

Giovanni Paolo Foscari – Plagiarist or Pioneer?

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1. Introduction

Giovanni Paolo Foscarini's Il primo, seco[n]do, e terzo libro della chitarra spagnola was printed in about 1630. A fourth book was added to the edition printed in about 1632 – **I quattro libri della chitarra spagnola**. The final version, with a dedication signed by Foscarini and dated Rome, 15th September, 1640, includes a fifth book and has the title **Li cinque libri della chitarra alla spagnola**. This version has been published in facsimile by Studio per Edizioni Scelte. There are no separate title pages to the different sections of the book.

The first section (p.2-14) includes some but not all of the pieces from Foscarini's two earlier books, **Libro primo**, no copies of which have survived, and **Intavolatura di chitarra spagnola. Libro secondo**, printed in Macerata in 1629. The latter is in part a plagiarized edition of **Giovanni Ambrogio Colonna's Intavolatura di chitarra alla Spagnuola (Milan, 1620)**. These pieces are in *alfabeto* only.

Book 3, (p.15-78) **Book 4** (p.79-102), and **Book 5** (p. 103-135) comprise pieces in **mixed style** in which strummed chords are combined with lute style counterpoint, together with some pieces entirely in **lute style** – that is without any strummed chords.

The pieces in **mixed style** are notated in **Italian lute tablature** with *alfabeto* for the standard 5-part strummed chords, a form of notation usually referred to as **mixed tablature**.

Foscarini was a lutenist by profession. A note at the end of the list of contents in his 1629 book refers to him as “Musico, e Sonatore, di Liuto, e Tiorba, della Venerabile Compagnia del Saattissimo [sic] Sacramento d’Ancona”. He was also a member of the Accademia dei Caliginosi in Ancona, identifying himself in his earlier books only by the name of the society together with his own academic name “Il Furioso”- “L’Accademico Caliginoso detto il Furioso”. In the introduction to his 1630 book he claims to be well known as a lutenist both in Italy and abroad, especially at the court of the Archduke Alberto in the Spanish Netherlands. Archduke Albert, a nephew of Philip II of Spain, was appointed governor of the Spanish Netherlands on 26th April, 1595. As he died in 1621, Foscarini must have been in the Netherlands some time before that date. Several letters written by Foscarini in Paris to the Dutch scholar, Constanijn Huygens, in the early months of 1649 give some information about his later years. In January he wrote to say that he planned to travel to Italy, but in March it seems that he was still in Paris without sufficient funds to make the journey. On April 2nd he was ill in bed, but on the 29th he seems to have obtained enough money to travel. He also mentions that he had finished a little book with preludes, allemandes, courantes and giges in the French manner; it is not clear whether these were for lute or guitar. Nothing more is heard of him after that date.

Presumably Foscarini played the guitar as well as the lute, although he may not have been as well versed in the practices and traditions of the instrument as we tend to assume today. It is also usually assumed that most of the pieces in his books are original compositions. It is more likely however that many of them are his arrangements of pieces

which were popular at the time. Some of them seem rather old fashioned and may well date from the previous century.

Although the mixed style of playing may have developed quite early, Foscarini's book is particularly significant because it is the earliest printed source (as far as we know) to include this kind of music and the earliest to have been printed from engraved plates. It is unlikely that Foscarini invented a suitable form of notation for this style of music single-handed and his notation is idiosyncratic and inconsistent. Some of the pieces are unbarred, and those that are, are often barred in an irregular way. Note values are ambiguous, wrongly aligned with the tablature or missing altogether. Many of the pieces are therefore difficult to reconstruct. It is possible that Foscarini did the engraving himself which would account for its chaotic appearance. On the other hand if the work was done by a professional engraver they may not have understood what it was meant to represent.

At the beginning of **Il primo, seco[n]do, e terzo libro della chitarra spagnola** and each subsequent edition of the book, there are typeset instructions for the player - **Regole per ben'imparar à sonar la Chitara Spagnola**. These are particularly valuable because they are the most detailed explanation of how baroque guitar tablature should be interpreted found in Italian sources. They are translated with a commentary and musical examples in the pages which follow.

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2. General observations on baroque guitar notation

Introduction

Baroque guitar notation evolved over a considerable period of time as the style of music composed or arranged for the instrument developed. It therefore varies from source to source and from period to period. There are however certain conventions which seem to have been widely observed.

Two types of notation are used in baroque guitar sources – lute tablature and guitar chord notation.

Lute Tablature

Two types of lute tablature are used for guitar music – **Italian** and **French**.

In **Italian** tablature the **lowest** line of the five line stave represents the **highest** sounding course; the frets are represented by **Arabic numerals**, the unstopped course being 0, the first fret 1 etc.

In **French** tablature the **highest** line of the five line stave represents the **highest** sounding course; the frets are represented by **letters of the alphabet**, the unstopped course being a, the first fret b etc.

As a general rule, **Italian tablature** is used in sources originating in Italy, the Iberian peninsula and Latin America and **French tablature** is used in sources originating in France and other northern European countries, although there are some exceptions.

In **Italian tablature** the note values are placed above the tablature stave. If the chords are to be strummed, the stroke marks will be attached to the lowest line, downwards for down strokes (bass to treble) and upwards for up strokes (treble to bass).

In **French tablature** the note values are placed above the tablature stave only if the notes are to be plucked. If the chord is to be strummed, the note value will be placed on the stave with the tail down for down strokes (bass to treble) and up for up strokes (treble to bass).

In baroque guitar literature the terms **down** and **up** refer to the direction in which the right hand moves when the instrument is held in playing position, down towards the floor for a **down** stroke and up towards the ceiling for an **up** stroke.

Guitar Chord Notation

There were several types of guitar chord notation. However the one most widely used and the one which is the best known today is *alfabeto* in which the basic 5-part chords are represented by single letters of the alphabet and a few other symbols.

What's the problem?

As anyone knows who has tried hand-copying baroque guitar tablature or even keying it into a computer, it is labour intensive to reproduce! For this reason a number of **shorthand devices** were used. The most obvious of these is *alfabeto* used in combination with **Italian tablature**. The fact that the notation is abbreviated is the cause of many of the problems which face us when trying to interpret the music today.

Baroque guitar music is often not as clearly or accurately notated as we would like. This is probably because composers experienced considerable difficulty in getting it printed at all. Baroque guitar tablature is too complex to print satisfactorily from **moveable type** and most guitar tablatures were therefore printed from **engraved plates**. Producing the plates was more time consuming and expensive than ordinary type setting and the printing process took longer.

Baroque guitar tablature is not just a placement notation for the left hand. The reason why it is so complex is because it is necessary to include a lot more information about what the right hand must do than is the case with standard lute tablature. This is because in the 17th century guitar right-hand technique was different from that of the lute in at least one respect -

Chords were usually (but not always) strummed – that is - instead of using separate fingers for each note of the chord in lute style, all the notes of the chord were struck with the thumb or fingers in a single stroke, up or down.

At the very least therefore, the notation needs to show

- a. whether the chords are strummed or played in lute style
- b. the direction of the strums – down or up
- c. the note values or rhythmic pattern of the strumming

There are two areas in particular where the fact that the notation is abbreviated may cause problems.

- a. the **open courses** to be included in strummed chords are not always indicated in the tablature. Instead of putting in the “0”s or “a”s, the tablature lines are left blank. The player has to decide which to include. This is usually straightforward although inevitably there are situations in which it is impossible to arrive at a definitive answer. This was probably the case in the 17th century too and it may have been up to the player to decide what was best.
It does not follow from this that the player has also to decide whether notes represented in the tablature by letters or figures should be left out (other than misprints!). This would not save anyone any time or trouble! The obvious way of making it clear what both the left and right hand should be doing would have been to include the “0”s or “a”s – and the more carefully produced sources do tend to do that, although they don’t do so consistently.
- b. if the same chord is to be repeated, the notes to be fretted will be shown once followed by the note values/stroke symbols only. This feature of the notation is complicated by the fact that when auxiliary notes are inserted into or between the chords, these may be shown as if they are single notes which are to be strummed. In some situations it will not be clear whether they should be played as single notes or whether they should be included in the chord and if so whether the harmony remains the same or whether it changes.

In addition time signatures, note values and barlines are often erratic, inaccurate – or simply missing altogether. There is no easy answer to the problems which this creates. Comparing different versions of the same piece can be helpful. At least the time signature may be discovered. However, this is not a problem confined to baroque guitar sources! It is due to the fact that a suitable form of notation which could indicate the complex rhythms characteristic of instrumental music was not fully developed at the time.

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3. Foscari's Regole per ben'imparar à sonar la Chitarra Spagnola The Nine Rules

At the beginning of **Il primo, seco[n]do, e terzo libro della chitarra spagnola** and each subsequent edition of the book there are typeset instructions for the player. Foscari first outlines the purpose of the rules as follows.

TO THE READER

Rules for learning how to play the Spanish guitar well

As I have seen so many agreeable comments about the first and second books which I gave to the press as a member of this profession, under the name of “Accademico Caliginoso, called Il Furioso”, I have not delayed in now adding a third, as I promised. This is included in the present book, following after the first two.

Because it is the work of much study, and rich in new invention, I persuaded myself that, in order to succeed, it must be both precise and useful. I therefore thought it necessary to explain, by means of the rules written below, the method by which any virtuoso wishing to profit by it will be able to learn it [the music] quickly and easily.

I would say that anyone wishing to learn to play this instrument easily, ought, among other things, to practice the following Alfabeto diligently, and commit it to memory so that he does not have to search for the chords when wishing to play any of the pieces.

The main part of the introduction is divided into **nine** rules. The **first, second and third rules** incorporate some of the introduction from his 1629 book and explain the notation, in particular how to play the *alfabeto* chords set out in the table on page 1 of the engraved section of the book. These actually paraphrase similar advice in the introduction to Colonna's **Intavolatura di chitarra spagnuola (1620)**.

In the Table of Chords in Foscari's **Intavolatura di chitarra spagnola Libro secondo (1629)**, printed from moveable type, the zeros indicating the open courses in the chords are included. It is almost identical with that of Colonna. In the Table of Chords on p.1 of the engraved editions these zeros have been omitted and the lines are left blank.

Illustration 1 – Foscarini's Alfabeto – 1629

A L F A B E T T O

*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L
2	2	3	0	0	2	3	2	0	1	3	3
2	0	2	0	2	0	3	3	2	3	1	1
0	0	1	2	2	1	1	2	3	2	0	0
2	3	1	3	1	2	0	1	3	2	3	4
0	3	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	3	3

M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	V	X	Y
1	3	1	3	4	2	2	4	4	2	5
1	1	0	3	4	4	2	2	4	4	5
3	1	0	1	3	4	4	2	2	4	4
4	1	3	1	2	4	5	2	2	3	3
3	4	3	1	2	2	4	5	2	2	3

Z	&	Q	R	B ^e	G ³	H ³	M ³	N ³	K ³	P ³	M [*]
3	3	2	3	1	5	3	3	5	3	5	1
5	4	2	3	3	5	5	3	3	5	5	1
5	1	4	6	0	4	5	5	3	5	3	3
5	2	5	5	3	3	5	6	3	4	3	4
3	1	3	5	3	3	3	5	6	3	3	2

Illustration 2 – Foscarini's Alfabeto – ca.1630

ALFABETO

+	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L
2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
2		2		2		2		2		2	2
3	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	2

L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	V	X	Y
2	1	1	1	2	4	2	2	4	4	2	5
1	3	1		3	4	4	2	2	4	4	5
4	3	1	3	1	2	4	2	2	2	2	3
3	3	4	3	1	2	2	4	5	2	2	3

Z	&	Q	R	B ^e	G ³	H ³	M ³	N ³	K ³	P ³	M [*]
2	4	2	3	3	5	3	3	5	3	5	1
5	2	4	3	3	4	3	3	2	3	3	3
5	1	3	4	3	3	3	6	3	4	3	4
3	1	3	4	3	3	3	5	6	3	3	2

3 &



Both tables include the standard sequence of chords represented by +, A-Z, four additional symbols and at the end, examples of chords played with a *barré* transposed to a higher fret.

The same note accompanies the table in both books.

Note that when playing a letter which has a number above it, e.g. 2, 3 or 5, the same letter must be played moving the hand 2, 3 or 5 frets down the fingerboard according to the number above.

In Foscarini's books this is followed by a note referring to Chord M+ which is not included by Colonna.

Note also that M with a cross above must be played at what ever fret is notated, 2 or 5 as shown in the example in the Alfabeto above.

It is clear that the open courses are to be included in all the chords in both tables. The one exception is the chord represented by B⁹ (represented by * in Colonna) which is a dissonance. In the type-set table there is no zero on the fifth course because it should be omitted. In the engraved table this is not clear – the player has to decide whether to include it.

In the later table Foscarini has also included the standard left hand fingering for the chords using the system of 1-4 dots although he doesn't explain the purpose of the dots when used in this context.

1 dot =	first finger
2 dots =	middle finger
3 dots =	ring finger
4 dots =	little finger

Musical Example 1 shows the chords in staff notation

Mus. ex. 1 - Foscarini's alfabeto

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a '8' indicating the eighth fret. The staff contains 20 chord diagrams, each with a letter or symbol below it. The chords are: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, K, L, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, V, X, Y, Z, &, R_x, B', G3, H3, M3, N3, K3, P3, M+, &3. Each chord diagram shows the fretting of the five strings on the eighth fret.

His explanation in the **first rule** is straightforward

*The **first** thing which you ought to know is that this Alfabeto is at the most composed of five things; that is lines, numbers, letters, signs and dots.*

The lines are five and they represent the five strings [corde] of the guitar, that is first, 2, 3, 4 & 5.

The numbers indicate the frets of the guitar, first, 2, 3, 4 etc.

The letters are A, B, C etc. which are the names of the chords.

He then goes on to explain that the signs indicating the direction of the strum strokes are placed below the line for a downward (bass to treble) stroke and above the line for an upward (treble to bass) stroke.

These v ^ are the signs which show the strokes which have to be given downwards [from bass to treble] and upwards [from treble to bass]. However many signs there are downwards, the same number of strokes should be given downwards, and on the other hand, however many are upwards should be given upwards.

This is the only advice which Foscarini gives about the notation of rhythm and metre and it relates primarily to the pieces in the first section which are in *alfabeto* only.

In the **second rule** he repeats the advice which he had given in his **1629 Book** (copied from Colonna) - whether the strokes are notated downwards or upwards they should be strummed in full.

Secondly it must be noted that all the strokes notated either downwards or upwards are strummed in full. And when any letter of Alfabeto is found, the chord which that letter represents is strummed, striking it as many times, down or up as there are signs which may be down or up. Note however above all to play each chord distinctly and clearly so that each string renders its true effect.

Again this rule applies primarily to the *alfabeto* chords. It does not imply that open courses should be included indiscriminately in all other chords.

The **third rule** refers to the use of a dot placed after the stroke mark below the stave to indicate that the note value should be increased.

Thirdly when a dot is found beside the letter with the said sign upwards or downwards like this B. this chord is given a little more time than the other; and when there are two E.g. B: that much more, that is to say the chord with a single dot is given the length of a crotchet, and that with two dots the length of a minim.

This rule originates with Colonna and is really superfluous since Foscarini usually places the note values above the stave in the usual manner for lute tablature. He seems to use the dots more often to indicate a pause or break between phrases rather than in the precise way the rule suggests.

He doesn't explain the purpose of the note values above the stave – presumably he expected players to understand what they are there for - and he says nothing specifically about the purpose of the stroke marks below the stave in the pieces in mixed style. His notation of rhythm is very erratic and the music is often unbarred.

Pieces in *alfabeto* only

The pieces entirely in *alfabeto* are notated on a single line with letters above the line and stroke marks above and below the line.

In the following example Foscarini has not put in any bar lines but the piece is in triple time and bars fairly regularly.

Mus. ex. 2 - Folie Diverse on C, p.3

C I C B

One of the *alfabeto* pieces has passing notes inserted between the chords to create a melodic line. The intervening notes which are to be played on the first course are placed on the line. There are no note values but each chord or single note presumably lasts for one crotchet. (Although Foscari hasn't indicated it the standard rhythmic pattern for the *Spagnoletta* usually alternates three crotchets with dotted crotchet, quaver, crotchet.)

Mus. ex. 3 - Spagnoletta, p.8. Second section

M3 H3 M3 H3

E I/4-3* C

3 M 3 H 3 M 3 H E I C

What is not immediately clear is whether these notes should be incorporated into the chords or played as single notes. In two places marked with a ! the note can't be played whilst the full chord is held; the first of these is marked as a down-stroke although if it is going to be played as a single note it might seem more natural to play it as an up-stroke with a finger. The auxiliary note in bar 6, which is also marked as a down-stroke, could be included in Chord E although Foscari probably didn't intend that it should be.

It is just possible that in the context, a single note marked as a down-stroke should be played with the thumb or even the nail side of the finger in a stroke similar to that referred to as “dedillo” in earlier sources for the vihuela. It should however be noted that Corbetta – who prided himself on the fact that he played only the guitar - invariably marks single notes to be played on the first course between chords as up-strokes in the *alfabeto* pieces in his earliest guitar book “De gli scherzi armonici” printed in 1639. What seems more likely therefore is that Foscarini is imposing the standard stroke pattern on the music regardless of whether this is appropriate.

In the place marked with * the figure placed above the line is played on the second course and is clearly meant to be incorporated into Chord I creating a dissonance which resolves as the chord is repeated.

Foscarini goes on to give some advice as to how these notes and the notation of the pieces in mixed style which follow should be interpreted in **Rules 4-7**. This is not very detailed and there are some inconsistencies in the way that the music is actually notated. This probably presented less of a problem to players in the 17th century than it does to us today. There may have been clearly understood conventions as to how the notation was interpreted, but it is quite possible that much was left to the discretion of the player. Improvisation played a much more important part in 17th century music making than it does today and experienced players would have felt free to create their own versions of the pieces.

Pieces in Mixed Style

In the **fourth rule** he explains how the notes between the chords should be played -

Fourthly Particular care must be taken when playing those numbers which are placed after an alfabeto letter. These must be played singly; that is to say you must pluck neither less nor more strings than those which are shown. In this way the true effect of the ornamental notes will be felt and the parts will follow clearly one after the other as I intend. This observation applies both in general and particularly in the Arie di Firenze Passegiate, Correnti Francese, Toccate, Gagliarde, e Balletti. Otherwise if more or less notes are played [than are notated] the music will sound dissonant and arouse no pleasure in the listener. This must be observed even if there is only a single number; that is to say you should only pluck the string and fret which the number shows.

Mus. ex. 4 - Aria di Firenze passeggiata, p.56.

The image shows a musical score for a lute piece. It consists of three systems of tablature. The first system has four measures with chords M3, H3, E, and *D. The second system has three measures with chords H, B/4-3, and G. The third system has seven measures with chords M, H, E, D, H, B, and G. The tablature includes stroke marks and auxiliary notes between chords.

In this example Foscarini has not given either the time signature or inserted any bar lines. However the *Aria di Firenze* was one of the most popular pieces at the time and from other sources we can deduce that it is meant to be in common time and can be barred regularly – at least as far as the first double bar. The chords are represented by the *alfabeto* and the auxiliary notes between them with figures on the relevant tablature line. What Foscarini has not made clear is that the chords (not the single notes) should be repeated on the down-strokes. (He also seems to have omitted an auxiliary note which should follow Chord E in the second bar the third time around, marked with an asterisk in the transcription).

Although the auxiliary notes are to be played as single notes, Foscarini has notated them as if they were to be strummed.

Including the stroke marks in this way makes the music easier to read, especially if it is unbarred, because it separates the single notes from the chords. In a way it is the equivalent of putting in the note values for each and every note (as in some lute and keyboard tablatures). There is a certain amount of logic in notating the single notes as up-strokes as this is usually how they will be played - with a single finger - but the stroke marks really serve a dual purpose.

He goes on to comment briefly on the pieces which are exclusively in lute style.

I will not say much about the sonatas which are in lute style only; I have included them as an embellishment to the work rather than for any other reason, because I

know that they are more appropriate for the lute than for the guitar. Really, I make my living by playing the lute, as has been noted by those who have encountered me in the service of various princes both in Italy and abroad and especially in Flanders , with his Serene Highness, Archduke Alberto.

A substantial number of pieces in the book fall into this category and at least some of them are actually arrangements of contemporary lute music. It is interesting that Foscarini stresses that they are more appropriate for the lute than the guitar. Other Italian books also include a few similar pieces but the style considered characteristic of the guitar always combined strumming with lute style counterpoint.

In the **fifth rule** Foscarini explains how notes are added to chords to form 4-3 suspensions. (He points out first that the chords must be played as notated whether in standard position or at the fret indicated by the number above the chord).

***Fifthly** 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 [the 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 rule applies in general to many of the pieces that you may play, and among others it is appropriate to the “Corrente, dette la Favorita” found on page 60.

Mus. ex, 5 - Corrente detta la Favorita, p.60

Musical notation for measures 1-5. The top staff shows a treble clef with a 3/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat. The bottom staff shows a bass clef. Chord symbols M3, *H/4-3, G, and B are written below the top staff. Red brackets highlight specific rhythmic patterns in the top staff.

Musical notation for measures 6-11. The top staff shows a treble clef with a 3/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat. The bottom staff shows a bass clef. Chord symbols E, B, D, H, G, O, and E *I/4-3 are written below the top staff.

Musical notation for measures 12-17. The top staff shows a treble clef with a 3/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat. The bottom staff shows a bass clef. Chord symbols E, H, O, B, D, H, B/4-3, and G are written below the top staff.

Detailed musical notation for measures 1-17, showing the treble and bass staves with fingerings and articulation marks. Chord symbols M, H, G, B, E, B, D, H, B, G are written below the staves.

In this piece, Chord H3 in the second bar is followed by a 6 on the second line of the tablature (marked with an asterisk). This is the suspended 4th and displaces the note on the second course which would form part of the standard Chord H3; it resolves onto the correct note as the chord is repeated. The same thing occurs with Chord I in bar 11. This is straightforward enough.

However at bar 15 Foscarini has indicated that an auxiliary note should be added to Chord B on the last beat of bar 3 (marked with a !), also creating a 4-3 suspension. The problem here is that if the first course is included in the chord, the suspended 4th will sound simultaneously with its resolution. This particular progression occurs quite often in Foscarini's music [it also occurs on the last beat of bar 3 in Mus. ex. 4 above] and it is probably intentional. It is not very satisfactory to leave out the first course when strumming and the resulting dissonance may therefore have been regarded as acceptable. The same dissonance is found in several pieces in Corbetta's "Varii Capricci per la ghitarra spagnola" (1643) and in Bartolotti's "Libro Primo di Chitarra Spagnola" (1640).

The basic sequence of *alfabeto* chords [shown above] includes one, the C minor chord represented by the letter L, which is particularly awkward to play. A dissonant note "D" on the 2nd course was therefore often substituted for the E flat. Foscarini includes both versions in his table of chords on p.1 of the introduction. This kind of substitution of a dissonant note is a feature of early guitar music in strummed style.

In several places in this example Foscarini has also notated the auxiliary notes between the chords as if they were to be strummed although presumably (according to Rule 4) they should to be played as single notes. In bars 1 and 3 [bracketed in the example] he has indicated that the notes are to be played alternately – up – down – up - although most players would otherwise assume that those in bar 1 were to be played as up-strokes with the fingers and those in bar 3 as down-strokes with the thumb. Throughout the rest of the piece the auxiliary notes are all marked as if they should be played with up- and down strokes.

Playing runs with thumb and finger alternately is a feature of lute technique and it is possible that Foscarini has notated them like that because that is how he thought they might be played. (The *Ciaccona* in Bartolotti's "Libro Primo di Chitarra Spagnola" (p.49-50, b.168-171) includes a variation which is explicitly marked to be played in this way). An alternative explanation could be that he is imposing on the music the stroke pattern which would be appropriate if the piece was entirely strummed rather than played in lute style, as we have already seen in Mus. ex. 3 above.

Rule 6 explains about chords in which fewer than five courses are to be included.

Sixthly observe that in the Corrente, detta Nuoua Inuentione 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. And the same must be observed in the Toccatas, Sinfonias, Passacagli Spagnoli Passeggiati, and Ciaconas, in which Sonatas one must take the utmost care and diligence, these being appropriate to this instrument. For in these I myself confess to having used more than usual diligence, so as to render them much more charming and full of novelty and varied invention.

Mus. ex. 6 - Corrente nova Inuentione, p.68. First section.

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Mus. ex. 6 - Corrente nova Inuentione, p.68. First section." The score is presented in three systems, each consisting of a treble clef staff with a 3/4 time signature and a guitar-specific bass staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with various rhythmic values and accidentals. The guitar staff features fret numbers (circles) and includes several annotations: asterisks (*), exclamation points (!), and letters (B, A, F, D, E, H3) indicating specific fret positions or techniques. The first system includes fret numbers 3, 4, 2, 1, 0, 1, 2, 3, 2, 1, 0, 2, 3, 2, 1, 0, 3. The second system includes fret numbers 2, 3, 2, 1, 0, 2, 3, 2, 1, 0, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0. The third system includes fret numbers 3, 2, 1, 0, 3, 2, 1, 0, 3, 2, 1, 0, 3, 2, 1, 0. A red arrow points to a specific note in the first system, and another red arrow points to a specific note in the third system. The letters B, A, F, D, E, and H3 are placed below the guitar staff in various positions, corresponding to specific fret numbers.

Although Foscarini has indicated the open courses on the last beat of bar 1 and on the fourth and fifth beats in bar 2 where this is essential to make sense of the music, he has not made it clear that it will also be necessary to include open courses in the following chords if they are to be strummed

- a. Bar 3 3rd beat
- b. Bar 3 4th beat**
- c. Bar 5 6th beat
- d. Bar 6 6th beat
- e. Bar 7 2nd and 3rd beats

[marked with asterisks in the example]

Including the open third course “G” in (a), (d), and (e) is unproblematic as it is C major chord. The open first course (E) could be also be included. The open fourth course (D) can also be included in (c) as it duplicates the note (the 7th of the chord) on the second course.

Including the open third course in (b) – marked with an ! in the example - is not so straightforward. Without the third course, the chord is a minor 7th on the second degree of the scale (D) in a standard cadential progression – ii⁷ – V⁷ - I ; the note “G” does not belong to it. If the “G” is included the character of the harmonic progression is altered. The chord is transformed into a 2nd inversion of the dominant 7th; the note “C” on the second course is then a suspended 4th which is prepared in the previous chord and resolves on the one which follows. Although the movement of the lowest part is less satisfactory in this context, this may have been acceptable when strumming. It is difficult to say whether this is what Foscarini intended or whether he really intended a 3-part chord to be played in lute style.

Open courses – to include or not to include?

In any event this particular rule highlights one of the main problems facing us when trying to interpret baroque guitar music today – when should open courses be included?

By definition, a chord cannot consist of less than three notes, and in practice strummed chords are most effective if all five courses are included. There is not much point in strumming less than three courses, although this is possible and in some instances may be what is intended. It is however a contradiction in terms to speak of strumming a single note. Courses to be strummed must also be adjacent. In the following example Foscarini has again put in the zeros in the places where it is necessary to make any sense of the music, but in bar 4 the second chord appears to consist of only two notes which are to be strummed. However it is fairly obvious that the open second and first courses can be included in the chord which would otherwise sound rather feeble. In bar 8 the same

cadence occurs but the chord is to be played lute style. Foscarini has indicated that the open second course is to be included.

Mus. ex. 7 - Passacaglio, p.85, Line 2.

The image displays a musical score for a lute piece. It is divided into three systems. The first system features a treble clef staff with a 3/4 time signature and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with a fermata over the first measure. The bass staff contains a bass line with chords. Chords are labeled 'D', 'D *', and 'D'. The second system starts with a measure number '6' and shows similar notation with a '*' marking a chord. The third system is a lute tablature showing fret numbers on a six-line staff, with chord diagrams and a 'D' label at the end.

In the previous examples it is possible to justify including an open course where this is necessary if the chord is to be strummed. However there are many places where the open course which would have to be included creates an unaccountable dissonance. In the next example the open third course can be included in the two chords in bar 4 [marked with an asterisk] – the music would again sound rather feeble otherwise. However in the first chord of the previous bar – marked with a ! - it makes no sense to include the open course. It may have been regarded as acceptable to do so if the chord is strummed but it is possible that what Foscarini really intended was a 3-part chord to be played lute style. The chord occurs in a lengthy unbarred passage which is in crotchets throughout and he has perhaps put in the stroke mark either to separate the chords from one or simply in error. The dissonant chord is shown at the end.

Mus. ex. 8 - Ciacona variata, p.28, stave 3

The image shows a musical score for 'Ciacona variata, p.28, stave 3'. It consists of two staves. The top staff is in 3/4 time and contains six measures of music. The bottom staff is in 3/4 time and contains six measures of music. A small inset at the bottom shows a simplified version of the top staff with fingerings and stroke marks.

In the next example Foscarini has put stroke marks throughout the whole section of the piece. In the opening phrase [bracketed] it is not appropriate to include any open courses until the third crotchet in the second full bar where it is necessary to include the open third course to make sense of the part writing, although Foscarini has not indicated it. And although the passage could be played with up and down strokes of the thumb or finger this is not particularly effective; it would sound just as well played lute style. The same problem occurs in bars 8-11 [also bracketed]. The open 3rd course can be included in the first & second beats of bar 8 but not the third and fourth or the first two beats of bar 9. In bar 11 on the last beat the treble part is sustained against the two lower voices.

Mus. ex. 9 - Toccata, p.105, 7th stave

Throughout the book there is a contradiction between what Foscarini has said in Rule 6 - that only the notes indicated in the tablature should be played in passages like these - and the way in which the music is notated - with stroke marks for each

chord even when, if the chord is to be strummed, it will have to include a note which is dissonant.

Since he regularly marks out single notes as if they are to be strummed, it is possible that he is also marking out passages in 2 or 3-part counterpoint in the same way, although he doesn't specifically intend them to be strummed. It certainly makes the music easier to read. The notation doesn't have to be interpreted literally in every respect! Some or all of the 3-part chords could be arpeggiated in lute style. Foscarini may have notated them in this way because this is what he had in mind although he had no means of distinguishing between the two styles of playing. Some later sources, notably Bartolotti's "Secondo Libro di Chitarra" (ca. 1655) do make this distinction.

The **seventh**, **eighth** and **ninth** rules explain the ornaments used in the music.

The **seventh** rule refers to notes which are **slurred**.

Seventhly you will find some numbers tied together [in the tablature] as in the Fuliè passeggiate on page 34 and in the first and second Sinfonias on page 57, and elsewhere. These are called stracini by professors of the theorbo, and are used nowadays by the French with the new tunings for the lute. On the guitar these ought to be played as follows. Pluck the first number in the group and then strike the others which are tied to it with the most convenient finger [of the left hand]. Any similarly slurred note should be treated in the same way. There will not be more than four in number at the most tied like this. Sometimes there may be only two, sometimes three, sometimes four but not more. Some of these Strascini run from below upwards, and others from above downwards, as you will see if you take care.

An example of this can be seen in the first bar of Mus. ex.7 above. Foscarini often places slur marks across courses although they can't really be played in that way. An example of this inconsistency can be seen in bar 5 of the same example.

The **eighth** rule refers to the **trill** but doesn't explain how it should be played.

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, as in the Sonata detta Battaglia, placed on plate 30, and in other places also, the same instruction should be followed.

It is not always clear which note ornaments are meant to be attached to. In the tablature Foscarini also occasionally uses a "x" without explaining what it means. From the context it is probably meant to indicate a **mordent**.

The **ninth** rule gives a rather convoluted description of **Vibrato** which again doesn't make it clear exactly how this should be executed.

Nine when a sharp sign like this # is found below any number, as in the Sonata detta Capriccio sopra la Ciaccona placed on page 28, one must draw the hand away from the guitar entirely, place the most convenient finger at the [fret represented by] the number which is shown and shake and press the hand so as to achieve as much as is possible a little sustaining of the sound of that string. This will serve for a general rule wherever it is found.

Summary and Conclusions

The most intractable problem with Foscarini's notation is his erratic use of bar lines and note values which often makes the rhythm uncertain. Aside from this, his notation does pose other questions to which there are no straightforward answers. It is clear that he regularly marks single notes as if they were to be strummed and it is also possible that he is marking single chords or whole passages in simple 2 or 3 part counterpoint as if they were to be strummed although they could be just as well be played in lute style, especially if the implied dissonance is unacceptable. Later sources in mixed tablature do usually make a clearer distinction between the two styles of playing by placing stroke marks on the lowest line of the tablature only if the chords are to be strummed; if there are no stroke marks then the notes are played in lute style. They usually, but not always, indicate the rhythm more clearly as well!.

Although there are inconsistencies in the notation, these are not really a serious impediment to interpreting the music. They are simply matters in which the player can be trusted to exercise his own discretion. It is not possible to arrive at a "definitive" version of Foscarini's music but it may not have been his intention to create one in the first place. Indeed the idea of a "definitive" or "urtext" edition may have been unfamiliar to him and to other players in the seventeenth century.

A note on the musical examples

In the musical examples the zeros indicating the open courses to be included in the standard alfabeto chords have been filled in. Elsewhere, if they have been added to make sense of the music they are shown in red.

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4. Foscari's *Regole per ben'imparar à sonar la Chitarra Spagnola*

The rest of the Introduction

Foscari's nine rules are followed by:

Rules and methods for tuning the guitar

These are carried over from his earlier book, **Intavolatura di chitarra spagnola; Libro secondo** (1629).

They are reproduced in the section comparing Foscari's 1629 introduction with that of Colonna.

These instructions are not included in any surviving books by Colonna, but Foscari may have copied them either from a missing book of Colonna's or another earlier *alfabeto* book. Much has been made of the fact that Foscari has included in his instructions a tuning check which he says is in octaves. This seems to imply that both the fourth and fifth courses of the guitar were octave strung, although if interpreted literally it would actually indicate that the fourth and fifth courses were strung in unison in the lower octave. There is no reason to assume that Foscari explicitly intended all the music in later editions to be played with this particular method of stringing or that this method of stringing was more generally used in Italy than either of the other two variants. [See also the accompanying paper – "The Stringing of the Baroque Guitar."]

Method of tuning several guitars to play in consort

These are also carried over from his earlier book **Intavolatura di chitarra spagnola; Libro secondo** (1629).

They are reproduced in the section comparing Foscari's 1629 introduction with that of Colonna.

The instructions have been copied from Colonna and are misprinted in the 1629 book so that they don't actually make sense in one place. The error is uncorrected in the later editions. They indicate two instruments (referred to as *mezana* and *grande*) tuned a tone apart and a smaller instrument tuned a 4th higher than the *mezana*. They do not give any indication as to how the instruments might be strung. 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.

Rule for the trillo

Picco, & Repicco

The *trillo*, *picco* and *repicco* are ornamental forms of strumming.

They are reproduced in the section comparing Foscarini's 1629 introduction with that of Colonna.

The rules and descriptions of the *trillo*, *picco* and *repicco* are not included in surviving books by Colonna, but Foscarini may have copied them either from a missing book of Colonna's or another early *alfabeto* book. They relate primarily to the pieces in *alfabeto*.

The rest of the introduction takes the form of general advice paraphrased as follows:

Note also that the pieces such as the correnti, balletti and gagliarde which are in the French style should be played calmly, giving them the air [metre] which is in keeping with the time signature placed at the beginning. In this way you will achieve what you desire. [This passage follows the description of the *trillo*, *picco* and *repicco* in the earlier book].

Finally it is recommended that you observe all the preceding rules and methods. In this way you will profit greatly, and not to run the risk of your mind being confused nor your hand damaged.

If you wish to apply yourself to this instrument which is so fashionable nowadays in all parts of the world, you are advised that to avail yourself of an intelligent and practical master. By this means it will be possible to learn to carry the hand well, to play each chord and fret distinctly, and to sound graceful and polished, playing sometimes loudly, sometimes softly in the true Spanish and Roman manner. If you do this it will encourage me to publish other new Inventions, which I am at present only dreaming of. When the lovers of this profession do me the favour of often playing these my compositions, as I beg them to do so from the heart, I trust they will repeat those which please them many times, which is the desire and the honour which I claim. Receive then these my little labours with a glad countenance and excuse with kindness that anything which does not please, so obliging me forever. Live happily.

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5. Foscari's Alfabeto Dissonante

All the chords in the basic sequence are major or minor common chords. Foscari also includes a separate sequence of dissonant chords – his *Alfabeto dissonante* - which uses some of the same letters with a cross beside them to represent different dissonances. Foscari uses only Chords A+ and I+ in the music which makes it difficult to be certain what purpose the rest are intended to serve.

Illustration 3 – Foscari's Alfabeto dissonante – ca. 1630

The image shows a historical manuscript page. At the top, a sequence of chords is listed: A⁺, B⁺, C⁺, D⁺, E⁺, F⁺, G⁺, H⁺, I⁺, K⁺, L⁺, M⁺, N⁺, P⁺. Each letter is positioned above a six-line staff, with dots indicating the fret positions for each string. Below the staff, there is a handwritten note in Italian: "Il sudetto Alfabeto dissonante si douera conoscere quando hauera una crocetta appresso."

Mus. ex. 10 - Foscari's Alfabeto dissonante

The image shows musical notation for chords A+ through P+ on a six-line staff. The chords are labeled a, A+, B+, C+, D+, E+, F+, G+, H+, I+, K+, L+, M+, N+, P+. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a common time signature. The chords are written as block chords with a suspended 4th.

It is sometimes assumed that the open courses should be included in all of the chords regardless of the fact that this would result in some rather strange dissonance.

However we have already met one of Foscari's dissonant chords – B⁺ - and it is clear from his 1629 table that the open fifth course is not to be included (see Mus. ex. 1 in Section 2). It is logical to assume that the open courses should also be included selectively in the *alfabeto dissonante*.

So how do we decide which to include? This involves a little harmonic analysis!

It is clear that all five course must be included B⁺, H⁺, K⁺, L⁺, M⁺ and N⁺.

H⁺ and M⁺ are unproblematic – they are major chords with a suspended 4th which resolves onto the same chord.

In K+ and L+ the 4th is doubled on the 5th course; it can resolve onto the same major or minor chord but the 5th course would have to be omitted from the chord of resolution to avoid an unwanted dissonance.

N+ is a chord of the 7th

B+ includes both the 4th and the 7th but the 7th is sounding simultaneously with its note of resolution.

This is similar to Mus. ex. 5 – Corrente detta la Fauorita above and may be intentional.

In the rest of the chords we have to decide which open courses to include.

A and **A+** – these are alternative arrangements of the standard G major chord with a different note in the treble. The second, third and fourth courses must be included in “a” – otherwise it can’t be strummed. [It is also clearly notated as a 6/4 chord!] The first course must be omitted from A+ because it does not belong to the chord.

F+ - this is the same as standard chord F, but the fifth course should be omitted. It is not clear why Foscarini has included it as a variant.

E+ - this is a variant G minor chord. The fourth course could be included, but the fifth should be omitted.

G+ - this is a variant D minor chord. The fifth course could be included but the first should be omitted.

C+ - this is a D major chord with a suspended 4th on the first course which should resolve on to an F#. The open fourth and fifth courses should be included.

I+ - this is an A major chord with a suspended 4th on the second course which should resolve on to a C#. The open first and fifth courses should be included.

D+ - this is a chord of the 7th on F. The open the fifth course could be included as it duplicates the note on the third course.

P+ - is somewhat ambiguous – but the open courses should probably be included. It does appear notated in tablature in the closing variation of the passacaglia on p.6 in **Bartolotti’s “Libro Primo di Chitarra Spagnola”** (1640). It is a form of lettera tagliata – a standard chord in which one or more courses are left unfretted - which is used as an appoggiatura between two standard Chord Ps. However, it is possible that it is intended to be played as a 3-part C major chord with a suspended 4th .

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6. Foscarini versus Colonna

Four guitar books of music in *alfabeto* printed in the 1620s and attributed to **Giovanni Ambrosio** Colonna survive today - **Intavolatura di chitarra alla spagnuola (1620)**, **Il secundo libro d'intavolatura di chitarra alla spagnuola (1620)**, **Il terzo libro de intavolatura di chitarra alla spagnuola (1623)** and **Intavolatura di Chitarra alla Spagnola. Del Primo, Secondo, Terzo, Et Quarto, Libro (1627)**. The second book lacks a title page but the other three were printed in Milan “*dell'her.di Gio. Battista Colonna*” – that is “for the heirs of **Gio. Battista** Colonna”. This raises an intriguing question which it is at present impossible to answer. Do the books originate with **Giovanni Ambrosio** or are they reprints of books which **Gio. Battista** had had printed earlier? There is a gap of fourteen years between the publication of Montesardo's **Nuova inventione d'intavolatura** in 1606 and the first of Colonna's books and it would be rather surprising if nothing had appeared in print during that period. In his introduction Giovanni Ambrosio claims that his book is the first of its kind to have appeared in print.

In 1637 a different version of the 1627 book - **Intavolatura di chitarra spagnuola del primo, secundo, terzo, & quarto libro** was printed in Milan by the printer Dionisio Gariboldi. From **Il secundo libro** onwards each book includes some pieces from previous books and some pieces which are unique. **Libro Quarto** probably appeared as a separate work before 1627 as different selections appear in the 1627 and 1637 editions.

Foscarini has included in his **Intavolatura di chitarra spagnola. Libro secondo**, printed in Macerata in 1629, an expanded version of Colonna's **All'Lettori**, his **Alfabetto** and his **Regola per incordare le Chitarre per sonare di concerto**. He has also included some of the pieces from Colonna's first book together with a substantial number of other, more complex pieces which are not found in Colonna's surviving books, but which are notated in a similar way. In particular, they have the note values placed above the *alfabeto* in an attempt to indicate the rhythm. Foscarini's work is in a similar format and uses the same rather imprecise notation as Colonna, although it is less clearly laid out on the page.

Although Foscarini has almost certainly copied his material from Colonna (and not vice versa), we can't be sure whether it was from the editions which survive or from earlier editions no longer extant. In any event, plagiarizing and expanding earlier works in this way was an acceptable practice in the 17th century and in doing so Foscarini has preserved pieces which are not found in other sources. It is however necessary to bear in mind that not all the information found in Foscarini's work is original, relevant or accurate when evaluating the contents

The following is a parallel transcription of the instructions found in the Colonna's first book and Foscarini's second book with English translation of Foscarini's version.

Colonna - 1620	Foscarini - 1629
<p style="text-align: center;">Alli Lettori</p> <p>Non hauendo, per mezo della Stampa : ancor visto il Mondo, il modo facile ritrouatosi d'ammaestrarsi nel suono della Chitarra all Spagnuola, istromento tanto usato, & per la suauità sua aggradito. Io, come è, che sempre fui bramoso del ben publico, per via d'essa, hò risoluto dar in luce questi miei componimenti.</p> <p>E per maggior facilità porui alcuni auertimenti da osseuasi per questo novo modo d'Intauolatura. Si che Lettore, prima douerai ben praticarti nel sotto impresso Alfabetto, & imprimirlo nella mente:</p> <p>avertendoti, che tutte le botte, siano in giù, ò vero in sù, hanno da esser piene.</p> <p>Dove trouerai qualunque carattere di detto Alfabetto sonerai quella botta, che detto carattere à suo loco ti mostra, tante volte in giù, & in sù, quanti trouerai segni simile \top ò sopra, ò sotto della linea, che attrauersa il foglio.</p> <p>Come per essempio $A\top\top$ s'ha de sonare la botte del Carattere A due volte in giù, & una in sù.</p> <p>Quando à detti segni, sia in giù, overo in sù, trouerai un ponto . darai al suono un poco di gratia, nello stesso modo, che si osserva nelli ponti delle notte Musical</p> <p>Et oltre di questa non vi è altra</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ALLI LETTORI</p> <p><i>Regola per bene imparare à sonare la Chitarra Spagnola</i></p> <p>Essendo stato pregato da cari amici, & dolcemente sforzato à far stampare le presenti mie sonate; mi è parso ancora di giusta ragione proporui il modo, che doueranno tenere nel volersi perfettionare in detto Stromento hoggi nel mondo tanto usato, si che volendosi con facilità imparare di sonare la Chitarra Spagnola</p> <p>doverassi far buona pratica nel sotto impresso alfabetto, & imprimerlo nella mente.</p> <p>Si deue anco auuertire, che tutte le botte, ò siano in sù \perp overo in giù \top, vanno piene.</p> <p>Et doue si trouerà qualche carattere di detto alfabetto, si suona quella botta, che detto carattere al suo loco vi mostra, tante volte in giù, & in sù, quanti segni si troueranno simile a questo \top ò sopra, ò sotto della linea, che attrauersa il foglio.</p> <p>Come per essempio $A\top\top$ s'ha da sonare la botte del carattere A, due volte in giù, & una in sù.</p> <p>Quando poi à detti segni, in giù, overo in sù, trouerà un ponto I. si deue dare al suono della botta, un poco di tempo più dell'altro, & doue ne saranno due I: un poco. V.G. il punto solo farà tempo di semiminima, & li due di minima</p> <p>Oltre di questo non vi è altra</p>

osservazione, ma si doue il tutto sonare susseguentemente in uno stesso tempi. Eccetto li Passacalli, Follie, Aria sopra le Follie, Spagnolette, Gagliarde & correnti, quali vano sonate in proportione.

[Però volendosi assicurare di uoler imparar bene, & in breue tempo, saria bene per qualche tempo seruirsi da Maestro intelligente per portar bene la mano, & dargli il tempo, & Sonare con gratia, & modestia, toccando hor piano, hor forte, alla uera maniera Spagnola, & Napolitana]

(This passage is not in the Libro primo version but is included in later versions. It probably originates with Colonna).

Regola per incordare le Chitarre per sonare di concerto [p.59]

Prima s'accordera la più grande in tuono come si vuole, e poi la mezzana vna voce più alta, cioè, toccando la quinta corda della grande, con la terza della mezzana farà unisono, la Chitarra piccola, toccando la quarta corda **à da** fare un' sono con la terza della Chitarra mezzana, & così sarà accordata un quarta più alta. Toccando poi una botta sopra la lettera I della grande, la lettera A della mezzana, & la lettera C della piccola farà bel concerto.

osservazione, se non che il tutto si deue sonare subitamente in un istesso tempo, eccetto le sonate, che sono segnate con il segno de tripola, quali vanno sonate detta proportione, cioè due in giù, & una in sù con il tempo più presto dell'ordinario : eccettuando le gagliarde, le quali vanno in tripole maggiore, cioè più adagio.

Però volendosi assicurar imparae bene, & in breue, sarà buona per qualche tempo seruirsi di Maestro intelligente che insegni di portar bene la mano, & dargli' il tempo, e sonare con gratia, & polizia, toccando hor piano, hor forte, alla vera maniera Spagnola, & Napolitana

Regola, & modo di accordare la Chitarra

Modo di accordare più Chitarre, per sonare di Concerto

Prima s'accorda la più grande in tuono come si vuole, poi la mezzana una voce più alta, cioè, toccando la quinta corda della grande, con la terza della mezzana farà unisono **con** la Chitarra piccola, & tocca[n]do la quarta corda **a due**, fare unisono con la terza **vac[a]nte** della Chitarra mezzana; e così farà accordata un quarta più alta. Toccando poi una botta sopra la littera I, della grande, la littera A, della mezzana, è la lettera C, della piccola farà buon concerto.

Promettèdisi di mandare in luce un'altra maniera nuoua, con inuètionone nõ più vedata, cioè alcune sonate, la metà passegiate al modo di Liuto, & l'altra metà al modo di Chitarra Spagnola, con

alcne inuentioni da me inuentare, supplicando li benigni amatori di questa professione di sonare più volte le presenti mie operette, acciò ne habbino loro quel gusto, che desideranno. Io l'honor pretendo della mia fatica. Viuino felici.

Del Trillo

Del Picco, & Repicco

Si è ancora d'auertire, che le sonate, come correnti, baletto, & gagliarde, che vanno nel stile francese, si deuono sonare quietamente, solo dargli spirito conueniente, conforma al tempo, che haueranno sopra, & per questo me hà parso di auuisargli acciò gli riescano conforme il loro desiderio.

Hanno ancora d'auuertire, che ci sono certe sonate, come la Bariera, la quale si troua sotto la lettera de C, un 5. come questo, si douerà andare con il detto piccolo al canto à 5 tasti, e cosi trouando altri simili numeri, cioè 6. ò vero 3. sempre s'intende andare à quel tasto, nel canto, e questo è quanto occorre nella opera. V.F.

ALFABETTO

Auuertendo nelle sonate à quelle lettere, quali hanno vn numero sopra, cioè 2. 3. ò 5. per più facilità s' hà da fare la medesima lettera, portando la mano 2. ò 3. ò 5. a'tasti più basso, conforme al numero, qual hauerà sopra.

Et questo per più facilità a quelli, che non intendo l'Intauolatura del Leuto.

ALFABETO

Auuertendo nelle sonate à quelle lettere, quali hanno un numero sopra, cioè 2. 3. ò 5. per più facilità s'hà da fare la medesima lettera, portando la mano 2. ò 3. ò 5. a'tasti più basso, conforme al numero, qual hauerà sopra.

Auuertendo ancora, che trouando vn M, con vna croce sopra si douerà fare a più tasti, come trouerà notato ò à 2. ò à 5. come e'insegna di sopra.

English translation of Foscarini's Introduction

To the reader

Rule for learning how to play the Spanish Guitar well

As I have been asked and gently prompted by dear friends to have these present sonatas of mine printed, it also seems to me a good idea to set out the method which one should have if one wishes to be accomplished on this instrument which is so widely used in the world today. Anyone wishing to learn to play the Spanish guitar with ease must practice the alfabeto printed below thoroughly and commit it to memory.

It must also be noted that all the strokes, whether they are up \perp or down \neg are all played in full.

And when any letter of the alfabeto is found, the chord which that character represents is played in that place as many times down or up as there are signs like this above or below the line which runs across the page. As for example A $\neg\neg\perp$ - the chord represented by A has to be played twice down and once upwards.

Whenever the said figure, either down or up is found with a dot I. the stroke of the chord must be given a little more time than the other; and if there are two I: a little more. That is to say a single dot is given the length of a crotchet and two dots that of a minim.

Other than this you will not find here any more instructions except that all must be played in the same tempo as you would expect, except the sonatas which are notated with the sign of triple time which is played in that metre, that is two down and one up with the tempo faster than usual, except the gagliards which go in tripla maggiore, that is to say, more slowly.

But whoever wishes to play well and quickly will do better with his time if he has a wise teacher, who shows him how to carry the hand well, how to play in the correct tempo and how to play with grace and charm; playing now softly, now loudly, in the true Spanish or Neapolitan manner.

Rule and Method for Tuning the Guitar

First tune the fifth course, which should not be too high or too low, that is to such a pitch which the others will also be able to maintain, in line with the size of the guitar, and then stopping the fifth at the fifth fret, the voice must make the fourth course open. Similarly the voice which the fourth course makes at the fifth fret must be made the open third course. And the voice which the third course makes at the fourth fret must be made the second course. And finally the voice which makes the second course at the fifth fret must be made the first course.

Essempio

5th string --5-----
4th string --0---- 5-----
3rd strings ----- 0-----4-----
2nd string -----0-----5-----
1st string -----0-----

Another rule will be found again for testing if the guitar is in tune, that is two courses in octaves, playing, as may be seen below, which are all octaves, and which makes all octaves, and this makes as much as I am able to say on the matter of tuning.

-----0-----3---2-- 5th string
-----2-----0----- 4th string
-----0-----2----- 3rd string
-----3---1---0--- 2nd string
-----3-----0----- 1st string

Rule for stringing the guitar in order to play in concert

First the largest guitar is tuned to any note you wish, and then the medium guitar one note higher, that is to say the fifth string of the large guitar makes a unison with the third string of the medium guitar. The fourth string of the little guitar has to make a unison with the third string of the medium guitar and thus it will be tuned a 4th higher.

The Trillo

[The instructions are not very clear because Foscarini, or his source, is trying to describe something which really can only be demonstrated practically!]

There are various ways of playing trilli and repicchi, because there are many ways of moving the [right] hand. When the player has learnt the correct way of carrying the [right] hand, has learnt all the chords and is familiar with the fingerboard, it will be necessary to vary the effect of the [right] hand with some trilli and repicchi.

Concerning the trillo, it should be noted that a stroke is made with the thumb and middle finger. E.g. A τ^{\perp} where the thumb plays a downstroke followed by an upstroke and the middle finger does the same. This is the way in which the trillo is played when a percussive ornament is required. Furthermore, the trillo may also be played with the index finger, dividing the stroke into four parts; that is, a minim will be divided into four quavers, the first down, the second up, the third down and the fourth up, at the speed appropriate to the tempo of the piece.

The Picco and Repicco

There are various kinds of picchi and repicchi which can be played on the guitar. I will describe here the three main kinds.

First, if you wish to play a stroke as in this example, BTT^L you should let the index and middle fingers move downwards gently and at the same time register the thumb, making the stroke sound three times in the same time that a single stroke would take. The upstroke is played in the opposite manner; the thumb moves up, followed by the index and middle fingers.

Secondly, after you have played the above, another stroke [i.e. the third stroke in the example] is played quickly and simply with all four fingers; then repeat the pattern as above. This method should be used in slower pieces, such as the toccate, passemuzzi, arie di Firenze and other similar pieces.

Thirdly, this example, CTT^L should be played with the middle finger moving downwards, followed by the thumb, and then the index finger quickly makes the same movement down and up, so that it feels as if the strings repeat the voice many times, responding with the index and middle fingers, so that the index finger goes downwards and the middle finger comes upwards in such a way that pleases the ear.

Note also that the pieces such as the correnti, balletti and gagliarde which are in the French style should be played calmly, giving them the air [metre] which is in keeping with the time signature placed at the beginning. In this way you will achieve what you desire.

Note also that in certain pieces, like the Bariera, you will find a 5 following the letter C; this should be played [as a single note] on the first course with the little finger. And if you find similar figures such as 6, or 3, they indicate the fret on the first course which should be stopped. These occur from time to time in the work.

This last comment refers to single notes inserted between the chords and played on the first course as in the *Spagnoletta* in Musical example 3 above. Foscarini (and Colonna from whom he has probably copied the piece) has notated it as a down-stroke although it should probably be played as an up-stroke, the reason being that throughout the basic strumming pattern is down – down – up.



The following is a list of concordances between the pieces in the two sources.

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Foscarini 1629

Colonna 1620

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Zarabande diuerse [A,B,C,G (I omitted)]	p.8-9	p.17
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[O,E] Arie di Firenze diuerse	p.18-19	p.31-32
[A, C, I] Arie di Firenze passeggiate	p.19	p.33
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[Gagliarda Passeggiata Pass'e mezzi per B Quadro	p.24] p.24-25	p.55= p. 39 [Page wrongly numberd]
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From here onwards Foscarini's contents are different.

La Bariera [C]	p.30	[1637 p.48 – similar]
Seguita Battaglia [C]	p.30 p.31	[1637 p.49 – similar]

Il Fine delle sonate semplici, e passeggiate.

Vestiva i Colli [D minor] [Original by Palestrina]	p.32	[1637 p.50 [G minor]
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