of mine of which I am able for your particular satisfaction which will also be mine. Adieu.</i></p>
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Comment: The two accounts of this incident differ in some respects. In the French preface Corbetta refers to a book which he says he dedicated to Louis XIV, and accuses persons unnamed in Paris of pirating it. He says also that he had given two copies of the book to Louis. He does not however say that it was actually printed in Paris in 1656. The ballet in which Corbetta took part was Lully's 'La galanterie du temps'.

In the Italian preface the account of the same incident is shorter. At first sight Corbetta seems to be saying that the book was printed in Paris in 1656. It is possible however that the clause "in the year 1656 here in Paris" refers to the time and place when the piracy occurred rather than to the time and place when the book was printed. Corbetta tends to write as he might speak rather than arranging his material in the most logical order. He says that he presented two copies of the book to Louis XIV but does not say that it was dedicated to him. Although there are inconsistencies, Corbetta seems to be referring to a different book from the one dedicated to the Duke of Brunswick-Lüneberg which he mentions in the account of his dispute with Granata in the final section of the Italian preface below. There is a gap of some twenty-two years between the publication of the books of 1648 and 1671 during which he may have published several other books which are now missing.

An unusual copy of Corbetta's 'Varii scherzi di sonate' (1648), was sold by the London auctioneers, Sotheby's, in 1991.¹⁶ This may be the 'Guitarra española y sus diferencias de sonos' dedicated to the Spanish king Philip IV listed by the seventeenth-century bibliographer, Nicolas Antonio, and possibly the pirated edition to which Corbetta refers. It was printed from the same plates as the original version of 'Varii scherzi' although the pieces are arranged in a different order and the titles of the exercises for accompanying a bass line at the end of the book have been altered to Spanish. It includes three additional pieces by Corbetta, a Prelud in G minor, a Brand and an Almanda, both in B flat major, and three Spanish pieces. The Brand and Almanda are included in GB:Ob Ms.Mus.Sch.C94 (folio 44); the Brand is also in B:Lc.Ms.245 (page 93) where it is attributed to Corbetta.¹⁷

<p><i>Diro d'un altro in Italia à Bologna qual è un certo Granatta Sonator di Chitarra del qualle oltre l'hauer rubato sonate, ne hà distacato anche inuentioni da miei libri stampati, et messe su suoi, come io uidi in un suo à Venetia al mio ritorno di Spagna, et ne fui per qualche mio affare à Bologna quall mi uenne il detto Granatta a scusarssi d'haver messo alcune mie sonate sul suo libro, che per esser statto mio scolare ne haueua presa la libertà uero é che gli die di molte mie sonate già'anni sono, ma'hauendomi più uolte offeso, causa la malitia superba che ne tiene, rissolsi di tratarlo da simia in un libro dedicato al Serenissimo Georgio-Guglielmo Duca di Bronsuich è Lunebergh</i></p> <p><i>I must speak of someone else in Italy, in Bologna, a certain guitar player named Granata, who, besides stealing my sonatas, also took ideas from my printed books and published them under his name, as I saw in one of his books in Venice, on my return from Spain. Whilst I was attending to some business in Bologna, Granata came to me, and apologised for publishing some of my sonatas in his book. As he had been one of my students, he had taken the liberty of doing so. It is also true to say that I had given him many of my sonatas years ago, but as he offended me several times with his arrogant malice, I resolved to treat him in the same way in a book dedicated to the honourable George William, Duke of Brunswick Lunebergh.</i></p>	<p>Not in the French preface</p>
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¹⁶ A facsimile edition was published by the Deutsche Lauten Gesellschaft in 2006.

¹⁷ For details see Section II Chapter 10.

che ne contentandossi della riprensione occulta, m'hà forzato di farne una piu chiara, per un discorso posto in un suo libro nel mio soggiorno in Inchilterra aducendo una confusione d'Autori tanto di Chitarra come di liuto contro me; Goffa balordagine d'un insensato, sapendo che è lui medesimo, d'hauer stirachiato sonate mie, et altri su suoi libri et piu datto ordine qui a suoi amici dinuiorli sonate di liuto di questi maestri Gottier, et du fo' et altri; et peruero se ne uede la sua maniera

Because this obscure reprimand was evidently unclear to him, I was forced to make a more explicit clarification during my stay in England following a discourse in one of his books in which he accused me of plagiarizing authors of both guitar music and lute music. This was clearly the awkward stupidity of a senseless person in view of the fact that he himself had stolen and published some of my sonatas and other pieces, and moreover that he had requested his friends here to send him lute sonatas by Gaultier, Dufaut and others, and in this way his manner is seen.

gia il mondo sa che non ho'mai praticato tal instrumento dove non ne so pur un accordo, che per piacer a me stesso la Chitarra sola n'e statto sempre il mio genio non hauendo mai hauto bisogno d'agiuto per perfectionarla; et molti proffessori de Chitarra in particolare qui in Parigi n'hanno tenuto il secondo loco dopo di me, confessati da lor medesimi; che costui non ne e'mai statto il secondo dopo loro. se si fosse racordato della scusa fattami a Bologna, non sarebbe passato si auanti; ma ne ha'bisogno di meglio memoria. mi dispiace o curioso d'hauerti sospeso in cossi basso discorso di perssonaggi degni di carte strazze, et se n'haurai una scentila d'affetto al mio libro, ne scuserai l'autore, oppresso da tanta ingrata et inuidiosa canaglia e uiui contento.

it is so obvious that the world already knows it, that I have never played this instrument, of which I do not know a single chord and that my passion has always been the guitar, which I play for my own pleasure. I have

Et parcequ'il y a - See above

always had a natural talent and have never needed any help to perfect my technique. Many guitar teachers, particularly here in Paris have held second place to me as they themselves have confessed.

Granata himself would not be second to them. If only he had remembered the apologies he offered me in Bologna, he would not have gone so far. It is necessary to remind him of this incident.

I am sorry to have involved you in such a base discussion of such unworthy characters. But if you have any liking for my books, you will excuse the author, plagued by such an ungrateful and envious scoundrel. And so live happily.

Comment: Corbetta's account of his dispute with his pupil Giovanni Battista Granata is only included in the Italian preface. Presumably it would have been of little interest to French (or English) readers who may not have known who Granata was. It is actually Granata who first mentions the dispute between the two men. In the preface to his 'Soavi concenti di sonate musicali' (1659)¹⁸ he says that he is printing the book to safeguard his reputation

[I was] stimulated moreover to compose from zeal for my reputation which may have been compromised when a certain professor of the Spanish guitar, too full of his own self importance, was prompted to say perfidiously, from ambition or from some other motive (he would not be able to distinguish one from the other) that I had reprinted, pieced together or rewritten some his own compositions and by this strategy I had tried to take credit for myself, whilst he like Aesop's crow attired himself in another's feathers in order to see himself in print.It is true, I regret to say, that I know that these same have (unfortunately) plundered the publications of Bartolotti and of Piccinini from Bologna, of Gaultier, of Monsieur Dufaut, Foscarini and others and even myself, transposing pieces from the lute to the guitar, from French tablature to Italian tablature, and from one mode to another, and have tried to conceal the reputation of others under cryptic names whilst exalting themselves as may be easily known from the professors of the art.¹⁹

Although he does not identify his "certain professor of the Spanish guitar" this must have been Corbetta.

¹⁸ Giovanni Battista Granata - Soavi concenti di sonate musicali (Bologna, 1659).

¹⁹ '...stimolato in oltre al comporre da zelo di riputatione, poiche verrebbe in parte denigrata, quando a qualche Professore della Chitarra Spagnuola abbacinato da troppo stima di se, fosse caduto in cuore di dire perfidamente, per ambitione, ò per altro (che esso pure non sapesse distinguere) habbia ristampate, rappezzate, o fatte sue le di lui compositioni, e che per tale strada pretendia d'accreditarse, mentre esso qual Coruo d'Esopo si forse vestuo delle penne altrui, per comparire alle Stampe....

E'ben vero, che mi rincresce, ch'io abbia a dire di havere conosciuto, che questi medesimi habbino (come pur troppo si vede) spoltate le Stampe di i Bertolotti, de i Piccinini da Bologna, de i Gottieri, de i Monsù de Fò, de i Foscarini, & aluri, e le mie ancora, e trasportando dal Leuto alla Chitarra, dal Francese all'Italiano, e da un tuono in un'altro, e vogliono sotto nomi Anagramatici con l'esaltar se stessi sepelire la fama altrui...'

A possible sequence of events is as follows. Granata included some of Corbetta's pieces in one or other of the three books which he published between 1646 and 1651.²⁰ During a visit to Venice Corbetta saw a copy of Granata's book and whilst in Bologna accused Granata of plagiarism. Between 1652 and 1659 Corbetta published a book dedicated to the Duke of Brunswick Luneberg, including in it some of Granata's pieces. In 1659 Granata accused Corbetta of claiming the credit for some of his music and some time after this as Corbetta says here -

I was forced to make a more explicit clarification during my stay in England following a discourse in one of his books in which he accused me of plagiarizing authors of both guitar music and lute music.

When and where this explicit clarification took place is as yet unknown but in 1671 preface Corbetta responds in detail with his version of events. No copies of a book dedicated to the Duke of Brunswick-Lüneberg have as yet come to light.

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²⁰ Giovanni Battista Granata - Capricci armonici (1646); Nuove suonate di chitarriglia (No imprint, ca.1650); Nuova scielta di capricci (No imprint, ca. 1651).

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Chapter 6 La Guitarre royale (1674)

Introduction

Corbetta's fifth and last surviving printed book with the same title as the 1671 book, 'La guitarre royale', was printed in Paris on 12th January 1674, three weeks after the Privilege had been granted. The *Extrait du Privilege du Roy* on page 6 reads as follows

Extract from the Privilege of the King

By the grace of the king dispatched at St. Germain en Laye dated 21st December, 1673. Signed Lenormant. S.^r Francesco Corbetti is allowed to print or have printed a book of many pieces to play on the guitar which he has composed, to be sold and retailed to the public during a period of six consecutive years; and all printers, bookshops and others are prohibited from printing the said book, from selling counterfeits or from extracting anything from the same, on pains of a fine of three thousand livres and of all dispensations, damages and interests as it is most amply conveyed by the said privilege. The said Sieur Francesco Corbetti has ceded and transferred his said privilege as above to Hierosme Bonneüil engraver en taille douce in Paris. Finally printed the 12th January 1674. The exemplairs have been supplied.¹

The book is printed from engraved plates made by Bonneüil to whom Corbetta had ceded the privilege as before. A note on the illustrated title page reads

Engraved by H. Bonneüil and sold in Paris by the said Bonneüil at Lard above the Halle aux Cuirs near the Holy Innocents. With the King's privilege.²

The church of the Holy Innocents and cemetery attached to it were situated in the central market area of Paris. The two banners at the top of the title page read

It is necessary for you to follow, We must all have our pleasure.³

Corbetta's dedication in Italian to the French king, Louis XIV is on page 2.

Sire - As Your Majesty is gloriously occupied in the Field of Mars,⁴ adding to the laurels with which you are crowned, your Armies being always triumphant and invincible, I have found myself compelled to search the Parnassus above me, so as not to appear to be the only one lacking in the superb Court of the greatest Monarch in the Universe; and in the shadow of

¹ Par grace et Priuilege du Roy expédié à S.^l Germain en Laye, en datte du 21.^e Decembre l'an 1673. Signé Lenormant. Il est permis au S.^r Francesco Corbetti d'imprimer ou faire imprimer un Liure de plusieurs pieces a jouer sur la Guitarre, qu'il a composé, de le uendre et debiter au public, et ce durant le temps et espace de six années consecutives, et deffences sont fait à tous Imprimeurs, Libraires, et autres, d'imprimer ledit Liure, d'en uendre de contrefaits, ny mesme d'en extraire aucune chose à peine de trois mil liures d'amende, et de tous despens, dommages et interets, co[mm]e il est plus amplement porté par ledit Priuilege.

Ledit Sieur Francesco Corbetti a ceddé et transporte son dit Privilege cy dessus A Hierosme Bonneüil graveur en taille douce à Paris. Achevé d'imprimer le 12. De Ianuier 1674. Les Exemplaires on esté fournis.

² Grauiés par H. Bonneüil et Se Vend a Paris chez le dit Bonneüil Rue au Lard audessus de la Halle aux cuirs prache [sic] Les SS. Innocents. Auec priuilege du Roy.

³ Il te faut suivre, Nous Luy devons tous nos plaisir.

⁴ Louis was engaged in the Franco-Dutch war (1672-8) at the time when Corbetta's book was published. The Siege of Maastricht mentioned in the title of the first piece in the book, a sequence of fanfares, took place between June 6th and July 1st, 1673.

these branches, my Muse is embolden to match its sweet concertos with the wild sound of many trumpets, flattering itself to be no less dear to him in war, than it is in the theatre of peace, where for many years I appeared at Your Majesty's express command. My Guitar was fortunate enough to earn the appreciation of such a king. And being desirous to meet his Genius reverently, I have not been able to draw from my works another more expressive sign of my Zeal, than the talents which are offered in a double vow to the feet of Your Majesty in these few concertos, with which I would remain full of infinite contentment, if the august Hand of Your Majesty, that today is recognized by all Nations as the prime mover in the Universal fate of Europe, deigned to receive them kindly and by this fatal act of covetousness I consecrate my compositions and my name to immortality. Sire, my spirit does not know how to aspire to a more sublime reward, than to breathe the greater glory to which I offer a profound deference forever.

*Your Majesty's most devoted and obliged servant
Francesco Corbetta.⁵*

The music is in almost entirely strummed with occasional single notes and short lute style passages, presumably because this is the style which appealed to Louis XIV. It is however notated in French tablature. The contents are more miscellaneous than those of the 1671 book and the music perhaps less interesting. It includes numerous sarabandes and minuets, two allemandes, a gigue, sets of variations on the Passacaille, Chacone and Folie as well as the battle pieces. The first twelve pieces are for two guitars; the second guitar part was printed as a separate booklet. A facsimile of the book without the second guitar part (presumably of the copy in the Civico Museo Bibliografico in Bologna) has been published by Forni Editore. A facsimile of the separate parts for the first twelve pieces was published by Studio per Edizioni Scelte in 1983. The second guitar part has been reproduced from the copy in the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

There is an anonymous six-line verse in French comparing Corbetta to Orpheus on page 3.

*To Monsieur Corbet
Your heart touched by my troubles,
Made you descend to the Abyss where I am,
And give some relief to my infinite sorrow
Through this Charming Book, and by your harmony.
But to release me from these places,
Corbet, like Orpheus, must charm the Gods.⁶*

⁵ Sire - Trouandosi la Maestà Vostra gloriosamente occupate nei Campi di Marte ad'accumulare gl'Allori ond'Ella uà Coronando i suoi Eserciti sempre trionfanti et inuitti mi sono Visto costretto di ricercarmne sù l'Parnasso per non parerne Vnicam[en]te priuo nella superba Corte d'el più grand Monarcha del'Vniuerso; e la mia Musa all'Ombra di questi Rami, Viene baldanzosa à giungere i suoi dolci concerti al fero suono di tante Trombe, adulandosi d'esser non meno Cara ne i bellici, che nè i pasifici Theatri, oue più anni sono essend'lo comparso per un comando espresso della M^a. V^a. La mia Chitarra hebbe fortuna d'esserui stata gradita da un tanto Rè. Onde desideroso d'incontrarne riuertentem^{te} il Genio, altro segno più espresso del mio Zelo non hò saputo trarre de i miei elaborati. Talenti, ch'offerir in duplicato Voto à i piedi della M^a. V^a. queste a[lcu]ne concertate, di cui restarei colmo'duna contentezza infinita, se l'augusta Mano dell M^a. V^a. ch'hoggi di è remirata da tutti Le Nattioni come il primo mobile della sorte Vniuersale dell Europa si degna benignamente ratt[cc]ogliarle, e per questo atto fatale all jnuidia consacrare e le mie compositioni, e l'mio nome all'imortalità. Premio più sublime Sire, non sapria ambire l'Animo, mio, ne respirare gloria maggiore ch'il proffesarmi in eterno un profondissimo ossequio.

Di Vostra Maestà. Humilissimo Deuotis^{mo} et oblig^{mo} seruo Francesco Corbetta

⁶ Ton Coeur tousché di mes ennuy, /Te peut faire descendre en l'Abyme ou ie suis, /Et donner quelque treuue à ma peine infinie /Par ce Liure Charmant, et par ton harmonie. /Mais pour me tirer de ces lieux, /Corbet, ainsi qu'Orphée il faut charmer les Dieux.

The list of contents is on page 5.

Corbetta's Instructions to the Player⁷

The introduction on page 4 is very brief and there are no examples to illustrate the points made. He begins by explaining his reasons for publishing the book.

Aux Amateurs de la Guitarre

To lovers of the guitar

Pour satisfaire l'inclination que j'ay tousiours eüe pour la Guitarre, j'ay uoulu uoir en plusieurs endroits de L'Europe ceux qui en faisoient profession : Et comme ils me prioient avec instance de donner au public quelques compositions suiuant leur maniere l'en ay fait imprimer a plusieurs fois pour les contenter. Il a deux ans que le fis parestre un Liure qui contenoit differentes sortes de manieres. Il y avoit des pieces pour ceux qui iouoient mediocrement de cet Instrument et pour ceux qui se picquent d'en bien jouer.

In order to satisfy the inclination that I have always had towards the guitar, I wished to see what those who make a profession of it do in several places in Europe. And as they requested me insistently to give to the public some compositions following their style I have had some printed several times in order to satisfy them. It is two years since I caused to appear a book which contained pieces in different styles [i.e. La guitarre royale (1671)]. It had pieces for those who play the instrument moderately well and for those who pride themselves on playing very well.

He then comments on the style of composition which is meant to appeal to Louis XIV.

Auiourdhy que l'occasion se presente de donner encore quelques nouuelles co[m]positions, j'ay uoulu me conformer à la maniere qui plaist le mieux a sa Maiesté, ueuque parmi les autres elle est la plus cromatique, la plus delicate, et la moins embarrassante. J'espere que ce Grand Monarque qui m'a quelquefois honoré de sescom[m]andemens, ajoutera a ma felicité l'honneur de son aprobation et de sa protection. Pour uous si uous en faites cas par leur propre merite, ou par la coustume des Francois de marcher tousiours sur les traces de leur grand Roy le uous en seray tousiours obligé.

Today as the opportunity arises to offer again some new compositions, I wished to conform with the style which is most pleasing to his Majesty [i.e. Louis XIV to whom the book is dedicated] given that, compared with the others, it is the most chromatic [colourful], the most delicate, and the least complicated. I hope that this great Monarch who has sometimes honoured me with his commands, will add to my happiness the honour of his approval and his protection. I will be always be obliged to you if you judge them by their proper merit, following the custom of the French, to walk always in the footsteps of their great King.

⁷ I am indebted to Chris Page for his assistance in translating these instructions.

The phrase *elle est la plus cromatique* has been the subject of some debate. It is unlikely that Corbetta is using the term *cromatique* in the modern sense. Mersenne comments on what he refers to as the *genre chromatique* as follows

*It is necessary to point out that the chromatic genre of musique takes its name for the colours, because chroma signifies colour.*⁸

What Corbetta means by colourful in this context is uncertain but the music does feature quite a lot of his unusual dissonance. He goes on to refer to more practical matters.

Si uous uoulés uous en donner la peine uous uerris cy dessous quelques aduis pour bien iouer mes pieces dont il y en a de faciles pour ceux qui ne sont pas fort auancés, de plus fortes pour ceux qui le sont dauantage en ainsi du reste.

If you wish to take the trouble you will see below some advice for playing my pieces well, where there is that which is easy for those who are not very advanced, [and] that which is harder for those who are more advanced and so on for the rest.

He starts by describing the *tirade*

l'ay aiuosté des Tirades de la main gauche en la place de ce qui se pourroit pincer de la droite. Si uous y trouués encore quelques endroit a pincer, Il sont tous aussi si faciles qui ils n'embarassent point ceux qui ny seroient pas accoustumés.

I have added the Tirades for the left hand in places where they could be plucked with the right. If furthermore you find some in the plucking manner, they are all also so easy that they will not cause problems for those who are accustomed.

According to 'La guitarr royale' (1671) a *tirade* is a downward slur embracing a group of notes which are played with the left hand after the first note has been plucked with the right. Corbetta seems to be saying that he has put in slurs to be played with the left hand but there are also places where the notes could all be played with the right. He continues

Vous saues desia ce que c'est qu'une Tenue, une Chute, une Tirade, etc. c'est pourquoy ie ne le repete que pour ceux qui en sauront moins que Vous.

You already know what is a Tenue, a Chute, a Tirade etc. I have repeated it only for those who know less than you.

Readers who had already studied the introduction to the 1671 book presumably would know what he was talking about but new readers might not have done.

La Tenue qui est exprimée par cette marque / fait tenir le main dans une mesme Situation iusqu'a l'endroit ou elle finit.

⁸Mersenne (1636). Livre troisieme des genres, des especes, des Systemes, et des Modes de la Musique. Proposition IV p.153.

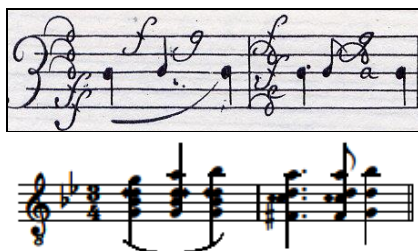
Or ie veux monstrier dans ce discours que les deux autres Genres sont tres-faciles et tres-necessaires pour la Composition, apres auoir remarqué que le genre Chromatic a peut estre esté appellé de ce nom, parce que les Grecs l'escruiuent avec des caracteres rouges, ou dautre couleur, car chroma signifie couleur:

Now I want to show in this discourse that the other two Genres are very easy and very necessary for the Composition, after noting that the Chromatic Genre has perhaps been called by this name, because the Greeks wrote it with red characters, or some other colour, because chroma means colour.

The Tenue, which is expressed by this mark / means hold the hand in the same position [i.e. to sustain the chord] until the place where it [i.e. the mark] finishes.

The *tenue* sign indicates that the notes should be held. In practice it is used in different ways. Although the underlying harmony remains the same some, notes within the chord[s] may change. In this example the uppermost notes of the chords in the first bar change to create a melodic line over the G minor chord.

Example 6.1 – Sarabande , p.54, b. 1-2



The *chute* is an upward slur.

La Chute que Voicy ∩ fait tomber ou couler les doigts sur les lettres suivantes.

The Chute which is thus ∩ means that the fingers should fall or curl onto the following letters [i.e. those included in the slur].

The *tirade* is a downward slur.

La Tirade qui se marque de cette façon ∪ fait tirer les doigts en prononcant les lettres que sont sur la dit Tirade.

La Tirade which is marked in this fashion ∪ means to pull off the fingers when playing the letters which are within the Tirade.

In the music these occur infrequently; the *chute* is really the same as an ascending appoggiatura as in this example.

Example 6.2 – Follie G. re. sol.ut p. 34 b.46-48



Corbetta then describes the different ways in which dots are used in the tablature.

Les points qui seruent en pinçant pour la main droite seruiroient icy pour la gauche en quelques endroits extraordinaires, ou ie les ay mis. Vous uerrés par le nombre des points qui

se irouent entre les lignes de quel doigt il faut tirer. Vn Point marque le doigt le plus proche du poulce, deux points celui d'apres, etc.

The [same] dots which serve for plucking for the right hand serve here [also] for the left in those particular places where I have placed them. You will see from the number of dots which are found between the lines [with] which finger it is necessary to stop [the strings]. One dot indicates the finger nearest the thumb, two dots the next etc.

Although in 'La guitarre royalle' (1671) dots are used to indicate when passages in two-parts should be played with the first and second fingers of the right hand instead of thumb and finger, they are not used in this way in the 1674 book. The dots here are used to indicate left-hand fingering. Some of the pieces have quite detailed left-hand fingering perhaps because the fingering of some of the chords is complex. The system of dots is straightforward

one dot	= index finger	three dots	= ring finger
two dots	= middle finger	four dots	= little finger

Corbetta does not make use of a wavy line to indicate a *barré* as in the 1671 book. The actual chords are sometimes ambiguous because it is not always clear whether open courses should be included. In the following example a *barré* at the fifth fret is necessary for the first two chords. The most convenient way of playing the rest of it is to use a *barré* at the second fret. However, if this option is selected it is necessary to omit the fourth and fifth courses from the D major chord and the fifth course from the final chord. The alternative would be to finger the D major chord in the standard way with 2nd – 3rd - 1st finger from the first course downwards.

Example 6.3 – Passacaille p. 56 closing bars



(For convenience notes on the fifth course are shown in the lower octave).

The dots may also indicate which notes should be omitted from a chord. As in 'La guitarre royalle' (1671) Corbetta uses these dots in the music in a random way or not at all and it is not always certain which notes should be included/omitted.

Pour ceux qui seront sur les lignes c'est pour faire entendre qu'il ne faut pas toucher les cords designées par les dites lignes.

Those [dots] which are on the lines indicate that the strings which those lines represent should not be played.

In the following example the fourth and fifth courses are to be omitted from the first full bar. In this book Corbetta often places "a"s on the tablature line to indicate when open courses should be included as in the last chord; the dot on the fifth line is therefore really superfluous.

It doesn't seem to have occurred to him or anyone else that the simplest solution would have been to put in the "a"s all the time.

Example 6.4 – Passacaille p.15 b.19-22



(For convenience notes on the fifth course are shown in the lower octave).

His next comment is not very helpful.

Le Martellement dont uoicy la marque , est un tremblem[en]t estouffé.

The Martellement which is shown with this mark , is a stifled trill.

Presumably it represents a mordent as in 'La guitarre royalle' (1671). It is used infrequently in the music.

Finally we come to the "true trill"

Pour le Veritable tremblement uous le feris sur la lettre qui sera hors des lignes dessu ou dessous, dont voicy, le Signe x.

For the true [or full] trill when you see this sign x you will play it [starting] on the letter which will be outside the [tablature] lines either above or below.

This is a trill with the auxiliary note shown above or below tablature as in 'La guitarre royalle' (1671). In Example 2 above *tremblements* occur on the chords on the second beat of the second and third bars.

The rest of the introduction comprises some general comments on the music.

le uous ay donné les contreperties de quelques pieces et mesme l'Allemande ne peut estré iouée a cause du nombre des poses en e mi la. Et il faut observer que les deux Guitarres doiuent estre accordées a l'Vnison.

I have supplied you with additional parts to some of the pieces and the Allemande [on p.11] can even be played alone because of the number of positions [chords] in E mi la. Note that the two guitars must be tuned in unison.

This is straightforward – the first twelve pieces have a second guitar part although the Allemande in E minor can be played on its own. The solmisation syllables are in the French order as in 'La guitarre royalle' (1671). Strictly speaking they should be la mi.

Vous suiurés la mesure qui est au dessus des lignes comme à l'ordinaire ou bien celle que i'ay mise en façon de Musique mais comme toutes les pieces son barreés cela uous eclaircira des difficultés que uous auriés la dessus.

You should follow the note values which are above the lines as is usual, that is those which I have put in the musical manner but as all the pieces are barred this will clarify for you any difficulties which you found above.

This is also straightforward up to a point. In fact, because most of the music is strummed the note values are more often on the tablature stave. They are only placed above the stave if they are to be played as single notes.

Et si Vous en trouués dans les pieces et mesme dans le Liure precedant uous saurés du Graveur ou uous deues uous adresser pour en estre plainement instruit.

And if you find in the pieces [anything you do not understand] and likewise in the preceding book [i.e. that of 1671], you will know [where to find] the Engraver to whom you will be able to address yourself in order to be plainly instructed.

It was quite common to advise purchasers of the book that they could get assistance in understanding the contents from the printer or even the guitarist himself. There is then a brief mention of the *batterie* or *repicco*

Quand à la Batterie la plus longue Note marque le Poulce.

In the Batterie the longest note [i.e. the note with the longest stem] indicates the thumb.

The *repicco* variation is included in the Chaconne which starts on page 26. This is in C major – the usual key for the chacone; different versions of this strummed variation are particularly associated with it. Corbetta has not explained which fingers should be used alternately with the thumb.

Example 6.5 – Chaconne p.26 repicco variation



Corbetta concludes with a rather unhelpful comment.

En couchant le premier doigt sur la touche, Vous touscheré les Points marquez un a chaque corde.

When resting the first finger on the fingerboard, you will touch the dots marked, one to each string.

It is not entirely clear what he means by this but when a *barré* is being used presumably the stopped notes are played as indicated by the other letters.

Contents

1. Pieces for 2 guitars

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p.2/3	Tambour de France Fifre
p.3/3	Tambour de Suisse Fifre
p.4/5	Fanfare la mesme
p.5/6	Autre Fanfare
p.6/1	Sarabande du depart du Roy
p.7	Passacaille (no second part included)
p.8/7	Sarabande La dauphine
p.9/8	Gigue Cherie du Roy
p.10/9	Prelude du Concert en e mi la
p.11/9	Alemande
p.14/11	Sarabande
p.15/12	Passacaille
p.17/13	Menuet
p.18/14	Sarabande En A mi la ré la

2. Pieces for guitar solo

p.19	Passacaille	A minor
p.22	Chacone	C major
p.23	Sarabande En B fa B mi	B flat major
p.24	Passacaille	B flat major
p.26	Autre Partie de Chacone	C major
p.29	Sarabande En C sol ut fa	C major ⁹
p.30/31	Sarabande En f ut fa B mol	F minor
p.31	Sarabande d la re sol	D minor
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p.37	Follie E mi la	E minor
p.40	Sarabande E mi la	E minor
p.41	Passacaille	E minor
p.43	Menuet	D major
p. 44	Alemande	D major
p.46	Sarabande	D major
p.47	Autre Air de Trompette	D major
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p.49	Passacaille	F major
p.51	Sarabande	G minor
p.52	Passacaille	G minor
p.54	Sarabande	G minor
p.55	Sarabande	A major
p.56	Passacaille	A major
p.58	Menuet	D minor
p.59	Menuet	D minor

⁹ Pages 29/30 are in the wrong order in facsimile.

Chapter 7

Rules for accompanying a Bass Line

Part I - 1643 and 1648

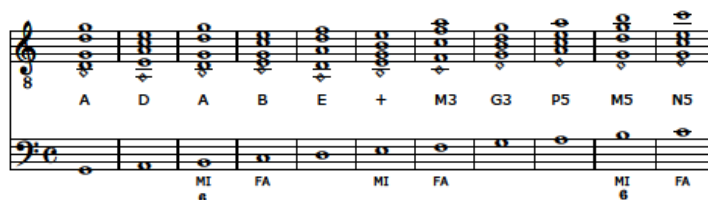
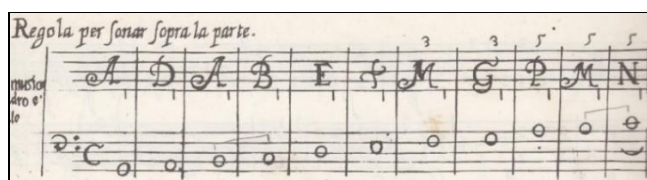
Both 'Varii Capricci per la guitarra spagnuola' (1643) and 'Varii Scherzi per la chitarra spagnola' (1648) include some examples illustrating how to accompany a bass line on the guitar. These cover the same topics with minor variations in the examples; the variations between the two sources are not of any great significance.¹

- p.70** *Regola per sonar sopra la parte*
 Scala di musica per b quadro e per b molle
p.79 *Scala di musica par b quadro e par b molle*

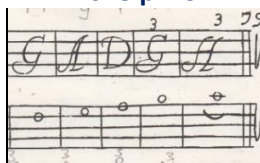
The notes from G to c' harmonized with *alfabeto* chords; all the notes are natural

Example 7.1

1643 p. 70



1648 p. 79



¹ There are a number of printing errors in the exercises in 1648, some of which have been corrected by hand or on the printing plates in different surviving copies of the book but these are not significant.

In the 1643 version Corbetta has chosen chords which reflect the way in which the bass notes move up the scale. To achieve this, he has had to use chords at higher positions on the fingerboard i.e. at the third and fifth fret, at the end of the sequence. In the 1648 version he has abandoned this idea and chosen chords which are more conveniently placed on the fingerboard. The first six chords from G to e are the same as those in 1643. Of the last five chords, three are played at the first fret like the ones at the beginning of the sequence and the last two at the third fret.

[Per b molle]

[Per b molle]

The notes from F to b flat harmonized with *alfabeto* chords with b flat key signature

Example 7.2

1643 p.70

Handwritten musical notation for Example 7.2, 1643 p.70. The top staff shows a sequence of notes: G, O, D, H, L, E, M, P, P, N. The bottom staff shows the corresponding chords: G, O, D, H, L, E, M3, P3, P5, N3. The bass line is in B-flat major (two flats).

1648 p.79

Handwritten musical notation for Example 7.2, 1648 p.79. The top staff shows a sequence of notes: G, O, D, H, K. The bottom staff shows the corresponding chords: G, O, D, H, K3. The bass line is in B-flat major (two flats).

In the second example he has done the same thing. The first seven chords are the same in both examples. In the 1643 version the last four chords are at higher positions on the fingerboard. In the 1648 version he has chosen chords at first position which are the same as those for the first four notes in the sequence. The last chord, K3, is a more convenient version of the C minor chords. He is beginning to adopt a practical approach rather than a theoretical one.

The basic rule is to use a root position chord on each degree of the scale except where the bass line rises a semitone. Corbetta does not observe this rule consistently. In the first example he

has adhered to the rule when harmonizing the notes B natural to C but not the notes E natural to F; he has given an E minor chord rather than an C major one. In the second example he has adhered to the rule when harmonizing the notes E natural to F but not from A natural to B flat; he has given an A minor chord rather than an F major one.

p.71 *Modo di tocar la notta col diesis e senza per b quadro*

p.80 *Modo di tocar la notta col diesis e senza p. b quadro*

Notes from G to g rising chromatically showing major or minor chords on each degree of the scale harmonized with either *alfabeto* chords or tablature

Example 7.3

1643 p. 71

The image displays two musical staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. It contains a chromatic scale from G to A, with notes G, G#, A, A#, B, B#, C, C#, D, D#, E, E#, F, F#, G. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. It contains a chromatic scale from G to g, with notes G, G#, A, A#, B, B#, C, C#, D, D#, E, E#, F, F#, G. Below the bass staff, there are labels for the chords: D, Q, X, B, E, +, G, A. The labels D, Q, X, B, E, +, G, A are placed above the notes G, G#, A, A#, B, B#, C, C# respectively. The labels MI, FA, MI, FA, MI, FA, MI, FA are placed below the notes G, G#, A, A#, B, B#, C, C# respectively. The labels are in a stylized font, with some letters in red and some in blue.

The example illustrates how to harmonize notes in the bass with sharps i.e. the progression MI – FA with a first inversion chord on MI.

In 1648 (not reproduced) the F sharp major chord is represented by G2 instead of Q and the B minor chord by K2 instead of X. This is in line with the move towards abandoning the letters at the end of the alphabet in favour of the simpler system of transposed chords. In each case here, the actual chords are the same. He has not put a first inversion chord in tablature on A sharp; he has put an *alfabeto* chord which will be a six-four chord with octave stringing on the fifth course. There is no obvious reason for this – he could have written a three-part chord on the first, second and third courses. The three-part chord on C sharp will be in first inversion with the “French” tuning.

p.71 *Il simile per b molle*

p.80 *Il simile p. b molle*

Notes from F to f rising chromatically showing the major and minor chord on each degree of the scale harmonized with either *alfabeto* chords or tablature with one flat in the key signature.

Example 7.4

1643 p. 71

Tablature: G O D H G³ B E M + G

Chords (Treble): G, O, D, H, G³, B, E, M, +, G

Bass line: MI, FA, MI, FA, MI, FA, MI, FA

1648 p. 80

Tablature: H A B E

Chords (Treble): H, A, B, E

Bass line: MI, FA, MI, FA

In 1643 he has not put a first inversion chord in tablature on B natural; he has put the *alfabeto* Chord G³ which will be a six-four with octave stringing on the fifth course. In 1648 he has substituted Chord A. In both sources he has put Chord + on E natural – a root position chord – rather than the first inversion C major chord. The two chords in tablature in the 1643 version will be in first inversion with the “French” tuning. In 1648 he has arranged the order of the notes on C sharp differently; it will be in root position with the “French” tuning.

p.72 *Modo di dar l'accompagn.^{to} alla notta della terza minor e maggiore*

p.81 *Modo di dar la compag.^{to} a la notta della terza minore e mayore*

Notes from F – f showing the major and minor chord on each note in *alfabeto*

Example 7.5

1643 p. 72

Tablature: P G Q A D I A R L B E C + F G

Chords (Treble): P, G, Q, A, D, I, A, R, L, B, E, C, +, F, G

Bass line: MI, FA, MI, FA



In 1648 (not reproduced) the B major chord is represented by H2 instead of R which, as before, is in line with the move towards the simpler system. The actual chords are the same. In both tables he has put Chord A, a G major chord on B natural instead of a B minor chord represented by K2.

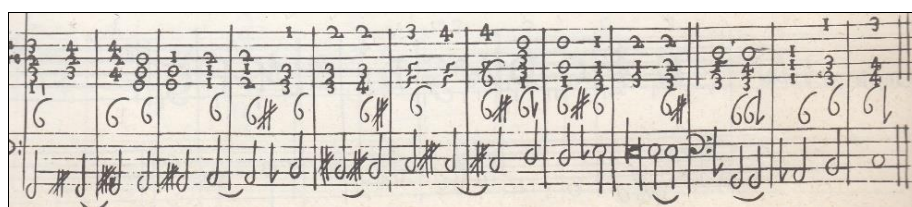
p.72 *Modo di dar l'accompagna.^{to} alla notte della sesta minor e maggiore*

p.82 *Modo di dar la accompagn.^{to} alla notte della sesta minore e maggiore*

Notes from F to e chromatically with first inversion chords in tablature throughout

Example 7.6

1643 p. 72



1648 p.82

The image displays two systems of handwritten musical notation from 1648 p.82. Each system consists of a treble staff and a bass staff. The first system has a treble staff with a 3/4 time signature and a bass staff with a 6/8 time signature. The second system has a treble staff with a 3/4 time signature and a bass staff with a 6/8 time signature. The transcriptions show chords on A, with some chords highlighted in green.

The examples are not identical in the two sources. The voicing of the two chords on A (bars 3-4) varies. The lowest note is stopped on the third course in 1643; the open fifth course is indicated in 1648. In 1648 Corbetta has included several extra chords. These are shown in green in the transcription. The last three examples with a key signature of one flat are identical in the two sources.

p.73 *Modo di far la cadenza di quarta risolta con la terza per b quadro con la quinta falsa*

p.83 *Modo di far la cadenza di quarta e terza con la quinta falssa*

Four-three suspensions at the cadence with the tritone in keys with sharps (major & minor)

Example 7.7a

1643 p. 73

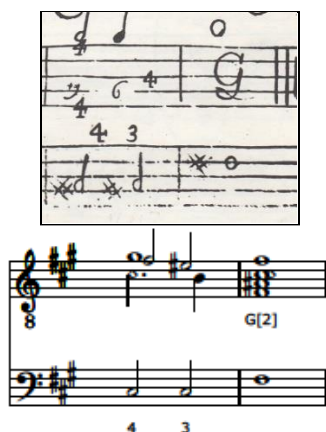
The image shows a single system of handwritten musical notation from 1643 p. 73. It consists of a treble staff and a bass staff. The treble staff has a 3/4 time signature and the bass staff has a 6/8 time signature. The notation includes various chords and suspensions, with some notes marked with '4' and '3'.



The four-three suspension is almost invariably introduced into a perfect cadence i.e. when the bass either falls a perfect fifth or rises a perfect fourth. Corbetta refers to the seventh as the “false fifth” (i.e. the tritone); the tritone occurs between two upper parts although strictly speaking the “false” note is a seventh from the bass. Corbetta has not indicated it in the figures; in 1671 he indicates it with the figure 5. When constructing the part writing it should really be treated as a passing note if it is not prepared rather than approached by a minor third from the leading note.

In the first example of a cadence in C major Corbetta has not been able to place the root of the chord in the lowest part – it can only be played on the open third course but Corbetta has not indicated that this should be included. The four-three suspension is on the fifth course. With a low octave string on the fifth course it will be in the lowest part. In practice this is acceptable. In 1648 Corbetta has added one further example in the key of F sharp major; the 2 indicating that Chord G should be played at the second fret is missing.

Example 7.7b
1648 p. 83 – Last example



Corbetta has not explained how the suspended fourth should be prepared.

p.73 *Il simile per b. molle*

p.84 *Il simile per b. molle*

Four-three suspensions at the cadence with the tritone in keys with flats (major & minor)

Example 7.8

1643 p. 73



1648 is identical. The last example in D flat major is arranged with the “four-three suspension” on the fifth course as in the C major example in Example 7A. More coherent part-writing results if the note on the fourth course – the seventh - is placed in the upper octave.

p.74 *Modo di far la cadenza di settima risolta con la sexta per b quadro*

p.85 *Modo di far la cadenza di settima et sexta per b quadro*

Seven-six suspensions at the cadence in sharp keys

Example 7.9

1643 p. 74



The image displays three systems of musical notation, each consisting of a treble and a bass staff. The first system shows a cadence with chords A, G, and F. The second system shows chords E, B, and R. The third system shows chords N4, D, and P5. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 7, 6, and # below the notes.

1648 is almost identical. In 1643 in the fourth cadence on D Corbetta has overlooked the sharp over the bass note and put Chord E – a D minor chord; in 1648 he has altered this to Chord C – D major. He has also used H2 instead of R for the B major chord.

Although Corbetta has not made a distinction between them, the examples illustrate two different progressions - a tenorising cadence where the bass line falls a tone and a Phrygian cadence where the bass falls a semitone. The third, sixth and seventh examples are Phrygian cadences.

In a tenorising cadence the suspension is introduced into a first inversion diminished fifth triad on the leading note in the progression $VII^{7-6} I/i$. The seventh resolves onto a major sixth and should be accompanied by a minor third; Corbetta has overlooked this rule in the second cadence on F major which should have a B flat rather than B natural. The final chord may have a major or minor third.

In a Phrygian cadence the suspension is introduced into a first inversion minor triad on the second or sixth degree of the scale in the progression - $vi^{7-6} V$ or $ii^{7-6} I$ - depending on the context. The final chord must have a major third.

Corbetta has not explained how the seventh should be prepared. In the cadences on Chord R (B major) and Chord D (A minor) the parts are inverted with the “French” tuning. In both instances this is acceptable.

p.74 *Il simile per b molle*

p.86 *Il simile per b molle*

Seven-six suspensions at the cadence in flat keys

Example 7.10a 1643 p.74

The image shows a handwritten musical score for Example 7.10a, which is a cadence in F major. The score is presented in two systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system shows a G chord (F major) and a C chord (F major). The second system shows an H chord (F major) and an I chord (F major). The notation includes various accidentals and fingerings, such as 7 and 6, and a sharp sign (#).

Examples two, three, six and seven are Phrygian cadences. In the first example cadencing on Chord G (F major) the parts will be inverted with a low octave string on the fifth course. In the cadences on Chord B (C major) and chord I (A major) the parts are inverted with the “French” tuning. In both instances this is acceptable.

In 1648 Corbetta has added one further example finalizing on F which is misprinted. The note on the first course in the first chord is given as F sharp instead of F natural.

Example 7.10b 1648 p. 86

The image shows a handwritten musical score for Example 7.10b, which is a cadence in F major. The score is presented in two systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system shows a G chord (F major) and a C chord (F major). The second system shows an H chord (F major) and an I chord (F major). The notation includes various accidentals and fingerings, such as 7 and 6, and a sharp sign (#).

At the end of the book there are two *sinfonie*. In the Table of Contents, the first is described as *come si deve sonar la notte* – literally “how the note must be played” which suggests that is an

example of how to create a piece from a bass line. Although the bass part is more or less integrated into the guitar part, there is no obvious reason why the bass line should not be doubled by another instrument. The “Aria” in Matteis’s ‘False consonances’ (page 4-5) is a similar example. It has a separate bass part which for practical reasons is printed separately from the guitar part rather than in score; the guitar part is more elaborate and takes up three staves while the bass part occupies only a single staff at the bottom of the page. It is fairly obvious that they are intended to be played together. There would be no point in including the bass line otherwise.

The second *sinfonia* has a note *acompannata con l’organo ò altro Basso* [accompanied with the organ or another bass (instrument) which suggests that it is a preconceived piece with organ or other accompaniment. In places the two parts are more independent with one echoing the other. The organ may not seem like an obvious choice as an accompanying instrument for the guitar but Corbetta may have had in mind a small chamber organ rather than a church organ. Today both pieces are often played as duets.

Conclusions

It is frequently argued that these exercises are only acceptable if played with a low octave string on the fifth course as well as the fourth course. However, all examples work satisfactorily with a low octave string only on the fourth course; they are either in the correct inversions or present acceptable alternatives. In some of the examples Corbetta himself has not reproduced the bass part in the tablature, resulting in a different but acceptable inversion. It is not always practical either to arrange the notes in a way that makes it possible to sustain the underlying harmony. The examples illustrate what actually works on a five-course instrument. As far as possible the examples are arranged so that they can be played without moving to high positions on the fingerboard.

Part II - 1671

‘La guitarre royalle’ (1671) includes similar exercises to those included in 1643 and 1648 set out in French tablature. However, they are not identical with either of the earlier books, something which is often overlooked.

p.99 *Commencement pour iouer la partie par b. quar*

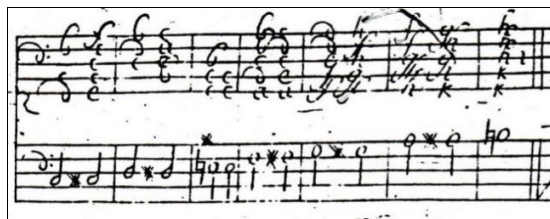
The notes from G to c’ harmonized with standard chords written out in French tablature

These are the same those as in the earlier books except that in bar 3 Corbetta has included the equivalent of Chord K2 as an alternative for Chord A on B natural and in bar 6 he has written the equivalent of Chord F (E major) instead of Chord + (E minor).

La mesme par b.mol

Notes from F to c’ with b flat key signature harmonized with standard chords written out in French tablature

The chords are the same as in both earlier books up to and including the note D in the bass except that only the consonant form of Chord L is included. Corbetta has included alternative



With the exception of the first chord, all are harmonized with standard five-part chords in French tablature rather than with three-part chords on the sharpened notes as in the earlier books. Corbetta has included the seventh in the chords on D sharp and G sharp (highlighted in red); he has not actually indicated that the open fifth course should be included in the former but presumably it could be. The chords from G sharp to b natural are not included in the earlier books.

He has omitted altogether the example showing the scale with a B flat signature (page 71/page 80 in the earlier books).

Maniere de toucher la tierce mineure et majeure

Notes from F – f with a b flat key signature showing the major and minor chord on each in French tablature.

This varies from the corresponding examples in the earlier books (page 72/page 81) in the following ways.

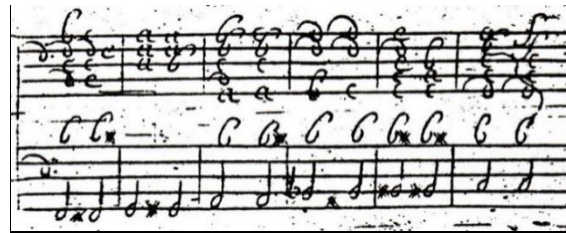
There is a key signature of one flat.

The fourth bar has B flat instead of B natural in the bass with B flat minor (Chord K) and B flat major (Chord H) chords.

p.100 Maniere de toucher la sexte mineure et majeure

Notes from F to e rising chromatically with first inversion chords in French tablature

Example 7.13 - 1671 p.100



These vary considerably from the earlier books. Corbetta has expanded many of the chords to four or five parts. He has included the seventh in the E major chords on B natural and in the F sharp major chords on C sharp (bar 5 and bar 8 of the transcription). The chords which are additional or which vary are shown in green.

Maniere de faire la cadense de quarte et tierce avec la fausse quint par b quart

Four-three suspensions at the cadence with the false fifth in keys with sharps (major & minor)

Example 7.14 - 1671 p.100

The image displays a handwritten musical score for Example 7.14, page 100. It consists of three systems of music, each with two staves (treble and bass). The first system shows a sequence of notes and rests. The second system shows a sequence of notes and rests. The third system shows a sequence of notes and rests. Below these are three systems of music with chord labels B, C, G, A, I, H2, and G2. Each system has a treble and bass staff with notes and rests. The chord labels are placed below the treble staff. The notes are in a 4/4 time signature.

Where possible Corbetta has filled out chords which were in three parts in the earlier books although he has not always made it clear whether open courses should be included.

It is not clear whether the open courses should be included in the first example.

The A major chord is increased to five parts in the second example.

An E minor chord is included as an alternative to the final E major chord in the third example.

An A major rather than an A minor chord is given for the final chord in the sixth example.

The F sharp major chord is increased to five parts in the seventh example.
 The "false fifth" is indicated with the figure 5 below the bass line wherever this occurs.
 He has not indicated that any of the chords are to be strummed as in the earlier books presumably because it is less convenient to do this in French tablature.

La mesme par b moll

Four-three suspensions at the cadence with the false fifth in B flat major, E flat major and A flat major

Example 7.15 - 1671 p.100

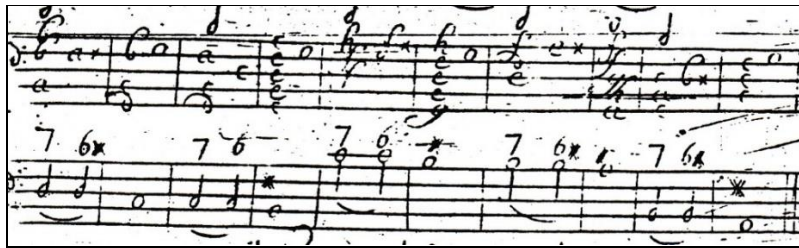
Corbetta has filled out chords where practical as in the previous examples.

The B flat major chord is increased to five parts in the first example.
 The E flat major chord is increased to five parts in the third example.
 He has omitted the example in D flat major included in both earlier books.

p.101 *Maniere de faire la cadence de septiesme et sixieme par b quart*

Seven-six suspensions at the cadence in sharp keys

Example 7.16 - 1671 p.101



7 6# 7 6# 7 6#

7 6# 7 6# 7 6#

7 6# 7 6# 7 6#

7 6# 7 6# 7 6#

As in the earlier books the bass line falls either semitone or a tone. The sixth and seventh examples are Phrygian cadences – the bass falls a semitone. The first, fifth and last two examples are tenorising cadences; the bass line falls a tone. The last two examples are reversed from the earlier version and end with major rather than minor chords.

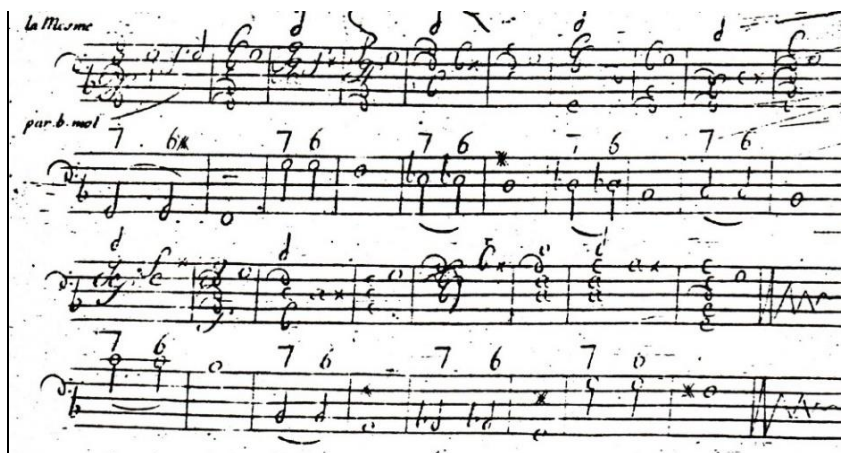
However, in the second and fourth examples, Corbetta has increased the number of parts in the initial chord from three to four, converting it from a first inversion diminished fifth triad on the leading note to a second inversion chord of the dominant seventh combined with a four-three suspension in a more complex progression i.e

$$\begin{array}{c} V^{7-6} | \\ 4-3 \end{array}$$

La mesme par b.mol

Seven-six suspensions at the cadence in flat keys

Example 7.17 - 1671 p.101



Examples three, four, seven, eight and nine are Phrygian cadences. Examples two, and five are tenorising cadences. In the first example the C major seventh chord has been increased to five parts; the progression is the same as the second example in Example 7.16 above although the notes are arranged in a different way on the fingerboard. With a low octave string on the fifth course it will be a straightforward dominant seventh chord with a four-three suspension. The second example is not included in the earlier books. The last example is included in 1648 but not 1643.

Conclusion

Like the exercises in the earlier books, all the examples in Corbetta's 'La guitarrre royalle' (1671) work satisfactorily with a low octave string only on the fourth course; they are either in the correct inversions or present acceptable alternatives. They illustrate what is practical on a five-course

instrument with a re-entrant tuning; as far as possible they are arranged so that they can be played without moving to high positions on the fingerboard.

It should be stressed that the exercises are not identical with those in Corbetta's 1643 or 1648 book. Understandably after a period of more than twenty years Corbetta has arranged some of the examples differently. The progressions illustrated in 1671 sometimes vary from those in the earlier books and the chords are often filled out with additional courses. The harmony is sometimes more complex and may include the seventh of the chord.

Corbetta may have had a different style of accompaniment in mind – one which is more appropriate for the guitar than the keyboard or lute inspired exercises in the earlier books. It consists predominantly of strummed chords, with less emphasis on reproducing the bass line as written and more complex harmony. In performance, this is more effective. The audibility and sustaining power of the guitar is more limited than that of a keyboard instrument or the lute or theorbo, and strumming underpins the voice parts more effectively.

Part III - Vocal pieces in *La guitarre royale* (1671)

This style of accompaniment is exemplified in the four vocal ensemble pieces at the end of the book. Two of these are for two sopranos and bass voice and two are for one soprano and bass voice. They are set out in score and all have both a figured bass line and a written-out accompaniment for guitar in French tablature. All are apparently arrangements of solo pieces in the main part of the book. (See Example 7.18 below).

It has been suggested that these accompaniments are not representative of common practice in the last quarter of the seventeenth century.² As there are very few comparable works, it is difficult to understand how this conclusion has been arrived at. It seems to be based on the mistaken assumption that the exercises in accompanying a bass line found in Sanz's '*Instruccion de musica*', printed in Zaragoza in 1674, are typical of late seventeenth-century practice throughout Europe and beyond. This is questionable.

First of all, there is no way of knowing whether Sanz's book ever circulated outside of Spain.³

Secondly, although in most of Sanz's exercises, which cover similar ground to those in the earlier Italian books, the bass line is reproduced as written and realized in three-part harmony without strummed chords, there is no reason to suppose that this style of accompaniment was intended to supersede the practice of strumming an accompaniment, or of combining strumming with three-part writing. It is not a superior way of providing an accompaniment; it is simply an alternative.

Sanz's first example shows the notes of the scale from G to f harmonized with both major and minor *alfabeto* chords as in the earlier Italian books, and with three-part chords in tablature. The

² Eisenhardt (2015), p.121 - "Although the accompaniments of the polyphonic songs from Corbetta's *La guitarre royale* (1671) should probably not be taken as representative of the continuo practice from the last part of the seventeenth century, they are still often referred to as classic examples".

³ This is also true of Murcia's '*Resumen de acompañar*'. This includes exercises similar in style to those of Sanz but did not appear in print until 1714.

alfabeto chords are the same as those in Corbetta's first example in 1643 and 1648. In the written introduction Sanz comments

Tienen todos los puntos dos acompañamientos, para que escojas el que quisieres. El uno es de Rasgueado, con toda la Guitarra, y este se señala con las letras. El otro de Punteado, que se señala con los numeros, y en este el pulgar tañe la cifra que corresponde al baxo, y con los otros dedos, las voces que vienen mas al proposito a la mano.⁴

All the notes have two kinds of accompaniment, so that you may chose which you like. One way is rasgueado, playing the whole guitar, and this is represented with letters. The other way is punteado, which is represented with numbers; and in this method the thumb plays the number which corresonds to the bass, and the other fingers the voices which fall most conveniently under the hand.

Illustration 1 – Sanz - Exemplo 1º Acõpañamiento Diatonico Pl.13



The rest of the examples illustrate progressions such as four-three and seven-six suspensions where it is not practical to use five-part chords. In essence they are the same as those of Corbetta.

It is also clear from what Sanz says when commenting on the second of his two labyrinths – *Laberinto 2º de las falsas, y puntos mas estraños y dificiles q(ue) tiene la guitarra* on Plate 2 of the first part of 'Instruccion de musica' that he considered a predominantly strummed accompaniment perfectly acceptable. The "labyrinth" consists of sequences of resolving seventh chords progressing in a circle of fifths from E minor and back again. Sanz comments as follows

En esta tabla hallaràs todas las falsas, y ligaduras de que se componen las clausulas, y cadencias de Musica, puestas con su prevencion, y resolucion, como enseña la buena composicion: Hallaràs las quatro voces, y todo lo mas lleno que se puede tañer en la Guitarra; y finalmente, todos los puntos cromaticos, con sus consonancias, y disonancias, que es lo mas dificil, y son de grande util para el que desea saber con fundamento, y acompañarse con la voz'.⁵

In this table you will find all the dissonances and suspensions from which the closes and cadences of music are composed, set out with their preparation and resolution as is taught in the art of composition. You will find some four-part chords [where five-part chords are impractical] and all the fullest harmonies that can be played on the guitar; and finally, all the chromatic chords, whether consonant or dissonant which are the most difficult and are very useful for whoever wishes to understand the basic principles and to accompany himself when singing.

⁴ Sanz – Instruccion de musica, Segundo tratado p.3.

⁵ Sanz – Instruccion de musica, Primer tratado p.6.

There are numerous Spanish manuscripts of vocal music with Castilian or Catalan *cifras* added to one or other of the parts which clearly indicate that a strummed accompaniment was considered appropriate at the time.

French and English sources suggest that Corbetta's approach was the norm. Grenerin's '*Livre de guitarre*', printed in Paris 1680, includes both exercises and consort pieces. There are three *Simphonies* for two violins, figured bass and written out guitar part and three *Airs* for three or four voices with figured bass and guitar part all set out in score. The guitar parts combine strummed chords with three-part writing. Although Grenerin has taken more care to reproduce the bass line in the guitar part than Corbetta, this may reflect the fact that he was primarily a theorbo player. The exercises in Matteis's '*False consonances of musick*', printed by John Carr in London in 1682, likewise combine strummed chords with plucked chords.

There are at least five manuscripts of English provenance of vocal music with a guitar accompaniment written out in tablature from the same period.

The earliest of these - US-CAuMs.1953.009 – apparently belonged to the Italian singer and lutenist, Pietro Reggio.⁶ It bears his signature and was at least in part copied by him. The date 16 December 1669 appears on the first numbered folio. Reggio was one of the troupe of Italian musicians employed by Queen Christina of Sweden between 1652-3. After her abdication he spent some time in Germany, Spain and France before settling in England in about 1664.

The manuscript is in five sections. The first comprises Italian canzoni and cantatas by Cavalli, Strozzi, Rossi and others with accompaniment for five-course guitar written out in French tablature with or without a separate (unfigured) bass line, for the most part copied and presumably arranged by Reggio himself. Some of the accompaniments are sketchy or incomplete, suggesting that the manuscript was originally a working document intended by Reggio for his own use. The second section comprises settings of psalms and other religious Latin texts with or without guitar accompaniment, copied in a different hand. Reggio seems to have favoured a style of accompaniment which consists of standard five-part chords where ever practical; a running bass line is however often left unharmonized, although in practice it may have been filled in. (See Example 17.19 below).

There are also four manuscripts of solo vocal pieces copied for the diarist Samuel Pepys by the Flemish-Italian musician, Cesare Morelli, which have guitar parts in French tablature which are predominantly strummed.⁷ Like Reggio, Morelli was a singer and lutenist; he entered Pepys' service in June 1675 and remained with him until 1682. The manuscripts comprise arrangements of works by a number of contemporary composers including Carissimi, Cesti, G.B. Draghi, Lully, Reggio and Stradella as well as pieces by Morelli and Pepys himself. Three of the manuscripts include a separate figured bass line. Morelli also compiled, presumably for Pepys' benefit, a didactic work – '*A table to the ghitarr shewing the relation of each Frett upon every string*' - dated 1680⁸ - with a set of short preludes "to every Key in use through the whole scale". Morelli clearly favoured a style in which full chords featured prominently. (See Example 17.20 below).

⁶Formerly Ms. f.C.697.M.4. For details see RISM Bvii, p.194-5.

⁷ GB-Cmc Ms.2591, 2802, 2803 and 2804.

⁸ GB-Cmc Ms. 2805.

Both Reggio and Morelli would have been familiar with Corbetta's music and may have known him personally, as they were all Italian and moved in the same circles in London during the 1660s and 1670s. Reggio would also have known Bartolotti, as they were both members of the group of musicians employed by Queen Christina between 1652-3. It is sometimes suggested that the guitar was not used for accompanying the Italian vocal repertoire later than that included in *alfabeto* song books. This is clearly not the case. Due to economic decline in the later part of the century, it may not have been profitable to print the music in a popular format and the guitar may not be mentioned specifically as an option for the accompaniment in those books which were, but there is no reason to suppose that it ceased to be used in this context.

Part 4 - Performance issues

Corbetta has very little to say about how the vocal pieces should be performed. In the Italian introduction he comments

et per dartene maggior Notitia mi sono seruito delle parole fatte sopra alcune mie sonate specialm^{te} soura la fauorita del Re et altre, conforme uedra a tre e a due voci, col basso continuo, et sotto al medesimo, l'accompagnan^{to} di chitarra. Troueroi nel principio del libro la detta Alem.^{da} fauorita in intauolatura soura un altro tono, et uolendola sonare col concerto, alzerai la chitarra d'un mezo tono;

...to draw more attention to them, I am supplying the words made for some of my sonatas, especially for the favourite of the King and others, just as you will see, in two and three parts voices with basso continuo, and below them the guitar accompaniment. At the beginning of the book [on page 1] you will find the said Allemande favorita in tablature in a different mode [i.e. in B minor instead of C minor] and if you wish to play it in consort [with the vocal version], you must raise the guitar a semitone;

and in the French introduction

...l'y ay mis l'exemple dans les chansons à trois parties avec le basse continue, et dessous, la mesme basse en tablature, c'est pour accompagner. Dans l'Allemande aymée du Roy qui est en musique uous y trouuez la mesme en tablature dessus un autre ton pour joüer seul, et si uous uoulez la joüer avec le concert uous mettrez la Guitare un demy ton plus haut, parceque pour la difficulté du ton il m'fallu la transposer d'un demi ton plus haut ;

I have included as an example the chansons in three parts with a basso continuo, and below the same bass in tablature, which is for accompanying. For the Allemande aymée du Roy which is in staff notation [on page 83] you will find the same in tablature above [on page 1] [in] a different mode [i.e. in B minor instead of C minor] to be played alone. If you wish to play it in consort [with the vocal pieces] you should tune the guitar half a tone higher, because on account of the difficulty of the mode it seemed to me necessary to transpose it [the vocal version] up half a tone.

The reason for the transposition is presumably to accommodate the voice parts; two of the other vocal pieces are also in different modes/keys from the solo guitar pieces.

p. 83 (p.1) Non si puo' star sempre altero - up a semitone

Original key = B minor

Vocal version = C minor

Voice ranges

Soprano 1	C1	b natural – f''
Soprano 2	C1	b natural – e flat''
Bass	F4	F – d'

p. 89 (p.6) Chi uuol la liberta

Original key = F major

Voice ranges

Soprano 1	G2	f' – b'' flat
Soprano 2	C1	c' - e flat''
Bass	F4	F – d'

p. 93 (p.11) Falloit il o' Dieux – down a perfect 4th

Original key = C minor

Vocal version = G minor

Voice ranges

Soprano 1	C1	d' – g''
Bass	F4	F – c'

p.96 (p.12) l'ay bergere et nuit et jour - down a semitone

Original key = C major

Vocal version = B flat major

Voice ranges

Soprano 1	C1	f' – g''
Bass	F4	F – c'

Whilst the bass line does not go below F in any of the pieces, the first soprano goes up to B flat above the treble stave in the second piece, and to G above the treble stave in the third and fourth pieces, not just occasionally but in extended passages which makes the pieces taxing to perform. Standard pitch may have been lower in the seventeenth-century England but cannot have been much lower without compromising the bass part.

Where is the bass line?

There is one question to which Corbetta has not provided an answer. Is the figured bass line provided as an alternative to the guitar or are two instruments intended to be play together and if so, what other instruments might have been used? There does not seem to be much point in including the bass line, which takes up space and makes extra work for the engraver, merely as an alternative, when the book is almost exclusively intended for guitarists. There is no obvious reason why the pieces should not be accompanied by two instruments – the guitar and theorbo would work well in practice - and there is certainly no reason why the bass line alone should not be re-enforced by another instrument given that the guitar cannot reproduce this as written, even if it is strung with low octave strings on both fourth and fifth courses.

Eisenhardt claims that “even though there is a wealth of vocal music with guitar accompaniment, there is very little historical evidence” for doubling the bass line with a viol or theorbo.⁹ This begs the question – what sort of historical evidence should there be? Nowhere in guitar sources is it explicitly stated that the bass line should or should not be doubled.

The source which is often quoted as an authority on this matter is Tharald Borgir who maintains that there is no justification for doubling the bass line in Italian baroque music.¹⁰ His book is in fact a revised version of his doctoral dissertation, which was completed in 1977. It is almost certainly out of date – many more sources may have come to light since it was written. He is concerned only with Italian practice and concedes that practice in France and elsewhere was different. He covers keyboard instruments and lutes with extended basses but the baroque guitar is not mentioned at all. He may not even have been aware that the guitar was used as a continuo instrument or have seen any of the sources which include instructions for accompanying a bass line.

Robert Zappulla takes a different stance on the matter.¹¹ He comments - “The authors of the accompaniment treatises for chordal instruments...describe and illustrate the playing of both bass and harmony by the latter, as was often done, but what might appear to be near unanimous advocacy of that practice, may actually be considered advice offered for a worse case scenario only when no sustaining instrument is present”. He points out that Rameau approved of the omission of the bass line by the harpsichord when a sustaining instrument was available.¹²

It may be stating the obvious, but in the exercises, as distinct from the musical works, the bass line has to be included to illustrate how it should be harmonized. However, what parts are included in copies of complete musical works in score, whether printed or hand copied, and how they are arranged on the page, is largely a matter of what is convenient. Pieces often survive in different arrangements and different formats. Surviving sources may not always include a separate bass line, although many of them do, but that does not prove that the pieces in question were specifically intended to be performed in only one way – with guitar accompaniment alone.

The one example which Eisenhardt refers to is the ‘Cancionero de Jose Marin’ (GB-CfmMs.Mus.727).¹³ This is a collection of fifty-one *tonos* or secular vocal pieces, composed or arranged by Marín, with a guitar accompaniment written out in Italian tablature, but no separate bass line. It was copied sometime between 1686 and 1695¹⁴ and belonged to the singer Miguel Martín who was employed in the Spanish Chapel Royal. However, some of the *tonos* are also found in other sources, usually with only the voice part and bass line; they were not composed specifically for guitar. It is not even certain that the guitar part is by Marín himself. It is actually rather sketchy and in places reproduces only the bass line unharmonized. The player would almost certainly have filled it out in one way or another and varied the accompaniment from verse to verse.

⁹ Eisenhardt (2015) p.119

¹⁰ Borgir (1987) p.37.

¹¹ Zappulla (2000) p. 54.

¹² Rameau (1732), p.17-19.

¹³ Eisenhardt (2015) Note 51, p. 214.

¹⁴ Not in ca. 1699 as Eisenhardt suggests. Op. cit. p. 173. 1699 is the year of Marín death.

Eisenhardt claims that this source is unique although it is not the case. The manuscript E-Bc Ms.Mus.3660 which was copied slightly later¹⁵ includes twenty-seven vocal solos with voice part, unfigured bass line and guitar part in Italian tablature. The guitar part is more complex than that of Marin, featuring many four-part chords and occasionally five-part chords represented with Castilian *cifras*. A further fourteen songs are incomplete – the guitar part has not been filled in.

In any event, as a bass line is actually included in ‘La guitarre royalle’ (1671), there is no excuse for ignoring it. Whatever players in Spain may have done twenty years later is irrelevant. It is reasonable to assume that the pieces would have been performed with whatever forces were available, and it would have depended on the circumstances in which they were performed whether they were accompanied with the guitar alone or a group of instruments.

The French lutenist, Henry Grenerin is a little more explicit about how he thinks that the vocal and instrumental pieces in his ‘Livre de guitarre’ (1680) should be performed. In a note at the beginning of the first *Simphonie* on page 68 he states that the piece is for

deux dessus de violon avec la basse, la Compag.^{ent} de la guitarre et le theorbe.

for two violins with the bass, the accompaniment for guitar and theorbo.

There is no reason to suppose that the guitar and theorbo were not intended to be played together or that the bass line should be omitted; this combination of instruments would work well in practice and would provide more adequate support for the two violins than just a guitar.

In his *Advis au Lecteur* at the beginning of the book Grenerin suggests a number of different options, including performing the vocal pieces as solos for either soprano or bass and using a keyboard instrument for the accompaniment in the *sinphonies*.

Vous trouverez dans ce livre quelques Airs curieux françois, et Italien a trois et a quatre parties, avec l’accompagnement de la guitarre, des quelles vous pouvez tirez les dessus et les basses pour jouer et chanter separement. Ils sont meslez de simphonies qui les precedent, les quelles peuvent servir a faire de concerts de basses de violle, deux dessus de violon et clavessine: l’on peut mesme tirer les quatre parties des airs pour chanter ensemble.

You will find in this book some interesting French and Italian Airs in three and four parts, with the accompaniment for the guitar, from which you can extract the soprano and bass parts and sing and play them separately. They are mixed with simphonies which precede them, which can be used to make consorts of bass viol, two violins and keyboard; one can also extract the four parts of the airs to sing together.

Grenerin clearly indicates that the bass viol could or should be included, even if a keyboard instrument is used to realize the bass line. There is nothing to suggest that he thought that a different style of accompaniment would be necessary if one of the voice parts was performed as a solo.

¹⁵ Folios 52 -66v comprise theoretical material, vocal exercises and keyboard music probably copied later. A note on f.52v is dated 28 March 1764.

Eisenhardt comments - “Regrettably, Corbetta did not leave any examples of accompaniment to solo song which may well have been different with regard to the density of the texture”.¹⁶ However, there is really no reason why it should be different. The setting of the *Sarabande Tombeau de Madame, Falloit il o Dieux*, (See Example 7.18) which reproduces the melodic line of the guitar version in the soprano part, would work perfectly well as a solo with the guitar accompaniment provided. It is to all intents and purposes a solo piece. Although the vocal bass line is texted, all that it does much of the time is duplicate the figured bass line. Any singer worthy of their salt should be able to hold their own in such circumstances. The pieces in US-CAuMs.1953.009 are all intended to be performed as vocal solos. The Pepys manuscripts includes solo arias and duets; the style of accompaniment is exactly the same.

Clearly there are some parts of the repertoire where doubling the bass line might be inappropriate. The early seventeenth-century *alfabeto* song repertoire is an obvious example in so far as the songs were intended for self-accompaniment although it is quite possible that in some circumstances more complex accompaniments would have been regarded as acceptable. Commonsense suggests that in the seventeenth-century musicians would have felt free to use whatever combination of voices and instruments were available to them and worked in practice. There are no really hard and fast rules about these matters.

¹⁶ Eisenhardt (2015) p. 121.

Examples of vocal music with guitar accompaniment

Corbetta – La guitarre royale (1671) p. 93 Sarab.^{de} Tombeau de Madame - Falloit il o dieux

This extract illustrates some of the compromises which have to be made when realizing an accompaniment on the guitar. Without a low octave string on the fifth course, the bass line is reproduced more or less as written. In particular, Corbetta has arranged the chords in the opening bar so that the descending chromatic bass line is in the lowest sounding part. This would be obscured with a low octave string on the fifth course.

In bar 3 a first inversion chord is not really practical on the first beat; without a low octave string on the fifth course the chord will in root position rather than an unacceptable six-four.

In bar 4 where a G minor chord is called for, it is not convenient to have a five-part root position chord. He could have written a G minor chord with a *barré* at the third fret but this would involve an awkward shift between the preceding and following chords.

In bar 6 a bourdon on the fifth course would reproduce the first F major seventh chord in first inversion but the root position chord is acceptable. Without a bourdon, the B flat chord which follows will be a six-four instead of root position.

In bar 7 the E flat chord will be a six-four with a bourdon on the fifth course.

In bar 8 in the last chord a bourdon on the fifth course would obscure the leading note E natural in the bass and create an unwanted doubling of the seventh in the wrong octave.

In bar 10, a five-part first inversion B flat major chord is impractical with or without a bourdon.

At the cadence a bourdon would double the suspended fourth in the lower octave.

Example 7. 18a

The image shows a page from a musical manuscript, page 93, titled 'Sarab. de Tombeau de Madame' and 'Paroles de Mlle des Jardins'. The music is in 3/4 time and features a vocal line and a guitar accompaniment. The lyrics are: 'Falloit il o Dieux qui la fit es si bel le : la faire mor- : telle Princesse. Princesse la Parque uous raut à nos yeux'. The score is written on ten staves, with the vocal line on the top five staves and the guitar accompaniment on the bottom five staves. The guitar part includes various chords and a descending chromatic bass line in the opening bar.

Fal - loit il o Dieux qui la fit es si

6 6 6 5 # 6 7 #

bel - le la la faire mor - tel - le Prin - ces - se Prin -

b 6 6 6 6

ces - se la Par - que uous ra - uit á nos yeux

6 6 5-3 4 3

In the Italian preface to 'La guitarre royalle' (1671) Corbetta implies that words were added to his pre-existing compositions for guitar solo.

et per dartene maggior Notitia mi sono seruito delle parole fatte sopra alcune mie sonate

to draw more attention to them, I am supplying the words made for some of my sonatas

The French preface is more ambiguous. However, comparing the guitar versions with the vocal versions does highlight some anomalies which suggest that the vocal versions may have preceded the guitar pieces, whether they were by Corbetta or not. In the opening bars here, there are two places where the soprano part is placed on the fourth and fifth courses and belongs in the upper octave if the two versions are to match. The bass line is inevitably rather sketchy.

Example 7.18b

Corbetta – La guitarre royale (1671) p. 11 La Sarabande b.1-5

Lil' Lullaby
The Little One

Handwritten musical score for a lullaby. The title is "Lil' Lullaby" and the composer is "The Little One". The music is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo/mood is marked "Adagio". The melody is simple and gentle, with a repeating pattern of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics "Lil' Lullaby" are written below the staff.

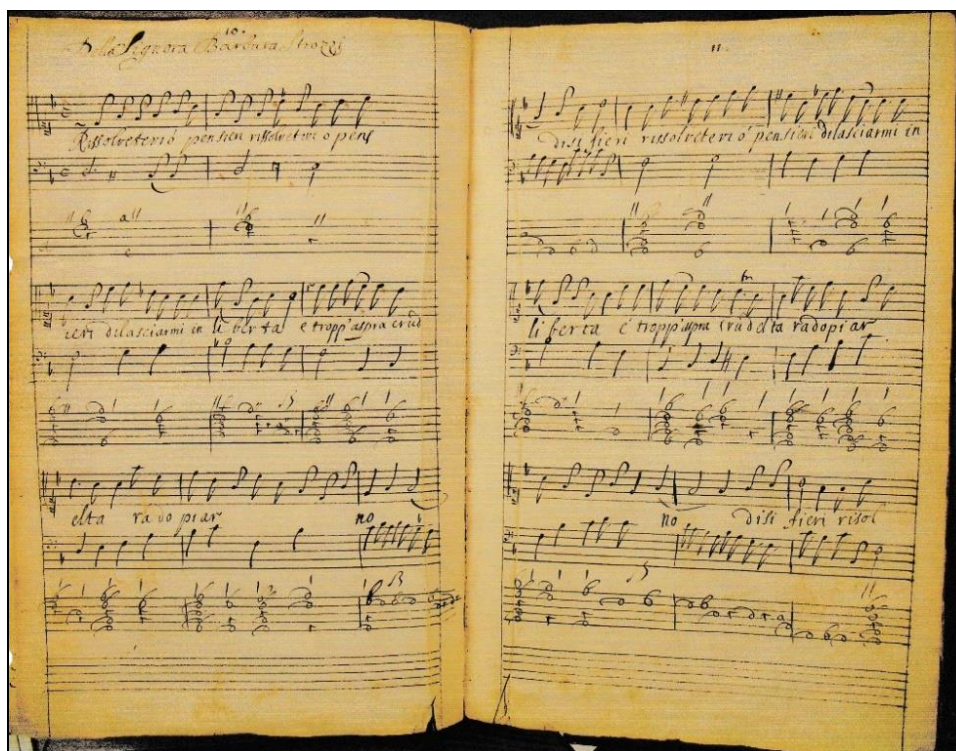


(In the example the voice and bass parts have been transposed to C minor.
The passage on the fourth course is highlighted in blue and that on the fifth course in red).

**US-LAuc fMs.1953.009 [RISM BVII p.194-195] – Barbara Strozzi *Rissolvetevi o pensieri*
(From *Ariette a voce sola*, Opera Sesta; Venice: F. Magni, 1657).**

The guitar accompaniment for this piece consists of standard *alfabeto* chords notated in French tablature when the bass line moves in crotchets. The passages in quavers are left unharmonized. The slash marks above the stave indicate the number of times the chords should be repeated but not the direction of the strumming. In this particular song, Reggio has simply added the chords according to the bass note without taking into account the voice part. Places where the chords do not fit are marked with an asterisk. Accidentals are used in a somewhat haphazard way. In bar 7 for example, there is no B natural in the bass part but the guitar has a G major chord; but in bar 10 the voice part has a B natural and the guitar has a G minor chord.

Example 7.19



Ris-sol-ve-te-vi o pen-sie-ri, ris-sol-ve-te-vi o pen-sie-ri di la-sciar--mi in

li--ber--tà e tropp'-a-spra cru-del--tà ra-do-

-piar-----no di si fie-

ri, ri-sol-ve-te-vi pen-sie-ri di la-scia--mi in

li--ber--tà è trop' as--pra cru-del ta rad-dop-piar-----

-----no----- di si fie-ri. Ri-sol

GB-Cmc Ms. 2591, p. 210–11 – Samuel Pepys *Beauty retire*

“Beauty retire” is Pepys’ own setting of lyrics by William Davenant. The voice part is notated in the bass clef to suit the range of Pepys’ own voice. The instrumental bass part is figured. The guitar part is very simple, comprising only chords to be strummed notated in French tablature with the note values indicating the direction of the strummed chords placed on the tablature staff. An unusual feature is that heads of the note values are placed on the second line down of the staff for the down strokes, and in the third space down for the up strokes. Open courses to be included in the chords are not indicated; the lines representing the unstopped courses are left blank; the player has to decide what is appropriate with reference to the figuring in the bass line. In bar 1 the first two chords can include all five courses, but the third chord should only include the upper three courses. The open first course could be included in the first chord of bar 2 as it is the sixth above the bass indicated by the figures. Morelli has added the seventh to the chords in bars 4 and 6, although this is not indicated by the figures in the bass line. Note that the first two systems belong to the previous song and are not transcribed.

Example 7.20

Handwritten musical score for "Beauty retire" from GB-Cmc Ms. 2591, pages 210-211. The score is written on two staves, with the voice part in the bass clef and the guitar part in French tablature. The lyrics are written below the voice staff. The score is divided into two systems, 210 and 211. The lyrics include: "monstres that are shee seem'd wickd since she first", "first I thought her by our Prophet sent, as a re-", "know Mars.", "ward for valour's spoils, more worth then", "Beauty retire then. Wast my pity move, be-", "all my Takers spoils but now shee", "leave my pity and then trust my love at", "is become my punishment".

Beauty re - thou doest my pit-ty moue, be - lieve my pit-ty and then trust my love

8

6# 6 5 b #

5

att first I thought her by our Pro-phet sent as a re-ward for val-our's toiles,

8

10

more worth than all my Fat-ther's spoils, But now shee is be-come my pun-ish-ment

8

6 5 b

Chapter 8

The method of stringing suitable for Corbetta's music

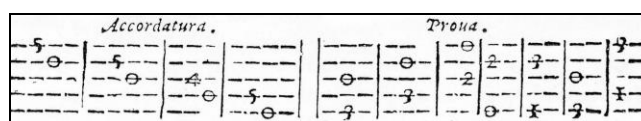
The first three books

None of Corbetta's earlier books include a clear indication of the method of stringing which he used himself or thought suitable for his music.

1639

At the end of the instructions in his 1639 book Corbetta has included two tablature examples for checking whether the guitar is in tune without any written explanation. These comprise the standard *Accordatura* found in many Italian guitar books and a *Prova*. Neither specifies whether the intervals between the courses are octaves or unisons. There is no indication that the fourth and fifth courses are to be doubled in octaves.

**Illustration 8.1 - Corbetta's tablature tuning checks from
De gli Scherzi Armonici (1639)**



A few people have argued that the intervals in the *Accordatura* can only be unisons and those in the *Prova* octaves. With the re-entrant tuning, the fourth course stopped at the fifth fret will sound an octave above the third course rather than in unison with it. It can therefore only refer to an instrument with octave stringing on both the fourth and fifth courses and clearly indicates that all the music is intended to be played with this method of stringing. However in practice the checks work perfectly well which ever method of stringing is used. Tuning the five-course guitar is not difficult and mixing octaves and unisons is not really a problem even for beginners. The fact that in written instructions found elsewhere the intervals are usually referred to as *voce eguali* or something similar suggests that the difference between a unison and an octave was not clearly perceived or taken into account. None of them mention that the strings of the two lowest courses are in fact tuned in octaves. Players who did use octave strings on the fourth and fifth courses would have understood how these were to be tuned. Those who did not would have been aware that there was an octave rather than a unison between the fourth and third courses when tuning in this way. If in doubt, they could have sought advice from another player.

In his doctoral dissertation Richard Pinnell¹ commented on these instructions as follows;

Through the use of lute tablature, Corbetta gives two methods of tuning: by unisons and by octaves, but since neither pitch nor the octave disposition is specified, it must be assumed that he used the tuning of Amat and Montesardo.

Pinnell also assumed that the tuning of Amat and Montesardo was suitable for the 1643 and 1648 books and then suggested that the method of stringing which Corbetta refers to in 'La guitarre

¹ Pinnell (1976) p.71; Pinnell (1980) p.53.

royalle' (1671) – the so-called “French” tuning with a low octave string on the fourth course only, with the two strings of the fifth course tuned in unison in the upper octave - was “new” in 1671.² It is simplistic to argue that because this method of stringing is not specifically mentioned before 1670-1 it had never been used before that date. At least some of the music in ‘La guitarre royalle’ was composed ten years earlier. There is no reason why one should assume that Corbetta used the method of stringing described by Montesardo. Writing in 1976, Pinnell had not seen the two books of Valdambrini printed in 1646 and 1647 as these were unknown at that time. These include tuning instructions which clearly indicate the re-entrant tuning. In 1647 book Valdambrini also refers specifically to the fact that the guitar has no bass strings.

Benche questo istromento non habbia i bassi come gl'altri con tutto cio si vede ch'è atto ad imitare tutto quello ch'è conduceulle alli affetti. La vaghezza e perfetione consisteno nelle variationi de stili perche hauendo il detto poche corde differenti un solo stile, ò riesco mancheuole, ò tedioso. Il sonarlo bene consiste più in destrezza che in rigore, perche volendoui andare con rigore di musica ò si darà in asprezze, overo in seccaggini per la ragioni su detta.

Although this instrument does not have basses like the others, nevertheless one can see that it is capable of imitating everything which is conducive to the affections. Its charm and perfection consist in variations of style, because having so few different strings, a single style would run the risk of defectiveness or tediousness.³

Had Pinnell been aware of this source, he might have arrived at a different conclusion about the method of stringing suitable for Corbetta's earlier books. However because his dissertation is still widely read, his comments and conclusions are never questioned. Furthermore the way in which he has transcribed Corbetta's music, with notes on the fourth and fifth courses always shown only in the lower octave, even in the pieces from ‘La guitarre royalle’ (1671), gives a completely false impression of how the music sounds when played on the baroque guitar, whichever method of stringing is used.

More recently it has been suggested that guitarists from northern Italy always used octave stringing on both fourth and fifth courses whilst guitarists from the south used the fully re-entrant stringing described by Valdambrini.⁴ No substantial evidence has been put forward to support such a theory, but because the article is included in a prestigious collection of writings about plucked stringed instruments in general, it is also widely quoted as if it were an established fact.

Corbetta has also included in his 1639 book instructions for tuning four guitars of different sizes to play together. These are calculated from the treble strings on the fourth and fifth courses of the large and medium guitars. Arguably they could imply the re-entrant tuning, but in the context it is not necessary to mention whether or not there are bourdons on the fourth and fifth courses.⁵

² Pinnell (1976) p.208; Pinnell (1980) p.152.

³ Ferdinando Valdambrini - Libro secondo d'intavolatura di chitarra. (Rome, no imprint, 1647). Avertimenti.

⁴ Boye (1997).

⁵ For further discussion see Section I Chapter 2.

1643 and 1648

In his 1643 book Corbetta has used the standard tablature tuning check to indicate the altered interval pattern for the *scordatura* pieces on page 63-67. Clearly, he had to have some means of indicating this, but to claim that it clearly indicates one method of stringing rather than another is simply reading one's own prejudices into the evidence. In his 1648 book Corbetta has used a different tablature check for this purpose.

**Illustration 8.2 - Corbetta's tablature tuning check from
Varii Scherzi di Sonate (1648)**



This avoids making a comparison between the fourth and third courses. If all the intervals are treated as unisons this check would imply a re-entrant tuning, in the absence of any mention of octave strings. This does raise the question - why did Corbetta use a different method in this particular book? Since Granata and Botazzari include pieces in the same *scordatura* and use the standard tuning check for the purpose, there is no obvious reason why he should have done something different unless he thought the standard check was unhelpful. The guitar can easily be re-tuned without re-stringing. To argue that in this check Corbetta has mixed octaves and unisons but not in the others is evading the issue.

It is possible that Corbetta may have used octave stringing on both fourth and fifth courses at the beginning of his career. If this was the case, there is no reason why he should not have dropped the low octave string from the fifth course. Some players, especially classical guitarists, have a problem with the idea of deliberately losing a fourth in the bass, thereby reducing the overall compass of the instrument. However this is offset by the advantages which are afforded by a re-entrant tuning. From a purely practical point of view, finding a suitable plain gut string for the bourdon on the fifth course may not have been easy and there are problems with tuning and fretting of octave courses. For the kind of music and in the context of the rôle that the guitar played in seventeenth-century music-making, leaving off the bourdon may have been the best option.⁶ It is a widespread misconception today derived from Sanz's comments that the reason for using re-entrant tunings was to eliminate octave doubling or skips of a seventh in the melodic line especially in *campanella* passages. What he actually says is

si alguno quiera puntear con primor, y dulçura, y usar de las campanelas, que es el modo moderno con que aora se compone, no salen bien los bordones, sino solo cuerdas delgadas, assi en las quartas, como en las quintas, como tengo grande experiencia; y es la razon, porque para hazer los trinos y estrasinos y demas galanterias de mano izquierda, si ay bordon impide, por ser

⁶ It often claimed that as the lute had low octave strings, there was no reason why the guitar should not have done so too. Clearly lutenists had a problem with the strings available for the bass register and there were various experiments with riders and extended necks to ameliorate this. Complications of this kind were inappropriate for the guitar which was sometimes promoted as being much easier to play and maintain than the lute.

la una cuerda gruesa, y la otra delgada, y no poder la mano pisar con igualdad, y sujetar tambien una cuerda recia, como dos delgadas;

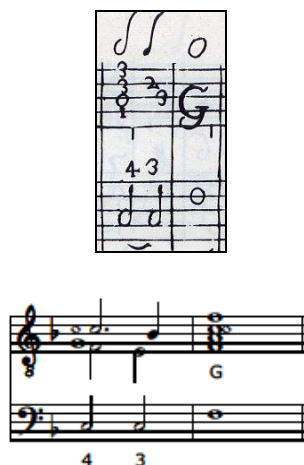
If anyone wishes to play with skill and sweetness, and to use campanelas, which is now the modern way of composing, bourdons do not sound as well as do only thin strings on both the fourths and fifths, of which method I have had much experience. This is the reason – when making trills, slurs and other ornaments with the left hand, the bourdon interferes with them because it is a thick string and the other is thin, and therefore the hand cannot stop them evenly, and hold down the thick string as easily as two thin strings.⁷

Sanz is concerned primarily left-hand technique, not voice leading or octave doubling.

The loss of the fourth in the bass register can be compensated for by extending the compass upwards, especially on the first course. Valdambrini uses the twelfth fret on the first course and the eleventh on the fifth. Granata uses the sixteenth fret on first course in his 1659 book; in his 1674, 1680 and 1684 books he uses the fourteenth fret on the first course. In his 1674 book he actually uses the thirteenth fret on the fourth course; it is very difficult to keep octave strings in tune at this pitch. In practice the “French” tuning is suitable for all Corbetta’s music from this period and the re-entrant tuning is suitable for the music in *alfabeto* in ‘De gli Scherzi Armonici’ (1639).

It has also been argued that the exercises in accompanying a bass line included in the 1643 and 1648 books will only reproduce the chords in the correct inversions with octave stringing on the both the fourth and fifth courses. This is simply untrue. With a few exceptions they work perfectly with a bourdon only on the fourth course. Where this is not the case the inverted harmony is acceptable. In Example 8.1 the four-three suspension will be in the lowest part with the “French” tuning. There is nothing wrong with this.

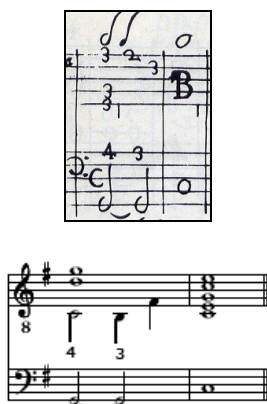
Example 8.1 – Four-three Suspension from 1643 p. 73



Corbetta clearly did not think so as in Example 8.2 he has arranged the guitar part with the four-three suspension in the bass assuming that there are octave strings on fourth and fifth courses.

⁷ Sanz f.8 Primer tratado p.1.

Example 8.2 – Four-three Suspension from 1643 p. 73



Accompanying a bass line on the guitar is about what is practical not about hypothetical rules.

1671 and 1674

Corbetta's comments on stringing in 'La guitarre royalle' (1671) are discussed in detail in Section I Chapter 5 and the implications for stringing when accompanying in Chapter 7. 'La guitarre royalle' (1674) does not include any information about stringing but it is reasonable to assume that the same method of stringing used in 1671 is appropriate for the music in 1674.

Octave stringing on the third course

It has become rather popular today to play Corbetta's music with octave stringing on the third course as well as the fourth, but with the fifth course re-entrant, in spite of the fact that there is no documentary evidence to support such an arrangement.

There are two Italian manuscripts, I-Bc Ms.AA360 (ca.1660) and I-MOe Ms.Campori 612 (undated), that seem to imply the use of a high octave string on the third course. Neither source indicates that this method of stringing is to be combined with octave stringing on any of the other courses and in both the information is ambiguous.

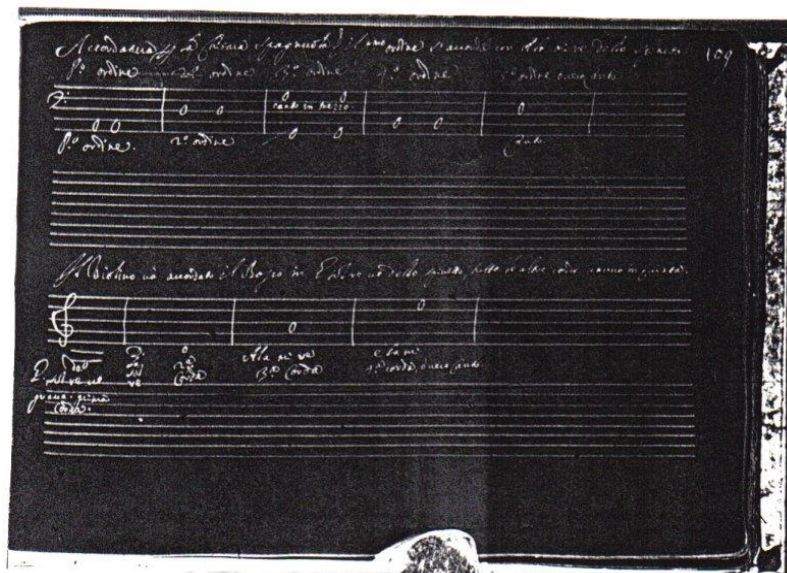
Illustration 8.3 – Octave stringing on the third course



I-Bc Ms. AA 360. (ca.1660)

This is a manuscript of music for various instruments including keyboard and violin, some in staff notation and some in tablature. It was copied over a period of time; the date 3rd November, 1661 appears on folio 119, 10th November, 1671 on folio 169v and 16th August, 1681 on folio 176v. On folio.109 the tuning of the five-course guitar and the violin are given in staff notation.

Illustration 8.4 I-Bc Ms. AA 360 – Tuning of the guitar and violin



The text reads

Accordatura da Chitarra spagnuola il primo ordine s'accorda con A la mi re dello spineto.

Tuning of the Spanish guitar. The first course is tuned with A la mi re of the spinet.

Il biolino va accordato il Basso in G sol re ut dello spineto le altre corde vanno in giusta.

The lowest string of the violin is tuned to G sol re ut [G below middle C] of the spinet, the other strings accordingly.

A la mi re can be the A either below or above middle C. The notes on the guitar are written in the bass clef, an octave lower than sounding pitch. The courses of both the guitar and violin are numbered in reverse order.

The notes representing the third course of the guitar are shown twice with a note between them “*canto in mezzo*” – “*canto in the middle*”. This could refer to the position of the high octave string between the other eight strings indicating that it is on the bass rather than the treble side of the course.

However it seems more likely that the purpose of the diagram is to match the lowest string of the violin (g) to the third course of the guitar (also g) and that it does not have anything to do with the way the guitar is strung. The term *canto* is ambiguous. It may refer to a high string but it can also mean “angle”, “corner”, and in architecture “the point at which two walls meet”. In the A Lettori of his ‘Libro Primero di Chitara spagnola (1640), Bartolotti uses the term to mean “to the side of” - *trouando 2 numeri con li punti a canto* (2 numbers with the dots to the side of them).

I-MOe Ms. Campori 612 “Regole per imparare a sonare la chitarra” (Undated)

This is a manuscript collection of music in *alfabeto*. The introduction, including an engraved illustration showing the tuning of the guitar, has been copied from Giulio Banfi's 'Il Maestro della Chitarra' presumably after 1653, when Banfi's book was published.

Illustration 8.5- Banfi's Illustration

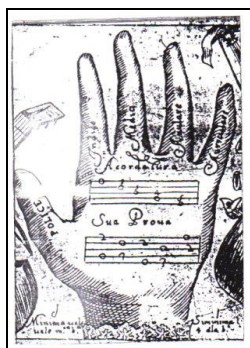
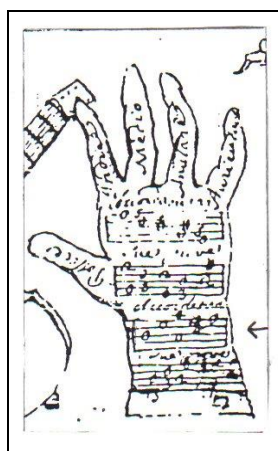


Illustration 8.6 – Illustration from I-MOe Ms. Campori 612



Banfi's original includes an *Accordatura* and a *Proua* - the standard Italian tablature tuning chart and a second chart presumably in octaves. In the manuscript, the staff notation and an additional tuning chart, which is also apparently in octaves, have been added. The staff notation has no clef but assuming the C clef on the lowest line of the stave the first course would be e'.

Rather than indicating that the third course is octave strung, this may be intended to clarify Banfi's ambiguous tuning instructions. If the standard Italian tuning check is used with a re-entrant tuning, there will be a discrepancy between the fourth and third courses - the fourth course stopped at the fifth fret will sound an octave above the third course, rather than in unison with it. The staff notation may have been added to illustrate this discrepancy and to indicate that the third course must be tuned an octave lower. Alternatively, many Italian tuning instructions mention the fact that first course stopped at the third fret sounds an octave above the third course, the staff notation may be intended to indicate that this is so in the tuning charts, the other intervals being read as unisons. Elsewhere in the manuscript the tuning charts and tables of

alfabeto chords in both Italian and French tablature have been copied from Carbonchi's 'Le dodici chitarre spostate' (1643).

What's the problem?

There are occasionally skips of a seventh or a ninth in the *campanella* passages in the music of Sanz, Santiago de Murcia and some Italian guitarists. These can sometimes, but not always, be ameliorated with a high octave string on the third course. The classic example is a passage in Sanz's *Jacaras* 'Instrucción de musica', in Book 1, page 7. In the first bar the high octave string on the third course will fill in the gap (and with the "right technique" the note in the lower octave can presumably be eliminated). However in the third bar no method of stringing or technique can remedy the skip of a seventh.

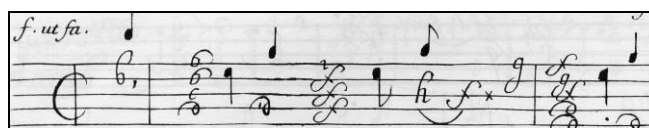
Example 8.3 – Sanz – Jacaras



Sanz is one of the few writers who has expressed his views about the suitability of different methods of stringing and he has not mentioned octave stringing on the third course as an option. Moreover he does not say that the standard re-entrant tuning is to be preferred because it eliminates skips of a seventh or a ninth in *campanelas*, (and nor does anyone else). There is no justification for using this method of stringing for his music.

Corbetta himself is rather fond of a melodic phrase which skips up and down a seventh as in the opening bars of the *Allemande Cherie de son Altesse le Duc d'Yorck* on page 6 of 'La Guitarre royale'. In the example below the passage is transcribed literally in Example 8.5a. The quaver passage could however be interpreted as being in two parts as in Example 8.5b.

Example 8.4 - Allemande Cherie de son Altesse le Duc d'Yorck



a.



b.



However, Corbetta has also included a vocal version of this particular piece and the voice part starts with the motif as in c. To reproduce this exactly it is necessary to have a high octave string on the third course as in 8.5d. The note F on the fourth course which precedes it should also be an octave higher.

c.



d.



Corbetta could have put all the notes in the right octave on the first course as in Example 8.5e, but this would involve going up to the tenth fret and shifting positions on the fingerboard twice and it would not be possible to sustain the chord.

e.



His reason for intabulating the music in this way is purely practical. Idiosyncracies like this do not indicate that the music is intended for one method of stringing rather than another. Corbetta of course says nothing at all about putting a high octave string on the third course. It is also questionable whether it would have been practical, with the kind of gut strings available in the seventeenth century, to put a thin string on the third course which had to be tuned a minor third above the first course. Even today it this can be a problem on a standard size five-course guitar. The fact that it works with nylgut or other synthetics is beside the point as these were not available in the seventeenth century.

The reason why this method of stringing has become popular today is because it makes the music sound much brighter. Notes on the third course will often sound above those on the first creating a different melodic line from what the tablature actually suggests.

Appendix

The “Key” System used in *La guitarre royalle* (1671) and *La guitarre royalle* (1674)

In both ‘*La guitarre royalle*’ (1671) and ‘*La guitarre royalle*’ (1674) Corbetta uses the hexachordal system used in some late seventeenth-century French sources to identify the key or tonal centre of his pieces. It is important to understand that this is slightly different from the system used in standard theoretical sources. The standard system starts from the note G on the lowest line of the bass stave – referred to as *Gamma Ut* or *Gamut* and represented by the Greek letter Γ. In the French system, the series starts a tone lower on the F below the lowest line of the bass stave. The second hexachord starts on C as in the standard system. However, the hexachord starting on G has been moved to third place.

Hexachordal System – late seventeenth-century French

Ut	re	mi	fa	sol	la				
F	G	A	B	C	D				
				Ut	re	mi	fa	sol	la
				C	D	E	F	G	A
	Ut	re	mi	fa	sol	la			
	G	A	B	C	D	E			

The notes are identified with the syllables in the following order.

Names of the Notes

a mi la re
b fa mi
c sol ut fa
d la re sol
e mi la
f ut fa
g re sol ut

This may seem academic but it is of more significance than may appear at first sight. In the comments on stringing in the French instructions to the player, the pitch of the octave string on the fourth course is referred to as *de la re sol* (rather than *d la sol re*). With the hexachords arranged in the non-standard order, this indicates the D on the middle line of the bass stave, not the octave above.

Keys in ‘*La guitarre royalle*’

The keys of the pieces in ‘*La guitarre royalle*’ are identified by the appropriate letter followed by the syllables in the order in which they occur in this arrangement. Major keys are referred to as *b car[t]* and minor keys as either *b mol* or *tierce mineure*.

a mi la re = A minor
b fa mi tierce mineure = B minor
b fa b mi = B flat major
c sol ut fa b mol = C minor

c sol ut fa b cart = C major
de la re sol = D minor
d la re sol b cart = D major
e mi la = E minor
f ut fa = F major
g re sol ut b mol = G minor
g re sol ut b cart = G major

The same system is used by Grenerin's 'Livre de guitarre' (Paris, 1680).