

Here is a tablature supplement of mainly French music in renaissance/vieil ton tuning from the early seventeenth century, juxtaposing all the lute solos ascribed to Despont with music ascribed to D, presumably the initial of a composer who may or may not be Despont.<sup>1</sup>

Despont probably refers to one of two brothers, Pierre and Luc Despont/Despond/Desponde/d'Espon/de Spon, lutenists and sons of Robert Despont, an instrument maker in Paris.<sup>2</sup> Pierre was born in 1583 and was a lute teacher, three contracts surviving for 1604-1609, and by 1609 he was master of the music of Marguerite de Valois (1553-1615). In 1572 she had an arranged marriage to Henri III of Navarre, but they were separated before his accession in 1589 to the French throne as Henri IV, and the marriage was annulled in 1599. Pierre probably remained in her household until she died in 1615. Henri IV married Marie de Medici (1575-1649) in 1600 and she was crowned Queen of France in 1610, but a day later Henri was assassinated. So Marie became queen mother and regent to their son, Louis XIII (1601-1643). By 1619 Pierre was employed as one of Louis' court musicians, dying sometime after 1627. Pierre's older brother Luc Despont was born in 1575 and is recorded as *maître joueur de luth* in 1615. Between 1620 and 1630 Luc held a post as musician in ordinary to the Queen-mother Marie de Medici, probably until he died, sometime between 1630 and 1636.

Ten pieces for 9 or 10 course lute in vieil ton tuning ascribed Despont are in Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury's lute book<sup>3</sup> (2 preludes - the first marked with slurs to indicate part writing, and the other unmeasured - a setting of *Filou*,<sup>4</sup> 6 courantes and a volte). Two more items, a ballet on *O trop heureux*<sup>5</sup> and a courante, for 10-course lute tuned harp way (fdeff) are in CH-Bu F.IX.53 copied after 1620,<sup>6</sup> and both are reproduced here (n° 4b & 5b) together with a transcription into vieil ton tuning (n° 4a & 5a). There is no indication whether Pierre or Luc composed the lute solos ascribed to Despont, so the surviving music could all be by one of them or include some by each as they were active in Paris at the same time, and Lord Herbert could have acquired pieces from either directly.<sup>7</sup> It is not known which type of lutes the Desponts played, but one of them might have composed the music in vieil ton and the other (Pierre who was 8 years younger than Luc?) those in harp way tuning. However, the music for lutes in the two tunings may also come from different stages in the career of one of them.

The remaining eight pieces (6 courantes and 2 canzon, one corrupt)<sup>8</sup> are from Johannes Aegidius von Rettenwert's

lute book<sup>9</sup> where they are ascribed D. It is likely that D is the initial of a composer, probably French, as other titles in the same source include composer's initials and the music mainly comprises courantes. Two pieces ascribed DG in Rettenwert are concordant with music by Michelagnolo Galilei so that here D probably means *de* or *Domini*, but for the music here D is used alone without a following initial for the name. Furthermore, two pieces in Herbert use the initial D to indicate Despont (n° 8 and 14), so it is conceivable that D is an abbreviation of Despont. But D could of course be the initial of a completely different composer or composers and necessarily all by the same one.<sup>10</sup> There are no obvious stylistic links between the two, other than the use of style brisé in the courantes typical of French lute music of the period.<sup>11</sup> Also the music ascribed Despont and D is found in different sources and none by them is concordant between the two, although the Swan manuscript<sup>12</sup> includes unasccribed concordant versions of one piece by each (n° 6b and 10a). N° 9a is a corrente from a print of Pietro Paulo Meli (n° 9b),<sup>13</sup> lacking the varied repeats, so the ascription to D in CZ-Pnm IV.G.18 is presumably an error.

#### Ascribed to Despont in the Cherbury Lute Book:

1. GB-Cfm Mus.689, f. 30v *Prelude Desponde* [7F8E<sup>b</sup> 9C]
2. GB-Cfm Mus.689, f. 44r *Prelude Desponde* [7F8E<sup>b</sup>]
3. GB-Cfm Mus.689, ff. 41v-42r *Filou Desponde* [7F8E<sup>b</sup>]
- 6a. GB-Cfm Mus.689, f. 63v *Courante Despond* [7F8E<sup>b</sup> 9C]
- 6b. RUS-SPAN O N° 124, f. 34v *Co:* [7F8E<sup>b</sup> 10C]
7. GB-Cfm Mus.689, f. 69r *Courante Despont* [7F8E<sup>b</sup> 10C]
8. GB-Cfm Mus.689, f. 30v *Courante du mesme D[espont]* [7F9C]
11. GB-Cfm Mus.689, f. 15v *Courante Despont:* [8D]
14. GB-Cfm Mus.689, f. 31r *Courante du mesme D[espont]* [7F9C]
16. GB-Cfm Mus.689, f. 11v *Courante Desponde* [7F8D9C]
18. GB-Cfm Mus.689, f. 63v *Volte du mesme [Despont]* [7F8E<sup>b</sup> 9C]

#### Ascribed to Despont in CH-Bu F.IX.53:

- 4a. CH-Bu F.IX.53, f. 24r *Ballet par Despont* [vieil ton] [10C]
- 4b. CH-Bu F.IX.53, f. 24r *Ballet par Despont* [harp way]
- 5a. CH-Bu F.IX.53, f. 25r *Courante par Despont* [vieil ton] [7F8E<sup>b</sup> 9D10C]
- 5b. CH-Bu F.IX.53, f. 25r *Courante par Despont* [harp way]

#### Ascribed to D in the Rettenwert Lute Book:

- 9a. CZ-Pnm G.IV.18, ff. 54v-55r *Courante D* [7F8E9D10C]
- 9b. Meli IV 1616, pp. 23-24 *Corrente detta la bella Caterina / Acorda l'ottana in ottana co'l Bordon a quattro Tasti* [7F8E9D10C]
- 10a. RUS-SPAN O N° 124, ff. 56v-57r *Courante* [7F8E<sup>b</sup> 10C]
- 10b. CZ-Pnm G.IV.18, f. 12r *Courante D* [7F8E<sup>b</sup> 10C]
12. CZ-Pnm IV.G.18, f. 165v *Courante D [Volt?]* [7F8E<sup>b</sup> 9D10C]
13. CZ-Pnm IV.G.18, f. 164v *Courante D* [7F8E<sup>b</sup> 9D<sup>b</sup> 10C]
15. CZ-Pnm IV.G.18, f. 165r *Courante D* [7F9D<sup>b</sup>]
17. CZ-Pnm G.IV.18, f. 80v *Courante D* [8D]
19. CZ-Pnm G.IV.18, f. 126r *Canzon D* [9D10C]
20. CZ-Pnm G.IV.18, ff. 79v-80r *Chanzon D* [7F9D]

John H. Robinson, August 2011

<sup>1</sup> Mostly for 9- or 10-course lute with a variety of different tunings of the diapasons, but most can be played on a 6-course lute by raising the bass notes an octave or just omitting them.

<sup>2</sup> François Lesure *Recherches sur les luthistes parisiens à l'époque de Louis XIII* in 'Le luth et sa musique' (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1957), p. 219; Yolande de Brossard *Musiciens de Paris 1535-1792* (Paris: Picard, 1965), pp. 95-96. Thank you to François-Pierre Goy for copies of these and additional comments on this text.

<sup>3</sup> Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge [GB-Cfm], MS Mus.689, copied early 17th-c up to 1640. Facsimile: Lute Society, forthcoming.

<sup>4</sup> Possible from the *Ballet des Filoux* staged in 1610, also found in Praetorius' *Terpsichore* 1612, p. 35 *Philou*, II, à 4 M.P.C., and may be familiar from track 6 of Paul O'Dette's *Lord Herbert of Cherbury* CD (HMU 907068).

<sup>5</sup> See Boeset *Quatrième Livre d'airs de cour* (Paris: P. Ballard, 1624), f. 21v. Different to the setting by Gauthier in GB-Lbl Eg. 2406, ff. 48r-47v, etc.

<sup>6</sup> Öffentliche Bibliothek der Universität Basel, copied c.1620-1645. Facsimile: Minkoff, date?

<sup>7</sup> Herbert was James I's ambassador to Paris, and 'went sometimes also to the Court of Queen Margaret' in 1608 and visited Louis XIII in 1619.

<sup>8</sup> Reconstructed here, shown by grey notes and rhythm signs.

<sup>9</sup> Praha, Národní Muzeum, Hudební Oddelení [CZ-Pnm], MS IV.G.18: Joannes Aegidius von Rettenwert lute book, copied c.1623-7.

<sup>10</sup> Stylistic considerations probably exclude Diomedes, Giovanni Battista Domenico or Dominique - music by the latter written in a different hand and for a differently tuned lute in the same source.

<sup>11</sup> A characteristic of several courantes ascribed to Despont is the use of phrases of descending notes as in n° 10, 11, 14 & 16 and particularly the second strain of n° 7, lacking in pieces ascribed to D.

<sup>12</sup> St. Petersburg, Library of the Academy of Sciences [RUS-SPAN] MS O N° 124, c.1600-50. Facsimile: Columbus, Editions Orphée, 1994.

<sup>13</sup> Pietro Paulo Meli *Intavolatura di Luto Attiobato. Libro Quarto* (Venezia, Vincenti, 1616). Facsimile: Firenze, SPES, 1979. Thanks to François-Pierre Goy for pointing out this concordance.

## 1. Prelude Despont

GB-Cfm 689, f. 30v

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16

23

31

38

## 2. Prelude Despont

GB-Cfm 689, f. 44r

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## 3. Filou Despont - six 16 bar variations

GB-Cfm 689, ff. 41v-42r

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31

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85

91

91

## 4a. Ballet Despont - A8 B8- vieil ton - 4b is on p. 9

CH-Bu F.IX.53, f. 24r

1

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## 5a. Courante Despont - A8 B8 - vieil ton

CH-Bu F.IX.53, f. 25r

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## 5b. Courante Despont - harp way

CH-Bu F.IX.53, f. 25r

8

8

## 6a. Courante Despont - A14 B14

GB-Cfm 689, f. 63v

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## 6b. Courante - A14 B14

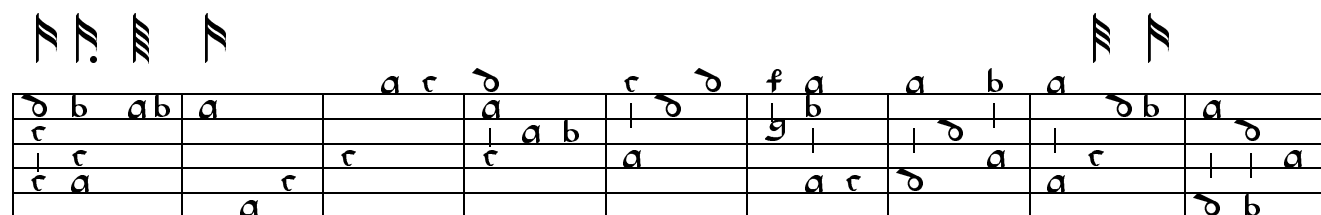
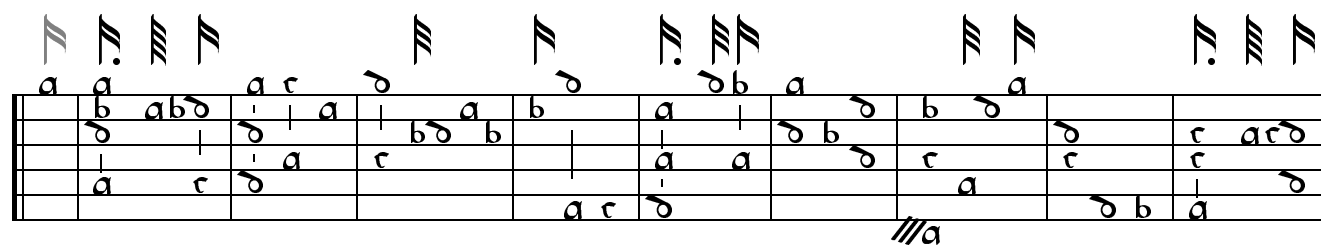
RUS-SPan O No.124, f. 34v

10

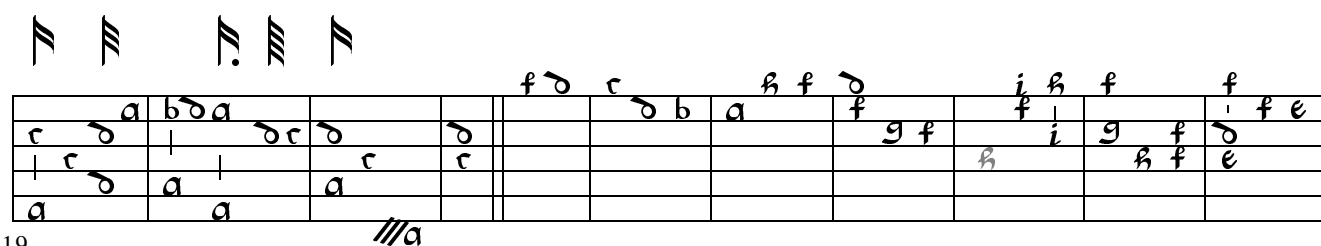
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## 7. Courante Despont - A22 B24

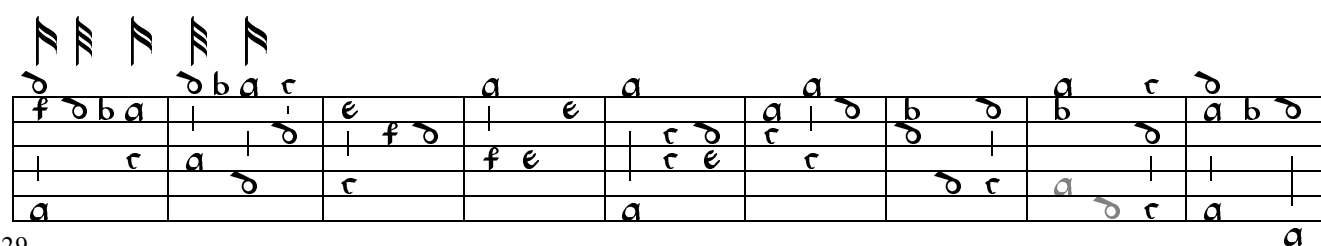
GB-Cfm 689, f. 69r



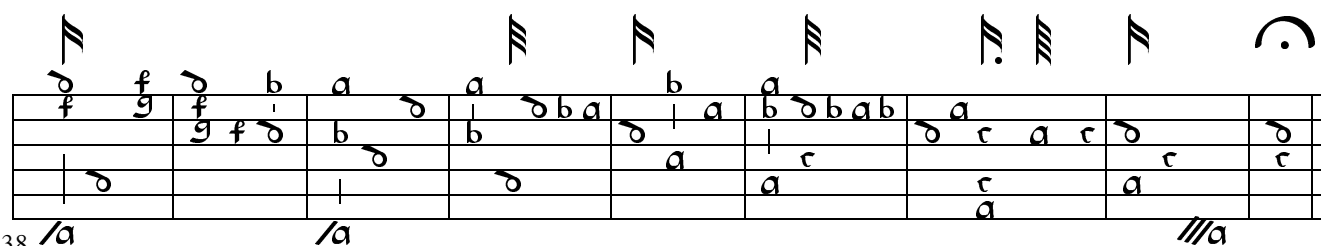
10



19



29



38



CH-Bu F.IX.53, f. 24r

1

## 9a. Courante D - A16 B16

CZ-Pnm G.IV.18, ff. 54v-55r

## 9b. Corrente detta la bella Caterina - AA'16 BB'16

Meli IV 1619, pp. 23-24



10a. Courante - AA'16 BB'18

RUS-SPan O No.124, ff. 56v-57r

A musical score for the song "The Rose Tree". The score is written for a single melodic line on a five-line staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody consists of 16 measures. The notes are as follows:

- Measure 1: Quarter note G4 (labeled 'g'), Quarter note A4 (labeled 'a').
- Measure 2: Quarter note B4 (labeled 'b'), Quarter note A4 (labeled 'a').
- Measure 3: Quarter note G4 (labeled 'g'), Quarter note F4 (labeled 'f').
- Measure 4: Quarter note G4 (labeled 'g'), Quarter note A4 (labeled 'a').
- Measure 5: Quarter note B4 (labeled 'b'), Quarter note A4 (labeled 'a').
- Measure 6: Quarter note G4 (labeled 'g'), Quarter note F4 (labeled 'f').
- Measure 7: Quarter note G4 (labeled 'g'), Quarter note A4 (labeled 'a').
- Measure 8: Quarter note B4 (labeled 'b'), Quarter note A4 (labeled 'a').
- Measure 9: Quarter note G4 (labeled 'g'), Quarter note F4 (labeled 'f').
- Measure 10: Quarter note G4 (labeled 'g'), Quarter note A4 (labeled 'a').
- Measure 11: Quarter note B4 (labeled 'b'), Quarter note A4 (labeled 'a').
- Measure 12: Quarter note G4 (labeled 'g'), Quarter note F4 (labeled 'f').
- Measure 13: Quarter note G4 (labeled 'g'), Quarter note A4 (labeled 'a').
- Measure 14: Quarter note B4 (labeled 'b'), Quarter note A4 (labeled 'a').
- Measure 15: Quarter note G4 (labeled 'g'), Quarter note F4 (labeled 'f').
- Measure 16: Quarter note G4 (labeled 'g'), Quarter note A4 (labeled 'a').

The lyrics "The Rose Tree" are written below the staff, aligned with the notes. The melody is a simple, folk-like tune. The score includes a key signature of one flat and a time signature of 4/4. The notes are labeled with letters 'g', 'a', 'b', 'f' to indicate the pitch.

10 a /a

[illegible][illegible]

f e f f  
g a f g f g b a g  
d c a d a c f g b a d  
e a c f d b a d f  
a

[illegible]

53

60

10b. Courante D - A16 B18

CZ-Pnm G.IV.18, f. 12r

66

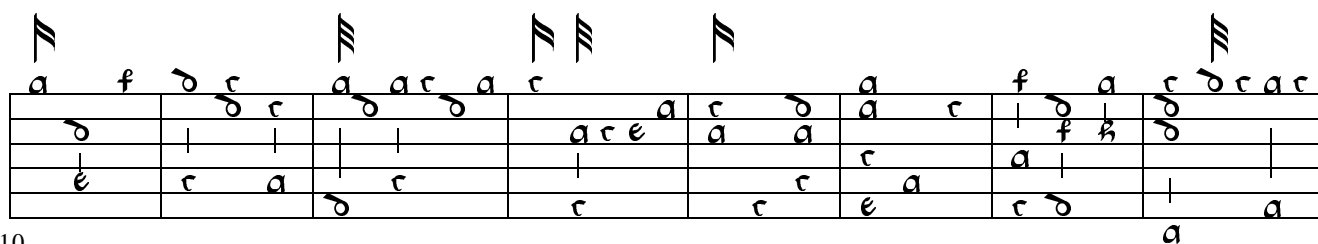
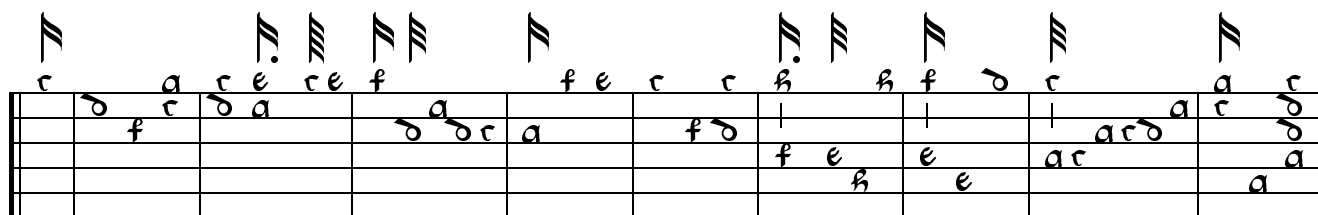
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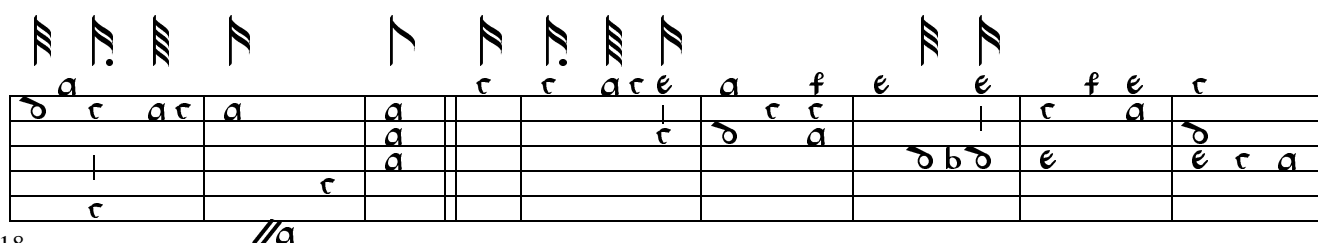
86

## 11. Courante Despont - A20 B23

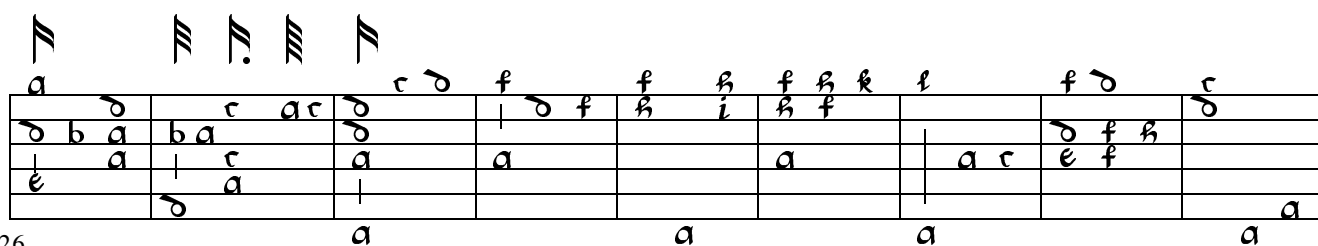
GB-Cfm 689, f. 15v



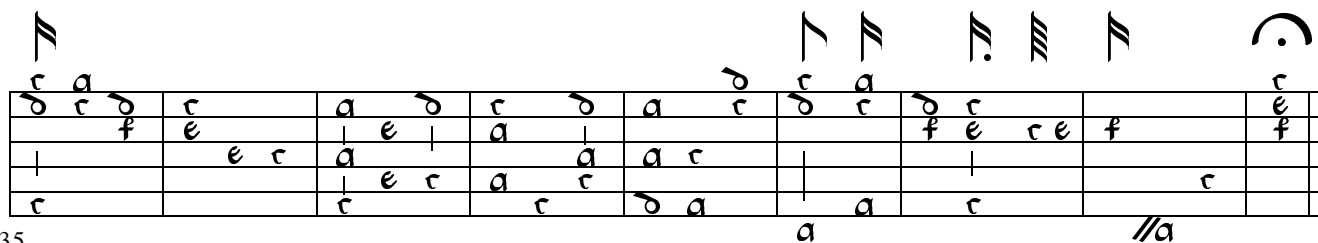
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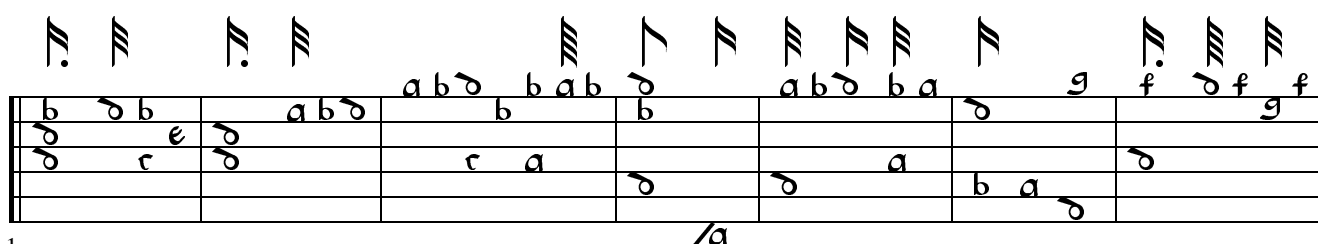
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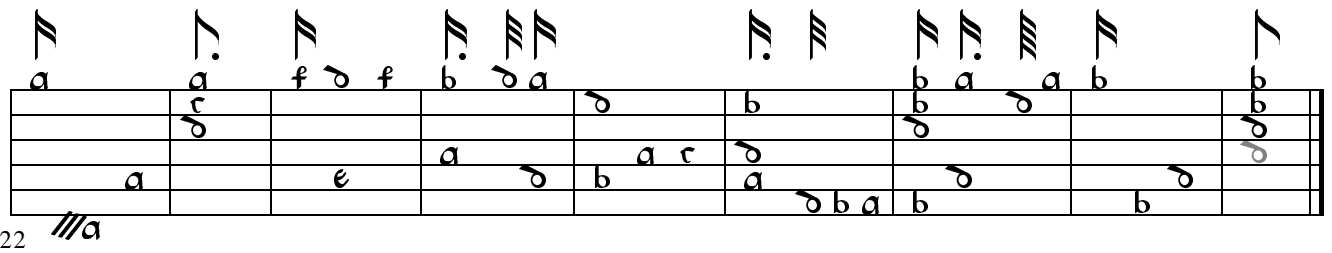
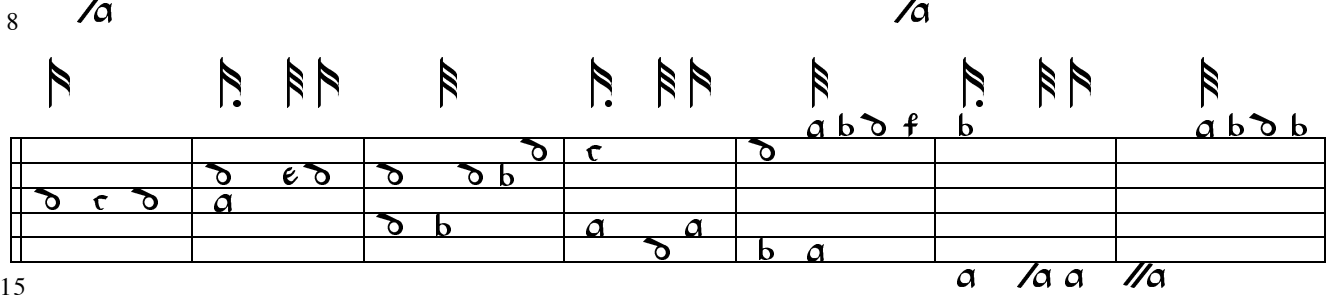
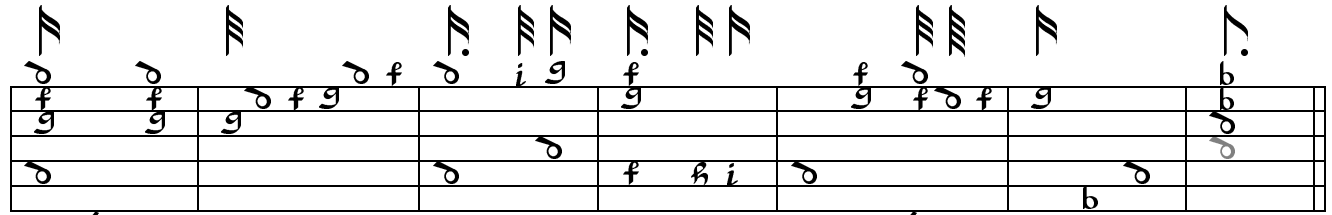
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## 12. Courante D - A14 B16

CZ-Pnm IV.G.18, f. 165v

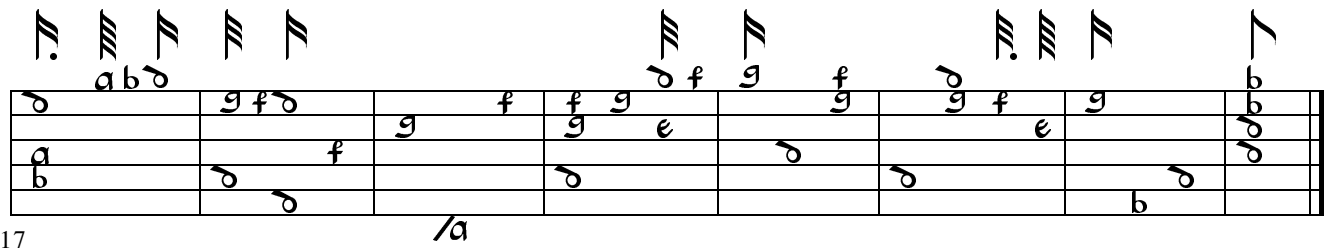
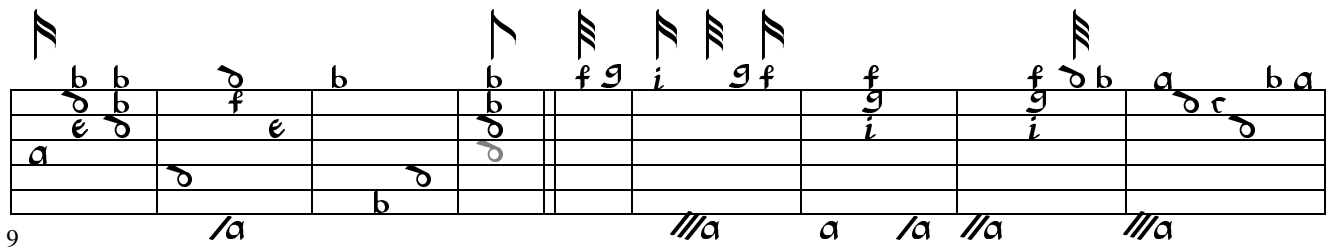
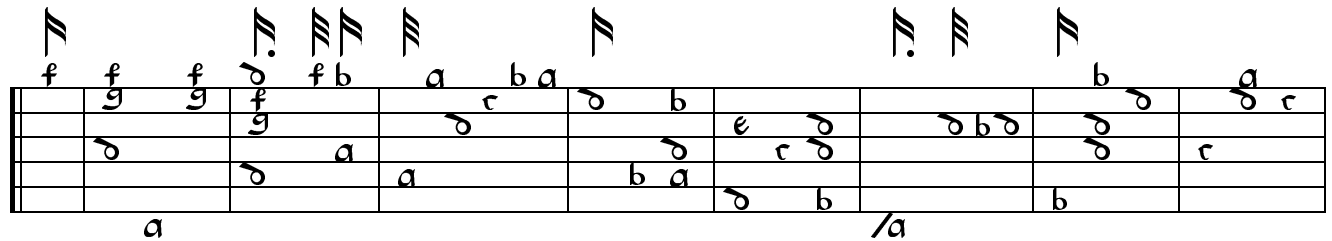


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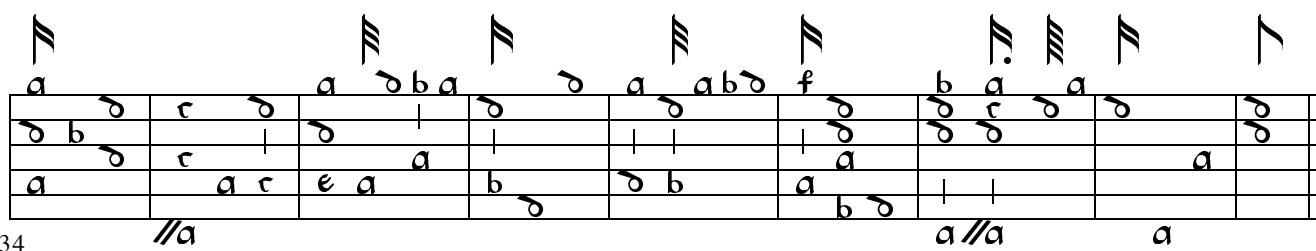
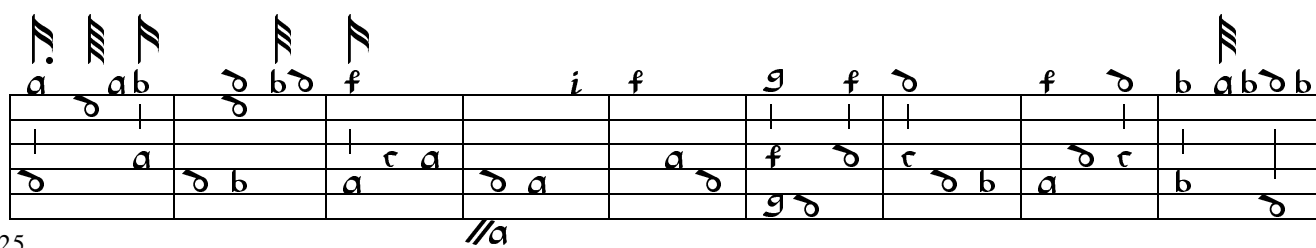
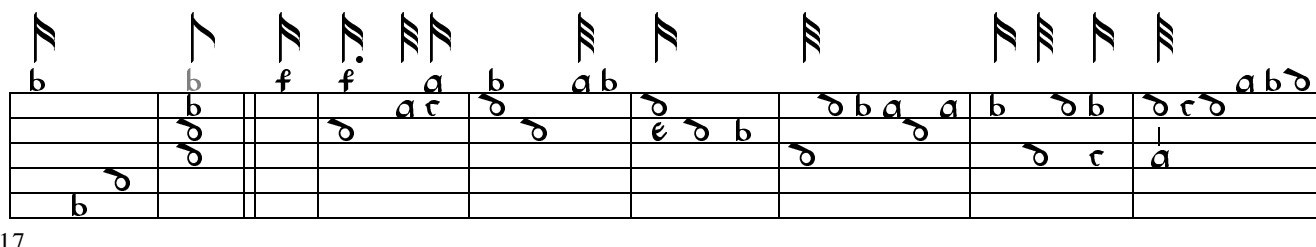
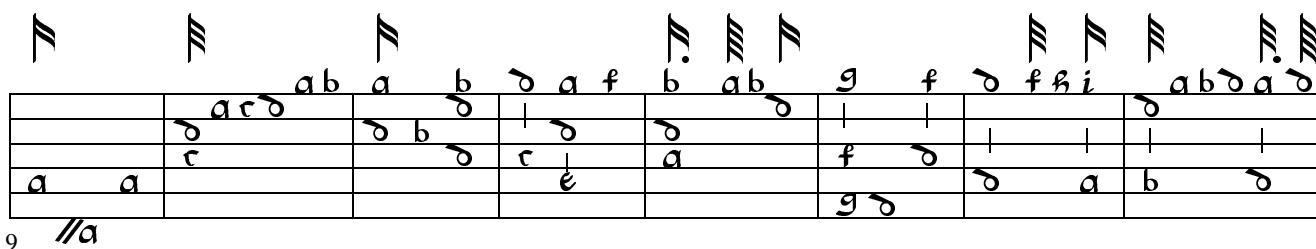
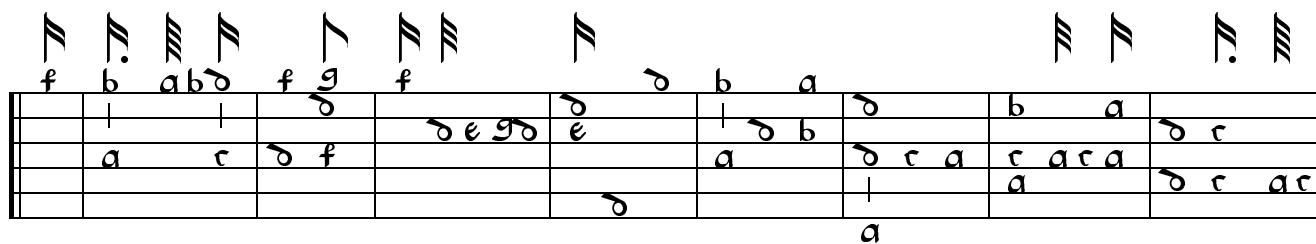
13. Courante D - A12 B12

CZ-Pnm IV.G.18, f. 164v



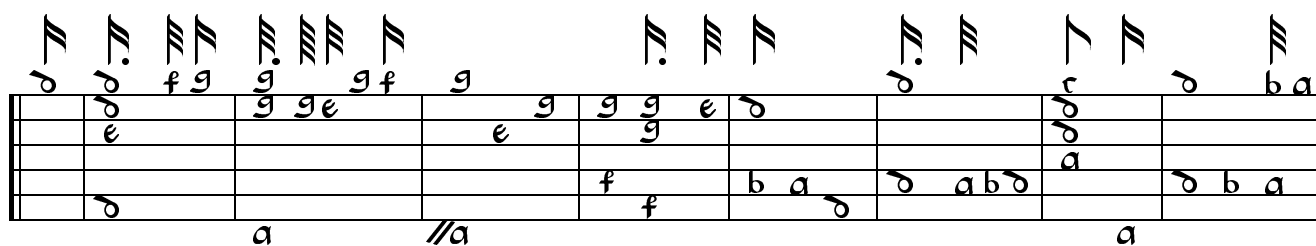
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GB-Cfm 689, f. 31r



## 15. Courante D - A12 B12

CZ-Pnm IV.G.18, f. 165r



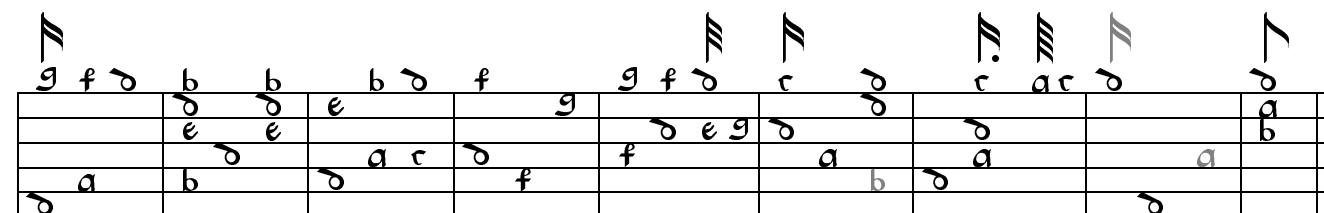




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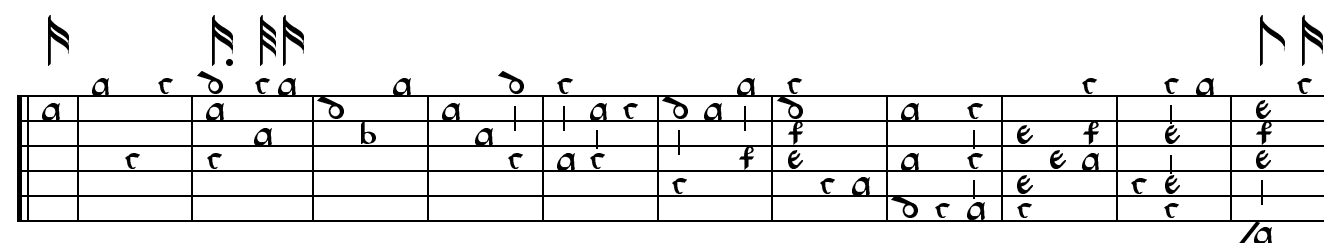
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16

## 16. Courante Despont - A20 B24

GB-Cfm 689, f. 11v

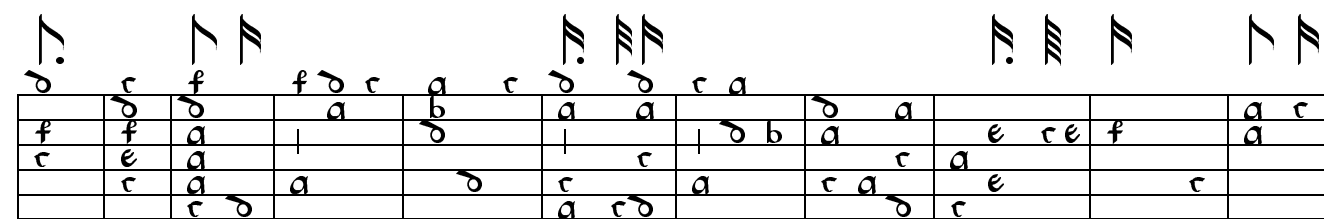


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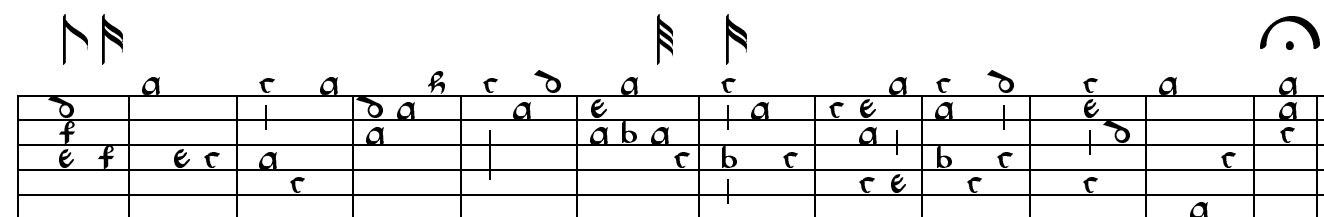
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22

//a

/a



33

/a

/a

/a

/a

/a

## 17. Courante D - A16 B16

CZ-Pnm G.IV.18, f. 80v

## 18. Volte Despont - A12 B16

GB-Cfm 689, f. 63v

18. Volte Despont - A12 B16. The score is written for three staves. The first system (measures 1-10) includes notes f, a, f, b, a, b, a, a, i, f, f, f, e, f, d, c, d, b, a, b, a, b, a, a, b, a. The second system (measures 11-20) includes notes b, b, a, c, d, d, f, f, f, f, i, d, f, d, a, b, d, b, d, a, f, e. The third system (measures 21-30) includes notes a, d, b, a, b, a, a, d, b, a, f, d, b, a, d, b, a, d, c, d, a, c. The score is marked with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The first system is marked with a '1' at the beginning. The second system is marked with a '11' at the beginning. The third system is marked with a '21' at the beginning. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

## 19. Canzon D - A16 B10

CZ-Pnm G.IV.18, f. 126r

19. Canzon D - A16 B10. The score is written for three staves. The first system (measures 1-10) includes notes a, c, d, a, f, c, f, e, f, d, e, a, d, c, a, d, b, b, a, a, a, d, b. The second system (measures 11-20) includes notes a, a, c, e, f, d, c, a, c, e, a, c, e, a, c, e, a, a, c, e, c, a, e, a, a, a. The third system (measures 21-30) includes notes a, c, e, f, a, c, d, a, b, d, a, b, a, d, b, a, d, b, a, a, a, a, a, a, a, a. The score is marked with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The first system is marked with a '1' at the beginning. The second system is marked with a '10' at the beginning. The third system is marked with a '17' at the beginning. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

## 20. Canzon D - A12 B9 C16

CZ-Pnm G.IV.18, ff. 79v-80r

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