

FICHE DESCRIPTIVE: MS. CAPIROLA

Date : 1515-1520 (c.1517 according to Gombosi)

Catalogue : RISM B VII/1, p.79; Arthur Ness, "Sources of lute music: Italy", *New Grove* (1980), 24, p. 41.

Library : US – Cn, Case MS - VM 140.C25 (VAULT) "Composizione di meser Vincenzo Capirola"

Table

	First pages	Folio
	[Table]	1r
	Composizione di mesez Vincenzo capirola gentil homo bresano.	1v
	Secreto da ligar le corde sul lauto	3v
	A. barez le corde, per meterle sul lautto	
	A ricordi per li lautti	4r
	[page blanche]	4v



Order	Title	Folio
1	La vilanela	5r
2	Recercar primo che imparaj bello.	5v
3	Obluier. Canto. nel ton del primo ricercar.	6v
4	Recercar segundo bello.	8r
5	O, mia ciecha e dura sorte. Che farala per so coa	9r
6	[Spag]na prima che mai inpari.	11r
7	Recercar terzo. bello.	13r
8	Sit nomen domini benedictum. cioe, o dulcis amicha mea.	16r
9	Padoana francese . a 4. bella, e forte.	17v
10	Stavasi amor dormendo soto a un fagio.	18v
11	Voi che pasati qui. nel ton del ricercar terzo.	19r
12	Ti [...] baletto da belar bello.	19v
13	Detubiens plaene. canto. nel ton del primo ricercar.	20v

Order	Title	Folio
14	[Sanc]ta ternitas. descorda il contrabaso. moteto piu belisimo	22v
15	[Cant]o bello.	24v
16	Recercar quarto, descorda nel ton de sancta ternitas belo.	25v
17	Padoana bellissima, descorda come sancta trinitas.	27v
18	Recercar quinto. nel ton del Recercar 6. bellissimo. iacop°.	29v
19	Recercar sesto. belo, a zanna dal contarinj sola.	32v
20	[Christe de si]dederò. Parte duna mesa. bellissima.	35v
21	[Ales] regres. canto.	37v
22	[Agnus] Dei. de brumel. de la mesa de ut. re. mi. fa. sol. la. bellissima.	39r
23	Recercar septimo, ave alvise di garzoni.	41r
24	Spagna tuta de fuge.	43r
25	Recercar ottavo, lalcier, et un spiciar, lave.	44v
26	Recercar nono. nel ton de nunquam fui p.m. bello.	45v
27	Recercar decimo. bello.	46v
28	Padoana. ala francese bella, e aierosa.	47r
29	Recercar undecimo. ala spagnola facile. bello.	48v
30	[Non] ti spiaqua lascoltar. moteto bello.	49v
31	[Gent]il princep. canto agieroso et bello.	50v
32	Nonquam fuit pena maior: canto vechio che da si non e bello.	51v
33	[Et resurrexit de lomo] arme. Parte duna mesa, bela, e bella.	53v
34	O florens roxa. aut virginitatis lilium. moteto beletisimo.	55v
35	[Si ded]ero. Canto belisimo mai esta sona asta foza.	58r
36	[Benedictus de brum]el. Parte duna mesa.	60r
37	Basadanza senza fuge bella.	61r
38	[Et in terra pax. Parte] duna mesa. bela.	65r
39	[Qui tollis pechata mundi.] Parte duna mesa. e piu bela.	66v
40	Recercar XII°. che sona messer Vincenzo. che niun la, ne ara.	68r
41	Recercar XIII che sono mi solo bello.	71r
42	[Tota] pulcra es amica, mea. belisimo moteto aieroso et forte.	72v

Format, paper and watermark : oblong paper book in sixteenth-century binding of gold-ornamented calf leather; 149 x 215 mm. Water mark corresponds to Briquet No. 3461 (Bergamo 1515, Treviso 1516, Udine 1521, etc).

Copyist : Vidal (a painter, possibly of Venetian origin and a pupil of Vincenzo Capirola. Vidal is also responsible for the pictures decorating the MS).

Foliation : 74 leaves in 10 fascicles: *⁴, a-h⁸, i⁶.

Content : 74 compositions including: 13 ricercars, 7 dances (2 La Spagna, a bassedance, 2 paduana "a la Francese", 1 paduana "descorda", 1 balletto), intabulations of Italian vocal music by Bartolomeo Tromboncino (2), Marchetto Cara and Michele Vicentino, and intabulations of French chansons, motets and mass movements by Josquin (3), Alexander Agricola (2), Brumel (2), Hayne van Ghizeghem (2), Caen, Févin, Ghiselin, Obrecht, Prioris and Urrede. Preceded by a very important preface by Vidal giving the Instructions of his teacher Capirola, including the "secrets" of the art of lute tuning and playing: half hand, right hand, graces, etc. It gives very important explanations of special signs invented by Capirola and not found in any other tablature of the time, explained in the Preface on f.2v-3r: see the indications of *tenuto*  , i.e. to hold a note until another sign appears:  ; another unusual feature is the indication of a *tremolo*, a grace that anticipates a real note with another note written with red dots (*appoggiatura*).

(example from f. 27v, first staff, bars 8-9, Paduana descorda)



A third sign, explained in the Preface f.3 and applied in the *Paduana descorda* (f.28v) is even more ingenious: "You will find in the Paduana discordata that the line of the middle string is divided into two lines and the one is stopped while the other is open. It will not seem difficult to you for it is a simple thing. With the left hand on the finger board, use your little finger to pull the lower string downwards a little so that it stays separated from the other and hold it firm; then with the first finger stop the other fret with the left hand as notated, stopped and open. This effect is done with the left hand and with the right strike through the whole course as usual ; and this you should understand to according to this description: because it cannot be written down...". Further evidence of this practice is found only in later printed editions by Fuenllana (1554), Bermudo (1555), and Bakfark (1565). Among the practical instructions for the two hands, according to Marincola (1999), Capirola indicates that it is also appropriate to use the thumb of the left hand in fingering chords since "it is more beautiful if it is seen on the finger board"(f.2): a similar suggestion was given later by Ganassi (*Letzione seconda*, 1543).

The biography of master Capirola has been reconstructed by Otto Gombosi as follows: Vincenzo, the son of Pietro Capirola, was born in Leno near Brescia (then part of the

Venetian territories in Northern Italy) in 1474 from a rich family; in 1517 he was the owner of an house in Venice, the city where probably he was active as lute teacher, but apparently he was living mainly in Brescia. The hypothesis concerning his possible travels to Ferrara in 1510 and in England at the court of Henry VIII in 1515 are not documented, but it seems evident from the high quality of his collection that Capirola was one the finest composers for the lute in the first decades of the sixteenth century. In his last document, a tax declaration signed in Brescia in 1548, Vincenzo at the age of 74 years, was not working ("senza esercizio alcuno" with a comfortable yearly income of 60 ducats. The Capirola Lute Book is to be considered the earliest notebook of a professional lute player and one of the most important sources for the instrumental music of the Early Renaissance.

Commentaires : First notice of the existence of the MS was a report by Land who examined it in Leyden in 1889 (8 handwritten pages attached to the present cover of the MS in Chicago). The MS was sold by the dealer B. Quaritch in London on 28 January 1902. It was acquired by the Florentine dealer Leo Olschki who then offered the item for sale in his 1904 Catalogue (n. 24919). It was acquired by the Newberry Library, Chicago, for 1500 Lire in May 1904 (Acquisition Number 107501). At present the MS is housed in the Rare Book Room of the Library.

Bibliographie : J.P.N.Land, *Het Luitboek von Thysius* (Amsterdam: 1889): 130, 147, 233 [Land 1889]; *Composizione di Meser Vincenzo Capirola. Lute-book (circa 1517)*, edited by Otto Gombosi, Neuilly-sur-Seine, Société de Musique d'Autrefois, 1955 [Gombosi 1955]; facsimile edition with Introduction by Orlando Cristoforetti (Florence: Spes, 1981); Federico Marincola, "The Instructions from Vincenzo Capirola's Lute Book: A new translation", *The Lute* (1983), 23-8; Dinko Fabris, "Lute tablatures instructions in Italy: a survey of the *Regole* from 1507 to 1759", *Performance on Lute, Guitar and Vihuela*, ed. by Victor Coelho (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Federico Marincola, "Vincenzo Capirola et le luth en Italie au début du XVIe siècle", *Les luths en Occident* (Paris: Clt  de la Musique, 1999): 135-43.

Discographie: *Vincenzo Capirola. Livre de Luth*, Federico Marincola, lute, 1 CD Paul Verany-Arion PV793012 (Paris: 1993): 19 pieces (Ricercare terzo, Sit nomen Domini benedictum, Ricercare quarto, Sancta Trinitas, Padoana discorda, Ricercare XII, Allez regrets, Ricercare nono, Nunca fue pena major, Bassadanza, Padoana alla Francese, O florens rosa, Stavasi amor dormendo, Ricercare primo, La Villanella, Ricercare ottavo, Gentil prince, Ricercare septimo, Spagna seconda); *Du mignard Luth...*, Pascale Boquet, lute, 1 CD Societ  Fran aise du Luth SFL 1105 (2011): 2 pieces (Recercar otavo, Paduana ala Francese).